

# Volunteers In Parks

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*Hygrocybe conica*, also known as Witch's Hat, at Thetis Lake Regional Park. Photo credit Rich Malby©



Making a difference...together

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# Thanking Our Many **Volunteers**

By Colleen Long

Regional Parks thanked our many volunteers at the annual recognition event, held this year at Mill Hill Regional Park in Langford on Sept. 17. The awards ceremony recognized 32 volunteers with milestone years of service.

A new category of volunteers that we are recognizing this year are participants in the removal of invasive species and restoration of natural habitats in Regional Parks.

At the luncheon, Chair Christopher Causton paid tribute to the volunteers on behalf of the CRD Regional Parks Committee. Dr. Richard Hebda, Curator of Botany and Earth History at the Royal BC Museum, gave a wonderful keynote address on climate change and its effects on native ecosystems.

Since 1982, volunteers have been stewards of our parks. You watch, listen to and educate visitors. You help plan, protect and restore our parks system. Last year, 768 volunteer wardens, gatekeepers, naturalists, beekeepers, restoration and community groups contributed over 7,000 hours pursuing their passion for parks!

I feel very fortunate to work with all of our fabulous volunteers. I am humbled by your commitment to Regional Parks and am very proud of the work that you do.



## 1st Year recipients

- Adina McIndoe - Naturalist Elk/Beaver Lake Nature Centre (shown above right)
- Alida Sinkelman – Naturalist Elk/Beaver Lake Nature Centre
- Anny Scoones - Naturalist Elk/Beaver Lake Nature Centre
- Brenda Crawford – Warden Galloping Goose
- Carolyn Felderhof – Naturalist Witty’s Lagoon Nature Centre
- Erie Pentland - Naturalist Francis/King Nature Centre (shown above left)
- Katelyn Musto - Naturalist Witty’s Lagoon Nature Centre
- Paula Johanson - Naturalist Elk/Beaver Lake Nature Centre
- Robert Letts – Naturalist Elk/Beaver Lake Nature Centre
- Shelby Stevenson - Warden Galloping Goose
- Tyler Laberge – Warden Coles Bay



Reed Osler and Heather Chatwin, Parks Interpreters



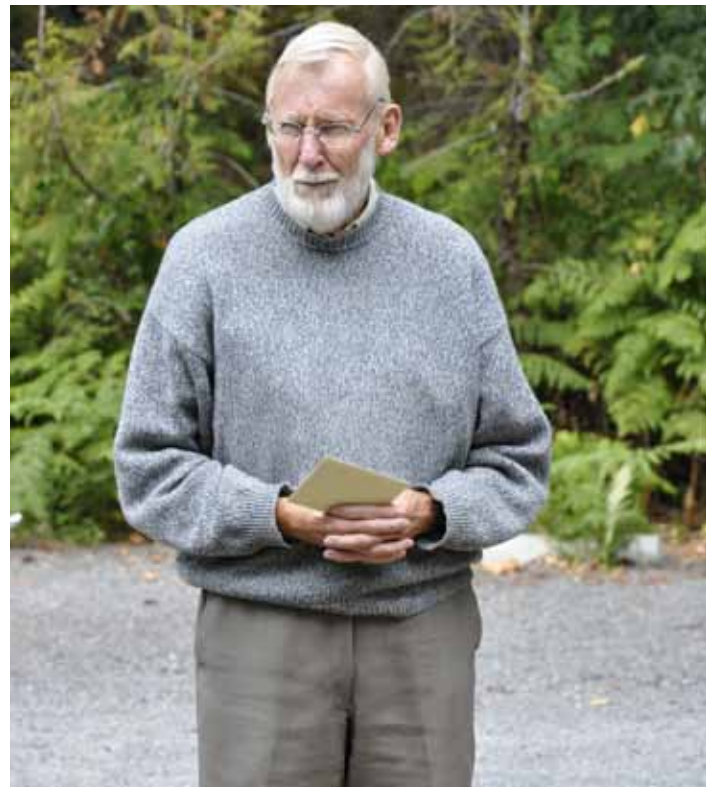
### **Devonian Restoration Group**

Abby St. Pierre, Roger St. Pierre, Moralea Milne (spearheaded this effort in 2002), Bill Cave, Linda Cave, Thomas Munson, Pilar Rodriguez Gomez, David Chauvin, Tim Rutherford (not shown are Ged Dady, Jeremy Arney, Katy Nelson)



