



Capital Regional District



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CRDVictoria

Fall Newsletter 2016



Volunteers In Parks

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Social Science in Parks

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Gerard Leblanc

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Brett Hudson

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The Role of Social Science in Parks

By Beatrice Frank

What exactly does a social scientist do, especially in Regional Parks?

My work is about connecting with people and engaging them in protected areas conservation and management. During my PhD in Human Dimension of Natural Resource Management, I worked on understanding people's values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours toward wild species

and protected areas. I researched how people are impacted, and how they impact species and the environment, and how people want wildlife and natural landscapes to be managed.

My work has included conducting surveys on human-wildlife interactions, with an emphasis on problematic species, such as coyotes and wild boars.

I engaged communities in Newfoundland to make Mistaken Point Wilderness and Ecological Reserve a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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Making a difference...together

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“We need a bit more science in our market surveys.”



In the United States, where I conducted my post-doctoral research, I have used workshops, focus groups and other participatory activities to discuss climate change issues with First Nations and decision-makers. Such work has led to a better inclusion of public insights in decision-making, be it related to developing a management plan for species, or an adaptation plan for climate and environmental changes.

Based on my passion for working with the public to engage them in natural resource issues, I have been hired by CRD Regional Parks to develop a social science program. The social science program's aim is to better understand CRD citizens' needs and expectations, and to develop participation processes that include the public in regional parks and trails decision-making processes.

The first step of this program is undertaking a residents survey to better understand the general public values, use, satisfaction and management opinions toward regional parks and trails. This survey is planned for the fall 2016 and will be sent by mail to 5000 randomly selected CRD residents.

In 2017, the program will include visitor surveys in specific regional parks and trails. Such surveys will allow us to better understand who visits a specific area, what the main

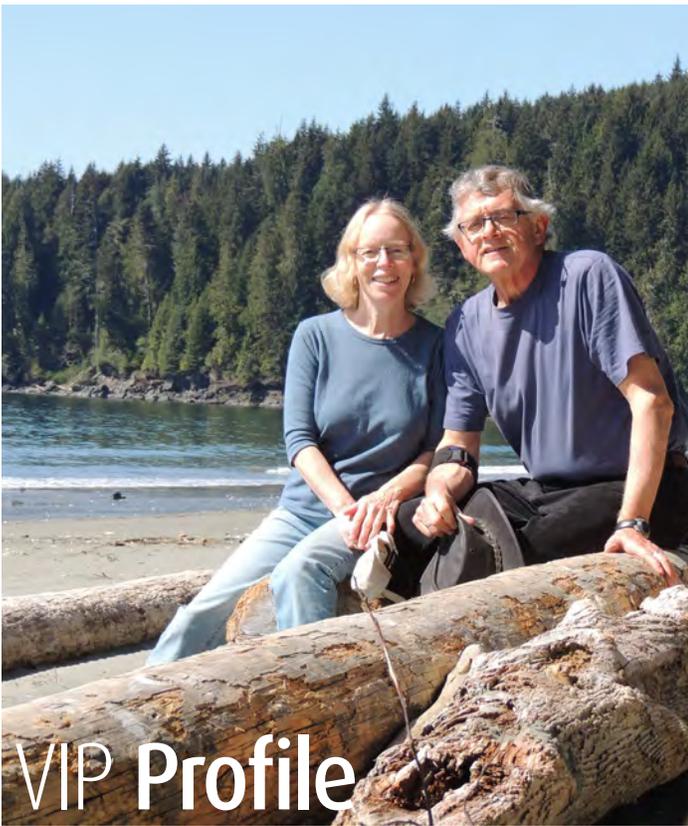
challenges in such areas are, and what needs to be done to solve them.

My work in the coming years will not only consist of conducting surveys. I intend to develop a social science program that builds capacity within and beyond CRD Regional Parks by fostering a culture and value of public engagement in CRD employees and citizens. I will pursue this goal by organizing participatory processes on management plans, organizing advisory groups and working with the public, stakeholders, other organizations and government agencies on different issues related to regional parks and trails.

So stay tuned, as I might cross your path soon and ask you what you think about our regional parks and trails, or to participate in a public engagement activity!

Beatrice Frank is the Visitor Services Social Science Specialist at CRD Regional Parks.





VIP Profile

Brenda Mark and Gerard LeBlanc have been Park Stewards at Jordan River Regional Park since January 2013.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

Brenda: I feel it is a positive volunteer activity and that I am helping to protect Sandcut Beach. It is very satisfying to be involved with CRD Regional Parks. Gerard: There's also a sense of doing something worthwhile locally.

What is your favourite CRD Regional Park and why?

Other than Jordan River, our favourite is East Sooke Regional Park because of its size and varied hiking experiences.

What is your favourite volunteer experience or memory?

Brenda: My favourite memories of Sandcut Beach walks are of the seeing the falls frozen during a January cold snap. Gerard: The walk to and from Jordan River, when the tide allows it, offers a good opportunity to see a varied shoreline, several streams, wildlife including otters, eagles, seals and sea lions, geese, ducks and other water birds.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Brenda: We live in Shirley and have been in the Sooke area since 1973. I was a Registered Nurse, working at Victoria General Hospital for 30 years and I retired in 2011. Gerard: I have lived on Vancouver Island for the past 26 years. I'm a semi-retired land use planner/local government manager who relishes being outdoors.



Staff Profile

Brett Hudson was recently hired as the Manager of Planning, Resource Management and Development.

What do you do at CRD Regional Parks?

