



# Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society

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

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

## SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER

### Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society Annual General Meeting

Tuesday April 3, 2019

7:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for registration and membership renewals

**CAPILANO LIBRARY (Potlatch Room)**

**3045 Highland Blvd., North Vancouver, BC**

Underground parking available but closes promptly at 9:00 p.m.

### Agenda

Approval of Agenda

Presentation by **Paul Kroeger** founding member and former president of the Vancouver

Mycological Society on **Death Cap Mushrooms in BC**

**Adoption of Minutes of April 17, 2018 AGM**

**Directors and Treasurer's Reports for 2018**

**Plans for 2019**

**Election of Directors for 2020**

**Adjournment**

Our meeting will begin with a presentation by Paul Kroeger, local and internationally celebrated mushroom expert. His topic for tonight is **Death Cap mushrooms in BC**.

Paul has provided us with a summary of his presentation: "The Death Cap *Amanita phalloides* is a deadly European mushroom introduced to North America with imported trees. It was first found in BC in 1997 and in Vancouver in 2008. Patterns of distribution may help explain how this important fungus spreads with horticultural trees and how it got here originally. I describe the detective work that yielded interesting clues and discuss some possible implications of what we've found".

The Atlantic Monthly's February 1, 2019 Science Section, featured Paul as the "go-to" authority on mushroom poisonings in Western Canada.

We are delighted to have Paul as our speaker for the 2019 FCPP AGM.

## **Winter snowshoe hike co-sponsored with Nature Vancouver**

Submitted by Jane Srivastava

On Saturday, January 26, Bill Kinkaid and Anne Leathem, both FCPP Directors and Nature Vancouver members, led 11 participants on a snowshoe hike to Bowen Lookout.

Unfortunately the day was overcast and the views had to be described rather than experienced to those who had not done that hike before. Stellar jays and whiskey jacks welcomed the group at the Lookout. Not quite so welcome were 4 leashless dogs whose owners said they were not aware of the dogs on leash Parks policy. Signs are prominent within the Park advising that dogs must be on leash.

## **Summer guided walks and hikes to be co-sponsored with Nature Vancouver**

We will be offering guided walks and hikes in the Park again this summer to increase appreciation of the park's natural environment. We will be offering **mid-week** as well as weekend hikes. Dates will be forthcoming in the Summer newsletter.

(Please note that David Cook has provided advance posting for his walks and talks at the end of his Nature Note article on Cougars - Lion of the Americas).

## **Cypress Provincial Park Winter Trails**

- **Baden Powell Black Mountain to Eagle Bluff**

As reported in our Fall Winter Newsletter 6 Student Rangers worked with Ranger Simon **Debisschop** on 2 trail reroutes from Black Mountain en route to Eagle Bluff. Descents over slippery rock faces posed challenges. Hikers have expressed satisfaction with the reroute which diverts around the rock faces. The work done by Parks with the Student Rangers on the trail reroute did not draw on the \$40,000 FCPP has donated to the Park Enhancement Fund. FCPP will discuss further trail work on that very popular trail with BC Parks.

For the winter season Parks poles to the Black Mountain junction only. However many hikers continue to Eagle Bluff. The winter trail is well trodden. Snowshoers going to the Bluff follow the red Baden-Powell trail markers.

- **Hollyburn Peak Trail** is poled to the top.

- **Howe Sound Crest Trail**

Parks has poled to Bowen Lookout only. Parks posts an advisory about proceeding further but many hikers continue to the Binkert Lookout and beyond. In May 2018 FCPP made a \$20,000 contribution towards the continuation of the HSCT upgrade, with the request that the funds donated by FCPP be dedicated to the HSCT and not used for other purposes. We are eager to see the continuation of trail building again this summer.

## **2019 BC Parks Student Ranger Program**

BC Parks will be continuing the Student Ranger Program for 2019. Unfortunately for Cypress, student rangers for 2019 will be assigned to Seymour and not to Cypress.

