

# Volunteers In Parks

## What's Inside

Cordova Shore  
Conservation Partnership

Who's that VIP?  
Kem Luther

Continuation of Land  
Acquisition Fund

VIP Update  
Staff Profile

Regional Parks  
Update



Deborah Kerr Designs



Making a difference...together

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# Cordova Shore Conservation Partnership

If you have never visited the Cordova Shore, you might not be aware of its ecological and cultural significance. This is a special place indeed. The Cordova Shore includes Island View Beach Regional Park, lands within the Tsawout First Nation Reserve, and the District of Central Saanich's Island View and Cordova Spit Municipal Parks.

These lands, (including  $\text{XIXEN}$ , the  $\text{SENĆOŦEN}$  name for the Cordova Spit) and associated nearshore waters are of great cultural and spiritual significance to the Tsawout people. The parklands offer important recreational opportunities to residents of and visitors to the CRD, including an expansive beach along the Haro Strait shoreline of the Saanich Peninsula. It features a panorama of land and seascapes, a long sandy beach for exploring, and several rare and beautiful plants. Flocks of migrating shorebirds feed along the sandy shores and seabirds bob on the waves just offshore.

"The Cordova Shore is truly a special place, and these kinds of ecosystems are not common in this region," said Marilyn Fuchs, the Regional Parks Environmental Conservation Specialist. "The lands and waters contain endangered and ecologically significant sand dune, salt marsh, Garry oak, and eelgrass ecosystems, as well as a very high concentration of plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate species at risk. Unfortunately, the ecosystems and species have been altered and degraded in many ways over the years, and continue to face many threats to their continued health and persistence."

This area is also critically important for migratory birds and the offshore waters have been identified as an "Important Bird Area" by BirdLife International, Bird Studies Canada, and Nature Canada.



Island View Beach Regional Park

## Partnership

In recognition of these important cultural and ecological values and the ongoing conservation issues, the three land-owning jurisdictions have been working together since 2006 to develop and implement a conservation strategy for the Cordova Shore, including measures to protect vulnerable ecosystem elements as well as restore those that have been damaged.

“This area is important because it’s such a sacred place for the Tsawout First Nation and for its high recreation and conservation values,” Marilyn adds. “That’s why we’re all there working together. We have many shared interests.”

With assistance and collaboration with the Canadian Wildlife Service, the University of Victoria, the BC Ministry of Environment, the Victoria Natural History Society, SeaChange Marine Conservation Society, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Parks Canada, and Peninsula Streams Society, the partners have collected and compiled a great deal of information about the ecosystems and species, their ecological requirements, conservation issues, and protection and restoration options and opportunities. The Tsawout community has also come together to document traditional ecological knowledge and discuss community concerns about, and aspirations for, the area.

## Conservation Strategy

“Now that we have this solid foundation of information, we have embarked upon drafting a multi-jurisdictional conservation strategy,” Marilyn said.

Towards that end, the Tsawout First Nation and CRD Regional Parks jointly sponsored a workshop last fall. Tsawout community members, regional parks and Central Saanich staff, and representatives from supporting agencies were invited to review proposed approaches to conserving and restoring the Cordova Shore.

“We greatly appreciate the hospitality of the Tsawout First Nation for hosting the workshop and providing an incredible salmon lunch. We would especially like to thank Chief Allan Claxton for chairing part of the meeting,” Marilyn said.

“The strategy is intended to guide us in our ongoing collaboration towards protecting and restoring this very special place. We look forward to strengthening a friendship with the Tsawout First Nation and the other partners as we proceed in this important quest.”

The first draft of the conservation strategy has been completed, and is being reviewed and revised. When finished, the strategy will inform the management planning process for Island View Beach Regional Park, which will soon be getting underway, and guide the implementation of conservation actions.

*Contributors Marilyn Fuchs and Laurie Sthamann*



View of Cordova Shore

## Ten Strategies for Protection and Restoration of the Cordova Shore (draft)

1. Manage collaboratively
2. Recognize ecological boundaries
3. Protect and restore ecological and physical processes
4. Protect and restore cultural resources
5. Control invasive plants and animals
6. Manage recreation and access
7. Address impacts from adjacent lands
8. Contribute to species at risk recovery
9. Promote education and research
10. Celebrate ecological and cultural uniqueness

# Who's that VIP?



By Colleen Long

I had chatted with Kem Luther, VIP Naturalist at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, a number of times before, but I never had the opportunity to sit down and really talk with him as much as I did while interviewing him for this article.

I had always thought Kem to be an interesting fellow, but never realized just how interesting he was. It's hard to encapsulate all of Kem in one article, but at least it will give you a bit of an introduction.

