

From: Katharine Steig [katharine@steig.com]  
 Sent: December 5, 2008 3:54 PM  
 To: Mayor and Council  
 Cc: Larry ENV:EX Syroishko; Linda Swain ;  
 Subject: Friends of Cypress Provincial Park November 2008 Newsletter attached

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Dear Mayor Pam Goldsmith-Jones and Members of Council,

Congratulations to each of you on your successful election (or re-election) to Council, and best wishes for a very productive year.

I am attaching for your interest Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society's 4-page November 2008 newsletter. Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society was established in 1990 to protect the park's natural environment and associated values. As the newsletter indicates, members are involved with a number of park projects, including production of interpretive materials, trail maintenance, and consultation with BC Parks and Cypress Bowl Recreations on matters of mutual interest.

You will note in reviewing our newsletter that we are very much concerned about BC Parks' overall low budget and how this inadequate provincial funding affects Cypress Park. Many park trails are in poor condition, park brochure/maps are no longer available at park kiosks, and ranger staff are in short supply. There are only three rangers to look after the several Vancouver area provincial parks, including Cypress, Mount Seymour, Indian Arm, Mecone-Burke, Peace Arch, and Apodoca on Bowen Island. A recent response from Environment Minister Barry Penner to a letter we sent him in June on providing more funding for Cypress Park trails was not encouraging.

Vanoc has spent several million dollars at Cypress on 2010 venues; a recent media report gave a figure of \$16 million. But Vanoc provided only \$400,000 for 2010 Cypress Legacy projects: \$300,000 for Howe Sound Crest Trail upgrades and \$100,000 toward Hollyburn Lodge restoration. We believe that it would have been appropriate for Vanoc to provide much more funding for park needs, considering the impact of the Olympics on the park.

I am bringing these concerns to your attention because I believe that it is in West Vancouver's best interest to help ensure that Cypress, in our back yard, is a park we can truly be proud of and that our visitors will admire. Thank you for your consideration of my comments. I hope you will find the attached newsletter informative.

Sincerely,

Katharine Steig, President  
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## Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society

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[www.cypresspark.bc.ca](http://www.cypresspark.bc.ca)

### NOVEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

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#### INSPIRED BY CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

ENVISIONING CYPRESS AFTER 2010 - by Katharine Steig

In early November, I had an opportunity to visit Cheyenne Mountain State Park in Colorado Springs. This 680 hectare (1680 acre) mountain park was created two years ago to protect one of the last significant open spaces in the southern section of Colorado's Front Range. It has 20 miles of well-maintained hiking/biking trails. But what impressed me was the excellent map/brochure one receives when entering the park, the numerous interpretive displays, trail markers with GPS coordinates, and the large Visitor Centre with ample seating space for looking through several binders of laminated pages containing pressed samples and information about the park's plants, shrubs and trees. There were numerous interactive natural history displays for children, a good selection of hiking and natural history books in the gift shop, and a large public meeting room. Park staff were available to answer questions. Information about the active "Friends" group is listed on the park brochure - see [www.cmspfriends.org](http://www.cmspfriends.org). Yes, there's a \$6/day parking fee. An annual pass for use in all Colorado state parks is \$60/year (\$30/year for those over 64).

You may wonder why I'm sharing this recent experience with you. The answer is simply that I believe we must keep our dream alive of someday having an "exemplary" park at Cypress. There will be increased commotion in Cypress Bowl during the next couple of years as new 2010 structures are put in place, used, and then taken down. Park staff and FCPP directors' time and energy will continue to be taken up with 2010 issues during this period. But there is life after 2010. Let's not lose sight of what we want Cypress Park to be in future.

#### BADEN-POWELL TRAIL RE-ROUTE TO BLACK MOUNTAIN

Construction of the new Baden-Powell Trail to Black Mountain Plateau was completed on October 1. Vanoc and Boyne/CNL (Cypress Bowl Recreations' parent company) shared the \$300,000 cost of trail construction. After several on-site reviews, FCPP directors formally notified BC Parks and Cypress Bowl Recreations that we considered the trail acceptable for summer hiking. We are aware that some trail problems have occurred since October 1, but note that CBRL is fully committed to addressing problems as they arise. Although a gentler grade with more switchbacks would have been preferable if terrain and ski development requirements had allowed it, most of the hikers we have talked with have commented positively about the trail. There are still issues to resolve about winter use and supervision of this trail, which is reserved for hikers, snowshoers, and backcountry skiers. Snowboarders

are not allowed on the trail. Backcountry skiers will be allowed one run down the Forks groomed ski run. FCPP directors will meet with BC Parks and CBRL for an on-site winter use review early in the ski season to ensure backcountry users' safety on this trail.