## **BC Parks Foundation**

### **Submitted by Anne George**

In late December Alex Wallace, President of Friends of Cypress Provincial Park and Anne George, Vice-President met with Dr Andrew Day CEO of the BC Parks Foundation. The Foundation was created in 2017 by the former BC government with \$10 million and a 10-member Board of Directors. Operations began in 2018 when Dr. Andrew Day was hired. The Foundation has two goals: (1) British Columbians will have the most active, diverse, and innovative community of parks supporters per capita of any jurisdiction in the world, and (2) Parks supporters, working collaboratively with governments, will help create one of the most revered systems of parks and protected areas on the planet.

It acts as the official charitable partner for BC Parks, but does not take direction from, report to, or raise money for government, since it works as an independent private foundation. The idea is that private contributions will allow for park enhancement beyond what is possible through government funding.

Having the dual role of protecting BC provincial parks and promoting public interest and support, the Foundation has organized its 5-year plan around 5 themes: Wildlife Forever, Healthy by Nature, Discover Parks, Original People & Places and Building a Legacy. An example of its new initiatives under the Healthy by Nature theme is a Parks Prescription (PaRx) Program by which BC doctors will prescribe “green time.”

### **West Vancouver Community Day - Saturday June 1**

FCPP will have display tables at West Vancouver Community Day (Ambleside Park) to provide visitors with information about Cypress Provincial Park and FCPP’s work. Look for the Cypress Provincial Park banners.

### **Nominations for 2019**

#### **FCPP Board of Directors**

FCPP is required to have at least five Directors on our Board. We do not have an upper limit. We currently have six Directors, with Katharine Steig serving as Advisor. If you are interested in serving on the Board or know someone who might be, please contact Nominating Committee Chair, Bill Kinkaid (778 319 1467). Nominations will also be accepted from the floor. Nominees must have been in good standing for at least six months prior to election. We look forward to hearing from you.

#### **FCPP Directors for 2018**

President: Alex Wallace; Vice-president: Anne George

Secretary: Anne Leathem; Treasurer: Irene Miller;

Directors -at-Large: David Cook, Lyn Grants, Bill Kinkaid, Eva Nagy.

Katharine Steig former president and long time Board member holds the position of Advisor.

Contact us at [info@cypresspark.ca](mailto:info@cypresspark.ca), 604 281 1273.

## Memberships

Your \$10 FCPP membership is for a one calendar year period. If you wish to check your membership status for renewal, please contact treasurer Irene Miller (ivm3924@shaw.ca or 604 224-7768).

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 Society, please mail to:  
Treasurer, Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_

Enclosed is \$10 for single/family membership.

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

Total Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Charity BN/Registration #89249 2372 RR0001)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

## Lion of the Americas - Our mountain cat cannot Roar

David Cook January 2019

For this issue of the newsletter I have chosen the top predator in the park and surrounding areas; the cougar or mountain lion, the cat of the mountains or catamount. Once upon a time it would have competed for this role with the grizzly bear and packs of wolves, but no more, with the tsunami of human population growth having driven the other top predators from our area. How has this large cat managed to survive this onslaught? Like the black bear, the only other large predator in our area, it has learned to live with humans but in a different way; namely by avoidance, by being principally a beast of the night and by maintaining a healthy fear of humans. The black bear, while eating meat when the opportunity presents itself, is primarily a vegetarian and is rarely aggressive towards humans.

The cougar, as we in our area prefer to name our largest wild cat, has dozens of names in the mythology of Native Americans and in contemporary culture. It holds the Guinness record for the animal with the greatest number of names, with over 40 in English alone. Currently, it is referred to as "puma" by most scientists because that is its scientific name (*Puma concolor*). "Cougar" is derived from the South American Indian words suçuarana or cucuarana. Puma is a South American Indian word meaning "powerful". "Concolor" is Latin for uniform colour. Their coat is typically tawny like that of the lion, which is why it was initially called the "mountain lion".

This plethora of names has come about because the cougar once had the widest distribution of any mammal species in the Americas and could be found all the way from Patagonia to the Yukon border in a wide range of habitats. This habitat tolerance has been a major factor in their ability to avoid humans. As a consequence of being able to fill so many ecological niches they have evolved into many subspecies.

Cougar size is smallest close to the equator and largest towards the poles. This is because heftier animals have a smaller surface area-to-volume ratio, which helps reduce heat loss, a pattern known as Bergmann's Rule.

