

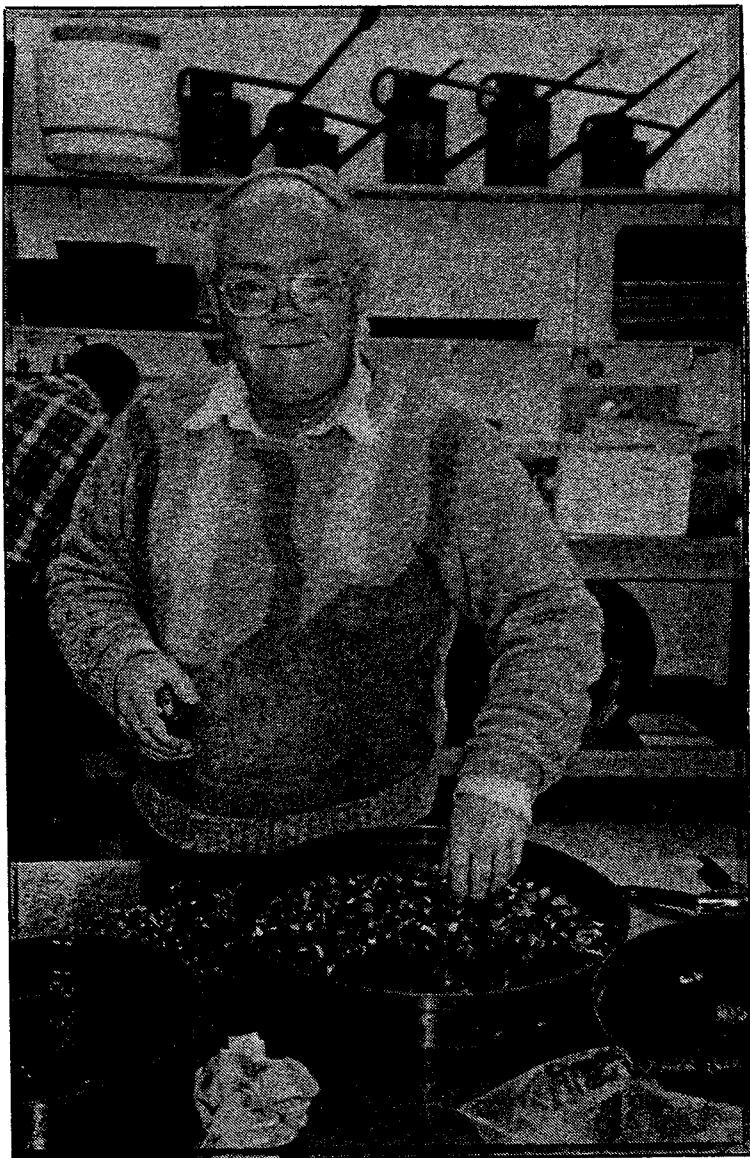
# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

January 1996, Volume 3, Number 1

## Garry oak preservation wish list for 1996

It is the time to ponder new beginnings and reflect on 1995. I could be out pulling broom instead, on this rainy Sunday, as Eric has organized a broom pull on Mount Tolmie for today. He organized one yesterday, as well, and I met a woman last night who participated. She is not a member of GOMPS yet, she says, but she likes to pull broom and told me she has planted a few Garry oaks and camas bulbs in her yard. I am not making any New Year's resolutions except to get out to a few more broom pulls and find a bit more time to work on my garden.



**NEW OAKS FOR 1996.** Tom Gillespie clips the roots of already sprouted acorns in preparation for planting them in containers at the Pacific Forestry Centre greenhouse.

Photo by Katie Stewart

From my front window I have nice view of the city, the straits beyond and the Olympic Peninsula mountains. My neighbourhood has many mature Garry oaks and I can see the Garry oak stand at the Cridge Centre. I wonder, though, how long our Garry oaks and meadows will survive.

The highway widening continues; north of the Payless gas station a swath of Garry oaks has been cut and the limbs have been piled for burning. I rescued a small piece of trunk, approximately 200 years old, to put in the garden, and I found one camas bulb. I saw two people out digging on Christmas Eve day, so maybe more bulbs have been rescued.

In 1995 the Christmas Hill development was finally approved, with some loss of Garry oak habitat and some protected. This year we are faced with more decreased Garry oak habitat. Within the last few months the board of directors has been contacted about five different areas slated for development with the GVRD. They all contain Garry oaks, and four of them contain at least some remnant meadows.

I was asked by a reporter for *Monday* magazine if I thought the Lotbiniere property should be protected and I said, of course, that as far as I was concerned, all remaining Garry oak meadows, not just the Lotbiniere land, should be protected.

So I have been writing letters to politicians of every stripe but I know the bottom line is — who will pay for these lands and how, in this time of budgetary restraint. And how can anyone determine which land is the most valuable?

The areas that are already protected are fragmented and encroached upon by human and animal activities and aggressive, non-native species.

I went to the annual general meeting of the Friends of Beacon Hill Society in the Fall. The featured speaker, Dr. Chris Brayshaw, retired from the Royal B.C. Museum, knows the location of many rare native plants in the park. He said there had been two specimens of one species and they had now disappeared.

I do not mean to sound pessimistic; I am not. Otherwise I would not be a GOMPS member. I know there are lots of people like me in the GVRD; we just have to become more vociferous. We have a lot to accomplish and we have to try.

I have made my personal Garry oak meadow wish list for 1996:

THAT

- The City of Victoria will finally enact a comprehensive tree protection bylaw;
- These remnant Garry oak meadows will be protected and not developed: three lots on Lotbiniere Avenue, three city-owned

*continued on back page*

# Exploring Alternatives for Rogers Farm

## Rogers Farm is an agricultural gem worth preserving

One of Saanich's few agricultural remnants, currently in transition, is the area surrounding Christmas Hill, in the triangle bounded by the Pat Bay Highway, McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street. The summit of the hill is part of the Swan Lake - Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary and well



known to many Garry oak meadow enthusiasts.

Rogers School is nestled between the sanctuary, the South Island Development Corporation (SIDC) lands and Rogers Farm. Its site is truly sensational and the school's reputation for integrating with its unique environment is growing. Neighbours and the school's Environment Club believe that it is well worth the effort required to preserve this beautiful setting.

The basic premise is to try to preserve Rogers Farm as a viable, environmentally sensitive agricultural endeavour. Many of the Rogers School neighbours, children, teachers and parents believe that having grazing cows across the fence from the school yard is precious. The farm as a whole is truly exquisite to behold and a gem within the surrounding urbanization. It is some 8 hectares in size (20 acres), with a thick Douglas-fir - Garry oak belt along the southern margin, a vegetable garden, rustic farm buildings and grazing meadows. I will present some ideas for

the farm's future below, but first some background on the area.

## Saanich has evolved from a rural area to a city

Rogers Farm is located in Saanich, which has evolved from a largely rural area to the largest, most populous city in the Capital Regional District. While Saanich still consists of a mixed bag of residential neighbourhoods, institutions, and agricultural land, the latter has been disappearing fast. Some areas, such as the Blenkinsop Valley, remain protected by the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), but development pressures, taxes and the high value of the land, have led to the systematic disappearance of most of the smaller farms.

## Some area development planned in conjunction with residents of Saanich

The area was recently the focus of an intense development analysis and an environmental value study, the Christmas Hill Slopes Action Area Plan. (See Sharon Waite's article in GOMPS's June 1995 Newsletter.) This plan recognised that several parcels of land on the slopes were subject to imminent development. Developers, local residents and city planners evaluated the neighbourhood and came to a reasonable compromise on what

should happen in the area. On the heels of this study have come three zoning change requests from major land owners: South Island Development Corp. (SIDC), for the areas to the southwest; the Hutchinson land north of Rogers Avenue; and the Rogers/Fatt family for the still operating farm immediately north of the sanctuary.

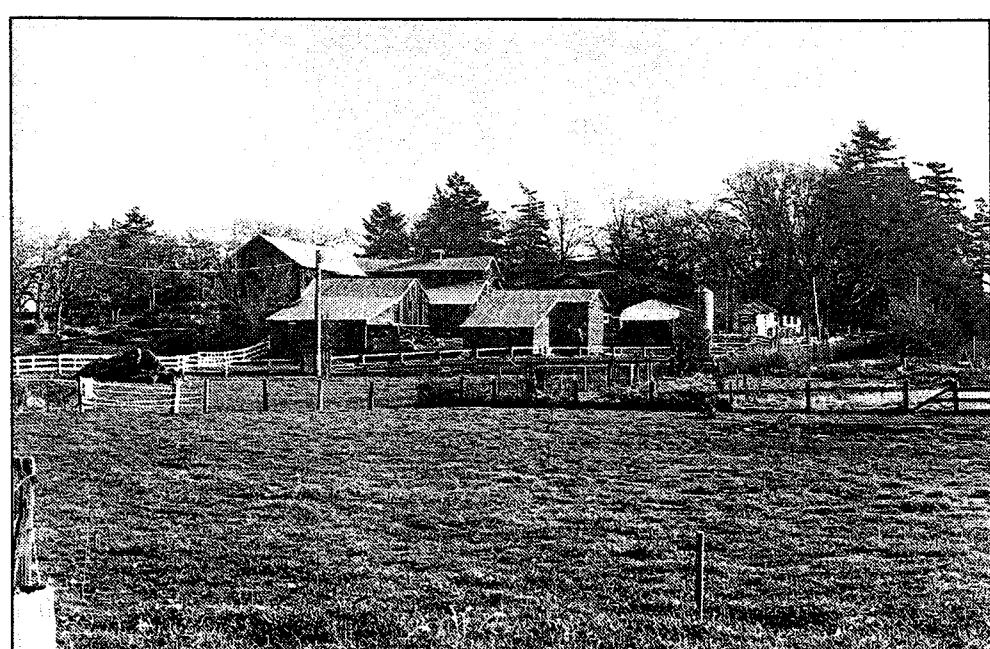
## How can we develop a workable solution to preserve this small farm?

The initial thoughts led to the concept of some sort of educational centre — a place for city children to see rural activities. Upon further consideration, however, it became evident that there are many options that may fulfill the basic intent of preserving Rogers Farm as a viable agricultural operation.

A critical element of any plan will certainly be the acquisition of the lands, and the resources to follow through with any concept. Local politicians may be persuaded to support an attractive scheme, but are not likely to put up significant funds (especially in light of the loss of potential taxes from development).

School Districts are under severe pressures right now and could be counted on for little more than moral support.

So it can be assumed that the millions



ROGERS FARM is unusual — a working farm in an urban setting.

Photos by Harald Wolf

of dollars needed to acquire and operate the farm would have to come from a combination of foundations and private and corporate donations. This stipulates that a very clear and viable vision for the property be in place.

## Food production may move closer to home as world food supplies dwindle

Many organizations, futurists, and statisticians believe that the exploding world population and dwindling agricultural base will lead to a situation where food production will once again become much more central to our existence — something not to be taken for granted as most of western citizens do now. Part of this scenario is to encourage the return of urban land to food production.

Even if such a situation were unlikely, there are other trends in food production and consumption that deserve attention. Many consumers are increasingly interested in, or concerned about, how food is grown or raised, processed and delivered.

## Possible options for the Rogers Farm

People interested in the preservation of the Farm have discussed a number of options including some sort of demonstration farm or education centre. The focus might be on how food production should happen. It might entail the teaching of organic, sustainable methods to



UPLAND VIEW on the farm.

gardeners or small-scale farmers.

Other concepts that have been mentioned include:

- Permaculture — which is about self-reliance, growing food, and building creative, beautiful, energy-efficient structures from local materials.
- Biodiversity
- Community supported agriculture
- Holistic resource management (HRM)
- Greenspaces / greenways

- Wildlife corridors
- Heritage crop experimentation
- Edible landscaping
- Wind / solar power

Any proposal must integrate well with the surrounding nature sanctuary, the school and the existing residents. Though the neighbourhood is used to quiet cows, it would not take kindly to significant smells, noise or the attraction of major traffic.

## We need your ideas about preserving Rogers Farm

This article is intended to stimulate participation in the development of a plan for the Rogers Farm. To develop and make a great solution happen, we will need the ideas, time, energy and, eventually, money of many people and organizations. We would like feedback from anyone who thinks they have something to contribute. We plan to have a brain-storming session in mid-February, at which time we will explore any and all ideas and scenarios, as well as gauge the community's support.

For further information or to pass along your ideas, please contact Harald Wolf at 479-9489 / email: ux363@FreeNet.Victoria.BC.CA or Yves Parizeau at Rogers School at 727-0188.

— Harald Wolf



GARRY OAKS abut a fenced field on the farm.

LEGEND

GARRY OAK ECOSYSTEM

H - High priority  
M - Medium priority  
L - Low priority  
S - Specimen trees

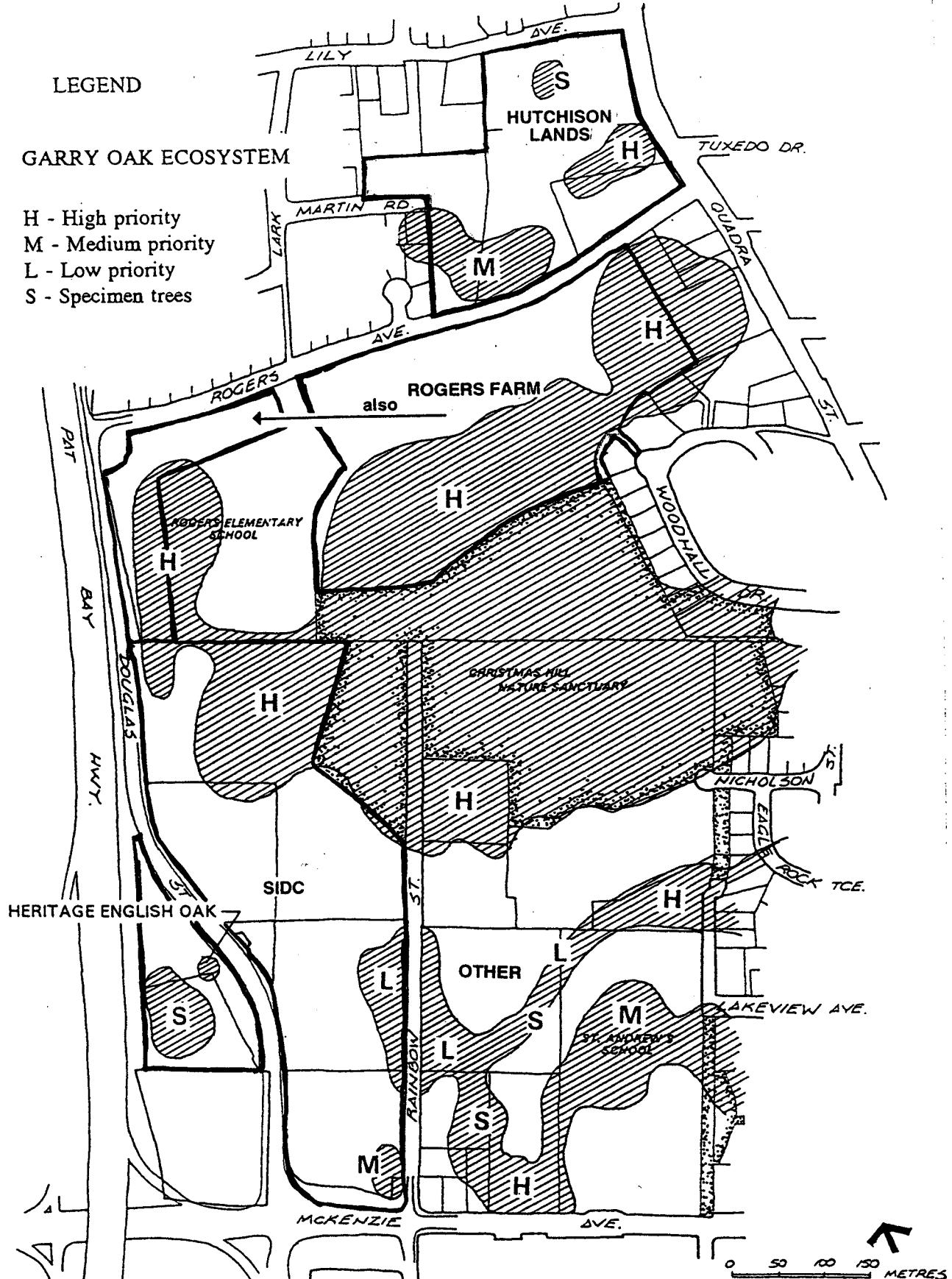


Diagram taken from Christmas Hill Slopes Action Area Plan, prepared by the District of Saanich's planning department, January 1995

FIGURE 4  
SITE ANALYSIS - VEGETATION

# Christmas Hill, downhill

As the New Year is traditionally a time for reflection and assessment of important matters, let us now review the progress — no, the progression — of developments affecting that delicious refuge from the surrounding flood tide of humanity known as Christmas Hill.

## SIDC lands

SIDC lands are the lower, southwest slope of Christmas Hill, bounded by McKenzie Avenue, the Patricia Bay Highway, and Rainbow Street. Saanich municipal council gave final approval to SIDC's development proposal in September, and the clock began to tick on the 10-month opportunity to add another 0.8 hectares to the summit nature reserve for \$1.1 million.

Times passes, but so far there has been no visible progress toward its purchase. Where is the leadership to put together a deal?

## Hutchison lands

Hutchison lands are 5.2 hectares owned by the late Bruce Hutchison, now in the hands of his descendants; they are bounded by Quadra Street and Rogers and Lily avenues.

This powerful family has presented a development proposal to Saanich and — amazingly — on the advice of the planning department, Saanich council declined to order a full Environmental and Social Review (ESR). That decision was being appealed, (no thanks to councillors Garrison and Williams, who voted to let the decision stand) and council sent the matter back to committee to be reconsidered.

These lands were considered by the Christmas Hill Slopes Action Area Plan, and contain significant numbers of Garry oaks. The mystery is why anyone would think an ESR should not be required.

This land is important because it contains two groves of oaks, one of which retains its native shrub and herb understory. (The other, on a rocky outcrop, has largely been overrun by that other alien scourge of the natives, Himalayan blackberry.) There are also three magnificent specimen oaks which stand proud against the sky in a field on Lily Avenue.

You can see the latter trees without trespassing, from the street. Look on them while you can, for they are passing and we shall not see their like again.

The development proposed by the Hutchison family is for 98 units: 40 townhouses and 58 single family dwellings. Of those only one — Bruce Hutchison's home — sits on a lot approximately the size of those envisioned by the Christmas Hill Slopes Study Plan.

Of the remaining 57 lots, 26 are to be zoned for 6,000 sq. ft. (or 60 x 100 feet) and the remaining 32 will be "small lots" of

between 3,000 and 4,000 square feet, or slightly larger than townhouse size. To put these numbers in perspective, think of the lot sizes and densities in James Bay.

Why should density be of concern to GOMPS members? In order to build to the projected density in the Hutchison subdivision, one oak grove will be destroyed. Those trees that do not have to be cleared for construction will temporarily survive in residents' lawns.

Unfortunately, mature oaks are sensitive to root zone disturbance, changes in underground water flow patterns, and changes in the winter-wet, summer-dry rhythm that is disrupted by irrigation of lawns and gardens. And what chance do the understory native shrubs and herbs stand against the garden centre gleam in a suburbanite's eye?

Moreover, the absence of walking-distance amenities will increase the pollution of the air around Christmas Hill, because of the necessary increase in motorized transport. The nearest shopping area is a kilometre away, guaranteeing most trips will be made by automobile.

The Christmas Hill Slopes Action Area Plan (which has been adopted by council and incorporated into the Local Area Plan) envisaged a process whereby developers could trade amenity for density. It also attempted to be flexible enough to encourage innovative design.

This developer (Ross Meek, of the Hutchison family) has outrageously densified his design. If adopted, his plan increases density from the 10-12 units per hectare allowed in the Local Area Plan, to approximately 20 units per hectare. And the amenity he proposes in return? A mere four per cent additional public open space, above the five per cent he is required to dedicate for parkland.

What happens next to this proposal? That depends on whether the appeal for an ESR is successful. If it fails, Saanich council has merely asked for a traffic impact study. When the developer has completed whatever studies are required, the proposal and impact study(ies) are reviewed by the planners. From there the matter goes before the advisory planning commission, a murky body appointed by council whose meetings are closed to the public.

The first opportunity for public comment in the process will come at the next stage, when the plans are considered by council's committee of the whole. The committee may vote to reject the proposal or send it to public hearing. This matter may reach these final steps as early as March if an ESR is not required.

## Rogers Farm

The Rogers family has submitted a development plan proposing 6,000 sq. ft. lots over the entire remnant of this ancient farm,

including all the Garry oak areas. So far as the writer is aware, they have not proposed any amenity in returning for doubling the density above the standard set forth in the Local Area Plan.

Terms of reference for an ESR for Rogers Farm have been prepared. So far no ESR, which is the responsibility of the developer to conduct.

## All the land around Christmas Hill

The Local Area Plan (North Quadra), which incorporates the Christmas Hill Slopes Action Area Plan, goes to public hearing January 30. The LAP is available from Saanich planning department or clerk's office now.

The public hearing is an opportunity for the public outside the neighbourhood to remind the council how important Christmas Hill is to the broader community.

In a year when council members face two elections, the message such support will send should be deafening. Please ... attend and speak if you can, or write if you can't.

There are other sites on Christmas Hill with oak woodland besides those reviewed in this article that are under development pressure. Some battles are over; others have yet to begin.

— Sharron Waite

## One vision

Is there anyone else out there besides me who is dismayed at the lack of action on saving that which can be saved with the application of dollars? Where is the Nature Conservancy? The Sierra Club? The rest of the environmental establishment?

I work for a paycheque every couple of weeks, like most of our members. I certainly don't have the resources of a Hutchison heir. But it seems to me that some of my money spent preserving whatever we can manage to save of Christmas Hill is put to much better use than acquiring another consumer thing I can live without.

So I will begin, by making a personal pledge of, say, \$100 toward a fund to buy more of Christmas Hill. If enough of you join me, perhaps we can shame the politicians and the environmental "establishment" into joining us.

If you will help, don't send any money or cheques now. Instead send or E-mail GOMPS your name, address, phone number and amount you are willing to donate, to the addressees in this newsletter. Let's see how far we can go. After all, mighty oaks from little acorns grow.

— Sharron Waite

# Board vacancy presents leadership opportunity

As membership development chair, it is my duty to identify the personnel needs of the society and recruit members to respond to these needs. On March 21, 1996, the society will hold its fourth annual general meeting. At that time, five directors elected in 1995 will be half way through their two-year terms. However, the terms of two other directors — Katie Stewart and myself — will expire, creating two vacancies on the board of directors.

In addition to the duties of president, Katie Stewart is also responsible for the displays committee as public relations chair, and in her spare time, she prepares our fabulous membership newsletter. She

was appointed director *pro tem* on April 5, 1995, to fill a vacancy on the board until the 1996 annual general meeting.

For my part, I presently have monthly duties as secretary, in addition to coordinating two society projects (Garry Oak Inventory - Victoria Phase; Operation Clean Sweep - Mount Tolmie Park Invasive Plant Removal Project), and monthly production and distribution of our membership newsletter. I was elected to a two-year term as director at the 1994 annual general meeting.

While I cannot speak for Katie, I can now advise you that in order to have more time for my activities at Mount Tolmie

Park, I will not be seeking another term as director of the society at this time. Consequently, after our annual general meeting, the new board will need to reassign my present duties as secretary and membership development chair. With their approval, I will continue with my other project coordination responsibilities.

Our society has come a long way in the last year. It is my parting hope that among our many members, someone will feel inspired to take up the challenge of the future and volunteer to lead our membership in the continuing pursuit of our noble objectives.

— Eric Redekop

## Lotbiniere lots need protection

The City of Victoria has only a few parks with significant Garry oak meadows. Government House, located in the municipality, also has a meadow behind and below the mansion, which is being restored so that the native vegetation is once again thriving. Adjoining this area of the Government House property is Lotbiniere Avenue, where three lots containing over a 100 Garry oaks, were recently surveyed.

The lots had been owned by two sisters who, according to the neighbours, wanted the property made into a bird sanctuary. However, with their deaths, the property was willed to a Dr. William Foster. No-one in the neighbourhood seems to know his intentions regarding the property.

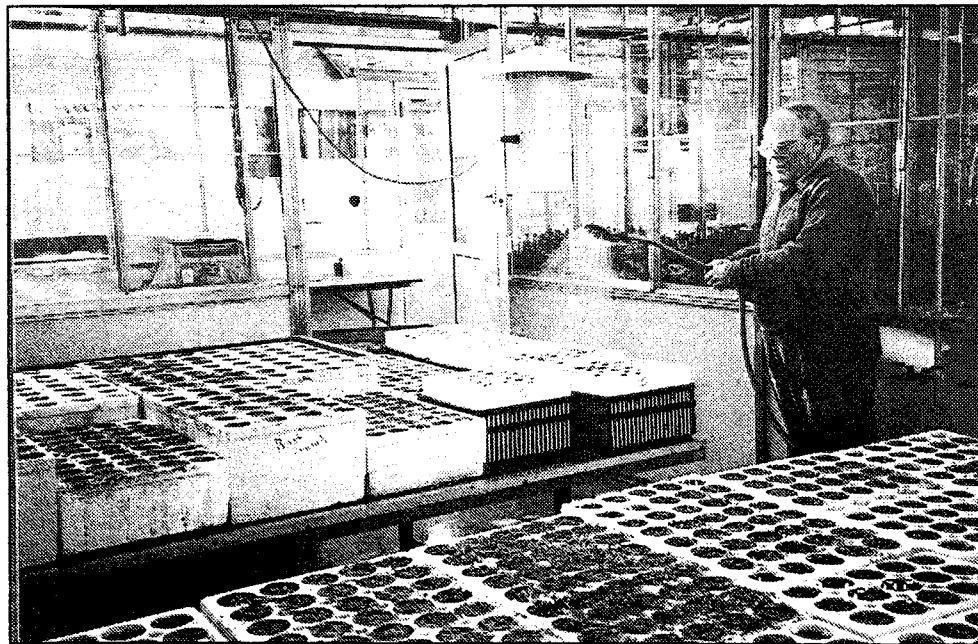
Nearby residents Janet Simpson and Bill Scott noticed the surveyors and contacted the GOMPS board, concerned about the fate of the oaks and the land. Both Tom Gillespie and I walked around one of the lots at different times. I noticed the bird sounds at once and realized that despite the invasive plants on the lot, here was a rare piece of wild land located in an urban area.

Like the City-owned lots on Summit Avenue, which adjoin the water district's Smith Hill reservoir and Summit Park, these lots fit the Capital Regional District's Green Space concept of greenway connecting links, "linear natural areas [which] provide a natural and/or recreational link

with green space core areas or greenway corridors within municipalities. In general, these areas would be of interest to the PCC (Provincial Capital Commission) or to municipalities." (Greenspaces Strategy).

Therefore we need to be contacting members of Victoria City council to enlist their support. Janet and Bill have talked to Bill Turner of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. They are trying to contact Dr. Foster to determine what he has in mind for the lots before they begin an active campaign in their neighbourhood. They will also be writing to David Lam, former Lieutenant-governor of B.C., to try to enlist his support.

— Katie Stewart



TOM GILLESPIE waters newly planted acorns (December 7, 1995) in a greenhouse at the Pacific Forestry Centre.

Photo by Katie Stewart

## CALENDAR

**NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP —**  
**January 18, 7 p.m.** Room A215, Clearihue Building, UVic. Featured speaker: Dr. Adolph Ceska on rare plants of B.C., 8 p.m.

**SOOKE HILLS MULTIMEDIA SLIDE SHOW —** January 18, 7:30 p.m., McPherson Theatre. Admission by donation. If you missed this show in November, catch it now. It's very well done, with narration, music and a theatrical surprise.

**BROOM PULL —** January 21, 1-3 p.m. on Christmas Hill. Meet at the Swan Lake Nature House. Refreshments to follow.

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING —** February 8, 7:30 p.m. at Paul Gareau's, 3503 Camcrest Place, Victoria.

# West Bay Environmental Group intent on saving Salvation Army land

The West Bay Environmental Group was formed in the Spring of 1995 by concerned citizens from the West Bay area of Esquimalt and from all parts of Victoria. With advice from members of the Raging Grannies and those who worked on the West Bay Community Plan, we were able to hold a successful information demonstration on the West Song Way.

During this event, we collected hundreds of signatures and were very pleased to discover that we have many supporters from all over Greater Victoria, including members of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society. It appeared that this event was necessary as a majority of the people were unaware of either the proposed development or the magnitude of this project.

At this point, our mandate is very specific: to lobby for an independent environmental review of the Salvation Army's proposed construction on the property of the former Matson Lodge, construction that has the potential to devour in its entirety the Garry oak meadow area, an area that comprises the very last remaining wild space in the entire Victoria Inner Harbour.

We feel it is important to focus on our campaign for an independent review on the area itself and not on the proposal. This Garry oak meadow is now the home to numerous wildlife, including herons and other birds, otters, numerous flora and fauna; much of this animal and plant life can no longer be found anywhere else in the Victoria Inner Harbour and with the completion of the project as proposed,



**AN INFORMATION MEETING** and petition signing regarding the Salvation Army's development proposal took place at the gazebo on West Bay walkway January 1. Just beyond the background of the trees at the left is the site of the proposed development. The building will be several times the height of the trees and radically alter the view and landscape. (See photo and article in the *Times-Colonist*, December 30, 1995.)

Photo by Katie Stewart

much of it is unlikely to be found there ever again. When a wild space is gone, as past development has shown us, it does not ever come back.

It is clear the Garry oak meadow is a natural gem that Victorians, visitors and animals themselves get a great deal of enjoyment from. Our group is not against development, nor are we against the organization involved; we are simply seeking a review which would determine

the impact of having a project this size built on that land, and for politicians and the public to then act upon the findings of that review.

Anyone wishing more information on the West Bay Environmental Protection Group can contact us at 383-8557 or fax 744-5833.

— Julie Flatt,  
West Bay Environmental Group

## LETTER

*Reply to a letter sent on behalf of Friends of Beacon Hill Park regarding Checkers Pavilion*

**Re: Efforts to preserve Garry oak meadows in the City of Victoria.**

Thank you for your letter of December 28, 1995 addressed to Mayor Cross and members of council expressing your concerns regarding efforts to preserve and enhance Garry oak meadows in the City of Victoria.

Your letter has been forwarded to Mayor Cross and council members for their information. I also forwarded your letter to the director of parks and recreation, and I will ask that he respond to your

concerns regarding the protection of native plant species.

Please note that at the November 9, 1995 Council meeting:

It was moved by Councillor McLean, seconded by Councillor Lunt, that the following be approved as outlined in the report dated September 20, 1995 from the advisory parks and recreation committee:

(1) The new concept drawings for rebuilding the Checkers Pavilion in Beacon Hill Park whereby walls and plant material are removed which screen the facility.

(2) The Sterling Men's Community Asso-

ciation be granted permission to rebuild Checkers Pavilion, retaining the original roof lines.

(3) The issue regarding the extent of concrete pad be reviewed by committee of the whole to ensure that the concrete plan does not extend beyond the existing roof line.

Council has approved the reconstruction of the Checkers Pavilion, and will ensure that the new structure retains its original dimensions.

Thank you for bringing your concerns in this matter to the City's attention.

Robert G. Woodland,  
Administrative Manager

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

#### GOMPS DISPLAYS:

January — Victoria City Hall

February — Department of Transport, adjoining the downtown Public Library  
— Marnie Phillips, 598-8820

### FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

### PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE

**SEEDS/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric at 595-7270 for information.

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Contact project coordinator Eric Redekop at 595-7270.

### NEWSLETTER

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Eric Redekop at 595-7270 or Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to A-954 Queens Ave., Victoria, B.C. V8T 1M6.

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President and Public Relations Chair .....	Katie Stewart	386-4792
Vice-President .....	Pierre d'Estrubé	477-2410
Treasurer and Finance Chair .....	Tom Gillespie	361-1694
E-mail ua620@freenet.victoria.bc.ca		
Secretary and Membership Development Chair .....	Eric Redekop	595-7270
Director and Program Chair .....	Sharron Waite	479-3380
Director .....	Paul Gareau	592-9089
E-mail wc290@freenet.victoria.bc.ca		
Director .....	Hal Gibbard	477-2986

## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

- Individual membership dues \$12      Please send more information about:  
 Family membership dues \$18       Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants  
 Donation       Garry Oak Inventory Project  
 Gift membership, send receipt to:       Operation Clean Sweep (Broom Removal)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Wish list continued from front page

lots on Summit Avenue; Rogers Farm, Hutchison land, some of Christmas Hill, and the Matson land;

- The 1000 Oaks Grove on Hornby Island will be properly protected;
- The provincial government will forbid the digging/selling of native plant species from the wild;
- The City of Victoria C.U.P.E. workers will agree to us doing broom removal in city parks;
- The Municipality of Saanich's tree protection bylaw will encompass rural lands;
- Municipal native plant protection bylaws will be developed so people can't destroy native plants on their property;
- Much more broom removal will be done in parks;
- More GOMPS members will lobby on behalf of these issues by writing letters — to the newspapers, to municipal and provincial politicians.

On a cheery note, some of the plants I transplanted from the highway widening last spring are poking out of the ground. Some shooting stars are starting to unfurl and many of the satin-flower plants are several inches high.

— Katie Stewart

## Notice to members

### Change of membership policy

Annual dues for new members joining and paying dues after January 1, 1996 shall be due and payable at the last day of the anniversary month of joining the society.

Members who joined prior to January 1, 1996 shall continue to have their memberships renewable by December 31 of each year.

Members shall cease to be in good standing if dues are unpaid at the renewal date but shall be reinstated without penalty upon receipt of dues within one month of the annual due date.

Memberships shall expire if dues remain unpaid after the one month period of grace.



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

February 1996, Vol. 3, No. 2

## Victoria needs tree protection bylaw

The City of Victoria is the only one of the four core municipalities which has not yet passed a tree protection bylaw. According to a report in the *Times Colonist* on Friday, Jan. 26, 1996, council opposed the proposed bylaw at its committee of the whole meeting on Thursday, Jan. 25.

The minutes from that meeting state: "A memorandum dated January 22, 1996 was received from the deputy director of engineering providing a brief background to the tree preservation bylaw. Through 1994 and 1995 the environment and public works advisory committee worked on a draft bylaw. In July 1995 the draft bylaw was forwarded to the committee of the whole, and then referred to the advisory parks and recreation commission for comments. An attached memorandum dated November 23, 1996 advised that the commission did not support the draft bylaw, being of the opinion that there is no need for a tree protection bylaw for trees on private property.

**Action:** It was moved by Councillor McLean [parks and recreation chairperson] that:

1) A joint meeting be arranged, within 30 days, for the environment and public works advisory committee, the advisory parks and recreation commission, and representatives from the planning department to discuss the tree preservation bylaw.

2) Councillors be advised of the date and time of the meeting."

According to the newspaper article, McLean does not support the bylaw for several reasons: that it would be difficult to enforce on private property; that the bylaw was based on Saanich's, which is not suitable for Victoria since Victoria has less undeveloped land than Saanich; and that Victoria's citizens should have a bylaw like that of Vancouver, "which makes it relatively easy for citizens to cut down trees — pro-

viding they replace them with one or more trees, perhaps in a different location ..." resulting in no net loss of trees to the city.

There are several flaws in McLean's argument. Oak Bay, which also has little or no undeveloped land, has managed to protect its Garry oaks, so McLean's argument regarding Victoria not having much undeveloped land compared to Saanich is irrelevant.

Why should it be difficult for Victoria to enforce its bylaws on private property? There are already laws governing housing construction with regard to setbacks, height, size etc. Does the city have difficulty enforcing those?

Having a bylaw similar to Vancouver's might not be at all suitable for Victoria. What McLean does not seem to have realized yet is that Victoria has a unique ecosystem which is different from Vancouver's.

There are already sections of the city, such as James Bay, which have few Garry oaks left. Allowing Victorians to cut down their trees and replace them with exotic specimens rather than natives would most likely result in a net loss of Garry oaks, unless there was a provision that native trees had to be planted. And given the mindset of the present council, I wouldn't count on it.

Let's look at summaries of the tree protection bylaws of the other three core municipalities.

### Oak Bay

The municipality passed its bylaw in January 1995. The bylaw protects its Garry oaks only, not other native trees.

**The bylaw in summary:**

Protects Garry oaks on private property which are 25 centimetres (9.84 inches or

*continued next page*



FILL COVERS DRIP LINE area of Garry oaks at Peninsula Bulldozer's Beckwith Avenue property.

Photo taken in June 1995 by Katie Stewart

continued from page 1

more in diameter at 1.4 metres above ground.

Protects Garry oaks growing outside the building envelope of lots less than 20,000 square feet (special rules apply for larger lots).

Prohibits the cutting down of Garry oaks or any part of a Garry oak greater than 25 centimetres (9.84 inches) in diameter.

Protects against damaging activities (such as placing fill, asphalt or a building or structure inside the drip line of a tree; removing soil from land inside the drip line; operating heavy equipment over the roots of a tree growing inside the drip line).

Allows a protected tree to be cut down or removed under certain circumstances (such as a severely damaged, dying or dead tree) with a permit.

Requires a permit to be obtained for the pruning of any branch of a Garry oak which is greater than 10 centimetres (3.9 inches) at the point it meets another branch or tree trunk. A certified arborist's opinion may be required at the expense of the owner.

Imposes fines of up to \$2,000 for each tree unlawfully cut down, damaged or pruned without a permit. In addition, a replacement Garry oak is also required to be planted for each such tree, with a security fee paid to the municipality for three years to ensure its maintenance.

#### Esquimalt

The municipality adopted its bylaw in November 1992. It applies to all public and private lands within the township.

Trees protected are: Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*), arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*), Pacific dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*), sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*); trees listed by species and specific location in the Heritage Tree Society schedule A, attached to the bylaw; and any other tree with a diameter larger than 12 inches.

By the bylaw's definition a tree is any living, erect woody plant which measures 5 metres (16.3 feet) or more in height, and 10 centimetres (3.9 inches) or more in diameter, measured 1.4 metres (4.5 feet) above the ground.

The bylaw only covers cutting down protected trees, but does not forbid damaging activities to trees.

A permit is required to cut down any of the protected trees.

A maximum fine of \$10,000 can be imposed for breaking the bylaw.

#### Saanich

Saanich's tree protection bylaw was passed in February 1993. Like Oak Bay's bylaw it is very comprehensive and contains descriptions such as drip line, floodplain, steep slope areas, rural land, agricultural land, etc.

