



Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society

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

www.cypresspark.ca

Spring 2023 Newsletter

*Do you recognize these animal tracks?
The correct answer is at the end of this newsletter*

A warm welcome to our Friends of Cypress community! Much has happened since our last publication in the Fall of 2022, so let's get you up to date.

Board news (or who's who in the zoo):

President: Alex Wallace

Vice President: Anne George

Secretary: Anne Leathem

Treasurer: Sandy Booth

Directors at large: Eva Nagy (membership)

Marshall Bauman,

Gail Ross, Bill Kinkaid,

Tom Kurucz (newsletter)



MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

A reminder to all members: please renew your 2023 membership using the form at the end of this Newsletter.

Thank you

Hollyburn Lodge - Winter 2023

Photo: Tom Kurucz



**AGM
Tuesday Oct. 10
7:30pm**

Directors Report - Alex Wallace

Mark your calendars: 2023 AGM to be held Tuesday Oct. 10

Our 2023 AGM will be held on Oct 10, 7:30pm at the Kiwanis Great Hall in West Vancouver. Bearing in mind the concern about Covid transmission, we plan to also have a Zoom link for those who choose not to attend in person. In 2024 our plan is to move back to a Spring AGM date. More details on the AGM to follow at a later date.

Alex continues (tirelessly) to communicate with BC Parks, Cypress Mountain Resort (CMR) and other groups to advance the concerns and interests of our membership. The following issues and items continue to be discussed and advocated for:

Trail project planning

After several discussions with BC Parks, we are still unclear how the trail work projects started on Black Mountain Plateau some years ago will move forward. We were working on the Baden-Powell trail to upgrade several sections, but for various reasons, this work stalled in 2020. BC Parks has made it clear that we need to start over with three bids from qualified contractors, a scope of work, annual operating plan and First Nations approval of the project. Given the late snowpack this year, and the need to work around the new Cypress Mountain Coaster that now operates on Black Mountain in the summer season, we do not anticipate an early start to any of this.

Partnership Agreement Legal Implications

It has been made clear to us that in order to fund or manage any trail project, we need to sign a BC Parks Partnership Agreement. This topic has received considerable attention, as these agreements include a clause where we, the Board of Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society (FCPP) would assume all liability on any project. Originally, these agreements, a form of the General Service Agreement for contractors employed by the Government of BC, were required of groups working on Crown Land, but they are now applied to trail projects and other work in Provincial Parks. We are not clear how this Agreement protects us in relation to trail work, and although it is accompanied by \$2 million general liability insurance, we are unsure how it functions if an injury claim is made. We are asking West Coast Environmental Law for a legal opinion on the wording and implications of this agreement as part of our due diligence. We are not the only group to be concerned, and have discussed initiating a legal review with the Federation of Mountain Clubs and the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC; however, we will be the lead organization in seeking a legal opinion.

It is ironic that we have been participating in and funding these projects to improve and upgrade numerous worn out and dangerous trails to protect the hiking public, but in order to do this work as a public service, we, a small park advocacy group, are now required to protect the Government of BC. More details to follow as we receive them.

Current projects

Two projects are hopefully being done in 2023 by BC Parks with funding assistance from FCPP. One is an improvement to the washroom at Magnesia Meadows hut, an "emergency cabin" built by West Vancouver High School students that actually functions as a busy remote mountain hut at a scenic location on the Howe Sound Crest Trail. There have been complaints about the human impacts at this location, so this is a much-needed hiking related project. The other is the completion of the Hollyburn Peak ledge that the BC Parks Rangers repaired last year, with funding from FCPP. This was a great improvement to a tricky and potentially hazardous spot just below the peak that had been eroding for decades. Much of the work is likely to be done by the Student Ranger crew, but we may again be asked to fund the helicopter lift of some materials this season.

New Provincial Funding

As reported by the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, (ORCBC) the Provincial Government is granting the ORCBC \$10 million to launch a new endowment fund and grant program that will support recreation-based projects of community-based volunteer groups, First Nations, and local governments.

This first-of-its-kind fund in B.C. will help to address the longstanding need for sustainable funding for outdoor recreation and will support the many groups that have faced and continue to face pressures from the surging interest in outdoor recreation.

Hiking Map

Because of demand of our wonderful map, we have reprinted them in time for this year's hiking season. MANY thanks to Mike Castle for his many upgrades and improvements throughout the years.

West Vancouver News - Tom Kurucz

Although rather dated news, the upper bridge over Brother's Creek was replaced in the fall of 2021, a number of years after the old log bridge disappeared. See photo below.

Very recent and unfortunate news - the lower bridge over Brother's Creek (along the Baden Powell Trail) has been closed permanently due to safety concerns related to age and degradation. There is no news yet on a replacement plan. The bridge on Crossover Trail a little further up the creek remains open.

Wildfire fuel management work over a 6 hectare section of forest near the Baden Powell Trail just east of Brother's Creek began in the late fall of 2022 and was scheduled to be complete in the spring of 2023.

Walks and Hikes with FCPP and Nature Vancouver

Walks and hikes are currently in the discussion and planning stage.

