

Fall 2011 Newsletter



Bioblitz Captivates Citizen Scientists!

Brian Titaro, *Conservation Technician*

The first BioBlitz in Stanley Park was a unique and unparalleled opportunity for visitors to experience the wonder of nature through a scientific lens. Adults and children alike clamored to see how even the smallest of fish and mammals had an identity and a purpose. Birds, insects, plants and reptiles also played starring roles in this show of biodiversity. Hundreds of “hands on” interactions with nature revealed the Park as a hotspot of biodiversity in Vancouver. Not only were citizens entertained, excited and educated, a total of 143 species not previously listed by the Stanley Park Ecology Society were recorded.

During the International Year of the Forest, on a hot weekend at the end of summer, Stanley Park was buzzing with its first ever “BioBlitz”. Co-hosted by the Stanley Park Ecology Society and the South Coast Conservation Program, this biodiversity blitz involved local researchers, ecology experts, stewardship groups and the general public. This 24 hour science relay identified a multitude of living organism types in Stanley Park.

Considering how heavily used Stanley Park is, it’s amazing that this type of event had never taken place before. Spanning August 20th and 21st, 20+ scientists with a legion of volunteers and local citizens launched into the Park, clipboards and field guides in hand, to perform a beach seine, small mammal trapping, lichen surveys, fish and amphibian surveys and many more events in a quest to record the diversity of flora and fauna in this 400 hectare urban oasis.

Even those whose skills weren’t scientific enough to tell the difference between a huckleberry and a salmonberry were included. Free interpretive events throughout the weekend were delivered to educate people from throughout Metro Vancouver about the Park’s biodiversity and hidden wonders.

Highlights of the weekend included hummingbird, bat and owl surveys. Individuals and families were able to interact with a local expert as he effortlessly caught, analyzed, and delicately banded three Anna’s hummingbirds over the course of just

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cont'd

an hour. The owl survey delighted observers as three barred owls flew over their heads and called back in response to the recorded calls that the biologist sent out into the dark forest. Five active, healthy bats were transferred from a veil of mist-nets over dark waterways to the hands of researchers and to the eager eyes of more than 30 people who participated until almost midnight.

The BioBlitz was a huge success largely due to the number of interactions between the public and the biologists. At the close of the weekend, more than 1000 individuals from the community had participated in one or more BioBlitz activity. Many individuals stayed engaged all weekend. One young boy participated in the beach seining, hummingbird trapping, amphibian trapping, fish trapping and aquatic insect pond dipping.

For children and adults, the BioBlitz provided an ideal opportunity to escape the hot city and connect to the natural world with the bonus of guidance from local ex-



A barred owl was spotted in the Stanley Park forest moments before the owl survey began.



Three Anna's hummingbirds were caught, banded and released during the BioBlitz.

perts happy to share their knowledge. As the last of the display tents were coming down the organizers celebrated a successful BioBlitz. The positive impact for the public was reiterated as another young boy who had spent the entire weekend under guidance catching frogs, butterflies and insects at Beaver Lake approached and excitedly asked, "Will you be doing all of this again next weekend?" The smiling response from SPES's Conservation Technician was, "Not next weekend, but maybe next year."

Thanks to all the scientists, partner organizations and volunteers who worked to make this weekend such a tremendous success! For a complete list of species identified during the first ever Stanley Park BioBlitz, please check www.stanleyparkecology.ca mid-September.

To keep connecting to nature, SPES has regular interactive walks and events on weekends throughout the year. Check our programs listed on pages 4 and 5, or at www.stanleyparkecology.ca/programs.

SPECIAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING EVENT

VANCOUVER'S BEST-KEPT SECRET: STANLEY PARK NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

In its splendid relationship of natural environment and commemorated cultural elements, Stanley Park is the epitome of the large urban Canadian park. Celebrating the 125th Anniversary of Vancouver and the 100th Anniversary of the national parks system, Parks Canada historian, Lyle Dick, illustrates and highlights many of the outstanding values that define Stanley Park as a nationally significant cultural treasure.