Besides Garry oaks, other species protected are: arbutus, Pacific dogwood, Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) having a diameter greater than 60 centimetres (24 inches); and any tree having a diameter greater than 80 centimetres (31.5 inches).

The bylaw's definition of what constitutes a tree is the same as Esquimalt's.

The bylaw: protects trees on land outside of the building envelope on building lots and residential properties in urban areas with allowances for construction of driveways and building services.

Defines other areas where removal is prohibited such as from urban land with potential for residential development.

Prohibits the removal of any tree growing within 15 metres of the natural boundary of a stream or floodplain.

Requires a certified arborist's report to prove that a tree is unsafe before a permit is issued for its removal;

Prohibits the same specific tree damaging activities as Oak Bay's bylaw with the addition of a prohibition on the removal of bark.

Requires a permit for pruning.

Imposes a fine of \$500 for every tree unlawfully removed or damaged with a subsequent offence bringing a fine of \$1000 for every tree so removed.

Requires replacement planting of the tree removed and a security paid to the municipality for three years to guarantee the tree's maintenance.

Like the other two municipalities, the bylaw has a provision for municipal employees to enter any property without obstruction at reasonable times to make an assessment or inspection for any purpose under this bylaw.



#### Applying Saanich's bylaw?

In mid-October 1995 I wrote to Saanich's parks and recreation department asking if its tree protection bylaw only applied to residential areas or if it also included industrial and commercial properties. I was concerned specifically about two properties: Lumberworld, which stacks its lumber beneath Garry oaks on its property adjoining Borden Street, and Peninsula Bulldozing on Beckwith Avenue, where dirt and fill has covered the drip line areas of some Garry oaks, which are dying or dead.

I received a reply from David de Shane, manager of parks operations, dated December 15, 1995.

"The tree preservation bylaw does apply to commercial and industrial properties.

"Specifically, Lumberworld at 3955 Quadra Street is in contravention of the bylaw by storing lumber within the drip line of several Garry oak trees. We have sent them a letter identifying the problem and have asked them to give us a date when the lumber will be removed.

"Peninsula Bulldozing at 1000 Beckwith Avenue is on property zoned A-1 rural and is outside the urban containment boundary. In these instances the bylaw allows the cutting down or killing of not more than three trees for every full .4 hectares (one acre) of land in a parcel for any reason in any 12-month period. This property is of sufficient size that there is no control over the number of Garry oak trees impacted.

"... We do appreciate you bringing concerns to our attention and the work of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society. Your efforts help to raise public awareness and plight of our Garry oaks."

However, I drive along Borden Street almost weekly and still have seen no sign of the lumber being moved.



Victoria council will soon re-address the question of whether a tree preservation bylaw is needed. If you support this bylaw please phone or write council, in particular David McLean, with a copy to the advisory parks and recreation commission.

Also, the Victoria Home Builders Association has asked Saanich council to review Saanich's tree protection bylaw at council's meeting on February 5.

— Katie Stewart

# VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Fund underway

Those of you who are members of the Victoria Natural History Society are probably familiar with the concept of the Habitat Acquisition Trust fund which was described in the current issue of *The Victoria Naturalist*.

In November 1995 the VHNS board gave its approval for a sub-committee to set up this fund. This group is still deciding how the fund should be structured. According to Jan Garnett's article, "There are several options, including a simple fund under VHNS's charitable tax number, forming a separate but related foundation, or being a fund in partnership with an existing foundation." A local lawyer is assisting the sub-committee on setting up the fund.

"... it will be designed to function as a private, non-profit, charitable entity controlling a revolving trust fund. It will be supported by both the public and private sector through donations, bequests, fundraisers and community involvement. Donations and bequests can be of money, land, or interest in land. Apart from direct land dona-

tions, funds will accumulate in the trust towards the purchase of 'significant' parcels of land as they become available.

"... another use being considered for trust fund money would involve purchasing conservation covenants on parcels of privately-owned land rather than actually buying the land — a far more affordable route in many situations.

"We aim to protect parcels of land from the size of a large couch to a few square kilometres, provided certain criteria of availability, suitability and affordability are present."

One of the objectives of the VNHS constitution is "to work with other societies and like bodies having interest in common with this society [studying and protecting flora and fauna and their habitat]."

I sent the GOMPS January newsletter to Jan along with a letter suggesting that our society work with the Habitat Aquisition Trust fund group. The VNHS no doubt has other areas beside Garry oak habitat that

they would like to see protected. However, our organization does not have any financial resources for acquiring any of the Garry oak habitat currently being considered for development and it would be beneficial for us to work with this much larger organization, I think, which is committed to setting up this fund.

If there are any GOMPS members who would like to be involved please contact me. GOMPS directors Sharron Waite, Paul Gareau and I will be meeting with Jan and other sub-committee members soon.

The first fundraiser — described as a coffeehouse atmosphere — for the H.A.T. fund will be on February 24 at Prospect Lake Community Hall (Spartan Road off West Saanich Road). Tickets are \$5, available from the Field Naturalist, 1186 Blanshard St. For more information on either the fundraiser or the fund itself contact Leah Ramsey at 479-0016 or Jan Garnett at 652-1529.

— Katie Stewart

## CALENDAR

**THE FUTURE OF ROGERS FARM** — Saturday, Feb. 10, 10 a.m.-noon at Rogers Elementary School. Harald Wolf (479-9489) and Yves Parizeau (727-0188) are hosting this brain-storming session to see if there are any possibilities of retaining the farm in its working state, and of preserving the farm's Garry oak woodland.

**WILDFLOWER WALKS ON MOUNT TOLMIE** — Sundays, Feb. 11, 18 and 25, and all Sundays in March, 1-3 p.m. with Eric Redekop. Meet at summit viewpoint.

**NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP** — Thursday, Feb. 15, 7 p.m. Room A215, Clearihue Bldg., UVic. Featured speaker 8 p.m.: Darren Copley on how to identify birds in your native plant garden.

**CELEBRATION OF SEEDS** — Saturday, Feb. 17 and Sunday, Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Craigflower Schoolhouse and Farmhouse, 2765 Admirals Road, Victoria.

**BACKYARD BIRDING: Creating an urban wilderness** — Sunday, Feb. 18, 1:30 p.m. Francis King Regional Park, \$4.28. Call 478-3344 to register.

**FRIENDS OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE BROOM PULL** — Saturday, Feb. 24, 10 a.m.-noon. Meet in the lower parking lot by the stables.

**VNHS HABITAT ACQUISITION TRUST FUND FUNDRAISER** — Saturday, Feb. 24, Prospect Lake Community Hall.

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** — Thursday, March 7, 7:30 p.m., at Tom Gillespie's, A-954 Queens Avenue, Victoria.

**NATIVE PLANT WORKSHOP** — Saturday, March 9, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Elliott Building Lecture Wing, UVic.

## Portland Broom Symposium

The California Pest Plant Council, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the Pacific Northwest Exotic Pest Plant Council and the Washington State Weed Board are jointly sponsoring a broom symposium (includes Scotch, French, Spanish and Portuguese brooms). It will be held April 16-18 at Portland State University, Portland, Oregon.

The symposium will focus on biology, ecology and management of broom.

For more information write to Weed Control, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, 635 Capitol Street NE, Salem, OR 97310-0110 or contact Dennis Isaacson at 503-986-4621, Carla Bossard at 916-758-1602, Laurie Penders at 206-872-2972 or Steve Hinton <steveh@hevanet.com>.



## *In a nutshell*

- Tony Embleton, the Victoria Natural History Society's volunteer project coordinator, has written to the municipality of Esquimalt offering VNHS's assistance in identifying ecologically sensitive areas within the municipality. Included in their list are Garry oak meadows "as identified by GOMPS." However, we have not done any formal surveys and we will consult with the Conservation Data Centre, which is compiling a databank of sensitive ecological areas, before undertaking any surveys.
- At the last meeting of the Native Plant Study group on January 18, Dr. Adolph Ceska spoke on rare plants of southern Vancouver Island. He mentioned that he and his wife had surveyed one of the Winchelsea Islands and they had found an almost intact Garry oak meadow, unique for its lack of invasive plants except a few broom plants. The island is for sale for \$600,000. Any takers?
- Dr. Ceska is organizing a native plant garden tour, which will probably be held either the weekend of April 20 or 27. A map

of the gardens will be produced and volunteers will be stationed at each garden. He has compiled a small list of possible gardens already but is looking for further suggestions. If you have any ideas please phone Nancy Field at 598-2909.

- The organizing meeting for the B.C. Native Plant Council will be on March 15 in Abbotsford. So far, Linda Beare and John Olafson from the Native Plant Study Group have indicated that they are going.
- Eric Redekop is offering a course through UVic Extension on "Springtime in a Garry Oak Meadow." The course will be held Wednesdays, April 10 and 17 from 7:30-9:30 p.m., with field trips on April 14 and 21. Cost: \$45.
- Brenda Costanzo is again teaching her native plant gardening course at Camosun College on Mondays, from February 12 to April 1, 7-9 p.m. There will also be two field trips on Saturdays, March 2 and 30. Cost: \$85.
- Thanks to Pierre d'Estrubé for suggest-

ing the new name of our newsletter.

- GOMPS member Fran Spencer has met with Bill Turner from Nature Conservancy Canada and a representative from Government House to see if there is any way that the land below Government House, currently zoned single family dwelling, can have a covenant placed on it to preserve the Garry oak habitat. The rep is supposed to talk to the deputy minister for Government Services and then get back to Fran.
- GOMPS Director Sharron Waite has been attending Saanich council meetings on behalf of the society on issues concerning us. On January 15 she spoke eloquently at the appeal to require an Environmental and Social Review for the Hutchison land. The developer, Ross Meek, told council he would be having his own environmental assessment done, which satisfied some of the councillors, who did not see the necessity of having an independent review. Two of the councillors felt that the municipality should conduct its own ESR, but they were in the minority.

THE HERITAGE SEED PROGRAM OF CANADA  
THE ISLAND GROWER AND  
THE CRAIGFLOWER LIVING HISTORY FARM

present

### THE CELEBRATION OF SEEDS

Victoria's Third Annual Community Seed Show  
at The Craigflower Schoolhouse and Farmhouse  
2765 Admirals Road, Victoria  
Saturday, Feb. 17 and  
Sunday, Feb. 18  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**\$3 admission per day (includes both sites)**

Calling all plant lovers and seed collectors. Come and discover new and unusual varieties of your favourite plants. Bring your own seeds to share at Victoria's third annual community seed exchange.

Free workshops on heritage roses, tips for growing from seed and for seed saving, heritage gardens, heirloom tomatoes and other plants, and seeds of diversity, throughout both days.

For more information please contact Carolyn Herriot at  
**592-4472**

### 3RD ANNUAL NATIVE VEGETATION SYMPOSIUM

presented by UVic VIPIRG's  
Native Vegetation Committee

**SATURDAY, MARCH 9**

**Elliott Building Lecture Wing, UVic**

**9 a.m.-4 p.m.**

**\$10 adults**

**\$8 seniors / students / unwaged**

Lectures, exhibits, native plant sales  
and book sales

*Speakers*

Willie MacGillivray

Hans Roemer

Nancy Turner

Adolf Ceska

For more information contact Brenda Costanzo  
at the UVic Herbarium, **721-7097**

# B.C.'s new conservation covenant

*The following article is reprinted from the November/December 1995 issue of The Cottage Magazine, courtesy of publisher Peter Chettleburgh and author Anne Curran.*

A new legal tool makes conservation efforts more attractive to private landowners.

Have you ever thought of conserving some aspect of your property for future generations?

At one time, conservation-minded landowners simply left their land to government, secure in the belief that it would be protected. But today we're more mindful of the environment and less trusting of government stewardship — with the result that many of us are now looking for ways to protect the land ourselves.

Until recently, our options would have been quite limited. Traditionally, landowners would have protected their property through the application of legal tools like covenants and easements.\* These evolved out of the British common law over hundreds of years and are still being used today. However, they weren't originally developed for the purpose of conserving land and are sometimes awkward to institute in a conservation context.

As a result, a new kind of legal tool — the conservation covenant — was established just a year ago by the B.C. government, under amendments to its Land Title Act.

Essentially, a conservation covenant is a written agreement between a landowner and a private conservation organization in which both parties agree to protect the land and specify how it's to be done. The covenant is then registered on the property title in the provincial land title office and "runs with the land," remaining in place despite changes in ownership. As long as the conservation organization — or its successor — continues to exist, so does the covenant.

Conservation organizations like The Na-

ture Trust of British Columbia, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Islands Trust, and Conservancy Canada) to name just a few, are playing an increasing role in conservation initiatives, taking the place once occupied by government. Many such organizations target specific kinds of land for conservation and join forces or "partner" with other like-minded groups to undertake large-scale projects. The Nature Trust, for example, with its interest in estuary protection, partnered recently with Ducks Unlimited Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada, the B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans to acquire properties and institute conservation measures in several estuaries along the B.C. coast and Vancouver Island. Obviously, such partnerships are also an effective way for government to stretch tax dollars.

The new conservation covenant differs from its common law predecessors in two important ways. It doesn't require government approval before going into effect. Nor

does the covenant holder (the conservation organization) have to own property adjacent to the land with the covenant registered on it. In other words, this approach is much more flexible than previous law — and certainly more in keeping with the general trend away from government regulation.

The new process may also have some tax advantages for landowners. Under amendments to the Assessment Act, passed at the same time as the Land Title amendments, a property assessor can take a conservation covenant into account when assessing property — presumably reducing its value and property taxes as a result. At least this is the anticipated result. The truth is that no one really knows what tax benefits might eventually fall out of the new legislation — it's simply too soon to tell.

*\*A covenant is a promise to do — or not to do — something to your property; an easement is the right of way a landowner can exercise over another nearby property.*

## *The Nature Trust of British Columbia*

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is typical of the many well established non-government organizations involved in protecting ecologically significant land. A charitable organization, it was established in 1971 and received a core fund of \$4.5 million from the federal government at that time.

Nature Trust's main purpose is to identify important plant and wildlife habitats in different parts of the province, then acquire these lands through purchase or donation. Once it owns a particular property, it usually leases it to government or a private agency (sometimes without charge) on condition that the property is protected and conserved as a site of ecological interest. As a result, it can keep its own staff to a minimum and stay focussed on acquisitions.

Currently the trust is targeting three primary conservation areas in the province:

Conservation of habitat in the arid region of the South Okanagan;

Conservation and management of coastal wetlands;

Conservation and management of the Vancouver Island marmot population.

The Nature Trust is always interested in reviewing proposals from anyone who believes an area deserves protection. For more information, contact: The Nature Trust of B.C., 808 - 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1A2. (604) 925-1128.

— Anne Curran

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

#### **GOMPS DISPLAYS:**

**February** — Department of Transport, adjoining the downtown Public Library  
**March 9** — Native Plant symposium

— Marnie Phillips, 598-8820

#### **FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE**

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

#### **PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE**

**SEED/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for information.

#### **RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Contact project coordinator Eric Redekop at 595-7270.

#### **NEWSLETTER**

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Eric Redekop at 595-7270 or Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to address below.

**GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
c/o A-954 QUEENS AVENUE, VICTORIA, B.C. V8T 1M6

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President and Public Relations Chair .....	Katie Stewart	386-4792
Vice-President .....	Pierre d'Estrubé	477-2410
Treasurer and Finance Chair .....	Tom Gillespie	361-1694
	E-mail	ua620@freenet.victoria.bc.ca
Secretary and Membership		
Development Chair .....	Eric Redekop	595-7270
Director and Program Chair .....	Sharron Waite	479-3380
Director .....	Paul Gareau	592-9089
	E-mail	wc294@freenet.victoria.bc.ca
Director .....	Hal Gibbard	477-2986

## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership dues \$12    | Please send more information about:                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership dues \$18        | <input type="checkbox"/> Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donation                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Garry Oak Inventory Project               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gift memberships, send receipt to: | <input type="checkbox"/> Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)     |
| _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> Growing, planting Garry oaks              |
| _____   |  |

## Remembering Wilma Vincent

In mid-January I was saddened to receive a call from Don Vincent, telling me that his wife Wilma had died on Friday, January 19.

I first met Wilma in November 1994 when she volunteered to again be a GOMPS director until the March 1995 elections. She had previously served as a director on the society's inaugural board and kept the board's minutes as the board secretary.

I mentioned to her, as so many other people had over the years, how much I admired her wonderful front yard in the spring, with its gorgeous display of fawn lilies, camas, shooting star and chocolate lilies. Wilma promptly invited me to visit, which I did a few times over the spring and summer.

On every occasion, Don and Wilma put on the coffee and brought out a plate of cookies as we chatted about GOMPS, wildflowers, gardening, children (theirs and mine) and their grandchildren. I got my tour, of course, and was able to admire their garden at different stages of growth.

In the summer I planted tomato seedlings Wilma had grown in her greenhouse and when the wildflowers had bloomed, Wilma kindly saved some of their seeds for me. I planted them last fall and I will have a permanent reminder of her when they come to bloom a few years from now.

I'll miss Wilma and our visits and chats, and I'll miss her generosity of spirit.

— Katie Stewart

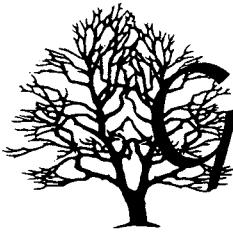
## Annual general meeting

On March 26, GOMPS will be holding its annual general meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary.

Two directors will be elected to the board at this time. (Current president Katie Stewart will be running again.)

The board will introduce a motion to increase the membership dues to \$15 adult and \$20 per family per year. Current membership fees are not adequate for the society's expenses.

We are presently arranging for a speaker and will announce the agenda and speaker in next month's newsletter.



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

March 1996, Vol. 3, No.3

## B.C. government proposes new parks

In June 1994 the government devised the Vancouver Island Land-Use Plan, with the intention of increasing the level of provincial parks and wilderness areas to 13 per cent of the Island's land base within Protected Area zones. Initially 23 new protected areas were established to fulfill the goal of protecting representative ecosystems.

A secondary goal was to "preserve natural, cultural, heritage or recreational special features of regional, provincial, national or global significance." [page 1, *Special Feature Protected Areas Summary Report*, prepared by Land Use Coordination Office, Ministry of Government Services.] Protecting sites in the Quadra Group of islands and the Nanaimo Lowlands ecoregion (south-east Vancouver Island) was the priority.

The areas selected were chosen from a list of 300 suggestions received by government staff. On February 5, Environment Minister Moe Sihota made the announcement of their choices, which will cover some 11,770 hectares.

Twenty-four crown land areas, totalling 7,730 hectares, are being designated immediately as parks or recreation reserves. The remaining sites are privately owned and the government will try to negotiate either land exchanges or outright purchase at market value. If the province cannot acquire the desired lands, it will try to acquire other, equally significant land.

Of special interest to GOMPS are two parcels in the latter category (Information taken from *Special Features* report.)

### SOMENOS GARRY OAKS PROTECTED AREA

**Size:** 17 ha

**Location:** southern tip of Somenos Lake in Duncan, in the Cowichan Valley Regional District

#### Conservation values:

- Represents a highly diverse wetland/terrestrial interface
- Site contains a large Garry oak-brome community and a smaller Douglas-fir / Garry oak-oniongrass community.

Relatively intact Garry oak grasslands like these are B.C.'s rarest ecosystem type.

- Largest known stand of healthy, deep soil growing Garry oaks in B.C. (relatively lacking Scotch broom).
- Only Garry oak stand known to border a marsh.
- Record-sized Garry oak (26 m tall, 40 m diameter spread, 1.6 m trunk)

*continued next page*



**CAROL SIM** inspects huge Garry oak in proposed Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area.

Photos by Katie Stewart

continued from page 1

**Rare elements:** red-listed yellow montane violet (*Viola praemorsa*), tall wooly heads (*Psilocarpus elatior*) and needle-leaved navarretia (*Navarretia intertincta*); blue-listed water-pepper smart weed (*Polygonum hydropiperoides*); most individuals known in a B.C. yellow montane population.

Nesting habitat for owls, red-tailed hawks, northern orioles, hairy and downy woodpeckers.

Somenos Creek outlet important in winter for many wildlife species as it tends not to freeze over.

Urban expansion, road and bridge construction are threats to the habitat; a two-year, no-build covenant expired in the spring of 1995.

**Recreation values:** bird watching, photography, nature study.

**Cultural / heritage values:** native burial site located in SE corner of proposal

**Access:** by highway

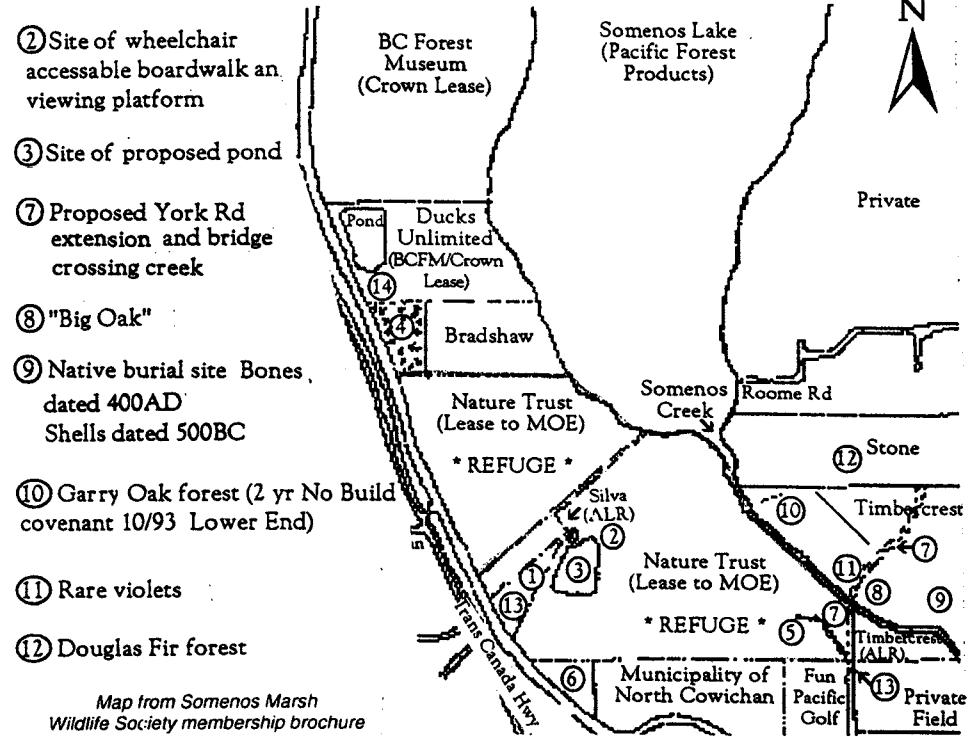
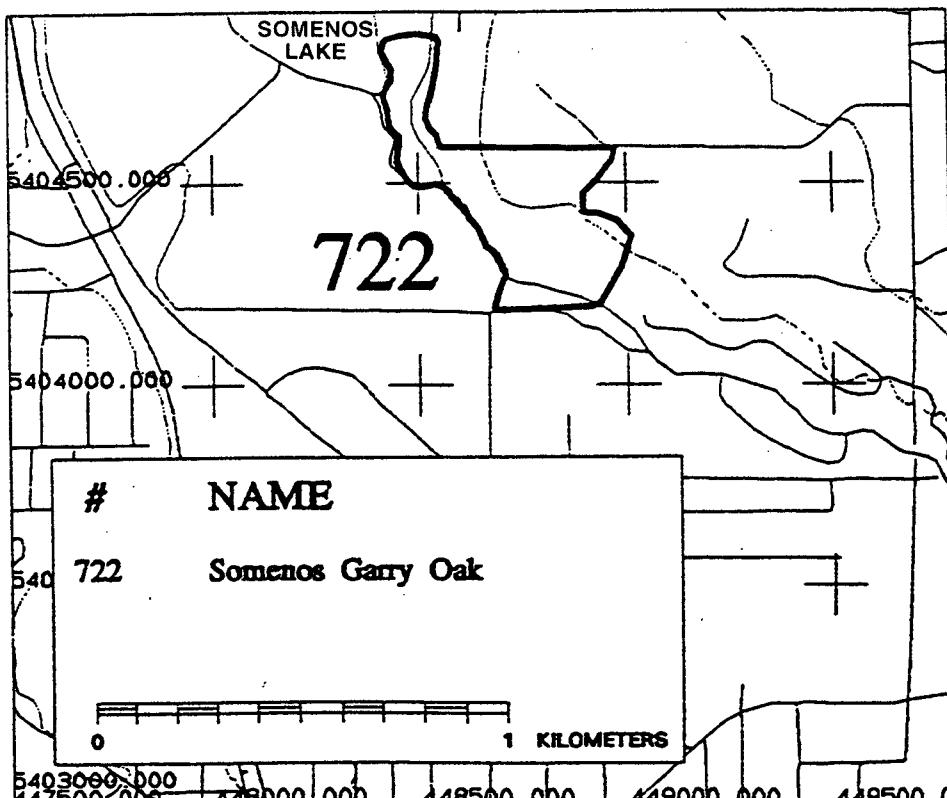
**Conditions:** requires negotiation of land acquisition from private landowner.

**First Nations area of interest:** First Nations of South Island Tribal Council / Cowichan Lakes First Nations / Cowichan Tribes

**Land status / Tenure:** private

Several local groups, including residents in a nearby subdivision who formed the Timbercrest Committee, the Cowichan Valley Naturalists and the Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (SMWS) lobbied the government for four years to protect the Garry oak stand.

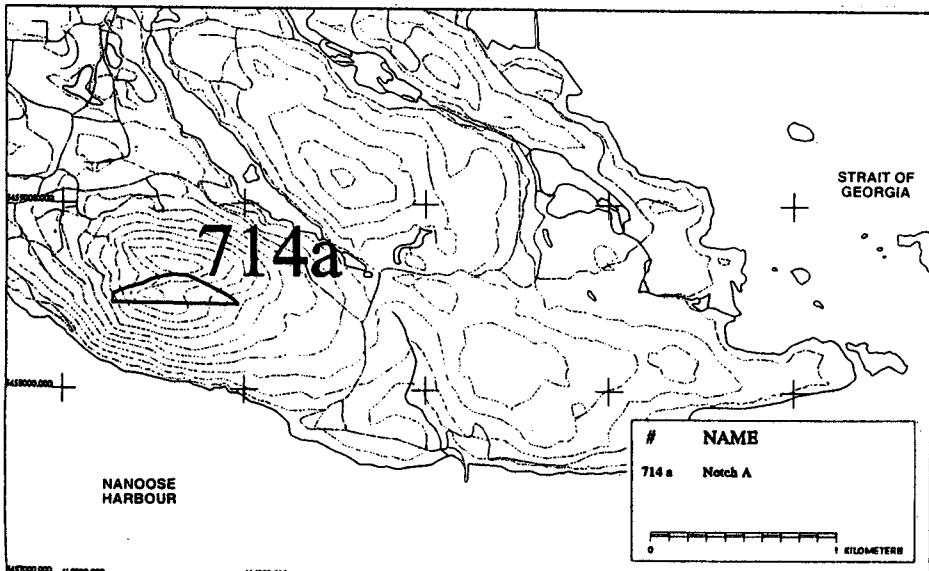
In 1995 construction of the north end of a road through the property began which will connect to a yet-to-be built bridge over Somenos Creek. The fate of the bridge and road depends on the outcome of the negotiations.



On the Island Highway side of Somenos Lake, approximately 27 hectares of land were acquired by the Nature Trust in 1989. Another portion of land adjoining the lake is maintained by Ducks Unlimited. The Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society would like the entire lakeshore to be

designated a provincial government Wildlife Management area.

Contact person for the society is Paul Fletcher, Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society, Box 711, Duncan, B.C. V9L 3Y1, phone: 604-746-8383, fax: 604-746-9710.



## NOTCH PROTECTED AREA

**Size:** 7 ha

**Location:** this site is the SE slope of Nanoose Hill, approximately 15 kms north of Nanaimo; in the regional district of Nanaimo.

### Conservation values:

The south-facing slope of Nanoose Hill has a Douglas-fir / Garry oak-oniongrass community, and a Garry oak-brome community. These red-listed ecosystems rival those found on Mount Tzouhalem and Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserves in size and condition (no Scotch broom.)

Provincially significant / rare species recorded here include: slim-leaved onion (*Allium amplectens*), Geyer's onion (*Allium geyeri*), *Heterocodon rariflorum*, Nuttall's quillwort (*Isoetes nuttallii*), white meconella (*Meconella oregana*) and Howell's montia (*Montia howellii*).

Ranked H+ by Conservation Data Centre for rarity, scarceness and uniqueness.

Over 20 yellow-listed (or watch-listed) plant species are found in this area.

Two rare and endangered mosses are found here: *Tortula laevipila* (known in only five coastal B.C. sites), and *Bartramia striata* (known only at one other B.C. site near Rocky Point, Victoria). Largest known B.C. coast population of prickly cactus.

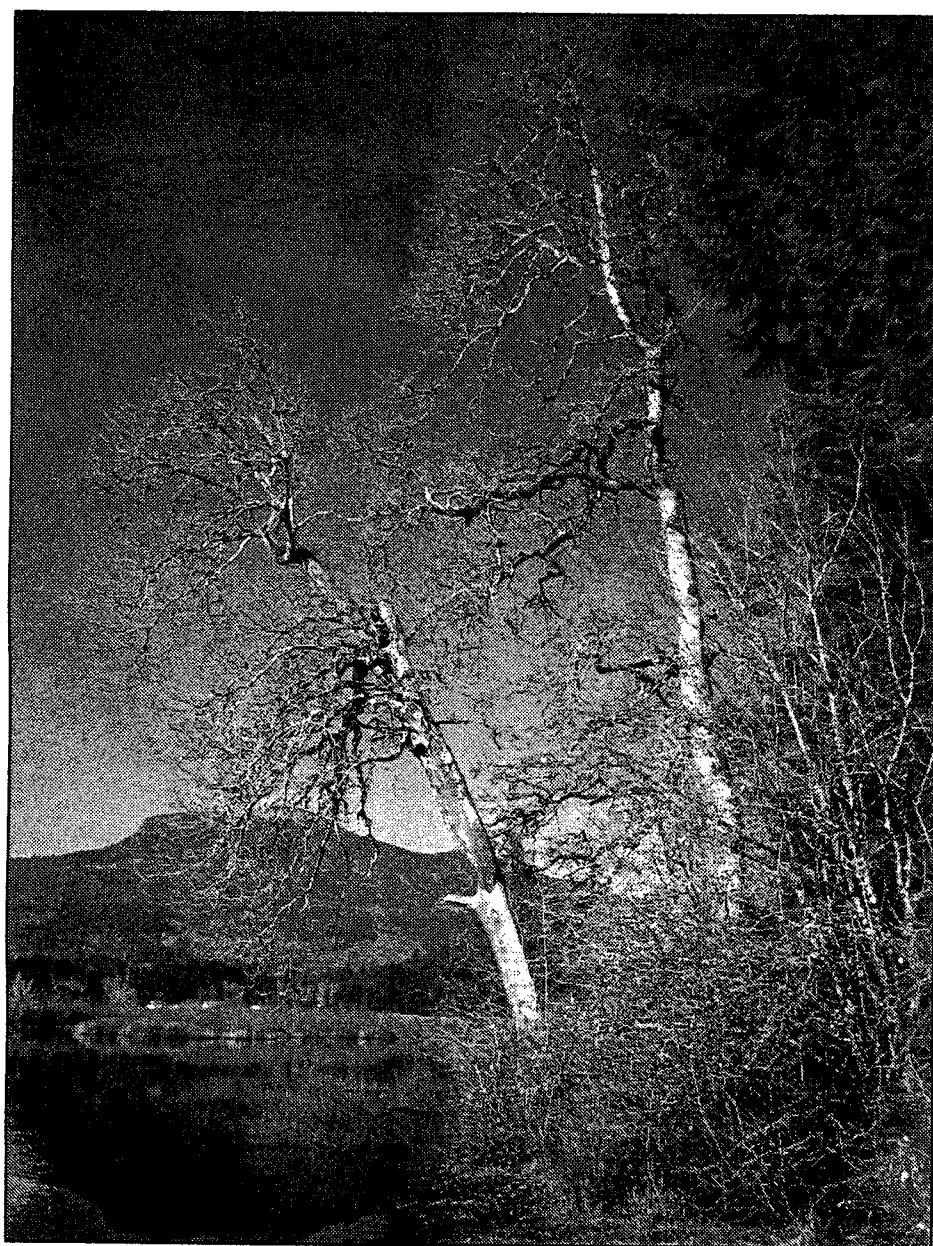
**Recreation values:** popular local resident destination, existing trails in this area.

**Access:** paved roads off highway.

**Conditions:** requires negotiation for acquisition of private land (Fairwinds).

**First Nations area of interest:** First Nations of South Island Tribal Council / Cowichan Lake Tribes, Nanoose First Nations.

**Land status:** private.



**GARRY OAKS** adjoin Somenos Marsh.

# What's left of our original forests?

At the February Victoria Natural History Society botany night, the featured speakers were Andy MacKinnon and Marvin Eng, who are researchers with the B.C. Ministry of Forests. They gave a talk on the process of making an inventory of old forests of coastal B.C. They used the term "old forests" rather than "old growth" forests because there is no commonly agreed upon definition of the latter.

In an article they prepared on the inventory for the Summer 1995 issue of *Cordillera*, they defined old forests as "stands with mean canopy age over 120 years in age. Because of the relatively recent history of logging in British Columbia, forests older than 120 years are almost exclusively unlogged areas."

There are three coastal ecozones: Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH), covering approximately 10.6 million ha; Mountain Hemlock (MH), covering approximately 4.1 million ha and Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF), covering approximately 200,000 ha on southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and a narrow strip of the mainland.

Of that forest, approximately 54 per cent of CWH and 34 per cent of MH is old forest, but *only* 0.5 per cent (1100 ha) of the CDF.

The CDF zone is one of the smallest of the province's 14 ecological zones. The major tree species is, of course, Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), comprising 67 per cent, with hardwoods being the next largest group, approximately 16 per cent [primarily red alder (*Alnus rubra*) and bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)].

This area is the most disturbed ecozone in B.C. Slightly over two-thirds of it has been logged and almost all of the remainder has been urbanized. Approximately one per cent (2000 ha) of the area is protected. Of that, only

112 ha is mature (unlogged) forest, a shocking figure.

"Protection of nine percent of the coastal forest area is somewhat less than the provincial government's stated goal of protecting 12 per cent of the province's regions. The areas newly protected on Vancouver Island (as a result of the CORE process), as well as on the mainland coast (as a result of the Protected Areas Strategy and various Land and Resource Management Plan initiatives), will add to the existing protected areas." (MacKinnon and Eng in *Cordillera*).

The provincial government wants to acquire some of the Greater Victoria Water District's off-catchment land, specifically 522 ha near Niagara Creek, to add to Goldstream Park. According to the *Special Feature Protected Areas Summary Report*, its conservation values include: representative of the distinctive flora and fauna of the under-represented Nanaimo Lowland

Ecosection, largest remaining Coastal Douglas-fir forest on southern Vancouver Island and old growth Douglas-fir remnant.

In addition to Niagara Creek, the government will transfer some crown land for regional parks in the CDF zone, and negotiate for 10 private land parcels, which will more than double the protected CDF zone.

Two per cent of the Coastal Douglas-fir ecozone being protected is certainly better than one percent. Twelve per cent may represent an impossible goal, considering how developed our area already is, the cost of land and the demands being placed on that land for development.

However, of the one percent already protected, only a small portion of that is Garry oak habitat. We *must* continue to lobby to protect as much Garry oak habitat as possible.

— Katie Stewart

## CALENDAR

**WILDFLOWER WALKS ON MOUNT TOLMIE** — Sundays (rain or shine) in March, and April 7 and 28, 1-3 p.m. with Eric Redekop. Meet at summit viewpoint.

**NATIVE PLANT COUNCIL FORMATION** — Friday, March 15, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. in Abbotsford. Contact Diane Gertzen 1-604-930-3309.

**NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP** — Thursday, March 21, 7 p.m. Room A215, Clearihue Bldg. UVic. Featured speaker at 8 p.m.: Dr. Nancy Turner on Ethnobotany.

**GOMPS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** — Tuesday, March 26, 7:30 p.m. at the Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary building.

**WILDFLOWER HIKE AT MILL HILL REGIONAL PARK** — Sunday, March 31, 9-11 a.m. Call 478-3344 to register. Cost \$3.

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** — Thursday, April 4, 7:30 p.m. at Hal Gibbard's, 1439 Wende Road

**GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE** — Saturday, April 20 and Sunday, April 21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Native plant gardening sale and demonstration.

**NATIVE PLANT TOUR** — Saturday, April 27, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tickets \$5. Phone Nancy, 598-2909 or Marg, 598-5329.

**CAMAS DAY** — Sunday, April 28, 1 p.m. in Beacon Hill Park.

# Update on Garry oak habitat issues

## "One Thousand Oak Grove," Hornby Island

Keith Sorensen, the developer of the High Salal subdivision, has submitted his final application for approval to the regional approving officer. According to Tony Law of Conservancy Hornby Island, the application still does not meet the requirements of the preliminary layout approval. CHI says the report from the Ministry of Environment (printed in the November 1995 GOMPS newsletter, ) was inadequate and that they would still like to have an ecological inventory done.

CHI's main concerns about the latest proposal are that the covenants are inadequate because they don't name the parties that will oversee the land and that the developer has not made the required park dedication.

Bill Turner from the Nature Conservancy and representatives from the Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy were scheduled to meet with CHI during the first week of March.

CHI's preference is that the "1000 Oak Grove" site be preserved as an ecological reserve, rather than a park, to protect the flora of the grove.

## Summit Avenue lots, Victoria

Friends of Summit Park (FOSP) held a meeting on February 28 at Quadra Elementary School to discuss strategies to save the three city-owned lots on Summit Avenue, which adjoin the reservoir lands at Smith Hill adjacent to Summit Park.

The city had put the three lots up for sale but as a result of pressure from the society, councillors agreed to give FOSP until March 1 to explore the possibilities (and impossible task) of raising funds to buy these lots.

The group (and others in the commu-

nity such as Bill Turner of the Nature Conservancy) thinks it is absurd for the city to expect a small community group to come up with money (at market value) for land the city already owns, buy it, then give it back to the city.

Members of FOSP are collecting signatures on a petition in the neighbourhood and lobbying individual councillors before making a final presentation before council.

Three Camosun environmental technology students are currently conducting an environmental assessment on the land and will prepare a report for FOSP.

The society will lobby the City of Victoria to designate Summit Park as a natural park, as Saanich has done with some of its parks.

FOSP member Dierdre Gotto will represent the society as a newly appointed member to the advisory parks and advisory commission.

