



Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society

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

www.Cypresspark.ca

Fall 2022 Newsletter

Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday October 5, 2022

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

7:00 to 7:25 for registration

By ZOOM

Zoom Link will be mailed with the AGM Package later this month

Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Director's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. 2021/22 Projects and Reports
5. Election of Directors for 2022-23
6. Presentation: **Frogs and Salamanders of the North Shore Mountains** by **Blake Danis, Instructor at SFU and PHD Candidate in Biological Sciences**
7. Adjournment

Proposed Directors for 2022-23

President: Alex Wallace

Vice-President: Anne George

Secretary: Anne Leathem

Treasurer: Sandra Booth

Directors-at-Large: Gail Ross, Eva Nagy, Bill Kinkaid, Lyn Grants, Marshall Bauman

Nominations will be accepted from the floor. Nominees must have been FCPP members in good standing for 6 months prior to election.

Remembering Katharine Steig

On August 13, 2022, we sent to our members the very sad news of Katharine's death. Many of our members shared with us memories of Katharine and fond recollections of having been with her on walks and talks on many and varied trails within the park. We all remember her respectful yet tenacious lobbying for the Park as a Park, and for her profound knowledge of Cypress' trees and plants.

At the conclusion of this newsletter we are sharing tributes to Katharine and her obituary forwarded to us by her family.

Katharine's love of Cypress Provincial Park and her advocacy for its integrity will not be forgotten.

BC Parks News

Sam Stickney, now a year into his position as Area Supervisor for the South Coast Region, has forwarded the following:

Currently, Simon Debisschop, and Gareth Wheatley and I are the only Park Rangers in the Vancouver area.

This is due to having exceptional auxiliary Park Ranger staff, who were scooped up by our counterparts elsewhere in the province for full-time positions. We are pleased for them but sad to lose them. This late departure resulted in a lack of applicants to fill summer auxiliary Park Ranger positions.

We have one new recruit, Crystal Forest, who has transferred to our area from the Fraser Valley. We are hoping to get some more excellent staff for the winter season.

The Student Ranger crew, funded by Victoria, spent most of the summer doing an Access Survey for a BC review of trails and other inventory,

Some time was also spent with Simon/Gareth and Alex Wallace on Hollyburn, repairing a short section of trail that has been degraded by weather over the years and has some tricky rocky sections. The team will spend a few days completing the work, with some excellent funding support from the FCPP!

Cypress Trail Projects Update / Report September Newsletter 2022

Late this summer we had three stacks of trail work materials delivered and sitting ready - at roughly the 1200m. elevation - up in the mountains at Cypress, in preparation for trail upgrades funded by Friends of Cypress and the Lunden Foundation. Work has started on rebuilding the eroding or 'missing' ledge near the peak of Hollyburn Mountain, some 30 years after the logs that were originally roped in place to create a ledge had deteriorated (and disappeared) due to erosion and snow load. This will hopefully resolve a longstanding safety issue on a trail popular with all age groups. The heavy annual snowpack and snow creep in late winter at this location also broke off the tree that initially was holding the ledge up. Hikers had, in recent years, been scrambling along the rock face under this tree stump, with some risk of injury, as further erosion then created a rough route below where the ledge used to be. The materials were helicoptered up by long line in August and now are on site, including a chain to grasp for stability, and at time of writing the BC Parks rangers aim to complete work on this project in late September, or at least before the snow arrives. In agreeing to this project on Hollyburn, BC Parks staff also decided to use the opportunity to dismantle and replace the ancient boardwalk at Cabin Lake - which regularly needed maintenance to replace old & brittle broken boards. The new materials for this boardwalk were paid for by Friends of Cypress and helicoptered to Cabin Lake on the same trip. BC Parks has managed to assemble a small crew to replace the



old boardwalk with a new bog bridge, designed to match those that we have helped install on the Black Mountain Plateau over the last decade. The old boardwalk was dismantled by the BC Parks Student Rangers on their last day at Cypress, and the pile of old material has now been helicoptered off the mountain to be safely disposed of, as toxic (arsenic) treated wood from some four decades ago.

On August 22nd, several of us met with the BC Parks Senior Rangers on site at Cabin Lake to review their plans, and at that point it was discovered that the old square beams supporting the deteriorating boardwalk were bolted together and sitting on concrete deck footings, which had completely sunk into the bog and had not seen the light of day for many years. After a useful discussion of how we could move forward with the current and future trail projects at Cypress, we left the Rangers and one keen student ranger volunteer busy dismantling these. The replacement will be a two-board cedar bog bridge, like those already installed by FCPP and BC Parks in past years on Black Mountain.

