



**Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society**  
P.O. Box 91053, West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 3N3  
[www.Cypresspark.ca](http://www.Cypresspark.ca)

## Winter/Spring 2020/21 Newsletter



Hollyburn - Early Morning- December 2020

### **December 21, 2020 Parks Posted -Attention Visitors- Important Notice - on Cypress Provincial Park Website**

The information about parking and suggested COVID-19 winter protocols was clear and well presented on Parks website. It prefaced the usual information you find if you enter Cypress Provincial Park into your web browser. Sadly, many frequent park users, and many others far less familiar with the Park, obviously did not think to consult the Cypress Provincial Park web page. They became familiar with procedures and protocols only after arriving in the Park. This was unfortunate. The website covered a number of important topics: Park Access and Traffic; COVID -19 Safety Plan; Backcountry Access Corridor; Winter Safety. In fact it is probably quite likely that many people do not actually get to the Cypress Provincial Park webpage for if you enter just "Cypress" into your web browser you come up with Cypress Mountain Resort. It might have been beneficial for Parks to have included its important notice on Cypress Resort webpage! Such is the ongoing confusion in the public at large between Cypress Mountain and Cypress Provincial Park! December 21, the day the above photograph was taken, was a magnificent day, and a day of maximum traffic and traffic delay. Our feature article in this newsletter will take us back to a previous day of excitement about accessing the snow, about maximum traffic and congestion, and yes, considerable frustration.

## Winter Access Report 2020/2021

### Black Mountain, Yew Lake Meadows and Bowen Lookout

The Backcountry Access Corridor (BAC) was well posted from the Black Mountain Lodge and through the ski area for access to Yew Lake and Bowen Lookout, and Black Mountain. The electronic gates have been removed this year for skiers, and hence snowshoers also moved easily through the ski and lift area without having to go through the gates. Back country tags are still available in the Black Mountain Lodge. There was no indication that BAC tags would be available at a kiosk outside the Cypress Creek Lodge.

The trails to Black, Yew Lake and Bowen Lookout were well poled by the rangers. Poling ends at the Bowen Lookout. The poles do not continue further on the Howe Sound Crest trail. Poling ends at the Black Mountain loop. Poling does not continue to Eagle Bluff. Nevertheless, that trail is extremely well used in the winter as in the summer.

The washrooms in the Black Mountain Lodge have been well maintained this winter, though it is not unusual to find one or other of the stalls is out of order. The Black Mountain Lodge washrooms are heavily used, particularly on weekends and holidays, by paying ski customers who park in the adjacent parking lots, as well as those accessing the back country. Those who access the back country are advised by Resort staff not to use the washrooms in the Cypress Creek Lodge. Cypress Mountain Resort staff maintain the Black Mountain Lodge toilets and the Brown Bag Room (a name which is something of a mystery to the younger generation). No doubt to discourage socializing in the Brown Bag Room during this time of COVID, the one table that was usually there and the few chairs have been removed (one chair remains). That is not of great concern. What is of concern is the distressing lack of avalanche or other backcountry information. The Black Mountain Lodge is the first stopping off point for those unfamiliar with the back country trails. For those unfamiliar with the trails it would certainly be beneficial to have more information. FCPP has written to parks suggesting that better and updated information is needed.

## Winter Access Report 2020/21

### Hollyburn

Three portable toilets have been installed near the kiosk close to the Hikers Access Corridor to Hollyburn, and one where the road turns up to the Nordic area. These offer a convenience to back country users and Nordic area skiers and snowshoers. As well they reduce congestion in the toilets opposite the ticketing office in the Nordic area. The Cypress staff have done a good job maintaining the portable toilets.

This year stairs have been cut into the short trail that leads up to the Hollyburn access - a pleasure to walk up.

Following concern that had been expressed by Alex Wallace in 2019 about the cross-country ski run which encroached on the Hikers Access Corridor to Hollyburn, the poles and ropes were installed this ski season in accordance with the Cypress Park Master Plan. The Rangers have poled the Hollyburn trail to the top.

Many trail users going up or down, wearing snowshoes or micro- spikes, admire the grace and skill of backcountry skiers as they swoop down the slopes adjacent to the well used trail.

## New Area Supervisor for the South Coast Region

In the Summer/Fall 2020 newsletter we welcomed Elyse Curley to the position of Acting Area Supervisor for the South Coast Region, replacing Scott Donker. Scott had returned to the north of the Province with his young family after two years on the south coast.

Elyse has taken the 2021 year off for maternity leave. We understand that Elyse will be returning to her former position as BC Parks Community Liaison Officer for Sea to Sky, Sunshine Coast and Lower Mainland Parks.

