



Volunteers In Parks

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Making the Case for Pollinators and Pollinator Conservation

By Jennifer A. Lotz, Pollinator Partnership Canada

Our planet, our home, is experiencing unprecedented global change. Dates as to exactly when this change began are argued among anthropologists and earth scientists alike; however, what is coming to be a more commonly accepted fact unanimously amongst scientists is that human activities are directly affecting the functioning of ecosystems and challenging the preservation of global biodiversity.

So why does all of this really matter, you may ask? Loss of ecosystem resilience, biodiversity loss, and climate change all pose risks to the provision of ecosystem services, which provide the basis for every human life on this planet.

Of one of these essential ecosystem services is pollination, and humans rely on the thousands of different species, mostly insects, to provide this service. All of the same threats that are affecting ecosystem resilience and biodiversity are having just as great of an impact on these small and important, but often overlooked creatures. So, why do pollinators deserve the limelight? About one third of the food that we eat every day is the direct result of pollination, and without pollinators our diets would lack exciting and essential foods such as fruits, vegetables, and even coffee and chocolate!

In addition to the food we eat, pollinators also support healthy ecosystems that improve air quality, stabilize



Metallic green sweat bee, all photos Anthony Colangelo

soils, and support all other wildlife. Pollinator declines can have large impacts given the critical roles that they play in ecosystem health. These small, but mighty organisms need our help to get populations thriving again!

Pollinators are a diverse group of organisms that visit flowers to feed on pollen and nectar or to collect oils and resins. In the process, pollinators transfer pollen grains and assist plants in reproduction, supporting productivity in natural and agricultural landscapes.

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Red Admiral butterfly



Pollen Pants bee

Native bees and other pollinators play a key role in the functioning of our global and local economies through the pollination services they provide to the agriculture industry.

Bees are the main pollinators of many wild flowers and agricultural crops across Canada. Most of us are familiar with the colonies of honey bees that have been the workhorses of agricultural pollination for years in Canada. Honey bees are not native to North America, or a natural part of our ecosystems. They were imported from Europe almost 400 years ago and continue to be managed for honey production and crop pollination services. But, largely unheralded, there are over 20,000 species of native ground and twig nesting bees globally, 800 in Canada, and over 200 locally here on Southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands! These bees have evolved with the local flora, and most of these bee species live solitary lives; a minority are social and form colonies or nest in aggregations.



Long-horned bee

Native bees come in a variety of body shapes, sizes, colours, and some even have tongues of different lengths. Most people don't even recognize many of them as bees! Native bees visit the widest range of flowers and crops of any pollinator group, and in many cases they are better at transferring pollen than honey bees. Our native bees can be encouraged to do more to support agricultural production if their needs for nesting habitat are met and if suitable sources of nectar, pollen, and water are provided.

Many pollinator populations and species are in decline likely due to habitat loss, disease, climate change, competition with managed pollinators, and the use of pesticides. Without feeding and nesting habitats, native pollinators

cannot function to support terrestrial ecosystem productivity.

The decline of these pollinators is a serious problem that requires immediate, local action to ensure that Canada and Vancouver Island's food system and natural environment are productive and resilient. Establishing goals to secure habitat for pollinators is an essential strategy that will take buy in, coordination, and commitment from a number of sectors including government, industry, and citizens.

The habitat requirement of pollinators is quite simple: they need regular access to foraging areas – flowers that bloom throughout the season, low exposure to insecticides, and nesting areas such as accessible soils and woody vegetation. Whether you are a small-scale farmer, a public or private land manager, or a gardener with a small lot, you can increase the number of pollinators in your area by making conscious choices to include native plants that provide essential habitat for bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, hummingbirds, and other important pollinators. As our Pollinator Partnership motto says, 'Protect their lives; Preserve ours'.

For more information please visit the Pollinator Partnership at pollinatorpartnership.ca. Our mission is to promote the health of pollinators, critical to food and ecosystems, through conservation, education, and research. Or visit



our local Island Pollinator Initiative at islandpollinatorinitiative.ca. This coalition of local organizations are dedicated to promoting the protection of native and managed pollinators on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.



Volunteer Profile

Rob Yerbury is a Restoration Volunteer. He began volunteering with Regional Parks in October 2011.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

Seeing the various park sites and teaming up with like-purposed people. On the restoration crew we are not all like-minded. This makes for a wonderful social event with each sharing their latest tale of adventure or offering up mindful tidbits of life and family. Mill Hill is literally my backyard. I take a personal interest in its welfare.

What is a memorable experience volunteering?

My most memorable volunteer experience was when I was asked "Why do you volunteer?" I rather quickly, without much contemplation, replied "Because I can!" Thinking about this later I thought maybe I was too hasty. Everything about volunteerism is good. It's my personal act of free will that I can do with enthusiasm.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm a second-generation BC person born in Comox. My twin sister and I started off enjoying the outdoors at two weeks of age on a camping trip to the Kootenays for an introduction to the extended family. Numerous excursions of fishing and exploring this beautiful part of the world followed. My mother always had on hand the proverbial plant and bird identification books. A little family ritual was to return home with a haul of trash and returnable bottles voluntarily picked up during our outing. When it came time for education and career I took up forest management and have worked in various locations throughout BC finally landing in Victoria. I've spent the last 30 years enjoying the unique environs of Haida Gwaii, returning home to Victoria and volunteering. Why? Because I can!



