

Connecting People with Nature



One of Beaver Lake's many residents in reflection. Photo by Michael Schmidt

Beaver Lake, a Glint in the Jewel of the City

Beaver Lake in Vancouver's Stanley Park is one of the last remaining wetlands in the City of Vancouver. It is home to a lot of amazing wildlife, and because of its open expanse of nearly four hectares, it is a great venue to see these species in action, morning through night.

A common sight is the great blue heron, a species of special concern in BC. Beaver Lake is a popular spot for young fledgling herons in training to catch some easy meals before heading off to feeding grounds further afield. You may also see the majestic blue dasher dragonfly, a behemoth of the insect world, whizzing alongside the quick

and maneuverable barn swallow. Both are species at risk in BC and both are after the same thing – a feast of small flying insects. The ever popular, and always fashionable, wood duck can also be found swimming Beaver Lake amongst a sea of other dabbling and diving ducks



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Annual General Meeting

**West End Community Centre
 Thursday Oct 24, 7:30-9:30 pm**

Keynote presentation by
 Richard Cannings, author-
 naturalist: ***Birds: Richness
 and Rarity in the City***

Info: 604-718-6523

Beaver Lake, a Glint in the Jewel



Invasive water lilies at Beaver Lake. Photo by Andrew Chan



Great blue heron. Photo by Michael Schmidt.



Female blue dasher. Photo by Don Enright.

However, if you have been a visitor of Beaver Lake for many years, you likely have noticed that it is shrinking. In 1938, the lake was nearly seven hectares. In that same year, two events changed the fate of Beaver Lake forever. First, the Causeway was built through the Park significantly affecting the amount of water that Beaver Lake receives from surrounding streams. The second, and most detrimental, event was the introduction of the invasive fragrant lily (the one with a pink flower, not to be confused with the native yellow pond lily) which has since aggressively grown to cover much of the lake.

Today the lake is nearly half the size it was in 1938. Research has shown that this trend will continue if nothing else is done. Although it is a common natural process for a lake to fill in over time, the introduction of invasive plants has rapidly sped up the process. Not only is the lake shrinking, the quality of the habitat is diminishing. The invasive lily is decreasing the amount of available oxygen in the water and drastically increasing the rate of organic accumulation. Floating mats of vegetation are now cropping up all over the lake where dense mats of decayed lilies are rising up from the bottom. If nothing is done to counter this manmade challenge, Beaver Lake will quickly become a forest meadow, and many of the species that rely on this much needed freshwater habitat will disappear.

Fortunately, a great deal of research has already been completed and Vancouver Park Board, with guidance from SPES and the Stanley Park Ecological Action Plan (2011), has already begun

planning for restoration activities that will hopefully be favoured by the community, approved and carried out over the next few years. Potential options for remediation may include invasive plant removal, a degree of lake dredging and/or the removal of floating islands. This is all in order to deepen the lake to a level that would retain and support more aquatic species of wildlife and native vegetation, including coastal cutthroat trout, another species of special concern in BC. Enhancements will also be made to the outflowing Beaver Creek to provide improved salmonid habitat and lake access. Work on the creek has begun with generous contributions from Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program, HSBC Freshwater Initiatives and the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund.

Among the 80 species of birds and many other species that will benefit from the restoration, we can also aim for a reintroduction of extirpated wildlife like the western painted turtle and Pacific tree frog. And let us not forget the beavers of Beaver Lake, who should be quite happy to see their lake deepened: Since the return of a solitary beaver in 2008 after a 60 year absence, these busy workers have begun the dredging process themselves, moving mud, sticks and branches from around their lodge to plug the outflow to Beaver Creek. The five beavers that now call the lake home are working tirelessly to maintain their lake habitat, and we can safely say that we are working with these Canadian icons to see that their dreams come true.

Dan Straker,
Urban Wildlife Programs Coordinator

1911	Trails are built around the perimeter of Beaver Lake making it a major recreational area.
1916	Fish hatchery is constructed by Vancouver Angling society, stocked with cutthroat for 30 years. Beaver Lake is supplied with artificial water inflow from municipal water supply.
1929	Beaver Lake is dredged, removing organic material from the lake.
1938	Vancouver Causeway is built across the Beaver Lake watershed. Aquatic fragrant water lily (<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>) is introduced and the lake begins to rapidly infill with vegetation
1999	Extensive research (Beaver Lake Environmental Enhancement Project) undertaken
2008	First beaver in 60 years re-settles the lake. SPES installs Wood Duck (<i>Aix sponsa</i>) boxes.
2011	Stanley Park Ecological Action Plan completed and approved by Vancouver Park Board
2013	Bog is restored. Environmental Assessment of the lake is approved and initiated.
2020	Beaver Lake will disappear if no action is taken (Hatfield Consultants estimate, 1985)

Stanley Park BioBlitz a Blast



*SPES staff spots a salamander
Photo by Robyn Worcester*

On August 24 and 25, Stanley Park Ecology Society hosted its second BioBlitz celebrating its 25th anniversary and Stanley Park's 125th birthday. During this 24 hour biological relay, field researchers identified a multitude of living organisms in Stanley Park while our education team showcased the natural wonders of Stanley Park to the public.