And so, Friends of Cypress Provincial Park gives a very big welcome to **Sam Stickney**, newly appointed Area Supervisor for the South Coast: Cypress, Seymour, Pinecone Burke, Peace Arch and the Marine Parks of Hacklett Bay on Gambier Island and Plumper Cove on Keats.

Sam's Bio which he forward to us for this newsletter reads as follows: *"I am originally from Saskatchewan and spent most of my winters cross country skiing and summers canoeing and hiking in the boreal forest. My first taste of mountain life was pursuing a Recreation, Fish and Wildlife diploma in the West Kootenays. I finished my first round of schooling and headed to the far north of Alberta to*

*chase down Mountain Pine Beetles during the winter and spent my summers with Parks Canada, initially as a seasonal Invasive Plant Technician, leading to various wildfire management positions and many years later leaving with a FireSmart Program Coordinator hat on. I spent two years in the natural resource consulting field, based in Edmonton, before returning to school at Vancouver Island University and completing a Forest Resource Technology diploma. Immediately after completing my second diploma, I was offered a seasonal Park Ranger position in the Okanagan, which eventually led to a full-time position based at the Cultus Lake Office, where I was responsible for the mighty Golden Ears Provincial Park. I look forward to putting my knowledge and skills to work in the Vancouver area and exploring the far reaches of Cypress”.*

*Acknowledging the traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, Semiahmoo, Tsleil-Waututh and Katzie Peoples whose land I am grateful to work and live on.*

### **Current Rangers**

We look forward to working with Sam Stickney of course and the Rangers: Simon Debisschop-Senior Park Ranger (Permanent); Gareth Wheatley-Senior Park Ranger (Acting); Naravana Smith-Auxiliary Park Ranger; Sarah Town-Auxiliary Park Ranger.

### **An Update About the Mountain Coaster for Cypress and a Future Four-Season Development Proposal for Cypress Provincial Park -from our President Alex Wallace**

The Mountain Coaster proposal was outlined in a previous Friends of Cypress Provincial Park newsletter. Although we were not clear about scheduling or construction we noted that it was already being surveyed in 2020. Further enquiries with BC Parks Area Manager led us to understand that the ‘Austrian Coaster’, was, in fact, already approved, in that it was a replacement for the previous Lift Assisted Mountain Bike venue that was constructed on Black Mountain in 2007, planning approval for which had been given in the 2006 Master Plan.

Given that it has been so approved and given that the foundations were poured late in 2020, the ‘Austrian Coaster’ is likely to be in operation later this year. The rail that the ‘toboggans’ run on will be temporarily installed on these foundations each summer, and then removed each winter before the ski season. (The Cypress Mountain ‘Austrian Coaster’ is similar to the popular Pipe Mountain Coaster already in operation at Revelstoke Mountain Resort. It should be noted that some mountain coasters shut down in rainy weather).

As construction is already under way, we have to be objective and look to the Mountain Coaster as having minimal environmental impact. The Coaster customer will ride up on the Black Mountain Eagle Chair and the cars to coaster will run down an old logging road from the 1960’s, following one of the oldest ski runs. It will be largely hidden by the trees on either side, while the noise of the little wheels will hopefully be likewise muffled. It will in effect deliver many young families back to the lift base after their short 3 to 5 minute Mountain Coaster ride. They may still want to spend more time in the park. Fortunately, the lift base location is at the South trailhead to the Yew Lake Interpretive/barrier free trail. Cypress Provincial Park summer hiking maps will be available at the kiosks. Hopefully new visitors to the park will be encouraged to walk the Yew Lake and other Cypress trails, visitors who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to visit and enjoy the natural environment and beauty of Cypress Provincial Park. (We are putting a positive gloss on the situation).

### **Plans for Spring 2021 -Summer plans will follow**

- In consultation with BC Parks, and our new Area Supervisor and Parks staff, formulate plans for 2021 trail work.
- Review of trail work on Black Mountain Baden-Powell Trail to Eagle Bluff, work that was started in 2018 and has been progressing very slowly in subsequent years.
- Schedule Trail Watch 2021 training session with BC Parks and Trail Watch volunteers.
- Plan field trips with associated organizations as soon as COVID restrictions will allow.
- Develop an updated inventory of animals seen within the Park. We encourage our members to record animal sightings and to forward information about when and where to FCPP at [cypresspark.ca/contact-us](http://cypresspark.ca/contact-us)
- Continue with website upgrade.
- With recommendations from Joanna Hirner, Conservation Officer for the South Coast region, continue with invasive species weed pull.

