



## Nature Nurtures Children's Health

Patricia Thomson, Executive Director

Even as a 3 year old, I clearly remember the day my brother found Leslie the Lizard on a [non-park] rainforest trail in the Pacific Northwest and brought it home to live for awhile in a terrarium. I remember the exuberance of my parents some weeks later as they strove to explain why it was natural that Leslie had crawled out of his shed skin... and was eating it.

I don't recall the event of returning Leslie to his rainforest habitat, but to this day I am enamoured by these tiny forest denizens, and am apt to get down and dirty looking for their kin.

I can't say for sure that it was the many explorations and picnic trips to alpine and beaches as a child that turned me into a biologist and conservationist. Perhaps it was playing hide and seek in orchards overgrown with bracken, and hemmed with skunk cabbage. But current global research indicates that those nature experiences fed me emotionally,

mentally, as well as physically.

Relative to even a generation ago, today's kids are disconnected from the intimacy of forests and foreshores, beaches and bogs. Yet they are inundated with fears of global warming, climate change, loss of rainforest, wars for water... For environmental and economic reasons, there is a need to engage and empower children as stewards of our future. But also for their *health* sake, we need to integrate these young people into nature.

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## Fall 2010 Newsletter

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### SPECIAL AGM Event: State of Stanley Park's Ecology

Find out what the buzz is about since the release of a first comprehensive report of the flora and fauna and stress factors of Stanley Park's diverse habitats.

Join us at our SPES AGM as we welcome a

### A Panel of Professionals

Sunday, October 17 2-4 pm

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...continued from cover.

In an era where the bulk of our populations congregate in dense urban centres and rely on technologies for experience, play, and social settings, we are removed from the very nature that sustains us not only in body, but in mental and emotional and spiritual health. Our children are part of a vast experiment – the first generation to be raised without meaningful contact with the natural world.

Diverse health researchers are recognizing that social and cognitive development is correlated to quality “time-in” with nature. As important as good nutrition and adequate sleep, Richard Louv’s best seller “Last Child in the Woods” spotlights that nature is a powerful antidote to depression, obesity, and attention deficit disorder, and aids in creativity and cognitive development - especially for children.

The ‘Robert Bateman Get to Know Program’ reports that the latest edition of the Oxford Junior Dictionary no longer contains the names of over 90 common plants and animals that had previously been included, such as “beaver”, “dandelion”, and “ivy”. The reason? These words are no longer considered relevant enough to be included in a children’s dictionary; they are replaced with words like “database” and “block graph.” Today’s Canadian kids spend 90% of each day indoors. In an age where Nintendos compete with tree climbing and pond dipping, the virtual world is winning.

Abundant research is showing that for children, in particular, unstructured nature play provides benefits far beyond the good fight for fitness. Building a ‘den’ in a hedge or temporarily trapping

a toad foster creativity and confidence. Shared with a pack of play pals, benefits also include practice in communication, cooperation, and compromise - skills that may be slower to gain within a regiment of scheduled activities that direct versus invite children when and where to kick the soccer ball or how to match the meter of designated dance steps...

Evolutionarily speaking, play is practice for adaptability and hence survivability. Nature play allows children to learn to personally assess and address risks. It fuels initiative, innovation, and investment, all of which ultimately feed individual success and future economies.

Vancouver has created an Action Plan for becoming the world’s Greenest City by 2020 ([www.vancouver.ca/greenestcity](http://www.vancouver.ca/greenestcity)).. This vision recognizes that easy access to green spaces is crucial in supporting people’s health by providing critical connections with nature, especially for kids.

On August 29, SPES co-hosted a first forum supporting this direction by bringing together professionals from health and programming fields to discuss emotional, mental, and physical benefits of nature access and purposefully engaging people therein.

- Panelists included:
- Dr. Randall White, MD Psychiatrist at St Paul’s Hospital;
  - Dr. Aimee Taylor, horticultural therapist for disabled adults and seniors with dementia, and founder of the Little Green Lunch program for preschoolers;
  - Alana Bliss, Quest University Ecopsychology student;
  - Becs Hoskins, E.D. of the Child Nature Alliance which works closely with Rich-



artwork: Jana Fernandes

ard Louv’s ‘Children & Nature Network’ in bridging health sectors and early childhood educators;

- Kristine Webber, WildBC Facilitator and E.D. of Young Naturalists’ Club of BC;
- Roger Keyes, SPES Mgr Public Programs

The current generation of youth will likely never experience nostalgia of dashing outdoors after breakfast to play until the evening lights begin to burn - never have memories of rigging forest forts, or being the Swiss Family Robinson.