In addition to the variety of surveys led by our committed volunteer team of 25 scientists, SPES presented 29 interpretive events: 5000 visitors participated in walks, plankton ID, a native plant garden open house, bat netting, hummingbird banding, amphibian surveys, face painting and a mural workshop, to name just a few.



*SPES volunteers search for sea life
Photo by Michael Schmidt*

Our Nature House was hopping throughout the weekend with 1600 visitors experiencing the wonder of nature through a scientific lens. Community members of all ages met and learned about creatures that call Stanley Park their home, while scientists collected data about which species reside where in the Park.

Although the Park is an island in a highly urbanized landscape, it is an oasis for a wide range of

plants, animals, fungi and pollinators. Forest, foreshores and wetlands teem with a significant variety of plants and wildlife. Even managed landscapes like the Rose Garden and areas dominated by ornamental planting provide food and shelter for many insects, small mammals and birds.

One highlight of the weekend was finding a millipede (*Rhiscosomides mineri*) that had not been identified in Stanley Park before.

This species has only been found in a handful of other locations in BC including Pacific Spirit Park in Vancouver, Crippen Park on Bowen Island, Point No Point near Sooke, Saturna Island, and recently at Ridley Island near Prince Rupert. This is only one of many species to be added to the life-lists of Stanley Park.

The SPES conservation team will be compiling and analyzing the data collected at the Bioblitz and drafting a report on what was identified during the 24 hour blitz. These results help SPES track the ecological health of the Park and guide future conservation efforts such as prioritizing areas for restoration or habitat enhancement.

Stay tuned for the report which will be posted on our website at www.stanleyparkecolgy.ca by the beginning of November.

Stanley Park Ecology Society thanks all of the scientists, partner organizations and volunteers who worked to make this weekend such a fun success, with special gratitude to our key sponsor, TD Friends of the Environment Fund.

**Julia Burns,
Anniversary Events Program co-Coordinator**



*Participant shows off her mussels
Photo by Michael Schmidt*



*EcoRanger engages the crowd
Photo by Michael Schmidt*

SPES Nature Programs



Stanley Park Nature House
Open on weekends
10 am - 4 pm

Visit Vancouver's only ecology centre to learn about Stanley Park's plants and animals. Find us under the viewing plaza at the north end of Alberni Street.



Photo by Brian Grover.

Nature Programs

For all Nature Programs, meet at Stanley Park Nature House unless otherwise noted.

*\$5 for SPES members, children and seniors. \$10 for non-members.

Pre-registration recommended for nature programs:

programs@stanleyparkecolgy.ca
604-718-6522

Stanley Park Young Naturalists: Nature Through New Eyes

Uncover your inner animal and create a wildlife mask that shows your wild side. Explore the wonderful world around us with a nature art specialist. For accompanied kids ages 5-14.

Sat, Sept 7, 10 am -12 noon

Urban Foraging

Lush berries and edible plants are plentiful, but which ones will fill your tummy without putting you in the ground? Explore the range of edible indigenous foods found in our local forests.

Sun Sept 8, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Underground in Stanley Park: Creature Colonies

Beneath the trails and towering trees there are vast colonies and creature caverns. Uncover facts about the millions of creatures we seldom see that keep Stanley Park healthy and vibrant.

Sun, Sept 15, 1:30-3:30 pm *



Photo by Michael Schmidt.

Animal Crossing

With the wet weather on its way, muddy boots are to be expected, but whose muddy feet left all these curious tracks? Take a closer look at the signs animals leave behind that can tell us who's hiding just around the corner.

Sun, Sept 22, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Birds of a Feather

Join us for this monthly, easy 2 hour walking exploration to watch for Fall migrants, and learn about bird ID and behaviour. Meet at the Stanley Park Nature House.

Participation by donation.

Sun, Sept 29, 9-11 am

World Rivers Day: Salmon Forest

As many as six different salmon species swim past Stanley Park on a return trip to their natal streams to spawn. Learn how they influence not only the streams they inhabit but the forests around them.

