In juxtaposition of tradition and modern development, a Stanley Park cedar is reborn.

‘Perfect Storm’ Celebrated
Jarrid Jenkins & Patricia Thomson

On Saturday, November 8, 2008 a story of success, of living history and of communities coming together was told on the shores of Crab Park, Vancouver, where Main Street meets the ocean inlet. Here, First Nations carvers and their students, elders, police officers, and many residents and supporters of the Downtown East Side gathered for the awakening, celebration and launch of a community-carved cedar canoe. And not just any canoe: a Stanley Park windstorm legacy canoe.

Before the singing and drumming that accompanies the awakening of a new canoe, an elder explained to those gathered that the wild windstorms of 2006-07 in Stanley Park provided the sizeable western red cedars used for fashioning the canoe and the paddles that would propel it that day. This is why, we were told, that a part of the canoe’s name means Perfect Storm. The ceremony was to honour traditions of the past, the many communities brought together through the project, and the many missing women of the Downtown East Side area of Vancouver. This story however, like many of the

continued on page 2...
The perforated pipe of a pond leveller is enclosed in a wire mesh and extends into the culvert. The beaver does not hear the drainage of the water.

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Robyn Worcester  
Conservation Programs Manager

In Vancouver, beavers regularly show up in local ponds in search of new territories after being expelled from their natal ponds. These juveniles often float down the Fraser River into the Strait of Georgia where their low tolerance for salt water forces them into the nearest available lakes and ponds, namely Jericho pond, Charleston Park pond, and Lost Lagoon. Despite its name, Beaver Lake in Stanley Park had not been inhabited by any beavers in recent memory until about one year ago, when one brave beaver found its way into this unclaimed pond. We believe that this young beaver may have come from the Capilano watershed and made its way across First Narrows where it found and followed Beaver Creek into the Park. The beaver was first noticed when it took down a few small trees on the north shore of Beaver Lake.

Ever since the beaver became established, it has been regularly seen washing itself on a small island at dusk before swimming into the open area near the outflow of the lake where it diligently piles mud, twigs and vegetation over the culvert entrance. Regularly, Parks staff diligently remove the material so the lake will not flood. For many months this routine has occurred resulting in a small scale dredging of the lake, a slight increase in water levels, and the partial removal of introduced water lilies that have been negatively impacting the lake since the 1930s.

Beavers play a crucial role as 'keystone species' in their environment and in turn many other species benefit from their activities. This 'ecosystem engineer' has been dredging the lake bottom and removing invasive lilies to the benefit of native fish, amphibians, birds and invertebrates which rely on deeper, colder water that persists into the summer. This beaver has also benefited people by providing opportunities for wildlife observation, nature photography, environmental education, and bird watching.

Because beavers provide the habitat necessary for supporting many other species and protect the web of life and engagement for Stanley Park. The collaboration by academia and professionals, community and organizations has been tremendous, and the required research, information sharing, new strategies, and sunlit patches of new forest stages is to be celebrated.

There is much work yet to be done in a process of forest nurturing that is expected to span another decade. And many stories are yet to come. SPES will continue to provide its collective hands and heads for longterm ecological management. And together we salute the dip of the cedar paddles of Perfect Storm as she slips by not the place of devastation, but rather the place of new birth – Stanley Park.

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American Beaver (Castor canadensis)
**Beyond Sunset: Bats in Stanley Park**

**Robyn Worcester**  
*Conservation Programs Manager*

This year for the first time SPES conducted bat surveys in Stanley Park. Working with Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) Susan Leech, we teamed up to mist-net bats in the park. Susan was involved with SPES during the windstorm restoration work as one of the biologists contracted to conduct breeding bird surveys and as an environmental monitor during forestry operations.

Over the course of four nights SPES staff, Susan and volunteers surveyed bats at Beaver Lake. We set up fine, wide mist nets along trails and used bat detectors to record the frequency of echolocation calls. For two nights we heard bats but caught none. However, we consistently observed them as they flew down to drink out of the still lake water around the outflow to Beaver Creek. So on the next two nights we put on chest waders and set up the volleyball-sized nets in the water.