### **Friends of Cypress Provincial Park-Website**

As we have reported previously, the webpage is being updated - a long process. The Summer Hiking Map is now available on the webpage and will, as well, be available in the kiosks in the Park in the early summer. Newsletters, as they are issued, will be posted to the website. Look for the newsletters, and other general information at [cypresspark.ca//contact-us](http://cypresspark.ca//contact-us)

### **Sad News**

With deep regret we share the following sad news with our members.

**Irene Miller.** Longstanding member of FCPP and for many, many years our valued Treasurer, Irene died February 25, 2021, at the age of 89. Irene rarely missed a board meeting, driving to the North Shore from the other side of the city, and always on time. Irene presented her Treasurer's information clearly and concisely and, of course, accurately. She was committed to the values of Friends of Cypress Provincial Park, and loved the park for its natural beauty.

Irene was an avid hiker. She knew many of the trails on the North Shore Mountains and of course led many hikes to the Cypress trails. Irene was a hike coordinator with North Shore Hikers until 3 years ago. She is credited with holding the record for leading the most hikes for the North Shore Hiking Club!

Irene was predeceased by her husband 3 years ago. Irene leaves behind a son and a daughter. She will be missed.

**Paul Berlinguette.** Longstanding member of FCPP and a founding and active member of many other environmental organizations, Paul died so unexpectedly on March 9, 2021 at the age of 64. Paul's dedication to environmental causes was inspirational. He worked hard for all of them as he did for trail and conservation projects with FCPP. Paul and his partner Fiona Wright worked on many projects within the park, and particularly on the Lost Lake Trail, their trail watch trail. Paul was tireless, hauling timber in his truck, teaching others how to fix bridges, fill gaps in board walks, and identify plants in the process. He was passionate about wetlands and drew Parks attention to important wetland areas within the park.

Paul worked as a gardener. Many of his clients were older. They came to rely on Paul not only for his garden expertise but for his kindness: he would shop for them if necessary, fix broken fixtures, listen to their stories and tell his own about the owl he had observed, the salamander at Cabin Lake.

He will be sadly missed by Fiona Wright, his partner of 29 years, by his family and friends, and by his Friends of Cypress.

Fiona has suggested that donations in Paul's name can be made to FCPP for future trail and restoration projects. FCPP is honoured and will ensure that with such donations Paul will be significantly remembered.

(North Shore Streamkeepers has raised funding for a plaque in Paul's memory to be placed at McKay Creek Pond-one of the many projects Paul advocated and worked for).

### **FCPP AGM for 2021**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 issues the Board has decided to delay the AGM until October in the hope that we may be able to have an in-person AGM rather than a virtual. We would look forward to seeing and greeting our members face to face ( mask to mask?)

We will of course keep you posted.

### **FCPP Directors for 2021**

The Directors are happy to welcome Sandy Booth as our new treasurer

President: Alex Wallace; Vice-President: Anne George; Secretary Anne Leatham; Treasurer Sandy Booth. Directors at Large: Bill Kinkaid; Eva Nagy; Marshall Baumann; Gail Ross; Lyn Grants.



A small photo collage for those of our members who can no longer get up to the snow .



## **Winter at Cypress Provincial Park 1976 - by Gail Ross**

*As I was one of the many driving in heavy traffic to get up to the snow at Cypress Provincial Park in December 2020, I was reminded of the start of a significant ski season way back when in 1976.*

*But first a short, abbreviated, historical preamble.*

The rich timbers of Vancouver's North Shore were exploited from the early days of settlement. Recognition of the recreational potential of the mountains soon followed. During the nineteen 20's, 30's and 40's hikers and skiers trekked up the mountains building cabins and lodges and forming ski clubs.

In the late 1930's the Heaps Timber Company of Los Angeles was granted a 40-hectare timber lease on Hollyburn Ridge. The logging was vigorously opposed by many recreationists and a growing number of conservationists. The Provincial Government was persuaded to exchange the lease on Hollyburn Ridge for timber leases on Vancouver Island. Then, in 1944 Cypress Bowl was set aside as a park reserve.

Twenty years later, in 1964, Alpine Outdoor Recreation Resources Ltd. submitted a proposal for a commercial recreational development in Cypress Bowl consisting of a 10 story hotel complex, aerial trams and an "alpine village". In 1966 the company was granted a lease to begin logging in Cypress Bowl, assuring the West Vancouver Municipality and Parks that cutting would be selective. Within two years approximately 10 million board feet of timber had been removed. FCPP had not yet been formed but many current members were among those expressing outrage.

On November 18, 1968 all timber falling in Cypress was brought to a halt. This time, a group of interested stakeholders came together to plan development in the bowl area. It included an interim logging plan that would be supervised by the municipal ranger.