When: Wednesday, October 26 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Details: Stanley Park Dining Pavilion ballroom. www.stanleyparkecology.ca/calendar



The Fragrance of the Forest: Connecting children to nature

Anita Georgy, *Acting School Programs Manager*

“I never knew the forest smelled so good!” said a surprised grade 6 student participating in SPES’s *Forest Fundamentals* program last spring. Our sense of smell is incredibly powerful. Smell can activate memories, emotions and feelings. It connects us, on the most fundamental level, to our place in the world.

It is startling to realize more and more children don’t know what the forest smells like. The scents in their world are man-made: car fumes, fast food or rain on pavement. How can we inspire them to protect the forest if they have no sense of its wonder or its fragrance?



Photo by Brian Grover

work will help these ideas stick. Between the ages of 7 and 11, it’s essential for kids to engage with the natural world. They should be encouraged to explore by following streams or building outdoor shelters. Nature journals will help them integrate the experience. By ages 11-14, kids are ready for social action projects. They can help clean up streams, create nesting habitat and remove invasive species.

The Child and Nature Alliance is hosting a three day conference in Vancouver, September 20-23, 2011, aimed at bringing together professionals from a range of sectors including health, environment, parks & recreation, education, community and urban planning. Conference organizers aim to build awareness, partnerships and action plans based on the belief that human health is improved by time in nature. Health is therefore also dependent upon the healthy ecosystems that parks and protected areas contribute .

In his bestselling book, *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv compiled a growing body of research outlining the impacts we are seeing in children who have become disconnected from nature. These impacts include obesity, attention disorders and depression. He goes on to detail 100 simple things we can do to help connect kids with nature. Louv recommends helping children start a rock or leaf collection, having a family ‘green hour’ as a daily time of unstructured outdoor play and adopting a tree to watch it grow and change throughout the year. Added to that list might be making sure your child knows what the forest smells like. They will be pleasantly surprised!

“It was really interesting how everybody’s forest colognes smelled different; that some smelled really pleasant, but some smelled horrible. By this, I learned that many things combined will produce different things” - Jenny, DeBeck Elementary

“...on the nature walk, we smelled a special bush that had soft spines. It smelled really fresh and minty.” - Michelle, DeBeck Elementary

References

Healthy by Nature [Internet]. Child and Nature Alliance [cited 2011 August 9]. Available from <http://healthybynature.ca>

Louv, Richard. (2008). *Last Child in the Woods*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books.

Sobel, David. *Coming Home: Developing a Sense of Place in our Communities and Schools*. Roger Tory Peterson Institute Conference proceedings, May 1997.



Photo by Don Enright

Often environmental education focuses on teaching kids about issues. They learn about tropical rainforest destruction and climate change and become overwhelmed. While adults all have a responsibility to model action on these issues, for example by making careful purchases and using climate friendly transportation options, what children need more is the time and space to develop a relationship with the earth.

Connecting kids with nature is easy. They don’t need expensive equipment or complicated instruction. It’s best to meet them where they are developmentally. David Sobel, renowned environmental educator, details age appropriate ways for kids to bond with the natural world.

For children aged 4-7, Sobel suggests developing empathy for the natural world is key. They can spend time in nature hiding like squirrels, flying like bats and using their senses to explore. Songs and art-

All Discovery Walks meet at the Stanley Park Nature House at Lost Lagoon unless otherwise indicated.

\$5 SPES Members,

Seniors & Children

\$10 Non-members



Bright Nights Xmas Train

December 9 - Jan 3*

3:00 - 10:00 pm

A million twinkling lights and animated displays transform Stanley Park's forest, train and Children's Farmyard.

* SPES members ride free on Dec 8!

Birthday Party in the Park!