### **5th Year recipients**

- Bryce McCaughey - Naturalist and Warden Francis/King
- Dianne Murray - Naturalist Witty's Lagoon
- Ellen Kowalyk - Warden Lochside and Coles Bay
- Margaret Reeve - Warden at Horth Hill (shown above)
- Scott Young - Warden Galloping Goose and Coles Bay



### **10th year recipients**

- Gail Nash, along with her horse "Rusty," - Warden Galloping Goose
- Marjie Radford - Warden Mill Farm Park Reserve on Salt Spring Island
- Heidi Romer - Naturalist at Francis/King
- David Boag- Warden Francis/King (shown above)
- Gil Parker -Warden Mt. Wells

# Fungi Forays & Feasts

By Kem Luther

Vancouver Island celebrates a second spring in October and November of each year when fungi push up colorful, fragrant, and beautiful reproductive bodies.

We salute the return of the mushrooms to the same woods and fields where we had searched, six months before, to find the early blossoms of forbs.

The southern end of our island has an active mushrooming community. Some of the residents range the woods for edibles, looking for chanterelles, boletes, hedgehogs, and pines. Others, wandering about with cameras, encourage us to enjoy the beauty of our fungal bounty. Mycologists and naturalists join foragers and photographers in order to identify and record BC's thousands of mushroom species. In the fall of 2011 over two dozen mushroom-related events— forays, feasts, lectures, courses—will be available to those who want to join this community of mushroom enthusiasts.

The fungi that produce our mushrooms eke out their livings in different ways. Lichenized mushrooms acquire food and energy by co-opting the services of algae and blue-green bacteria. A couple of mushroom species are predators on insects and soil organisms. A few species parasitize plants and animals. The vast majority of mushroom-producing fungi, however, are either rotters or symbionts.

The rotters digest decaying vegetable matter in logs and soil. This group includes almost all the mushrooms that are grown for market—growers nurture them on the same substrata that the mushrooms seek out in the wild. Only a few of these rotters are raised and sold in BC. Many more, over two dozen, are cultivated and sold in Asian countries.

The symbiotic mushrooms are our mycorrhizas (a word meaning mushroom/root). Mycorrhizal mushrooms attach themselves to the underground structures of plants, setting up tit-for-tat arrangements: the mushrooms supply the plants with water and soil nutrients and the plants hand over, in turn, a share of the carbon and energy that they make with sunlight. BC is especially blessed with mycorrhizal mushrooms. They are not easily cultivated—mycorrhizal mushrooms that sold in the market (chanterelles, for example) are wild harvested.

Come along, if you can, to some of Southern Vancouver Island's second-spring outings. A list of the upcoming events can be viewed at [metchosinbiodiversity.com/mushrooms](http://metchosinbiodiversity.com/mushrooms).

*Kem Luther is a park warden at Matheson Lake and a guest naturalist for nature programs on fungi.*



The Hooded False Morel (*Gyromitra/Helvela infula*) pops up in the woods from late summer to late winter



This small *Mycena*, probably *Mycena aurantiidisca*, has made its home in a bed of moss and slime mold spores



Parrot Waxy Cap, *Hygrocybe psittacina*, glows a translucent green when it first appears  
Photos by Rich Mably©

# Who's That VIP?



VIP Naturalist Liz Belcher

Liz Belcher is a naturalist at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Nature Center and volunteers in the invasive species management program with Colleen Long and CRD Environmental Conservation Specialist Marilyn Fuchs.

Liz moved to Victoria from Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2007 and volunteered in her first Mill Hill Broom Sweep that fall. Since then, she has battled Black Knapweed, Giant Knotweed, Briar Rose and is soon to take on Orchard Grass. She started working at Witty's Lagoon in 2009.

Liz is an outdoor enthusiast and enjoys meeting people and listening to their great stories of encounters with nature. One of her joys volunteering in the CRD is meeting so many people, who appreciate the parks and the opportunities to be outdoors, surrounded by beauty and curious creatures.

Liz grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and graduated with a science degree from the University of Manitoba. She worked for the Rh Laboratory at the Health Sciences Center and University of Manitoba, Pediatrics Department, for seven years. She has done numerous wilderness canoe trips since she was 10 years old and loves waking up in a tent next to water.