When he moved to BC in 2004, Kem quickly realized that his knowledge of the Ontario ecosystems wouldn't take him very far in the BC environment. He began to make use of the Regional Parks nature programs almost as soon as he arrived. For several years he attended most of the adult outings and "pestered" (as he says) the interpretive staff with questions about vascular plants, mosses, algae, and fungi. "I think some of the CRD staff," says Kem, "started boning up on their natural history topics before the walks out of fear that I might show up."

Kem moved to Canada 30 years ago, having been born and raised on a ranch in the sand hills of Broken Bow, Nebraska. After graduating from high school, he moved to Chicago where he did most of his undergraduate studies. He has a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Chicago. While he was in Chicago he met his wife Jeanne, a vocal musician and soloist from London, Ontario. They have two grown children and one grandson.

While teaching at a Mennonite School in Virginia, Jeanne and Kem decided to move to Canada to be closer to Jeanne's family. In 1981, they moved to Toronto where Kem joined the Computing and Information Sciences



**Kem Luther, VIP Naturalist  
at Witty's Lagoon Regional  
Park, and author.**

faculty at Sheridan College. In 1984, Kem started on another degree sequence, this time in computer science. He completed a B.A. at York University in 1987 and a M.Sc. at the University of Toronto in 1989. Soon



# THE NEXT GENERATION GAP

THE RISE OF THE DIGITALS AND THE RUIN OF POSTMODERNISM



KEM LUTHER

To date, he has written six books, two of which have been published. In 1993, the University of Nebraska Press published his first book, *Cottonwood Roots*, a genealogical work of his family settling in Nebraska. His second book, *The Next Generation Gap*, predicts another generational gap within the next decade. Kem has started in on another book, which occupies much of his free time.

When he isn't writing, Kem loves to be out in the natural world and can often be found wandering around parks with his six-year-old grandson, Finn, in tow. When talking about his love and interest in the natural environment, Kem referred to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences in which it is believed that there are eight or more forms of intelligence (i.e., verbal or linguistic intelligence, mathematical or logical intelligence and so on). These intelligences encompass the wide variety of abilities humans display. One of the eight listed forms of intelligence is naturalistic intelligence. Individuals with this form of intelligence love to spend hours on end in the outdoors, they have a greater sensitivity to nature and their place within it, and they can also be classifiers and experimenters. Some people are just programmed for this intelligence and Kem believes that is true for him. When he was young he would sit for hours at a time by a pond on the ranch where he grew up and just watch and listen. Often he would bring things home with him after his adventures and look at them under his microscope or measure them with his equipment. This deep connection to nature has always been a part of Kem.

Kem has always enjoyed interacting with others. This combined with his love of the natural environment made the role of Volunteer Naturalist appealing to him. In the fall of 2005, after settling in Metchosin, Kem came on board with us. Since that time he has been welcoming visitors to the Nature Centre at Witty's Lagoon, answering any questions that they might have and getting more material for upcoming books.

afterwards he began work on his Ph.D.. While working on his Ph.D., his mother had a stroke in 2001, so after 22 years of teaching at Sheridan, Kem took an early retirement to look after his mother. In the years before he retired he was the Associate Dean and Project Manager for Communication, Culture and Information Technology at Sheridan College.

While writing the dissertation for his Ph.D., Kem found his true passion - writing books. Once he started, he couldn't stop and he has been writing for 20 years.

# Land Acquisition Fund

A defining ingredient of our region's livability

By Laurie Sthamann

Imagine that your favorite regional park or trail was not connected with your morning run, cycle to work, daily walk, place for children to play in the woods or a sanctuary for solace. Instead, it was a subdivision, mall or clearcut. That could very well be the case if it were not for visionary planning over the last decade.

That brainchild was the CRD Regional Parks' Land Acquisition Fund, which was initially established in 2000 for a ten year period to acquire prime natural areas in the region that would otherwise be lost to development.

The vision came from the Regional Parks' Master Plan. This plan was developed with residents and set the strategic direction for our parks and trails system. They were very instrumental in establishing the Land Acquisition Fund and identifying areas of park potential. It was felt that the lands acquired through this fund would contribute significantly to the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the region. The regional parks connect residents to the natural world of the CRD and provide opportunities to connect with each other.

The fund was originally based on a rate of \$10 per average household assessed value. In total, the CRD acquired 2,968 hectares of the region's prime natural areas, valued at \$30,704,000. These land purchases would have not been possible without the many partners: land owners, citizen and business donations, The Land Conservancy of BC, Nature Conservancy of Canada and the federal and provincial governments.