Of the estimated 4000 cougars in Canada, 3500 live in BC and of these nearly a quarter reside on Vancouver Island (itself only representing 3% of BC's land area), resulting in the highest concentration of cougars throughout its range.

Fatal cougar attacks on humans are extremely rare and occur much less frequently than fatal snake bites, fatal lightning strikes, or fatal bee stings. Children however do seem to be more vulnerable to cougar attacks. Research into attacks prior to 1991 showed that 64% of all victims, and almost all fatalities, were children usually unaccompanied by adults. Cougar prey recognition is a learned behaviour and they do not generally recognize adult humans as prey. Studies in the USA have shown that juvenile cougars are the age class most frequently involved in conflicts with people. This is because younger animals tend to be forced out of

their natal territory into human-occupied areas and so have higher encounter probabilities with humans than older animals. To gauge your chances when encountering a cougar look at the results of a New Mexico study from 1985 to 1995: Of 172 encounters, the cougar retreated 72% of the time, stayed 24% of the time or exhibited threatening behaviour without injury 9% of the time.

The cougar is not usually included in the grouping known as the “big cats” even though it is larger than a leopard, snow leopard or cheetah, all of which are described as “big cats”. Cougars are described as the largest of the “small cats”. They are in fact only superseded in size by the lion, tiger, and jaguar which are the other “big cats”. This rather confusing categorization is because they cannot roar, their eyes have pupils that cannot narrow to vertical slits and because of their taxonomy; the big cats belong to the genus *Panthera* while the cougar belongs to the genus *Puma*. Cougars are more closely related to domestic cats than to tigers, lions and the jaguar.

The cat family (Felidae) is believed to have originated in Asia about 11 million years ago. They then radiated west to Europe and Africa and east across the Bering land bridge into North America 8.0 to 8.5 million years ago. North American felids then invaded South America 2 to 4 million years ago as part of the Great American Interchange, following formation of the Isthmus of Panama. The original North American population of large cats was wiped out during the Pleistocene extinctions when other large mammals also disappeared. North America was then repopulated by a group of South American cougars by crossing through the Isthmus.

Cougar calls have been described as screams, low-pitched hisses, wails, growls, and purrs, as well as chirps and whistles. Some of these sounds are comparable to those of domestic cats. They cannot roar like a lion because they have a different structure to their larynx.

Sight (including good night vision) and hearing are a cougar's most acute senses but their sense of smell is poor although supplemented by the presence of the vomeronasal or Jacobson's organ in the roof of the mouth, allowing the animal to "taste" the air. This tasting of the air is called the Flehmen response. It is used mainly by males to detect pheromones of females in heat and by females to identify their kittens. That is why all cats have a split upper lip which gives better access of the pheromones to the vomeronasal organ which is in the roof of the mouth. The cat family evolved short muzzles to increase biting power at the expense of their sense of smell. Comparing their sense of smell with humans and dogs, the human nose has about 5 million olfactory receptors, cats have 45 million to 80 million receptors, while the average dog has between 149 million and 300 million receptors.

They have large paws and proportionally have the largest hind legs in the cat family, allowing for their great leaping and short-sprint ability. The larger front feet and

claws are adaptations to clutching prey. Like the other big cats the *coup de grace* to the prey is a suffocating neck bite. The cougar is solitary unlike the lion. This is no doubt because the lion hunts much larger and swifter prey and requires team effort to achieve a kill. These physical and behavioural characteristics and their habit of stalking from the rear (referred to as “ambush” or “spot and stalk” predation) have been developed to conserve output of energy and recover from the high stress moment of the short chase and kill. So like all members of the cat family, cougars spend most of their time resting, spotting and sleeping but remain on high alert for predators or prey when sleeping. The genetic imprint of the resting and sleeping behaviour is so strong that even the domesticated cat has retained it. Cougars are opportunistic hunters. In other words they do not hunt because they are hungry. One cougar can consume up to 9 to 13.5 kg (20 or 30 pounds) of meat in a single meal. They will cache the carcass which they will defend for later use.