But while researching his book, Louv was encouraged to find that many people now of college age – those who belong to the first generation to grow up in a largely de-natured environment – have tasted just enough nature to intuitively understand what they have missed. This yearning is a source of hope for their own children: There is yet the alternative possibility for not the end of nature, but for the “rebirth of wonder.”

# Stanley Park Nature Quilt

For three consecutive Saturdays in July, 20 eastside children came to SPES’s classroom to create the Stanley Park Nature Community Quilt project. Designed to bring youth and families with barriers to the park, the project is fully funded by the Collette Foundation,

Guided through principles of art and ecology with a professional artist and ecological educator, participants

chose images inspired by walks in the park to stencil, paint and embroider into a cloth collage. Sewn into form by an experienced quilter, images of a nurse stump, a squirrel, an eagle and other Stanley Park icons came together in a quilt that is a true homage to the beauty and biodiversity of the park.

The quilt will be on display at the Stanley Park Nature House at Lost Lagoon.



SPES educator, Roger Keyes, interviews a young nature quilter.

# Cool Summer Wildlife Sightings In Stanley Park

**Robyn Worcester**  
*Conservation Programs Manager*

One of the best things about working in Stanley Park is that every day there are cool new wildlife sightings. Volunteers and members of the public often report their newest discoveries to SPES through email or by dropping by the Nature House.

Throughout summer, joggers, walkers, and a gardener reported seeing a sitka black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus sitkensis*) near Prospect Point and Siwash Rock. This unlikely park visitor was released into Stanley Park by Conservation Officers in an emergency situation: the deer woke up prematurely from its tranquilizer as it was being transported by vehicle from the railyards of Vancouver through the park to a more suitable location on the North Shore. Keep your eyes peeled and you may still see this animal browsing in the clearings and forest.

Barred owls are not an uncommon sight to the trained eyes of local naturalists in the Park, but a pair at Beaver Lake have been quite visible this year, sitting just 1-2 meters from the trail in broad daylight! The photo below was captured by a tourist who was one of many people who stopped to take pictures and watch. The family of owls, including 2 fledglings, may still be seen and heard regularly around the north end of the lake.

This incredible image of newly fledged tree swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) was captured as their mother flew up to feed them. Although tree swallows are not a rare species, this particular family is special because they fledged from nesting boxes that SPES placed outside the Nature House on Lost Lagoon. This is the first time that a family has successfully survived to fledging age, and here at SPES we are ecstatic about the success of this new program.



Photo: Georg Drabner



Photo: Peter Woods

A keen-eyed EcoRanger volunteer captured this image of a family of river otters (*Lontra canadensis*) as they visited Beaver Lake in July. These large, playful mustelids (relatives of weasels) are becoming increasingly common around the shorelines of Stanley Park and the rest of Vancouver. The mother and two kits shown in the photo probably came to the lake so she could teach them to hunt frogs and ducklings.



Photo: Sam Huang

# Fall 2010 Nature Programs

All Discovery Walks meet at the Stanley Park Nature House at Lost Lagoon unless otherwise indicated. Members \$5, Public \$10



## The Young Naturalists' Club of Stanley Park

This monthly event is a chance for children (with their parents) to enjoy two hours of nature exploration. Activities include hiking, games, wildlife observation, outdoor art, and more! Presented by the Stanley Park Nature House at Lost Lagoon and the Young Naturalists' Club of BC, please call 604-718-6522 for more information or to sign up. Drop in and check us out!

### Attention Teachers!

SPES offers a dozen diverse, fun, and engaging park and classroom programs for students, K-Grade 7. Including the outstandingly popular 2-day overnight "Urban Camping" immersion, these field trips are curriculum based, and highlights of a school year.

For information: call 604-257-6907 or [www.stanleyparkecology.ca/programs/school](http://www.stanleyparkecology.ca/programs/school).

Teacher workshops also available.