The third project is the stalled upgrade of the trail that loops around Black Mountain Plateau between scenic Theagill and Sam Lakes. However, despite our efforts, we have had little success in meeting BC Parks Scope of Work and other approvals, due in part to the complexity of these, and unfortunately we are still not likely to see any movement this year, with the two stacks of custom cut yellow cedar boards for a new boardwalk at Sam Lake still sitting under the snow on the top of Black Mountain, likely for a third winter (see photo) This is not the outcome we were hoping for, but weather and other factors have contributed to put it on hold. At least the massive 5m. long Yellow Cedar boards are not affected by the long delay and are in fine shape. We are trying to simplify this project by deleting a short bridge from the plans (deciding that it was unnecessary), and we hope to move forward in 2023 on it.

Also in 2023, we are planning on replacing the sadly (and completely) sunk picnic table at Blue Gentian Lake with a table to commemorate Paul Berlinguette's work in this area. This would be 'floated' on the wetlands by bolting it on to short cedar boards, (in effect a short bog bridge) to prevent a repeat of the sinking. This design resulted from a spirited debate – while at Cabin Lake on Black Mountain with the Rangers - over the feasibility of this, or the wisdom of having a picnic table at that particular location beside the lake, but BC Parks Rangers were flexible and creative in their thinking, so a good result was achieved by a collaborative approach.

Further to that, we have agreed in principle to fund a minor refit or upgrade to the Magnesia Meadows site that the Rangers have proposed, to deal with the sanitation and other unfortunate aspects of having a popular backcountry facility like the Magnesia Meadows 'Emergency Cabin' – which was built and installed by the West Vancouver High school students some years ago as a refuge in emergencies - and immediately was put to use by hikers, as an ad-hoc mountain hut! This is a fairly remote location on the Howe Sound Crest Trail, but it is trail-related and has been reported by members as an issue, so we have agreed to help BC Parks out by funding this upgrade, again in 2023.

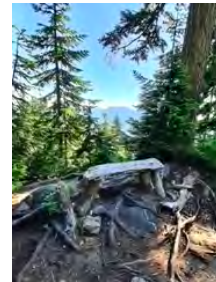
Howe Sound Crest trail: following the 2010 Olympics, the FMCBC and Friends of Cypress worked for years raising some \$450,000 (in grants from VANOC & from Ottawa) to move this project forward, and it has now almost reached the increasingly popular destination of St Marks Summit, despite several delays. The involvement of Friends of Cypress is now less of a key factor, and the project halted in 2022, largely due to the sudden retirement of Ron Goldstone, the BC Parks Section head who was formerly in charge of Capital Projects in the Lower Mainland. We understand that it will resume when the person who is taking over that position reviews the project with other BC Parks staff, so it likely will see more work in 2023. As

ever, the number of hikers is increasing on this trail and others, but due to Instagram and other social media, there now are many hikers following the dubious suggestion that hiking out to St Marks in winter to see the sunset is a great idea. This has been a topic of discussion with BC Parks, but their ability to control the situation is limited. As in other areas, the lack of staffing, continual staff changes, and basic lack of a decent operating budget, - where BC Parks now, despite "budget increases" has roughly the same \$45 million in operating budget that it had 30 years ago - when there were some 420 Provincial Parks, instead of the current 1,000+ sites to manage, - in other words, an average of \$45,000 per Provincial Park or Protected area, somewhat less than the \$1.5 million per location that Metro Vancouver Regional Parks has each year.

The upcoming FCPP AGM would be an opportunity to discuss the role of FCPP in funding and potentially managing trail projects by signing a formal Partnership Agreement with BC Parks, and how this relates to our conservation and education role.

Alex Wallace for FCPP Directors, September 2022

Another small but welcome achievement that should be noted, was the repair of the old, rustic bench at the Crown Mountain Lookout on Hollyburn. FCPP's intrepid-always-on-the-trails President, Alex Wallace, together with Senior Ranger Gareth Wheatley, trimmed off the broken end, and bolted the bench together once more. The bench looks eastward towards Crown Mountain and Grouse, at the end of a switchback on the hiking trail -at the old ski-run down to Hillstrom Peak. (It is, in fact, the old ski runs that allows for the view). The bench is a little more rustic every year, the seat is shorter than it used to be, and the legs are gripped by the tree roots. Nevertheless, it is now, again, a sturdy bench.



