

Old Growth Conservancy Society OGCS Directors' Report for 2019

The Directors of the Old Growth Conservancy Society at the end of 2019 were:

- President: Karen Marzocco
- Vice-President: Marshall Bauman
- Secretary: Alan Bardsley
- Treasurer: Doug Bardsley
- Directors-at-Large: David Cook, Hugh Hamilton, Paul Hundal, Herb Storm
- Advisory Members: Katharine Steig, Terry Taylor
- District Representatives¹: Corinne Ambor,
DWV Parks Stewardship Manager,
and
Kari Pocock,
DWV Parks Planning Assistant.

The Old Growth Conservancy Society (OGCS) held 10 regular directors' meetings in 2019 including the AGM, which was held February 20, 2019 at the West Vancouver Seniors' Centre.

2019 Summer Guided Tours

The OGCS provided sign-up sheets for summer tours into the Conservancy at the newly launched Bridge Festival in Ambleside and at the Coho Festival.

As per the previous year, the OGCS led six guided tours into the Conservancy. All tour correspondence and tour bookings were organized by our Secretary, Alan Bardsley. 51 guests joined the tours, despite 7 cancellations the day of Whistler Gran Fondo. The 2020 tour planning will avoid the Gran Fondo date as well as increase the number of reservations from 10 to 12 to accommodate cancellations and guests on waiting lists. 12 reservations continues to maintain the integrity of small tour sizes in the Conservancy. Guests on the 2019 OGC tours were emailed the group photo taken on their particular tour.

The guided tours of the Old Growth Conservancy offer our guests the rare opportunity to enter into the apex of the Conservancy to see veteran trees up to 900 years old or older. Hiking into the apex is quite rugged as the OGCS does our best to avoid the creation of trails other than the Conservancy Crossing Trail (CCT) which is the only approved trail in the Conservancy. The OGC tours begin on the CCT trail where participants learn the characteristics of an old-growth ecosystem. They then enter a once logged second growth stand just south of the Conservancy boundary. The stand may well be an area that grew back after being logged and milled at what would have

¹ The District Representative role for the OGCS is a non-voting board membership. Corinne Ambor's extensive experience with WV Parks provides the OGCS with insight into issues that may relate to or impact the Conservancy. Kari Pocock, whose own experience prior to joining Parks in DWV is highly valued by the OGCS, joined us for some meetings. She and Corinne will share the Representative role on the OGCS Board.

been the nearby Naysmith Mill. The last part of the tour ventures into the apex of the Conservancy to experience near pristine areas in much the same state as pre-contact with Europeans. The tour guides for 2019 were David Cook, Hugh Hamilton and Alan Bardsley.

Guided tours into the Old Growth Conservancy for 2020 will take place on Saturday, August 22, Wednesday, August 26, Saturday, August 29, Sunday, September 13, Thursday, September 17 and Saturday, September 19.

An exciting moment for the OGCS was a guided tour into the OGC that included then newly elected West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country MP, Patrick Weiler and his partner, Nicole Pedersen. The tour was prearranged by Katharine Steig at a District of West Vancouver civic event that Mr. Weiler had attended. Mr. Weiler had expressed previous interest in joining an OGCS guided tour prior to running for the role of MP but he had been unable to coordinate his dates with our scheduled tours. The tour occurred on October 27 and included 9 people including Katharine, her son and daughter-in-law.

Tours of West Vancouver Old-Growth Forest Areas Outside the OGC

Paul Hundal led 3 tours along park trails into old-growth areas in West Vancouver. The tours focused on local historical logging and took place on 2 Sundays in June and one in July. The first led participants into Lighthouse Park, the second was a more rigorous hike into Brothers Creek and the last ventured into Nelson Canyon-Whyte Lake. Three eras of logging in West Vancouver were discussed and guests were able to view some of the veteran trees that survived the historical logging. The tours featured the following eras of logging: 1860 to 1905 - The first logging rights granted on the North Shore via homesteading rights; 1905 to 1926 - An era that involved more intense logging including the removal of smaller trees and a shift to more redcedar due to demand for shakes and shingles; and post-1926 - Extensive logging primarily conducted to clear British Pacific Properties land for residential development, including land that has not been developed to this day.

