

Fall 2012



@ Glen Kepke, Marine Photobank

Oil Spills and Stanley Park

Patricia Thomson, Executive Director

If a major oil spill were to occur in the waters of Burrard Inlet, it could devastate both resident and migratory species in the region and have a ripple effect on the entire marine food chain. Increasing the size and frequency of tankers negotiating Vancouver’s port, particularly those laden with heavy bitumen crude oil from Alberta’s tar sands, significantly increases the already high risks posed by current oil transport.

Hugging the foreshores of Stanley Park, Burrard Inlet joins English Bay to the south to contiguously form a globally recognized “Important Bird Area” with 236 species and up to 17,000 individual birds using the Park every year for food, and wintering, migration and breeding habitat. The Park’s shorelines include rock, sand and mud beaches, kelp beds and at-risk dune grass habitats that together support shellfish, fish, algae, shore-birds, and many of the 30 mammal species

that depend on the intertidal food chain.

Kinder Morgan’s proposed Trans Mountain pipeline expansion from the tar sands in Alberta to Burnaby, BC could annually dispatch more than 300 massive oil tankers past these shores, a huge increase from 22 vessels in 2008. Such tankers may carry four times the amount spilled by the ill-fated Exxon Valdez, which poured 260,000 barrels of oil into Prince William Sound in 1989 [1].

Continued on page 2....

Sneak Peek:

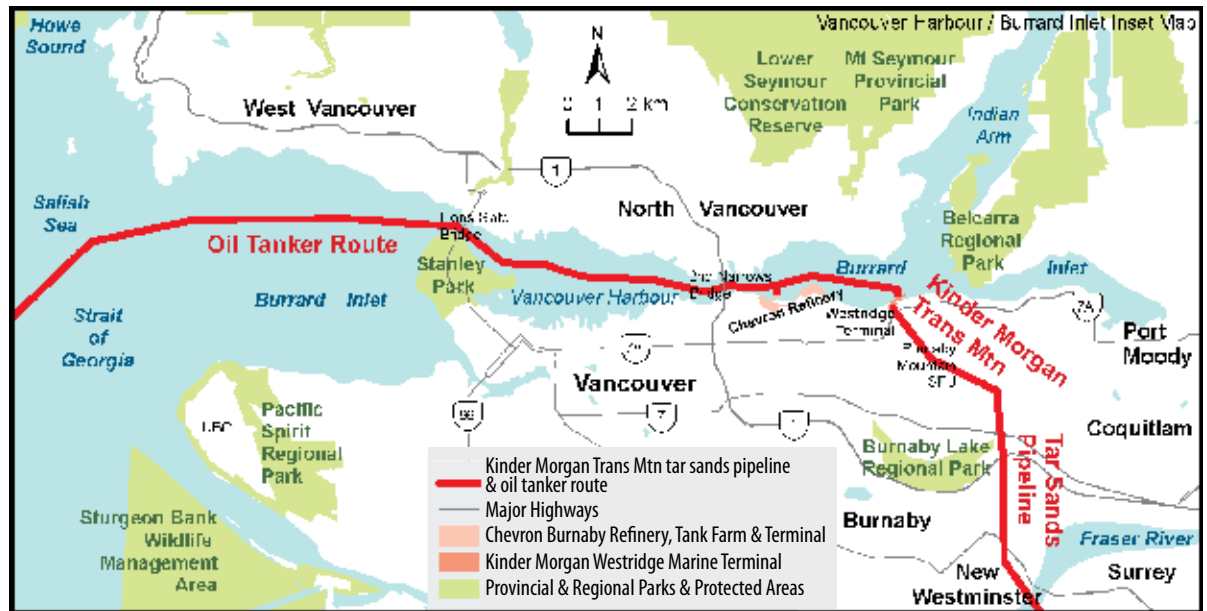
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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, October 22
6:45 – 9:00 pm

Panel discussion:
“Oil Spills and Stanley Park”
See page 2 for more info or
call 604-718-6523.