For more information, visit [www.stanleyparkecology.ca](http://www.stanleyparkecology.ca) or call (604) 718-6522

- 
- Sat, Sept 11 5:00 pm **Opening: The Stanley Park Community Quilt Project**  
We unveil the Stanley Park Nature House Community Quilt! This creative work of over 20 eastside youth is an homage to the biodiversity in Stanley Park and envisioned as a way to connect nature and youth who normally do not have a chance to visit the park. Funded by Collette Vacations, the quilt will be unveiled at the Stanley Park Nature House with many of the children and their families present. Come down to celebrate this beautifully crafted quilt.
- 
- Sun, Sept 12 1:30 – 3:30 pm **Myths & Mysteries of Historic Stanley Park**  
Join historical interpreter, Jolene Cummings, on this fascinating walk through the human history of Stanley Park. Please note: This walk begins in front of the Stanley Park Pavilion at Malkin Bowl.
- 
- Sun, Sept 19 1:30 – 3:30 pm **State of the Park for Ecological Integrity**  
In spring 2010 SPES released this groundbreaking report that compiled a bio-inventory of the park's flora and fauna and identified areas of concern in the park's various habitats. Join SPES for a tour of areas and concerns highlighted in the report.
- 
- Sat, Sept 25 10 am - noon **Young Naturalists' Club of Stanley Park**  
Please see sidebar: This month: Putting Mason Bees to Be!
- 
- Sun, Sept 26 9:00 am – 11:00 am **Birds of a Feather**  
Join naturalist and expert bird watcher, Cathy Aitchison, for a two-hour walk exploring Stanley Park's varied and beautiful bird life. By donation.
- 
- Sun, Oct 3 1:30 – 3:30 pm **Eco 101: The Temperate Rainforest of Stanley Park**  
Always want to know the big picture? Join a SPES Environmental Educator as we weave and wander on the beautiful trails of Stanley Park on this walk on the basics about our temperate rainforest.
- 
- Sun, Oct 10 9:00 - 11:00 am **All Fowled Up!**  
A parliament of owls? A siege of herons? A gaggle of geese? Join well-known local naturalist, Al Grass, on a stroll to see which birds are on the shores and in the forest of Stanley Park.
- 
- Sun, Oct 17 1:30 – 3:30 pm **The Birds of November**  
Join bird expert, Cathy Aitchison, on a glorious walk along the inter-tidal zone for walking, spotting, oohing and ahing! Expect to see hundreds of surf scoters as well as other migratory birds.
- 
- Sun, Oct 17 2:00 – 4:00 pm **SPES AGM – State of the Park for Ecological Integrity - Next Steps**  
Hear from a special panel of professionals on considerations of inventorying Stanley Park's flora and fauna, and trends with respect to ecological health of its diverse habitats. Location: Vancouver Aquarium AquaQuest meeting rooms (north entrance). Seating is limited; advance registration recommended: 604-257-6908.
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Sun, Oct 24 1:30 – 3:30 pm	<b>State of the Park for Ecological Integrity</b> In spring 2010 SPES released this groundbreaking report that compiled a bio-inventory of the park's flora and fauna and identified areas of concern in the park's various habitats. Join SPES for a tour of areas and concerns highlighted in the report.
Sun, Oct 31 9:00 am – 11:00 am	<b>Birds of a Feather</b> Join naturalist and expert bird watcher Cathy Aitchison for a two-hour walk exploring Stanley Park's varied and beautiful bird life. Donate What You Can.
Sat, Nov 6 10 - noon	<b>Young Naturalists' Club of Stanley Park</b> Please see sidebar
Sun, Nov 7 1:30 – 3:30 pm	<b>Love and Loathing on Lost Lagoon</b> Mallards court for a couple of months and then form pair bonds in February. Mating occurs in the spring and then, of course, come the cute, little ducklings. Watch for less recognized winter bird behaviour alongside naturalist Abby Schwarz, while learning field ID marks for other species of ducks: scaups, gadwalls, wigeons...
Sun Nov 14 9:00 - 11:00 am	<b>The Birds of November</b> Al Grass, renowned local naturalist, leads this walk around Lost Lagoon and nearby shores to spot who's in the park in November. Will it be surf scoters, mergansers, buffleheads? Join Al and find out! Perfect for all levels.
Sun, Nov 21 1:30 – 3:30 pm	<b>The Life of Plants</b> Walk with Terry McIntosh, botanical naturalist, through the plant life of Stanley Park. In various habitats, see how mosses to trees work together to produce a functioning and healthy ecosystem within the urban landscape.
Sun, Nov 28 9:00 am – 11:00 am	<b>Birds of a Feather</b> Join naturalist and expert bird watcher Cathy Aitchison for a two-hour walk exploring Stanley Park's varied and beautiful bird life. Donate What You Can.