Educational, exciting and interactive birthday experiences for kids of all ages. Tailored to favourite themes like: Frogs, Flowers, Forests and more!

For more information :
604-718-6522

Sun., Sept. 4 1:30 - 3:30 pm	The Perfect Storm Walk with Biologist David Cook through the forest of Stanley Park where the effects of the hurricane-force storm of 2006 were most impactful. See how it is recovering after 5 years of natural regeneration and human prescription. Meeting Location: Parking lot behind Third Beach kiosk. Turn right at Tea House.
Sun., Sept. 11 1:30 - 3:30 pm	The Rainforest Café Fast food or ten course meal? Explore the temperate rainforest with naturalist Murray Lashmar for herbs, berries and trees that West Coast First Nations peoples used for food.
Sun., Sept. 18 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Urban Wilderness A quick dash through the shadows and squeaky chattering up a tree remind us that we are not alone in this urban jungle. Join Coyote Programs Coordinator, Bryan Jackson and Environmental Educator, Krystal Pyke for the inside scoop on the curious creatures that share our neighbourhoods and ways to live in harmony with our wild friends.
Sun., Sept. 25 9:00 - 11:00 am	Birds of a Feather As Fall nights stretch longer, learn how birds prepare for migration or for a long winter. Join expert bird watcher, Cathy Aitchison, during a two-hour exploration of Stanley Park's varied and beautiful bird life. Participation by donation.
Sat., Oct. 1 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Young Naturalist Club: Fun with Fungi Do garden gnomes really live in little mushroom houses? Come along as we learn all about the fantastic fungi that live in the forests of Stanley Park. For kids 5-14 with a parent. (Call 604-718-6522 for pre-registration).
Sun., Oct. 2 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Go outside and play: 15 Minute Field Trips We all know that fresh air and sunlight are good for everyone so why are we spending more time indoors? Join long-time teacher and naturalist, Brian Herrin, for an exciting activity-packed outing to learn how easy it is to fit in more outdoor discovery time.
Sun., Oct. 9 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Arachnipalooza - Get caught up in the complex web surrounding our creepy crawly friends, the spiders! Learn the tricks of the spider trade in our complicated ecosystem. Join insect expert, Andrew Scott, for a closer look at the eight legged individuals that call Stanley Park home.
Sun., Oct. 16 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Fungus Among Us: Mushrooms Galore Ever wonder if toads really do sit on toad stools? Learn the interesting names and fun facts about Stanley Park's fungal flora. Get the down low on what's going on under the forest floor with botanist Terry Taylor, as he explains the importance of the fungus among us.
Sun., Oct. 23 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Salmon Forest Year after year up to six different species of salmon swim past Stanley Park on a return trip to their natal streams to spawn. They fight their way there against predators, fishing fleets, and hurricanes. Learn with VCC Biology Instructor, Maria Morlin, how persevering pinks and courageous coho influence not only the streams they inhabit but the forests around them.
Sun., Oct. 30 9:00 - 11:00 am	Birds of a Feather Who's that birdie in the bushes? Join naturalist and expert bird watcher, Cathy Aitchison, for a two-hour exploration of Stanley Park's varied and beautiful bird life to learn about different ways birds adapt or behave to keep themselves hidden. Participation by donation.
Sat., Nov. 5 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Young Naturalist Club: Savvy Scavengers Take a closer look at the sneaky creatures that survive in Stanley Park. From coyotes to crows, we will explore the life of these wily wildlife. For kids 5-14 with a parent. (Call 604-718-6522 for pre-registration).

The Stanley Park Nature House, headquarters of SPES's interactive nature exhibits and exciting programs, has something for everyone and is open every weekend 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. Located at the edge of Lost Lagoon under the viewing plaza at the corner of Chilco Street & Alberni Street.