Paul plans 2 tours for 2020: Lighthouse Park on Sunday, July 5 and Nelson Canyon-Whyte Lake on Sunday, July 19.

Brochure on Old-Growth in West Vancouver

An updated draft brochure that highlights old-growth forested areas in West Vancouver was written by Paul Hundal based on Katharine Steig's original brochure. It will include the Old Growth Conservancy yet its intention is to redirect people to the old-growth areas outside the Conservancy. The brochure will be handed out to interested parties who wish to hike to and visit our local old-growth ecosystems. Five main areas are featured in the brochure including: The Old Growth Conservancy, Cypress Falls Park, Cypress Provincial Park, Lighthouse Park, Nelson Canyon/Whyte Lake and Brothers Creek. The handout will include a basic map of featured areas. A darkening of the main roads on the map is necessary before it can be made available to the public and on the OGCS website.

Bridge Festival

West Vancouver Community Day transformed into the Bridge Festival in 2019. The focus centred on BC's diversity and was intended to create immersive cultural experiences. The event took place over two days on Friday, May 31 and Saturday, June 1. The OGCS participated in the Saturday event along with other sustainability groups. Alan Bardsley was the first to arrive to set up the booth and he discovered that the provided tent was too close to one of the performance stages. So, Alan and the event organizers moved the tent to a more appropriate area to enable comfortable interaction between the OGCS and our visitors. The location of the tent was close to one of the entrances so we had quite good attendance at our display. The change in the focus of the festival appeared to draw new people to our tent so we were able to have conversations with people we, perhaps, would otherwise not have been able to engage.

Coho Festival

Taking place on the second Sunday in September, the Coho Festival was held September 12, 2019. As with the previous year, it was a rainy day, though less of a soaker than 2018. Nonetheless there was reasonable attendance and the location of the OGCS booth worked well for attracting festival guests. It was noted that our booth display panel acted as a bit of a barrier between us and our visitors. The OGCS will look at what may be required to reduce this barrier going forward.

Monitoring the Conservancy

Springtime in the Old Growth Conservancy brought Lamium to the east side of Parking Lot 5 as well as Reed Canary Grass already in Parking Lot 5 to the edge of the Conservancy. Marshall Bauman, the intrepid OGC monitoring extraordinaire was tasked with attempting to cover the grass with the hope of impeding its growth. The forested portions of the OGC remain almost free of invasive plants, except for wall lettuce and the occasional holly, which is always pulled. The southeast corner of Parking Lot 5 is the most contaminated area in terms of invasive plants, as morning glory, thistle, lamium, pepperweed, foxglove, various daisies, hawkweeds, buttercup and the occasional broom pops up.

In March Marshall alerted OGCS directors and District of West Vancouver Parks staff to trees that had fallen across the Conservancy Crossing Trail (CCT). Marshall also noted that water pooling on southern boundary road was directing bikes into a second growth area of the OGC. At that time, the number of riders in the area appeared to be low. At least four trees fell across the CCT in 2019 and had to be cut and moved or removed by the WV Parks' team. One of Marshall's unusual spring finds in the OGC was a crossbow dart. No victim of the dart was discovered.

Toward the end of July, Marshall alerted directors that at least three good-sized trees had fallen across the route that the guided tours take into the apex of the Conservancy. These newer fallen trees were in addition to trees that had fallen the previous spring and required the assistance of DWV Parks to remove from the path. In early August,

Alan Bardsley contacted a trail builder he knew and they used a chainsaw to cut through the newer tree fall. The trail builder also used the wood cut from this newer fall to build steps on either side of the trees that had fallen the previous year. Marshall then added a board approximately 1.5 metres x 0.3 metres to create a bridge across the tree fall that was still in place. Then by August 19, prior to the first tours into the OGC, Parks removed the tree fall from the previous year. They required a small crane lift from a truck bed to remove 8 logs measuring 6 metres each and 2 smaller tops from the area which was close to the Cypress works yard. The location of that tree fall was just outside the OGC and thus the removal of the wood did not negatively affect the Conservancy. A remaining stump is now an interesting stop for the guided tour as it indicates how a tree is able to fold in upon itself to possibly repair damage it had sustained many, many years ago.

