



Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society

P.O. Box 91053, West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 3N3

www.cypresspark.ca

Spring 2024 Newsletter

A warm welcome to our Friends of
Cypress Provincial Park Society

Directors:

President: Alex Wallace

Vice President: Anne George

Secretary: Anne Leathem

Treasurer: Sandy Booth

Directors at large:

Marshall Bauman

Gail Ross

Bill Kinkaid

Fiona Wright

Tom Kurucz

2024 AGM Notice

Wednesday April 17, 2024

Doors open for coffee and treats at 6:45 pm

Meeting starts at 7:30 pm

Kiwanis Great Hall, 999 21st St., West Vancouver

**Parking is at the West Van Recreation Centre, or
on nearby streets such as Gordon or 21st, followed
by an easy and short walk in.**

**Guest speaker: Paul Kroeger discussing
Ascomycetes and Springtime Mushrooms**

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE - A reminder

Please join or renew your 2024 membership

**Use the form at the end of this Newsletter,
or use the online form at <https://cypresspark.ca/membership>**

**Or at the AGM - our membership Secretary, Eva, will have a table
set up at the meeting.**

Thank you

President's Report – Alex Wallace

With the April 17th AGM date, we are returning to the 'normal' schedule for these annual meetings that were moved to the Fall for several years, due to the Covid pandemic. Currently, we are signing the BC Parks Partnership Agreement that is a requirement for all of our activities, from trail repairs to interpretive hikes, and this follows on from our receiving a legal opinion on this Partnership Agreement and the related liability insurance to be provided by the Government of BC. This has been a slow process, but we had to do our due diligence as it relates to assessing our liability as a non-profit society in many areas of activity. We are advised that we must stay within our Statement of Purpose under the Societies Act of BC. However, with BC Parks, we are funding new and improved signage for the Yew Lake area related to the protection of these areas, while BC Parks has now updated almost all of the green directional signage on trails in the park. This includes the Blue Gentian and Lost Lake areas up to the Black Mountain Plateau; i.e. where new and less confusing Black Mountain trail signage was installed in 2023. BC Parks staff have cheerfully listened to our concerns and advice on these signage projects. As noted elsewhere, we look forward to a significant increase in BC Parks staffing on the ground in 2024.

We now have moved our focus on trail repairs from the Black Mountain Plateau and Howe Sound Crest trail upgrades way down to the Blue Gentian and Lost Lake trails. We have done some preliminary hikes, but as yet, we have not worked through with BC Parks what work will be the priority, and whether this will include new boardwalk and bridge construction work. We first have to assess the wetland areas on the Lost Lake trail for damage and see how this can be mitigated. Meanwhile, we are pleased that the BC Parks Ranger crew did more work on the eroded or missing Hollyburn Peak ledge, finally fixing an awkward hazard for hikers that truly was a longstanding concern. They also installed a new Yellow Cedar bench at the Crown Mountain Lookout halfway up Hollyburn, which is appreciated.

The Howe Sound Crest Trail will go forward as a BC Parks Capital Project, although we did participate in the planning process for this next stage. We are still in discussion with BC Parks about the alignment to St Marks Summit on a steep sidehill, as so many unprepared people go out there in winter and spring, (on the basis of what they see on the internet) despite the warning signage and significant danger in terms of avalanche areas and icy slopes late in the spring.