### Creatures of the Night

Along with this year's theme for the Ghost Train - "Alice in Nightmareland", Stanley Park Ecology Society is offering a "Creatures of the Night" walk that'll put the Cheshire grin on your chin! Meet up with nocturnal creatures of Stanley Park in surprise encounters with chatty bats, rascally raccoons, man-sized moths, and more!

Tuesdays through Saturdays,  
Oct. 8 - 30

Presentations start at 5:00pm and run every half hour until 9:00pm  
\$4/adults, \$2/kids,

For more info: 604-718-6522 or  
programs@stanleyparkecolgy.ca

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

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- Great Blue Heron Information
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- Bimonthly colony updates
- An annual heron colony report
- An on site tour of the herony

# Bettina the Gardener

**Mariee Devereux**  
*School Programs Manager*

With 20 years of gardening experience, the gardens at Stanley Park are in good hands with acting head gardener, Bettina Harvey. Pairing her visual arts background with a major green thumb, Bettina brings the elements and principals of design together to create the colourful floral displays found in front of the Pavilion. But it's not just beds filled with buxom annuals that tickles her fancy; she also has a passion for perennials and the pollinators they attract.

In fact, her favourite feature of the Main Garden, found just west of the Rose Garden, is a rather cheeky male Anna's hummingbird. Bettina remembers the January day Henry the Hummingbird showed up 3 years ago. "He used to follow me around the garden all day," she smiled, "bellowing out his distinctive and squeaky call."

If you'd like to get to know this little hummer, stand by the Mason Bee pagoda condo and open your ears. You will be sure to hear him before you see him, perched high on the top branches of a tree. The presence of this hummingbird, along with a few others she discovered this year, are a good sign that gardens serve as habitat to attract bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

With our coldest seasons ahead, Bettina is always thinking of design even for winter. She notes that "you always want to have something that's visually appealing throughout the seasons."

This savvy gardener achieves this by planting certain perennials that have interesting "structural qualities or seed heads" and planting early blooming bulbs or shrubs for those dreary days in February. Bettina sees the gardens of Stanley Park as an extension of our own backyards. So even though you may be putting your garden to bed for the winter, remember that now is the perfect time to think ahead for spring!

You may want to consider taking the workshop "Creating Magic in your garden with bulbs" at VanDusen Botanical Garden, led by Bettina on September 26.



**Venue Rental facilities available**  
on the second floor of the historic  
Stanley Park Dining Pavilion.

For events, meetings, workshops, parties, and presentations within the heart of Stanley Park!

For more information, call  
(604) 257-6908



# Smoking Banned in Vancouver Parks and Beaches

Taking effect September 1, 2010, the Vancouver Park Board has approved two bylaws related to the permanent smoking ban in Vancouver parks, beaches, seawalls, trails and public golf courses. **The Park Board Smoking Regulation By-law** (<http://vancouver.ca/parks/info/regs/SmokingRegulationBylaw.pdf>) describes the new regulations, and a second bylaw authorizes Park Rangers to issue tickets for smoking infractions.

Adding to the consideration of established medical evidence about the significant health dangers of smoking and second hand smoking, the ban was approved based on environmental and aesthetic impacts of cigarette litter, fire risks in urban forests, the results of public consultation and the successful experience of other jurisdictions.

“Smoke-free parks and beaches are a natural extension of Vancouver’s reputation as a healthy, clean and green city,” said Park Board chair, Aaron Jasper.

Cigarette butts are not only difficult to be cleaned by conventional sweeping equipment, they persist in the environment for very long periods, and are po-

tentially harmful to wildlife which can and do swallow them as mistaken food.

There’s a common misconception that cigarette butts are biodegradable, but in fact the filter is made from cellulose acetate, a plastic product. The source material will become diluted in our water and soils, but it will never disappear. When cigarette butts enter aquatic ecosystems, toxic chemicals such as cadmium, lead and arsenic leak out, threatening the quality of the water and many aquatic life forms.