Oil Spills and Stanley Park...



Proposed pipeline route. Copyright: Wildernesscommittee.org

Marine ecosystems around the Georgia Strait already suffer damage as a result of shipping traffic and industrial pollution, which affect critical habitat and have contributed to declines in local bird populations.

Second Narrows is the most dangerous navigational point in Vancouver Harbour. Tidal currents here reach a significant three knots and gale force winds are not uncommon; yet even in a 25-knot strong breeze, a large ship navigates at its peril between the rocks. Large oil tankers can only travel through these narrows at high tide, and even then a loaded Aframax tanker has less than a two-metre clearance from the rocks below [2]. The Second Narrows CN rail bridge spans the narrowest point with a width between pillars at high tide of only about 134 metres, less than half the length of a Suezmax tanker. A simple rudder malfunction with a little wind and current, even with tug escorts, could turn a tanker enough to collide with the railway bridge. In 1979, a freighter collided with this bridge, shutting down North Shore bulk terminals for three months and railway traffic for nearly five months.

Globally, the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation has recorded nearly 10,000 oil spill incidents since 1970. Yet major spills account for only a fraction of oil in the oceans:

“Normal spillage” from routine operational release at docks, tank installations, minor ruptures and other can cause severe damage to a harbour ecosystem. In the event of a spill, Stanley Park’s world-renowned seawall and wildlife viewing areas could be forever diminished, and Vancouver’s “Greenest City” ambitions would be a thing of the past. Shorelines from Indian Arm to Vancouver Island could become toxic from the chemicals in diluted bitumen and could be filled with dead, unmetabolized biomass incapable of supporting wildlife.

Estimations are that crude oil may persist in an ecosystem for up to a century with continued negative impacts on flora and fauna, including death, reproductive failure, lesions and genetic damage. Ten years after the Exxon Valdez disaster, only two of 28 impacted species had recovered [3].

References and for more information:

1. Oil Spills and Vancouver’s Stanley Park: A report on the Consequences of oil tanker traffic in Burrard Inlet. Wilderness Committee & TankerFreeBC. July 2012. http://wildernesscommittee.org/publication/oil_spills_and_vancouver_stanley_park
2. “Oil Risks on the B.C. Coast”. Vancouver Naturalist, September, 2010.
3. Exxon Valdez Oil Spill: Ten Years Later. Alaska Wilderness League. March 1999. <http://arcticcircle.uconn.edu/SEEJ/Alaska/miller2.htm>

JOIN US:

OIL SPILLS and STANLEY PARK ~

A special presentation at SPES’ ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Featuring :

Lance Barrett-Lennard,
Marine Mammal Research
Vancouver Aquarium
Ben West,
Wilderness Committee
Robyn Worcester,
Stanley Park Ecology
Society

Public welcome – no charge

When: Monday October 22,
6:45 – 9:00 pm

Where: West End Community
Centre, auditorium

Info:
www.stanleyparkecology.ca/
604-718-6523

Small, but no longer overlooked

Brian Titaro, Conservation Technician

Everything in Stanley Park's been studied, right? I mean the Park is in the heart of the largest city in western Canada! While many of the creatures in the Park are regularly monitored by SPES such as bald eagles and great blue herons to name just a couple, there are still some mysteries, however.

This summer the list of uncertainties got a little smaller when the first ever small mammal monitoring survey took place in Stanley Park. The survey humanely live trapped and identified small mammals before releasing them unharmed back into the Park. This program was a priority for SPES, because the State of the Park Report identified small mammal species diversity as a gap in our ecological knowledge of the Park. Much of the Park was also designated high quality Pacific water shrew (*Sorex bendirii*) habitat (an endangered species in BC) as a result of our ecological research following the 2006 windstorm, and we hoped to learn more about their potential presence here.

