STANLEY PARK ECOLOGY SOCIETY
Connecting People With Nature

Annual Report 2014-15
SPES’ membership grew by 28% in the last year.

474 volunteers collectively donated 13,013 hours of their time.

14 year old Liron Gertsman, longtime birding volunteer, led his first Discovery Walk.

More than 361 m³ of invasive plant material was removed from Stanley Park.

163 public programs connected 3285 people with nature in the Park.

15,990 visitors learned about Stanley Park’s ecosystems at the Stanley Park Nature House.

We engaged 5135 elementary students in 233 nature program classes - 27% more than in the previous year.

Our coyote information line received 2137 coyote sighting reports.

Eco Steward volunteers broke in 308 work gloves during habitat restoration projects.

419 students camped in Stanley Park during Nature Ninjas Urban Camping school program.

15,990 visitors learned about Stanley Park’s ecosystems at the Stanley Park Nature House.
On behalf of the Board of Directors of Stanley Park Ecology Society, it is my privilege to thank you – our members, volunteers, donors, and other supporters – for helping SPES to promote awareness of and respect for the natural world and to play a leadership role in the stewardship of Stanley Park through our many collaborative initiatives in education, research and conservation.

With your help, SPES has achieved many successes this year, as you’ll see in this report. I’ll highlight just one example: Our unique Nature Ninjas program is a transformative activity that encourages urban elementary school students to connect deeply with the natural world. This year, we were fully booked from late April through June, meaning that SPES provided more than 400 students from around the Lower Mainland the opportunity to experience their science curriculum come alive as they camped out overnight in the Park.

Although Nature Ninjas participation is restricted to elementary school students, SPES offers many other ways for all ages to experience the Park. If you haven’t yet had a chance to experience the full breadth of SPES program offerings, I encourage you to come out for a Discovery Walk; to roll up your sleeves and remove invasive species as an Eco Steward; or to volunteer as a Creature of the Night, Cob House popcorn seller, wildlife monitor, nature interpreter, or in any one of a host of other indoor or outdoor roles!

In closing, I am excited to report that SPES’ membership grew by an incredible 28% this year, and I look forward to meeting many of our continuing and new members at future SPES events!

Tracey Leacock
Board President

Trip Advisor opened our fiscal year heralding Stanley Park as the #1 urban park in the world. It hasn’t been the first time for this recognition, and we’re positive it will reoccur! Stanley Park’s extra specialness is partially captured in the Parks Canada National Historic Site statement of commemoration: “In its splendid setting and through the relationship between its natural environment and its cultural elements developed over time, [Stanley Park] epitomizes the large urban park in Canada.”

SPES often provides requested tours for international governmental agencies – from Korea, India, and elsewhere – who are keen to explore models of municipal management that collaborate with the non-profit sector. When they tactfully ask why much of the Park is maintained in an unmanicured state, I beam: Stanley Park is globally appreciated precisely because alongside its beautiful gardens, recreational paths and facilities, it prescribes naturally complex native habitat for wildlife.

SPES has 27 years of educational and ecological service to Vancouver’s largest park. We are privileged to play a leadership role in preserving the integrity of this island oasis, and to use it as an incomparable classroom to connect children and adults alike to nature. We are grateful for your diverse support in this!

Patricia Thomson,
Executive Director

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The Year In Review

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Board President
Engaging a City:
SPES provided education and support for the Vancouver Park Board’s new heron web cam campaign. In addition to facilitating citizens’ views of the great blue herons and their chicks in a selection of the colony’s 83 nests, the new web-based interactive camera offered SPES better heron colony monitoring capability than ever before.

Protecting Wildlife:
SPES’ 2014 summer QuackSnacks program reached 100 individuals who pledged to keep ducks healthy by letting them find their own food. Many shared their pledge publicly on social media and on SPES’ photo billboard. With the success of a measurable decline in duck feeding in the Park, the program continued in summer 2015.

Creating Awareness:
SPES helped organize and host Vancouver’s third annual Bird Week, May 2 to 9. Celebrating our local birds, over 30 events drew more than 1300 people to lectures, art workshops, walks and talks across Vancouver.

Boosting the Bog:
Native plants like ferns, salal and sedges belong in the Park, but they could overgrow the newly restored sphagnum bog along Beaver Lake. To maintain the bog ecosystem, SPES removed and salvaged a cubic meter of the native plants for restoration projects elsewhere in the Park.