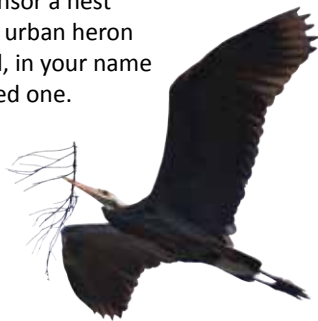
SPES Nature Programs

- Sun., Nov. 6 **Fungus Among Us: Mushrooms Galore**
1:30 - 3:30 pm A repeat by popular demand: Learn interesting names and fun facts about Stanley Park's fungal flora. Get the down low on what's going on under the forest floor with botanist, Terry Taylor, as he explains the importance of the fungus among us.
- Sun., Nov. 13 **Frosty Tweet: Waterfowl Blitz**
10:00 am - 12:00 noon Join SPES staff and volunteers as they count every bird they can find along the Stanley Park seawall. Conduct surveys with the experts and practice your bird identification skills. All experience levels are welcomed to attend. Meet at the Nature House on Lost Lagoon.
- Sun., Nov. 20 **Feathers, Forests, and Foreshores**
1:30 - 3:30 pm Curious about swan songs and Harlequin romances? Want to dabble in ducks? Wade into waterfowl with naturalist, Murray Lashmar, as we discover the wide array of avian species around Lost Lagoon, the Stanley Park seawall and perhaps even Beaver Lake.
- Sun., Nov. 27 **Birds of a Feather**
9:00 - 11:00 am The brisk waves splashing on Siwash Rock would test even the most valiant polar bear swimmers, but some ducks find it ideal. Join expert bird watcher, Cathy Aitchison for a two-hour exploration of Stanley Park's varied and beautiful bird life. Participation by donation.
- Sat., Dec. 3 **Young Naturalist Club: Space Invaders**
10:00 am - 12:00 noon Did you know that many of our favourite plants and creatures are aliens?! Learn about introduced species in Stanley Park and make festive creations while helping restore biodiversity. For kids 5-14 with a parent. (Call 604-718-6522 for pre-registration).
- Sun., Dec. 4 **The Edge of Winter**
1:30 - 3:30 pm Looking for ideas on how to get through the winter? Join naturalist, Murray Lashmar for an enlightening look at how plants and other animals adjust to survive the cool, wet (and sometimes white!) West Coast winter.
- Sun., Dec. 18 **Celebrate Solstice**
1:30 - 3:30 pm The chestnuts are roasting and holly has been hung. Join naturalist, Jennifer Swanston to explore the history and customs of midwinter festivals and understand the traditions behind the plants & decorations associated with the season.

A Great Blue Gift Idea

Adopt a Great Blue Heron Nest

Join the Stanley Park Ecology Society in our efforts to help protect these incredible birds. Sponsor a nest in one of the biggest urban heron colonies in the world, in your name or on behalf of a loved one.



www.stanleyparkecology.ca
Email nests@stanleyparkecology.ca
Phone 604-681-9453

IVY BUSTERS

Stanley Park's forests are being overtaken! Learn about the biodiversity and ecology of your park while you work to protect it from an army of invasive plants that threaten it.

Community invasive plant management events are scheduled for:

- Sept. 10 10 am-1 pm
- Sept. 25 10 am-1 pm (Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup) – Pre-registration is required.
- Oct. 8 10 am-1 pm
- Oct. 23 12:30-3:30pm
- Nov. 12 10 am-1 pm
- Nov. 27 12:30-3:30 pm
- Dec. 10 10 am-1 pm
- Dec. 18 12:30-3:30 pm

For information and to register, contact Greg, Stewardship Programs: stewardship@stanleyparkecology.ca



Along with this year's Ghost Train Circus of Disaster theme, the Stanley Park Ecology Society offers "Creatures of the Night" wildlife walks putting you on the prowl for owls!

Meet up with nocturnal creatures of Stanley Park in surprise encounters with chatty bats, rascally raccoons, man-sized moths, and more...