The survey involved SPES staff and volunteers venturing

into the woods around the clock for four days to check 19 strategically placed live-traps, inventorying the small, fuzzy creatures that, while rarely seen, call Stanley Park home. The traps were designed to make the temporary living conditions comfortable for any animals which found their way inside. They included bedding to keep warm, ample food, water and a dry roof over their heads. All of the species caught were identified, measured, weighed and assessed for their overall health before being swiftly released back into the Park.

Here's what we found: 32 deer mice; 5 creeping voles; 3 common shrews; and 1 shrew-mole.

While the elusive Pacific water shrew didn't make an appearance, this doesn't mean it's not around, as it is an incredibly rare and shy creature. A second small mammal survey will take place this fall to sample another population of small mammals in the Park. However, in the meantime we can celebrate the discovery of the shrew-mole, a new addition to the life list for Stanley Park!



Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)

This is the most widespread mouse in North America, and many find its large eyes, dainty nose and long whiskers to be incredibly cute. Deer mice live in a variety of habitats, including buildings, and they use their internal cheek pouches to collect and transport seeds and berries but will also eat insects, eggs and nestling birds.

Creeping Vole (*Microtus oregoni*)

The smallest vole in its range, this secretive creature is rarely seen as it spends its time travelling along underground burrows. Creeping voles eat a wide variety of plants and roots but are particularly fond of fallen apples. They often use mole tunnels to feed in people's gardens, passing the blame along to the innocent mole. They're found from southwestern BC to northern California.



Common/Masked Shrew (*Sorex cinereus*)

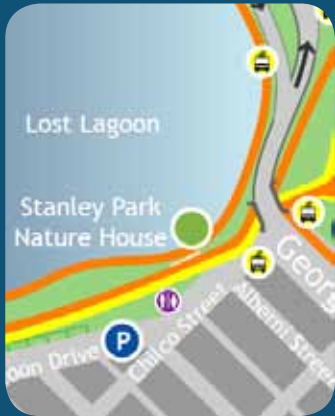
Despite being the most common shrew in BC, they're rarely seen. As a nocturnal creature they travel under the cover of debris on the forest floor and seldom sit still. They have a ravenous appetite and high energy level and feed on various insects as well as slugs, snails, young mice, carrion and plants. This shrew is believed to be venomous, similar to other insectivorous mammals. However, it only bites humans when being handled and its venom is too mild to be of a concern.

Shrew-mole (*Neurotrichus gibbsii*)

More shrew-like than mole, it spends less time underground than most other moles in BC, pushing its way through leaf litter and decaying vegetation rather than burrowing. Unlike other moles, it has the ability to move its feet beneath its body and therefore runs with great dexterity. Their diet consists of earthworms and sow bugs, and they're found from San Francisco up the coast to the Fraser River delta.



SPES Nature Programs



Stanley Park Nature House

The Nature House is located on Lost Lagoon under the viewing plaza at the corner of Alberni Street and Chilco Street.

Nature House Hours

Autumn and winter weekends:
10 am - 5 pm

Nature Programs

Meet at the Nature House unless otherwise indicated.

Preregistration recommended for drop-in programs:

programs@stanleyparkecolgy.ca

\$5 Members,
Seniors & Children

\$10 Non-Members

Fragmented Forests: Living on the Edge

Isolated from other forests, how do plants and animals survive in Stanley Park? Bordered by ocean and city on all sides, learn about the challenges of fragmented forests and what you can do to help.

Sun, Sept 9, 1:30-3:30 pm

Fungus Among Us

Ever wonder if toads really do sit on toad stools? Learn the interesting names and fun facts about Stanley Park's blossoming fungal flora. Get the lowdown on what's going on under the forest floor.

Sun, Oct 7, 1:30-3:30 pm
Sun, Oct 21, 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 adaptations, interesting habits, and take apart a real owl pellet to see who was eaten for dinner.