## Salvation Army land, Esquimalt

The West Bay Environmental Group is preparing to leaflet several neighbourhoods and gauge the amount of public support for preserving the sloped area of the land adjoining the seawalk, which contains both native and introduced plant species. It is the last wild area on the Inner Harbour.

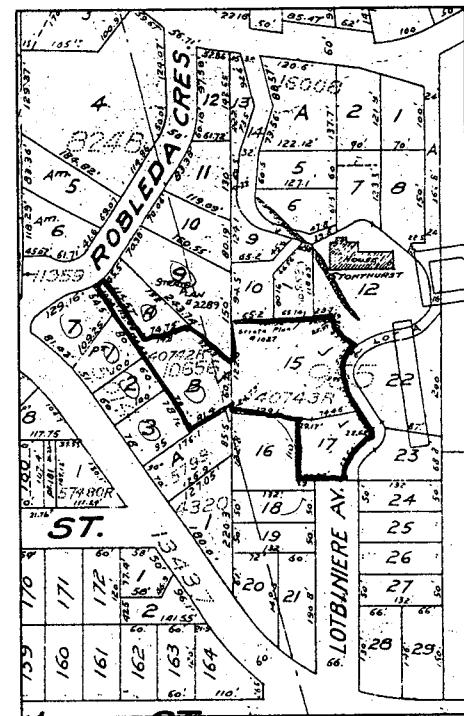
WBEG member Julie Flatt is attending council meetings to keep abreast of the development proposal. A public hearing is expected before the end of April.

A strategy meeting was held March 8, chaired by Al Lubkowski, who originally developed the local community plan. According to an article in the February 29 issue of *Monday* magazine, Lubkowski says the current plan is contrary to his recommendations and the public's wishes regarding the property.

## Lotbiniere lots, Victoria

Since late October 1995 GOMPS members Janet Simpson and Bill Scott have been trying to protect three lots on Lotbiniere Avenue [see map].

The couple, who live beside one of the lots, prepared a brief about the property and Garry oak ecosystem which they sent to city councillors and the present and former Lieutenant-governors (Garde Gardom and David Lam). Councillor Laura Acton visited the site.



Bill and Janet and GOMPS directors, Pierre d'Estrubé and Paul Gareau, both doctors, have attempted to contact Dr. Foster, who inherited the property from two sisters (not family) but so far have not had any luck.

Lot 15 at 548 Lotbiniere Ave., measures 147x90 ft., with the house assessed at \$220,000 and the land at \$383,000, for a total value of \$603,000. Lot B measures 115x50 ft. and is valued at \$287,000. Lot 17 (south of the house on Lotbiniere) measures 110x92 ft. and

*continued on page 6*

*continued from page 5*

is valued at \$263,000. Total assessed value: \$1,153,000.

In their brief, Janet and Bill said that the property meets some of the objectives included in the Rockland Plan, which was approved by city council in 1987.

"2.6.1 The retention of existing private Green Space is important as the amount of neighbourhood / community park space is below city standards.

2.6.2 Opportunities for the provision of new public park areas should be examined and land acquisition possibilities investigated."

## Hutchison land, Saanich

Saanich council has requested that a full Environmental and Social Review be done for the Hutchison development (Rogers and Lily avenues, and Quadra Street).

GOMPS director Sharron Waite, who has been attending Saanich council meetings, and follows all Christmas Hill/North Quadra development issues closely, thinks that will slow down the development process four to six weeks.

As well, clarification of the number of units of housing per hectare still is being determined.

## Christmas Hill pledges

In the January 1996 newsletter, Director Sharron Waite appealed to GOMPS members for pledges to purchase a bit more of Christmas Hill. We are happy to report that we have received many pledges. The campaign is still ongoing if anyone is interested in pledging. Any contributions will be considered a charitable donation and will receive a receipt for tax purposes.

## *HATs off to a successful fund-raiser*

On Saturday, Feb. 24, the Victoria Natural History Society, held a smashing, well planned, sold-out inaugural fund-raiser for its new Habitat Acquisition Trust Fund.

Twenty people, all involved in environment protection through work or as volunteers, entertained in various musical combinations and one funny monologue.

B.C. Forests Minister Andrew Petter came late, donned one of the many hats decorating the wall behind the stage and sang two songs and recited two poems, one with a line about a dog and a politician.

Master of ceremonies Bruce Whittington mentioned that all raffle items were eagerly donated by people and businesses which hadn't even been approached. Use of the Prospect Lake Community Hall was also donated, helping to bring the amount raised to around \$2000.

At a meeting I attended with HAT fund organizer Jan Garnett later, she said she has already been approached by several community groups, including GOMPS, regarding habitat they would like to see protected.

As she sees it, the first step will be to establish a foundation with five or six directors plus a number of voting memberships from groups such as GOMPS, Islands Trust, the Nature Trust of B.C., the Nature Conservancy and municipalities. Building a financial base is obviously a goal.

Initially she sees HAT facilitating covenants by contributing towards legal fees. Actual land acquisition will be tougher, given the price of land around Victoria.

The finale was a new version of an old favourite, with words contributed by Leah Ramsey, Dave Fraser, Bruce Whittington, Jan Garnett and about 10 others.

— Katie Stewart

### **HAT's This Land is Your Land**

Chorus:

This land is your land, this land is wild land,

From the Oak Bay Islands to the Gowlland Highlands,

From Jordan River to Cabbage Island  
HATs off to biodiversity.

As we develop this tiny Island,  
Let's save some meadows and rocky

highlands,  
Some ancient forest, filled with  
spring chorus,  
HATs off to biodiversity.

In the springtime's sun and gentle  
showers,  
We'll still have carpets of bright  
spring flowers

A sea of camas, and waves of  
shooting stars,  
HATs off to biodiversity.

For swans and ducks in flooded  
farmlands,  
For native dune grass in shifting  
beach sands,  
For salmon spawning in rivers to the  
sea,  
HATs off to biodiversity.

So much has gone now, we know the  
story,

We'll save the remnants of former  
glory,

Cut back the broom and turn back  
the bulldozers,  
HATs off to biodiversity.

As we went walking, we detected,  
A sign that said, "This land's  
protected,"

Looks like our trust fund is really  
working,

HATs off to biodiversity.

# THE BIOREGIONAL QUIZ

by Peter Warshall, Leonard Charles, Jim Dodge, Lynn Milliman and Victoria Stockley from a *CoEvolution Quarterly* issue on bioregionalism and updated for the Whole Earth Ecolog

“A self-scoring test on basic environmental perception of place”

1. When you turn on your faucet, where does the water come from? (Can you trace it back to local storm systems?)
2. When you flush the toilet, where does the water go? (Not just the treatment plant, if there is one, but the final river, lake or ocean.)
3. What soil series are you standing on?
4. How long is the growing season?
5. What are the major geological events that shaped your bioregion (faults, uplifts, downwarps, volcanics, sea flood etc.) Does your community give them special attention ... are they sacred, blessed, protected?
6. How did the original inhabitants eat, clothe, and shelter themselves? How did they celebrate the seasonal changes in times before you?
7. How many days until the moon is full?
8. From where you're reading this, point north.
9. Name the major plant/animal associations that thrive in your bioregion. Name five resident and migratory birds; five trees; five grasses; five animals and reptiles or amphibians. Which are native?
10. Name the plant or animal that is the “barometer” of environmental health for your bioregion. How is it doing? Endangered? Threatened? Thriving? Has it become a symbol of local power for your community?
11. What species have become extinct in your area?
12. What spring wildflower is consistently among the first to bloom where you live?
13. What was the total rainfall in your area last year (July-June)? (Slack: 1" for every 20")
14. From what direction do the winter storms generally come in your region?
15. Where does your garbage go?
16. What other bioregions of the planet have the most similar climate, culture, and analogous plants and animals? In other words, who are your Gaian cousins?
17. Name the bioregions that grew each item of food on your plate. Could you eat more locally? Support nearby farms?

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

#### **GOMPS DISPLAYS:**

March 9 — Native Plant symposium, UVIC.

— Marnie Phillips, 598-8820

### **FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE**

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

### **PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE**

**SEED/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for information.

### **RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Contact project coordinator Eric Redekop at 595-7270.

### **NEWSLETTER**

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Eric Redekop at 595-7270 or Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to address below.

**GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
c/o A-954 QUEENS AVENUE, VICTORIA, B.C. V8T 1M6

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President and Public Relations Chair .....	Katie Stewart	386-4792
Vice-President .....	Pierre d'Estrubé	477-2410
Treasurer and Finance Chair .....	Tom Gillespie	361-1694
	E-mail	ua620@freenet.victoria.bc.ca
Secretary and Membership		
Development Chair .....		
Director and Program Chair .....	Sharron Waite	479-3380
Director .....	Paul Gareau	592-9089
	E-mail	wc294@freenet.victoria.bc.ca
Director .....	Hal Gibbard	477-2986

## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Individual membership dues \$12

Please send more information about:

Family membership dues \$18

Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants

Donation

Garry Oak Inventory Project

Gift memberships, send receipt to:

Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)

Growing, planting Garry oaks

## Volunteers wanted

Earth Day is April 20 and as usual, the marchers will end up at the Legislature. We would like to have our display there during the afternoon and we need a couple of volunteers to man it. If you can spare a few hours please contact Marnie Phillips at 598-8820 by March 25.

Do you have any experience fund-raising? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

## Bob Duncan to speak at GOMPS AGM

Just a friendly reminder for members to please attend the annual general meeting on Tuesday, March 26 at 7:30 p.m. at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary.

After our business is attended to, Bob Duncan from the Canadian Forest Service, Pacific Forest Centre will give a slide presentation on beneficial and non-beneficial insects that live in Garry oaks.

## For sale: a half duplex

Pat Johnston owns half a duplex in Fernwood and the other half is for sale. At the February meeting of the Victoria Native Plant Study group, she asked — realizing, of course, that it was a long shot — if anyone might be interested in interested in looking at and buying the other half. The property is Garry oak habitat. Both owners have private garden space and Pat would like to convert the common property to a Garry oak meadow and hopes that whoever buys the other half would have similar interests. If you are interested, call her at 595-6700.

## Welcome new members

Nan Gregory, Vancouver; Christine Bloomfield, Victoria and Donna Robinson and Graham Taylor, Victoria.



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

April 1996, Vol. 3, No. 1

## Native plant salvage program needed

by Katie Stewart

Twice in March I was contacted by two GOMPS members regarding plant rescues.

### Knockan Hill

The first phone call on March 13, from Andria Tetlow, concerned a private lot adjoining Knockan Hill Park. The owner was going to develop the lot soon but was allowing

people to dig up native plants. Prior to any digging, Andria had suggested that the owner retain the native plants but his wife wanted "grass and a cedar hedge."

I made a number of phone calls to find rescuers and a site where the plants could go. Linda Grimm, a member of Friends of Summit Park, was enthusiastic, and she enlisted several students in the Camosun College Environmental Technology course, who dug up sods for the native plant garden being established at Camosun.

I visited the rocky site and noticed that the owner had marked the boundary of his property with bright orange spray paint. On the park side, satin flowers were in bloom. On his side, there were big patches of camas and licorice fern, soon to be moved or destroyed. I looked at the nearby back yards and none seemed to include or enhance the native vegetation.

### Washington native plant salvage program

I went to the inaugural meeting of the soon-to-be-formed Native Plant Society of B.C. on March 15. While I was on the ferry returning to Victoria, I looked through a binder prepared for the meeting and started reading the Fall 1995 issue of *Douglasia*, the newsletter of the Washington Native Plant Society. I noticed references to two native plant salvage programs undertaken by chapters of WNPS. Both programs include holding facilities for rescued plants. I wrote to the people named in the articles for more information and hope to receive replies soon.

### Highway rescue

The second phone call was on March 24 from Hans Roemer alerting me about work being done near the Victoria General Hospital. He was worried that a lot of camas and erythroniums were going to be destroyed. I did some phoning around and arranged for seven people to meet at the Hospital parking lot to do some token salvaging.

Besides the road work already underway, a large sloped area appeared to have been logged and much of the soil was overturned. (I called Hospital administration next day for



**JULIE MITCHELL** holds small sod containing camas and grasses dug up from Victoria General Hospital site.

Photo by Katie Stewart

Continued on page 2

clarification and was informed that the area was part of the highways expansion, including a new entrance to the hospital. I do not know why the sloped area has been cleared or why it was such a large area.)

For about three hours we dug up fawn lilies, camas and some sods. I took one small tub of fawn lilies home and transplanted them; the rest were taken to someone's yard, to be dealt with the next day.

The following day I wrote and faxed a letter to Moe Sihota (below).

### Native plant salvage program

Maureen Funk, a member of the Native Plant Study Group who has been regularly transplanting plants from the highway development, suggested at the March 21 NPSG meeting that a native plant salvage program be established.

An organizing meeting will soon be set up. The program will need a list of volunteers, information about the best methods of digging up and transplanting, advance notification of sites so we don't have to scramble to find volunteers and a place to put the plants, a holding facility, tools and transportation.

Bobby Arbess from the Environmental Youth Alliance would like to involve EYA members. Are any GOMPS members interested in either organizing or being part of this program? Please call me at 386-4792 to let me know.

I do not have the time to organize the program, but I do think it is necessary and probably should have been started years ago, considering the amount of development going on around the Greater Victoria area.

There have been well thought out plant rescues in the past, such as the one Willie MacGillivray organized to transplant native plants from the Broadmead subdivision to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary.



**TUB OF ERYTHRONIUMS** await transplanting after being dug up from Hospital site.

Photo by Katie Stewart

### Letter to Moe Sihota

*On March 25 I faxed this letter to Sihota's office and a copy to Corky Evans, Minister of Highways.*

I would like to know when the various ministries will begin consulting with each other when decisions are made that have a huge impact on the environment.

Yesterday I was called by a member of our society regarding the possibility of organizing a native plant rescue along the Island Highway. He said that many erythroniums (fawn lilies) and camas were about to be destroyed near the Victoria General Hospital.

I called a number of people and was able to round up six people, including Julie Mitchell, a woman who has approached your ministry for funding regarding planting native plants along highway rights-of-way (rather ironic, don't you think?).

We went to the hospital site and once again I was furious and appalled at the enormous swath of land taken for the highway project. Another Garry oak meadow destroyed, just like the one at the Millstream Connector, where a

group of people made about a dozen trips to rescue plants last year.

Your ministry funded publication of a brochure called Garry Oak Ecosystems, published in October 1993. It states: "The largest continuous occurrence of Garry oak woodlands was formerly in the urban development centre of Greater Victoria, a region that is now almost completely developed. Parkland and meadows, once common in this area, are in *extreme peril* [italics mine]. The trend continues, with many developments imminent." and "... the Garry oak - grass community has been rated as one of the most endangered in British Columbia" and "The Victoria area has a high concentration of rare species when compared to the rest of the province. Garry oak ecosystems have been identified as a 'hot spot' of biological diversity. In addition to the rarities they contain, the designation reflects their limited extent, the significance of their biodiversity from a provincial perspective, and the trend of accelerating habitat loss."

The Ministry of Forests has published a beautiful brochure on the Coastal Douglas-fir zone, of which the

Garry oak habitat is a small part, with a description of Garry oak ecosystems.

But it seems as if the Ministry of Highways and Transportation is ignorant of local ecosystems when the engineers make their grandiose plans. Did any of the planners consult with local scientists or the Conservation Data Centre or the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory when the plans were drawn up?

Our small society is trying hard to raise public awareness of the Garry oak ecosystem; to lobby politicians such as yourself and local municipal representatives to pass tree protection by-laws (the City of Victoria has yet to do so) and to increase protection; to conduct broom and invasive species removal and to conduct a Garry oak inventory in the four core municipalities.

When we see such outrageous habitat destruction as has occurred — and is still occurring — along the Island Highway, we wonder if it is futile since the local Garry oak habitats are becoming more and more fragmented, despite our letter writing, despite our appearances before local municipal councils pleading for more protection.

Last year we wrote to the Highways Ministry requesting notification of site destruction and blasting ahead of time so we could organize plant removals. In November we received a letter from the coordinator of roadside development stating, "We are currently working on a approach for plant salvaging on highway rights-of-way in response to your request and the work that is currently being done in Washington State in this area. Once this work is completed and integrated into highway construction planning, it is our intention that groups and organizations such as GOMPS will have greater access to removal of vegetation prior to road building getting underway."

Well, four months have elapsed and nothing has changed. We have not been notified, we are trespassing to rescue the few plants we can and Highways

goes about its business.

Dr. Adolph Ceska stated in the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* that there are 90 species of plants considered to be rare in British Columbia that occur only in the Garry oak meadow habitats. What we are rescuing are only a few dominant species of this ecosystem. It is laudable that we are saving those few plants but we can never recreate in our gardens an ecosystem that took thousands of years to develop.

In 1977 the Island Highway was widened and less than 20 years later it is being widened again. For what? To save a few minutes travelling time for people who have chosen to live in this beautiful part of the world? What will happen 20 years from now? Another huge destructive widening? It seems to

me that it is time that we humans adapted to the environment, instead of expecting the environment to adapt to us.

Your government has been progressive in many ways, including some important environmental initiatives. But as far as the Highways Ministry goes, it is in the Dark Ages, despite its ads touting the new and improved Island Highway.

A group of people from various organizations is setting up a Native Plant Salvage Program and we will establish a holding facility. We want the highway work at the Hospital stopped until we have had an opportunity to dig up as much as the plant material as we are able. The Environmental Youth Alliance has a team of young people available to do this work.

## Gardening for Wildlife

### A NATIVE PLANT GARDENING SALE AND DEMONSTRATION

**Saturday, April 20 and Sunday, April 21  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Swan Lake / Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary  
3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria**

**Featuring:**

Sale of native plants, bird feeders, nesting boxes, gardening equipment and supplies

Guided tours of the Native Plant Garden

**Presentations:**

Landscape for you and for wildlife

Attracting birds to your back yard

Insects you want in your back yard

Native plants — hands-on "how-to"

Biodiversity in your backyard

Natural soil conditioning/composting

**COST: \$3 person/\$5 family**

Members and Friends free

For more information, contact Terry Morrison or Joan Cowley  
at the Nature Sanctuary office, 479-0211

# 'Cultivating' native spring flowers

by Hans Roemer

Several people intent on writing about native plant gardening have recently queried me about this topic. So I thought giving a first-hand account of this might be a good idea, at least for the GOMPS audience.

To start with, I must admit that I really cannot claim to be gardening with native plants in the true sense. It is more of a case of helping these plants flourish in a near-natural site surrounded by my driveway, fence and garden.

I started from a grassy area with a few scattered oak trees and many tall bushes of Scotch broom. I had noticed seed pods of camas and shooting star when moving to this property, so I lost no time cutting the old broom. What a satisfying picture afterwards!

Short-lived, I might add, because after only a year incredible masses of broom seedlings covered this area of about 20 by 25 metres. The spring flowers looked promising, however, and appeared grateful for the increase of sunlight. So I kept pulling out what seemed like millions of little broom plants year after year. I think it was in year four when recruitment of new seedlings finally dropped off considerably. Now, after seven years there are nearly no new seedlings.

The soil in this area is very shallow, in some portions only 10 cm over weathered bedrock, in others up to 70 cm. The topsoil has the characteristic black colour found in Garry oak sites. There was one fairly undisturbed part and one part where the ground was compacted and the vegetation was worn off by trucks shortcutting across it.

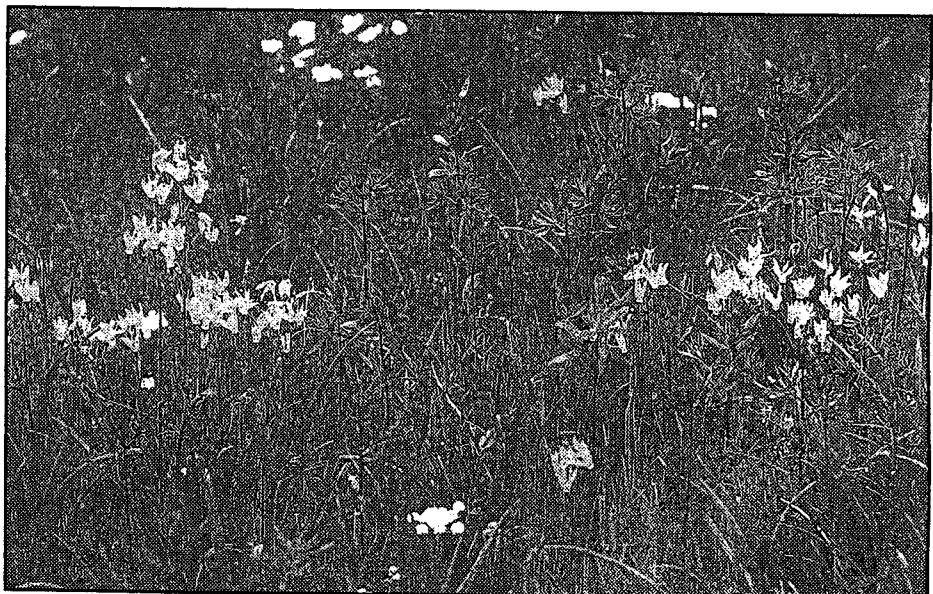
Judging from the undisturbed portion, the original "grass" cover consisted primarily of non-native annual species, native short-stolonized sedge (*Carex inops*), and the omni-present Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*).

Mosses formed part of the vegetation cover on patches with thin soil. Wildflowers on these patches were Hooker's onion (*Allium acuminatum*) and satinflower (*Sisyrinchium douglasii*), initially not strong enough to flower.

Slightly deeper soils supported early camas (*Camassia quamash*), spring gold (*Lomatium utriculatum*), shooting star (*Dodecatheon hendersonii*), harvest brodiaea (*Brodiaea coronaria*) and woodland star (*Lithophragma parviflora*). A small group of fawn lilies (*Erythronium oregonum*) sur-

minimum of competition for the native wildflowers, I ensure that grasses are kept very short during the spring growing season. I take the lawn mower over the area in July when the tall, dry grass gets unsightly and the native plants are ready to scatter their seeds.

I make another pass with the mower in late December or in January to remove any regrowth, especially after a wet fall or in a mild winter. The shooting stars with their ground-hugging, short rosettes of leaves especially seem to like this, because they have increased tremendously after this treatment.



BLACK & WHITE reproduction of a colour photo of Hans Roemer's Garry oak meadow cannot do justice to the shooting stars, spring gold and camas in the meadow.

Photo courtesy of Hans Roemer

rounded a small stump of a long dead Douglas-fir. Deeper soil pockets were occupied by western buttercup (*Ranunculus occidentalis*) and the odd great camas (*Camassia leichtlinii*). California brome (*Bromus carinatus*) and chocolate lily (*Fritillaria lanceolata*) occurred only in close vicinity to the stems of oak trees.

Apart from keeping it free of broom, my "conservation management" of this area is very simple. In order to provide a maximum amount of light and a

All other flowers mentioned have also increased steadily, although more slowly. Hooker's onion, satin flower, and chocolate lily started flowering only after the second year of this regimen and woodland stars went from a few individuals to a concentrated colony.

I believe that the July mowing also prevents further establishment and expansion of the perennial introduced grasses (for instance, orchard grass), which would be the main competition

of the native wildflowers. These grasses are cut before having a chance to spread their seeds. Annual grasses, most of which are introduced species, are less of a problem because of their smaller, ephemeral nature and their weak root systems.

It should go without saying that watering in this area is strictly avoided. Anybody wanting a true "Garry oak meadow" has to put up with the "messy" sight of dry grass. I actually like the golden yellow colour. Why not go with the seasons?

How does this treatment compare with what Mother Nature might have provided? The dry grass that I remove every season by mowing and raking up the clippings may have been removed under natural conditions by periodic

wildfires. Fire would recycle some of the nutrients back into the soil in the form of ashes. It is therefore imaginable that in the long run, my treatment may lead to deficiencies. However, there is no indication of this now, seven years into this experiment. So far, flowers have been more plentiful each successive year.

On two occasions I had the chance of obtaining camas bulbs (both species), and spring gold roots from construction sites. After soil compaction had been lessened through the frost action of two winters, these were used to replant the damaged portions mentioned above. In this situation, both camas species were most successful, while spring gold was slow to establish.

Disturbance in this part is still very obvious by the abundance of cat's ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), a species which also plagues all our other Garry oak meadows, such as on Christmas Hill or Knockan Hill. It is weeds such as this which obviously have no intention of decreasing, once established, that convince me that real native spring flower gardening will be much more difficult than what I have been doing here, especially where we do not have the advantage of a Garry oak site and soil. A lot of experimentation will be needed to move from enhancing these species on a natural site to gardening with them.

*Editors's note: A photo of Hans Roemer's Garry oak meadow is featured in Lynn Milne's 1996 edition of In A Victoria Garden calendar.*



## CAMAS DAY April 28

Come to Camas Day in the beautiful Garry oak meadows of Beacon Hill Park, where natural history and cultural history have been interwoven for centuries.

**GUIDED WALKS** at 1 p.m. with leaders who are experts in their field:

### WILDFLOWERS:

Chris Brayshaw, Robert Ogilvie and Adolf Ceska

### ARCHEOLOGY:

Grant Keddy

### BUTTERFLIES:

Gordon Hart

Meet at the flagpole on the top of Beacon Hill.

Sponsored by the Friends of Beacon Hill Park and the Victoria Natural History Society

## GOMPS Board 1996-97

At the Annual General Meeting on March 26, Janet Simpson and Katie Stewart were acclaimed directors for a two-year term.

The new executive were selected at the Board of Directors meeting on April 4. Tom Gillespie will continue as treasurer, Pierre d'Estrubé as vice-president and Katie as president. Sharron Waite is the new secretary and membership development chair and Paul Gareau, the new program chair.

## Project coordinator needed

GOMPS received funding from the Public Conservation Assistance Fund to conduct an inventory of Garry oaks in the core municipalities. We are close to completing the City of Victoria and have the other three municipalities to do.

Is any GOMPS member willing to coordinate this project? Please contact Sharron Waite at 479-3380 if you can help.

## Welcome new members

Beryl and Harry Borris, Victoria and Imre S. Otvos, Victoria.

# B.C. Native Plant Society struggling with the word 'conservation'

By Katie Stewart

On March 15, almost 60 people met at the Agricultural College in Abbotsford for an organizing meeting of a native plant society for British Columbia. Most of us were from the lower mainland or Vancouver Island; a few had travelled from the interior and northern B.C.

Prior to this meeting, several people in Victoria had met to prepare a draft paper, with a mission statement and objectives. This paper was circulated at the Native Vegetation Symposium at UVic on March 9, the Native Plant Study Group and also photocopied for the participants' input at the Abbotsford meeting.

Officially none of us were there as representatives of any group, so our name tags just indicated our names. Before breaking off into five smaller groups to work on a defining mission statement and, if time, the objectives, we introduced ourselves, and at that point our "affiliations" came out. I was sitting next to Jim Rainer, Pacific field editor for *Wildflower* magazine, and he did a tally, allotting one category per person. The largest group worked for or had their own nurseries or seed collecting or propagating firms; others were worked for government ministries — Highways, Forests (11), Parks — B.C. Hydro, Environment Canada, botanical gardens and consulting firms. I was the only person there representing a conservation group, although several others spoke of conservation concerns.

There was a large contingent from Victoria, including Brenda Costanzo from the UVic Herbarium; Jenny Eastman from the VIPERG Native Vegetation Committee; Adolph and Oluna Ceska, Hans Roemer, Bob Ogilivie, Nancy Field, Linda Beare, John

Olafson, Jean Anne Wightman and several Ministry of Forests officials.

I thought that the draft mission statement was acceptable but there was objection from some people to some of the wording.

"The Society is a coalition whose purpose is, by advancing public knowledge and awareness, the protection, restoration and conservation of British Columbia's native plant species, plant communities and their habitats."

When we reassembled from our small groups we tried to come up with a final statement but did not achieve that. We got as far as "The purpose of the Native Plant Society is to advance knowledge, appreciation and \_\_\_\_\_ (conservation, and stewardship were suggested, but we couldn't reach consensus on either) of B.C.'s native flora and habitats."

One of the organizers took a vote and the room was split, with those wanting "conservation" in the mission statement slightly in the majority. Another organizer asked (despite several objections) who in the group could not live with

the word "conservation" in the mission statement. No one put up their hand. He asked who had to have "conservation" and at least a dozen people put up their hands, including me. One woman said she hadn't driven hundreds of miles not to have conservation included as part of our goals. This issue still has to be resolved.

Apparently the word "conservation" has a wide interpretation. (Just out of curiosity, what does it mean to GOMPS members? If anyone would care to write me a quick note, I'd be interested to see how we interpret this.)

Fifteen people volunteered to be on the steering committee to draft the objectives and formally set up the society. John Olafson and Adolph Ceska from the Victoria Native Plant Study Group volunteered as did Giles Stevenson of Carex Environmental Restoration Group Ltd. in Duncan. They will organize another meeting in Victoria for our input. If you have any ideas regarding society objectives please contact John at 658-8993.

Our next group meeting will be in June and I hope to be able to attend.

## CALENDAR

**WILDFLOWER WALKS ON MOUNT TOLMIE** — Sundays, April 7 and 28, 1-3 p.m. (rain or shine) with Eric Redekop. Meet at summit viewpoint.

**GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE** — Saturday, April 20 and Sunday, April 21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Native plant gardening sale and demonstration.

**EARTHDAY** — Saturday, April 20, 12 p.m.-4 p.m. 15th Annual Earthday walk from Centennial Square to the Legislature.

**NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR** — Saturday, April 27, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**CAMAS DAY** — Sunday, April 28, 1 p.m. in Beacon Hill Park.

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** — Tues., May 7, 7:45 p.m., Janet Simpson's, 1336 Richardson St.

# New membership rates

by Carmel Jorgensen

At the GOMPS annual general meeting, members voted to change the existing membership dues.

An increase was approved to cover the cost of producing the monthly newsletter. The former annual dues of \$12 for an individual membership didn't quite cover the costs of photocopying and mailing the newsletter (approximately 50 cents per issue). Thus, the individual membership dues are now \$15 and family membership dues are \$20.

Members also discussed how the society could accommodate people without the funds to pay the full membership dues.

Most environmental and social organizations have differential memberships for people who are underwaged, for example, students, single parents, people living on minimum wage, people on welfare, people employed seasonally, etc.

Staggered dues help to ensure that a wide cross section of people feel welcome in the organization. They also show that GOMPS is aware that all people can make valuable contributions to their community and that GOMPS doesn't wish to exclude people due to financial means.

There are many people who are currently active within the group, participating in broom pull events, etc., yet they are not members. The annual general dues are the barrier preventing many of these people from joining. Non-membership means they don't have access to the newsletter and are thus cut off from the society's main communication mode.

A new membership rate of \$6 per year was approved by members. This new rate is entitled "youth and associate member." (The word youth is used

because our constitution already has a youth category.)

An associate membership means that members will be on the phone tree and they will be able to receive the newsletter via e-mail. All students at UVic and Camosun have access to free e-mail and will be able to receive the newsletter.

For people who aren't hooked into the electronic communication world, GOMPS decided to make the newsletter available in some public institutions. Members who support this initiative can help cover the costs of this service. And if they wish, members who do re-

ceive the newsletter, can pass the newsletter on to an associate member.

While GOMPS has decided to make the newsletter available to all members through e-mail, the work still needs to be done! Volunteers to begin and maintain this service are needed. (Ed. note: Please contact Katie Stewart if you can help.)

The goal is to make the newsletter available to every member without going into bankruptcy. One idea might be to formally recognize that "family membership" can include households of non-related people and groups of friends and neighbours.

## Victoria Horticultural Society Native Plant Study Group

### NATIVE PLANT and LOW-WATER USE GARDEN TOUR SATURDAY, APRIL 27

**WHY:** To provide an opportunity to see a range of native plant and other low-water-use gardens and landscapes and learn how to create and maintain them; To provide an informal forum to meet others interested in native plants, and learn about related activities, including the formation of a new province-wide organization, the British Columbia Native Plant Society; To raise funds for future conservation projects of the Native Plant Study Group.

**WHAT:** Tickets are in the form of a map and guide with addresses and details about each garden.

Highlights include guided tours of the flowering meadows below Government House, not normally open to the public; Richard Oud's large-size native plants for sale; and private gardens ranging from ornamental to wild and from tiny to large estates.

Displays at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary with gardeners on hand all day to show people the Native Plant Garden and answer questions.

A Social, free and open to the public, between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Nature House at Swan Lake, an opportunity to meet others interested or involved in native plants and water-wise gardens. Refreshments will be sold.

**TICKETS:** Available at most bookstores and nurseries  
and from The Field Naturalist.

**COST:** \$5 per person

Contact Nancy Field, 598-2909 or Marg McKeen, 598-5329  
for more information.

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**GOMPS DISPLAYS:** call Eric Redekop, 595-7270

### FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

### PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE

**SEED/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for information.

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Project coordinator needed. Call Sharon Waite at 479-3380.

### NEWSLETTER

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to address below.

**GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
c/o A-954 QUEENS AVENUE, VICTORIA, B.C. V8T 1M6

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President and Public Relations Chair .....	Katie Stewart	386-4792
Vice-President .....	Pierre d'Estrubé	477-2410
Treasurer and Finance Chair .....	Tom Gillespie	361-1694
E-mail ua620@freenet.victoria.ca		
Secretary and Membership		
Development Chair .....	Sharron Waite	479-3380
Director and Program Chair .....	Paul Gareau	592-9089
E-mail wc294@freenet.victoria.ca		
Director .....	Hal Gibbard	477-2986
Director .....	Janet Simpson	381-6657

## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP DUES:  Donation

Individual \$15  Family \$20 Please send more information about:

Youth and Associate \$6 (no newsletter)  Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants

Gift memberships, send receipt to:  Garry Oak Inventory Project

\_\_\_\_\_

Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)

\_\_\_\_\_  Growing, planting Garry oaks

## Eric Redekop receives award

Congratulations to our hard-working Eric Redekop! In recognition of the hours of work he has put in organizing and participating in broom removal, Saanich Council presented him with a certificate and a plaque at the March 11 council meeting.

*The certificate reads:*

Saanich Parks and Recreation  
Partnership Award

Eric Redekop  
has been honoured for outstanding dedication and effort in contributing to the quality life by working in partnership on Stewardship of Mt. Tolmie Park

Signed Mayor Murray Coell and Director Parks and Recreation Don Hunter



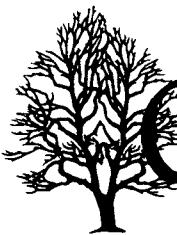
## Thank you, Marnie Phillips

If you have ever seen our folding display board around town, you can bet it was put there by Marnie Phillips. She made numerous phone calls on our behalf to find places to put it up.

Over the last few years the display has been at several Royal B.C. Museum Showcases, Victoria City Hall and Saanich Municipal Hall, Camosun College, CRD offices, government buildings and various workshops such as the Arborists Conference and Native Plant Symposium in Vernon.

Thanks very much for your perseverance and hard work, Marnie.

Eric Redekop has volunteered to take over the responsibility .



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

May 1996, Vol. 3, No. 5

## Esquimalt council approves Salvation Army development proposal

by Katie Stewart

On April 29, Esquimalt council voted unanimously to approve the Salvation Army waterfront development proposal, against the recommendations of the municipality's planning director, Russ Fuoco. He wanted the Salvation Army to set out specific terms describing the kind of family housing to be provided.

Originally the Salvation Army had said the housing was to be mixed seniors and affordable family, then wouldn't what "affordable" meant. At a meeting in February, council asked the Salvation Army to sign an agreement being specific about the housing but by the April meeting they hadn't

done so. Their lawyer instead suggested council trust the Salvation Army and council agreed.

An 11-story apartment and townhouse complex is to be built on flat land bordering Dunsmuir Avenue and on the waterfront slope below, which will destroy most of the last wild habitat in the Inner Harbour.

Council members apparently do not see the value of retaining the sloped land in its undeveloped state even though many people who use the walkway appreciate the wild nature of the land, considering it the best part of the walk. Council could have asked the Salvation Army to come up with an al-

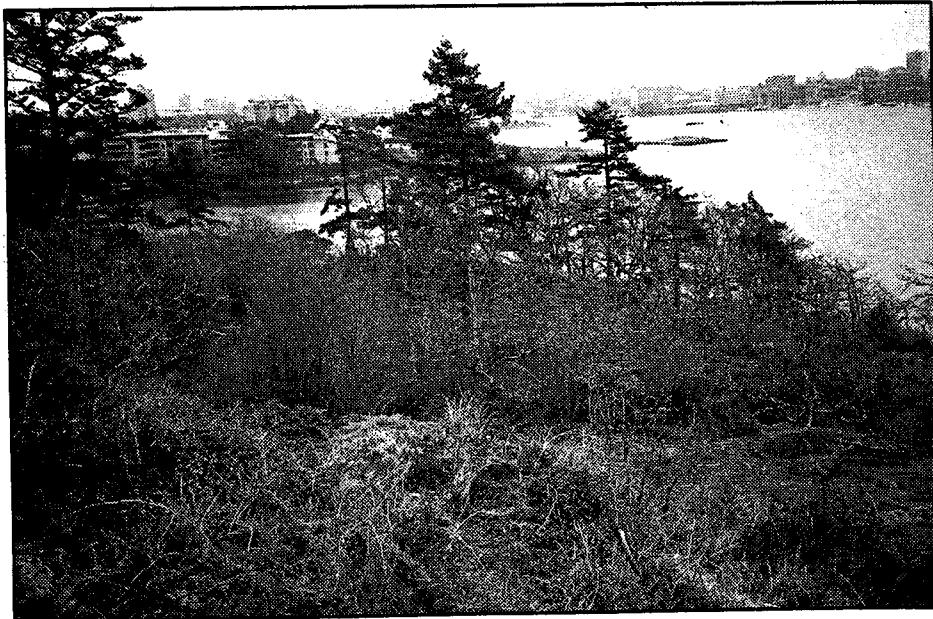
ternate plan which would increase the density of the buildings on the top portion of the site and leave the forested slopes intact. Besides its intrinsic value as a wild area, the land is also valuable as Garry oak habitat.

### Mayor Clement's view

I wrote a letter to Mayor Chris Clement and council in mid-January 1996 and he replied: "I would submit that the area you have addressed in your letter [the slopes of the development] does not qualify as a 'Garry oak meadow.' As an ecologist and consultant who has surveyed that particular property for the Conservation Data Centre, I believe I am qualified to make the following observations:

1. The site does have a few small Garry oak rock outcrops present, which have been seriously impacted by human foot traffic.
2. Much of the site exists as a Douglas-fir-Arbutus-Snowberry unit and to the east are deeper soils with moisture-loving shrubs.
3. Throughout the property are serious indicators of disturbance such as Scotch broom, ivy, blackberry, orchard grass (and other introduced grasses) and *Geranium molle*. Trails and garbage can be found throughout the site."