## **HOWE SOUND CREST TRAIL 2010 LEGACY PROJECT**

BC Parks staff have spent considerable time this summer/fall working out details for the first stage of major upgrades planned for the Howe Sound Crest Trail, with changes made to the route from Cypress Bowl to Bowen Lookout. A new summer/winter route is being constructed from the Pumphouse Road to Bowen Lookout, and will be available for backcountry use this winter. FCPP directors have been involved in on-site review of this new route. The old summer trail, which starts near the green water reservoir, will remain in place under a different name. The second stage in HSCT upgrades will be the section from the West Lion to St. Marks. Improvements to the section from St. Marks to Bowen Lookout will make up the third and final stage. Two new emergency shelters were installed this summer at Magnesia Meadows and Brunswick Lake. As part of this Legacy Project, a new trail and interpretive information kiosk will be constructed near the new Cypress Bowl day lodge. The total cost for HSCT upgrades and the information kiosk is expected to be an estimated \$875,000, of which Vanoc is contributing \$300,000. The Federation of Mountain Clubs is the key sponsor of this project.

## **SUMMER 2008 TRAIL MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS**

BC Parks had much work to do in early summer chain-sawing through the many trees that fell across trails last winter. FCPP Trail Watchers worked diligently - checking their assigned trails, reporting on trail conditions and signage, providing flagging where needed, blocking confusing side trails, clipping obstructing vegetation, and doing other basic work. While it is not the job of Trail Watchers to do major repairs, their reports bring problem areas to BC Parks' attention for future trail improvement. This year's Trail Watchers were June/Alan Banwell, Kitty/Mike Castle, Viire Daniels, Joy Davidson, Lois Enns, Paul/Willa Geddes, Lyn Grants, Louise Irwin, Peter Merrison, and Katharine Steig. Alex Wallace and Bill Sims also work on park trails. This summer we were joined by new FCPP member Gerry Westie, who put in a tremendous number of hours on our trails, cutting through trees across trails, redirecting water off trails, and clipping encroaching vegetation. In August, Gerry, Kitty/Mike Castle, Susan Calvert, Louise Irwin, and Katharine Steig worked with Park Ranger Rob Wilson on the long, sloping boardwalk at the west end of the Hollyburn Baden-Powell Trail, removing deteriorating mesh and replacing it with new mesh. In October, Gerry and Park Ranger James Kelly re-routed the east end of this trail away from a well-known boggy area. In September, at our request, West Vancouver Parks staff repaired some bridges/boardwalks on the Baden-Powell Trail (West Vancouver land) near Blue Gentian Lake and also repaired several boardwalks on the Blue Gentian Lake Access Trail since they were in the area. We appreciate their generosity and expertise.

## **2009 TRAIL GOALS**

Next year BC Parks plans to build bog bridges over the increasingly muddy areas on the Hollyburn Peak Trail near the Triangle Lakes intersection. While it was not possible this year to replace the small broken bridges on the Lost Lake Trail, we are hopeful that this will be done next year. The broken bridge over Stoney Creek at the top end of the Lost Lake Trail also needs replacement. As Trail Watchers have reported, trail signage is inadequate in many park areas, especially in the southeast corner and on Black Mountain Plateau. Significant signage improvements should be undertaken in 2009.

## **INADEQUATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR BC PARKS**

Regarding Government funding for BC Parks, including trail improvements, FCPP has not yet had a response from Environment Minister Penner to our June 2008 letter on Black Mountain trails funding. We had written to express concern that the approximately \$300,000 for upgrading trails on Black Mountain Plateau (Baden-Powell Trail and Black Mountain Loop) had once again been withheld by the Treasury Board, although the project had been approved by BC Parks. While the new Baden-Powell Trail to Cabin Lake, funded by Vanoc and CBRL, has been completed, trails beyond this point on Black Mountain Plateau remain in poor condition due to the number of extremely boggy areas that can be hazardous for hikers. Although Government provided BC Parks \$11 million this year in capital funds for infrastructure upgrades, including campground and water system improvements and trail upgrades in several parks, BC Parks' 2008 operating budget was only \$30 million. In 1999, it was \$41 million. In that same year, the government-commissioned BC's Park Legacy Panel, chaired by Mark Angelo, recommended that the operating budget be doubled to \$80 million by 2005 to allow for proper park management. Obviously, this recommendation was ignored. Fewer expensive government TV ads on BC's parks and more on-the-ground funding would help to bring BC closer to being "the best place on earth."

## **VANCOUVER AREA TRAILS WEBSITE**

Interesting and useful information about Vancouver area hiking trails can be found at [www.vancouvertrails.com](http://www.vancouvertrails.com) Take a look. The site includes photos, articles, notices, hikers' comments and more. Thanks to North Shore Hikers for this information.

## **NEW CYPRESS CREEK DAY LODGE IN CYPRESS BOWL**

CBRL's new 48,000 square-foot day lodge near Black Mountain's Eagle Chair is expected to be ready for use in time for this winter's ski season. Named Cypress Creek Lodge, it will ultimately replace the existing Black Mountain Lodge. There will be some space in the new lodge for natural history displays and brochures about the park.