Photos: Strachan Meadows in Spring,
Pine Drops, Sticky Asphodel
by Alex Wallace



A concern to us still (as outlined in previous AGMs), is that the pika population and then the Northwestern Salamander numbers have had a catastrophic decline, and from a conservation point of view, this needs to be addressed as a priority. Our first observation was that the decline in pika numbers we used to see in areas within the park coincided with the 15 year influx and establishment of a coyote population, likely meaning that predation by coyotes in areas that have roads is the key factor. However, we only have anecdotal evidence at this stage, and now that the pikas are effectively all gone and the coyotes are still around, there is the strong possibility that they now are predators of other small mammals and ground nesting birds. They also appear to be established in the adjacent West Vancouver lands where they den below the snow line, but they likely venture uphill to hunt in the park. They could pose a wider hidden threat to the ecosystem at Cypress Provincial Park (CPP), but we have no studies to establish whether this is in fact the case. Similarly, we noted in the Summer and Fall of 2023 that salamander numbers have drastically been affected by some factor, as they also had largely disappeared. If this is due to the Chyrtid fungus [Catastrophic Amphibian Chyrtid Fungus] that is affecting amphibian populations worldwide, then this is an unfortunate circumstance. The Chyrtid fungus cannot be eradicated once it appears in a lake, (i.e. possibly brought in on the feet or feathers of ducks or other birds) but as yet, it is not clear if this is the cause of the sudden population decline, or if it is an effect of the recent hot summers due to climate change. In either case, we have to make an effort to get a study going on this in order to get some data, as currently we just have our sporadic observations (even though we have regularly looked for these two species in an informal count). In the past, both UBC and SFU have organized forestry and botany studies at CPP (for example the UBC Sticky Asphodel carnivorous plant study at Yew Lake meadows that was internationally celebrated). We are approaching UBC with regard to FCPP funding a study on pikas and coyotes, with a similar request for a study funded by FCPP on the salamander population decline by a grad student from SFU. We have discussed this with salamander specialist Blake Danis at SFU. You may recall that Blake spoke at our AGM two or three years ago. This is going to take time to set up, and even if we have some hard data, it is not clear what remedies might be available, if any. However, we need to initiate studies on these apparently vanishing populations, as this falls within our advocacy mandate, and clearly we have the funds for these important projects.

Related to conservation, access and advocacy goals, we are reprinting our CPP hiking map once again this spring, as it is very popular with park visitors, (and we see very few discarded out of 10,000 printed. This is being managed by FCPP director Tom Kurucz, who also installs the map holders on the information kiosks and in Black Mountain Lodge. We have had discussions with BC Parks as to their plans for the kiosks, as we are told that the Binkert Shelter Kiosk is to be dismantled due to nearby danger trees, and it will be replaced by two smaller kiosks in nearby locations. Possibly we will have learned more by the April AGM. We are also still working to find a long lasting solution to the car and motorcycle racing with its pervasive noise, as this seems to be a failure of the multiple jurisdictions in the park to get a grip. BC Parks and the ski area management are working to place concrete barriers in Lot 3B and possibly other parking lots this summer of 2024, although of course this may affect the ongoing parking issues, but it is a start. As well as a nuisance, this is a significant hazard on the Cypress Bowl Road, and we have also discussed this with British Pacific Properties, as their anticipated residential development is adjacent to the park highway, where cars hurtle past day and night on their way to test their motors in Lot 3B at all hours. We do have a coordinated strategy in mind to deal with this ongoing issue, but it has been hard to get any coordination as yet. But we are working on it.

Conservation and Recreation: 50/50? - submitted by Fiona Wright

Since Cypress Mountain's (CM) 50 year lease for the Controlled Recreation Area (CRA) operated within the Park can be up for renewal at the 40 year mark, there is an opportunity to review the lease to see what needs updating. Friends of Cypress Provincial Park is specifically concerned about conservation. The lease should reflect the commitment BC Parks and CM have to maintain the 50% conservation piece within Cypress Provincial Park (CPP) and the CRA through dedicated planning and resources. A lot has changed since the original lease was signed: truth and reconciliation, technology, climate change, invasive species, population growth and diversity, expectations and backcountry accessibility. There is time to reflect on the implications of these changes for future generations of Park and ski area users to assure:

1. Indigenous Input
2. Safety of Park users, downstream neighbours and non human species
3. Preservation of the unique ecosystems within CPP that are easily accessible to the general public
4. Stopping riparian zone losses
5. Protecting the back country

Recreation is a new focus for BC Parks and summer recreation will become more of a focus for the ski area, so that conservation measures should be built into their planning. Capacity, changing demographics and weather also need to be considered. Noise pollution is an issue to be dealt with, as well as the ongoing concern of increasing dog/pet presence in the Park and unfortunately on the Yew Lake Trail.

Riparian areas retain and filter water, provide habitat and a buffer between the recreation activities and the adjacent ecosystems. Incremental loss of habitat within the CRA seems accelerated in the past few years in the downhill and cross country areas. Loss of habitat equals loss of biodiversity which equals accelerated water run off.