After discussing with fellow GOMPS BOD directors how exactly a Garry oak meadow is defined, I replied.



INNER HARBOUR AS SEEN from Salvation Army land which is slated for 11-storey development.

Photo by Katie Stewart

Continued on page 2

"I appreciate your clarification regarding my terming the bottom portion of the land a remnant Garry oak meadow. It does, however, have plants associated with Garry oak habitat.

"I visited the site again last Sunday and took a good look around. There are, in my opinion, more than a few small Garry oak [rock outcrops (Mr. Clement's description)] present. I would say there are numerous Garry oaks, as well as other native trees such as arbutus.

"If the criteria for preserving wild space is whether or not there are invasive species, or strewn garbage or trails, few of the now protected areas in the GVRD would fit the bill. Cairn or Highrock Park, which I also visited the same day, is heavily invaded in parts of the park, as is Knockan Hill Park, Mt. Tolmie, Christmas Hill, etc. etc. With some effort, the lower site could be restored (and maintained) as is being done elsewhere in the capital region by groups such as ours. It would be a daunting task and a good community project. That would be much better than dismissing the site as not worth saving because of its invasive plants."

I did not receive a reply from Mayor Clements.

### A different view

I was given a draft copy of a "report on the ecology and significant of the Salvation Army property as Garry oak habitat" prepared by Wayne Erickson, who visited the site several times as a part of his M.Sc. thesis work on Garry oak ecosystems. His viewpoint is the opposite of Mr. Clement's.

"The Garry oak ecosystems are among the most endangered in B.C. and probably in Canada. They have a high perceived value through the eyes of scientists and the public alike. Opportunities for preservation of these ecosystems are not like opportunities for conifer forest or the eastern hardwoods. There are no large geographic areas available. Instead, each small parcel

takes on a high degree of significance. These are the small areas typically compromised by piecemeal development. The lower portion of this Salvation Army property is one such valuable representative of this endangered ecosystem which should be saved from development."

Mr. Erickson's report lists the plant communities and species and oak regeneration.

### West Bay Residents Association

Local residents have been organizing to fight this proposal. On the afternoon of May 20, the newly formed West Bay Residents Association (consisting of a number of members of the West Bay Environmental Group) will have a display set up on the seawalk near Barnes Park and will be again gathering names

on a petition.

On May 22, the Salvation Army will hold a public meeting with architectural drawings and a model of the development at the Recreation Centre at 7 p.m.

The public hearing for the project will be on May 27 at 7 p.m. in the Esquimalt High School Theatre.

The West Bay Residents Association is asking for your support in opposing the Salvation Army's current proposal. Visit the site and see for yourself, then write to Mayor Chris Clement and council, 1229 Esquimalt Road, Victoria, B.C. V9A 3P1; come to the information display on May 20; ask the Salvation Army representatives and the member of Esquimalt council who will chair the May 22 meeting why no environmental assessment has been done and/or come to the public hearing.

## Proposed park integrity at risk

By Katie Stewart

Dawson Reservoir.

Many GOMPS members may be familiar with the planning history of the FAMA subdivision in Brentwood Bay, Central Saanich.

The land along Benvenuto Avenue and Wallace Drive was originally zoned Rural Residential B, with a minimum lot size of 4.1 ha. FAMA's first proposal comprised 13 lots. The property was subsequently rezoned to Residential Estate 4, the minimum lot size decreased to an average of 0.4 ha and the density therefore increased to 60 lots.

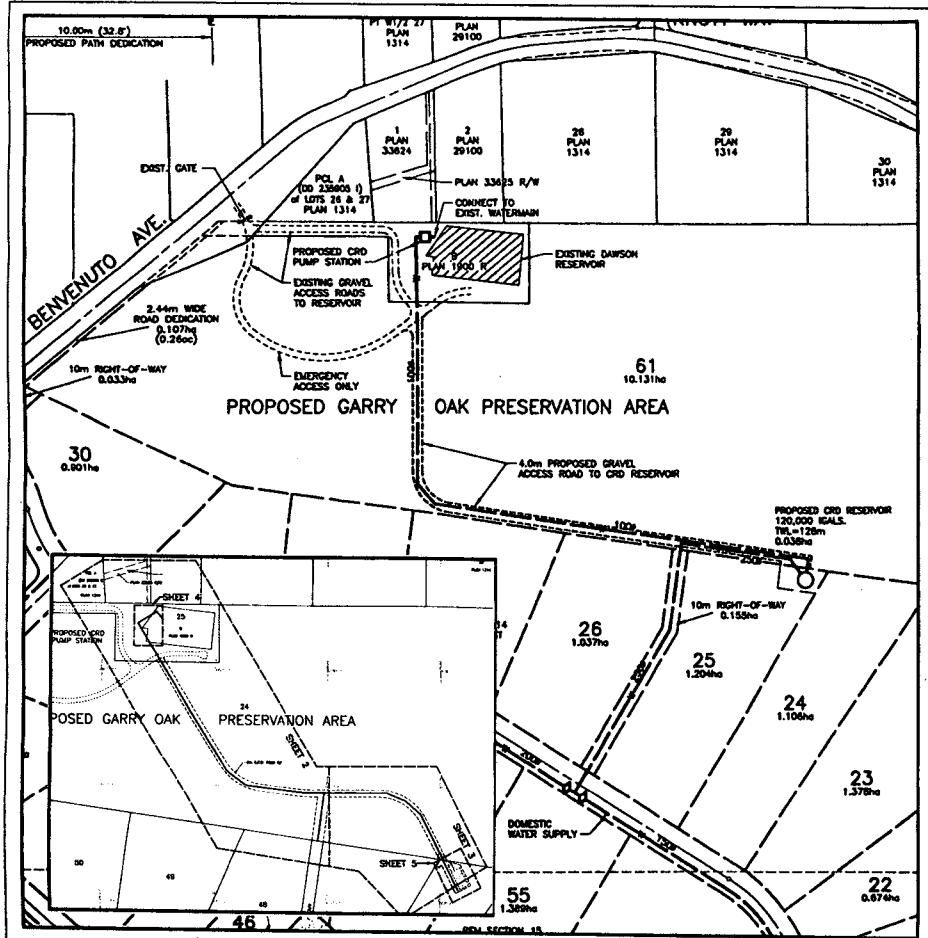
In exchange for this increase in density, FAMA is supposed to give 25 acres of prime Garry oak habitat to the municipality as a park. Unfortunately, not all the Garry oak meadows will be contained within the park.

The Capital Regional District does not consider the existing Dawson water reservoir located at the north end of the property sufficient to supply the needs of the subdivision so another reservoir is to be built, connected from

According to plans presented at the public hearing on March 9, 1995, a 4-m-wide road and waterline was supposed to be constructed south of the Dawson reservoir and along the periphery of the lots to Lot 25 where the new reservoir is to be built. (The 60-lot subdivision plan had originally called for a road to go through the meadow to a reservoir located in the meadow, but naturalists and scientists objected at the public hearing.)

Local residents were alarmed to recently discover new survey stakes in the meadow, indicating a different route. Dr. Robert Thompson confirmed with Central Saanich staff that this was the intention of the survey.

Drs. Richard Hebda, Thompson and David Boag along with GOMPS director Tom Gillespie checked the meadows on May 1. The doctors each wrote to Central Saanich council protesting this change of route after the public hearing. Another resident and GOMPS



# Summit Avenue lots update

by Katie Stewart

The fate of the three City of Victoria-owned lots on Summit Avenue has still not been decided.

On April 3, Linda Grimm of Friends of Summit Park, and I, on behalf of GOMPS, made a presentation before the Advisory Parks and Recreation Commission requesting their support in adding the lots to Summit Park.

FOSP distributed a background packet to each commissioner ahead of time including, among several documents, a photo of the area and a letter I had prepared summarizing the imperilled state of Garry oak ecosystems.

Dierdre Gotto, a member of FOSP

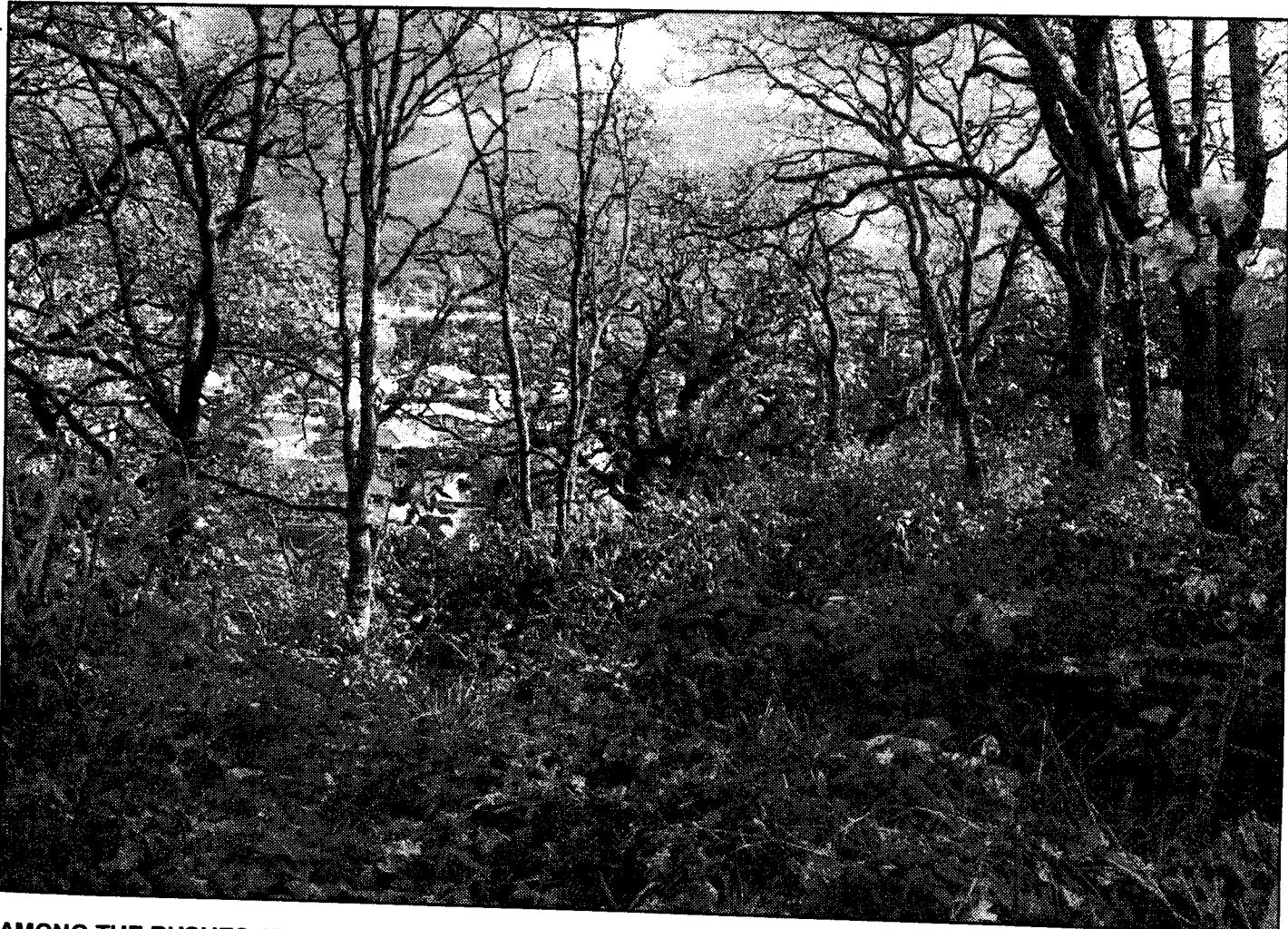
who sits on the commission, had told us that the commission has made the acquisition of Garry oak habitat as one of its goals for this year.

Yet commissioners seemed lukewarm to the idea of acquiring these lots when we spoke at the meeting. One fellow asked how we could be sure that the Garry oaks would survive. Councillor David McLean, whom the commission members seemed to take direction from, said we were "overparked", i.e. that we had more park acreage than other areas in the city. While that may be true, I pointed out, we were talking about rare natural habitat, which you can't compare to a park used for baseball.

Linda Grimm had asked University of Victoria professor and botanist Dr. Nancy Turner to assess the lots (we already had an inventory report prepared by several Camosun Environmental Technological students), so the commission chair asked FOSP to submit a letter from her for the next meeting.

Dr. Turner obliged and sent a letter after spending two hours with Linda looking over the lots a few weeks ago.

In her letter to the commission, Dr. Turner stated: "This is to support, in the strongest possible terms, the city's retention of those lots as natural Garry oak habitat for the residents of the City of Victoria. These lots are invaluable as refugia for important wildlife and



**AMONG THE BUSHES** AT one of the Summit Avenue city-owned lots.

native plant populations. Wild areas such as this, even small ones, are critical for conserving native species — the very species that give Victoria its beauty and character.

“... I have listed some of the native species I observed on this site during a brief survey. Particularly notable are the dense patches of blue camas lilies, and the Garry oaks themselves, including many young and ‘teen-aged’ ones. This is especially, important, because throughout our city, younger Garry oaks are becoming rare. Often the older oaks are spared in developments (although many later succumb); the younger ones are deemed expendable and frequently removed. I am concerned that in the next century, our oak populations will decline even more rapidly than today because of the low numbers of young individuals.

“I grew up in Victoria, and have watched with great sadness over the past several decades as one wild area after another disappeared, for roads, parking lots, housing and shopping malls. I remember many more songbirds in the past. Yellow warblers, chipping sparrows, western tanagers and many others were common right within the city, but I have not seen them for many years. This is because their habitats have disappeared. If we want to keep Victoria as the special, attractive, ‘green’ city it has been, we must start paying closer attention to preserving the natural areas that give it its unique character.

“These lots will contribute significantly to the city’s preserved natural areas, and with the links to Summit Park, through covenants on the adjacent properties, they are even more valuable, serving as an important corridor and extension of the area.”

At our next meeting with the commission on May 1, I asked for the commission’s support and Dierdre made a motion to ask the city to retain the lots as park. She received little support.

One commissioner said he found Dr. Turner’s letter enlightening but said he thought the commission needed more information. Don Anderson, representing the parks staff, said there was enough Garry oak habitat in that part of the city and reiterated Mr. McLean’s position re the Cook-Hillside area having enough park land. However, the same commissioner said the point was that it was Garry oak habitat.

After some discussion, another commissioner made a motion to ask the city to take the lots off the market and to ask the parks staff to compile whatever information is already available on Garry oak meadows in the city. (Don Anderson suggested GOMPS might have some of this information! We have requested the city to acquire the lots and now we’re being asked what might be the best habitat to acquire?)

This, apparently, is supposed to help the commission to decide if the Summit Lots are best preserved or possibly sold so different Garry oak habitat might be acquired. The motion passed.

Where do we go from here? Dierdre Gotto of FOSP contacted city councilor Laura Acton, who had advised FOSP to prepare a submission for the advisory commission. She said that the motion will be on city council’s agenda on May 16.

Linda and I will attend that council meeting. We hope to be able speak to the motion and to ask council to add the lots to the park. While we are pleased that there is a possibility of the lots being taken off the market for now, we would like the issue to be resolved and the lots protected rather than the matter delayed further.

We would appreciate letters of support from GOMPS members to be sent to Victoria city council, #1 Centennial Square, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1P6. If you do write, please send us a copy.

Sheila Orr, Steve Orcherton and David White, three candidates in the Victoria-Hillside riding in the upcoming provincial election, say this is one of their campaign issues.

## CALENDAR

**NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP** — Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m. Botanizing walk at John Dean Park. Meet at the tap in the parking lot.

**WILDFLOWER WALKS ON MOUNT TOLMIE** — Sundays, May 12 and 26, 1-3 p.m. (rain or shine) with Eric Redekop. Meet at summit viewpoint.

**LAKE LOOP** — Monday, May 20, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park. Join a CRD Parks naturalist on a hike around the lake. Meet at information kiosk at Hamsterley Beach parking lot off Brookleigh Road.

**A REALLY BIG DAY!** — Sunday, May 26. Fundraiser for Habitat Acquisition Trust Fund. Search for the highest number of vertebrates in the Victoria check list area. Registration forms at the Field Naturalist, Goldstream Provincial Park Visitor Centre or by calling 479-6622. Deadline for registration is May 19.

**SALVATION ARMY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL INFORMATION MEETING** — May 22, 7 p.m., Esquimalt Recreation Centre, 527 Fraser Street.

**SALVATION ARMY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PUBLIC HEARING** — May 27, 7 p.m. Esquimalt High School Theatre, 847 Colville.

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** — Thursday, June 6, 7:30 p.m. at Paul Gareau’s, 3503 Camcrest Place, Victoria.

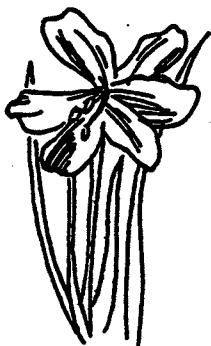
# Behold the bounty of beautiful blooms by bus

by Eric Redekop

The wonderful Garry oak meadows of Victoria are in full bloom right now, and our local transit system makes it convenient and inexpensive for everyone to get out and see them.

## Beacon Hill Park

Our most centrally located meadow areas are found in Beacon Hill Park, which can be reached using either bus #5 (Beacon Hill) or #30/31 (James Bay). Catch the southbound #5 on Douglas Street in front of McDonald's, and get off along Douglas Street by the park. If you board a #30/31 (James Bay) bus, get off behind the Legislature on Superior Street, and walk one block east to the park.



Of the park's 154 acres, only the northwest corner and south side remain in a semi-natural state. If you walk east through the park to the other side, you can catch the #5 (Beacon Hill) bus on Cook Street to return downtown. Of course, if you catch the #5 (South Fairfield) on Fort Street, you can get off on Cook Street and walk west through the park instead.

To get back downtown, catch a #5 (South Fairfield) bus from Douglas Street, or either of the #30 (Carey) or #31 (Glanford) buses on Superior Street.

## Uplands Park

The largest and best example of our rare Garry oak vegetation is Uplands Park, located near the seashore in Oak

Bay. While the park has no improved trails, the fairly level and open terrain has a maze of worn pathways providing easy access to every meadow area. From downtown, catch the northbound #1 (Willows) bus on Douglas Street, and get off on Beach Drive, next to Willows Beach. You can walk to the park along Beach Drive, or along the beach itself, if you prefer.

Since the park is completely surrounded by residential areas and the ocean, you cannot get lost for long. To return downtown, go back to Beach Drive south of Estevan Avenue and wait for a #1 (Richardson) bus.

You can also get to Uplands Park from the UVic exchange, using the #11 (Uplands) bus. If you get off the bus on Lansdowne Road, between Rutland and Midland, the park is behind the homes on your left, and paths enter the park from adjacent dead-end streets. After your stroll, return to UVic on the northbound #11 bus from Midland Road north of Cotswold, or return downtown on the southbound #11 bus from Cadboro Bay Road south of Uplands Road.

## Mount Tolmie Park

Another exceptional example of Garry oak habitat is found in Mount Tolmie Park, near the University of Victoria campus. Your excursion will be amply rewarded, not only by an abundant variety of flowers, but by a 360 degree view of Victoria from its 125 meter summit. From downtown, catch the southbound #14 (University) bus on Douglas Street.

As you near the mountain, you can choose from two itineraries. First, you can get off the bus on Richmond Road at Mayfair Drive and walk up the hill to the viewpoint, descending through park meadows on improved trails to Cedar Hill Cross Road, where you can catch the #14 (Craigflower) bus across the street to return downtown.

Your other option is to get off the bus on Cedar Hill Cross Road at Gordon Head Road, walk through the park to the viewpoint, and descend via Mayfair Drive to Richmond Road, where you can get the #14 (Craigflower) bus back downtown.

## Christmas Hill

For a real workout, you can combine a lakeside stroll with a mountain hike at the Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary. From downtown you can take several buses: the #30 (Carey), #31 (Glanford), #70 (Pat Bay), #72 (Sidney), or #75 (Central Saanich). Get off any of these northbound buses on Vernon Avenue between Saanich Road and Ravine Way, and walk north to the Saanich Municipal Hall. Turn right and go through the parking lot to the back, where you can join the 2.5 kilometer trail that circles Swan Lake.

Allow 40-60 minutes to walk around the lake, or more time if you plan to stop at the Nature Center to see the natural history displays and native plant garden. From the Nature Center, you can walk another 2.5 kilometers to the top of Christmas Hill and back. To return downtown, catch southbound buses on Blanshard Street, behind the Town & Country shopping center.

If you only want to hike Christmas Hill, or if you are coming from either Esquimalt or the university, use the #26



(Crosstown) bus; for those coming from downtown, you can transfer to the #26 at Saanich Road. However you approach the area, get off the bus on Saanich Road



at Mackenzie Avenue and walk west on Mackenzie to Nelthorpe Street. From here, turn left to get to Swan Lake and the Nature Center, or turn right and follow the trail markers up to Christmas Hill; the 1.5 kilometer round trip should take about 40 minutes. Use the #26 (Crosstown) bus for your return trip, transferring to any southbound bus to get back downtown.

### Thetis Park

Finally, if you have more time, you can reach an extensive trail network in Thetis Park, which is linked to more

trails in Francis-King Park to the north-east on Munn's Road, and to Mill Hill Park, across the Trans-Canada Highway to the south.

Use the #50 (Goldstream) bus to get to the CanWest Mall, where you can transfer to a #57 (Humpback) bus, that will take you to the southern perimeter of Thetis Park on the north side of Phelps Road. Take the footpath north, then the right fork along the south side of the lake to the main parking lot (about 1.5 kilometers); trails to Garry oak meadow areas on Seymour Hill begin on the other side.

For your return trip, catch a #57 (Humpback) bus on Phelps Road and transfer to city-bound #50 (Goldstream) bus at CanWest Mall. Remember to take a watch and your Rider's Guide, as buses to this area are somewhat irregular, and do not run on Sundays.

### Other meadows

There are several other smaller meadow areas in the Victoria area which are also easy to reach by bus, including Fairfield Hill Park (#1 Richardson), Gonzales Hill (#1 Richardson, #2 Gonzales), Anderson Hill (#1 Richardson, #2 Oak Bay), Summit Park (#6 Quadra, #20 Cook), Highrock/Cairn Park (#24 Colville, #26 Crosstown), Mount Douglas Park (#28 Majestic), Knockan Hill (#22 Burnside) and John Dean Park and Bear Hill Park (#70 Pat Bay). Other larger meadows are at Please remember that our rare meadow vegetation is extremely sensitive to trampling at this time of year. To avoid damage to plants while visiting, please stay on improved trails or worn pathways, and take photographs only.

For more information or directions, call B.C. Transit (382-6161) or the Swan Lake Nature Center (479-0211).

## Proposed park in peril

*continued from page 3*

considering the decision council had made.

Mr. Achtem said FAMA was not prepared to spend any more money on engineering surveys and studies since Central Saanich had already approved the road change. Former councillor Thompson said he could not recall giving the developer permission. The only discussion he could remember concerned cutting a few trees in the ring road of the subdivision. There was no discussion of the change of route yet council had inadvertently approved it because the new route appeared on a map apparently submitted when FAMA was asking for the tree cutting permit.

Mayor Box asked me if GOMPS was prepared to spend money to help realign the route. I was quite taken aback. Tom pointed out that FAMA was going to make \$4 or \$5 million on the increased housing density and they could afford to pay for any increased engi-

neering expenses in order to preserve the meadows. (FAMA had already benefitted from selling 246 ha of their land holdings for the new Commonwealth Legacy park for \$8 million, \$5 million more than they paid for their 488 ha property 5-1/2 years earlier.)

Mayor Box decided to ask Dr. Hebda and the Environmental Advisory Committee to walk through the meadows and flag the route they considered most suitable. Presumably the engineers will then survey that. It's what should have happened originally. The walk is slated for Sunday, May 12.

Incidentally, the map of the subdivision, park, reservoirs and route still being handed out by Central Saanich's planner does not indicate the route into the meadow, but the route the public was shown at the public hearing.

Letters urging council to keep the road out of the proposed park can be written to District of Central Saanich, 1903 Mount Newton Cross Road, Saanichton, B.C. V8M 2A9.

## *We need your help*

by Katie Stewart

Dear members:

As you can see by the articles in this newsletter, your support is needed. Directors of the GOMPS board speak to municipal councils and committees. We also write letters on behalf of GOMPS but it would be helpful for individual members to do so as well. Our politicians need to hear that we want Garry oak habitat protected. Attend public hearings. Make your voice heard.

Let's bombard Moe Sihota with a hundred letters demanding that he make Garry oak habitat protection a priority. I'd like to see all property which contains Garry oak meadows be required to have restrictive covenants prohibiting destruction of the meadows. For example, some of the FAMA lots contain Garry oak meadows; the developer's spokesman, Keith Hale, has said restrictive covenants will be placed on the Garry oaks. That isn't good enough. The Garry oak ecosystem is too threatened and becoming too fragmented.

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**GOMPS DISPLAYS:** call Eric Redekop, 595-7270

### FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

### PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE

**SEED/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for information.

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Volunteers wanted to count trees! Call project coordinator Paul Gareau 592-9089 for more information.

### NEWSLETTER

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to address below.

**GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
c/o A-954 QUEENS AVENUE, VICTORIA, B.C. V8T 1M6

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President and Public Relations Chair .....	Katie Stewart	386-4792
Vice-President .....	Pierre d'Estrubé	477-2410
Treasurer and Finance Chair .....	Tom Gillespie	361-1694
	E-mail	ua620@freenet.victoria.bc.ca
Secretary and Membership		
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Director and Program Chair .....	Paul Gareau	592-9089
	E-mail	upgareau@islandnet.com
Director .....	Hal Gibbard	477-2986
Director .....	Janet Simpson	381-6657

## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP DUES:  Donation  
 Individual \$15  Family \$20 Please send more information about:  
 Youth and Associate \$6 (no newsletter)  Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants  
 Gift memberships, send receipt to:  Garry Oak Inventory Project  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
 Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)  
 Growing, planting Garry oaks

## Making a difference

By Marnie Phillips

We often think that only major involvement on our part can make a difference in our community. While it is true that considerable time and energy is expended by GOMPS board and volunteers to inform the public and politicians, I would like to make members aware that they, too, expending little energy, can be an influence.

As a resident of Oak Bay, I have contacted the parks department on several occasions, requesting that replacements for diseased trees be Garry oaks (for example, the Garry oak removed at the Oak Bay library). Since the young Garry oaks, at least 8-ft.-tall, are expensive, the taxpayer's phone call expressing interest and concern can help justify this expenditure.

I always mark my calendar and do a follow up phone call around planting time to reinforce my interest. As for success: there are five young trees planted in the last two years in my neighbourhood. Maybe it wasn't my request alone. That's okay. I still feel good about it.

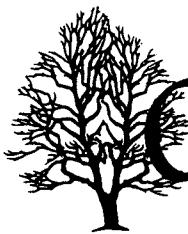
My rational for this expenditure: it is our native ecosystem, drought tolerant with the additional benefits of supporting a variety of wildlife and creating a beautiful landscape. So it is slow to grow — I'm patient.

## Library subscription donations

Thanks to donations from GOMPS member Lynne Shields and friend of GOMPS Leslie Page, subscriptions of the *Garry Oak Leaflet* will be sent to University of Victoria and Camosun College libraries and to the Nellie McClung and Main branches of the Greater Victoria Public Library.

## Welcome new member

Alice Campbell, Victoria.



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

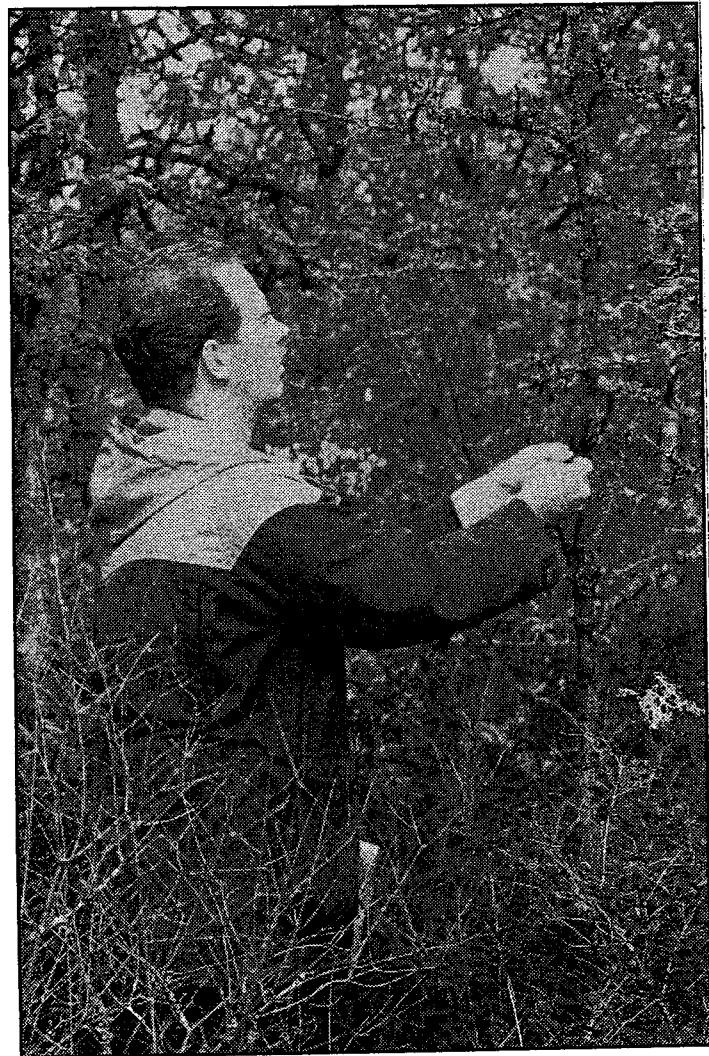
Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

June 1996, Vol. 3, No. 6

## Update: Fama Garry oak park access road

by Katie Stewart

On May 12, Don Bottrell, Robert (Bob) Thompson, David Boag, Andrew Harcombe, Hal Gibbard and I walked through Fama's proposed Garry oak park looking for a better route for the access road/water main (as requested by Mayor Box during our walk through the park on May 9). We spent several hours walking around the site and flagged a route that would not go through the Garry oak meadow.



**DON BOTTRELL FLAGS** a small Garry oak in Fama Holdings' proposed Garry oak park in Central Saanich.

Photo by Katie Stewart

We also discussed where the second reservoir should be located. If possible, we hope that the route could avoid another Garry oak meadow by jogging into the park and the reservoir moved to another lot. I wrote a letter to Central Saanich council outlining our concerns and asked that it be passed on to the Environmental Advisory Committee for their consideration.

During the following week Bob Thompson made up pro forma letters which he distributed to GOMPS and to other people and, as you know, the BOD made its appeal to GOMPS members to mail their copies to council and Fama. By the time our members received the mailout, council had already received 73 pro forma letters and seven letters, including three from GOMPS directors and one from GOMPS member Sheila Mosher, against moving the access road. Council got the message.

By the May 21 council meeting, staff had figured out a loophole: to delay renewing the preliminary subdivision layout approval which had expired (it needs to be renewed every three months), because the access road was not in the public interest.

Council therefore passed this motion: "WHEREAS the area of the Fama property is preserved for the protection of the Garry oak ecosystem; and

"WHEREAS considerable community concern has been expressed with regard to the access road through the Garry oak park; and

"WHEREAS the Approving Officer has requested the direction of Council as to the public interest;

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that in order to reflect the public interest and protect the Garry oak ecosystem, consideration be given to locating the road to minimize the impact on the Garry oak ecosystem while considering the engineering constraints as to grade, etc.; that this location be reviewed in consultation with Andrew Harcombe and the Environmental Advisory Committee; and that a report on the recommended location of the road be brought

*Continued on page 2*

back to Council for review, and that no further work be conducted in the Garry oak preservation area until Council has reviewed the alternate routing."

On May 30, Environmental Advisory Committee members Andrew Harcombe and Jan Garnett, along with John Winsor, Central Saanich's approving officer, and Michael Achtem, the Willis Cunliffe Tait engineer hired by Fama, spent most of the morning evaluating the site.

Jan said that "some bridges are beginning to be built" and that they (she and Andrew) were pushing for the lowest possible route along the top of the property lines and trying to have the reservoir moved.

She said that the CRD has requirements concerning water pressure and flow that have to be met, so that moving the reservoir might not be possible. No decision will be made until after Central Saanich's engineer returns from holiday on June 11.

Fama Holdings was also inundated with letters and pro forma letters. I faxed my letter to President Kassem Aghtai and a day later sent him the B.C. Ministry of Environment brochure on the Garry oak ecosystem and the Ministry of Forest brochure on the ecology of the Coastal Douglas-fir zone.

In response to my letter, Mr. Aghtai did not address what I had written regarding preserving the Garry oak habitat, but instead sent me a pro forma letter of his own, a photocopy of a letter written to the *Times Colonist* concerning the May 22 article titled "20 years of Fama dispute to come to a head in meadow."

In his letter he stated: "The change implemented on the original proposed gravel road was not initiated by Fama but by the following authorities: the Approving Officer in consultation with the Municipal Engineer, the Fire Chief, the Manager of Leisure Services and the Superintendent of Public Services

of the Municipality of Central Saanich. Based on this approved plan, Fama commissioned Willis Cunliffe Tait to do the engineering work and tender documentation. This work was tendered to a local contractor and pursued accordingly."

"... If Fama accepts to do so, and changes the gravel road to satisfy the municipality and interest groups, it should not be penalized by carrying the costs caused by such a change."

Mr. Aghtai's letter went on to complain about the various inequities his company has suffered over the years dealing with Central Saanich council.

I'd like to acknowledge and thank Bob Thompson for his considerable help. He supplied me with a lot of background material about the decision making that had taken place at Central Saanich council regarding this issue, which enabled GOMPS to take a public position.

## Waterfront development approved

by Katie Stewart

Despite considerable community opposition at the public hearing for the Salvation Army waterfront development on May 27, Esquimalt council passed the third and fourth bylaw readings required for the development.

The Salvation Army can now proceed to erect a building which will include 110 "life-lease" condos for seniors worth \$160,000-\$300,000 each, an assembly hall and a worship hall which will rise 11 storeys from the waterfront and 10 "modest-income" townhouses on the flat upper portion of the property.

Many local residents said they opposed the height of the building, fearing it will set a precedent for future buildings in Esquimalt, dominate the

site along the seawalk, ruin the ambience of that stretch of the walkway and obstruct the viewpoint from the top of the sloped area.

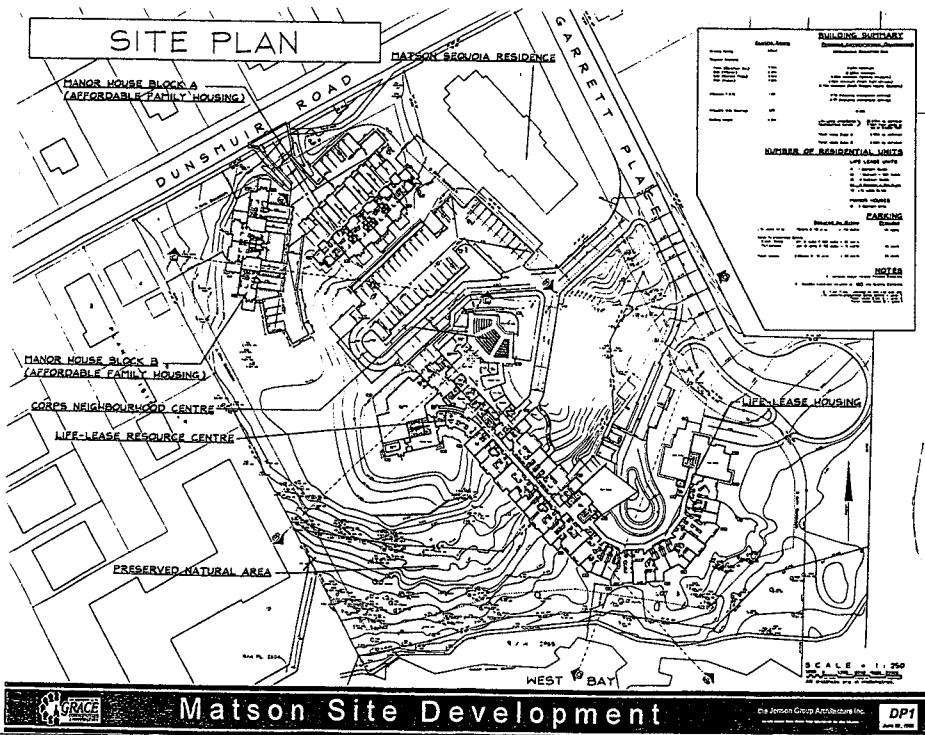
The architect, Darrel Jensen, said the Salvation Army was, in fact, downzoning from the allowed density for the property and only developing 35 per cent of the property. He also said they would be retaining 79 per cent of the 280 trees on site and removing 31 Garry oaks.

Now that the development has been approved, the Salvation Army will give the municipality of Esquimalt the strip of land along the water which is currently a right-of-way being used as part of the seawalk. (The entire property was willed to the Salvation Army, so this generosity is more like reciprocity.)

GOMPS directors Pierre d'Estrubé, Sharron Waite and I each spoke against the proposal, along with several other individuals concerned about the Garry oak habitat, suggesting that only the flat part of the property be developed.

Carmen Cadrin had previously given council information about the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory and referred to that; Edward May of the West Coast Environmental [Ecological] Youth Alliance presented a detailed proposal for the EYA to rehabilitate the sloped areas.

I asked why the developer had not done an environmental assessment, which should have been conducted in a period from mid-February until the end of April. I also asked the mayor about his written comments in his



### Matson Site Development

**11-STOREY CONDO** building will sit atop camas beds on the sloped area.

evaluation of the site done in August 1994 for the Conservation Data Centre: "Should be a CRD park! Esquimalt council should be involved in pushing Salvation Army to set aside."

He replied that he would have liked to see the sloped area be a park but there was no money available to do so, either municipally or regionally. (Former Esquimalt councillor Rod Newman had written to the Provincial Capital Commission on May 30, 1994 requesting that the PCC consider purchasing the land but the PCC replied that it was beyond the financial resources of their Greenways Fund.)

The public hearing was grueling. The last speaker finished at about 1:20 a.m., then the councillors proceeded to discuss the motion. The mayor indicated he could not support the bylaw because the "ecological issues weigh heavy on my mind" and because of the opposition from the West Bay community. Councillor Ray Rice, who was also opposed, likened the controversy to a "mini war in the woods." The outcome was disappointing, but not unexpected with the majority of councillors being pro-development — Councillor Jim

King had indicated to Sharron and I at the May 22 information meeting that he thought it was a great proposal — and the deciding vote was by a councillor who was a developer himself.