The Land Acquisition Fund continues to receive strong municipal and public support. The CRD Board recently approved the continuation of the successful fund for an additional ten years. It will increase from \$12 to \$20 per average residential assessment over

Summary of CRD Parks Land Acquisition 2000 through 2009					
Area	Year Acquired	Area (Hectares)	Expenditures		
			Acquisition Value	CRD Parks' Contribution	Partners' Contribution
Millstream Creek/Galloping Goose Regional Trail	2000	2.00	400,000	325,000	75,000
Gowland/Brooks Point	2000	0.87	355,000	280,000	75,000
Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt - Seraphim Lands	2001	1380.00	5,300,000	3,000,000	2,300,000
Mill Hill Regional Park - east slope	2001	7.89	2,276,000	1,625,000	651,000
Salt Spring Island - southwest area	2001	15.00	2,500,000	1,500,000	1,000,000
Horth Hill	2001	5.37	382,650	322,650	60,000
Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt - TimberWest/ Nature Conservancy of Canada lands	2002	121.00	704,000	n/a	704,000
Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt - CRD Water lands	2002	123.80	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mount Work-Thetis Lake Connection	2003	67.98	935,000	607,750	327,250
Witty's Lagoon	2003	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mount Wells	2003	20.20	89,800	n/a	89,800
Killarney Lake/District of Saanich lands	2003	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Salt Spring Island - southwest area	2004	64.60	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sooke Potholes	2005	55.50	3,000,000	2,405,000	595,000
Matthews Point	2005	12.14	725,000	634,000	91,000
Matthews Point	2006	5.90	712,500	707,500	5,000
Mill Hill addition	2007	7.26	250,000	0	250,000
Sea to Sea - TimberWest Land	2007	932.00	5,842,314	5,342,314	500,000
Trans Canada Trail	2007	7.67	0	0	0
Mount Work addition	2008	64.70	2,200,000	0	2,200,000
Mount Work addition	2008	64.30	2,132,000	500,000	1,632,000
Island View Beach addition	2009	9.90	2,900,000	2,900,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2968.08</b>	<b>30,704,264</b>	<b>20,149,214</b>	<b>10,555,050</b>
				<b>66%</b>	<b>34%</b>

the next five years (2010-2014) at a rate of \$2 per year and be maintained at \$20 to 2019. Average residential assessment is the value of all household property assessments in the region, with the average ~\$530,000 for 2010.

The increase in the fund for 2010-2019 will result in \$2 million to \$3.2 million available per year for land acquisitions and \$30 million over the ten year period.

Meanwhile, work on the Regional Parks' Strategic Plan (an update of the Master Plan) has begun and is planned for completion at the end of this year. This plan will set the vision for the next ten years for the regional parks and trails system and will identify additional areas of park potential for the fund.

This is significant because land acquired for parkland is essential to meet the needs of current residents and future population growth. Land acquisition really plays an important role in setting the future land use pattern in the region. It says that these areas are what the residents value as part of their home and want to keep undeveloped today and for future residents. It is estimated that the population of the CRD will

increase by 111,000 or 31 percent over the next 30 years. As well, park visitor use continues to increase, natural areas and species continue to be lost, and new environmental challenges continue to emerge both locally and globally. Questions are being raised as to how regional parks and trails should be managed and what the management priorities should be.

Parkland acquisitions have helped the CRD move towards creating a sustainable region for the long term and achieving the Board's environmental protection and climate action strategic priorities in the 2009-2011 CRD Strategic Plan.

These parklands protect ecosystems, provide habitat for plants and animals, and support the natural cleansing of water and air. Regional Parks also contribute to the economy and tourism; walking, hiking and visiting parks are the top three activities enjoyed by tourists.

Our regional parks and trails are a defining ingredient of our region's livability. It can be argued that they are among the best in the world. We can be very proud of what we have accomplished here.

# Volunteers in Parks Updates

## New Naturalists Welcomed

Thank you for sharing your passion and volunteering your time with Regional Parks.

Amelia Porter

Carolyn Felderhof

Joey Belanger

Liz Belcher



## Recruiting Naturalists

Regional Parks is recruiting for Volunteer Naturalists to become part of our team at the Elk/Beaver Lake nature centre. Volunteer Naturalists open the nature centre and engage park visitors in a friendly, welcoming manner. This helps to build awareness, understanding and appreciation of the cultural and natural environment in regional parks and trails.

Extend an invitation to your friends, family and acquaintances who would be interested to share their passion for parks and nature.