I work with my staff to complete management plans for regional parks and trails, do ecological assessments, inventories and restoration work, plan and deliver new park and trail facilities, and provide GIS expertise.

Where have you worked previously?

Before coming to the CRD, I worked as a planner with BC Parks for over a decade. Before that, I worked for the Government of the Northwest Territories, coordinating input into environmental assessments for oil and gas, mining and forestry projects, and in the public and private sector in Manitoba.

What is your favourite CRD Regional Park and why?

I have two favorite parks. I enjoy the coast trail in East Sooke on a sunny summer day, and I also really like the accessible trail in Francis/King, where I take out-of-town visitors with mobility challenges to experience the beautiful coastal forest.

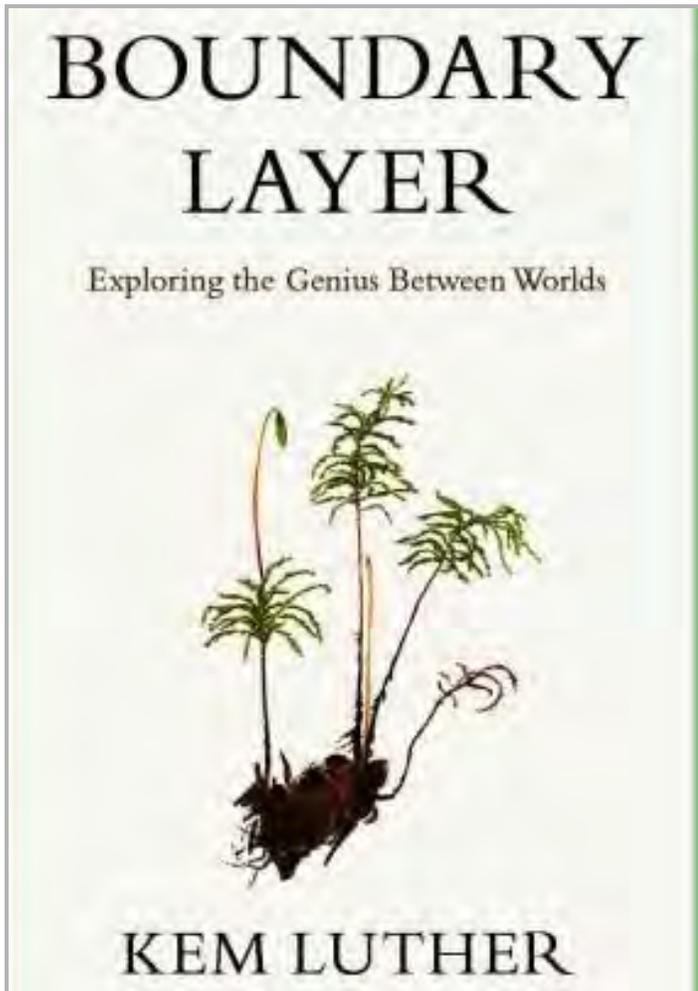
Where were you born and where have you lived?

I was born in Prince George, but I grew up in Winnipeg. Then I moved to Yellowknife for a few years before deciding to give Victoria a try almost 15 years ago.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Whenever I get the chance, I like to get into the outdoors, hiking, skiing, kayaking or anything else I can try my hand at. I also enjoy travelling, and have been lucky enough to visit many amazing places in my life.

Volunteer & Park Updates



Volunteer's Book Explores Concepts of Species, Ecosystems and Wilderness

Kem Luther, Volunteer Park Steward at Matheson Lake, has a new book out. *Boundary Layer* was published in April by Oregon State University Press.

Boundary Layer is a general interest book about things, people, and ideas. The things are the organisms that live along the ground in BC - the layers of plants, fungi, lichens, and mosses that are so prominent in local forests. The people are those who study these organisms. The book highlights the work of nine BC naturalists and scientists, including Andy

MacKinnon (Volunteer Naturalist at Witty's Lagoon), Darren and Claudia Copley of the BC Museum/Victoria Natural History Society, and Adolf and Oluna Ceska of the Southern Vancouver Mycological Society.

The ideas in *Boundary Layer* are concepts of species, ecosystems, and wilderness. When these concepts come into conflict, Kem says, they give rise to boundary ideas that can give fresh insight into environmental issues.

Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of the John Burroughs Medal Award-winning *Gathering Moss*, says that Kem's book "takes the reader on field walks with fascinating field scientists from restored sand dune ecosystems, to salmon streams, to the lichen-draped forests of British Columbia. Every encounter offers an insightful glimpse into the thoughts and lives of the naturalist/guide, their charismatic landscape, and ultimately how that person's work fits into a large map of important ideas about humans and nature."

The book is available at the University of Victoria bookstore and Munro's Books. Further information is available on the book's web site www.stegnon.com.

Volunteer Naturalist Recruitment for Witty's Lagoon Nature Centre

We are looking for Volunteer Naturalists at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Nature Centre. Naturalists welcome, engage and help build awareness, understanding and appreciation of the park's natural and cultural environment. We provide the training, volunteers provide the time. No experience is necessary. The commitment is a four-hour shift once a month on weekends year round. Position descriptions is available at www.crd.bc.ca/parks.

New Volunteers Welcomed

Joan McDonald – Naturalist Witty's Lagoon Regional Park
Emily Besler-Dean – Park Steward Devonian Regional Park
Keaton Paterson – Park Steward Mt. Wells Regional Park
Christie Lombardi – Park Steward East Sooke Regional Park
Ed Earl – Park Steward Sooke Potholes Regional Park
Lisa Davison – Park Steward Mill Hill Regional Park