The one positive outcome is that the southwest corner of the property the developer calls a "Garry oak grove", which was originally designated a natural area on development plans, will now have a conservation covenant. In researching the development proposal, we noted that Mr. Jensen had indicated at an Esquimalt Environmental Services and Land Use Committee

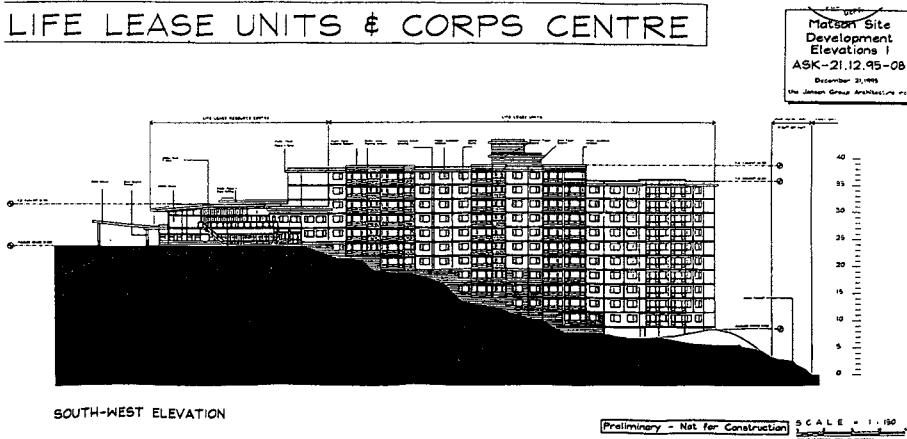
(EESLUC) meeting on September 19, 1995 that a covenant could be considered for this area but no mention of the covenant was included in a letter written to EESLUC dated January 9, 1996, by the Salvation Army's Major K.M. Bonnar.

He wrote: "With respect to your request that in addition to transferring the walkway to the Municipality of Esquimalt as park, that the Salvation Army also agree to transfer as park the area of Garry oak grove in the southwest corner of the parcel, we are unable to agree with this suggestion. As you will note in our landscaping plan, we have no intention whatsoever of developing that particular area and intend to retain it as a preserved natural plan."

At the information meeting on May 22, Sharron read this paragraph out loud and asked why wasn't there going to be a conservation covenant. Mr. Jensen asked her what that was and she elaborated. Following the meeting, the mayor came up to us and told Sharron that he hoped she would bring that up at the public hearing.

We were surprised that by the time of the public hearing, council had apparently convinced the Salvation Army to agree to a covenant. At the public hearing Sharron read aloud a definition of conservation covenant, spoke of its merits and passed on the information in written form to council.

### LIFE LEASE UNITS & CORPS CENTRE



**SIDE VIEW OF THE CONDO** building shows how close the structure will come to the seawalk (between the two vertical lines on the right of the diagram).

# How to remove broom: The short answer, part 2

by Eric Redekop

Bashing broom in the summertime provides an entirely different combination of challenges and opportunities from those of fall and winter broom bashing. As soon as the wildflowers have set seed and drought conditions become established in the meadow, removal activities can resume in earnest.

Before anyone rushes out to bash broom, a little preparation could make the difference between a great summertime workout and a visit to the hospital.

## Dress appropriately

Even though it may be hot, it is very important that broom bashers cover up all exposed skin. Scented sunscreens, shampoos and deodorants can attract flying insects and short sleeves will neither protect skin from scratches nor provide padding for shouldering heavy loads of broom.

Headgear is an absolute must, not only to protect the face and eyes from heat and sunshine, but from dirt and debris. It is also important to have a good supply of fluids to prevent overheating and snacks to restore energy.

## Tools to bring

As for tools, gloves are essential workwear for everyone, while keyhole or swede saws and long-handled loppers or pruners are the preferred items. However, since they will be used at or below ground level and around rocks, new or top-quality tools should probably be left at home.

There are a few good reasons not to use shovels, axes or machetes for bashing broom. In each case, the blade is larger than its target (eg. root, stem), meaning that not only the target will be struck by even the best-placed blow. Resulting soil disturbance has been shown to actually promote sprouting of banked broom seed.

Also, in each case, but particularly with the axe and machete, a vigorous striking motion is required to be effective, which means bystanders could also be struck or injured by accident. While working in a group or in sensitive areas (eg. Garry oak meadows), these tools are also best left at home.

## Handling broom debris

Just as in the fall and winter, broom debris must be bundled and carried to disposal staging areas. Dragging broom stems along the ground can disperse seeds and seriously damage sensitive areas.

However, dead-standing broom, easily recognized by its weathered silver-grey appearance and lack of foliage, can be broken down on site and scattered about to promote soil development, structure, and moisture-retention capacity, provide habitat for insects and other dependent wildlife, as well as to deter prohibited mountain bike traffic and moss poaching.

The general procedure involves several steps. First, lift out most of the dead-standing stems and either break them down or lay them aside for separate treatment later.

Get the most heavily padded volunteer to lop off entangled blackberry canes about knee high, and pile them separately for disposal.

Lower cut canes become hazards, since they can catch on shoe laces or pant cuffs, and thorns are not broken down during composting along with chipped broom debris.

Ask someone with a swede saw to remove all the really mature stems (thick as wrist) by cutting, either as low as possible, or about chest high. The low stump will probably not resprout (too old), but the tall stump can be pulled out during the next winter treatment.

The smallest, knee high stems can be pulled gently, but any other stems remaining should only be cut, below their first lateral root, using loppers or pruners.

Any stump left exposed will probably resprout from dozens of dormant buds just above the first lateral root.

Cutting techniques only apply between Canada Day and Labour Day. While drought conditions become established on a site-specific basis, all work should stop by Labour Day because stems cut afterward may not be under sufficient moisture stress to prevent resprouting, particularly if autumn rains return earlier than late September, and especially if stems have been cut above the roots.

After rains have moistened meadow soils, work can resume using winter techniques and methods, usually by Thanksgiving.

Green broom debris should be cast out in small piles for pick up and transfer to disposal staging areas. Stacking debris with stem butts facing one way makes it easier to pick up and carry, and faster for parks staff to handle for disposal.

When volunteers are carrying debris along trails or other constrained areas, loaded haulers should always be given right-of-way since their vision and mobility is more restricted.

## Insect pests

Another common summertime hazard for broom bashers is wasps. Wasps with nests built in standing broom thickets will swarm if disturbed. Sometimes, but particularly in areas of relief, wasps will build nests in ground cavities where fallen rocks or trees create subsurface hollows.

These nests are very difficult to detect, so great care should be taken, particularly by broom bashers with aller-

gies to stinging insects. Once located, wasp nests should be conspicuously flagged with survey tape to avoid further disturbance.

### Organizing a broom bash

For those readers interested in organizing a project in their neighbourhood, remember that work should not begin until the site has been systematically observed for at least two years, to prevent unnecessary damage to rare or sensitive vegetation.

Local park authorities will also need to be involved, to coordinate debris staging and disposal and to provide permission for volunteer work parties.

Of course, if there are park neighbours or frequent users, these will need to be notified regarding when and where removal activities will occur, and at least three months should be allowed to promote work events in local media.

Finally, learn as much as possible about the enemy and get some experience working with local project leaders before beginning a new project.

### Mount Tolmie Conservancy Association broom bashes

The Mount Tolmie Conservancy Association will host several broom bash events in Mount Tolmie Park this summer.

Events will run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., July 2-4, 14, 21, 28, August 15, 22, and 29. Our goal is to completely clear the east side of the park, from the summit all the way to UVic. As the first step in rehabilitating park meadows, about two-thirds of this area is already cleared.

With Environment Canada Action 21, Saanich Parks and other project partners, our association hopes to replant this zone with 700 native shrubs to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the park this November.

For more information about the association and its activities, please call Eric Redekop at 595-7270.

## Water-wise lawn and garden education program

The Victoria Compost Education Centre has set up a program to teach people how to garden with less water using seven principles.

Coordinator Nancy Field has organized a series of workshops at the centre and at nurseries over the summer. All workshops are \$5, except the lecture on June 23.

- **Saturday, June 15** — "Introduction to water-wise gardening," 10 a.m.-noon, Victoria Compost Education Centre, corner of Chambers and North Park avenues.
- **Sunday, June 16** — "Drought-tolerant and native plants," 1:30-3:30 p.m., Mosswood Perennials on Creed Road (phone the Compost Education Centre for directions)
- **Sunday, June 23** — "Water-wise gardening." Nancy Field will be giving a slide lecture at the Victoria Flower and Garden Festival at the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre at 11:30 a.m. Admission for the 3-day festival, which is open from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday is \$10.
- **"Water-wise Wednesdays," June 12 and 19** — "Introduction to water-

wise gardening," 7-8:30 p.m. at the Compost Education Centre.

- **Monday, June 10** — "Homeowner water-wise gardening assessment" public information meeting. The coordinators of the program will recruit up to 100 homeowners who have gardens, visit their gardens to assess water use, plant groupings, and type of soil etc.

They will make a report and give ongoing support for a couple of transition years to gardeners who wish to adapt water-wise use principles in their gardening. The free meeting will be at 1923 Fernwood Road, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Please register for any of these programs by calling Nancy Field at 385-1379.

## Celebrating natural history in Oak Bay

On Saturday, June 22, GOMPS will be participating in the municipality of Oak Bay's "90 Years Under the Oaks" celebration. Eric Redekop (595-7270) has set up a program for our society, including interpretive walks and setting up our free-standing display. If you can

spare a few hours that day to stand/sit with the display, talk to people and sell memberships, please let Eric know.

Eric will lead 90-minute walks from near the washrooms at Willows Beach, leaving at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

## Langford greenspaces inventory

A group of concerned residents with an objective of compiling an inventory of "special places" in Langford will be holding a meeting on Tuesday, June 14 from 7:30-9 p.m. at 2775 Millstream Road (upstairs of Firehall #1, corner of Goldstream Road).

Guest speaker will be George Sranko, a member of the Provincial Capital Commission Greenways Committee.

Organizer Diane Murray (474-1447) encourages anyone — Langford resident or not — with ideas to contribute, to come.

# Highways Department tacitly approves plant salvaging

by Katie Stewart

On May 8, members of the West Coast Environmental [also known as Ecological] Youth Alliance resumed highway native plant rescuing. (They had been salvaging from time to time whenever they could find volunteers and a vehicle.)

Prior to this particular salvage operation, several people had scouted what areas were left that could be salvaged and determined that there were several which still contained a lot of plant material of the Garry oak ecosystem.

The small group salvaged for a few days then suspended a sign painted "LAWNS TO MEADOWS: YOUTH RESTORING GARRY OAK HABITAT" below the rocks where they were working.

Its presence brought MoTH person-

nel to the site in a hurry. The site where the EYA was salvaging was what the Highways Department considered an active site, with blasting imminent. EYA spokesman Bobby Arbess was told the group could be arrested if they didn't leave but the salvagers stood their ground and refused to leave until all the plant material was removed.

Bobby Arbess contacted me and I called the *Times Colonist*, which sent out a photographer and reporter.

I arrived about an hour before MoTH spokesman Gene Mazza, the landscape coordinator for the Island Highway Project who had been summoned from his office by the first Highway personnel. After considerable negotiating and being promised that they could finish the plant salvaging on that site, the EYA members decided to leave for the day. A meeting was set up with MoTH for

the following morning.

At the meeting JJM Construction supervisor Jim Ross said no one had approached him for permission to salvage and that he would have given it willingly for non-active sites.

I told him that GOMPS had written to MoTH months ago and had received a reply saying that we would be notified when and where we could salvage but we had had no word since then.

Mr. Mazza maintained that I had been asking for a policy that applied anywhere on B.C. Highways but I said we had been specific as to the Island Highway Project. We hadn't realized that we should have been asking the contractor rather than MoTH.

MoTH representative Catherine Abel insisted that any work would have to be supervised and that everyone on site would have to wear hard hats and safety vests. I pointed out that all the rescuers in the room — not all were EYA members — had safely salvaged dozens of times, were aware of safety considerations and had had no accidents. But she said that while the ministry could not officially give approval they could have an understanding with the salvagers that as long as safety considerations were met, they could resume work.

Bobby Arbess pushed for MoTH to supply a vehicle but Ms Abel said that was impossible.

As for future plant rescues, Gene Mazza promised that the EYA, GOMPS and other groups that were interested would be notified in advance of future highway development so there would be adequate lead time to get the plant material.

Since the meeting volunteers — wearing the safety gear — have done



MoTH EMPLOYEE GENE MAZZA negotiates with EYA representative Bobby Arbess on highway site.

Photos by Katie Stewart



**EYA MEMBERS** Bobby Arbess and Edward May carry stretcher of rescued plants from the highway site.

more plant rescuing and taken sods to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary for storage.

A formal native plant salvage program still has to be established, though.

Jeff Ward, regional parks planner at CRD Parks, asked me if GOMPS would like to be involved with planting native plants of the Garry oak ecosystem on the approaches to the new Galloping Goose overpass at Douglas Street

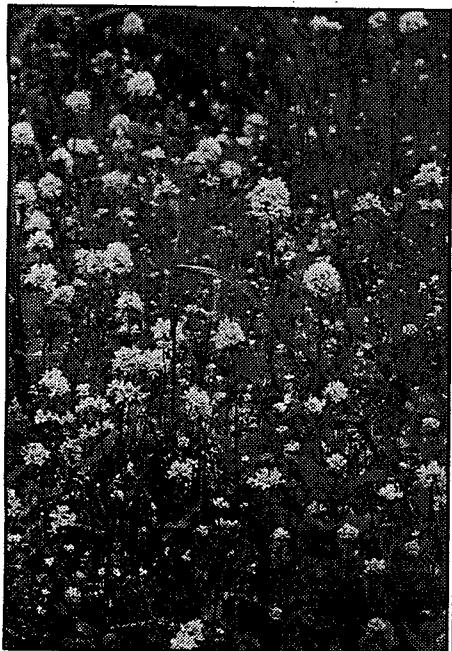
and the Island Highway. CRD Parks is interested in utilizing some of the salvaged plants. We have a meeting set for June 6 with representatives from the EYA and a few other individuals.

The EYA are interested in the proposal but they also have other sites in mind.

On Earth Day members took some salvaged plants in pots to the Legislature lawns, symbolic of what has been destroyed during the highway widening, hoping to present them to Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks representatives.

Unfortunately the gesture did not succeed as no MoELP staff were on hand.

The EYA has launched a "campaign to 'return these highway plant refugees' to suitable urban sites, turning back monoculture lawn space in the city and other ecologically degraded areas into native plant sanctuaries that will form a network of ecologically restored places in the city," according to a press release issued on Earth Day, April 22.



**LICHEN ON GARRY OAK** in Knockan Hill Park prior to flushing of leaves (above). Picture at left is sea blush (*Plectritis congesta*) in bloom, post-broom removal, also taken in the park. The wildflowers are thriving with the broom removed.

Photos by Katie Stewart

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**GOMPS DISPLAYS:** June 3-July 5, Saanich Municipal Hall  
call Eric Redekop, 595-7270

### FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

### PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE

**SEED/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for information.

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Project coordinator needed. Call Sharon Waite at 479-3380.

### NEWSLETTER

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to address below.

**GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
c/o A-954 QUEENS AVENUE, VICTORIA, B.C. V8T 1M6

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President and Public Relations Chair .....	Katie Stewart	386-4792
Vice-President .....	Pierre d'Estrubé	477-2410
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	E-mail	upgareau@islandnet.com
Director .....	Hal Gibbard	477-2986
Director .....	Janet Simpson	381-6657

## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP DUES:  Donation

Individual \$15  Family \$20

Please send more information about:

Youth and Associate \$6 (no newsletter)

Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants

Gift memberships, send receipt to:

Garry Oak Inventory Project

\_\_\_\_\_

Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)

\_\_\_\_\_

Growing, planting Garry oaks

## Grass identifying walk

If you can't tell the difference between non-native orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*) and native grasses such as California brome (*Bromus carinatus*), and would like to know which grasses are part of the Garry oak ecosystem, join Dr. Hans Roemer on Sunday, June 9 for a grass identifying walk on Lone Tree Hill.

Hans suggests bringing a hand lens, some paper and a pen to take notes, and a plant identifying book that has grasses. He has prepared a handout with some information about grasses of the Garry oak ecosystem.

There is a fescue named after Hans which we will be able to see on the hill.

Meet at the CRD parking lot at 9 a.m. The walk will last the morning.

## Welcome new members

Eleanor McKinnon, Victoria; Sheila Midgley, Vancouver and Stephen Stewart, White Rock.

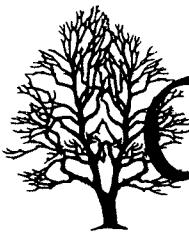
## CALENDAR

**GRASS IDENTIFYING WALK** — Sunday, June 9, 9 a.m. with Dr. Hans Roemer.

**WILDFLOWER WALKS ON MOUNT TOLMIE** — Sundays, June 2, 16, 23 and 30, 1-3 p.m. (rain or shine) with Eric Redekop. Meet at summit viewpoint.

**“NINETY YEARS UNDER THE OAKS”** — Saturday, June 22, Willows Beach, Oak Bay.

**VICTORIA FLOWER & GARDEN FESTIVAL** — Friday, June 21-Sunday, June 23, Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre. On Friday Willie MacGillivray will give a talk at 10 a.m. on Native Plant Gardening “Hands-on, how-to”; on Sunday, Nancy Field will give a talk at 11:30 a.m. on Water-wise Gardening.



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

July/August 1996, Vol. 3, No. 7

## Salt Spring Island protected area proposal

by Katie Stewart

Salt Spring Conservancy and Friends of Ecological Reserves are lobbying the provincial and federal governments to acquire 160-acre Mill Farm on the western slopes of Mount Bruce.

This land is a key component of their Mount Tuam/Mount Bruce/Satellite Channel protected area proposal. Proponents would like to consolidate 7000 acres on both mountains through covenants, formally protecting existing crown land and buying land if neces-

sary. B.C. Conservation Data Centre staff have identified this region for its high conservation values.

According to a press release sent to GOMPS by the FOER in May, much of this land is already in public ownership or under protective designation.

However, Mill Farm, which contains 65 acres of old growth Douglas-fir, is now up for sale by court order as its 10 owners cannot decide how to manage the land, despite buying it 15 years ago to save the land from clearcut logging.

The asking price is \$1.3 million, making it almost impossible for the conservancy to buy, despite vigorous fundraising attempts. They have asked the Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy (a federal-provincial coastal park fund) to buy the property, but the fund will only pay one third of the cost, ostensibly since the farm is not waterfront.

### Features of the entire proposed area are:

Intact parcels of up to 65 acres of

*Continued on page 2*



**VOLUNTEERS REMOVE SOIL FROM HIGHWAY** native plant rescue site to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Many camas and allium bulbs were removed as well as some harvest brodiaea and tiger lily plants which were still in bloom.

Photo by Katie Stewart

continued from page 1

- old growth Douglas-fir — largest, least modified in the Islands Trust area
- The largest Garry oak tree in B.C.
- One of the largest stretches of continuous second growth forest left in the Trusts area
- Intact wildflower and Garry oak meadow habitat of up to 200 acres
- At least 30 threatened and vulnerable wildflower species
- Three endangered plant species: phantom orchid (*Cephalanthera austinae*), yellow montane violet (*Viola praemorsa*) and scalepod (*Idahoa scapagera*)
- Two endangered butterfly species: Propertius Dusty Wings and Zerene's Fritillary

The last remaining wild area on Salt Spring Island for bear and cougar

Eagle nests

The highest peaks in the Gulf Islands, with stunning views over Georgia and Haro Straits

Continuous undeveloped pebble beaches for six miles

Spectacular waterfalls into the sea

Lush cedar and sword fern swamps

#### Focus

600 acres of Ecological Reserve

1800 acres of Crown Reserve

2300 acres of private Forest Reserve, potentially under Forest Practices Code and Biodiversity Guidelines

439 acres with zero densities

130 acres already under covenants

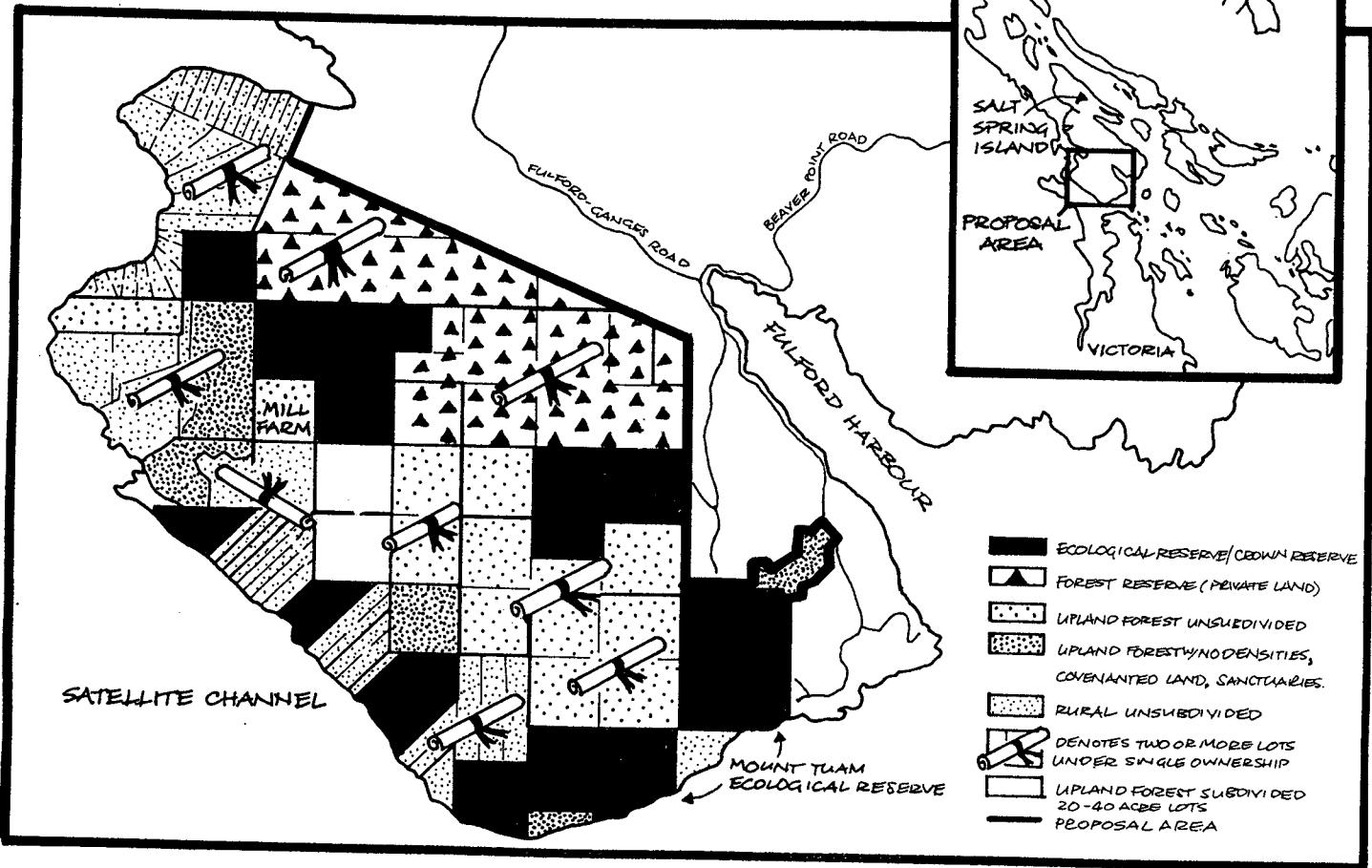
160 acres are a Buddhist retreat

± 2000 acres of key undeveloped land — priority candidates for conservation covenants because they are areas of "ecological significance," available for income tax credits under new legislation.

Salt Spring Conservancy has made a video, "Save Mill Farm for Parkland," which features supporters talking about why the farm should be preserved. If you are interested in finding more about the protected area plan or would like to make a financial contribution, phone 653-4632 or fax 653-4536.

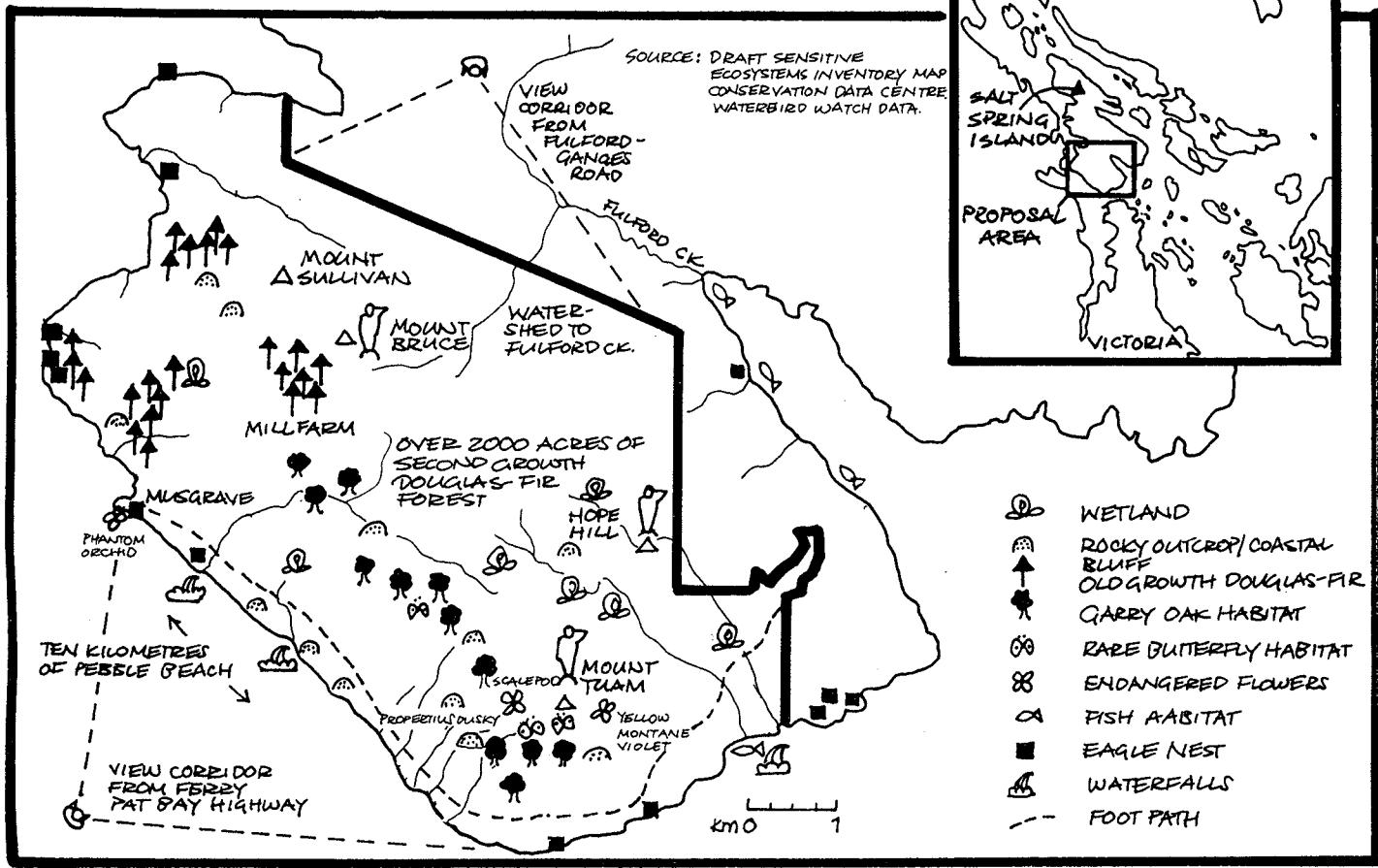
Letters of support for PMHL acquiring Mill Farm can be written to: Bill Henwood, Senior Planner, New Park Establishment, 300-300 West Georgia St., Vancouver, B.C. V6B 6C6.

## MOUNT TUAM/MOUNT BRUCE PROTECTED AREA PROPOSAL OVERVIEW OF EXISTING LAND STATUS



# Mount Tuam / Mount Bruce Protected Area Proposal

## RARE WILDLIFE & HABITAT FEATURES



## Salvation Army shelves plans

by Katie Stewart

The Salvation Army has decided not to proceed with its controversial 11-story waterfront development which was recently approved by Esquimalt Council. Opponents to the development were shocked by the sudden July 8 decision, six weeks after the project was approved following a grueling public hearing.

The Salvation Army had already begun advertising the proposed life-lease condos in the *Times Colonist* and had set up a sales office on site to handle inquiries.

The army's local spokesperson, Ma-

yor Martyn Goodger, explained the decision was strictly financial, citing the difficulties Grace Communities Corp., the army's development branch, was having in selling similar projects in London, Ontario and Abbotsford.

According to Major Goodger, local opposition had no part in the decision.

Restrictive covenants for the southwest Garry oak woodland are already in place, so even if the property is sold, the covenants will stay with the property.

There is some concern, however, among West Bay residents that the covenants are not adequate. Mayor Chris

Clement has asked Carmen Cadrin, both a resident and former employee with the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory, to assess the covenants.

Prior to this, Ms Cadrin had already passed on to council a copy of the Spring 1996 Natural Resources Law Newsletter, which contained the article "Conservation Covenants — Useless Without Teeth" by lawyer Wendy Zimmermann.

In the article, she pointed out that without provisions for enforcement, compliance is often unlikely. As she says, "without teeth, a covenant is just a piece of paper."

*Continued on page 6*

# Highways ministry official explains “environmental choice”



**ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH ALLIANCE** member Sol labels pots of bulbs collected from the highway. Plant material is being stored in the shadehouse at Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary until it is determined where it will be transplanted.

Photo by Katie Stewart

by Katie Stewart

On Monday, June 19 I received a reply (dated June 14) to the letter I sent Moe Sihota in March regarding the environmental damage and destruction that the Island Highway widening project had caused several Garry oak meadows and roadsides (see April newsletter).

This letter came four days before the MoTH June 20 deadline given the Environmental Youth Alliance and others including myself who were doing plant rescues.

“The Honourable Moe Sihota has asked me to respond to your letter of March 25, 1996, regarding the impacts of the Island Highway construction on the Garry oak meadow habitats in the Greater Victoria area. I apologize for the delay in responding.

“The province has an established referral system whereby project proposals of one provincial ministry are sent to other provincial ministries for review and comment. B.C. Environment regional staff have reviewed the highway expansion plans and found that the proposed route minimized overall environmental impacts.

“I have asked the Nanaimo regional office to contact the Ministry of Transportation and Highways Environment Section regarding provision of the time frame of works to your society in or around Garry oak meadow habitats. I expect you will be hearing from that ministry in the near future [ed. note: not a word].

“Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. I commend the efforts of your society to preserve threatened native plants.

Yours sincerely,

Jon O’Riordan

Assistant Deputy Minister  
Regional Operations Manager

cc: The Honourable Corky Evans, MoTH  
Mike Whately, Regional Fish and Wildlife Manager”

## ***FAMA meadow route changed***

by Katie Stewart

Central Saanich councillors voted in late June to approve the second of two routes recommended by Andrew Harcombe, head of the municipality’s Environmental Advisory Committee. The final decision had to be made by Central Saanich’s approving officer, John Winsor.

Since then, Jan Garnett, a member of the EAC, told GOMPS that Mr. Harcombe had received a copy of a letter Mr. Winsor had written to FAMA. He gave the developer

permission to continue with its development permit with the stipulation that they only use route two — the ideal route — which goes down the road and along the property lines. The matter of who is going to pay for the changes is still not settled.

Thanks to all GOMPS members who sent either letters and/or the pro forma letters in May to Central Saanich council and to FAMA.

We will still have to keep a close eye on how the park will be managed.

# Couple donates home as park

**Pat and Jean Strachan arrange the first such park dedication under recently passed B.C. legislation**

By T.K. Demmings  
*Goldstream News Gazette*

Paul and Jean Strachan didn't want to see the land they've lived on since 1942 subdivided so they've made their Florence Lake property a park.

In doing so, they've helped Langford achieve a municipal first.

Using new provincial legislation, the Strachans gave their 1-3/4 acres of land over to the Nature Conservancy of Canada and set up roles about what Langford can and cannot do with the land.

"I just couldn't bear the thought of this property being bulldozed," Jean Strachan said.

As she walks the Setchfield Road property, she points out sprouting Easter lilies, blooming daffodils and strong Garry oaks.

She can rest assured now that the spot won't be disturbed, even after she dies.

"We can use the property for the rest of our lives or until we go into a nursing home," Pat Strachan said, adding they still have to pay taxes until that time.

It's the first time in B.C. that a municipality has entered into such an arrangement, says Bill Turner, a land securement officer with the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

The conservancy is the only national charity dedicated to preserving biological diversity by purchasing and protecting ecologically sensitive natural areas.

Turner said a 1994 change to Section 215 of the Land Title Act made the covenant possible.

"It's the first use of a conservation covenant on municipal park land," he said.

B.C. and Nova Scotia are the only provinces that allow groups like the Nature Conservancy to place covenants on Municipal land.

Langford clerk-administrator Geoff Pearce said the process was a "complex legal wrangle," made more challenging because no one had tried it before.

But by December of last year, the details had been worked out and Langford was able to pass the Rowena Strachan gift bylaw. Rowena is Jean Strachan's second name.

Councillor Denise Blackwell said the municipality is grateful for the land.

"It's a lovely gesture. (Pat Strachan) is such a wonderful man, and he's done so much for his community."

For the Strachans, the knowledge that their land will be left intact is a relief.

They've even written into the 14-page covenant a section which prevents their cats' graves from being dug up.

Strachan says his kids took the news pretty well, although he added, laughing, that it wouldn't matter much if they didn't.

The property is divided into three sections, each with explicit directions on what kind of use will be allowed.

The area where the house now sits could be used as a museum, caretaker's residence or picnic grounds.

The area where the cats rest and the Easter lilies bloom the best cannot be dug up. As well, on the rest of the property, no non-native plants can be introduced or trees cut down.

"The covenant is perpetual, so the Strachans know that even 200 years from now, that land will still be used as a park."

*Reprinted courtesy of the Goldstream News Gazette (Wednesday, March 27, 1996 edition).*



**DR. HANS ROEMER** sits among some *Festuca idahoensis var. roemerii* (Roemer's fescue) near the top of Lone Tree Hill. There are a few grassy knolls consisting of almost all native plants, but unfortunately they are quite a rarity. Hans led 16 or 17 people on a grass identifying walk in June.

Photo by Katie Stewart

# Friends of Summit Park exploits

By Dierdre Gotto

Two FOSP members met with Steve Orcherton, our new MLA for Hillside-Quadra, in early July to talk of Summit Park concerns.

Steve grew up in this neighbourhood and played in Summit Park as a kid so he is as keen as we are to see it stay as it is. We discussed our goal of adding three city-owned lots on Summit Avenue to the park and of protecting the wild water district lands which are tucked in beside the park.

These public lands belong to us and offer valuable green space and a heritage landscape of Garry oak meadows; it only makes sense to protect and enjoy them.

We have found that Summit Park issues are an integral part of neighbourhood issues just as the park is part of the neighbourhood. For example, in May members of the Sikh temple located at the corners of Blackwood Street and Topaz Avenue asked Victoria City council for permission to relocate the fence on the Smith Hill reservoir, thereby creating more parking spaces. The proposal initially included building a connecting pathway through one of the meadows to the temple. Though this proposal went nowhere due to FOSP intervention at council, the problem of parking for the temple is still around and FOSP wants to be part of the solution.

With Steve Orcherton's help, we are planning a meeting with temple representatives to discuss alternatives.

FOSP will also be sending a representative to a founding neighbourhood council meeting in July to advocate not only for the park but for the "backyard" oaks which are such a distinctive part of the neighbourhood. Did I hear "tree bylaw"?

□

Our focus in the park recently has been on mowing. Five of us met with four city staff at the park on a hot July

afternoon to discuss maintenance matters, such as when and how much to mow the tall grasses in the park.

The city is concerned about fire hazard; we are concerned about oak seedlings getting a chance to grow up and wildflowers completing their natural seeding cycles.

We reached some good compromises: no mowing before July 1; patchwork mowing rather than large swathes; 3-foot perimeters of no mowing around trees; staking seedlings and wildflower populations (by FOSP volunteers); alerting mowing staff not to trespass; and educating staff on maintenance in a sensitive Garry oak meadow landscape.

GOMPS member Eric Redekop, who was also present at the meeting, offered to spearhead an on-site workshop/seminar in the spring for maintenance staff from all core municipalities. We all share the same landscape regardless of boundaries and can learn from each other.

Joe Daly, a parks employee, suggested that FOSP map the vegetation in the park, as Friends of Beacon Hill are doing in that park. That way, a more accurate mowing regimen based on wildflower seed ripening can be adhered to, since some wildflowers such as shooting star, fawn lily and camas finish ripening while other plants are still in bloom.

It will be a long term project and FOSP will get to know the park intimately. While camas is one of the dominant wildflowers in abundance, some species such as chocolate lily only have a few specimens.

FOSP were impressed with the city's willingness to listen and learn and we thank Joe Daly, Dave Aason, Bruce McCowan and Chuck Kerr of the City of Victoria for their time and cooperation.

Stay tuned for future exploits of Friends of Summit Park. In the meantime, come and enjoy a sunset in the

park. The view across the reservoir and over the canopy of the oaks to the west can't be beat!

□

## Editor's note: Re: Summit Avenue lots.

Several FOSP members and I went to the City of Victoria's Committee of the Whole meeting on June 13, expecting that the issue would be discussed. I had prepared a package for each councillor consisting of copies of letters from Drs. Nancy Turner, Hans Roemer and Briony Penn and myself and some CRD Parks figures on Garry oak habitat.

We had been told a few days before the meeting that we could not address the committee, contrary to our expectations. Councillor David McLean had also told FOSP member Linda Grimm on June 12 that we would have an opportunity to talk at the next council meeting two weeks later.

Instead, McLean made a motion to take the matter back to the Advisory Parks and Recreation Committee because no report had yet been made on the status of Garry oak meadows left in the city. It was frustrating since we had already been to two advisory committee meetings and two council meetings.

So ... the matter appears to be on the back burner, but the issue will not go away.

---

Salvation Army continued from page 3

□

According to Julie Flatt, spokesperson for the West Bay Ratepayers Association, two West Bay residents are contemplating a law suit against an Esquimalt councillor who is alleged to be a Salvation Army member.

They contend he should not have voted on the Salvation Army's proposal. Their decision on whether they will proceed will be made within the next week.