Members will be notified through Events on the Nature Vancouver webpage and by email to FCPP members.

We look forward to seeing you on the trails!

New Brother's Creek Bridge

Photo: Tom Kurucz



A Gathering to Honour Katharine Steig - Lyn Grants

On a snowy Saturday, November 28, 2022, more than 50 people gathered in the Old Growth Conservancy parking lot to honour Katharine, who passed away on August 12, 2022.

Family and friends stood in a circle. As the snow fell in big, moist drops and the weather seemed to become colder, the circle moved closer together. A microphone was handed out by one of Katharine's sons, so that all those who wanted to voice a tribute to Katharine could be heard. The tributes were many and diverse, but there was a theme:

Katharine's profound interest in nature and her determination to foster in others an awareness of the fragility of our natural surroundings and the importance of advocacy.

Many were the references to Katharine's gentle but persistent advocacy—from supporting better teacher to student ratios when her sons were at school (aeons ago) in West Vancouver; her active support for the formation of the Old Growth Conservancy; her committee work with Nature Vancouver; her dedication and commitment to Friends of Cypress Provincial Park, her involvement with the District of West Vancouver over park and conservation issues, her amazing memory, her record keeping which was at an archival level.

Russell Chamberlain, CEO of Cypress Mountain Resort, who attended the gathering with his second in command, spoke admiringly of Katharine for her dedication to the integrity of the Park. Many times their perspectives differed, but his respect for her never wavered.

And it was heartwarming to hear her grandchildren speak of Katharine's gentle, yet determined influence in encouraging them to observe nature and remember the names of plants. On one occasion when some of them had set out on a nature walk, Katharine wanted them to observe and remember the sundew, despite being cautioned about a bear hovering nearby. Caution won out, but the memory of the occasion and the sundew lives on.

While some of us had expressed misgivings about attending a memorial, in the open, in the snow, the setting could not have been more appropriate: big trees around us, trails leading to bigger trees, an area conserved due to the determined work of Katharine and other like minded individuals.

Katharine was inspirational. She will not be forgotten!

Photo submitted



A chilly fungus. Photo: Tom Kurucz



Flora and Fauna News - Fiona Wright

All of us love the park and want to help to protect its natural spaces and biodiversity. Since there are no regular surveys done in the park, it would be great if you could record some of the species you see when out hiking, snowshoeing or even backcountry skiing. Plants, animals, birds, bugs are all waiting to be found. We want to learn more about the species that live in our park, especially species we don't see very often like the Common Pika or the Flying Squirrel.

We encourage the general public to use the iNaturalist app to record what they see in parks, so you will be contributing to a citizen science generated database. Take a photo, upload it to the iNaturalist app, identify the species if you can or the app may be able to help. The app also relies on photo contributions to improve the identification ability of the app.

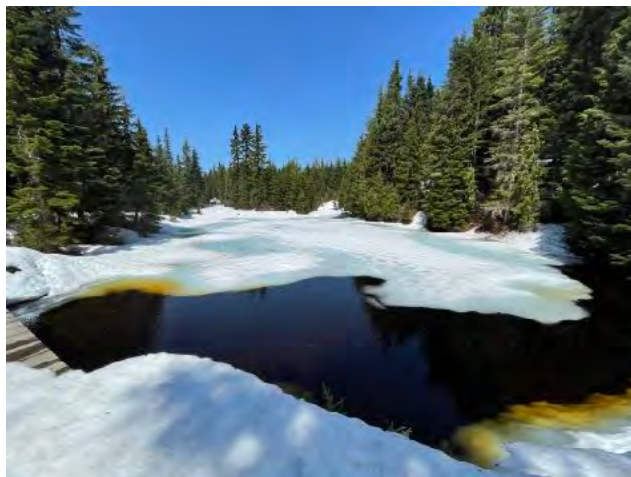
The Common Pika or American Pika, *Ochonta princeps*, inhabits rocky alpine and subalpine terrain. The ski slopes do provide rocky terrain. Pikas make a squeaking sound which is easy to hear but the pika making the call is not as easy to find. Take your time, look around you; are there any piles of dried grasses that may give you a clue to its location. These interesting animals are in the same Order as hares and rabbits, *Logomorpha*, and they have been around for a long time. There was a reported sighting of a Pika on one of the ski runs in 2018. In iNaturalist, there is a photo of a Pika in the park from 2020.

The Northern Flying Squirrel, *Glaucomys sabrinus*, doesn't really fly, it glides and can cover up to 150 feet gliding from tree to tree. Unlike the Pika, the flying squirrels are only active at night so they are not seen too often. If you happen to hike or cross country ski in the evening, you may be lucky enough to see them moving from tree to tree. The last reported sighting I am aware of was by a skier who was also our carpenter at the time, the year was 2016. There were no sightings found in iNaturalist or efauna.

What looks to be a pika. Photo: Marshall Bauman



Spring melt. Photo: Tom Kurucz



Hello Friends of Cypress Provincial Park,

As we wrap another busy winter season, BC Parks is looking forward to continuing discussions with our partners, including FCPP, North Shore Rescue, and Cypress Mountain Resort, about the meaningful work that can be accomplished in Cypress Provincial Park during 2023.