Sun, Oct 14, 1:30-3:30 pm

Stanley Park's Champion Trees

Home to some of the largest and oldest trees in BC, some of the Park's trees are over 700 years old! Explore this ancient forest and discover how these trees have survived to reach such a great age and size.

Sun, Sept 2, 1:30-3:30 pm

Arachnipalooza

Get caught up in the complex web surrounding our creepy crawly eight-legged friends, the spiders. Learn how spiders hunt, survive and just how important they are in our complicated ecosystem.

Sun, Sept 16, 1:30-3:30 pm



Young Naturalists' Club: Seedy Characters

Join us in search of the wind-born sailors, hidden hitchhikers, and pirate boarders of the plant and fungi world as we discover the ways they get around. For kids 5-14 accompanied by a guardian.

Sat, Sept 8, 10 am-12 noon

Introduced Invaders

Have you ever wondered why certain species are called invasive or alien while others are native? Discover the many species you may already recognize that are invading our beloved Stanley Park and find out how to keep our wild spaces healthy.

Sun, Sept 23, 1:30-3:30 pm

Young Naturalists' 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 accompanied kids ages 5-14.

Sat, Oct 13, 10 am-12 noon

A Special AGM Presentation

"Oil spills and Stanley Park" with Lance Barrett-Lennard (Vancouver Aquarium), Ben West (Wilderness Committee) and Robyn Worcester (SPES). Public welcome, no charge. West End Community Centre.

Mon, Oct 22, 6:45-9 pm



Edge of Winter

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, Nov 18, 1:30-3:30 pm

Celebrate Solstice

The chestnuts are roasting and holly has been hung. Explore the history and customs of midwinter festivals, and understand the traditions behind the plants and decorations that we associate with the season.

Sun, Dec 9, 1:30-3:30 pm

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Join us every month for an easy 2 hour walking exploration to learn about bird ID and behaviour. Meet at the Stanley Park Nature House.

Sun, September 30, 9-11 am
Sun, October 28, 9-11 am
Sun, November 25, 9-11 am

Young Naturalists' Club: Nature Journals

As we explore the world around us, we see beautiful sights and cool creatures. Join us to build your own Nature Journal to fill with the many adventures to come! For accompanied kids ages 5-14.

Sat, Nov 3, 10 am-12 noon

Young Naturalists' Club: Savvy Scavengers

Take a closer look at these sneaky creatures that survive in the park. From coyotes to crows we will explore the lives of these savvy scavengers and their creative survival skills. For accompanied kids 5-14.

Sat, Dec 1, 10 am-12 noon

Waterfowl Blitz

The brisk waves test even the most valiant polar bear swimmers, but some ducks call it ideal vacation property. Join us for an adventure to meet some of the ducks that winter alongside the seawall during these chilly months.

Sun, Nov 4, 10 am-2 pm

Winter Birds: Build a Bird Feeder

Drop by the Stanley Park Nature House to build your own unique cone feeder, packed full of important nutrients to help our feathered friends as they prepare for another wet West Coast winter.

Sun, Dec 2, 1:30-3:30 pm

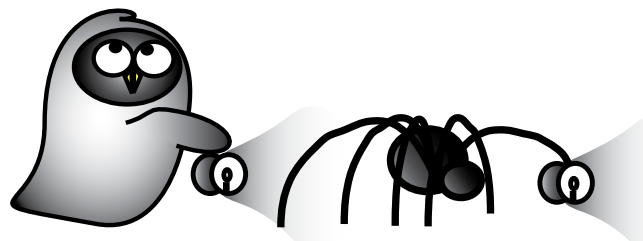
Creatures of the Night

A popular event in parallel with the Stanley Park Ghost Train, Creatures of the Night is an entertaining and educational adventure for explorers of all ages.

From the miniature train plaza, follow your ecology guide through the forest on a 30 minute candle lit walk to meet some of Stanley Park's elusive animals.

On each half hour, 6:30-9:30 pm Thu-Sun in October.

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



Lanterns are provided; bring your sense of adventure!