# Down and Dirty with Native Plants

with VIPIRG's Native Vegetation Committee

by Carmel Jorgensen

CFUV's newest 'swivel chair' show: bi-monthly Tuesdays at 8 pm.

## Why a show about native plants and the down and dirty issues surrounding them?

In the town where Butchart equals Victoria and petro-pumped english flowers and invasive plants dominate where homes, highways and mono-yawn-lawns allow....

*Camassatiflowerindianplumdevil'sclubred-floweringcurrentredalderredosier  
dogwoodstingingnettlepseudotsugamenziesiisalixspp.cedarswampmeadowgarryoak  
firstrnationstraditionalecologicalknowledgessoverientyculturalheritageecologically  
soundssenseofplacepeacejusticeharmonywithpeopleplantsandplace*

*are just plants and issues and things we don't hear enough of in the media.*

Hear us share knowledge, ideas, and issues about native plants local to the Victoria community. We tap into the breadth and depth of bioregional knowledge and activism in the community: and bring it to you on air through a mix of interviews, radio field trips, lectures, music and more. And venture beyond the Island to find out what is going on in other communities and what the peoples there are up to.

## More reasons to tune in:

The study of indigenous plants increases our awareness and knowledge of local plants, their habitats and ecological interrelationships.

Native plants are important cultural, dietary, and medicinal components for indigenous peoples.

Learning about native plants and acting positively in the community is one way people can reestablish their sense of integrity with place.

Native plants attract native animals, they are ecologically sound and actively support the continuum of a healthy landscape.

Natural areas offer opportunities for rest and reflection upon the native environment and they are visible reminders of the need to preserve both the local ecosystem and its cultural heritage.

*Weaving together people, plants and place*

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**GOMPS DISPLAYS:** call Eric Redekop, 595-7270

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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Individual \$15  Family \$20

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Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants

Gift memberships, send receipt to:

Garry Oak Inventory Project

\_\_\_\_\_

Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)

\_\_\_\_\_

Growing, planting Garry oaks

## Gardening for Wildlife a great success

*This article is from the Summer 1996 Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary newsletter*

This spring's fund-raising event, the Gardening for Wildlife native plant sale, was a great success!

Over 760 people attended the sale and presentations on April 20 and 21. We sold over 1,000 plants (70 or so different species) during these two days and took orders for over 1,000 more.

We were more than pleased (overwhelmed may be more like it) by the response, and exceeded our expectations for this first-time effort with a net profit of around \$5,700.

It was nice to see such a high level of interest in gardening with native plants. We are happy to fill a role in promoting that concept, and provide some revenue for the sanctuary at the same time.

Mark April 19 and 20, 1997 on your calendars, for our second annual Gardening for Wildlife event!

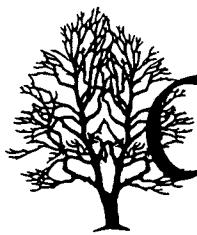
## Welcome new members

Robert Thompson and Heather Biasio, Saanichton and Linda Grimm, Victoria.

## CALENDAR

**BROOM BASHES** — Mount Tolmie Park, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Thursdays, August 15, 22 and 29. Bring your own gloves, loppers, keyhole or swede saws and water. For more information contact Eric Redekop at 592-7270.

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** — Thursday, September 5, 7:30 p.m. at Hal Gibbard's, 1439 Wende Road, Victoria.



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

September 1996, Vol. 3, No. 8

## East Vancouver Island Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory

*Reprinted with permission from the March 1995 British Columbia Conservation Data Centre newsletter*

The human desire to live in a comfortable environment and beautiful landscape has too often led to the destruction of that very same landscape. The southeastern portion of Vancouver Island and adjacent Gulf Islands are a prime example of this complex situation.

Situated within the rainshadow of the Olympic and Vancouver Island mountains, the area has warm, dry summers and mild, wet winters. This Mediterranean climate, coupled with the beauty

of the Island landscape, has attracted settlement over thousands of years. Although the First Nations peoples of the area had achieved some balance of distribution of human population and resource use, the arrival of industrial society has completely shattered this equilibrium.

The fragmentation and loss of natural habitats to subdivisions and urban encroachment is a burgeoning threat to the biological richness characteristic of the area. The last 25 years have seen major losses of Vancouver Island's unique and sensitive ecosystems. Within the last decade, development

pressures have become so intense as to threaten many individual species and natural ecosystems with extirpation or extinction.

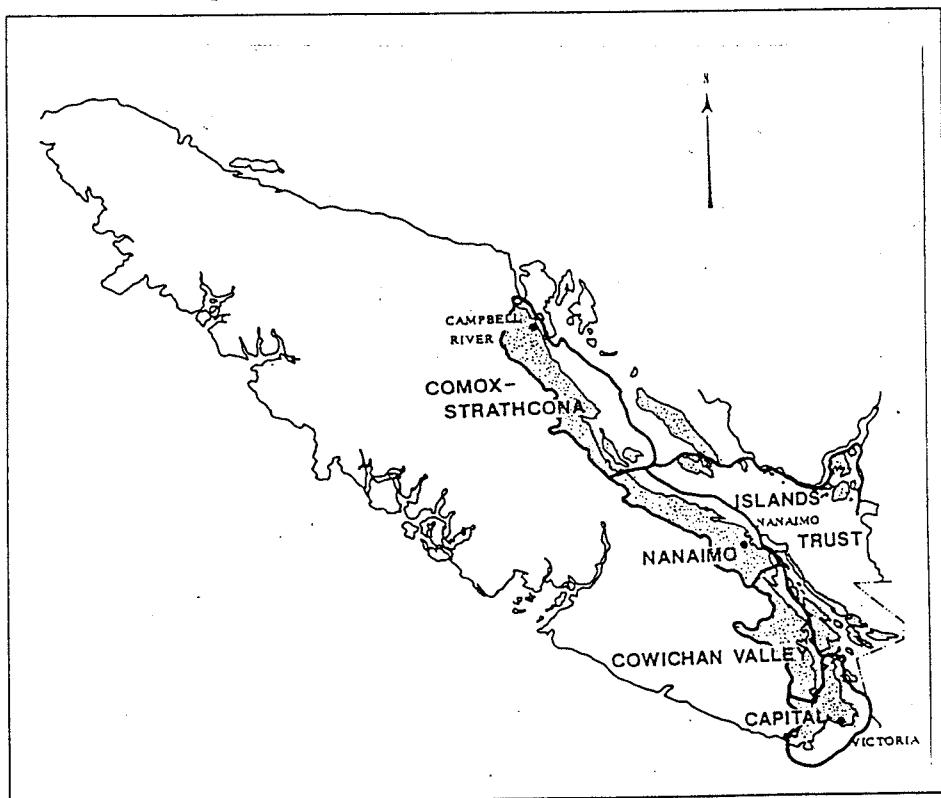
At present, there is no detailed inventory of these threatened ecosystems or the species that inhabit them. And yet decision-makers, planners, and resource managers at all levels of government are required to make decisions on further urban and resource developments on a daily basis.

Too often the results of these decisions result in conflict between preservation interests and development interests. A systematic inventory, identification, mapping, classification, and evaluation of these disappearing ecosystems would enable resource agencies to set priorities for their management and protection.

Over the past two years, representatives from provincial and federal governments have come together with a common goal: to identify, locate and map the sensitive ecosystems remaining on southeast Vancouver Island and adjacent Gulf Islands.

Specifically, the area of interest is the eastern Vancouver Island coastal plain, from Victoria to Campbell River, and adjacent islands. The boundary of the study area is defined by the boundaries of the Nanaimo Lowland Ecosection of Eastern Vancouver Island Ecoregion and the Strait of Georgia Ecoregion (excluding Texada and more northerly islands). This boundary corresponds closely to the Coastal Douglas-fir

*Continued on page 2*



*continued from page 1*

Biogeoclimatic Zone and includes a small portion of the driest part of the Coastal Western Hemlock Zone.

In order to make this project feasible and to maximize the opportunity for using regional knowledge, the study area has been split into five areas, divided according to the boundaries of four regional districts on Vancouver Island proper, plus the Islands Trust area of responsibility.

The five areas of study are named according to the jurisdiction as follows: Capital Regional District, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Nanaimo Regional District, Comox-Strathcona Regional District and Islands Trust.

This multi-phase project is being carried out under the direction of an interagency Technical Advisory Group

that includes the Canadian Wildlife Service, B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (MOELP Regional Habitat and Wildlife), the Habitat Conservation Fund, and the B.C. Conservation Data Centre. Based on a recognized need for such a project, governments at the municipal and regional levels are also providing funding support.

The initial phase of the project was air photo interpretation of the study area, emphasizing the identification of sensitive, rare and depleted ecosystems. All wetlands and riparian ecosystems are included in the study, as well as seasonally flooded agricultural lands because of their importance as wintering habitat for waterfowl.

Some of the more-known non-wetland ecosystems being inventoried are Garry oak woodlands, old conifer-

ous forests (remains of older selectively logged forests that retain important old growth attributes are included here), and herbaceous communities of southwest slopes and coastal bluffs. Less well-known ecosystems, such as the coast Fescue-Junegrass grasslands, have been identified. Extensive field-checking and data collection is almost complete.

The final product of this project will be a set of maps at 1:20,000 identifying the location of the sensitive ecosystems remaining within the study area. Known locations of rare and threatened vascular plants and vertebrate animals (as recorded by the CDC) will be added to the maps. Such a product will serve as a proactive approach to resource management, providing the basis for a Conservation Strategy for the Southeast Coast of Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands.

## **Public meeting on the Greater Victoria Water Supply**

### **Special Commission on the Conservation and Protection of the Greater Victoria Water Supply**

Special Commissioner David Perry invites public participation at the public presentation and discussion of his preliminary work on the future governance of Greater Victoria's water supply, water demand management and land use issues, September 14 and 15.

Pre-registration for facilitated group discussions which will be held both days is necessary (phone the Special Commission secretariat at 356-2190). Pre-registrations for the presentations or open house is not required.

Saturday theme: "Models of governance structure for Greater Victoria's water supply and aspects of a new mandate."

Sunday's theme: Morning — "Land use: an overview of options and procedures for a land use plan." Afternoon — "Water Demand Management: what is it, do we need it and what can be done."

Included in the afternoon proceedings is a presentation by Allan Dietemann from Seattle's Water Conservation Office on Seattle's Demand

Management Program.

For details on time and location, see the *Garry Oak Leaflet* calendar.

## **Teaching about backyard diversity**

Educators among you might be interested in utilizing *Backyard Diversity and Beyond: A Handbook for Students and Teachers* by Deanna Binder, Stewart Guy and Briony Penn. This resource binder is designed to help the intermediate grades explore the richness of life on earth — from micro-organisms to old growth forests.

It focuses first on the student's own local area, then on biodiversity of British Columbia as a whole, and finally with a look at global biodiversity.

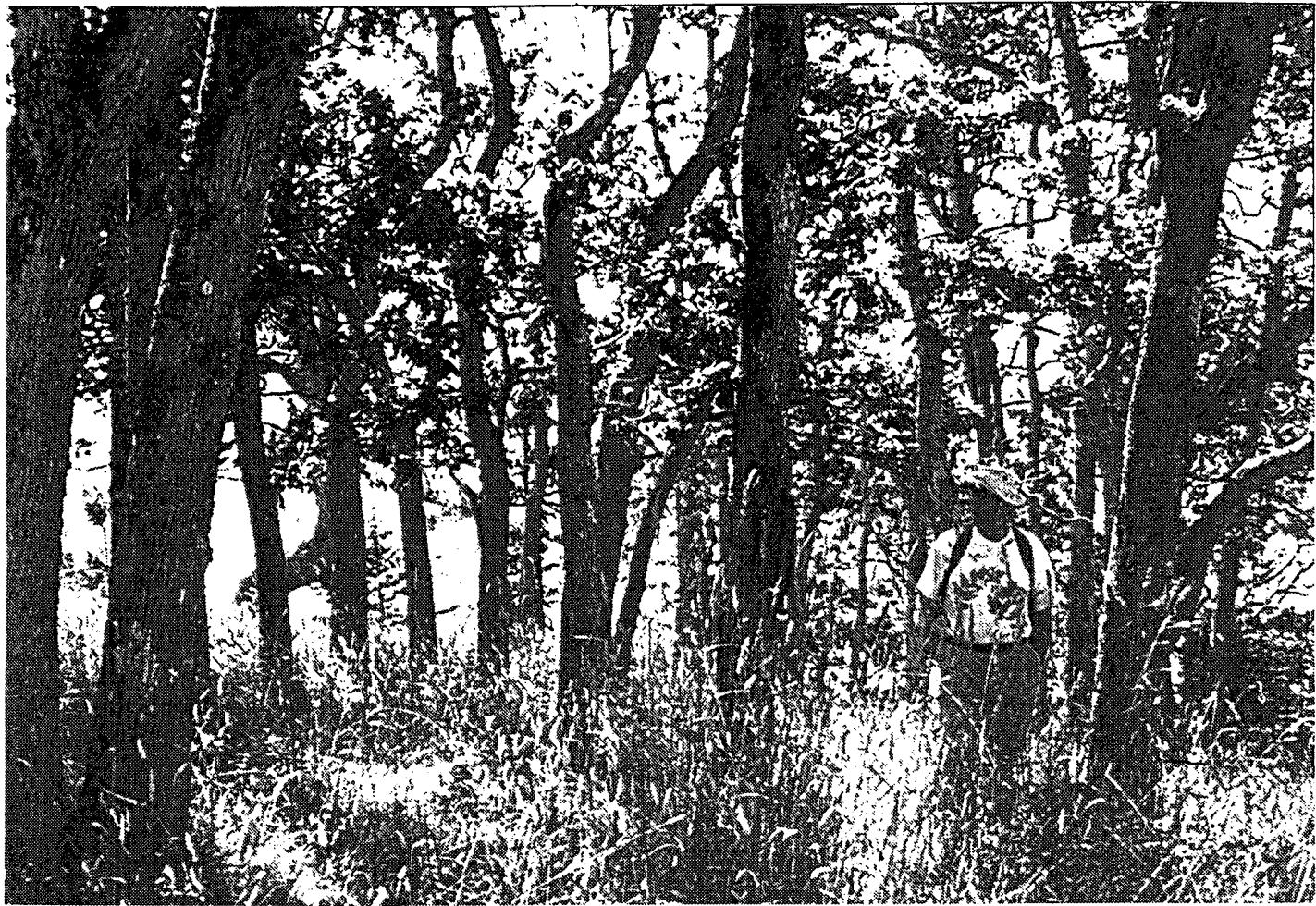
Modules include: Biodiversity: The Spice of Life; Connections: The Basics of Biodiversity; Biodiversity in British Columbia; Endangered Species/Endangered Spaces; Biodiversity: Think Globally!; Act Locally! Your Community Action Toolkit.

The comprehensive appendices include a species list for B.C.'s ecoprovince and the Red and Blue Lists of endangered and threatened species and species vulnerable to extinction.

*Backyard Biodiversity and Beyond* is in its third printing and is being used as part of B.C.'s school curriculum. It has been translated into French.

The binder was first published in April 1994 through funding provided by Canadian Heritage, B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Ministry of Forests.

Anyone seeking a copy can contact the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks; Fisheries, Wildlife and Habitat Protection Department; Project Wild Office, 300-1005 Broad Street, Victoria.



STANDING AMONG SOME of the oaks of Hornby Island's 'Thousand Oak Grove' is GOMPS member Ray Zimmerman. The fate of the grove still has not been determined.

Photo by Katie Stewart, July 1996

Not much progress has been made towards the area's protection since the grove was last mentioned in the *Garry Oak Leaflet* in March 1996.

According to Conservancy Hornby Island representative Tony Law, four issues still have to be resolved: the plan for Lot 30 still shows a house being built in the grove; the lots still don't conform to the Preliminary Layout Approval; the covenants are still not adequate (apparently as it stands now a committee of the local land owners could decide to lop a tree if one of the owners requested it) and the covenants need to be held with Islands Trust or The Nature Conservancy; the park dedication has not been met and there is still no definition of what constitutes the grove's ecosystem.

The Conservancy wrote to the premier, and their local MLA followed this up so now a special projects manager in the Ministry of Environment, Lands

and Parks is evaluating what has been done so far in the various ministries.

The executive of the Islands Trust will be meeting with Conservancy Hornby Island this week to discuss the issue. No approval has yet been given for the subdivision.

□

Columnist Stephen Hume wrote an excellent article on the Thousand Oak Grove in the *Vancouver Sun* on June 1, 1996 called *The Last Stand*.

The last few paragraphs of his article read: "Historically, 'The Thousand Oaks' site was used as part of an informal island commons. When only 50 people lived on the island there was little conflict. Today, there are 1,500 permanent residents and a possibility of 5000. In the summer, the inter-island ferry already logs upward of 85,000 visits.

"A footpath from that gentler past

still winds among the twisted, wind-blown oaks. On a sunny spring day, with dew sparkling on the grass that's brindled by shadows from tossing leaves, with whitecaps crisply dancing across the straits, the beauty transcends the merely picturesque. The place throbs with spiritual importance.

"It is not difficult to understand why someone would want to claim a personal piece of it. And that is precisely how [developer Keith] Sorensen sees the community's stubborn resistance to his plans to develop his property.

" 'I call it the politics of envy,' " he says. " 'We have an extraordinarily beautiful piece of property and some people resent that. Personal vendettas exist on this island, perhaps that has something to do with this.' "

"Sorensen says the aging hippies and draft dodgers who came seeking sanc-

*Continued on page 6*

# How to remove broom: The short answer, part 3

by Eric Redekop

In Part 1 of "How to remove broom: The short answer" (October 1995, pp. 4-5), I covered the basic technical aspects of broom removal, and made a few comments about broom removal relating to the protection of native plants and the handling of dead broom debris. Some of these comments could bear further explanation.

## Cutting blackberry

For example, when I advised removal of blackberry canes, I should also have mentioned that there is also a native blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) which should not be removed. It is easily distinguished from the undesirable Himalayan (*Rubus discolor*, or *R. procerus*) and evergreen (*Rubus laciniatus*) varieties, which should be removed not only because they are exotic, but because they are also extremely invasive and hazardous to broom removal volunteers.

While canes should be cut back to knee height during removal of mature broom stands, blackberry root stumps left in the ground will quickly produce new canes and begin spreading into areas cleared of broom if not checked immediately or frequently.

I find the best approach is to wait until the ground is soft (eg. November), prune severely, then loosen the soil around the root ball with a garden fork. Lift out the offending plant, shaking off soil and replace any native bulbs found tangled in the mass.

Blackberry canes should be piled separately from other debris, not only because the thorns make handling hazardous, but because the thorns will remain hazardous after composting if mixed with other debris.

Parks staff appreciate our efforts more if blackberry debris is properly staged for handling and prompt disposal.

English ivy (*Hedera helix*) debris should also be segregated for disposal because it will be handled differently from both blackberry and broom.

## Accidental removal of native vegetation

In broom infestations that have advanced into shrubby meadow margins, extreme care should be taken to not remove native vegetation; volunteers should always confirm the identity of plants before removal. In an effort to quickly and completely clear an area of broom, well-intended but uninformed volunteers should take care not to accidentally remove or damage a wide variety of native shrubs.

These may include red-osier dogwood, Nootka rose, snowberry, Indian-plum, Saskatoon, mock-orange, honeysuckle, bitter cherry, oceanspray, black cottonwood, hardhack, willow, big-leaf maple, arbutus, Douglas-fir and even Garry oak.

Native shrubs and trees in the work area can be located in advance and flagged for the attention of workers untrained in plant recognition, or someone with experience can be assigned to directly supervise each work team.

## Dealing with dead broom stems

I also advised broom busters to break down dead broom stems and leave them on the ground, to enhance soil structure and water retention capacity, reduce erosion, provide habitat for insects, and to deter prohibited bicycle traffic.

However, I should add that in mature infestations of broom (eg. more than 10-15 years on site), you may find that dead stems have already fallen to the ground and been overgrown by grass or moss.

In some cases, these stems fall through the broom cover onto the prostrate limbs of scrubby oaks, crawling along the ground in search of light.

When distributing dead broom debris, not only should we not pin the branches of other trees to the ground, we should check within the drip lines of scrubby oaks in particular to ensure that no branches are pinned. Fallen broom stems can also be removed from

shrubby areas, broken down, and transferred to adjacent meadows or outcrops.

While dead broom stems occasionally fall on mossy outcrops, there are many where this is not the case. Ironically, broom removal improves access not only for legal uses (walking, birding, photography), but for illegal uses, such as moss or plant poaching.

In particular, moss poaching is becoming a serious problem in several parks, where many outcrops have been denuded by evil hanging basket gardeners and deviant holiday season decorators.

In addition to the purposes previously mentioned, therefore, a generous sprinkling of broom twigs and branches also renders a fluffy patch of moss unattractive to the scourge of poachers.

Few poachers have the patience to grow moss for themselves, and fewer still the time to carefully remove scattered debris under torchlight. Certainly, none realise that nature may take half a lifetime or more to restore the cover on rocks exposed by moss poaching.

A few more points can be made about dead broom. Dead broom comes in all sizes. In mature stands, seeds deposited below an existing canopy may sprout, but the young plants fail to thrive due to competition from their parents, which are better established and able to withstand the rigours of drought stress, in particular.

Many of these sproutlings die before their second year, and have developed few lateral roots. Consequently, when these smaller dead stems are found in mature infestations, they are lifted out of the soil quite easily.

As a result of their germination under an existing canopy, many of these dead sprouts are tall for their age, with few lower branches and a long, straight stalk. When breaking down such debris, leave this long stalk in one or two pieces, and crumble the smaller, top branches.

Continued on page 5

Another feature of mature infestations is decadent, mature broom, which may be dying off in sections. Often, such large, leggy stems can be literally pushed over, snapping the larger rotten roots.

From that point, the stem can usually be lifted out, but occasionally loppers are required to sever a persistent root. Removal of such large stems in this way will often leave a hole at least the size of the broom stalk.

It is very important to reduce the effective disturbance of removal activities by immediately tamping down loose soils and covering them with organic litter, including dead broom debris.

When broom stems die, the leaves fall off, stems lose their colour, the smaller branches fall off, and the bark fades to a silvery grey. Until the smaller branches fall off, it takes more time for volunteers to break down dead broom on site.

If a large stem is found, it may just be too large or "fuzzy" (eg. lots of little branches) to be broken down quickly. In such cases, volunteer time might be better spent hauling the whole stem out for disposal.

However, if a bare outcrop is nearby, many of the smaller twigs can be broken off by vigorous flailing of the stem against the rock; the rest of the stem can then be hauled away.

### Broom stumps

Sometimes when broom is pulled, the top of the plant snaps off leaving a tall stump in the ground. Of course, these should always be removed. However, remembering that the stump cannot resprout after being pulled, it can safely be left along with other dead broom debris, since it is missing its bushy branches.

On more than one occasion, I have removed the top branches of large stems to get access to the remaining stump. In such cases, the stump cut off at chest height can be used as a lever to break the roots, using loppers as necessary. Once removed, these tall stumps

can be left lying in the meadow along with other dead broom debris. Unlike normal twigs and limbs, these rooky stumps offer an even more hazardous deterrent to prohibited bicycle traffic.

Finally, some volunteers say they do not have the strength or energy to struggle with larger stems or to lift debris off the ground while hauling it away for disposal.

Unfortunately, it is essential that stems not be dragged across the ground, since this causes disturbance or damage to fragile areas and may also dis-

tribute additional seeds.

Other volunteers can help out by making smaller piles of debris, or by dividing larger stems into smaller pieces. If there are trails or roads nearby, these can be flagged with survey tape to direct traffic away from sensitive or hazardous areas.

However, rather than bashing or hauling broom, some volunteers might prefer a less vigorous, though equally essential component of the process, such as collecting and breaking down dead broom.

## Workshop on Broom Removal and Reintroduction of Native Plants in the Southern Gulf Islands

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1:15 P.M.

Galiano Community Hall South, Galiano Island

Admission by donation • Shuttle bus available at Sturdies Bay

• Pre-registration advised

### AGENDA

1:00 Welcome and Introductions

1:15 R.D. (Ray) Read

Regional Vegetation Biologist, BC Hydro

(former Regional Noxious Weed Manager for New Zealand)

### **The Nature of Broom: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**

1:45 Dr. Wilf Nicholls

Research scientist, UBC Botanical Garden

### **Identifying and Restoring Native Plants to the Southern Gulf Islands**

2:15 Break

2:30 Joel Ussery

Masters Candidate, Resource and Environmental Management, Capital Regional District Parks

### **Broom Removal Strategies and Techniques**

3:00 Jeremy Gye

Consulting Arborist, Arbour-Care Tree Conservation Services Ltd.

### **Soil and Tree Management**

Displays: Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society, Naturescape Program, Nurseries and Suppliers of Tools

For registration and more information contact: Galiano Conservancy Association, R.R. 1  
Porlier Pass Road, Galiano Island, B.C. V0N 1P0 tel/fax: (604) 539-2424 or

Dianna Colnett, Vancouver (604) 738-9384

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**GOMPS DISPLAYS:** October 5, Galiano Broom Workshop. Call Eric Redekop, 595-7270, to suggest locations.

### FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

### PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE

**SEED/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for information.

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Project coordinator is Paul Gareau, 592-9089.

### NEWSLETTER

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to address below.

**GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
c/o A-954 QUEENS AVENUE, VICTORIA, B.C. V8T 1M6

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President and Public Relations Chair .....	Katie Stewart	386-4792
Vice-President .....	Pierre d'Estrubé	477-2410
Treasurer and Finance Chair .....	Tom Gillespie	361-1694
E-mail ua620@freenet.victoria.bc.ca		
Secretary and Membership		
Development Chair .....	Sharron Waite	479-3380
Director and Program Chair .....	Paul Gareau	592-9089
	E-mail upgareau@islandnet.com	
Director .....	Hal Gibbard	477-2986
Director .....	Janet Simpson	381-6657

## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Donation

Individual \$15  Family \$20

Please send more information about:

Youth and Associate \$6 (no newsletter)

Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants

Gift memberships, send receipt to:

Garry Oak Inventory Project

Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)

Growing, planting Garry oaks

*Continued from page 3*

tuary are upset because others want to join them.

"That element is making its last stand here and they just don't like developers and development. They see their own lifestyle challenged here, I guess."

"The unintentional irony is poignant. It's already the last stand for the northern Garry oaks."

□

Keep writing letters, folks. It's still not too late. Let's keep this issue on the front burner. I'm waiting for a reply to my letter sent to the new Environment Minister, Paul Ramsey, written July 26, after my second visit to the grove. This time I enclosed pictures.

—K.S.

## CALENDAR

**IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD** — A "docu-drama" about the old growth controversy, written and performed by Todd Jefferson Moore, who plays 19 characters. **Thursday, September 12, 7:30 p.m.** Victoria Conference Centre. Admission: \$10. A fundraiser for the Sierra Club.

**PUBLIC MEETING ON THE GREATER VICTORIA WATER SUPPLY** — Saturday and Sunday, **September 14 and 15, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**, James Bay Community School Centre, 140 Oswego Street.

**NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP** — **Thursday, September 19, 7 p.m.** Cornett A-Room 120, UVic.

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** — **Thursday, October 3, 7:30 p.m.**, Paul Gareau's, 3503 Camcrest Place.

**BROOM REMOVAL WORKSHOP** — **Saturday, October 5, 1-5 p.m.**, Galiano Community Hall South, Galiano Island

# 70th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PLANTING

## A PROJECT OF THE MOUNT TOLMIE CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION

in partnership with the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society, Environment Canada/Action 21, Pacific Forestry Centre, Mount Tolmie Community Association, Saanich Parks & Recreation Department, Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group, Victoria Compost Education Centre, EcoNews, Victoria Natural History Society, West Coast Ecological Youth Alliance, Sierra Club of B.C., Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Aveda Institute, Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, Provincial Capital Commission, Dr. Ronald E. Parfitt, Inc., Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, Uplands Elementary School, Saanich News/News Group, Campus View Elementary School, and the Fernwood Community Association.

### BACKGROUND

In 1993, Saanich Municipality amended its Park Management and Control Bylaw by restricting bicycle use to paved surfaces in several public parks including Mount Tolmie Park, which is home to over 1100 species indigenous to its rare Garry oak meadow habitat.

In 1994, community volunteers initiated a project to remove invasive Scotch broom from the park, supervised by the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society and the Saanich Parks & Recreation Department. By January 1996, a large, contiguous broom-free zone was established east of Mayfair Drive (see map on reverse).

In several locations within this zone, observations revealed that prohibited cycling had damaged or destroyed the vegetative cover, resulting in rapid erosion of thin surface soils and further loss of vegetation cover. Ironically, until removed, broom infestations actually protected soils from cycling traffic by physically or visually obstructing access to sensitive meadow areas.

To compensate for recent landscape change and achieve several other objectives, we propose to plant native shrubs in selected locations where volunteer work crews have removed Scotch broom from the park.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project zone has a wide variety of vegetation and topography, with at least a dozen native shrub species represented. The most abundant are Western snowberry, Nootka rose and Ocean spray, and there are a few individuals of several other species. Most of these are suitable candidates for planting in the project area.

By increasing the local abundance of these species, habitat conditions are improved for many

other species, including birds, butterflies, and plants requiring partial shade or pollination by insects.

Placement of shrub stock will be influenced by several factors, including visual aesthetics and view maintenance, as well as potentials for reducing soil erosion or modifying use patterns. These factors and others will also influence the choice of species planted in any given situation.

Wherever shrubs are planted, the boundary layer microclimatology will undergo modification due to surface shading, accumulation of litter, increased soil moisture capacity, and reduced exposure to drying winds. An increased proportion and variety of shrub cover will significantly promote variety in microclimatological conditions in the project zone.

### PROCEDURE

A volunteer work event is scheduled for November 16th, 1996, and has already been advertised through our membership newsletter and other non-profit and volunteer information publications and media outlets. Particular effort has been made to recruit participants from local horticulture, landscaping, and ecological restoration programs, as well as from regional environmental interest groups.

Plant stock will be delivered to the park from a local nursery specializing in native species, and planted under the supervision of the Project Coordinator, with the approval of Saanich Parks Department, which manages the site.

Plantings will be monitored weekly until established, and the landscape will be photographed after the first season of growth to document the rate and scale of visual change. A project report will be prepared after one year to describe survival proportions and evaluate the need for further plantings.

# 70th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PLANTING

A PROJECT OF THE MOUNT TOLMIE CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION

## PARTICIPANTS

At least 214 hours of voluntary labour will be required to complete this project, including 160 hours to plant 700 native shrubs and at least 50 hours to plant 1400 Garry oak seedlings donated by the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society and the Pacific Forestry Centre. Several local environmental groups have already pledged over 400 volunteer hours to the project.

To publicize the project and train participating volunteers, two information seminars will be presented this autumn, at the Swan Lake Nature Centre. The first program (October) will describe the project background, objectives and procedures, and provide an opportunity for the public to express their concerns and to have their questions answered. The second program (November) will focus on technical aspects of the project, for the information of volunteers directly involved with planting activities.

## MOUNT TOLMIE PARK DAY

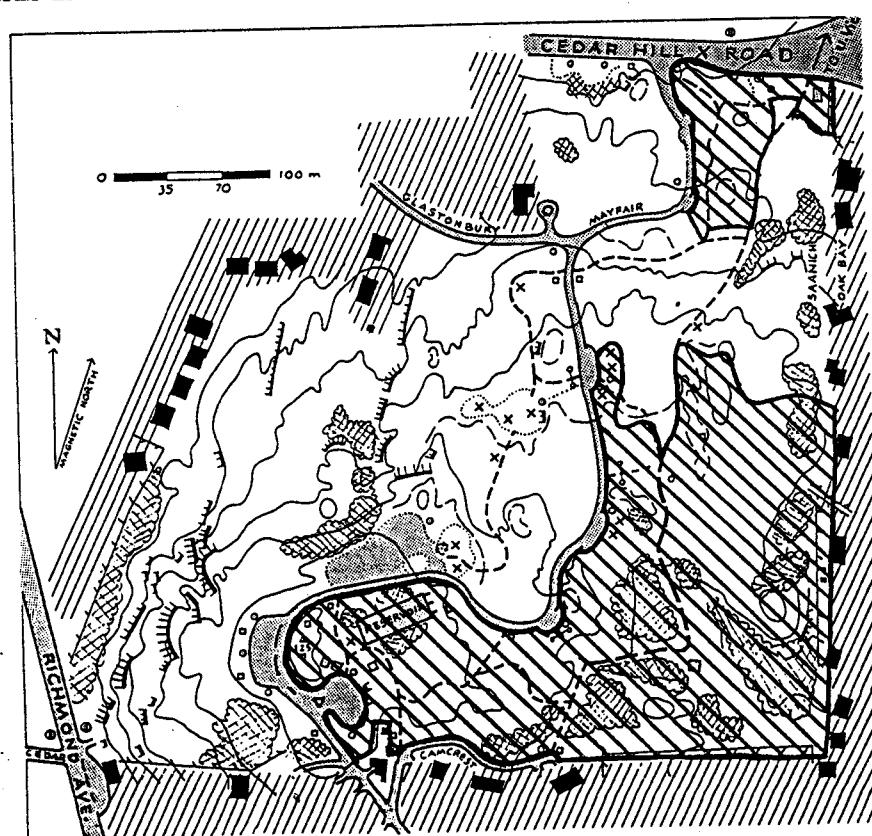
November 18th, 1996 was proclaimed Mount Tolmie Park Day in Saanich by Mayor Murray Coell on April 22nd. To help celebrate this milestone and publicly announce the completion of our project, we have invited federal Environment minister, the Hon. Sergio Marchi, to participate in a brief ceremony in the park.

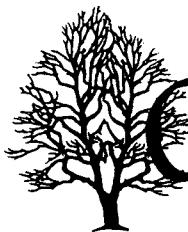
## 1997 WILDFLOWER WALKS

During the spring wildflower season (February through June), the association will present its second series of free interpretive nature walks, to promote the planting project and communicate association interests to the public. Dates and times will be announced in local media and through our membership newsletter.

Project Coordinator: Eric Redekop, 595-7270  
c/o 3503 Camcrest Place, Victoria, B.C. V8P4V6

## MAP: BROOM-FREE AREAS IN MOUNT TOLMIE PARK, CLEARED JAN/94-JAN/96





# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

October 1996, Vol. 3, No. 9

## Legal protection of Garry oak habitat urgently needed

by Katie Stewart

The directors of GOMPS advocate for Garry oaks and their ecosystem by speaking at public hearings and meetings and at municipal council meetings. This is mandatory (but often futile) whenever developers propose to further diminish the already very fragmented Garry oak habitat.

However, our doing so highlights an urgent need: the legal protection of the Garry oak ecosystem.

As we know, adequate scientific evidence already exists which shows the high percentage of rare plants in this ecosystem and how little of the habitat remains.

Four categories of Garry oak plant communities and a fifth in association with Douglas-fir are red-listed (endangered and threatened) by the Conservation Data Centre as are some individual plant species. The Ministry of Environment's brochure on the Garry oak ecosystem labels it an ecosystem at risk.

Current legal mechanisms are not sufficient to protect the ecosystem.

Tree cutting bylaws partially address protecting Garry oaks themselves, not the ecosystem, in three of four of the core municipalities. These regulations only apply to "urban containment areas" and do not protect young and small Garry oaks.

### Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act

In 1995 the B.C. government enacted the Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act. This amendment to the Municipal Act will allow regional boards to adopt regional growth strategies [RGS]. Its purpose: "to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources."

Among its 14 specific goals are protecting environmentally sensitive areas and avoiding urban sprawl.

The act requires RGS to cover at least a 20-year period and to include a "comprehensive statement on the future of the region, including the social, economic and environmental objectives of the board in relation to the regional district."

Municipalities must accept the RGS before they are adopted and various mechanisms are in place to ensure their acceptance.

Some municipalities, such as Richmond, have already identified their environmentally sensitive areas and have included them in official community plans. Development permits control how land so-designated is developed. Richmond's municipal staff prepared a design manual for developers called *Criteria for the Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas*.

### Municipality of Saanich

The Municipality of Saanich is in the process of identifying its environmentally sensitive areas.

For the September GOMPS Board of Directors meeting we invited Karen Hurley, Saanich's environmental planner and Ron Carter, who works for Saanich Parks as Coordinator of Horticultural Services.

The municipality has received \$50,000 funding from the Ministry of Environment to survey urban salmon habitat and \$58,000 from the Real Estate Foundation. Eight students are doing field work and Ms Hurley is compiling what information she can from existing material as an initial step in the process.

Mr. Carter told us he is working on amending the existing tree protection bylaw, which he expects will come before council soon.

Directors wonder if existing development proposals such as Christmas Hill, Rogers Farm and the Hutchison land will be affected by an environmentally sensitive designation and if so, what will be the result.

The Capital Regional District is preparing to commence its RGS. The process will take four years. The CRD recently advertised for applicants for an two-year advisory committee. What-

*Continued on page 2*

*Continued from page 1*

ever the outcome will be in terms of environmental protection is too far away.

In the meantime, immediate action needs to be taken.

### **Green Spaces and Growth: Conserving Natural Areas in B.C. Communities**

In March 1996 lawyer Calvin Sandborn prepared the Green Spaces document for the Commission on Resources and Environment, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

It is interesting reading. Mr. Sandborn's concern was the six percent of land not included in the B.C. government's Protected Area Strategy. This is land in communities which are often situated in the most desirable areas such as riverfronts, uplands etc. with the consequent effects of environmental degradation and stress.

The report is broad-reaching. Mr. Sandborn looked at how communities elsewhere are grappling with similar issues and discovered some innovative answers. Land trusts, natural lands acquisition funding, incentive policies, creative development such as cluster housing in exchange for areas left natural and private stewardship, are some of the topics he looked at.

It is obvious from reading his report that British Columbia could be much more progressive and protective. Just one small example (page 75): Under B.C.'s Municipal Act a developer of a new subdivision with lots less than two hectares is required to dedicate five percent of the land for parkland. In Alberta, the designation is 10 per cent.

As well, developers there can be required to "give an 'environmental reserve,' including swamps, gullies, ravines, coulees or natural drainage courses, floodplains and unstable

lands. Saskatchewan's legislation is quite similar.

"One of the advantages of the Alberta and Saskatchewan laws is that they enable government to set aside and protect ecologically critical areas such as wetlands and plains. Such areas are sometimes not protected in B.C., when communities use their five-percent dedication primarily for playing fields."

### **Special protection status**

On page 99 of his report, Mr. Sandborn wrote: "Some regions of British Columbia are so environmentally critical that special measures are called for to protect their natural values ... the unique Canadian desert and grassland habitats of the South Okanagan and the Garry oak woodlands of Southern Vancouver Island are two of Canada's four most endangered ecosystems. These two areas, and all or part of the coastal zone, might merit designation as 'critical areas' in which the province would provide special protection of natural values by means of an Islands Trust-like model."