Liz married her husband, Brian, in 1983. Brian is a researcher and professor in natural resources and international development. His work took them to many different countries in the world including India and Indonesia, where they raised their two boys. Visiting the many parks, in these countries was a great

privilege to Liz. She found the rich flora and fauna a pleasure to explore finding hornbills, Hoopoe birds, gibbons, Spinner dolphins, Bumperhead parrotfish, gorgeous tree ferns and orchids. She said the spiders spun the most amazing webs.

While in Asia, Liz taught middle school and high school science and math in international schools for over ten years. She found it greatly rewarding to work with young people and ignite their curiosity about their world. A gardening science unit with grade eight students was a favorite to teach. The students got so excited to see their vegetables grow. Many of them had grown up in big cities and had little experience with nature.

Along with teaching, Liz volunteered as a judge and board member of an Indonesian swim club. She also performed with a local theatre company and sang in an acapella group. She performed for many years in a benefit concert that supported the One More Chance foundation. This foundation raises money to house and school street children in Jakarta.

When Brian had an opportunity to work at Royal Roads University, the family moved from Jakarta to Victoria and settled right next to Mill Hill Regional Park. Being a part of the CRD family as a volunteer has been a rewarding way for Liz to feel she is contributing to the fantastic system of parks which green the CRD. She says it's not hard to keep up her running when she has such great park trails to use.

It isn't easy to pick a favorite Regional Park but Liz has a soft spot for Witty's Lagoon. She loves to sit on the rocks at Tower Point and look to the Haystack Islets to watch the seals, the oystercatchers, the Harlequin ducks and so much more.

## New Volunteers Welcomed

Fortunately for us, several of our summer Volunteer Naturalists enjoyed their time with us and decided to stay on year round. Joining the naturalist team at the Nature Centre at Witty's Lagoon is Kathryn Kelly-Freiberg and at the Beaver Lake Nature Centre are Marlie van Roy and Alex Cowan. Welcome aboard!

## Trail Ambassadors

Regional Parks Trail Ambassadors are going to be out on the Lochside Regional Trail on Saturday, November 12 from 10am-2pm to promote our Share The Trail etiquette and trail safety in terms of visibility at this time of year. With the shorter days and wet rainy weather, there is a lot of potential for mishaps along the regional trails.

Several groups will be joining us at the event including: a representative from "A Drop in the Bucket" to promote their campaign to install water fountains along the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails. Staff from BCAA may be joining us to promote their Bike Assist Program. Staff from CRD Environmental Sustainability may also join in to promote their sustainability projects.

## Continuing Education Session

I am just in the midst of organizing another Continuing Education Session before the end of the year and hope to have something out shortly. Stay tuned.

## Staff Profile



**Lynn Wilson**  
Park Planner

### What do you do at Regional Parks?

I am a park planner. In this capacity, I am involved in a suite of activities related to park management planning. This involves handling referrals from other agencies, working on different policy and planning issues, developing site or area plans, assisting with land acquisitions, and developing full park management plans. My job is always interesting and challenging—characteristics I like!

### What is your work background?

I have a varied academic and professional background. I have a B.A. in Anthropology, an M.A. in Parks and Recreation Administration, an M.A. in Community and Regional Planning, and am almost ready to start a master's thesis for an MPA degree I've been pursuing since 2009. I've worked in the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean on conservation and protected areas issues since 1996.

### What is your favorite Regional Park and why?

I really like all the Regional Parks, although I've spent the most time in the Sea to Sea Regional Park as part of a park management planning process I recently completed there. I love the park's large landscapes and the sense of freedom and remoteness that this landscape provides—and all within an hour of Victoria!

### Where were you born and where have you lived?

I was born in Sacramento, California. I've also lived in Florida, New Mexico, and Virginia in the U.S., and Smithers, Vancouver, and Victoria in BC. I've done lots of exploring and travelling and am happy to say that I've had an adventurous life so far.

### Tell us a bit about your family.

I was married on August 8, 2008 (08-08-08). My husband I live in Cobble Hill with our three cats in a lovely home overlooking Satellite Channel. The rest of my family lives in California, Washington, and Alaska.