Stanley Park Halloween Ghost Train

October 5 - 31

The Stanley Park Halloween Ghost train presents **SCARY FAIRY TALES!**

SPES members ride free on October 4, 6-10 pm

Bright Nights Christmas Train

November 29 - January 1

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

SPES members ride free on an early evening To Be Announced.

Call 604-718-6523 for details.

Things to do in Fall

Greg Ferguson, Stewardship Coordinator



Fall is a season of change. With the shortening days, the plants around us begin to slow their growth and leaves turn different colours due to changes in the amounts of certain pigments. Leaves that fall to the ground protect and nourish the surrounding soil through their decomposition and provide habitat for organisms that live in the soil such as bacteria, fungi, ground beetles and earthworms.

Fall is a great time to discover the native plants in Stanley Park, or in your local park. Bring a local plant book and magnifying glass to get a closer look at the shapes, veins, and colours of the leaves that lie on the ground.

You can also get the kids involved in creating some wonderful crafts from a variety of coloured and shaped leaves. Please only use leaves from your own yard as city bylaws prohibit the removal of plants and leaves from Vancouver's parks.

Please visit <http://bit.ly/O9jSZe> for three fun fall leaf activities you can do with your family and friends.

Giving the Gift of Time

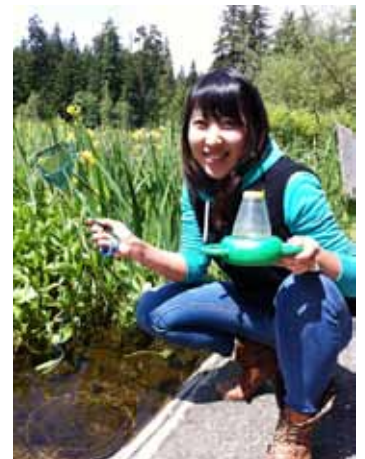
Julie Sabau, Volunteer Coordinator

SPES has 1181 fantastic volunteers and they come from all walks of life: professionals, homemakers, students and retirees. This past year, our volunteers performed almost 16,000 hours of work, which is roughly equivalent to that of nine full-time staff members. With just ten regular members of staff, this means that we are able to do twice as much as we otherwise would.

As a volunteer you can meet new people, learn new skills, improve your resume, see and help fantastic wildlife and have fun. It's also a great way to work towards a career in conservation. Read on for what a few of our volunteers had to say about their recent volunteering experience with SPES, and on page 7 you can check out our current volunteer positions.

*"The first day I was back at UBC, I was looking outside the window and guess what I saw perched in a tree? A pileated woodpecker! I was sure of it because of its bright red head. I had to stop the class to point it out and I sat there in marvel for a good 10 minutes. As you can see, you can just imagine what kind of impact SPES has had on me. **This experience will be carried throughout my teaching career as I continue to tout the benefits of outdoor education.** I can't wait for the day when I come back to visit you at SPES with my own class. Keep in touch and I will be sure to visit once I graduate!"*

Jin Hamn, UBC Student Teacher intern



The Gift of Time

*“With a full time job and family to attend up to, 24 hours in a day is just not enough. I used to spend so many days not stopping to look up or down, listen to the birds’ call, or smell the blossoming flowers, but instead busily rushing to my destination. It was only after I started volunteering as an Eco Ranger with SPES that I realized how much pleasure of life I had been missing out on. By walking along the trails of Stanley Park every week and talking to fellow walkers on the trail, **I learned why skunk cabbages stink, why raccoons stare at you when you walk with a bag of chips, what is going on between the Park Board and the beaver, and much, much more.** Eco Rangering made me realize the joy of being amidst wildlife, and taught me why we should care about nature and work to preserve it in a way that textbooks can never teach. That is why I decided to return for the second summer to volunteer with SPES, and so far the experience has not only been great, but awesome.”*
Sophia Park, Eco ranger volunteer in 2011 and 2012