Mr. Sandborn acknowledged that there might be considerable public opposition to a new institution and suggested a "special mandate for existing regional districts to 'preserve and protect' its unique environmental values."

He gave four successful examples of where critical protection is working elsewhere. For example, Alberta's minister of environment can "designate 'restricted development areas' as a way to protect environmental values. Nine areas have been designated so far, including the river valleys around Edmonton and Calgary. Within restricted development areas, the minister must give consent to changes in land use."

### **Inventory of Natural Areas**

Mr. Sandborn summarized the importance of identifying (page 46) "all of the critical areas that should be protected from development."

On page 47 he wrote: "It is vital that local governments have a full inventory of the ecologically sensitive areas in their communities long before development is proposed."

He suggested various ways that would facilitate acquiring that information, including "... for the province to make the pilot project Conservation Data Centre (CDC) a permanent institution, and expand its role to provide comprehensive information for the preparation of environmentally sensitive areas inventories." I was unaware that the CDC was not permanent. It seems ludicrous otherwise, for it is such a vital information repository.

Although Calvin Sandborn's report is prepared for government use, many people in the "environmental community" have been reading it and discussing it. There are no copies available right now at the government office at 300-1005 Broad St., Victoria, which distributes it. /

There is currently a waiting list of around 30 people; once it reaches 50 it will be reprinted and copies will be available for \$10. The downtown library has a copy and the GOMPS Board of Directors has two photocopies if any members are interested in reading it (call me at 386-4792).

According to the GOMPS constitution our mandate is: Dedicated to the preservation, protection and restoration of Garry oak stands and their natural habitats. What else might we be doing?

An obvious step is to request a meeting with the environment minister, something the current board hasn't done up to now. Some of us plan to attend all candidates meetings for the upcoming municipal elections and to question candidates regarding protection issues.

Any ideas from GOMPS members are welcome, so don't hesitate to contact your directors or come to a board meeting.

# Reflections

by Jude Alden

I cherish greatly those quintessential moments in life when I have experienced a stirring excitement with the discovery of an aesthetic, belonging to a world that has been quietly disclosed from the obvious, and separated from the more contrived fabrications of our species. As an artist I have found inspiration within an eclectic range of influences.

For example, I find visual richness in the metal waste yards scattered around Vancouver where mounds of refuse rust quietly and obtrusively, sadly plethoric in their experience.

It has occurred to me that as a city dweller, I have



been segregated into my world of concrete. To be honest, I am mystified and intimidated by our natural world, though captivated by its lush splendour and peacefully submersive qualities. While rediscovering and educating myself of this new world, it has become apparent to me how easy

it is for one to remain ignorant and unappreciative of the unknown.

I leave you with one of my recent photographs taken in the Uplands Park of a friend who also shares my awe for this lush garden that is located in our back yard.

# Let's plant oaks!

by Sharron Waite

One of the delights of autumn on the coast is the fall planting season. Now is the time to be putting in new trees, shrubs and perennials. In this gentle climate, new plants establish best when planted in the fall. The ground is still warm, and there is ample water to promote new growth.

## WE HAVE OAKS FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS TO PLANT THIS FALL

These are two-year-old oaks. If you want some for your landscape, call me at 479-3380 to arrange pick-up. If you get the answering machine, leave a message! Oaklings will be available from now until mid-November. A small donation to GOMPS in return would be appreciated, but is not required.

To obtain other native plants this fall, ask at your local garden centre, or contact one of the excellent local nurseries specializing in natives. (GOMPS has prepared a list of sources of Garry oak meadow plants.) Oceanspray, Indian plum, mock-orange, tall Oregon-grape, common snowberry and Nootka rose are natives that naturally associate with oaks in this area; some other native shrubs adapted to similar growing conditions are Saskatoons, red-flowering currant, hairy manzanita, evergreen huckleberry and soapalie (soapberry).

A reminder to all gardeners: Although one of the advantages of plantings of native species of the Garry oak ecosystem is their drought tolerance, young plants, like young people, need more care and nurturing than older individuals.

For young oaks, the Pacific Forestry Centre recommends two gallons of water every two weeks in summer, or whenever the top inch of the soil gets dry, for the first two drought seasons.

Plant in soil enriched with compost and mulch with oak leaves or other organic matter to conserve water, reduce temperature fluctuations, and improve weed control.

Practice clean cultivation i.e., keeping the base around the seedling clear of weeds, for at least the first few years. Finally, it is well-established by industrial forestry that providing each seedling with an grow tube accelerates growth.

Each new oaks helps to repair the shattered fabric of our native ecosystem, and contributes to the long-term goal of a true urban forest in Victoria.

# How to remove broom: The short answer (part 4)

by Eric Redekop

In Part 2 (June 96), I described the special opportunities and problems presented by bashing broom in the summertime. During the winter months, the preferred removal technique is pulling the broom stem out whole, which dispenses with handling gardening tools. However, winter weather presents other factors which should be considered in preparing for an event.

## The fashionable fall and winter broom-basher

Motivated, energetic volunteers can work all day, if they come to the meadow properly dressed. Starting from the inside, to ensure warmth and comfort, I like to wear thermal or long underwear under my jeans, which also adds extra padding to protect against blackberry thorns, for example.

Topside, I wear several layers, beginning with an old, ratty t-shirt, then a sweater, then a long-sleeved sweat shirt, then a light jacket. These layers add warmth and padding, and can be removed if I need to cool down.

Even though sunburn is more frequently a hazard during summer, low angle winter sunshine can still burn your skin if exposed for too long, and cooler winter temperatures can sometimes be misleading.

If you're rummaging through a closet or trunk looking for an old jacket, choose one without drawstrings, open pockets or large zipper tabs that could get stuck in broom bundles heaved onto your shoulder.

On my feet I wear a pair of thin nylon socks under a pair of wool work socks and large, rubber boots. The nylon sock wicks perspiration away from the skin, while the wool socks retain warmth (even wet) and the padding helps protect ankles and lower legs from sharp rocks and blackberry canes.

Finally, large amounts of body heat will be lost from the face and head without a warm cap or hat for protection. A hat will also reduce windburn and protect the face and ears from sharp or flying objects. Choose a dark colour which will absorb solar radiation, rather than a light colour which will tend to reflect it away.

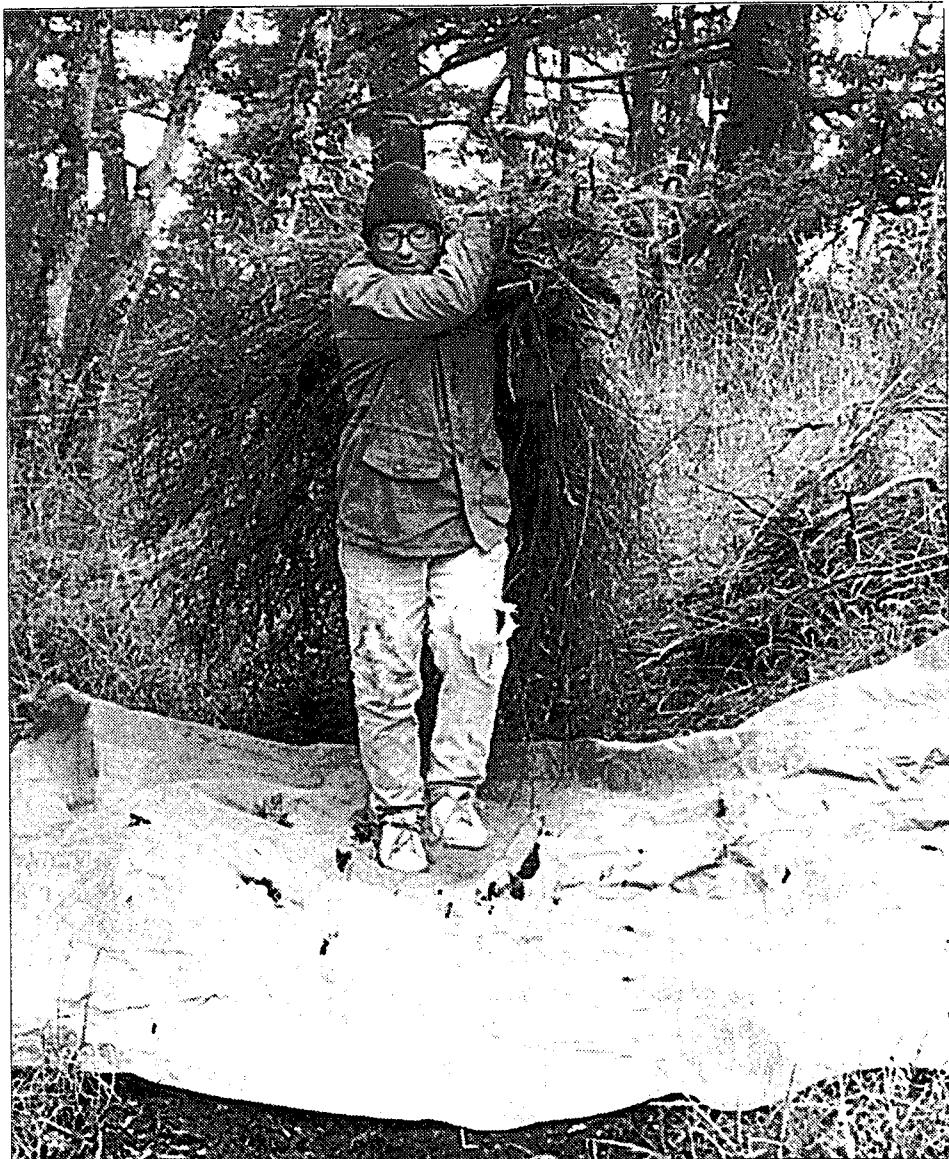
As mentioned earlier, pulling broom in the winter months does not require special tools. Dressed warmly, glove-clad hands are all most volunteers will need. I like to wear thin knit nylon

gloves inside my leather work gloves, for extra padding and dryness.

## And on to tools

Sometimes large stems will have strong lateral roots which resist pulling. If the stem cannot be left and cut during the summer instead, use loppers to nip tenacious roots. Never lop a main stem above the first lateral root, especially during the winter months, as this will only stimulate resprouting from the stump.

Left unchecked, these sprouts (grow-



**EXPERIENCED BROOM BASHER** Eric Redekop was dressed appropriately for a rainless broom pull on Knockan Hill, October 1995

Photo by Katie Stewart

ing on a mature stump) will produce flowers and more seeds in the spring and summer following.

A few more words about tools: When finished using loppers or saw, always place these down gently to avoid damage to sensitive areas, risk to co-workers and damage to the tools themselves.

Tie a piece of pink survey tape to tool handles to prevent misplacement and loss.

Some other tools which have proven useful include aluminum poles, tarps and ropes. With four volunteers, it's possible to carry a large bundles of broom or other debris, stretcher-style, on a tarp supported on two sides by long poles.

However, considering the time required to load the tarp and the hazard to volunteers who may not be able to see their feet while walking, the same load might be more safely moved by four volunteers with four bundles instead.

If the terrain is open, flat and not sensitive to disturbance (eg. wide chip trail or road), the loaded tarp can be pulled across the ground by one or two volunteers, then rolled over sideways onto the end of the debris pile.

A short piece of rope can be used to tighten and haul broom bundles that are difficult to pick up. Fold the rope in the middle and push it under the pile, leaving the other ends on the ground. Go to the other side and roll the bundle over until the loop appears underneath, then pass the two loose ends through the loop and cinch it up. Using the rope as a handle, even large, unwieldy piles can be easily moved in this way.

Other supplies proven useful include fabric bandages for bandages and cuts; tweezers to extract slivers and thorns; survey tape to flag hazards, trails and native plants; and plastic bags to rescue dislodged bulbs. Of course, no volunteer is prepared without a supply of fluids (water is best) and snacks.



**A GROUP OF PEOPLE** using a tarp can make piling the broom for disposal an easier chore. It works best on flat terrain. This photo was taken in November 1995 at Cattle Point.

Photo by Katie Stewart

### **The broom-basher's favourite weather: freezing rain**

From personal experience, I can tell you that bashing broom in the rain is no picnic, but the freezing rain of December 9, 1995 provided special challenges. First, bedrock covered with a clear sheet of ice is difficult to see and very slippery. Our volunteers had to walk a specially flagged route to avoid slipping.

Also, broom stems covered with ice are very hard to grip with wet leather gloves. I found that a key was useful to scrape ice off the stem for a better hold. Finally, broom coated with ice is very heavy. Our volunteers hauled bundles less than half the normal size, due to the extra weight.

Among the other general hazards are those connected with the physical activities of pulling, lifting, carrying and climbing. In particular, take care not to strain arm, shoulder, neck and back muscles or wrist, knee or ankle joints.

Proper pulling technique is essential and improves with practice. Squat with the stem between your feet and as low

as possible with both hands, placing the stalk under your arm. Lift by straightening your legs. As you feel the roots giving way, check your pull to avoid flying backwards or downhill suddenly. Immediately replace any dislodged rocks and dirt, firming the area down with your feet.

Stems should be stacked in small piles for volunteer pick-up, with all stem butts facing one way. Collected into larger bundles, these must be lifted off the ground for transfer to disposal staging areas.

Never drag broom stems across the ground as branches will gouge sensitive areas such as mossy outcrops, leading to severe and permanent habitat loss.

When volunteers are walking to and fro, those with loads of debris should always be given the right of way, since their mobility, reaction time, and visibility are significantly reduced.

Space permitting, "Part 5: Organizing a broom bash" will appear in your November newsletter.

# **CITY-WIDE BROOM BASH SCHEDULE**

Volunteers are welcome to participate in any or all broom bashes. Conditions at each site may vary, so please contact the organizer(s) for both directions and instructions. Some sites have had no broom removal done at all, while others have had many broom removal events so the organizer(s) may have priority areas in mind.

Please wear warm clothes and rain gear if necessary. Bring gloves, clippers and loppers, if you have them, and a snack and water to drink.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Organizer</b>
<b>Sat., Oct. 12</b>	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Uplands Park, Oak Bay	Nancy, 592-1317
<b>Sun., Oct. 13</b>	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Mount Tolmie Park, Saanich	Eric, 595-7270
<b>Mon., Oct. 14</b>	9 a.m.-Noon	Thetis Lake Park, CRD	Elisabeth, 479-7694
<b>Sat., Oct. 19</b>	9 a.m.-Noon	Mount Douglas Park, Saanich	Ken, 477-8007
<b>Sat., Oct. 19</b>	1 p.m.-4 p.m.	Cattle Point, Oak Bay	Margaret, 595-8084
<b>Sun., Oct. 20</b>	9 a.m.-Noon	Mount Tolmie Park, Saanich	Eric, 595-7270
<b>Sun., Oct. 20</b>	1 p.m.-4 p.m.	Cattle Point, Oak Bay	Margaret, 595-8084
<b>Sat., Oct. 26</b>	9 a.m.-Noon	Mount Douglas Park, Saanich	Ken, 477-8007
<b>Sat., Oct. 26</b>	1 p.m.-3 p.m.	Rithet's Bog, Saanich	Linda, 658-8993
<b>Sun., Oct. 27</b>	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Mount Tolmie Park, Saanich	Eric, 595-7270
<b>Sun., Oct. 27</b>	1 p.m.-4 p.m.	Highrock/Cairn Park, Esquimalt	Ron, 386-7886
<b>Sat., Nov. 2</b>	9 a.m.-Noon	Anderson Hill Park, Oak Bay	Roger, 598-0077
<b>Sat., Nov. 2</b>	10 a.m.-Noon	Government House, Victoria	Fran, 370-2541
<b>Sun., Nov. 3</b>	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Mount Tolmie Park, Saanich	Eric, 595-7270
<b>Sun., Nov. 3</b>	Noon-4 p.m.	Summit Park, Victoria	Deirdre, 386-6359
<b>Sat., Nov. 9</b>	9 a.m.-Noon	Gore Park, Central Saanich	Bob, 652-4691 or David, 652-5156
<b>Sun., Nov. 10</b>	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Mount Tolmie Park, Saanich	Eric, 595-7270
<b>Mon., Nov. 11</b>	Noon-4 p.m.	Knockan Hill Park, Saanich	Andria, 479-1947
<b>Sat., Nov. 16</b>	10 a.m.-4 p.m.	Knockan Hill Park, Saanich	Andria, 479-1947
<b>Sun., Nov. 17</b>	1 p.m.-4 p.m.	Christmas Hill, Saanich	Joan, 479-0211

# B.C. Native Plant Society formed

On July 4, the new native plant society was formed. Its formal title is NPSBC Native Plant Society of British Columbia.

## Objectives

The purpose of this society is to encourage knowledge, appreciation, responsible use and conservation of British Columbia's native plants and habitats as follows:

(1) Advance knowledge and awareness of the value of native plants.

(2) Develop and maintain an inventory of B.C.'s native plant species, communities and habitats.

(3) Promote the conservation of B.C.'s native plant species, communities and habitats.

(4) Initiate the development of guidelines concerning the ethical use of native plants.

(5) Support the use of native plants in accordance with the ethical use guidelines.

(6) Encourage the restoration of disturbed habitats of native plant species and communities.

(7) Facilitate communication and interaction among individuals, groups and governments regarding native plant issues

(8) Support research on native plants and plant communities.

## Membership classifications

(a) Individual members are entitled to participate in all the society's activities including full voting privileges (\$20).

(b) Associate members are non-voting individuals and groups who wish to be kept informed of the society's activities (\$15).

(c) Corporate members are non-voting commercial firms or professional groups who wish to support the soci-

ety, receive the newsletter and be informed of activities (\$75).

To join, write a cheque payable to NPSBC Native Plant Society of British Columbia and send to Diane Gertzen, 14275 96th Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V3V 7Z2.



The first membership meeting will be on Saturday, November 25 from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Grand Hall, University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops. Scheduled speakers and topics are: Biodiversity and grasslands (Don Gayton); ethnobotanical studies in B.C. (Brian Compton); First Nations perspective (Mary Thomas, Ron and Marianne Ignace); amateur botanists in B.C. — their role, tasks, etc. (Adolf

Ceska); native plants are ornamentals (Wilf Nicholls); restoration and revegetation (Tom Wells); urban landscaping — a Vancouver perspective (Ross Waddell); NPSBC: its history, future plans, rationale (Diane Gertzen/Wilf Nicholls).

Afternoon sessions include: biodiversity and research; ethical use guidelines; communication and education and First Nations issues to identify priorities, goals, products, resources and directions for the society.

If you are interested in attending, send a \$25 cheque payable to NPSBC Native Plant Society of British Columbia, c/o Diane Gertzen, 14275 96th Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V3V 7Z2 by November 8. The registration fee includes two coffee breaks and lunch.

## Extinction threatening Garry oaks?

This article in Dr. Briony Penn's files was published on Sunday, May 24, 1959 in the *Victoria Daily Colonist*. Author unknown.

Victoria's own oak tree, the Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*), is the only one native to B.C. This particular tree grows nowhere else in the world, except a small clump at Yale and a few on Sumas Mountain. It is supposed that they were carried out there by pigeons which feed on the acorns or by a past generation of Indians who used the acorns for food.

The lower part of Vancouver Island is the Garry oak's real habitat and Victoria its home.

This tree is on its way out unless something is done about it. Where houses or buildings are put up, they are cut down and bulldozed out.

Beacon Hill Park is perhaps the only place that the tree is safe, and there some of the older trees are rapidly coming to their end.

These oaks live to several hundred years old and in their old age have a tendency to go rotten on the inside. The condition cannot be seen, and often what looks like a sound tree is ready to fall in a gale of wind.

What can be done about preserving this rugged tree with its twisting limbs, a thing of massive and rugged beauty?

Shall this tree go the way of the carrier pigeon, the yellow lady's slipper and several other plants and animals — just because people will not think or perhaps do not know?

It is a good thing that the Garry oak has no commercial value or it would have vanished by now.

It is well-known that the first people of Victoria are tree conscious, and would hate to see Victoria's own tree vanish. But a caution to those who are not aware that the Garry oak is a real rarity, and must be preserved, is in order. — F.K.

## Wanted: Garry oak acorns

GOMPS has received a request from Guy Sternberg, president of the International Oak Society, for a small shipment of Garry oak acorns.

Mr. Sternberg, who owns and operates Starhill Forest Arboretum in Petersburg, Illinois, will ship the acorns to several arboreta in Europe.

If any members can find what appear to be plumb, weevil-free acorns, please call me at 386-4792.

— Katie Stewart

## How are GOMPS' oak seedling plantings faring?

The Board of Directors wants to compile statistics on the survival rate of our Garry oak seedlings now in the ground. (These are the young seedlings grown from GOMPS' annual acorn-planting program at the Pacific Forestry Centre).

If you have planted any in the past on your property or at another site, please call me at 386-4792 and tell me how well they've done.

— Katie Stewart

## Welcome new members

Jim and Alison Prentice, Victoria; Doug Cherrington, Victoria and Jillian and Robin Ridington, Galiano Island.

## CALENDAR

**NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP** — Thursday, October 18, 7 p.m., Cornett A, Room 120, UVic

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** — Monday, November 4, 7:30 p.m. at Pierre d'Estrubé's, 1542 Athlone Drive.

## ONGOING

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**GOMPS DISPLAYS:** October 5, Galiano Broom Workshop. Call Eric Redekop, 595-7270, to suggest locations.

### FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

### PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE

**SEED/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for information.

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Project coordinator is Paul Gareau, 592-9089.

### NEWSLETTER

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to address below.

**GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
c/o A-954 QUEENS AVENUE, VICTORIA, B.C. V8T 1M6

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Vice-President .....	Pierre d'Estrubé	477-2410
Treasurer and Finance Chair .....	Tom Gillespie	361-1694
		E-mail ua620@freenet.victoria.bc.ca
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Director and Program Chair .....	Paul Gareau	592-9089
		E-mail upgareau@islandnet.com
Director .....	Hal Gibbard	477-2986
Director .....	Janet Simpson	381-6657

## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Donation

Individual \$15  Family \$20

Please send more information about:

Youth and Associate \$6 (no newsletter)

Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants

Gift memberships, send receipt to:

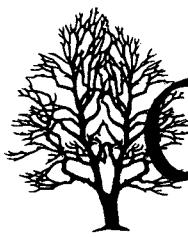
Garry Oak Inventory Project

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Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)

\_\_\_\_\_

Growing, planting Garry oaks



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

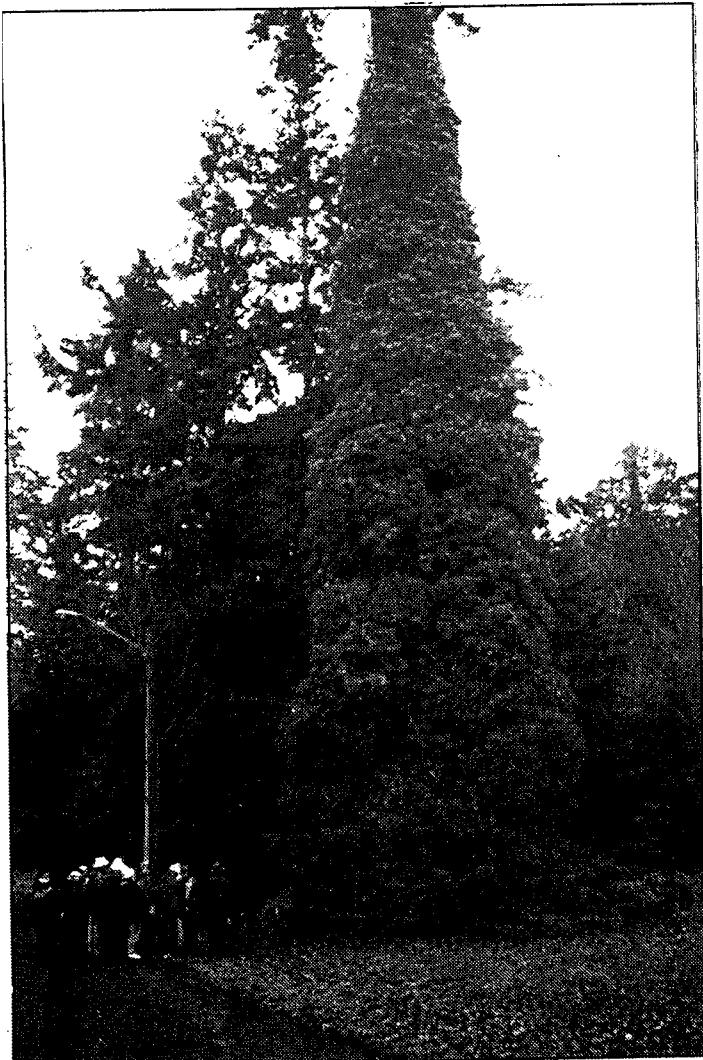
Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

November 1996, Vol. 3, No. 10

## A new role for GOMPS: holding conservation covenants

by Katie Stewart

A few days prior to the GOMPS September Board of Directors meeting, our guest, Saanich environmental plan-



**ENGLISH IVY** on a fir tree dwarfs group of naturalists on a walk at Royal Roads. Ivy is another exotic plant running riot and overwhelming native flora in our local parks. See article on page 4.

Photo by Katie Stewart

ner Karen Hurley, asked me if GOMPS might be interested in co-holding conservation covenants with Saanich.

The directors briefly discussed the idea with her at the meeting and decided we needed to find out more information and so we put it on the agenda of our October 3 board meeting. The day of that meeting I received a note from Ms Hurley telling me that the two covenants had gone ahead: one on two Garry oak knolls at Chatterton Way and another on Garry oak habitat at the townhouse complex at Oakwinds and McKenzie Avenue.

I was surprised at how quickly Saanich had proceeded. I phoned Karen, but she was on holiday and talked to a woman in the planning department who told me that the covenant was still being drafted for the October 15 public hearing.

At our October board meeting the directors decided that holding covenants was something we'd like to see GOMPS doing. However, we needed to find out more about the legalities and our responsibilities and to get accreditation from the Ministry of Environment to hold conservation covenants.

### Ministry of Environment

A letter has been sent to the Surveyor General of the Ministry of Environment asking for general designation to hold conservation covenants on Garry oak habitat within the range it occurs in British Columbia: southeastern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. If someone should ever like to transfer an existing conservation covenant to us, we would also have to apply for assignment designation.

There are two workshops in November which are timely for GOMPS, to prepare us to hold covenants.

### Covenant Monitor Training Program

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is holding a covenant monitor training program on November 9. GOMPS director Paul Gareau will attend that and a follow-up field trip. He will learn about conservation covenants, how to complete a baseline documentation report (assessing the

*Continued on page 2*

Garry Oak Leaflet 1



## HABITAT CONSERVATION TRUST FUND

# Habitat Conservation Trust Fund grant

The B.C. Ministry of Environment's Habitat Conservation Trust Fund has contributed \$6482 to GOMPS for the "Garry Oak Meadow Invasive Plant Removal Project" on Mount Tolmie.

GOMPS member Eric Redekop, who has already put in hundreds of hours of work removing broom and other exotic plants from Mount Tolmie, prepared an exhaustive proposal to apply for this funding.

He outlined which species will be enhanced, what removal techniques will be used, the economic benefits and considerations, and the relevance to regional/program priorities.

Using information from the Conservation Data Centre, he listed five plant communities on the centre's red (endangered) list and one on the blue list, as well as eight species on the data centre's yellow list, which he hopes will be enhanced by the exotic plant removal.

Eric will now be paid for his work; however, volunteers will still be needed for the ongoing work. Eric anticipates applying for repeat funding for the next four years to complete the project.

The Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society is grateful for this funding and is pleased that Eric will receive remuneration.

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Call Eric Redekop, 595-7270, to suggest locations.

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\_\_\_\_\_

Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)

Growing, planting Garry oaks

land) and how to conduct a monitoring visit and complete the necessary monitoring report.

## **Stewardship Workshop: Tools for Land Conservation**

This workshop will be held November 21 at the Freshwater Ecocentre in Duncan. Put on by the Cowichan Community Land Trust Society, it focuses on legal issues related to covenants. Guest speakers are Ann Hillyer from West Coast Environmental Law Association and Bill Turner of The Nature Conservancy.

GOMPS director Pierre d'Estrubé will attend that session.



Bill Turner has extensive experience with conservation covenants. He suggested that — assuming GOMPS will be able to hold covenants — if Saanich or any other municipality asks us to co-hold a conservation covenant, that we be involved in the drafting stage. Then we could ensure that our concerns are included in the covenant(s). He also said that we should have the document examined by a lawyer, independent of the local government's lawyer.

As an example of what a conservation covenant can protect, we looked at The Nature Conservancy's covenant on 57 acres on Quadra Island, owned by the Quadra Island Conservancy and Stewardship Society. The covenant is explicit about what can and cannot be done.

There are numerous conditions such as no interfering with or altering the land's hydrology; no synthetic chemicals being allowed; no soil, rock, gravel etc. being removed or disturbed; no removing, pruning, moving etc. (except non-native) or introducing plant material etc. etc.

The fine for non-adherence to the contract is prohibitive, a \$50,000 rent charge to the land, increasing according to any Consumer Price Index increases as of August 1, 1995. The rent charge would only be charged if the covenantor breaches the covenant and

has not "cured the breach" within 10 days of being given notice to do so by the covenantee.

Mr. Turner says the covenantor wanted such a high deterrent in case the land is sold to someone not so conservation-minded. Since the covenant stays with the land if it is sold, the next owner would also have that stiff penalty for non-adherence.

### **Deterrent necessary**

It is clear that a substantial deterrent is important for assuring compliance with the covenant. In the 1995 Department of Fisheries and Oceans study, *Protection of Aquatic and Riparian Habitat on Private Land: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Covenants in the City of Surrey*, researchers looked at six streams in Surrey where some of the property adjoining the streams had restrictive covenants.

There was an overall frequency of encroachment of 75 per cent into the covenanted area, despite the majority of land owners claiming to be concerned about stream habitat. The researchers found no difference in encroachment between properties that were covenanted and those that were not.

Some owners knew there were restrictive covenants attached to their land but didn't know what they entailed. Even though the covenants spelled out that no vegetation should be cleared, trimmed, altered etc., and that no buildings should be built in covenanted areas or soil and debris piled there, some householders cleared the vegetation right to stream bank and built structures.

The covenants had no built-in penalties. The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans thought that "covenant enforcement would entail lengthy, costly and risky civil action suits."

### **Oakwinds covenant**

The public hearing for the Oakwinds townhouse development came before

Saanich council on October 15. The .89 ha development had been substantially changed since the initial proposal of a total site coverage of 60+ units to the current 14-unit townhouse complex. Developer Mike Geric Construction Ltd. held three meetings in the neighbourhood and the current proposal received neighbourhood support.

Approximately 23 per cent of the site will be buildings and 25 per cent of the site will be covenanted. Fifty-seven out of 68 Garry oaks will be retained. The landscape designer said the developer will plant 63 Garry oak saplings in the meadow area once it is clear of broom and blackberry, a formidable task as the Garry oak habitat on the property is heavily invaded with the latter.

I spoke with the developer after the public hearing. In the area to be developed he planned to clear out the blackberry and other invasive plants. According to the covenant, which we looked over the day of the hearing, the developer cannot operate heavy equipment in the restricted area nor stockpile soil or building materials there.

There are several other restrictions regarding cutting down trees, pruning etc. without permission from Saanich. A wooden or metal post fence has to be constructed along the boundary of the restricted area prior to any construction and to stay in place until the completion of the project.

Hal Gibbard met with a representative of the Gordon Head Ratepayers Association to look over the covenant and offer suggestions. The architect was advised prior to the public hearing that the wording of "The covenantor shall preserve, conserve and keep the restricted area in a natural state ..." required a definition of natural state to ensure that natural meant native plants. The architect indicated that the developer would be willing to define natural state. Hal also suggested that only localized water be applied to the newly planted Garry oaks and that was also agreed to.

The covenantor will face a fine of

\$5000 per tree and \$1000 per plant removed, killed or cut down (excluding exotics, I assume) in the covenanted area.

At the public hearing Councillor Ian Cass said he didn't see the point of being concerned about the native bulbs and restoring the Garry oak meadow. Why not plant daffodils and tulips? They were much more colourful and bright. He watered his oaks and that didn't harm them so he didn't agree with not watering the meadow area, either. Mr. Cass said that as a species Garry oaks were dying out and later that Garry oaks didn't grow fast enough so some other fast-growing species should be planted.

I suggested that he might like a membership in the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society so he could learn about the Garry oak ecosystem. He didn't appreciate my comment! But it was clear to me that he didn't understand what a conservation covenant is designed to achieve and like many municipal councillors in other municipalities has no understanding of the local ecosystem, let alone how endangered it is.

Landscape designer Carol Small told me later that she appreciated my support at the hearing after she had responded to Councillor Cass' negativity.

It will be interesting to keep a close watch on the site, even though GOMPS will not be holding a covenant with Saanich, just to see what happens over time.

□

When Karen Hurley first asked me if I thought GOMPS would be interested in co-holding covenants with Saanich my initial reaction was uncertainty. Conservation covenants have the potential to be an effective tool for land/ecosystem protection and I certainly was aware of what they were but I had never thought of GOMPS being a partner.

As GOMPS would theoretically hold

conservation covenants in perpetuity, I was concerned about how long GOMPS would be in existence. Any organization is only as viable as its members are active. Right now we have a dynamic board, trying to cover a lot of ground.

Quite frankly, with the exception of a few GOMPS members, we are the only ones active. I expect that is the case with many organizations. Most GOMPS members provide financial

support and are obviously concerned enough about Garry oak ecosystems to join GOMPS but they don't want to pull broom, plant acorns and trees or even go to meetings.

Nonetheless, the board has decided to prepare GOMPS to hold conservation covenants. Karen Hurley told us in the event GOMPS does fold, we can get a back-up, so to speak, to take over our obligations such as the Nature Conservancy or VHNS if they are willing.

## CALENDAR

**FRIENDS OF BEACON HILL PARK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** — Wednesday, November 13, 7 p.m., Fairfield Community Place, 1335 Thurlow Street. Speaker: Art Guppy "Growing the Yellow Paintbrush." To quote from FBHP's announcement: "Mr. Guppy has successfully grown the rare yellow paintbrush that used to grow in the park. He will make a slide presentation on his methods for growing the paintbrush and other native plants." FBHP are hoping to reintroduce the plant to the park.

**MOUNT TOLMIE CELEBRATION PLANTING** — Saturday, November 16, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help plant 1400 Garry Oaks and 700 native shrubs in areas of the park which have been cleared of broom. Please phone Eric Redekop at 595-7270 ahead of time if you wish to participate.

**MOUNT TOLMIE 70TH ANNIVERSARY CEREMONY** — Monday, November 18, 2 p.m.; speeches at 3 p.m. Watch for flagging tape about half way up the mountain near the picnic area.

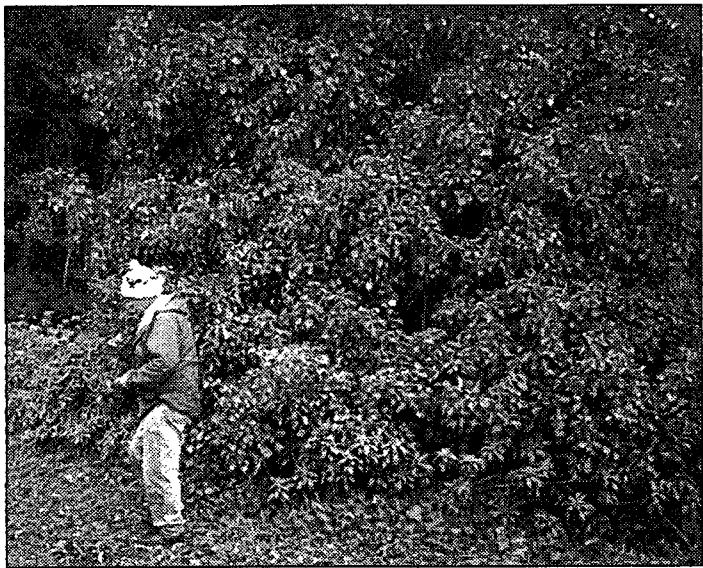
**NEW PLANT DISCOVERIES IN B.C. SUMMER 1996** — Tuesday, November 19, 7:30 p.m. Swan Lake Nature House. Drs. Hans Roemer and Adolf Ceska will present a slide-illustrated talk. Presented by Victoria Natural History Society.

**NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP** — Thursday, November 21, 7 p.m. Cornett A, Room 120, UVic. Speaker: Dr. Brenda Callan, forest pathologist and mycologist on "Diseases of Native Trees and Shrubs." For more information contact Dr. Robert Ogilvie, 658-8937.

**BROOM BASHES** are ongoing until Sunday, November 24. Refer to last month's *Leaflet* for the schedule or call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for when and where.

**NBSBC THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF BC FIRST MEMBERSHIP MEETING** — Saturday, November 23, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Grand Hall, University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops. Contact Dianne Gertzen at 604-930-3309 to register.

**GOMPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** — Thursday, December 5, 7:30 p.m. at Hal Gibbard's, 1439 Wende Road.



DR. CESKA is dwarfed by ivy covering the same fir as is in the picture on page 1 of the Garry Oak Leaflet.

hanging, very bushy foliage. This encroachment by the ivy creates excessive shade for the tree's foliage.

When a tree's foliage does not receive enough light for its normal shoot growth, die-back of twigs and limbs occurs. This die-back can not only weaken the tree's infrastructure but the resulting dead limbs present a hazard to anything below them.

Another hazard presented by adult growth of English ivy is caused by the added weight to a tree's canopy limbs. The extra weight placed on a tree's limbs by the presence of abundant adult ivy growth stresses the tree's internal support system by putting new demands on its architecture. This stress, combined with the additional weight, can cause a seemingly healthy limb to fail break off unexpectedly.

Flourishing ivy not only adds weight to a tree but changes its configuration and therefore its dynamics. Adult ivy growth, by virtue of the fact that it is so bushy, substantially increase's a tree's wind sail factor by providing more surface area to catch the wind.

This extra exposed "wind catching" surface area (especially during a storm) plus the increase in weight, places even more stress on the tree's internal support system and can cause the whole tree to be uprooted or "wind felled."

If English ivy is left unchecked and allowed to grow high into a tree it will eventually mature to the adult phase. It is at this phase that it starts to have a detrimental effect on a tree's overall vigor and presents a potential hazard to the tree's target area.

Ivy should be removed from a tree, preferably before the aerial roots have established a firm grip on the bark, then kept in check by consistently pruning the main stems to an easily maintained height.

The longer it is left to grow unchecked the more difficult and costly English ivy become to remove from trees, houses or anything else its enterprising stems decide to conquer.