However, controversy about commercial development continued and when it was revealed that a new company, which had just purchased Alpine Outdoor Recreation Resources, was connected to overseas gambling activities, the Minister of Lands declared, in 1971, that the government would take over the development of winter recreational facilities in the area.

The Parks Branch began intensive planning of Cypress for winter recreation in September 1971, based on a "single mountain theory" where both alpine and Nordic activities would all occur within the bowl itself. However, it soon became obvious that there would be a significant lack of parking space unless the forest and meadow area around Yew Lake and along Cypress Creek would be cleared for use. Since so much vegetation had already been removed through the logging operations, there was considerable apprehension about destroying any remaining vegetation. As a result, by the following year, the "two mountain theory" was developed, where downhill activities would be focused in Cypress Bowl and Nordic activities would take place on Hollyburn Ridge. The forest and meadow area around Yew Lake and along Cypress Creek would be left in tact.

In 1972, the Parks Branch began developing alpine and Nordic facilities with a goal of eventually serving 10 – 15,000 daily visitors. The goal of the first stage was to accommodate 4000 people by providing two ski lifts and a rope tow, first aid hut and lift ticket booth with parking for 450 cars in the downhill area and a first aid trailer and parking for 150 cars at Hollyburn.

In 1975, the southern section of the park was granted Class A Provincial Park status. The first District Superintendent of the new Cypress Provincial Park was Tom Moore. In conversation he has said that with 20/20 hindsight it was very unfortunate that the government hadn't overseen the logging undertaken for the original ski hill development as too many trees had been taken down, and those

that were removed were cut too high on the stump. ( See Tom Moore's photos at the end of the article).

Over half a million dollars was spent cleaning up the logging slash inherited from the private sector and \$600,000 was spent putting the ski slopes into shape. As part of the restoration and revegetation work over 100,000 trees were planted to remediate the effect of logging. This work continued for several years.

Besides the logging clean up, some other challenges which occurred during the construction phase included a one-hectare fire in the middle of Strachan on the south west slope which escaped while burning logging debris, and havoc caused by vandals who stole a bulldozer and ran it into the first aid building and lift ticket booth causing \$35,000 damage just before the ski area was scheduled to open.

Constructing and paving 70% of the new three lane access road to Cypress Bowl was done by the Department of Highways at a cost approximately \$8,000,000. The remaining 30% of paving was completed the following year.

The two chairlifts which were installed each had a capacity of 1200 persons/hour and the rope tow could service 1500 persons/hour. Approximately 30% of the developed runs were classified as novice, 50% as intermediate and 20% as expert. During the first season of operation, weekend price of lift tickets for was \$7.00 for adults and \$4.00 for kids.

By the time the downhill area opened in December 1975, the road, grooming and road clearing equipment, facility infrastructure and lifts had cost around \$13,000,000.

On the first sunny weekend in January the limited mountain parking for 600 vehicles created chaos. It seemed that every Vancouverite had brought the family up to the mountain to see the ski facilities in the newly developed Provincial Park. Tempers flared as drivers, who had taken up to 3 hours to drive up the mountain because of the traffic, were told they would have to turn around and drive back down the mountain as there was no place to park. One driver was so irate that he jumped out of his truck and took a swing at the young Park Employee. I know this, as I was the parkie at Mile 8 who he took a swing at.

By the end of the first winter season, there had been 87,395 skiers, in 35,745 cars that had come to the mountain.

On November 28, 1975 B.C.'s Recreation and Conservation Minister, the Honourable Jack Radford, concluded his on-site tour of Cypress Provincial Park by saying to the local media to: "It is our hope that Cypress Provincial Park will be a showplace, eventually, but like all good things, it will take a little time."

Cypress Provincial Park has indeed become both a summer and winter showplace with over 1,000,000 visitors each year.

Thank you to Tom Moore for sharing his photos and memories.

Evidence of the rapacious logging, the slash to be cleaned up, and an aerial view of Yew Lake and meadows which would have been harmed irreparably if clearing for parking had gone on.





## 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 membership secretary Eva Nagy at 604 929- 4286

Please clip and mail the membership form below. FCPP Directors greatly appreciate your support of the work our Society does to enhance and protect Cypress Provincial Park. THANK YOU!

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For membership in Friends of Cypress Provincial Park mail to:

Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society  
P.O. Box 91053  
West Vancouver, BC V7V 3N3  
Canada

Name(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address  
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City and Postal Code  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone  
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E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_  
Enclosed is \$10 for single/family membership.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ is added as a tax deductible donation.

Total Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