Currently, measurement of all of the above is limited. Use of public data bases like iNaturalist and ebird rely on citizen science to provide species data and, fortunately, citizens do contribute. Data is generated and trends can be monitored over time. Our goal would be to find more species over time and not lose them.

A Bioblitz is another tool for monitoring biodiversity. It is a species count done over a set period of time in a specified area, often within a 24 hour period. A Bioblitz is a way to learn more about species in the area as well as stimulate interest in and respect for nature. North Shore Wetland Partners Society hosted a Bioblitz in CPP on BC Parks Day from 2012-2014. Volunteers spent Saturday on Black and Strachan Mountains, then Sunday on Hollyburn Mountain, with the most scientific support in 2012. Follow the link below to the data from the 2012 Bioblitz which was added to the BC Conservation Base Data about the Park provided by Joanna Hirner, BC Parks Conservation Officer, when she gave FCPP permission to run the Bioblitz.



Photos: Yew Lake Ponds,
White Flower Rhododendron
by Gail Ross



BC Parks Update - submitted by Ryan Village, BC Parks Area Supervisor for Howe Sound

Hello Friends of Cypress Provincial Park,

I'm very excited to be coming into what's sure to be another busy (and hot) summer season in Cypress Provincial Park (CPP). Starting with a quick staffing update - in May of 2023, Nicole Phillips joined our team as the Vancouver Area Supervisor responsible for Mt. Seymour Park and Pinecone Burke Park, among others. While she isn't directly involved with operations in CPP, she's a key team member in the North Vancouver office and we're excited to have her on board. Simon Debisschop maintains his position as Senior Park Ranger for the Vancouver Area, and the same for Gareth Wheatley in the Howe Sound Area. Crystal Forest maintains her position on the North Van team as a full-time Park Ranger, and we'll be welcoming two new full-time Park Rangers in the Spring of 2024.

By the time the summer rolls around, I'm hopeful that the Partnership Agreement between BC Parks and Friends of Cypress Provincial Park (FCPP) will be completed so you are able to independently complete pre-approved projects within CPP. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the work and time from members of FCPP that went into ensuring this agreement was an appropriate way forward for your organization, and am confident it will be a valuable tool in our continued relationship that will promote greater action and efficiency. I look forward to future discussions about potential projects in the park.

The Howe Sound Area has ambitious plans for CPP this year. While some of these items may fall to the backburner depending on other unforeseen operational priorities, the operational items we're looking to accomplish this year include:

- New directional and regulatory signage for Cypress base area, Yew Lake, and the Howe Sound Crest Trail, generously paid for in-part by FCPP.
- New Yew Lake maps to be printed and installed on kiosks and on 8x8's around Cypress base area and Yew Lake.
- Installation of new trail markers on the Howe Sound Crest Trail.
- Greater Ranger presence on weekends on high-use trails.
- Continued trail improvements on the Black Mountain Plateau and Baden Powell trail to Eagle Bluffs.

The BC Parks Capital team and their contractors will also likely be present in CPP this year in finalizing their facility plan for the Howe Sound Crest Trail and beginning long-term preparations for future work. BC Parks is always continuing to work collaboratively with Cypress Resort to facilitate the provision of the best possible experience for our shared visitors while respecting park values.

I look forward to seeing you out on the trails this year, and am grateful for the time, dedication, and passion from all members of FCPP in ensuring the continued improvement and protection of this North Shore gem.

Regards,

Ryan Village (he/him)

Area Supervisor – Howe Sound

BC Parks | Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy

I am fortunate to live, work and play in the traditional territory of the x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) peoples.

Sometimes Ya Just Gotta Laugh - submitted by Marshall Bowman (aka Ramblin Man)

As a 'monitor' for the Old Growth Conservancy Society – trained by the amazing Katharine Steig, I usually start my Conservancy visits by circling Parking Lot #5 – which is mostly in Cypress Provincial Park. Katharine pointed out the many invasive species there, and the litter or dumps which were usually fairly obvious. Some of those dumps in the earlier years were rather outrageous. I would love to have asked the person who left the 5 foot wide clump of bamboo 'where exactly do you want us to plant it?' Or ask the dumpers of the broken-into office safe 'where exactly do you live?' About 10 years ago, Bobby Swain of Cypress Mountain simply put up a gate for the summer months, and most of the dumping ceased.

