



Volunteers In Parks

Feature:
35th Annual Volunteer
Recognition Event

VIP Profile:
Greg James

Staff Profile:
Kim St. Claire

**Volunteer &
Park Updates**



Bob McDonald (l) poses with volunteers Bill Spriggs and Randy Cunningham, and Randy's partner Anne Kelly

Celebrating 35 Years of Volunteers

By Colleen Long

2017 marked the 35th anniversary of volunteers at CRD Regional Parks, so this year's Volunteer Recognition Event was a special one.

In honour of this milestone, each volunteer received a 35th anniversary pin and a CRD lunch bag. Elected officials were on hand to celebrate this special day including the CRD Board Chair and the CRD Regional Parks Committee Chair. As well, the Chief Administration Officer of the CRD, Bob

Lapham, attended the event along with Larisa Hutcheson, General Manager of Parks and Environmental Services, and Mike Walton, Senior Manager of Regional Parks.

The event took place on October 28 at the Olympic View Golf Club in Colwood. A lovely brunch was followed by addresses to the volunteers by both the Board Chair and the Regional Parks Committee Chair. The keynote speaker for the event, Bob McDonald, of CBC fame, gave a great talk entitled, "Perspectives of a Planet." **Continued on p.2**

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His talk gave us all some perspective on how important it is that we take care of this planet that we call “home.” The awards ceremony following Bob McDonald’s presentation recognized 18 volunteers for their years of service, ranging from one to 35 years.

Two volunteers received awards for 20+ years of volunteer service. Rich Mably, Park Steward in the Sea to Sea and Sooke Hill Wilderness regional parks, received his 20th year award.

Rich first began volunteering with us in 1997 with his son, Sylvan, at the Nature Centre at Witty’s Lagoon Regional Park, as one of our first parent and child Volunteer Naturalist teams. In 2013, Rich requested to transfer roles to become a Park Steward in the newly established Sea to Sea Regional Park Reserve and served as our eyes and ears in the park, reporting back on activities that he was observing. When the park officially opened in 2017, Rich continued on in his role and also added the newly opened Sooke Hill Wilderness Regional Park to his repertoire.

When the formal volunteer program first began at Regional Parks in 1982, two programs were offered. They were our Volunteer Beekeeper program and Volunteer Warden program, now known as our Park Steward program. In that first year, we recruited four Volunteer Wardens and one Volunteer Beekeeper. Brian Peddlesden was one of those original Park Stewards and he celebrated 35 years of volunteer service with Regional Parks. Brian originally began as a Park Steward at Mount Work Regional Park and when his family moved to Sooke in 1995, he became a Park Steward at East Sooke Regional Park, and along the rural sections of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail. Later he added Roche Cove to parks he patrolled and gave up his patrols along the Galloping Goose. For the last number of years he has been doing patrols at both East Sooke and Roche Cove regional parks and recently has also been doing patrols in Sea to Sea Regional Park.

35 years is an incredible amount of time to donate to any organization and through his hundreds of reports, numerous recommendations to staff and countless interactions with visitors, Brian has helped to make a difference.

Congratulations Brian and Rich on your incredible achievements and thank you for all that you have done and continue to do on our behalf.

Whether you have only been with us for a few months or 35 years, you play an important part in helping to protect and restore the region’s biodiversity and provide residents of the region with safe and enjoyable recreational experiences.



2017 Award Recipients

1 Year Award Recipients

Emily Besler-Dean–Park Steward Devonian
Nansi Blenkiron–Naturalist Witty’s Lagoon
Lisa Davison–Park Steward Mill Hill
Ed Earl–Park Steward Sooke Potholes
Eleni Gibson–Naturalist Elk/Beaver Lake
Christie Lombardi–Park Steward East Sooke
Joan McDonald–Naturalist Witty’s Lagoon
Keaton Paterson–Park Steward Mount Wells
Shandy White–Park Steward Mount Work
Karen Wray-Benson–Park Steward Witty’s Lagoon

5 Year Award Recipients

Ryan Batten–Long-term Restoration Volunteer
Christopher Causton–Park Steward Gonzales Hill

10 Year Award Recipients

Doreen Derouin–Long-term Restoration Volunteer
Del Meidinger–Naturalist Francis/King

15 Year Award Recipients

Ted Simmons–Park Steward Elk/Beaver Lake
Joyce Wallbridge–Park Steward Elk/Beaver Lake

20 Year Award Recipient

Rich Mably–Park Steward Sea to Sea and
Sooke Hills Wilderness

35 Year Award Recipient

Brian Peddlesden–Park Steward East Sooke,
Roche Cove and Sea to Sea



- 1 35 year award recipient Brian Peddlesden
- 2 20 year award recipient Rich Mably (r) with volunteer Hans Roemer
- 3 15 year award recipient Ted Simmons (r) with Park Operation Technician John Mooney and 2017 Regional Parks Committee Chair Mike Hicks
- 4 10 year award recipients Doreen Derouin (l) and Del Meidinger (c) with 2017 Board Chair Barbara Desjardins
- 5 5 year award recipient Christopher Causton (r) with Park Operations Supervisor Todd Shannon and Mike Hicks
- 6 1 year award recipient Joan McDonald (r) with 2017 Regional Parks Committee Vice-chair David Screech



Volunteer Profile

Greg James is a Park Steward at East Sooke Regional Park. He has been a volunteer with parks since June 2004.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

Volunteering with CRD Regional Parks exercises my connection with the community, encourages me to physically enjoy our super natural environment, and enables me to contribute in a small way towards sustaining the wonderful park system.

