

South Jubilee News

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BOWKER CREEK WATERSHED PLAN – MOVES FORWARD

Take a stroll along Bowker Creek and you'll be surprised what you might find. Although it drains one of the most highly urbanized watersheds in the Capital Regional District (CRD), sections of the creek offer a unique retreat from the noise and traffic of the city and provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.

From its headwaters at the University of Victoria, the 8-kilometre main channel flows south through the Shelbourne Valley, meandering through neighbourhoods in Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay before entering the ocean near the Oak Bay marina. A short tributary flows out of the Cedar Hill Park and Golf Course. The creek feeds several wetlands and connects a number of existing parks, schoolyards and public facilities including the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre and Vancouver Island Cancer Centre. All of the South Jubilee neighbourhood drains into Bowker Creek. It's our watershed.

Over the years much of original creek channel has

either been straightened or enclosed in underground pipes. Today about 2.5 kilometers are still above ground. The creek remains almost completely open from Richmond Road downstream to the ocean at Beach Drive in Oak Bay.

During 2002 and 2003, the CRD convened a *Forum* including residents, stewardship groups, community associations, and local and senior governments to craft a new vision for the Bowker Creek watershed. The *Forum* also developed a watershed plan that promotes creek renewal including public awareness, habitat and biodiversity values, water quality, stormwater management, and greenways connections.

Thanks to the support of staff, community members and elected officials in Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay, implementation of the plan is moving ahead. A steering committee is in place with support and leadership provided by the CRD's Bowker Creek coordinator Lehna Malmkvist. Interpretative signage is



Bowker Creek at the BC Hydro property off Haultain

nearing completion and partnership funding for a hydrologic study is currently being explored. The creek also provides exciting greenways opportunities that complement municipal initiatives and the Regional Blue/Green Spaces Strategy.

For more information on Bowker Creek, visit www.bowkercreek.org or contact:

- Rob Miller, Friends of Bowker Creek Society at 595-6186 or
- Lehna Malmkvist, Bowker Creek Initiative at 360-3302

Did you know:

- Bowker creek is named for John Sylvester Bowker, an American who settled in the area during the 1860s
- Prior to agricultural and urban development, Bowker Creek would have supported populations of coho salmon and cutthroat trout
- A First Nations shell midden adjacent to the creek is at least 2500 years old.
- At 117 meters, the peak of Mt. Tolmie is the highest point in the Bower Creek watershed

If you have any articles or news items to contribute to the next newsletter, contact Liz Hoar – 595-2685

RECYCLING UPDATE

Pacific Mobile Depots announces they will accept two new categories at our monthly plastic collections.

Milk/Soy Cartons & Drink Boxes

Rinse with soap and water /remove any caps

(\$.05 up to 1 litre, \$.10 for 2 litre)

Foil Coffee Bags

Rinse out— \$.01 each

Plastic recycling happens the 2nd Saturday of every month 10 - noon at the corner of Bank and Leighton.

Now, allow me to share a recycling story that touched us. At our December Plastic Collection, a young man turned up for the first time with a small bag of assorted plastic items, a couple of which we don't yet take and handed back to him as we often do. Then his story came out. In spite of the derision heaped on him by his roommates for even bothering with recycling, this young man had come to the collec-

tion on the bus from his home in North Park. With this situation there was no way he could take any of the items-back—it would be double jeopardy. Of course we rescued him from his dilemma.

I have since wondered if these two positions on the value of recycling are reflected in our general population? Of course those of us involved in the process only see one side—ours!

AT SUNDANCE SCHOOL

Sundance Elementary School is planning 2 projects this spring for their Garry Oak Meadow Restoration Project.

On Wednesday January 26, Todd Carnahan representing the Good Neighbourhoods Program from Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) will be spending the day at the school. During the morning he will be presenting an educational session on Garry Oak

Ecosystems in each classroom. In the afternoon, each student will plant camas bulbs (donated by Todd) in 1 or 2 litre milk containers. The bulbs will be forced in the classrooms over the next 3 months.

On April 21, in conjunction with an Earth Day celebration involving guest speakers and activities, the camas flowers will be planted outdoors in

the meadow area behind the split rail fence. Plastic has already been laid out in the meadow to kill the invasive grass and ready the area for planting. We are hoping for a nice show of colour in the meadow this spring.

More to come later on the Sundance Earth Day/Garry Oak Meadow Day.

KASAPI PARK

The vacant lot on the corner of Leighton and Bank has become the project of a student from the University of Victoria, Restoration of Natural Systems program. She will assess the property in terms of its effectiveness as a Garry Oak ecosystem and help the South Jubilee Neighbourhood come up with a restoration plan. Her assessment will involve mapping the lot and

all the living and non-living things on it – rocky outcrops, trees, shrubs, grasses, forbs and even insects. She plans to pull together all the interested people including the Sundance School community, the Victoria College of Art community and the community association to find out our ideas and vision.

Carrying out this plan is contingent on acquiring the prop-

erty which is a long way in the future. But every grandiose plan begins with the first step!

Keep your eyes on the next newsletter (March) for an announcement of the time and place of a meeting to hear about the initial assessment and discuss the future among all interested parties.

BRANCH PICKUP

City of Victoria will begin its annual tree and shrub branch pickup Feb 14th. For more on what's acceptable, visit the City's web site at www.city.victoria.bc.ca and search for Branch pickup.

OLD PAYLESS STATION SITE

Building plans are in the making for the old Payless station site on the corner of Oak Bay Avenue and Davie Street. D'Ambrosio Architects, designers of the Oak Bay Cycle building, say a single storey commercial building for the site is planned for the site. No official review is necessary due to the site zoning but we may get a look at plans next month.