Halloween brought a lawn chair and about twenty 'roman candle' fireworks to Parking Lot 5. Less garbage is found in the parking lot once the entrance gate is closed and locked.

Marshall, often with Mike Castle, spent some of 2019 exploring the southern boundary of the Conservancy. In the past, there were about 21 marked points along the approximately 1½ kilometre southern border. These points usually indicated a direction change so the border itself can be complicated to find and to follow. Most of these points were or are marked by white 3 sided posts, but these are deteriorating, and some have even been moved. The eastern half of this border was also 'tagged' with blue ribbons at least 10 years ago, most likely by Bill McCuaig. Yet, many of these ribbons have come down and some have been removed completely. For example, the southeast corner has been stripped of all ribbons, and we do not know the reason for their removal. Luckily, Bill had also marked this spot by blazing three trees with his axe and adding dabs of orange paint. Due to the weathering, loss or removal of some of the border markings along the southern boundary, Marshall has not been surprised that some encroachment can occur in the Conservancy.

Monitoring Discovery of Rogue Hiking Trail: In September, a rogue trail leading from the ski area maintenance yard roadway into the apex of the Conservancy was discovered. This is the same location in which a rogue trail was decommissioned in 2013 with the help of the mountain biking community. Marshall and Mike Castle used a GPS to map the coordinates of the rogue trail and found that it continued from the apex to the Conservancy Crossing Trail and onto Cypress Bowl Road southeast of the OGC. This section leads past the vicinity of the Naysmith Mill and evokes the history of logging in the area. OGCS directors believe the two sections are related and are the work of a local hiker. No bicycle tire tracks were found on either section.

Also in September, Alan posted signs at key points on the rogue trail to inform the builder that the area was a Conservancy and that trails were not allowed. Alan included his contact information on the signs. He posted additional signs again in October. However, to date, he has not been contacted by the builder or trail users. Alan posted

the signs so that the trail builder could abide by the DWV Council's policy of no new trails in the Conservancy,

At the December 4th meeting of the OGCS board, the directors supported the decommissioning of the section of the trail within the Conservancy. Alan decommissioned this trail section on December 13th with the assistance of DWV Parks staff, just before snowfall covered the trail for the winter. The section southeast of the Conservancy (outside the OGC) remains in place and directors are considering allowing the trail to persist in order to illustrate the local logging history since the trail leads to the likely historical location of the Naysmith Mill.

When he was not directly monitoring the OGC in 2019, Marshall continued to examine and log his archive of photos that he has taken in the Conservancy over the years.

Forest Ecosystem Inventory of Old-Growth in the Conservancy

In 2017 and continuing into 2018, students at the BCIT Forest and Natural Areas Management Department conducted an inventory of the Old Growth Conservancy under the direction of Wayne Horvath, Program Head of Sustainable Resource Management. OGCS directors and District of West Vancouver Parks were to be provided with a report on the inventory studies to expand our information regarding the Conservancy. All onsite work was completed in October 2018. The OGCS and DWV Parks are still awaiting the report from BCIT. We look forward to its completion and will make it available to our members when received.

Marr Creek to Brothers Creek Old-Growth Biophysical Study

David Cook continued to direct the Marr Creek to Brothers Creek Old-Growth Biophysical Study in 2019 and along with Alan Bardsley conducted the field work for the study. The work is meant to outline the extent of the old-growth features and record details such as the diameters of the veteran trees. The GPS locations of these 165 measured trees are also recorded. The area is original old-growth forest within the District of West Vancouver between Marr Creek and Brothers Creek. The study area has been precisely defined and it is about two kilometres from east to west at an elevation of approximately 500 metres to 800 metres. The northwest boundary is the transition zone between redcedar and yellow cedar which corresponds more or less to the West Lake Fire Access Road.