Sun, Sept 29, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Stanley Park Young Naturalists 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 accompanied kids ages 5-14.

Sat, Oct 5, 10 am - 12 noon



Photo by Michael Schmidt.

Nocturnal by Nature: Stanley Park's Night Life

The days are getting shorter and the nights longer; a perfect combination for the creatures of the night. Join us for a pre-view afternoon stroll and reveal the nature of Stanley Park's night life.

Sun, Oct 6, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Fierce Flyers

Join us as we explore the world of predatory birds that call Stanley Park home. Learn about their special adaptations and interesting habits. Take apart a real owl pellet to see who was eaten for dinner.

Sun, Oct 20, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Stanley Park Ecology Society Annual General Meeting

Join SPES for a special keynote presentation by well-renowned biologist and author, Richard Cannings on the birds of BC and Stanley Park's Beaver Lake.

West End Community Centre
Thu, Oct 24, 7:30-9:30 pm

Birds of a Feather

Cooler weather is on its way, and with it the winter birds. Join us for a two-hour easy walking exploration to meet the season's birds, and learn about bird identification and behaviour.

Participation by donation.

Sun, Oct 27, 9-11 am



Photo by Don Enright.

Amazing Eagles: A visual presentation.

Explore the fascinating world of bald eagles with pioneer eagle researcher, David Hancock.

Participation by donation.

West End Community Center

Sat, Nov 2, 1-3 pm

Forests, Feathers, and Foreshores

Looking for ideas on how to get through the winter? Join in on an enlightening walk to look at how plants and animals adjust to survive the cool, wet (and sometimes white) West Coast winter.

Sun, Nov 3, 1:30-3:30 pm *

War and Peace in Stanley Park

In the 1800's Stanley Park was declared a British Military Reserve...or was it? On this walk, discover over 125 years of military related stories, ranging from secret defence sites, monuments, memorial gardens, protests, gathering places and war effort activities.

Sun, Nov 10, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Birds of a Feather

Join us for this easy, monthly 2 hour walking exploration to see early winter birds, learn about bird ID and behaviour.

Meet at the Stanley Park Nature House.

Participation by donation.

Sun, Nov 24, 9-11 am

SPES Annual General Meeting

West End Community Centre
Thursday Oct 24, 7:30-9:30 pm
Free admission.

Keynote presentation by

Richard Cannings, author-naturalist: ***Birds: Richness and Rarity in the City***

Creatures of the Night

Running in parallel with the Stanley Park Ghost Train, SPES' nature program, "Creatures of the Night" is an entertaining adventure for explorers of all ages.

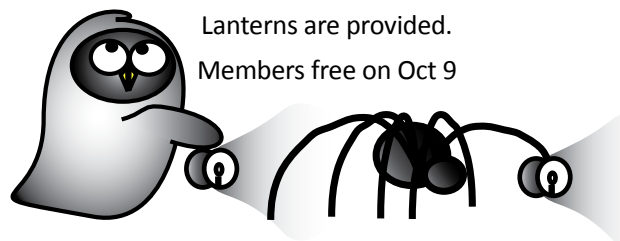
Join an ecology guide through the forest on a 30 minute candle-lit walk to meet and talk with some of Stanley Park's elusive evening animals!

Departing on each half hour, 6:30-9 pm,
Thu-Sun Oct 11- Nov 2.

Tickets: \$5 Adults, \$3 Children & \$15 Family of four.

Lanterns are provided.

Members free on Oct 9



Membership Perks!

Halloween Ghost Train in Stanley Park

Crawl out from your coffins, slither from your slabs, and ooze out from your tombs! These October nights summon you from darkness.

Oct 11 - Nov 2

(closed Oct 14)

SPES members ride free on October 9; just show your membership card.

<http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/ghost-train.aspx>

Bright Nights Christmas Train

During the holiday season the Miniature Train and Plaza in Stanley Park go through a festive transformation of nearly two million lights and displays. Fun for all!

Dec 5 - Jan 5

SPES members ride free on December 4; show your membership card.

Not a member yet or want to renew?

Read more about SPES memberships on page 7.

Nature Notes - Mostly on Moths

Although we work our days in Stanley Park, even the staff rarely get to catch sight of all the surprising and often overlooked wildlife wonders. We are grateful for the generosity of a number of very talented photographers who know the woods and wetlands in ways that inspire interest and intrigue.