#### References:

- Joyce and Brickell, *The Complete Guide to Pruning and Training Plants*, Simon and Schuster, 1992  
John M. Haller, *Tree Care*, Howard W. Sams & Co., 1977  
Putz and Mooney, *The Biology of Vines*, Cambridge University Press 1991

## GOMPS and English ivy

by Katie Stewart

Although we have focused on broom as an aggressive, invasive exotic plant species, we are well aware of what ivy can do to an area of native habitat.

GOMPS directors Pierre d'Estrubé and Hal Gibbard have been experimenting with methods of ivy removal. They held a meeting with David De Shane, Manager of Parks Operations in Saanich last year and received a follow-up letter stating: "The Parks and Recreation Department has had a policy for a number of years to cut ivy growing on trees in our parks and boulevards. We normally can only afford to do this work when we happen to be working in the area although many of our parks have been done.

"We would certainly welcome any assistance that might be available through the members of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society.

"The only condition that we require is that we be notified before any work is done in our parks. Boulevard trees would require the approval of the adjacent resident.

"We look forward to becoming partners with you in attempting to bring better control of ivy growing on our trees, particularly our extremely important Garry oak."

Pierre and Hal have been working on a brochure on ivy that Saanich will publish to inform people of its undesirability. Unfortunately, most garden/nursery outlets sell English ivy as a fast-growing evergreen ground cover and give no warning as to its rambunctious and destructive nature. A far more desirable and suitable ground cover is our native kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*). University of British Columbia scientists have developed an excellent form which is widely available, called Vancouver Jade.

If you have any doubt as to what English ivy can do, take a walk through Knockan Hill Park. Much of the lower portion of the park is carpeted with ivy, which outcompetes the native plants.

If you would like to help with ivy removal experiments, contact Hal at 477-2986 or Pierre at 477-2410.

# Ivy, ivy, all over: English ivy from the tree's perspective

by Dorothy Hartshorne, ISA Certified Arborist

English ivy (*Hedera helix*) is an evergreen, woody vine that is part of a versatile group of plants called root-climbers. Native to European forests, English ivy has become widely spread in temperate areas of the world. Its growth habit allows it to begin life in the profound shade, then ascend, via the nearest support, to sunlight.

Able to grow in almost any soil or situation, English ivy, if its growth is left unchecked, can cover a house or tree with its dense foliage, semi-woody stems and questing shoots.

In trying to determine English ivy's effect on trees, it is important to understand its pattern of development and growth.

One of the basic differences between a vine and a tree is that a tree supports itself while a vine relies on external support. A tree, because it has an internal support system, can display flowers and bear fruit without any new structural demands being placed on its architecture.

A vine, to display flowers and support the weight of fruit, has to find an external support system.

This search for external support by questing shoots and the subsequent ascent of an available structure by climbing stems commonly takes place in a root-climber's juvenile phase. Many root-climbers will then produce an adult phase that grows away from their external supports.

One of the characteristics of English ivy is that it undergoes a dramatic development change from the juvenile phase to the adult phase.

In its juvenile phase, English ivy develops lobed leaves, which are alternately placed on a flexible climbing stem. These stems work their way through other plants to climb various host supports such as rocks, houses and trees. The searching tip of the climbing stem moves horizontally over the host. Clinging aerial roots develop from the lower internodes and support the main stem: these roots take time to establish a firm hold over the host's surface. Once the aerial roots take hold English ivy grows vigorously.

After the juvenile phase is firmly established, the adult or reproductive phase — which may take many years to reach — produces clusters of greenish-yellow flowers and small berries. The adult leaves are oval shaped and are spirally arranged on bushy, "non-climbing" stems that do not produce roots and fall away from the host support.

The difference in appearance between the juvenile and

adult phases of English ivy is so marked that it looks as if two types of ivy are growing on the same host support.

The heavy mass of foliage and semi-woody stems that vigorously growing ivy develops, seems to do little harm when confined exclusively to the trunk of a host tree and remains at the juvenile phase.

It is when it climbs out through the canopy and matures to the adult phase that the ivy can have a detrimental effect on a tree's development by engulfing the limbs with its free



DR. ADOLF CESKA holds ivy leaves showing two phases of development. Dr. Ceska led a walk for VNHS members through the old growth forest at Royal Roads campus earlier in 1996.

Photos by Katie Stwart

# Volunteers wanted to count oaks

By Paul Gareau

Some members of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society (GOMPS) may not be aware that we have been carrying out an inventory of Garry oaks, which to date has been confined to the municipality of Victoria. In 1994 GOMPS received a \$2000 grant to do this work in the Capital Regional District.

We chose Victoria to start because it was the only one of the four core municipalities that did not have a tree protection by-law. This first stage is almost complete and the data is being transferred to a data base. It was done by volunteers using area maps which have lots outlined and by the volun-

teer simply indicating the addresses and the number of Garry oaks on each lot.

The executive has decided to proceed to stage 2 and to do so in the urban containment boundary of the municipality of Saanich. This municipality has the most comprehensive tree protection by-law. Saanich has 62 separate area maps and over half are in the urban containment area to be inventoried. We need many volunteers, therefore, and many more than were required in Victoria, where members of the Board made up most of those doing the work.

I am appealing for members and non-members to help out. If you can help or you know of any non-members such

as retirees, students or anyone who likes walking at leisure and could record trees with the help of a pen, map, and possibly binoculars, we can provide an healthy and productive and extremely beneficial pastime. This activity can be done at a pace the volunteer chooses and I wouldn't expect it to be complete before October 1997, although there is much leeway in the date.

Please give serious thought to helping and let me know if at any of the following numbers: Phone: 250-592-9089; fax: 250-592-9089 and as soon as the answering machine answers press \*. Address: 3503 Camcrest Place, Victoria, B.C. V8P 4V6; e-mail: upgareau@islandnet.com

## Summit Avenue lots still on backburner

by Katie Stewart

The fate of the Summit Avenue lots is still unknown, though they are off the City of Victoria's for sale list. We'd like to see this resolved but there is one plus to the very slow way things are proceeding. The Department of Parks and Recreation are being forced to come up with data on Garry oak habitat within the city.

At the October meeting of the Advisory Parks and Recreation Commission, Joe Daly, Manager of Parks Design and Development, gave the commission a summary of the available studies related to Garry oak meadows in the City of Victoria and the Capital Regional District, all of which we are familiar with.

1. *Garry Oak Ecosystems at Risk* (published by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks);

2. *Proceedings of the Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium*, published by GOMPS in 1993;

3. *Regional Green Spaces Strategy*

draft study prepared by the Capital Regional District Parks staff. [Now Green Spaces/Blue Spaces];

4. Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory of Southern Vancouver Island, the mapping project coordinated by the Conservation Data Centre;

5. Environmental and Social Review of Possible Development on Lots 43-45 on Summit Avenue (prepared for Friends of Summit Park by Camosun College students);

6. Beacon Hill Park — Wildflower Mapping Project, a joint effort of Friends of Beacon Hill Park and parks staff. Volunteers have been collecting field data for the past two years and parks staff have provided air photos, base maps for field uses and drafting services to prepare a completed map.

At the commission meeting, Mr. Daly said he had made an appointment to meet with Joel Ussery regarding the CRD report and with Jeanne Illingworth regarding the SEI to see if any Garry oak habitat within the city

had been identified.

He said that the parks staff doesn't even have any information on Garry oaks within the parks system. Mr. Daly was unaware of GOMPS's Garry oak inventory project and said that such information would be a welcome addition.

### Garry oak planting

The department does not have a policy to plant Garry oaks. Parks staff did, however, obtain 200 seedlings in 1995 from the Pacific Forestry Centre (from acorns collected and planted by GOMPS members). These seedlings will be planted prior to the end of 1996.

Joe Daly contacted Friends of Summit Park for their advice as to where to plant 100 seedlings in the park. The other 100 seedlings will be planted in Beacon Hill Park.

Staff have asked Pacific Forestry Centre for an additional 300 seedlings which will continue to be grown at the city nursery until they can be planted in the fall of 1997.

# Please vote on November 16!

X

By Katie Stewart

With municipal elections just days away, it's time to be thinking of who to vote for.

It's interesting to note that in Esquimalt there is actually some competition for council seats. During the previous municipal election, the incumbent mayor and councillors were acclaimed. This time, a handful of new people are running, disgruntled by how the Salvation Army Matson land development was approved by council immediately following a rancorous public hearing at which most local citizens opposed the proposed development.

Similarly, in Oak Bay, there are candidates who are unhappy with the approval of a 24-unit condominium project on the south side of Oak Bay Avenue, bounded by Monterey and Oliver Streets, which will result in the loss of many Garry oaks.

In Victoria, Jack Etkin and Art Van Berg are running as Green Party candidates. Friends of Summit Park polled mayoral and incumbent councillor candidates and two candidates who live close to the park to ask their opinion on the future of the three city-owned

lots of Garry oak habitat that FOSP is promoting be added to Summit Park and about the future of the Smith Hill reservoir lands.

In the recent FOSP newsletter, Dierde Gotto writes, "Laura Acton supports protection of the reservoir lands together with the three lots as an 'ecological reserve' linked to and extending Summit Park. Acton has been actively involved with FOSP from the start on these issues and has taken the time to listen carefully positions. Bob Cross supports continuing discussions on the future of the reservoir lands and the three lots and recognizing the ecological significance of Summit Park." Of the incumbent councillors, only Pam Madoff agreed with Acton's position. Others were reserved, preferring a wait and see attitude.

Councillor David McLean, who in the past has supported private development on reservoir lands, has not supported FOSP in their quest. He and Geoff Young are under fire for their part in the decision to raise Sooke Dam.

At the all-candidates meeting on November 3 which I attended, environmentalists grilled him as well as picketed him with a send-up of the old U.S. Army recruiting poster depicting David

McLean saying, "I want you to drink Highway 117," referring to the flooding of the highway once the dam is raised.

Bobby Arbess, formerly the Environmental Youth Alliance coordinator, asked Mr. McLean what was being done to inventory Garry oak habitat in the City of Victoria and what was being done for its protection. He was evasive in his answer and blamed city workers for stopping local girl guides from pulling broom at Summit Park.

As a resident of Victoria, I am more familiar with Victoria councillors' viewpoints than those of other municipalities, except for the times I have attended meetings specifically concerning Garry oak habitat issues. I notice, however, that in many areas, such as Central Saanich, Langford and Saanich, there are "green-oriented" candidates, who say that habitat protection is a priority and necessary component in planning.

If you can't get to all-candidates meetings to hear the candidates and ask questions, contact local ratepayer or environmental groups for their input. There are good candidates out there, who are concerned about protecting environmentally sensitive areas and good planning. Let's consider electing them.

## Thanks, *Wildflower* magazine

James L. Hodgins, the editor of *Wildflower: North America's magazine of wild flora*, has again given free publicity to GOMPS in the magazine. He offered to print an ad for us in the current Autumn 1996 issue. He had printed another ad in an earlier edition this year, which resulted in the International Oak Society contacting us.

The magazine, journal of the Canadian Wildflower Society, devoted its Autumn 1994 issue to oaks and included an article by Anne Keay,

"Getting Together to Save our Garry Oaks," which was reprinted from the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings*.

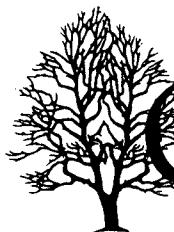
If anyone wishes to join the society and receive its always interesting and far-ranging journal, contact Wildflower - Subscriptions, 4981 Highway 7 East, Unit 12A, Suite 228, Markham, Ontario L3R 1N1.

Memberships for 1 year are: Regular \$30 and Family \$35; for 2 years, Regular \$55 and Family \$65.

**AFTER VOTING, COME AND PLANT TREES AND SHRUBS ON MOUNT TOLMIE DURING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PLANTING. SEE CALENDAR.**

## Welcome new members

Ron Steele, Victoria; Nancy Newell, Victoria; Karen Clark and John Munro, Saltspring Island and Maureen Milburn, Saltspring Island.



# GARRY OAK LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

December 1996, Vol. 3, No. 11

## Government House Garry oak habitat

*Friends of Government House Gardens Society formed in 1992 after former Lieutenant-Governor David Lam was inspired to improve the grounds and gardens of Government House. He gave a large financial donation for that purpose, particularly to establish a rose garden.*

*The society's aim is "to improve, preserve and enhance the grounds and gardens of Government House and to*

*encourage the active participation of the people of B.C. in their development and maintenance, in cooperation with the province of British Columbia, for continuing use and enjoyment."*

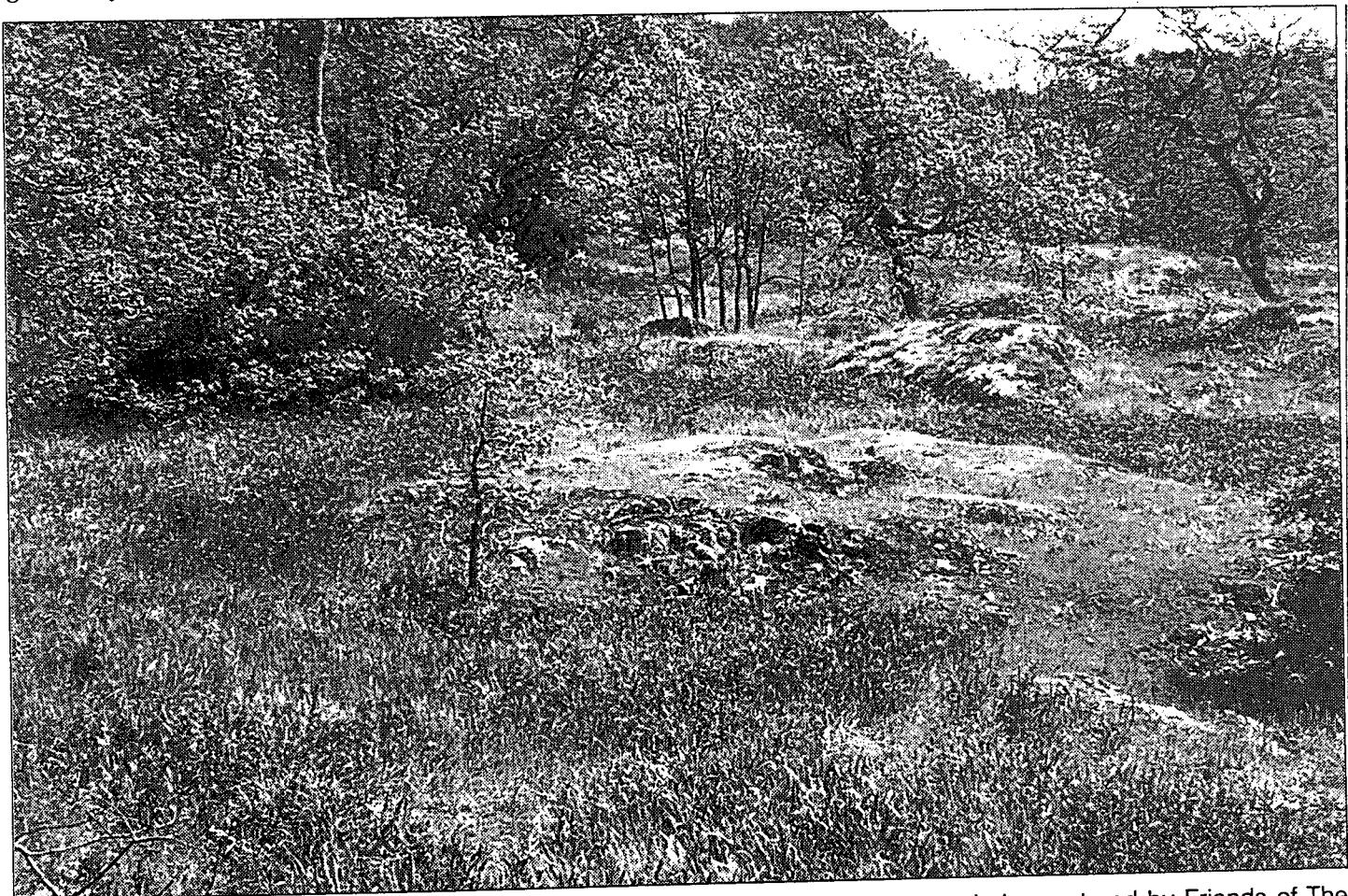
*While the majority of the Friends (about 260) are involved in the formal gardens, a small group of a dozen or so have been restoring the Garry oak habitat on the 22 acres below the house for a few years. This group has made*

*the following proposal to the society and are trying to enlist the support of the current lieutenant governor, Garde Gardom.*

Victoria and the surrounding agricultural areas have developed on one of the rarest and fastest disappearing ecosystems in British Columbia.

The pressure of modern development

*Continued on page 2*



WOODLAND-NATIVE PLANT garden below Government House is part of the area being restored by Friends of The Government House Gardens Society.

The photo was taken in 1994 by a member of the Photography Group of the Society.

Garry Oak Leaflet 1

is continuing to take its toll — threatening these areas. However, there are still remnants of this endangered ecosystem left throughout the region and Government House grounds is amongst the largest and most significant of them.

We would like to preserve and protect this Garry oak habitat in its most natural pre-European state through an ongoing process of management, minimal restoration, research and education.

Using this presently isolated area as an irreplaceable living model, we hope to encourage the public's appreciation of, and their active participation in supporting and strengthening the viability of the Garry oak habitat within the Government House grounds and in their own back yards.

Our desire is to help preserve and restore a foundation of Garry oak habitat throughout its original area so that future generations can once again live in harmony with the Garry oak ecosystem.

The Government House Garry oak habitat included in this management plan encompasses those areas south of the formal garden that are managed by the Garry oak volunteers (formerly Woodlands). The Garry oak habitat appears in the photography group's map [not included in this article] as:

(W) Woodland and Native Plant Garden

(T) The rock face below the Ballroom Terraces, excluding the Alpine Gardens

(G) The area including immediately south of the stables, including the Rhododendron Glen.

## Guidelines

### 1. Name Change

We would like these areas renamed The Garry Oak Habitat (GOH). This will be truly descriptive of the area and stress the importance of this rare and

endangered ecosystem.

### 2. Protection and management

In the Garry Oak Habitat, we have identified three types of management areas. Preservation sites include the least disturbed areas; restoration areas include relatively undisturbed areas and demonstration/education sites are areas of greatest disturbance.

With the new direction being taken in the GOH, past assumptions and routines must be re-evaluated. It is vital to the smooth and effective operation of the GOH that all involved groups/individuals establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue with each other. To avoid confusion, duplication of tasks and errors, the planning committee wishes to act as a facilitator of information and communication among these groups. We feel this is important due to the size and scope of the project and the numbers of groups and individuals involved.

To begin protection and management in the GOH we need to know what we have and where it is. Therefore, a mapping and inventory project should begin immediately. [Since this was written, mapping of the area by vegetation polygons has been conducted by a UVic environmental studies student. GOH has a display with a photo showing the mapping and a description of the vegetation zones.]

The GOH is separated into areas for preservation, restoration and educational plantings where only GOH plants are to be used. The demonstration beds used for educational purposes should contain plants propagated from Government House (GH) stock but may contain introductions of GOH plants from reputable sources. Ideally, propagation stock, either commercially obtained or GH volunteer-generated, should be from a site in close proximity to Government House.

A responsible seed collection and propagation program of GOH plants found on GH property is being initiated by GOH volunteers.

Grass cutting should only be done after seeds have dropped and leaves have withered.

The practice of dumping waste material in the GOH should cease.

Public access should be strictly confined to defined pathways and limited to guided tours led by Friends tour guides. For the present, tours should be led only on established vehicular maintenance paths.

Footpath planning requires further consultation with knowledgeable parks personnel.

### 3. Preservation

Preservation areas are sites where, following the removal of exotics, only self propagation will occur, thereby permitting the return of the natural processes. Here there will be no plant introductions in order to preserve and protect the existing genetic material in an unaltered state and allow the natural evolutionary process to continue.

We emphasize that this is a long term project and, as ecological integrity is the prime concern, the only approach is to go slowly.

These preservation areas will be vital for the emerging study of biodiversity and ecological restoration in GOH.

### 4. Restoration

Restoration areas are defined differently from preservation areas in that long-term monitoring and research will determine if supplementation of indigenous plants is required.

We cannot emphasize enough that the return of suppressed native species to the GOH by natural processes will take several years, at least.

The first step in restoration is the removal of exotics and monitoring of the re-emergence of GOH floras and fauna.

If necessary, the first choice of plants

for supplementation will be those propagated from existing GH native plants.

□ Introduction of non-Government House but GOH plants, as a last resort, will alter the essential character and balance of the existing habitat. Even with consultation, the best effort will still be a guess as to what grew here.

## 5. Research and education

□ Our desire is to have this, as nearly as possible, an example of a thriving Garry oak ecosystem for broad educational, research and enjoyment purposes.

□ The GOH should be made available for co-operative scientific research.

□ To help determine what the composition of the pre-European GOH was, archival research must be conducted.

□ We wish to create a public desire to use native plant species in all garden settings from formal to natural, keeping in mind the 14-point Canadian

Wildflower Society Gardener's Guidelines [see sidebar].

□ We hope to help educate future generations about the GOH and how we influence the environment.

□ We will actively seek supervised involvement by the public — especially school children.

□ We want to demonstrate to wholesale and retail nurseries the commercial use of native plant species to the public. We wish to see plant stock from "legitimate" sources be readily available.

## 6. Designation

□ We feel it is imperative that the GOH be protected for all time by designating it a conservation area (P-5 or provincial equivalent). This will obviously require further investigation and may not include the total area.

Submitted by The Garry Oak Habitat Planning Committee: Fran Spencer, Catherine Fryer, Linda Beare, John

Olafson, Nairn Hollot.

\*\*\*

According to John Olafson, these guidelines have been accepted by Friends of Government House. Negotiations are also under way for a conservation covenant.

Linda Beare says the group has been maintaining species data and was excited to notice a couple of "firsts" this year, post-invasive plant removal: one *Eriophyllum lanatum* (woolly sunflower) and *Piperia elegans* (elegant rein-orchid) — at first three plants noted, then an "explosion of them in the woods."

If you are interested in becoming involved with this project, Friends of Government House Gardens Society can be contacted by writing to the society c/o Government House, 1401 Rockland Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V8S 1V9 or phoning 356-5139 (voice message), volunteer coordinator Betty Wright at 658-5820 or fax 387-2077.

# The Canadian Wildflower Society's Gardener's Guidelines

1. Do not disrupt native plant communities.

2. Obtain native plants from seed, garden or nursery.

3. Buy only wildflowers and ferns certified by the vendors as "Nursery Propagated."

4. Use plants and seeds which have originated in your immediate bioregion. Such plants and seeds are best adapted to the local climate, soil, predators, pollinators and disease.

5. Give preference to bioregionally native plant species in your garden, rather than naturalized or exotic species. The latter group may escape to wild habitats and interfere with the growth and spread of native flora and fauna.

6. Promote the cultivation and propagation of bioregionally native plants as an educational and conservation measure to supplement the preservation of natural habitat.

7. Keep accurate records of any bioregionally rare flora which you are growing to increase our understanding of the biology of the species.

8. Transplant wild native flora only when the plants of a given area are officially slated for destruction eg: road construction, subdivisions, pipelines, golf course, etc. Obtain permission before transplanting.

9. Collect no more than 10 per cent of a seed crop from the wild. Leave the rest for natural dispersal and as food for dependent organisms.

10. Use natural means of fertilizing, weed and predator control rather than synthetic chemical means.

11. Consider planting native species attractive to native fauna, especially birds, butterflies and moths uncommon to your region.

12. Exercise extreme caution when studying and photographing wildflowers in order not to damage the surrounding flora and fauna.

13. Cooperate with institutions like arboreta, botanical gardens, museums and universities in the propagation and study of rare species.

14. Openly share your botanical knowledge with the public but ensure that native plant species will not be damaged in the process.

CWS

4981 Highway 7 East  
Unit 12A, Suite 228  
Markham, Ontario  
Canada L3R 1N1

# The Twelve Days of Christmas in a Garry Oak Meadow

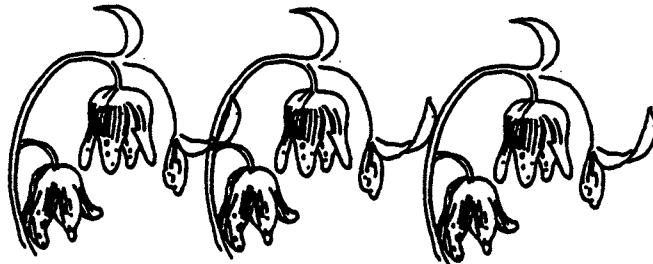
adapted by Eric Redekop

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.



On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me, two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.

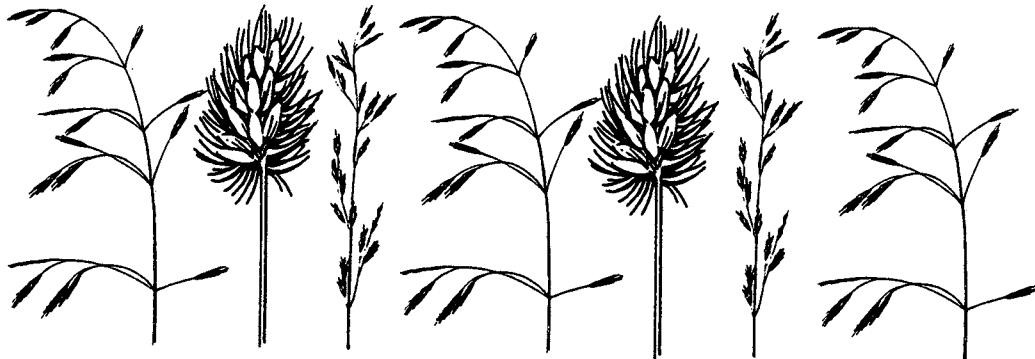
On the third day of Christmas my true love gave to me, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.



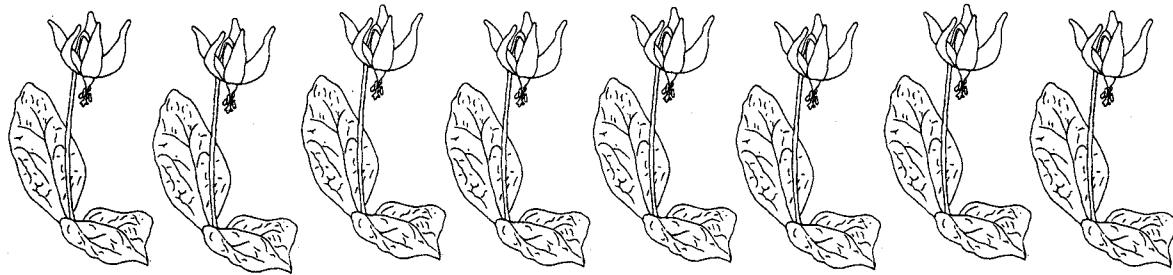
On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, four *Fritillaria*, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.

On the sixth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, six swaths of sedum, five *Propertius* dusky winds, four *Fritillaria*, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me, seven blades of *Bromus*, six swaths of sedum, five *Propertius* dusky winds, four *Fritillaria*, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.



On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, eight Easter lilies, seven blades of *Bromus*, six swaths of sedum, five Propertius dusky winds, four *Fritillaria*, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.



On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, nine 'gator lizards, eight Easter lilies, seven blades of *Bromus*, six swaths of sedum, five Propertius dusky winds, four *Fritillaria*, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.

On the tenth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, ten bryophytes, nine 'gator lizards, eight Easter lilies, seven blades of *Bromus*, six swaths of sedum, five Propertius dusky winds, four *Fritillaria*, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.

On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me, eleven common lichens, ten bryophytes, nine 'gator lizards, eight Easter lilies, seven blades of *Bromus*, six swaths of sedum, five Propertius dusky winds, four *Fritillaria*, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, twelve bad old broom, eleven common lichens, ten bryophytes, nine 'gator lizards, eight Easter lilies, seven blades of *Bromus*, six swaths of sedum, five Propertius dusky winds, four *Fritillaria*, three kinds of camas (That's *Camassia quamash*, *Camassia leichtlinii*, and *Zygadenus venenosus*, which isn't really a camas, anyway), two sharp-tailed snakes, and a Stellar's jay in an oak tree.

## GOMPS and conservation covenants

by Katie Stewart

GOMPS has now received from the Ministry of Environment "a general designation to hold a conservation covenant to protect, preserve and restore, both Garry oak stands and their natural habitats over southeastern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, subject to the following condition:

"That the designate obtain the written consent of the Agricultural Land Commission prior to registering a covenant affecting title to lands that lie within an Agricultural Land Reserve

as designated under the Agricultural Land Commission Act."

After attending the Covenant Monitor Training Program on November 9, GOMPS Director Paul Gareau concluded that GOMPS is too young and too small an organization to actually be a single covantee, but could fulfill a role as a co-covantee.

In our November newsletter I wrote that GOMPS had been invited by Karen Hurley, Saanich's manager of environmental planning services, to be a co-covantee. It appears that Saanich

no longer is interested in having co-covenantees, however.

We received a note from Ms Hurley informing us of this. Attached was a letter Saanich Municipal Administrator R. M. Sharp had written regarding third party covenants.

"The Victoria Natural History Society has requested it be a co-covenantee in respect to covenants on the Glendale project. The rationale is that it will foster partnerships with the municipality regarding stewardship of

*Continued on page 8*

# *How to remove broom: the short answer (Part 5)*

## Municipal Support Services

by Eric Redekop

For those readers with leadership inclinations or masochistic tendencies, organizing a neighbourhood broom bash may be a perfect part-time project. Before beginning work in your favourite meadow, however, it would be wise to take a few basic steps to get the project off on a positive note.

### **Permission for broom bashing**

Before work can begin, the most important first step is to get permission from the appropriate authority. For public property, such as parks or boulevards, this would be the local municipality.

Call the Parks Department first, or ask the Municipal Clerk who should be approached. Take this first step early, before developing your project plan, since even the best plan will be useless without the necessary permission to execute it.

Indeed, your volunteer project may be prohibited outright by the terms of a collective agreement, zoning language, or some other legal impediment.

As long as your proposed activities are not otherwise prohibited, all you need at this stage is approval in principle, and you are more likely to receive it if you insist on developing a plan before commencing work.

Early consultation with authorities will also ensure that any subsequent public volunteers will be directed to contact the project leaders.

### **Developing a work plan**

Several factors require consideration in developing a work plan, and each site will be different, so each project requires its own unique approach. First, you should check the site and interview neighbours and municipal staff to determine whether broom removal activities have been conducted previously. Where stems have been cut, you may

have to deal with resprouted stumps with older and stronger root systems.

In some public parks, routine mowing has reduced thousands of broom stems to stumps, stimulating vigorous resprouting, particularly in trailside areas.

Unless stems can be recut below their first lateral root between Canada Day and Labour Day, they should be pulled or dug out whole between Thanksgiving Day and Groundhog Day.

In some cases, areas may have been cleared by pulling, and if these are not revisited annually, thousands of seed bank sproutlings will eventually restore the seed production cycle, and return your project to square one. Areas cleared within the last two years should receive the highest priority, and particularly if complementary to the work plan, since the seed production cycle cannot be allowed to resume once it is interrupted.

Strategically, there are several other factors which are essential to consider. Since broom seeds are distributed by physical expulsion from the seed pod, cleared areas can be protected from re-introduction of seeds from adjacent mature plants by intervening high ground, native shrubbery, wide trails or paved roadways.

When exposure to seed producing stems cannot be avoided, the boundary length between these areas should be minimized. On a strategic scale, the general plan which emerges involves working from the perimeter of an infested area toward its centre, using various obstacles to reduce exposure of cleared areas to new seed sources.

From a physical perspective, another factor critical to success is site access, for both volunteers and disposal service. Many remaining Garry oak meadows that are infested with broom are located in areas of high relief, with soils that are shallow to bedrock. This means that few of these areas have road ac-

cess or level grade improved trails.

When removal activities are planned for areas remote from existing roads or trails, bright flagging tape can be used to mark parking areas and paths

In addition to indicating the shortest and safest routes between removal and disposal staging areas, these marked paths can be very important to reduce harmful shortcircuiting across sensitive meadows.

Shortcircuiting can result in new paths being worn across mossy outcrops, or in soil compaction that can alter subsurface drainage and local moisture regimes, resulting in negative impacts on the same native vegetation habitat that project activities are intended to protect.

### **Disposal areas**

Disposal areas should be designated in advance, in consultation with authorities, to ensure adequate access for disposal equipment and activities.

To reduce the volume of organic debris removed from the site, chipped seedless broom (eg. winter bashed) can be blown back into cleared meadows, but this should be completed before the wildflower season begins.

In extremely remote areas, physical transfer of broom debris to disposal staging areas by pedestrian volunteers may not be feasible, due to dangerous or highly sensitive terrain, or to extremely long distances between removal areas and trails or roads. In such cases, three alternatives may be used with success.

First, if the debris cannot be removed for disposal, bring a portable chipper to the site and dispose of it at the site. Of course, use of such equipment should only be made by qualified staff with proper safety procedures, liability insurance, and written permission in effect.

This may not be possible in all situations, particularly on public lands

where collective agreements may prevent use of power machinery by volunteers.

Another way to avoid removing debris is to burn it on site, but this alternative may prove even more problematic than broom removal itself.

Conducted in populated areas, burning is both noxious and potentially dangerous; in remote areas it is merely dangerous.

Broom stems contain natural oils and mature infestations have significant amounts of dead standing stems, which turn dry Garry oak meadows into tinderboxes by June.

This extra fuel makes wildfire extremely hazardous for young native trees and shrubs, since fires can burn hotter and longer. In addition to removing protective cover before the rainy season, burning stimulates germination

of broom seed, resulting in thick infestations in burned areas within two years.

Due to wildlife hazard, burning of accumulated debris should only be conducted under the strictest supervision, preferably in early autumn, when nearby herbaceous litter and organic soils have been dampened by rainfall.

Finally, large amounts of stacked broom debris can be transferred using large nets and a helicopter. This approach has been used with some success at Christmas Hill under the supervision of site manager Willie MacGillivray.

In general, debris accumulated over several months is staged in a location suitable for helicopter approach, then carefully loaded into nets spread on the ground.

On H-Day, a minimum of staff are

required to attach the nets to the lifting cable and to secure the dump zone. Hiring a helicopter can be very expensive, so efficient planning is essential for this option to remain feasible; sharing the expenses with projects in other locations may help.

Once you have a good understanding of the nature and scale of your project, make a formal proposal to the appropriate authority to obtain permission in writing.

Your letter of permission should clearly specify the area and target plants in question, describe the removal techniques and procedures, and identify who will coordinate the work.

As the project advances, keep authorities advised of project progress and future plans, including maps to clearly indicate areas of removal activity and debris staging locations.

## Galiano broom workshop

Broom bashing has been an ongoing activity on Galiano Island for some time. The Galiano Club has been hiring youth workers to clear broom from a heavily invested area of an oceanview park owned by the club and removal has gone on in other locations. Members of Galiano Conservancy Association, which organized the October workshop, hoped to create more public awareness of the need to remove broom and control its spread on the island.

Speaker Ray Read, a vegetation biologist with B.C. Hydro (ironically, an agency which contributed to the spread of broom by planting it to stabilize slopes), showed slides of six species of broom in New Zealand. Along with gorse, it occupies three percent of the land base. Mr. Read was formerly the noxious weed manager in New Zealand and said originally the country had total eradication as their first goal. Now, more realistically, the attempt is to keep roadsides and riparian zones clear to control seed dispersal.

Mr. Read said it is only a matter of time before broom ends up in the clearcut areas of our forests, as truck tires are a prime spreader of broom seeds.

Joel Ussery gave some practical tips on organizing broom bashes and did a practice demonstration using loppers after the workshop was over.

GOMPS had its display on hand and distributed approximately 200 Garry oak seedlings which had been requested by the conservancy.

**GOMPS PRESIDENT** Katie Stewart holds a flat of 2-year-old Garry oak seedlings which were taken to Galiano Island.



Continued from page 5  
sensitive areas, ensure the permanency of covenants and engender trust.

"After reviewing the request with the Solicitor, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Parks and Recreation Director, and the Municipal Planner, it was decided not to accede to this request at the staff level.

"This decision was based on the premise that partnerships are not dependent upon a covenant (i.e. Friends of Mount Douglas), trust is earned, not legislated, and Council should not abdicate its role of final adjudication; that is, the final decision should always rest with Council after having received input from citizens, special interest groups and staff. I am providing this memorandum to Council for information and possible debate at the Public Hearing on November 19, 1996."

Needless to say, the GOMPS board does not agree with these conclusions. We think we could fulfill a monitoring role. For example, although we are not co-covantees on the Oakwinds development, we have noticed that already the covenant is not being adhered to. The owner was required to "erect a fence constructed of solid wood or metal posts along the boundary separating the restricted area from the remainder of the lands prior to commencing any construction, development or excavation." The fence is flimsy orange plastic and is now broken in one spot where blasting has occurred beyond the fence line (blasting within the restricted area is verboten.) We wonder if the fence has actually been moved because its present location does not follow the contours of the diagram in the covenant.

If the final arbiter of a covenant is Council, what happens if Council is pro-development and not particularly caring of environmental protection?

Ms Hurley will continue to advocate for co-covantees, so possibly in the future Saanich may be more amenable.

**GOMPS MEMBERS — please check the *Garry Oak Leaflet* mailing label for your membership expiry date. For many of you, your membership renewal will be at the end of December.**

## ONGOING

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**GOMPS DISPLAYS:** Call Eric Redekop, 595-7270, to suggest locations.

### **FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE**

As our main fund-raiser, GOMPS has for sale full colour posters of a Garry oak and a meadow of camas/buttercups under a bright spring sky. We also have wildflower placemats, wildflower posters and the *Garry Oak Meadow Colloquium Proceedings* for sale. Call Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

### **PRESERVATION/RESTORATION COMMITTEE**

**SEED/SEEDLING EXCHANGE.** Interested members contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792.

**OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP** (broom removal). Call Eric Redekop at 595-7270 for information.

### **RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**PUBLIC CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUND GARRY OAK INVENTORY PROJECT.** Project coordinator is Paul Gareau, 592-9089.

### **NEWSLETTER**

If you have any contributions — photos, art work, articles, letters of agreement or disagreement or anything else you'd like to contribute, contact Katie Stewart at 386-4792 or mail to address below.

**GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
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## MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Donation

Individual \$15  Family \$20

Please send more information about:

Youth and Associate \$6 (no newsletter)

Local sources for Garry oak meadow plants

Gift memberships, send receipt to:

Garry Oak Inventory Project

\_\_\_\_\_

Operation Clean Sweep (broom removal)

\_\_\_\_\_

Growing, planting Garry oaks