*“The opportunity to work with the stewardship programs of SPES has been incredible. I have seen Stanley Park in ways I never thought possible, gained an appreciation of the incredible biodiversity of the Park, been truly impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the SPES staff – and seen the first salmonberry flower puncture the greyness of March. I volunteered as a gift to my daughters; **every day I spend working for SPES has become a gift to myself.**”*

Tom McIlffaterick, Stewardship Volunteer

Learn and Lend a Hand, Join the Team

However you can help, whether it’s monitoring bird populations, pulling invasive plants, designing our annual report or donning a raccoon costume for our Creatures of the Night events in October, a little time from you can make a world of difference to SPES and yourself.

Here are some of our current volunteering opportunities. Please check our website (www.stanleyparkecology.ca) or call us (604-681-7099) for more details and information about how to apply:

- Co-Existing with Coyotes Info Line Assistant
- Bird Monitoring volunteers
- Ivy Buster volunteers
- Creatures of the Night actors/actresses

Ivy Busters Community Stewardship Events

Learn about the ecology of Stanley Park while helping to protect its biodiversity from alien invasive plant species.

Upcoming Event Dates:

September: Saturday 8, 10am - 1pm and Sunday 23, 12.30 - 3.30pm
October: Saturday 13, 10am - 1pm and Sunday 28, 12.30 - 3.30pm
November: Saturday 10, 10am - 1pm and Sunday 25, 12.30 - 3.30pm
December: Saturday 8, 10am - 1pm and Sunday 23, 12.30 - 3.30pm

For more information on how to register, what to bring, and meeting locations, please email stewardship@stanleyparkecology.ca or call 604-718-6547.



...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.

SPES Members Enjoy:

- Discounts on Discovery Walks, Family Programs and Events
- Seasonal activities calendar and quarterly newsletter
- Special perks and promotions including:
- 20% Discount Vancouver Aquarium general admission
- Free preview nights for Christmas Bright Nights, Halloween Ghost Train and Theatre Under the Stars

Contact Us:

Stanley Park Ecology Society
PO Box 5167
Vancouver BC V6B 4B2
www.stanleyparkeology.ca

- Reception: 604-257-6908
- Media: 604-718-6523
- Development: 604-718-6523
- School Programs: 604-257-6907
- Public Programs: 604-718-6522
- Conservation Programs: 604-718-6547
- Co-Existing with Coyotes: 604-681-9453
- Stewardship: 604-718-6547
- Volunteers: 604-681-7099
- Nature House: 604-257-8544

Donating to Stanley Park Ecology Society is fast and easy thanks to CanadaHelps which provides secure service for monthly or one-time gifts. Click the "Donate Now" icon on our website, www.stanleyparkeology.ca. Tax receipts are automatically issued for donations over \$30.

YES! I Want To Contribute!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Postal Code _____ Phone _____

Email _____

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

Payment Method

Cheque Visa Mastercard

Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____

Cardholder _____

Cheques are payable to:
Stanley Park Ecology Society
PO Box 5167
Vancouver, BC V6B 4B2

You can also pay by credit card by calling 604-257-6908

I Want to Become a Member

Family or couple (\$40) Individual (\$20)

Senior (65+) (\$15) Senior couple (\$30)

Junior <19 (\$15) Volunteer (\$15)

This is a renewal membership

Renew for 2 Years

Send newsletter by email

Send newsletter by post

I Want to Make an Extra Gift

\$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 will be issued for donations of \$30 or more.

THANKS to our SUPPORTERS and PARTNERS



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.

Thank You to our Recent Donors:

Telus, Birchdale Ecological Ltd, Chimp Foundation, Judith Macpherson, Daniel Sheshan, Leanne Dospital, Bradley McKillop, Marianne Worcester, Pamela Kalas, Myron Pinnell, Spencer Chandra Herbert, Victor Balon, Corinne Hohl, Mary Landell and Renate Wiggers.