Thursdays through Sundays, Oct. 7 - 30, 2011
Presentations start at 6:00 pm and run every half hour including 9:00 pm.

Adults \$4/ Kids \$2
For more info: 604-718-6522 or programs@stanleyparkecology.ca

Cool wildlife sightings

By: Robyn Worcester, *Conservation Programs Manager*

This summer, SPES's Stewardship Coordinator, Greg Ferguson, identified the first ever recorded Pacific sideband snail (*Monadenia fidelis*) in Stanley Park. This is a blue-listed species at risk in BC and Greg was likely the first person to look for it in the Park. This snail feeds on fungi and plants. In captivity it can survive up to eight years. As terrestrial molluscs in BC are poorly understood, all inventories and records are important for increasing awareness and informing best management of these species.



Photo by Peter Woods

This Johnson's hairstreak butterfly (*Callophrys johnsoni*) was recently photographed in Stanley Park by local naturalist Peter Woods. This butterfly is considered threatened or endangered in BC mainly because it requires old-growth coniferous forests that contain western hemlock trees infected with hemlock dwarf mistletoe, a parasitic plant. Johnson's hairstreak feeds and breeds on the mistletoe which occurs high up in the forest canopy so it is rarely observed. Although this butterfly was thought to occur here in the past, its fate became uncertain after *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) was sprayed over the area in the 1990s in an effort to control the invasive gypsy moth.

Fall Phenology

As fall approaches, watch for the many species and events that mark the passing of the season.

As breeding birds migrate south and the great blue heron colony disbands, flocks of winter ducks will arrive on Stanley Park's shores by the thousands. In 2010, peak numbers of up to 4500 surf scoters were feeding in flocks off the west side of the Park in November, while hundreds of Barrow's goldeneye, long-tailed and harlequin ducks tagged along.



A flock of surf scoters (led by one pintail) lifts off the waters off Third Beach. Photo by Peter Woods

Fall is also the time to watch for the ephemeral fruiting bodies of mushrooms.

As these underground organisms send caps above ground at this time of year, they produce a huge diversity of colours and shapes. Mushroom fruiting is now used as an environmental indicator of climate change. Recent studies suggest that the extension of the growing season in some areas has been changing the timing of the emergence of fungi. Take your camera or sketch pad to observe this annual phenomenon, but please do not pick any mushrooms in parks. For closer investigation, attend our ever-popular seasonal mushroom walk, *Fungus Among Us: Mushrooms Galore* with local botanist, Terry Taylor (two dates by popular demand!).



Wild Food Wonders

By: Anita Georgy, Acting School Programs Manager

British Columbia's Coastal Temperate Rainforests are full of edible plants. While it is never appropriate to harvest wild foods from protected areas such as Stanley Park, it is possible to harvest wild plants ethically, or better still, to grow them in your backyard!

Consider replacing your ornamental landscape plants with native edibles. You will have a yard full of plants that require almost no maintenance once established. The added bonus is providing food for you and the birds.



Fall is a great time to plant native edibles. Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) is one of the most common understory plants along the coast. The sweet blue berries were an important food source for First Nations. The leathery leaves are now used extensively in the floral industry. You can make a delicious jam with the ripe berries!

To learn more, join naturalist, Murray Lashmar for a Discovery Walk on September 11, 2011. *The Rainforest Café* will leave from Stanley Park Nature House at Lost Lagoon at 1:30 pm. See page 4 for further details.



Salal Leather

2 cups salal puree
2 tsp organic lemon juice
½ cup sweetener (or to taste) - sugar, honey, corn syrup

Wash and stem enough ripe berries to produce 2 cups puree. Add in lemon juice and sweetener and mix thoroughly. Dry in your dehydrator (spread on a tray), or in the oven as follows: Cover a cookie sheet with plastic wrap and spread the puree evenly across the surface. Place in 145-degree oven for about 4-5 hours. When dry, roll and store in locking plastic bag in a dark, dry place. When ready to use, garnish with nuts or your favourite jelly or jam.