## **HOLLYBURN LODGE RESTORATION AND USAGE**

An agreement is being worked out among BC Parks, Cypress Bowl Recreations and the District of West Vancouver to give West Vancouver ownership of the lodge while maintaining CBRL's use of the building. This agreement would allow West Vancouver to apply for Provincial Heritage grants for phased restoration of this historic building. Restoration is expected to cost around \$1 million, of which Vanoc will contribute \$100,000.

## **HOLLYBURN BOOK PUBLISHED**

*Hollyburn - The Mountain and the City* by Francis Mansbridge is now available in local bookstores or online. It's a "must read" for anyone interested in the long history of Hollyburn. The project was initiated by the Hollyburn Heritage Society. The author received the 2002 B.C. Lieutenant-Governor's award for historical writing for a previous book, *Launching History: The Saga of the Burrard Dry Dock*.

## **BLUE GROUSE: NAME CHANGED TO SOOTY GROUSE**

This summer we learned that in 2006 the American Ornithologists' Union split the species Blue Grouse into two species and changed their common names. Sooty Grouse is the new name of the coastal species of Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus fuliginosus*) that inhabits the park.

The interior species is now called Dusky Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*). They are similar in size and appearance and difficult to tell apart in areas where their range overlaps, e.g. east slope of Washington State's North Cascades. We became aware of the name change when 60 members of the American Birding Association (ABA) visited Cypress at the end of August. Seeing a Sooty Grouse was an important goal for the group and fortunately they saw one. ABA also made a generous donation to FCPP as thanks for help we gave them. We are now inspired to begin work on updating and reprinting the Cypress Bird Checklist, which we produced in 1996 with a grant from VanCity Savings and essential help from Nature Vancouver members. (Although there is a 2002 version on our website, it's also out of date.)

## INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

A small FCPP-funded sign about the 743-year-old mountain hemlock at the start of the Yew Lake Old Growth Loop was installed at this location by BC Parks in early September. FCPP is providing funds for a new interpretive sign for the Roadside Yellow-Cedar near the Hollyburn Ridge turn-off. BC Parks' old sign about this important 1200-year-old tree had deteriorated beyond repair. The new sign should be in place next summer. As already reported, BC Parks is planning new signage for the Cypress Bowl BC Parks kiosk, which will be relocated near Cypress Creek Lodge. BC Parks is also planning new signage for the Hollyburn Ridge kiosk. FCPP will provide assistance with this work.

## RAVENS - APPARENTLY NOT SO BUSY THIS SUMMER

There have apparently been fewer problems at Cypress this summer from ravens pulling rubber off car windshield wipers compared with last summer when over one hundred vehicles were reportedly affected. Cypress Bowl Recreations posted notices this summer in numerous places in Cypress Bowl and Hollyburn Ridge, warning visitors about raven activity, advising protecting windshield wipers with PVC pipe or other sturdy material, and asking that raven activity be reported to the Guest Services Office in Cypress Bowl or emailed to [contact@cypressmountain.com](mailto:contact@cypressmountain.com) If your vehicle was affected this summer, and you did not report the incident to CBRL, please do so now. Scientists are not yet sure why ravens act in this way. We will continue to try to obtain more information on raven behaviour.

## PIKA SIGHTINGS

Pikas, sometimes called "rock rabbits," used to be seen occasionally in the 1980s in rocky areas near the top of the Black Mountain ski slope and also near the top of Hutch ski run on Strachan, but they had not been reported for several years. In 2006 one was seen near the West Lake bend of the Cypress Bowl Road. This fall one was seen near the Km 13 culvert intake near the end of the road and another was seen among the new rocks at Quarry Lookout. It would be great to have a colony of pikas in the park again. Please watch for them and report any sightings to FCPP directors.

## CYPRESS SKI CLUB SCOTCH BROOM PULL

On Sunday, October 19, members of the Cypress Ski Club removed a large number of Scotch broom plants from ski slopes and road edges on Mt. Strachan. They have worked in this area in past years as well. We appreciate their help in non-native invasive plant removal and were pleased to lend them the weed wrenches we obtained a few years ago through a TD Friends of the Environment Grant.

## IN MEMORIAM

Most of you already know that Halvor Lunden and Mary Macaree passed away at the end of July. Since much has already been written about these two great people in other organizations' newsletters, we will just say here that FCPP was honoured to have them as long-standing members. Everyone in the hiking community benefited from Halvor's dedicated trail work and from Mary's (and her late husband David's) classic books, "103 Hikes in SW BC" and "109 Walks in Vancouver's Lower Mainland." Mary had almost finished a 6<sup>th</sup> edition of "109 Walks." It was completed by others and will be published by Greystone Books in Spring 2009. The sturdy bridge that Halvor designed and helped build in 1997 over Montizambert Creek at the top end of the Sunset Trail in Cypress Bowl will serve as a special reminder to us of his skills, hard work and generosity.

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#### **FCPP DIRECTORS for 2008-09**

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