Walks and Hikes in Association with Nature Vancouver Fortunately, the hike to Black Mountain on Sept 10 was accomplished. However, the Blue Gentian/West Lake Loop was cancelled due to A Parks Closure Order. The order was issued August 31 for the Nordic area of the Park including Blue Gentian and Lost Lakes, due to bears actively feeding in the area. The order has now been extended until September 28. The hike scheduled for September 13, Yew Lake to Bowen Lookout, was cancelled due to the heavy smoke advisory.

.Monday October 3 Hollyburn Peak

Leaders: Diane Fast & Anne George

Meet at Nordic area BC Parks Kiosk at 9:30 a.m.

Nature Vancouver Rating C5; 430m elevation gain; 8 km return; approximate time 5 hours.

Good hiking boots are and poles are essential.

Contact Anne George at "George, M. Anne" <ageorge@mail.ubc.ca>

.Saturday October 22 St Marks Summit

Leader: Bil Kinkaid

Strenuous hike on the Howe Sound Crest trail.

Difficulty level C6. The trail is being improved and upgraded, but there are many rough and steep sections.

Dress for the weather and carry plenty of water.

Contact Bill at Bill Kinkaid <billkinkaid@gmail.com>

Remembering Katharine Steig

Joanna Hirner

Conservation Specialist,
BC Parks, South Coast Region

I was so fortunate to work with Katharine as part of my job as Conservation Specialist for BC Parks. She was an amazing advocate and knowledge keeper for the ecosystems of Cypress Provincial Park. I visited the park on many occasions with her, along with conversations by phone and email, and she was always a pleasure to talk to and spend time with. She was always generous with her time and knowledge, and very kind, always asking me how I and my family were doing. I am grateful, honoured and fortunate that she shared her knowledge and passion for the park with me, and I hope she knew how valuable and important her work to protect and conserve Cypress has been, and what a difference she made. Although I was fortunate to still connect with her occasionally, I have missed her over the past few years, and am so sad to hear about her passing.

Terry Taylor

Naturalist, member of Nature Vancouver, the Native Plant Society of BC and the Vancouver Mycological Society.

I remember the good times I have had over many years, looking at plants with Katharine, in Cypress Provincial Park. Summer days at Yew Lake, and Hollyburn Ridge botanizing. Katharine would often ask me to identify various species she had located in the park. I was amazed at how well she knew the park. She knew the exact locations of individual flowers along all the trails. If something was growing in Cypress, Katharine probably was aware of it. That so many of these plants are still there, is to a great extent, due to Katharine's activism in protecting the ecosystems of the park.

Katharine had me compiling plant lists for several areas in the park. There was a survey for Paul Hundel in the Old Growth Conservancy when the site was proposed for a golf course. There were visits to the Basin Bog, where Katharine located another site for the rare three leaf gold thread. She showed me the only pine drops plant ever found at Cypress Park. There were the visits to the old pump house road, where there is seepage, and many plants we did not find in other areas. Plants such as butterworts, as well as sedges, rushes, and others. I was also shown one of the few known breeding sites for the rare petal tail dragonfly. Down at Ambleside she carefully monitored the native black lilies growing there.

Katharine also visited us at our new home in Qualicum Beach. She had been to Little Qualicum Falls many years previously and we were pleased to take her there again. She also recognized features along the trail that she had seen on that previous visit, and was happy to see them again.

Rosemary Taylor

Where to start? At the beginning is usually a good place, but I don't even know where that was. Katharine always loved the North Shore mountains, and Cypress Bowl and Hollyburn in particular. I had always enjoyed nature photography, and these interests were, I think, what really brought us together

It was a year or two before the Vancouver Winter Olympics took place in 2010 when Katharine, as a caretaker of Cypress Bowl, was concerned about the proposed 'rearrangement' of the area to fit the requirements of an international ski hill. There were proposals to not only disturb, but perhaps even devastate, certain areas where a variety of sub-alpine plants had been growing happily for years, and Katharine wanted at least to inventory what was there, and asked if I would help by creating a photographic record before it was too late.

That was the start of many happy hours over many years, wandering Cypress and Hollyburn together in all seasons, not only building up a library of plants, from the common to the curious, but noting, amongst other things, how butterworts along the pump house road were slowly spreading - indeed I recall one lunchtime sitting together at that very spot and rejoicing in how well they were doing. She carefully noted where one penstemon plant appeared on the trail around Cypress Bowl, and for several years we checked it out on our rambles, greeting it like an old friend. The many sites where gentian grew were linked together as we visited them as we visited them in summer, and Katharine led nature walks for the (then) Vancouver Natural History Society and Friends of Cypress Bowl so others could enjoy them with her.