For the last five summers plant species have been identified throughout the area and veteran trees (very old and large trees that survived the logging era) have been located and mapped to ascertain hot spots for special study. The plant studies have been completed and the final phase of the veteran tree mapping continues beyond 2019 due to the identification of two additional areas of old-growth Douglas-firs that require recording.

To the best of the knowledge of the OGCS, this West Vancouver old-growth forest area and the Mosquito Creek old-growth forest in the District of North Vancouver are the two largest remaining areas of low-elevation old-growth forest on the North Shore of Burrard

Inlet that are publically accessible. Low elevation refers to those areas lying within the Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic Zone below about 800 metres elevation on the North Shore.

Why this area is important and should be protected for the following reasons:

1. The plant studies have established that this area has about three times the biodiversity of other old-growth areas at comparable elevations on the North Shore.
2. To preserve the ecology of a healthy old-growth forest for research, aesthetic values, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, and the biological services such an ecosystem provides.
3. To preserve an ancient natural area for the education of present and future generations.

David Cook will be working towards a final report to be presented to the OGCS board prior to submission to the District of West Vancouver when the full study is complete. The OGCS will then work with the District to ensure the protection of the area. From the beginning of the project to the end of 2019, 165 old-growth trees have been identified, mapped and tagged. The majority are western redcedars, but there are also some yellow cedars and Douglas-firs.

Randy Stoltmann Interpretive Sign Project

DWV Parks continued work on an interpretive sign celebrating Randy Stoltmann to be placed at the Hollyburn Fir which he discovered in 1985. Initial research into the content of the sign was begun by the OGCS, particularly Katharine Steig in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, the OGCS learned that the Old Brewis Trail was built by Randy and his brother Greg to access the Hollyburn Fir.

Moving into 2020 and 2021, in recognition of Randy's legacy, the OGCS will advocate for and work with stakeholders and interested groups to rename the segment of 'Brewis Trail' from the Hollyburn Fir south to Millstream Trail as the 'Randy Stoltmann Trail'. Thus, hikers up the mountain from the Pinecrest Drive trailhead to the Hollyburn Fir will be on the 'Randy Stoltmann Trail' and the hikers/mountain bikers coming down the mountain from Hollyburn Ridge will continue to use the 'Brewis Trail'. The name change to the 'Randy Stoltmann Trail' will occur at the Hollyburn Fir where the interpretive sign will be located (pending approval by the District of West Vancouver). The section of trail that the OGCS hopes to rename for its founder, Randy Stoltmann is in poor condition and needs improved definition. It is also currently unmarked so the OGCS will work with the District to improve this portion of trail and its markings.

The OGCS will update members when the Randy Stoltmann Interpretive sign progresses.

Other Work in 2019

In early 2019, Paul Hundal began working on a brief history of the OGC and the OGCS that he submitted as a Wiki page. A Wiki page that can be accessed on the internet has to be supported by corroborating documentation. Paul will be resubmitting additional verifying information for the Wiki in 2020. At which time we will await approval of the Wiki site before it can be made visible to the public.

In July, the OGCS directors sent a letter to the District of West Vancouver Mayor and Council expressing the concern of the Society regarding the proposed tree bylaw and the necessity of including protection for eagle perch trees especially Douglas-firs which have the strong branches needed to support hunting eagle parents.

Alan Bardsley started using Mailchimp to improve privacy protection for members and increased efficiency for OGCS email communications.

District of West Vancouver

The OGCS directors are grateful to Corinne Ambor and Kari Pocock for sharing their expertise with us at our board meetings. We thank both for their dedication to our Conservancy and for giving up their cherished Wednesday evenings to join us each month.

With the greatest of thanks to our highly valuable and long-serving directors, Hugh Hamilton and Herb Storm

We want to recognize the tremendous service over many years from two directors that are departing this year. Herb Storm is a founding director who contributed greatly to the writing of our constitution in 2006 and served for many years as our treasurer and as Parliamentarian at our meetings.