What is your favourite volunteer experience or memory?

Among the whale sightings, raptor kettles and companionable hikes I have two touchstone park experiences. On a glorious sunny spring day I sat on Beechey Head and watched mature bald eagles teaching two offspring to fish. The tidal currents were such that a ball of herring was created within 30m of the shore, thus I had a ring side seat to the soaring, diving, fumbles and successes of the eagles. Of equal enjoyment was a moment when the sun came through the trees and into the ravine on the Coppermine Trail. There is a section where the ravine is carpeted in mosses, with the stream tumbling down the centre, and the seeming infinite shades of green was like viewing through an emerald prism. I make a point of stopping there every time I hike that portion.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I like sunset walks on the beach, love kittens and puppies and long conversations over wine in front of a fire. Oops, wrong website. My life has oscillated between a love of being outdoors, in nature, and the interiors of my career. In retirement the pendulum is firmly weighted towards the blessings of hiking, fishing and having the time to absorb the wonderful world in which we live. Having grown up in Tsawwassen, I married in Toronto, worked abroad and, with the world to choose from, chose to return to Victoria.



Staff Profile

Kim St. Claire is Manager of Visitor Services at Regional Parks. She began working at the CRD in 2014.

What do you most enjoy about working at the CRD?

I am glad that a lot of the work I do is focused on getting people out to enjoy nature. We help people find out about our parks and then they have good experiences, such as coming along on a guided walk or volunteering. It is exciting to see how we are using social media and new technology to share information and post spectacular photos. I think that educating visitors and telling stories about our natural spaces are as important as conserving them.

What is a favorite memory of your time at Regional Parks?

Our Marine Day event at Witty's Lagoon in 2014 was a surprise. I was new to Victoria and had never been to that park before. Marine Day is one of our biggest special events so I knew that there would be many activities like the beach seine out in the tidal flats and divers at Tower Point. What I didn't know was that it would take so long to walk from one activity to another. That is a big, amazing space at low tide.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

For many years in Ontario, I worked at a historic site and enjoyed learning history and sharing stories of the people who lived there. I love culture as much as nature and always stop to read bronze plaques on the side of buildings, no matter what part of the world I am in.

Volunteer & Park Updates

2018 Regional Parks Committee Chair and Directors

In December 2017, the new CRD Board Chair, Steve Price, delivered his inaugural speech outlining the Board's vision for the year ahead. Highlights for regional parks included:

- Connecting Langford to Victoria through construction of a 1 km section between Atkins Avenue and Savory School in Langford as part of the E&N Rail Trail.
- The Special Task Force on First Nations continues to explore various governance approaches, and is gaining considerable insight into possible models through on-going and regular meetings with First Nations leaders.
- A Regional Trails Plan for the Southern Gulf Islands will identify a conceptual regional trail route on each of the six gulf islands.

The chair also announced appointments to standing committees, including the Regional Parks Committee. Its mandate is to oversee and make recommendations to the Board regarding the following functions:

- a) Regional Parks including land acquisition, management, operations and programs
- b) Regional Parks Strategic Plan

The Committee may also make recommendations to the Board to advocate to senior levels of government to support major multi-modal transportation projects which encourage economic development.

2018 Appointments:

- Alto, Marianne (Director)
- Brownoff, Judy (Director)
- Isitt, Ben (Director/Vice Chair)
- Plant, Colin (Director)
- Price, Steve (Ex Officio)
- Screech, David (Chair)
- Seaton, Lanny (Director)
- Tait, Maja (Director)
- Williams, Ken (Director)



**Regional Parks Committee
Chair David Screech**

To read the CRD Board Chair's inaugural speech and to learn more about the Board and Committee, visit www.crd.bc.ca.



Board Chair Steve Price and T'Sou-ke Nation Chief Gordon Planes

T'Sou-ke Nation and CRD Sign Traditional Use and Access Agreement for Sea to Sea

T'Sou-ke Nation and the CRD ratified an agreement recently on traditional use and access in Sea to Sea Regional Park. The Agreement is the first of its type within CRD's Regional Parks system and sets out a new relationship with the CRD and T'Sou-ke Nation. It meets the CRD Board's 2015-18 corporate priorities related to opening the regional park, relationship building with First Nations, and respectfully addresses the priority and significance that T'Sou-ke Nation has placed on access to these park lands.

The Agreement advances relationships between the CRD and the T'Sou-ke Nation, while ensuring Regional Parks priorities related to conservation, public safety and outdoor recreation opportunities are realized. Decisions about how best to manage the environmental effects of access to the lands for traditional uses and outdoor recreation will be addressed through the establishment of a joint Park Operations Management Committee. The Agreement sets out initiatives to address economic development related to park services including tourism.