



# The Garry Oak Leaflet

Official Newsletter of the  
Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

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## Annual General Meeting

**Wednesday, March 10, 2010 — 7:30pm to 9:30pm**  
**Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 West Burnside Rd.**

Speaker:

**David Polster — Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area**

Dave Polster, who has been restoring an oak meadow complex beside Somenos Lake, Duncan. "This is a project I have been involved with for about 15 years – mostly trying to keep this rare deep soil Garry oak site in Duncan, BC from becoming a housing development.

After a lot of effort, eventually BC Parks forged a deal with the owner and the site became protected parkland. We didn't want it to become an ecological reserve because we knew that we would need to do some experimenting to develop effective restoration strategies for this and other Garry oak sites, so it remains 'Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area'".

Features of the site are species at risk, including Yellow montane violet (*Viola praemorsa*), and Howell's triteleia (*Triteleia howelli*), evidence of a nearby first nations village, and a surprising number of even-age Garry oaks. Challenges include an encroaching Douglas fir forest on one hand and encroaching modern housing on the other.

Dave is an experienced restorer, including mine and forest sites, and is a member of GOERT's Board, as well as several subordinate Groups. Light refreshments — Old, new, and potential members and guests welcome.



**Join us** — Meet or renew acquaintance with long-time members; Learn about GOMPS' early activities; Update yourself on recent activities; Provide advice to newer members.

## GOMPS' "TEENAGE" BIRTHDAY PARTY

GOMPS celebrated its 17<sup>TH</sup> Birthday Party on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to connect with old, and maybe new, Members and recognise its accomplishments. Twenty-five Members and guests enjoyed a presentation by Dr. Paul Gareau on his role in organising and monitoring the Garry oak inventory project from 199...? to 200...? The purpose was to record the number of Garry oaks per property in the four "core" municipalities: Oak Bay, Victoria, Esquimalt and Saanich, to provide a basis of assessing their distribution and assist governments in planning their management. Each municipality provided maps of properties that volunteers, after training on recognizing Garry oaks vs. other species, used to record the presence, number and relative size (trees under 10 cm. in stem diameter at breast height vs. larger) of Garry oaks visible from the street. The importance of including the "small" trees was to indicate any newer generations that could succeed the prominent mature trees – those most admired, but due to fail, or be removed by our management preferences for other features – in the next decades. Although differences in skill level and interpretation of protocols led to somewhat-inconsistent records, this program showed clearly that Garry oaks are clustered, rather than spread evenly, and that few young trees could be seen from the street, likely indicating that our landscape could change drastically by 2050 or 2100 if efforts to establish a young forest did not commence soon. An arborist familiar with the situation in Oak Bay (home to thousands of Garry oaks) stated that 600 of that species had failed or been removed for housing, etc. in the preceding decade. The maps were offered to their source municipalities, some of which used them to create a level in their inventory for consultation during rezoning and building applications. More recently, they can assist these governments in formulating better tree-protection laws and Urban Forest plans.



Our second speaker was Evelyn Hamilton, B. C. Ministry of Forests and Lands, addressing

"Climate Change and Garry Oak's Future". She reviewed the evidence: increasing average (and high summer) temperatures, decreasing glacier and arctic sea ice levels, - where the impacts are stronger than in our latitudes – more-serious forest fires and, especially in BC, devastation by pests, such as the mountain pine beetle. High-elevation areas will be strongly affected, resulting in displacement northward of native species such as Alaska cypress and mountain hemlock. They created the forest background during the Winter Olympics at Whistler and Cypress Bowl. She outlined the likelihood of further impacts by invading organisms, such as insects and drought-tolerant plants and the need to adapt our land-management practices to withstand the increasing stresses on our landscapes. In general, Garry oak should be among the better-adapted species in this future landscape, increasing the need for a concerted program of growing and planting our only native oak species.

During the refreshment break we enjoyed drinks and “nibblies” supplied gratis by Starbucks at the Tillicum Centre, as well as holding a draw for items, contributions from several sources - in particular CDs of all GOMPS Newsletters from the first issue, and others. One special item, a cartoon donated earlier by Adrian Raeside, depicting the too-frequent fate of Garry oaks in urbania (removal), was raffled, drawing a \$200 bid by Hal Gibbard. **Many** thanks.



That was followed by presentations of Certificates of Appreciation to Founding Members Dr. Pierre d'Estrube', Tom Gillespie and (in absentia) Dr. Briony Penn, plus Dr. Paul Gareau and Hal Gibbard. All had been approved (some deception was involved) at the previous Board meeting.

**MEMBERSHIP AND DONATIONS**

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Membership Dues:  
Individual \$15                      Family \$20

Please complete this membership form and mail along with cheque to:  
GOMPS, Suite A 954, Queens Avenue, Victoria BC, V8T 1M6.

Thank you for your support.

Membership Fees Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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