Hugh Hamilton first joined the board in 2008 and served two terms as president. He freely shared his considerable forestry knowledge and inspired us with his passion for old-growth. Hugh's greatest contribution was creating the summer guided tours of the Conservancy. The tours are his legacy and have become the core of the society's public engagement.

OGCS Newsletters #15 and #16

A big thank you to Paul Hundal for writing the 2019 newsletters.

OGCS Minutes

Alan Bardsley deserves thanks for his detailed notes and minutes of all board meetings. Alan's work organizing OGCS tours and communicating with members is invaluable to our Society. Thanks, as well to Katharine Steig for continuing to offer details to enhance the integrity of all minutes.

Where We Meet Each Month

Thank you to Katharine Steig for continuing to host the monthly OGCS directors' meetings.

Super-Duper Monitor

Forget hallway monitors: the OGC monitor, Marshall Bauman is a treasure with or without a hall pass. His camera is his outdoor pass to keeping the Conservancy safe. Thank you, Marshall!

Plans for 2020:

2020 is the 30 Year Anniversary of the Golf Course Referendum!

November 17, 1990 was the referendum date that saved what is now the Old Growth Conservancy from a fate whereby the only woods remaining would be the Woods golf clubs themselves along with irons, wedges and putters. We will send out anniversary celebration details closer to the date and hope that you will join us! As well, we will contact you with any ideas/plans to make this occasion especially important. Please feel free to contact us at ogcs.wc@gmail.com if you have ideas you'd like to contribute for the celebration. The OGCS anticipates that Paul Hundal will present a brief history of the fight to save the old-growth from the golf course development and the work that led to the establishment of the Conservancy.

Tours Outside the Conservancy

As mentioned above, Paul Hundal will guide the following trips with a view to the history of logging in West Vancouver: Lighthouse Park on Sunday, July 5 and Nelson Canyon-Whyte Lake on Sunday, July 19. These trips will also be advertised in the North Shore News.

Summer Trips into Conservancy

Guided tours into the Old Growth Conservancy for 2020 will take place on Saturday, August 22, Wednesday, August 26, Saturday, August 29, Sunday, September 13, Thursday, September 17 and Saturday, September 19. **If you have an interest or background in biology, ecology, botany or forestry--please let us know if you are interested in becoming a tour leader.**

Marr Creek to Brothers Creek Old-Growth Forest Biophysical Study

David Cook and Alan Bardsley will continue to tag and map veteran trees. They've tagged 165 old-growth trees since the project first began and Alan will continue the fieldwork to include the two additional areas that were identified as containing old-growth Douglas-firs.

Randy Stoltmann Interpretive Sign and Trail Renaming Project

The OGCS will continue to assist the DWV in 2020 and 2021 regarding the interpretive sign and the OGCS plans to work with the District and stakeholders regarding a potential renaming of a portion of the 'Brewis Trail' for the founder of the trail, Randy Stoltmann.

Bridge Festival and Coho Festival

We will see you at these 2020 festivals!

Ongoing Monitoring

Marshall continues monitoring the Conservancy this year.

Plan to Digitize OGCS Historical Documents

Plans will begin to digitize and log many of the historical documents and records that Katharine Steig has kept safe over the years.

Website

Check out ogcs.ca for updated news of guided tours and other pieces of interest throughout the year.

Congratulations

Congratulations to David Cook for receiving the District of North Vancouver Heritage Award for his excellent work on old-growth forests and ecosystems in the District of North Vancouver and across the North Shore. David received his award the evening of Tuesday, February 25.

Special Thanks

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the Directors, especially Hugh and Herb for their extraordinary years of service, and WV District's Corinne Ambor and Kari Pocock for their dedication to the conservation and educational work of the OGCS. And, thank you to each of you for joining us at our AGM and for your support as members of the OGCS.

Thank you,

Karen Marzocco, OGCS President