We were thrilled to catch six bats, and although they can be challenging to identify, we believe that they were two big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*), three little brown myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*) and one yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*). These are bats that commonly live in Stanley Park, but catching any was lucky and also important, as these small flying mammals are increasingly becoming a conservation concern. Bats are some of the most poorly understood and endangered wildlife, yet they are essential to the balance of nature.

**Batty About Biology Researcher Profile: Susan Leech**

SPES asked Susan how it is that she is in this line of research:

**Why did you become a biologist?**

After spending years as a child collecting every kind of creature I could find and trying to convince my mother (mostly unsuccessfully) to let me keep them in my room, I became truly committed to a career as a biologist. Living in Europe for five years gave me a new perspective on how lucky we are in Canada to have such an incredible natural environment, and how much work needs to be done to protect it. The push for development is strong, and we need to work hard to make sure we don’t lose the uniqueness of our natural heritage.

**What advice do you have for prospective biologists?**

Take time to find a program that will give practical, hands-on experience in the real work field. And know that a really effective biologist needs to work well with people—because it’s people who need to change in order to protect wildlife and the environment. Focus some of your time on learning how to be an “agent of change” because that’s the way we will make the most progress in this area.

**Why do you study bats?**

About 10 years ago, when I worked for UBC’s Malcolm Knapp Research Forest in Maple Ridge, I was encouraged to do bat surveys by my then-boss Paul Lawson. At the time I thought he was a little crazy. I had always focused my fieldwork on birds and wasn’t sure that bats were going to do it for me. But after my first survey, I was hooked! Why? Firstly, they are fascinating little creatures. They use echolocation to move around and they are so good at it, it’s a real challenge to catch them. Secondly, because so little is known about bats, anything you find out is a real contribution to information about these animals. Thirdly, their populations are declining as they lose habitat, so they are a real conservation concern. Fourthly, there is a lot of public misconception about bats; once they learn the reality of low risk of rabies and the important role that bats play in our ecosystems, most people are much more interested in having bats around. There are great success stories about how adding bat houses to farms has eliminated the need for pesticides, as bats are so good at controlling insects (one bat can catch as many as 300 mosquitoes per night!). Fifthly and most importantly, they are really cute!
**Your Guide to SPES...**

**Winter 2008-09 nature programs**

**Discovery Walks**

**Sunday Specials (2 hours)**

*1PM to 3PM (unless otherwise noted)*

Join a Stanley Park Ecology Society guide for an in-depth exploration of one or more of the fascinating aspects of this park. Our Sunday Specials guides are recruited for their expertise and insights into the ecological or cultural histories of the local environment, and specifically of Stanley Park. Bring your cameras and curiosity with you as these experts reveal the past, present and future stories of this National Historic Site.

*$10 general; $5 under 18 & members

All Hikes leave from the Lost Lagoon Nature House unless otherwise posted!

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**Overnight Adventures in Stanley Park**

The Stanley Park Ecology Society would like to invite you to take advantage of our new partnership with the Vancouver Aquarium. Join us for two-hour adventures in the forests of Stanley Park followed by a themed sleepover program at the Aquarium where the adventure is continued. Call 604-659-3504 for more information or 604-659-3552 to book.

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**Discover the Birds of Stanley Park**

9AM on Sundays November 30, January 25 February 22, March 29

Join naturalist and bird watcher Cathy Aitchison for these 2-hour walks exploring Stanley Park's migratory and resident bird populations. Admission by donation.

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For more information, visit www.stanleyparkecology.ca or call (604) 257-8544
**Bright Nights in Stanley Park**

**Yuletide Train at the Stanley Park Miniature Railway**

Nov 28, 2008 - Jan 3, 2009  
3-10pm daily  
(closed Christmas Day, Dec. 25)

The Vancouver Park Board and the BC Professional Fire Fighters’ Burn Fund have together created nights of magic and illumination in the middle of wonderous Stanley Park.

- Adults: $8.00  
- Discount: $5.00 (children, seniors)

**Bright Nights Info Line:** 604-257-8351

Call 604-280-4444 or visit www.ticketmaster.ca for advance tickets.

**The Ephemeral Art of Stanley Park – A Walking Tour**

SPES invites you to join us for a unique tour of Stanley Park. We will visit and discuss the ephemeral environmental art pieces currently installed in the park, as well as the semi-permanent works to be installed by July. Admission by donation.

