

Old Growth Conservancy Society Newsletter

July 2012 – December 2012

The initial newsletter from the Old Growth Conservancy Society covered the January - June 2012 period. This newsletter will cover the period up to the end of December 2012. There were a number of items in May and June of the previous newsletter which we will follow up in this newsletter to provide continuity of the events.

1. Parks Master Plan (PMP):

The OGCS was very active with the PMP in early May and June and put in a number of submissions to the Working Group and attended the Open Houses on February 29th and March 6th as reported in the January to June newsletter. The final draft of the Parks Master Plan was approved by Council on June 18th 2012. The Directors of the OGCS would like to thank Alan Bardsley on his great work and diligence in serving on the Working Group and keeping us abreast of the status of the Plan.

2. Interpretive Sign for the Conservancy Crossing:

OGCS Directors have continued work on an old growth interpretive sign to be placed near a large old growth redcedar at the viewing area off the Conservancy Crossing (CC) trail. The overall theme for the sign has been determined and many photos have been taken to show key features of old growth forests. In October a photographer from the District of West Vancouver accompanied us to the Conservancy, taking many shots of various scenes, trees, snags and fallen logs. We are now examining her photos as well as those of Marshall Bauman and others in order to make a final decision for the sign. We have also decided to create an interpretive sign for the CC trailhead to provide information on the Conservancy's social history. Progress in completing the signage task has been delayed by our focus on the ongoing Black Creek project, but work on the interpretive signage will be renewed in early 2013.

3. OGCS Website:

The OGCS website became public in June and since then Miles Hume, with help from other Directors, has made huge improvements to the site. The 2012 Community Day report and photos; links to Terry Taylor's blog, and David Cook's Nature Vancouver trips were posted along with field trips and other coming events. The website continues to be changed and updated frequently, so it is well worth members taking a good look at it. See: <http://ogcs.ca>

4. Community Day and Coho Festival:

Directors started planning for Community Day in March when they received an invitation to participate which required that the fee for entering would be \$40. As a result Directors of the OGCS and other Stewardship groups met with Deputy CAO Brent Leigh, to argue that stewardship groups should not have to pay the participation fee. The result was that the fee was cancelled for stewardship groups. On Saturday, June 2, the OGCS joined other environmental groups under a 20x20 tent just inside the Ambleside entrance. This very favourable site attracted many people passing by to attend the ceremonies. Our display was open to the public from 11:30 am to 4:00 pm.

It turned out to be a very busy and enjoyable day. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who came to help at the display tables and talk to our visitors. The OGCS also had a display at the Coho Festival at Ambleside Park on Saturday, Sept. 8th, and was again able to provide visitors with information about the Conservancy and other West Vancouver old growth areas and help them learn how to identify native conifers.

5. West Vancouver/Cypress Liaison Group (WVCLG):

The many stakeholders in the WVCLC who are active in Cypress Provincial Park and Hollyburn Ridge area met on June 6th to share information regarding the mountainside. The twice-yearly WVCLG meetings are chaired by Corinne Ambor, Manager, Parks Planning and Community Stewardship at the DWV. Attendees included representatives from OGCS, North Shore Wetland Partners, West Vancouver Streamkeeper Society, Friends of Cypress, Hollyburn Ridge Association, Hollyburn Heritage Society, North Shore Hikers and North Shore Mountain Bike Association. Bob Sokol, Director of Planning, and Geoff Croll from British Pacific Properties also attended. The group met again on October 3. Hugh Hamilton represented the OGCS and presented a summary of what happened at the Black Creek Diversion Project carried out by the West Vancouver Engineering Department. John Mc Mahon also attended and commented on the project. The next meeting will be June 5th 2013.

6. Black Creek Dam Project:

At the end of April, 2012, two directors of the OGCS discovered that the District 's Engineering Department had entered into an old growth stand and developed an initial road bed for the purpose of accessing the Black Creek dam and carrying out rehabilitation work on the water pipe. The clearing work had been conducted in the fall of 2011. This was a devastating find. As a result the directors concerned contacted the Director of Engineering and arranged a meeting with him on May 17th to advise him of our alarm and distress. Since that time a number of OGCS Directors have attended meetings with Engineering staff, have taken Councillors on trips to the site, and have met with the Mayor. Your directors have put as much pressure as we can on the District to find the reasons for the tragic error, one in which many old growth trees were felled including Douglas fir 700 years old. You may well have seen the articles in the North Shore News on June 23rd and July 15th both of which gave a good account of what happened in the Black Creek project, but they did not provide the whole story, nor did they provide the five recommendations that were put forward by the stewardship groups at the major meeting of divisional staff, contractors and consultants on July 5th. We have been working on this continuously but have yet much to do to see that the District understands the gravity of the error, takes steps to ensure the public that this type of mistake never happens again, and will keep building relationships in the community between staff, stewardship groups, and residents.

In order to follow up on the initiative that we started in May and which has been ongoing since then we have presented our story to Brent Richter (NSN). The story by Brent Richter was published in the January 9th edition of the North Shore News. The article notes that the five recommendations we made at the July 5th meeting and later presented to the Mayor, "- - have either been adopted or in the process of being adopted - -". We hope that you will read this article in the NSN so that you can appreciate the position we have taken and that we will continue to take with the District. See the following link for the January 9 article:

<http://www.nsnews.com/search/search.html?q=vw+groups+cautiously+OK+old-growth+plan>

The District had recommended that funds from the sale of the timber be directed to the OGCS. However, at the request of the OGCS, it has been arranged that any such funds be directed to the West Vancouver Community Foundation from which funds may be drawn by OGCS and West Vancouver Streamkeepers for environmental and educational projects. In November the District posted the position for Manager of Environment and Sustainability, a permanent full time job. This is one of the five recommendations that were made at the July 5th meeting and later to the Mayor.