Here are a few nature notes shared recently by one such eagle-eyed nature-enthusiast, Peter Woods:

July 14, 2013 - Stanley Park

"I was on one of my regular insect surveys and encountered this exotic looking moth in the forest - in the dark - on South Creek Trail about 50 m west of the Shakespeare Garden. The insect landed on a damaged portion of an exposed Douglas fir root. I had to use flash to get the photo since it was in dense shade.



Douglas-fir pitch moth, July 14, 2013.
Photo by Peter Woods.

About Clearwing Moths

Clearwing moths (family Sesiidae), also called wasp moths, is a family of approximately 1,000 species of moths that are long-legged with a slender, dark body with bright red or yellow markings. The wings frequently lack scales and are transparent. They look like anything but moths actually and many mimic bees or wasps quite convincingly. This is their main form of defence against predators and it allows them to be active during the day.

"Now, looking at it more closely, I suspect that it's a female and could have been laying eggs. I'm going back to check tomorrow (Monday). This is only the second clear-wing moth I've ever seen in Stanley Park ... and the second species!"



Sequoia pitch moth, August 8, 2008.
Photo by Peter Woods.

"The Sequoia pitch moth above was 'my' first clear-wing moth in Stanley Park. The moth flew into a Himalayan blackberry thicket on the south side of Lost Lagoon where I was busy photographing bumblebees."

"I have to add just one more moth from today. It's only 4mm long but armed and dangerous."



As-yet unidentified moth, July 14, 2013.
Photo by Peter Woods.

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PERKS!



School children on a field trip in Stanley Park.
Photo by Mike Mills.

Support your park ~

Together we are **making a real difference to nature and wildlife** in Vancouver's urban wilderness, Stanley Park, and helping people of all ages enjoy the natural world.

Purchase your SPES membership through our secure online membership store. Only \$20 for an individual, \$40 for the whole family and \$15 for seniors or youth.

www.stanleyparkecology.ca/membership

Benefits include a special invitation to ride the Halloween Ghost Train (free for SPES members on Oct 9) and Christmas Bright Lights Train in Stanley Park (see page 5 for dates), and 20% off food at Prospect Point Cafe and Stanley's Bar & Grill.

If you prefer to phone us or have us send a membership form by mail, call 604-718-6523.

Thank You

SPES relies on the generous support of individuals and organizations whose financial support help us to continue our longstanding commitment to environmental education, stewardship and conservation in Stanley Park.

We would like to thank our most recent donors:

Victor Balon
Drew Dennis
Spencer Chandra Herbert
Stephen Hogarth
Hewer Home Hardware
David Jagpal &
Leanne Dospital
Joslin Kobylka
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Kayla Wilson
Patricia Dairon

SPES is a registered charity #11916 6890 RRR0001. Charitable tax receipts will be automatically issued for donations of \$30 and more.

Thanks to our Supporters and Partners



The Employment Program of British Columbia is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Department of the Environment.

Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du Gouvernement du Canada agissant par l'entremise du ministère fédéral de l'Environnement.

Upcycling: Creative Solutions to Restoration



Repurposing English ivy.
Photo by Sharon Kallis.

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Conservation: 604-718-6547
Urban Wildlife: 604-681-9453
School Programs: 604-257-6907
Nature House: 604-257-8544

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

To get the latest news, follow SPES on Facebook and Twitter @StanleyPkEcoSoc



Crocheting English ivy. Photo by Sharon Kallis..

In 2009, SPES launched a pilot project in collaboration with local environmental artist, Sharon Kallis, that takes a creative approach to ecological restoration in Stanley Park. As SPES diligently removes invasive plants, we are repurposing and 'upcycling' some of this green waste as baskets, hats and jewellery.

With financial support from the Greenest City Community Grants program and the Vancouver Foundation, this year we are putting this 'new resource' back into the Park as bio-netting for erosion control on a slope which had previously been cleared of English ivy along the north side of Lost Lagoon.

This multi stage project began with the removal of English ivy by a team of volunteers. The vines are then processed and crocheted with the help of volunteers using the fence on top of the Nature House as a crochet hook, producing mats of various lengths and widths. The mats are hung to dry and are scheduled

to be installed in early October. Bound with willow stakes, the crocheted mats will secure soil onto the slope and native plants will be planted to grow through the holes. Over time the bio-nets decompose and the slope will become restored as the roots of plants begin to stabilize the slope preventing further erosion.

If you are interested in learning more about this project or volunteering, please contact stewardship@stanleyparkecolgy.ca.

Ivy Smith, Stewardship Coordinator

**Notice of SPES'
Annual General Meeting**
(see page 5 for time and location)

For information on membership or nominations to the Board, contact 604-718-6523.