So, in 2023 there is not much to report but below are some photos of more recent dumps. I'm going to say elephant scat? Different diets, obviously! Coincidentally, the large tree holding the NO DUMPING sign recently fell down, further burying 2 bags of garbage that had been dumped in the thick bushes below the sign. Ya gotta laugh!

Not all that lurks in the lot is unpleasant though. This gorgeous creature popped up in June last year - presumably to eat invasive plants, I'm hoping.



Photos: Elephant scat?
Curious deer
by Marshall Bauman



Citizen Science

The West Vancouver Stream Keepers Society recently purchased a "grab-and-go" water quality kit which will be available for all interested members. If a creek doesn't look quite right or human activities are observed that could adversely impact stream health, this kit will allow anyone to rapidly assess the water.

The new kit contains electronic devices to measure dissolved oxygen, pH, electrical conductivity and temperature, and a clear tube to manually measure turbidity (opposite of water clarity). Measurements are entered into a standard Stream Keeper's water quality data sheet, and an overall index of water quality is easily calculated.

Google is Wrong – submitted by Marshall Bowman (aka Forest Grump)

There is now a 'road sign' in front of the Cypress Village pop-up restaurant near the bottom of Cypress Bowl Road that states GOOGLE IS WRONG! I am particularly amused by that because my FCPP Trail Watch trail happens to connect with two other trails that are curiously dealt with by Google, in my opinion. Specifically, the 'Old Strachan Trail' (100 years old) is not shown by Google maps but is shown on the FCPP map. 'Halvor's Shortcut' is shown on Google maps but is not on the FCPP map because BC Parks considers it an unauthorized trail. In all fairness, most hiking apps show both!

So who is in charge? With social media, I guess we all are. Or no one is. Let's face it, the trail network is changing constantly. I can now monitor the trails near the Old Growth Conservancy, or Black Mountain from my computer or device by looking at trail apps, or Strava heat maps, perhaps. Consider 'Bald Mountain' in West Vancouver,

above the Quarry Lookout picnic site in Cypress Provincial Park. I have lived in West Vancouver for over 30 years and have never heard of Bald Mountain, with the exception of a 1925 Province Newspaper map in a local history book. Well, it is back now and shows up on many trail apps. In the last few months a new trail has appeared that goes up and over Bald Mountain. I doubt that I would ever have found it in the wild, so to speak. So, it does look like we are all in charge. And it also looks like some people are out enjoying the forest while I track them on my computer. What am I doing? Maybe I should go out and play!



Photo: Google is wrong
by Marshall Bauman

Summer Hikes

Hikes, in association with Nature Vancouver, are in the planning stages. Please continue to review our website for updates.

FCPP Website

FCPP directors are gradually updating the content of its webpage, <https://cypresspark.ca/> We did get behind in adding to the history pages, correcting inaccuracies, and changing with the times, but are now working on it.

The detailed map, developed by long-time member Mike Castle, can be downloaded from the website. When you find hikers at CPP who don't seem to know where they are going (as we know park signs are confusing), suggest they download the map from the FCPP webpage. Soon to be added will be documents from David Cook, including a self-guided tour and geology description.

Please let us know if you have suggestions for changes or additions to the site.



Photos: Big tree hunting,
Lions View
by Anne Leathem



Joining FCPP or Renewing Your Membership

Your \$10 FCPP membership is for a one-year period, starting January 1st. If you wish to check your membership status for renewal, please contact the membership secretary Eva Nagy at evnagy@shaw.ca.

You are welcome to join or renew your membership by either:

1. Mailing your cheque and membership form below to Treasurer, FCPP, Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society P.O. Box 91053 West Vancouver BC V7V 3N3
2. Paying electronically through our website. See <https://cypresspark.ca/membership>

Membership Form

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City and Postal code _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail _____ New Member ____ Renewal _____

Enclosed is \$10 for single/family membership \$ 10.00

Tax deductible donation – optional \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

(Charity BN/Registration #80249 2372 RR0001)

Thank you for your support!