These hunting behaviours are to be remembered when walking in cougar country. However they are very wary of adult humans and attacks are rare. If you notice that a cougar is watching you, maintain eye contact with the cougar and speak to it in a loud firm voice. Do not try to outrun or play dead; the top running speed of a cougar ranges between 64 and 80 km/h (40 and 50 mph). Flight will initiate their chase instincts. If a cougar begins following you face it but back off very slowly, keep eye contact. Standing still may cause the cougar to consider a person easy prey. If it continues to follow, yell and make loud noises. Crouch down as little as possible when picking things up off the ground. If the cougar attacks, fight back, focusing on its facial and eye area. Use rocks, sticks, bear spray, or personal belongings as weapons. You are trying to convince the cougar that you are a threat, and are not prey. They are adept at climbing, which allows them to evade canine competitors and can leap as high as 6 metres. This is a behaviour that hunters with dogs make full use of. Although not strongly associated with water, they can swim. A generalist predator, the cougar will eat any animal it can catch, from insects to large ungulates over 500 kg (1,100 lb). In the mountains of the North Shore the principal prey are deer and snowshoe hare. In urban areas, prey may be raccoons, domestic pets and rats. Estimates of kill rates is one deer every two weeks for a single adult or one kill every three days for a mother when cubs are nearly mature. In the USA where deer are the prey of choice, studies have shown the cougar will self-regulate its population with litter size according to the availability of the deer population. This contradicts the hunter’s argument that cougars should be culled in order to preserve the deer population.

Litters are one to six (average 2.4) kittens or cubs every two to three years throughout the mother’s reproductive life which can start as young as 17 months with usually one survivor per litter. They stay with the mother for two years. Life expectancy is eight to 13 years (20 in captivity).

The cougar is territorial and can survive at low population densities because genetic viability is maintained by wide ranging males. Male territory sizes vary widely up to 1300 km<sup>2</sup> (500 sq mi) with females half that. Males have been recorded traveling over 50 km in one day.

Records of sightings on the North Shore are available on the WildSafe BC website <https://wildsafebc.com/>. However cougar sightings are often unreliable as many are bobcat sightings. Call the Conservation Officer Service reporting line (1-877-952-7277) to report sightings.

**The following hikes, offered by David Cook, are joint field trips for Nature Vancouver and Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society.**

**Registration is required.** Because of a need to limit the size of the group and because the event may be rescheduled due to weather registration is required. **Contact David Cook to register at [cookeco2@yahoo.com](mailto:cookeco2@yahoo.com)**

**Meeting time and place:** 11:00 am in the parking lot near the Black Mountain Lodge of Cypress Provincial Park. (**NOT** the new Cypress Creek Lodge).

**Be Prepared:** Hiking boots with ankle support recommended. Dress for changing mountain weather, bring lunch and adequate water.

#### **Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**Old-growth forest ecology along Hollyburn Baden-Powell Trail (East from Cypress Bowl Alpine Ski Area).**

**Duration:** Approximately four hours.

**Terrain and elevation gain:** Moderate, but with several rough/rooty sections. Elevation gain: 120 metres. The first creek crossing 0.5 km from the start may be difficult for some in which case they should sign off and return. Length of hike: 4 km roundtrip.

#### **Sunday July 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 Geology of Cypress Provincial Park.**

**Duration:** Approximately three to six hours depending on the two scenarios described below.

**Terrain & elevation gain:** We will be hiking up the Collins Ski Run which has a loose, pebbly surface which can be slippery on descent. So deep-tread hiking boots with ankle support and poles are highly recommended. 290 metres elevation gain (600 metres elevation gain for those continuing on to the first peak of Mt Strachan).

**Length of hike:** 3 or 7 km round-trip depending on choice of routes.

**Description:** A slow hike with many stops to look at the geology along the way. We begin from the parking lot at Cypress Bowl downhill ski area then up the Collins Ski Run to elevation of 1200 metres where there is an area of sub-alpine pasture where we will have lunch. Those wishing to continue to the first summit of Mt Strachan to enjoy the views will sign off and continue from this location. The remainder will return.

**Be Prepared:** This could be a full day's hike depending on preferences, so bring lunch, water and prepare for changes in weather.