**Young Naturalist’s Club**

The Stanley Park Ecology Society is very excited to be offering a new Public Program for local families with children between the ages of 5 and 14. We are inviting you to join the newest chapter of the Young Naturalist’s Club of British Columbia – YNC Stanley Park! As a member of YNC Stanley Park, you will be able to participate in monthly activities designed to connect young people and their families to nature through direct, hands-on experiences that will bring learning alive and will help connect children to the place around them. Getting started is easy – simply visit the Young Naturalist’s Club website at www.ync.ca to join and register for the Stanley Park club, and then check out the upcoming schedule of events to see what’s in store for members. Our first event will be in the New Year so join now and tell a friend, and we’ll see you soon!
On Wednesday, November 19, SPES, its project partners - Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver Arts Council - artists and guests gathered to celebrate the culmination of the ephemeral phase of the Stanley Park Environmental Arts Project (SPEAP). The upper Dining Pavilion was beautifully decorated to showcase images and conversations generated by the artists thus far, and included a chance to contribute to Shirley Wiebe’s next project, “Cozy,” a ‘quilt’ of small wood-burned wood rounds or ‘cookies’. The event also marked the start of the next phase of the project, which is the proposal and installation of semi-permanent works in the park.

The new self-guided brochure and map for the ephemeral works was also introduced. These and post cards of them can be picked up for free from the Stanley Park Info Booth and Lost Lagoon Nature House on weekends. With all of the amazing opportunities that have sprung out of the first year of this project, SPES eagerly awaits the next year and looks forward to even more opportunities in the future.

For more information on the project, visit www.vancouver.ca/spea.

The enclosed concrete environment for this artwork was the former bear pit of the Stanley Park Zoo. Vines now claw their way up from the empty moat below while a massive yew tree extends its branches overhead, and various root systems determinedly penetrate the barricading concrete wall.

Using a biodegradable erosion control blanket made up of shredded coconut fibres stitched with jute, I sewed various amorphous shapes that I stuffed with wood chips from the park. The forms, entitled Hibernators, are quite malleable and capable of assuming lifelike and emotive postures.

Hibernators is intended to revitalize the zoo through an intervention that draws attention to its potential as a viewing stage or theatre. A transition between what was there and the future. The forms interact with each other and the site in a drama that is subject to the viewers’ interpretation.

- Shirley Wiebe, Artist in Residence

This land has not heard our language being spoken here for several decades, other than the rare moments where those who still retain the language come and speak it. To walk this land, this site, and to share the language as I learn it, through the guidance of our Young People who have been gifted with growing up with their Elders, has been an amazing part of my journey further into my culture. Through the plants and the language, I am learning to walk with more humility and with grace. My relationship with our songs and stories has become a deeper and more meaningful part of my on-going relationship with this place, and with the many village and gathering sites I encounter on my journey through Xway Xway to Kanaka Ranch. K’Ayatch’t’N! I hold my hands up to you, plant spirits!

- T’Uy Tanat Cease Wyss and Davide Pan

Influenced and inspired by branching structures and the symbiotic relationships expressed in structures and organs like roots, rivers, arteries and the placenta, this piece explores these associations and how they link to culture, community, land and life. Drawn to areas of the Park I hadn’t yet explored, I was struck by the amazing root systems overturned during the storm... how they resembled the branching of vessels in a placenta and how they themselves are organs facilitating many of the same functions for life as the womb and umbilicus. My partner and I had just had our first son, Skyelar, and when I looked at this root system I felt it as if it was a part of me; I felt the land through to my core.

- Tania Willard
It is often thought that bird watching is at its best during the migration periods. However, winter does provide some unique birdwatching opportunities, and lucky for us, Stanley Park is one of Vancouver’s winter birding hotspots! While the overall numbers of bird species are at their highest during spring and fall, there are often greater populations of individual species to see during the winter. As the cold season returns, many birds move southward from their summer breeding grounds to take up winter residence in our area. With the dropping of leaves from deciduous trees, our permanent avian residents become easier to spot. Also many birds become more social compared to their more reclusive behaviour during the summer. For example, during the winter months, chickadees gather in large flocks for warmth and to forage for food, and are easier for birders to observe.