Interview with an Intern

Each year 1400 dedicated volunteers lend their helpful hands and endless experience to projects here at SPES. A few of these exceptional volunteers are international interns. Matthais Mertzen joined SPES from Kiel, Germany. He has contributed his knowledge for six months while learning new skills and working towards conservation and education goals. We caught up with Mattias before his return to Germany to continue his studies, to capture his thoughts.

What ignited your interest in ecology?

I wanted to see how everything regrows and how things change over time. It was a process of many things during my childhood including my many pets (rabbits, birds, fish) and many holidays where we would visit zoos and aquariums. The first time I snorkeled, I wanted to find out how everything worked in the sea and how it was connected. I guess that's how I got started.

What attracted you to the Stanley Park Ecology Society?

Oh my goodness, there is so much! I liked the combination of education and conservation programs. SPES offers so many programs: EcoRangers, Internships, school programs and field research. It's a job where I could do everything including education and biology. I didn't have to sit in a lab to research things; I could go out and share my knowledge with other people.

What is your favourite part of being an intern with SPES?

Urban Camping! You are outside all day (and night), and you have kids around that ask so many questions and are so interested in nature. It is nice to see how fast kids learn and how they understand the world around them.

What will you take with you from your experiences here with SPES?

I cannot count because I learned so much about the environment here. The interactions with other people and the different kinds of conservation programs at SPES were great to experience. My English has improved, too. Those are only a few points. There are so many more. If others are given this chance, I'd say, "Do it!" It was amazing.



...promotes awareness of and respect for the natural world by providing a leadership role in the stewardship of Stanley Park through collaborative initiatives in education, research and conservation.

SPES Members Enjoy:

- Discounts on Discovery Walks, Family Programs and Events
- Seasonal activities calendar and our quarterly newsletter
- Special perks and promotions from community partners
- Free preview nights on Christmas Bright Nights and Halloween Ghost Trains plus Theatre Under the Stars

SPES Membership Supports:

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

Donating to the Stanley Park Ecology Society has never been easier, thanks to **CanadaHelps** which provides secure service for monthly or one-time gifts.

Simply click the "Donate Now" icon on our website, **www.stanleyparkecol-ogy.ca**. Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$30.

YES! I Want To Contribute!

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All information will be kept confidential according to the Personal Information Protection Act.

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Cheques are payable to:
 Stanley Park Ecology Society
 PO Box 5167
 Vancouver, B.C. V6B 4B2 Canada

I Want to Become A Member

- Family (\$40) Individual (\$20)
 Junior <19 (\$15) Senior/Volunteer (\$15)

- This is a renewal membership
 Send newsletter by e-mail
 or Send newsletter by post

My Gift Is Enclosed

- \$20 \$50 \$100 \$ _____

I Want to Make A Monthly Donation

I authorize the following monthly credit card donation to the Stanley Park Ecology Society:

- \$10 \$15 \$25 \$ _____

SPES is a registered charity #11916 6890 RR0001. Charitable Tax Receipts issued for donations of \$30 or more

WE THANK OUR RECENT DONORS AND PARTNERS



This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Department of the Environment.
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Collette Foundation Charitable Fund of Tides Canada Foundation

Thanks Also To Recent Donors:

Judith Macpherson, The Fairmont Waterfront Hotel, TELUS, Victor Balon, Rory Wallace, Milos Lakovic, Sheyla O'Flynn, Art Wolfe Workshops

TEAHOUSE
 IN STANLEY PARK

A Sweet Perk for SPES Members!

1 free dessert with the purchase of a minimum priced \$13 entrée at the Teahouse Restaurant.

Offer expires October 31st, 2011. (Members must show membership card to redeem offer.)

**For reservations:
 The Teahouse In Stanley Park
 www.vancouverdine.com/teahouse**