Facilitating Higher Education:
While conducting a biophysical inventory of the Beaver Creek estuary in January 2015, BCIT students from the Fish, Wildlife and Recreation (FWR) program found a Pacific spiny lumpsucker fish (*Eumicrotremus orbis*). This is the first time a lumpsucker, often found in eelgrass meadows, has been identified in this location. BCIT FWR students also engaged with six other SPES projects including a beaver baffler installation in Ceperley Creek and a feasibility study for a bog enhancement project near Beaver Lake.
Connecting with Nature:
419 elementary school students transformed into “Nature Ninjas” during SPES’ unique two day overnight camping program in Stanley Park. Campers explored the Park’s forests, wetlands and beaches while learning to live sustainably with nature in this immersive outdoor experience.
Photo by Don Enright

Sharing Knowledge:
At the International Urban Wildlife Conference in Chicago in May, SPES joined leading North American urban wildlife researchers and presented the story and lessons of our unique and precedent-setting Co-Existing with Coyotes program.
Photo by Michael Schmidt

Supporting Wildlife:
Dedicated volunteers helped install eight tree swallow nest boxes on Lost Lagoon and two wood duck nest boxes on Beaver Lake. The boxes, monitored from early April through late August, housed five swallow families, with sightings of over 30 wood duck ducklings in the Park.
Photo by SPES

Inspiring Park Visitors:
30 Eco Rangers, Stanley Park’s nature ambassadors, engaged 5871 Park visitors from as far away as Britain, Arizona, Michigan, Alaska, and Saskatchewan. They also tended to a twisted ankle, assisted a fallen cyclist, and redirected lost tourists.
Photo by SPES

Restoring Habitat - Creatively!
SPES stewardship volunteers braved thorns and weather to remove Himalayan blackberry thickets from Park blowdown sites. Under guidance from environmental artist Sharon Kallis, volunteers wove the invasive vines into fencing to help protect sensitive habitat restoration sites throughout the Park.
Photo by Sharon Kallis
Financials

**Statement Of Activities**

**Support and Revenue**

- Grants and Wage Subsidies: $260,878
- Interest: $5,863
- Donations and Membership Dues: $66,798
- Program Fees: $237,330
- Fundraising, Sales and Services: $97,025

**TOTAL**: $667,894

**Expenses**

- Financial Service Charges: $2,796
- Program Supplies and Equipment: $97,451
- Concession Supplies and Service: $4,185
- Administrative Supplies, Services and Support: $7,974
- Wages and Benefits: $532,095
- Professional Fees: $9,105

**TOTAL**: $653,606

**Net Ordinary Income**: $14,288

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*The complete unaudited financial statements can be obtained through SPES for $1 per page. The unaudited financial statements contain notes that provide additional relevant information to the financial information contained in the annual report.*

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**What Our Supporters Say...**

“SPES plays a unique role unlike any other environmental-based organization in the Lower Mainland because of its potential audience of up to 8 million park visitors annually. Engaging a wide diversity of community stewards from the everyday citizen to corporate groups shows that SPES is vested in long-term action and without such action, Greater Vancouver risks losing a significant portion of its biological richness.”

- Ross Vennesland, Species at Risk Recovery Specialist, Parks Canada

“If you like nature and want to help protect the Park, then SPES is a great place to volunteer. The Park is also such a pleasant place to work...and as a mum it’s reassuring to know that SPES is working to protect it for the future.”

- Tara Gregor, SPES Volunteer

“The Stanley Park Ecology Society provides a solid roster of current, applicable, creative new programming that supports the BC Ministry of Education learning outcomes, and integrates technologies such as program support for science-shy Teachers. The Vancouver School District acknowledges the long-standing contribution that the Stanley Park Ecology Society continues to make for the communities of the heavily populated Lower Mainland, forging new programs to positively impact our children, adults and seniors alike.”

- Maureen Ciarniello, Associate Superintendent, Vancouver School Board

“This was the best day of my life!”

- Ria, Grade 4, SPES School Program participant, AHP Matthews Elementary
Your Support Is Invaluable

Our team expresses immense gratitude to the countless supporters who contribute to our conservation and public education efforts. You are making a difference. Thank you!

Visionaries  ($30,000 and above)

HSBC

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:

Canada

Environment Canada

Environnement Canada

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

Sustainers  ($10,000 and above)

Canada

Natural Resources Canada

Stephen Partington

Supporters  ($1,000 and above)

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Spencer Chandra Herbert
Stanley Ulmer
Steve Curry
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Teresa Polonio
Vicki Cuthbert

...and 474 volunteers who collectively contributed $236,115 in service.
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