For more information contact 250.478.3344, email: [parksvolunteer@crd.bc.ca](mailto:parksvolunteer@crd.bc.ca) or visit [www.crd.bc.ca/parks/volunteer](http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks/volunteer).

## Staff Profile



Jeanette Mollin

By Colleen Long

Many of you are probably familiar with the name, but what really do you know about Jeanette Mollin? Jeanette provides administrative support to both Volunteer Services and the entire complement of staff within Planning, Resource Management and Development Services. She's a busy gal and I feel fortunate to have her assistance and support in my duties.

Jeanette was born and raised in Victoria, mainly in Esquimalt. She has been working with the CRD since September 2006. She began working at CRD as an auxiliary worker in the clerical pool and then quickly moved into an administrative position with Water Services. In November 2007, Jeanette came to Regional Parks and is really enjoying her work here.

Outside of work, Jeanette spends a great deal of time in Regional Parks with her favourite companion, her six-year-old pure bred boxer Ayla. Jeanette especially enjoys taking Ayla to Albert Head Lagoon, East Sooke, Thetis Lake and the Galloping Goose Regional Trail. But her favourite park is Albert Head Lagoon. She likes the fact that the park is relatively undiscovered and enjoys the peaceful and tranquil environment.

Another great love of Jeanette's, besides her family, is playing slow-pitch, "old people's ball," as she calls it. Jeanette has been playing baseball for 20 years. She coached fastball for 11 years and currently plays on two slow-pitch teams. She doesn't have time for competitive ball anymore; she prefers to spend time with her husband, two daughters, aged 18 and 22, and her friends.

So now you know a little more about the person at the other end of your emails, letters and phone calls. If you run into Jeanette and Ayla out in the parks, be sure to stop them both and say hello.

Deborah Kerr Designs

# Regional Parks Updates



Donated photograph of Devonian Regional Park

## Citizen Advisory Panel

The public is welcome to attend meetings of the Citizen Advisory Panel. The panel will provide advice to Regional Parks on the preparation of the 2010 to 2019 Strategic Plan. They meet on the third Thursday of the month from 7-9:30pm at CRD Headquarters, 625 Fisgard Street, in the main Boardroom. Upcoming meeting dates are February 4 & 25.

As a member of the public you are also welcome to address a meeting of the panel. You can make a request by contacting Jeanette Mollin at 250.360.3341 or [jmollin@crd.bc.ca](mailto:jmollin@crd.bc.ca). Requests must be received no later than five calendar days prior to the meeting. Presentations are limited to five minutes unless a longer period is agreed to by unanimous vote of those members present.

The panel will play a collaborative role in the community engagement process which begins in April.

## E&N Rail Trail

Construction of the E&N Rail Trail is underway! In October, contractors started work on the section of trail in Langford. Although this section isn't complete yet, it is exciting to see the trail becoming a reality. Bridge construction will start soon. Trail bridges will be built at Hereward Road, Island Highway at Four Mile and at Helmcken Road. In addition, a new rail bridge will be constructed at Island Highway at Four Mile. Further trail construction westward from Esquimalt Road will begin later in 2010.

## Sea to Sea Management Plan

Regional Parks has finalized the management plan for four key parcels of land within the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt: Ayum Creek, Kapoor, Sea to Sea, and Sooke Potholes. The plan is now going before the CRD Regional Parks Committee and CRD Board, and once adopted, will direct how these parks will be developed and managed in the future. The planning process involved extensive input from the public, First Nations, government, key user groups, and a Management Plan Advisory Group.

## Tapestry~ A Legacy Program

Our thanks to the volunteers who participated in the legacy workshop back in November. All the feedback and suggestions were invaluable in helping to shape the program. You helped hit home the fact that the reasons for giving to Regional Parks are as diverse as our park visitors, supporters and park system.

We will be unveiling the program in a phased approach in the coming months - watch for it in the next newsletter. There is a rich history of people like you giving time and gifts towards Regional Parks and as a result, we are making a difference...together.

## Mountain Biking

The South Island Mountain Bike Society (SIMBS) has been instrumental in developing the designated mountain bike area of Mount Work - Hartland and continues to be a key partner with Regional Parks in the provision of mountain biking opportunities in the parks system. That includes not only assistance with trail maintenance, but also by providing advice to Regional Parks on key visitor issues. Most recently, our staff worked with SIMBS to develop fun, flowing and challenging trails at Hartland, including the new Torpedo Run. We are also working towards providing mountain biking opportunities in the Harbourview area in the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt Regional Park Reserve. Together, we are developing mountain bike trails over the long term that both SIMBS and Regional Parks can be excited about and proud of.