Staff Profile

Doug Carmichael is a GIS Technologist at Regional Parks. He began at the CRD in February 2014.

What do you most enjoy about working at the CRD?

The variety of tasks and initiatives that I get to dive into. Whether it's helping to author updates to trail maps or signage, pulling together different ecological or conservation data for analysis, or collecting GPS data for our infrastructure, there is no shortage of interesting topics! Of course, getting out into our Parks and seeing what nature has to offer is a great reward of working here!

What is a favorite memory at Regional Parks?

Recently a team of us were scouting out a remote area of Sooke Hills Regional Park. We were travelling down a heavily overgrown access road, when suddenly our group startled what we thought was a bear, but turned out to be wolves. We confirmed our observation by not only hearing a sudden barking that sounded similar to a dog, but by viewing one of the wolves which suddenly appeared on a rocky outcrop above us. A very cool experience!

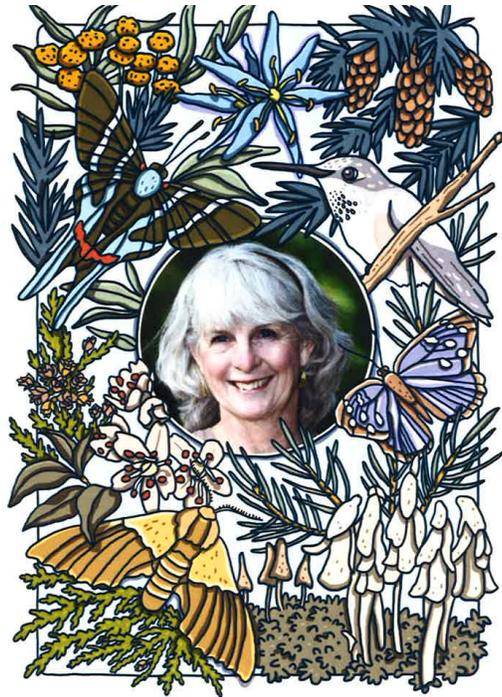
Tell us a bit about yourself.

I grew up in Coquitlam, BC, and moved to Vancouver Island in 2006 after a career change to Geographic Information Systems (GIS). I've had a few positions in the CRD before landing at Regional Parks just over a year ago. I'm an avid outdoors person who enjoys hiking and being a recreation runner (completing 4 marathons and several half-marathons). The CRD has an impressive array of Regional Parks from rugged coastlines to mountain peaks, to leisure lake-side recreation spots. I've been to most of our parks, but am setting my sights on visiting them all, including the ones on the Gulf Islands.

Volunteer & Park Updates

In Memory of Devonian Restoration Volunteer, Moralea Milne

By Colleen Long



Moralea Milne was tragically killed in a car accident in Surrey, BC, on Saturday, July 28, 2018. I attended Moralea's Celebration of Life on Sunday, August 5 at the Metchosin municipal grounds. It was a spacious outdoor event, attended by a large gathering of people that knew Moralea from the many facets of her life. There were people from the community, politicians, members of the Beecher Bay Sci'new First Nation, folks from all walks of the environmental field, many of the Devonian Restoration Volunteers, and of course her family, including her mother. Her husband, John Webb, passed away in 2007.

Moralea was a councillor with the Municipality of Metchosin since 2008, had served on a number of boards and committees over the years and was well respected in her community. Though many people spoke of her great strength of character, her fiscal responsibility and her determination to maintain Metchosin's rural integrity, many also spoke of her kind heartedness, her willingness to help out whenever needed, her unwavering love for her family and her love and dedication to the natural world in general. On the band stand was a large sign with a quote



by Moralea that guided her decision making as a councillor: "The environment is the lens through which I view every decision."

Previously a successful retail business owner, Moralea shifted gears and returned to school in 1999 to pursue a diploma in Restoration of Natural Systems from the University of Victoria. She graduated from the program in 2002 and since that time pursued her passion working and volunteering in the restoration field.

It was around this time that Moralea began volunteering with Regional Parks. She began with us as a Volunteer Naturalist at the Nature Centre at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park in 2000, and then moved on to become a Park Steward at Devonian Regional Park. In 2001, while completing her diploma, Moralea spearheaded the Devonian Restoration Project.

The Devonian Restoration Volunteers are an incredibly dedicated group of volunteers, many of whom who have been with the project since it began. Every Sunday from the middle of October to the end of March, they meet at the park for 2-3 hours removing invasive plant species from the Garry oak ecosystems. After they often head to the Broken Paddle Coffee House. Over the years they have contributed more than 4200 hours of time and have transformed the Garry oak ecosystems in the park.

On the few occasions that I had the opportunity to work with the group, I could see their great camaraderie. Moralea was much more than just the group leader; she was the glue and inspiration that brought all of these folks together. You could see that she cared deeply for her fellow volunteers and valued their friendship.

Moralea will be greatly missed. She was a truly amazing person that gave so much of herself to everything that she did. I have had several people contact me since her passing wanting to become a Devonian Restoration Volunteer. It made me smile to know that her legacy continues on.