But one of the most memorable occasions was May 24th, 2010 - early spring in the mountains when the snow was finally going, the skunk cabbage were blooming, and...at the toe of my boot the most strange little flower appeared. I, for one, had never seen such an unusual, tiny flower, and to everyone's delight, it turned out to be the Fern-leaf Goldthread, less well known than the Three-leaf Goldthread which was also in the area.

This treasure became a sort of touchstone between us, something we referred back to frequently as being one of those unforgettable moments.

Our wanderings together eventually helped to create a brochure entitled *Flowering Plants in Cypress Provincial Park* in 2012, when Katharine convened a group of interested people to put this publication together, sitting round her dining table to do so. It was a pleasure working with others, collecting photos from a variety of photographers she knew, so that many different friends could be included in the finished product.

We often dropped by Katharine's home to share a snack lunch - and how I loved that sharp cheese she always had on the table! We chatted about this, that and the other, shared many moments reminiscing about our times together, and before we left, knowing Terry's penchant for chocolate in his hiking lunches, she always had a packet of his favourite treats to speed us on our way.

Katharine was one of a kind, caring for Cypress Provincial Park, working with the growing number of Friends of Cypress for many years, gentle and kindly, yet determined that the Olympics would not irrevocably alter her beloved area either before the Olympics, or leave it in a state of disrepair afterwards. Not only was Cypress her special area, but the Old Growth Forest was also one of her special places, and she will always be connected to them in the thoughts of those who knew her.

In Memoriam Katharine Steig

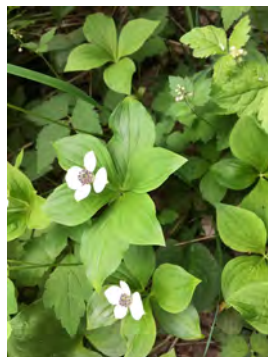
Submitted by Katharine's Family

Katharine Steig of West Vancouver, British Columbia, passed away peacefully on the evening of August 12, 2022. She was in her 86th year. Katharine was predeceased by her husband, Michael Steig. She leaves behind her son Eric Steig of Seattle, his wife Juliet Crider, and their children Lucie and Henry. She also leaves behind her son Joseph Steig of West Vancouver, his wife Susan Sandison, and his adult children by prior marriage, Cassie and Sam. Katharine also leaves behind her older sister, Winifred Wood of California, and three nieces, Kimi Wood, Naomi Bowman, and her children Christian and Hannah, and Nori Jabba, and her children Katherine, Claire and Corinne.

Sara Katharine Jaeger was born in November 1936, the youngest of two daughters of Ethel and Julius Jaeger. She grew up in Tacoma, Washington and went to Reed College in Portland Oregon where she met and married Michael Steig of New York City. They later moved to Seattle, then to East Lansing, Michigan, and finally to West Vancouver, Canada in 1966 when Mike took a faculty position at Simon Fraser University. Katharine became an active member of the West Vancouver community and maintained her involvement in educational and municipal affairs for over 50 years. She was also an active and serious potter for many years and leaves behind for her family a personal legacy of clay dishes and animal figurines.

Katharine's greatest passion was for native plants and wild places. Some of her fondest childhood memories were of summers in Puget Sound beach-combing and playing in the mud flats and estuaries. She studied biology at Reed College before completing her undergraduate degree in early childhood education at University of Washington. Upon moving to West Vancouver she first became entranced by the wilderness on the doorstep of the urban and suburban world and then concerned by the threats from development to this wilderness and to public lands and parks. In 1990 she played a leading role in the successful effort via municipal referendum to protect a stand of old growth forest within West Vancouver lands, preventing a golf course from being built. She devoted the remainder of her life to the protection of wild places to ensure that they were preserved for future generations to respect and enjoy. The old growth forest she helped protect came under the stewardship of the Old Growth Conservancy Society, a group in which she was an active participant until her death. In 1991 she became a member of Nature Vancouver and served on the Board of Directors and as the Chair of the Conservation Section for many years. She also was a founder of [Friends of Cypress Provincial Park](#), an organization charged with ensuring that the natural features of the park be maintained in the face of development pressures. For many years she chaired this group. Outcomes of her efforts include the protection of Mount Strachan and Hollyburn Mountain from development and the preservation of Yew Lake as a place for wild animals and plants and as a sanctuary for humans. Her gentle spirit will live on in these special places.

A memorial service is being planned for late 2022.



Membership

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 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>

THANK YOU

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City and Postal code _____

E-Mail _____

Telephone _____ 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