Forest birds to watch out for in the Park include:
• Dark-eyed juncos, varied thrush and fox sparrows which have come down from their higher altitude breeding grounds
• American robins foraging for worms, insects and fruit
• Woodpeckers foraging on mature and old growth trees
• Sparrows scratching for seed on the ground
• Brown creepers and red-breasted nut-hatches feeding on insect larvae in the crevices of tree bark
• Chickadees, kinglets and bushtits foraging in branches and residual foliage

Waterfowl are especially remarkable during winter as their new breeding plumage is fresh from the fall moult. Ostentatious courtship displays and pair formation can be observed through most of the season. Watch for the following on Lost Lagoon, Beaver Lake and the foreshores:
• Dabbling ducks (which feed by tipping rather than submerging): mallards, wood ducks, American wigeons, green-winged teals, gadwalls, northern shovelers, northern pintails
• Diving ducks (which feed by diving, often to great distances): canvasbacks, common and red-throated loons, common and Barrow’s goldeneyes, lesser and greater scapaus, ring-necked ducks, scoters, mergansers, buffleheads, grebes, Harlequin ducks, long-tailed-ducks.

Others to watch for include gulls and shorebirds such as dunlins, sandpipers, black oystercatchers and black turnstones. Rare bird sightings create much excitement with local birders. For example, occasionally trumpeter or tundra swans appear on Lost Lagoon. With severe winter storms in the north leading to prey shortages, there have been sightings of snowy owls, normally residents of northern climes.

Join our monthly bird walk and volunteer bird counts each month as we set up scopes around Lost Lagoon and Beaver Lake and learn to identify our local birds. For information on how you can get involved in SPES and other local birdwatching projects such as the Christmas bird count, please contact Koren at 604-681-7099 or email vols@stanleyparkecology.ca.

Baffling The Beaver

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...upon which we depend, we should try to coexist with them whenever possible. In the urban environment, however, beavers can cause problems by taking down too many trees for food and by flooding water courses that are close to human infrastructure such as houses, trails, and roads. An adult beaver can take down many alder, willow and other trees in one year, so to prevent the removal of the Parks’ limited supply of these riparian trees, metal wraps are used to protect them.

To stop the flooding of Beaver Lake due to the damming of its outflow stream, a device called a Pond Leveller has been installed. It fools the beaver into believing that it has plugged up the stream, while allowing water to flow out of the lake through a submerged pipe.

Research has shown that finding creative ways to coexist with seemingly “nuisance” animals is usually more cost effective and has a greater long-term benefit to local ecology. Wetlands provide valuable wildlife habitat and are important to humans because of the ecosystem services they provide. The beaver is instrumental in the creation and maintenance of healthy wetlands in their natural habitat and so creative solutions to allow for coexistence with these intriguing animals should be found whenever possible.
SPES Thanks Its Sponsors & Donors

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Membership Supports:
• School and Public Programs helping more than 30,000 children and adults to discover nature each year through hands-on stewardship and education adventures
• The Lost Lagoon Nature House, Vancouver’s only ecological interpretive centre, welcoming over 15,000 visitors each year
• Wildlife monitoring, habitat restoration and biodiversity conservation in Stanley Park

Members Enjoy:
• Discounts on Discovery Walks, Hikes, Family Programs and Events
• Seasonal activities calendar and our quarterly newsletter
• Voting privileges to help SPES enact ecological stewardship in Stanley Park
• Special perks & seasonal promotions from Park partners
• Free preview nights on Christmas Bright Nights and the Halloween Ghost Train

Membership Supports:

From SEPT 02, 2008 – APRIL 30, 2009

The Fish House is a friendly and casual retreat, located in Vancouver’s Stanley Park jewel-like setting. It is the perfect location for celebrating a special occasion, entertaining friends from out of town, or dropping in for a treat after observing nature in the park!

For more information, please visit: www.fishhousestanleypark.com

8901 Stanley Park Drive, Vancouver, BC

Please identify yourself as a Stanley Park Ecology Society member when making your reservation by calling 604-681-7275 or online at Open Table.com

**This incentive is valid for a maximum of 8 people, and cannot be combined with other promotional offers**

**Not valid on Thursday live jazz nights**