Our Ranger team will be active along the Howe Sound Crest Trail this summer, with continued capital improvements also slated for the coming years. We hope to be able to contribute some time and resources to completing sections of the Black Mountain boardwalk with the leftover lumber.

We'll endeavour to also complete the maintenance required to the upper section of the Hollyburn Mountain trail, and work towards improved signage throughout the park.

With the Vancouver Area now split in two, with me taking over the western portion of Sam Stickney's parks, I look forward to continuing to build on this long-lasting partnership between BC Parks and Friends of Cypress Provincial Park, with Gareth Wheatley acting as the permanent Howe Sound Area Senior Park Ranger. As of February 2023, we're excited to welcome two new Park Rangers to the North Vancouver office: Shayne Poleyko & Chelsea Brager. Simon Debisschop will maintain his title of Senior Park Ranger for the Vancouver Area, with Crystal Forest rounding out our compliment of Park Rangers. The Vancouver and Howe Sound Areas will collaborate throughout 2023 as details are confirmed regarding how resources are allocated to the respective areas, so expect to see all of us on the trails in Cypress Provincial Park this year.

I'm looking forward to working with you and the rest of the FCPP team regarding what we can accomplish together in Cypress.

Best,

Ryan

Does anyone know this man?

Photo: Marshall Bauman



Morning rains. Photo: Tom Kurucz



Bear News - North Shore Black Bear Society

At the North Shore Black Bear Society we had more than the usual number of reports of bear sightings this winter. We had bears popping up in neighbourhoods periodically, getting into garbage, organic waste and bird feeders. As a result, we have also had more than the usual number of North Shore residents asking us.

“Did our bears not hibernate this winter?” Well, the answer is a little complicated.

First of all, black bears are not actually true hibernators. Hibernators such as deer mice lower their body temperatures drastically and slow their metabolisms by around 90%. Black bears are able to get through the winter by entering a state called torpor, in which their body temperature only goes down by 4 or 5 degrees. This still allows them a savings in energy consumption of about 75%, but also means that they rouse more easily. It is not uncommon for black bears to move around inside their dens, leave their dens for a stretch and a sunbath, or even to go further afield for a drink and a snack, and then return to their dens again.

Another advantage to torpor is that female bears are able to gestate, give birth to their cubs in January and care for their cubs while they are in their dens. The cubs are born blind and with their ear canals closed, at a much smaller size in relation to their mother than are human babies. The mother bear grooms and looks after them in the den, nursing them with her very rich milk, all while she is in a state of torpor. Once the cubs' ears and eyes have opened, they will emerge with their mother to start learning about finding food other than her milk, sometime in April. We also see that black bears that enter their dens with injuries are very often able to heal over the winter, without infection, emerging in the spring good to go for another season.

So, why were some of our bears so active this winter?

Several environmental factors contribute to triggering black bears to den down, such as the shorter number of daylight hours, lower temperatures, presence of snow, and lack of available food. Some bears that do not put on sufficient body fat during the fall hyperphagia period may not den down, but remain active and continue to feed. It is possible that climate change is having an effect here: the berry crops, salmon in the rivers, and even the insects that are important natural foods for our bears, seem to be varying in abundance year to year.

However, we feel that the most important factor is the consistent availability of unnatural food sources. A black bear with their amazing sense of smell has no trouble locating easily accessible garbage, food waster, and bird feeders all winter long on the North Shore. And indeed, this is what we saw this past winter. We had a sharp uptick in bears accessing bird feeders (seed, suet and hummingbird types), as well as bears specifically targeting strata and co-op complexes with their communal garbage areas. It is a challenge for a complex to ensure all residents are compliant with shutting garbage bin lids, freezing the most odorous parts of their garbage, and keeping the enclosures securely shut. Unfortunately, too often these bears pay for our lack of responsibility with their lives.

Photos this page: Marshall Bauman



We had an amazing sight this past winter as one resident who lives close to a forest reported they had a bear denning under their shed. This resident, and their neighbours, formed a very supportive community for this bear, and they all cooperated to allow the bear to peacefully snooze the winter away. Below is a photo from their wildlife camera showing the bear raking leaves into the den that they dug the shed.

Photo submitted



We should be expecting more bear activity now as spring weather takes hold on the North Shore. Please remember that feeding wildlife, even inadvertently, is illegal. Visit our website: www.northshorebears.com for best practices on living peacefully with black bears. Please report sightings of black bears, coyotes, cougars and bobcats to us on our website to help us understand how wildlife is active on the North Shore and to aid us in educating residents.

Nordic warming hut

Photo: Tom Kurucz



Mystery question answer:
Those are black bear tracks, seen on the power line cross country ski trail on Hollyburn Ridge in January.
Photo: Tom Kurucz

Joining FCPP or Renewing Your Membership

Your \$10 FCPP membership is for a one-year period. If you wish to check your membership status for renewal, please contact the membership secretary.

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