7. Nature Vancouver/ Old Growth Conservancy Field Trip – August 12, 2012:

There were 16 gathered at Quarry Lookout at 10:00 am to take part in David Cook's hike up the Trans-Canada Trail (TCT) and then round the Old Growth Conservancy (OGC) and back to the Quarry. The walk passed through a part of the OGC in the southwest corner where the TCT passes through the Conservancy. A stop here gave participants the opportunity to identify plants in the open area near the power lines, to examine old growth redcedar (600 - 900 years old), old growth tree canopy structure and stand characteristics. After a lunch at the west entrance to the Cypress Mountain works yard we went through the eastern part of the OGC on the Conservancy Crossing trail. South of the Conservancy the group went through an immature stand (70 - 90 years old) and this gave participants the chance to compare the vegetation under the immature stands with that of the old growth stands. It was a wonderfully instructive 3 hour trip.

8. Parking Lot 5 and Dumping:

The dumping of all kinds of refuse has been a problem at Parking Lot 5 (PL 5) for some time, so in May 2012 Katharine Steig initiated discussions with BC Parks Senior Ranger Rob Wilson to arrange for a meeting of all parties involved in PL5 with a goal of stopping all dumping. On June 11th Hugh chaired a meeting comprised of Directors of OGC, Corinne Ambor (WV Parks); Rob Wilson (BCP); Lyon Coull (Cypress Mountain) and Mark Kachaluba (WV Parks). A good discussion all round was followed by a decision to install a gate subject to approval by Larry Syroishko, BC Parks Area Supervisor. It is a credit to all that the gate was approved by BC Parks and installed by Cypress Mountain on July 13. Prior to the gate installation DWV staff used a backhoe to remove yard trimmings and other debris dumped down the southwest bank of PL5. Alan Bardsley advised the North Shore Mountain Bike Association, PL5's main users, about the change in parking lot arrangements. Cypress Mountain has now removed the gate for the winter in order to carry out regular snow removal. It will be reinstalled in the spring. Marshall Bauman who has monitored the many dumpings over the past few years will now no longer have to carry out this duty.

9. Ira Sutherland Presentation:

Ira Sutherland (UBC Ancient Forest Committee) made a presentation entitled "The Great Vancouver Rain Forest" to a combined audience of the OGCS and the Lighthouse Park Preservation Society (LPPS) at the Phyl Munday House in Lighthouse Park on August 14th. This was a well attended talk followed by an active question period at the conclusion of his presentation. Many visitors to the Park also joined the audience. This presentation was initiated through a visit by David Cook and Marshall Bauman on a field trip to the old growth areas at UBC, organized by Ira Sutherland.

10. Upper Lands Working Group (ULWG):

The Terms of Reference for the ULWG were approved by WV Council on July 23rd. Alan Bardsley, OGCS Director, is a member of this nine-member Working Group. OGCS Director Bruce McArthur is also attending meetings as a member of the public. One of the items to be addressed by the ULWG is the consideration of allowing development in an area above 1,200 ft elevation in exchange for protection of environmentally sensitive lands below this elevation. All ULWG meetings are open to the public. Both Alan and Bruce will keep the OGCS informed on the Working Group's progress.

11. Invasive Plant Species Strategy Working Group:

This Working Group was set up in October after Council received a report on "Invasive Plant Species – First Steps". Applications for the Working Group were advertised with a closing date of November 16th. On December 15th it was announced that Nora Gambioli would be the Council representative for this group and that Dan Henegar and Corinne Ambor will be the staff liaisons. Hugh Hamilton will serve on the Working Group with seven other community members.

12. Old Growth Conservancy – Access Policy:

In May, Directors held a discussion on how to increase interest in old growth and the OGCS while maintaining an Access Policy as presented in the *Strategy for Protection*. A special meeting to discuss this issue was proposed. Hugh sent out a discussion paper to Directors in September and a special meeting was held on November 28th to discuss possible access policy changes. At the special meeting a number of background documents were reviewed and well thought out points were discussed. The outcome of the meeting was that the OGCS would develop plans for visits in the later (drier) part of the summer (July, August and September) with parties of up to eight people and led by one or more of the Directors. The District supports this concept as carrying out visits in the manner suggested would not conflict with the OGC *Strategy for Protection* guidelines.

The rationale for these changes to the access policy will be presented at the AGM for discussion and approval of a one-year trial period.

13. Field Trip Templates:

David Cook and Katharine Steig have been working since the summer to construct templates to set up and record information on field trips. We now have two templates, an Old Growth Area Template and a Field Trip Report Template. These templates will be useful in providing information on such items as the location of the trip, the weather, the purpose of the trip, details of the area to be viewed, and in maintaining detailed reports on the nature of the trips. The Eagle Lake field trip on July 17th was the first one to put the new templates to good use.

14. Recent Snow/Wind Damage in OGC:

On January 2, Marshall Bauman reported that a large number of trees had recently fallen in the OGC. We have since learnt that many have come down elsewhere on the mountainside as well. Directors are currently assessing the situation and will provide a report at a later time.

Important Dates for your Calendar

February 16th Annual Winter Snowshoe Trip

February 20th. Annual General Meeting of the Old Growth Conservancy Society

Hugh Hamilton, President

January 17th 2013

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