Cigarette butts have been found in the stomachs of birds, fish, whales, and other marine animals. This equates to the ingestion of hazardous chemicals and potential digestive blockages. Also, once ingested, birds feel full which can cause them to starve to death.

*In 2009, Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup participants removed 367,010 cigarettes/cigarette filters from shorelines across Canada. In Vancouver alone, participants picked up 53,580 cigarettes/filters from shorelines.*



One butt may not seem like a huge threat to our water quality, but the estimated **845,000 tons of butts littered worldwide per year** is definitely a threat to our environment.

“Year after year, the number one item removed from shorelines in Canada as well as worldwide is cigarette butts,” reports Jill Dwyer, Manager of Vancouver Aquarium’s Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. “Our data also show that the majority of shoreline litter comes from land-based recreational activities such as picnicking, festivals, a day at the beach. Although we encourage Canadians to enjoy our beautiful shorelines and waterways, we ask them to do so in a responsible manner.”



Join Stanley Park Ecology Society for this year’s Vancouver Aquarium Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. We’ll be collecting garbage around Stanley Park’s Beaver Lake and Third Beach. If there’s little garbage, we’ll help the surrounding forest by also removing unwanted English Ivy.

**When:** Sunday, September 26th  
12:30 to 3:30pm,  
**Meet:** at the SPES office, upper floor, Stanley Park Dining Pavilion.

This event is appropriate for individuals, couples, families, and children over 6 years of age. Come prepared for the weather and the site conditions, which could include slippery rocks and uneven terrain (i.e., wear closed, sturdy footwear such as hiking or gum boots, old runners). It will require at least 30 minutes of walking to and from cleanup locations plus walking during our cleanup.



A group of HSBC employees “dive in” to Stanley Park to clean it of invasives and garbage.

## IVY BUSTERS

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

Community invasive plant management events are scheduled for:

Sept. 11	10 am-1 pm
Sept. 26	12:30-3:30 pm
Oct. 9	10 am-1 pm
Oct. 16	12:30-3:30pm
Nov. 13	10 am-1 pm
Nov. 28	12:30-3:30 pm

For more information and to register, contact Greg, Stewardship Programs: [stewardship@stanleyparkecology.ca](mailto:stewardship@stanleyparkecology.ca)

# We THANK OUR RECENT DONORS AND SPONSORS



Keith Lord Sports Foundation Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation



## Thanks Also To Recent Donors:

Urban Fare Rebert Anderson Sky Spirit Studio Aboriginal Tourism Assoc of BC



### Bright Nights Xmas Train

November 26 - Jan 1 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 \***

Nov 29, 30, Dec 1 \*

### Hallowe'en Ghost Train

October 8 - 31 6:00 - 10:00 pm

Since 1999, the Stanley Park Ghost Train and Haunted Children's Farmyard have spooked thousands of families who dared to climb aboard. For information: [www.vancouver.ca/parks/events/ghosttrain](http://www.vancouver.ca/parks/events/ghosttrain)

**SPES members ride free \***

October 7

\* Show your SPES card for entry.

**Canada Helps!** Donating to the Stanley Park Ecology Society has never been easier, thanks to CanadaHelps! This online donation portal is accessible through our website, [www.stanleyparkecolgy.ca](http://www.stanleyparkecolgy.ca). Simply click the "Donate Now" icon on our homepage. CanadaHelps provides secure service for monthly or one-time gifts. 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

### 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

## STANLEY PARK

## ECOLOGY SOCIETY

...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, hikes, 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 Train

### 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



offers

**15% off\***

your food bill at lunch or dinner, upon presentation of your Stanley Park Ecology Society membership card.

**From Sept 1, 2010 - Nov 30, 2010**

The Fish House is a friendly, casual retreat, located in Stanley Park's jewel-like setting. It is a perfect location for celebrating a special occasion, entertaining visitors, or dropping in for a treat after observing nature in the park!

Watch for 20th anniversary specials after Nov 5. For more information, please visit:

[www.fishhousestanleypark.com](http://www.fishhousestanleypark.com)

Identify yourself as a Stanley Park Ecology Society member when making your reservation by calling 604-681-7275 or online at [OpenTable.com](http://OpenTable.com)

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