



Volunteers in Parks

Feature

2023 Volunteer
Recognition Event

Feature

How to Enjoy a Green
Holiday Season

Staff Profile

Eva Gribbon

Park & Safety Updates



2023 CRD Regional Parks Volunteer Recognition Event

A Recap of the 2023 CRD Regional Parks Volunteer Recognition Event

By **Nadine Collison**

It was such an honour to emcee my first Volunteer Recognition Event. Once again, it was held at the Olympic View Golf Club and we were treated to beautiful views, as well as delicious food. The Volunteer Recognition Event is our way to celebrate all the long-term volunteers of the organization – and the more than 4,500 hours contributed to regional parks this year so far.

...continued on page 2

The Event at a Glance

This year, we celebrated our first Corporate Award, given to Stantec who volunteered 127 hours in a single session doing a beach clean-up at Island View Beach Regional Park. We then celebrated our recreation groups, which collectively contribute thousands of hours above and beyond the 4,500 our other volunteers contribute. We are deeply thankful to the South Island Mountain Biking Society, Sooke Bike Club and Elk/Beaver Lake Equestrian Society – each tackling important improvement projects throughout the year, such as the riding ring project highlighted in the Fall Newsletter.

We then went on to honour the important milestones of our long-term volunteers. This year we celebrated 18 first year volunteers, 4 five-year volunteers, 2 ten-year volunteers, 2 fifteen-year volunteers, and 3 twenty-year volunteers.

I then presented the launch of our Volunteer Satisfaction Survey! The survey is designed to get feedback about the volunteer program from the volunteers – What motivates you? Do you like the annual Volunteer Recognition Event? Would you recommend us? The survey results will help us keep our volunteer program strong and thriving for another 40+ years.

The survey closes on December 31 and can be found [here](#).





1st Year Award Winners

Sennait Yohannes - Naturalist
Ken Black - Restoration Volunteer
David Nicol - Naturalist
Sonya Nott - Restoration Volunteer
Hugh Valiant - Restoration Volunteer
Jared Watts - Restoration Volunteer
Kimberley Morrison - Restoration Volunteer
Shirley Meaning - Restoration Volunteer
Sandy McAndrews - Restoration Volunteer
Derek Leschasin - Restoration Volunteer
Jennifer Davison - Restoration Volunteer
Gerald (Jerry) McAndrews - Restoration Volunteer
Charlotte Senay - Restoration Volunteer
David Mahoo - Restoration Volunteer
Drake Saunders - Restoration Volunteer
Scott Dewar - Restoration Volunteer
Angeli dela Rosa - Restoration Volunteer
Martin Larratt - Restoration Volunteer



5-Year Award Winners

Simon Bluck - Restoration Volunteer
Anna Kanary - Naturalist
Devon Parker - Restoration Volunteer
Merrilee Hoen - Restoration Volunteer

10-Year Award Winners

Amber Brown - Park Steward
Jules Thomson - Park Steward

15-Year Award Winners

Gordon Tolman - Park Steward
Diane Knight - Park Steward

20-Year Award Winners

Katy Nelson - Restoration Volunteer
Linda Cave - Restoration Volunteer
William Cave - Restoration Volunteer



How to Enjoy a Green Holiday Season

Make Memories Not Waste

Packaging, wrapping paper, plastic toys and decorations often aren't loved for as long as they last, and it all adds to the local waste stream. Here are some simple, low-waste ideas to create a holiday that's memorable in all the right ways. Learn more about this CRD Rethink Waste campaign [here!](#)

DIY Décor

Infuse your home with the warmth and authenticity of DIY decor. Explore creative avenues with natural and repurposed materials available in your home.

Borrow from nature: Many decorations can be found by looking no further than your back yard. Pinecones, branches, leaves, and twigs can all be used as decorations. Try using the greenery in nature to make your wreath or centerpiece this year. It's easy, waste free, and smells good too! Just remember not to remove nature from regional parks.

DIY Garland: Use recycled giftwrap or dried orange slices to create a beautiful garland.

Turn old toys into ornaments: Transform old toys into nostalgic Christmas tree decorations. Ask your family to help pick out which toys to use.

Be kind to your Christmas decorations: Store decorations carefully and you'll be able to use them year on year – meaning less waste going to landfill and reducing your need to buy new stuff. You can use shredded wrapping paper or packaging from new toys or gadgets to protect delicate items. If you need to buy new decorations, buy reusable ones that last for years and keep unnecessary waste out of the landfill.



Sustainable Wrapping

Rethink your approach to gift wrapping by breaking free from the conventional gift wrap/tape/bow combo.

Use materials you already have at home:

Newspaper (especially the comics section), paper bags, old calendar pages, old book pages or maps.

Reuse old gift wrap/gift bags: Instead of recycling old wrapping paper and gift bags, hang on to them and reuse them the next season.

Wrap your gift with another gift: A sweater can double as a gift and be used as an alternative to wrapping paper. Or if you're wrapping a kitchen or food-themed gift, use a pretty tea towel.



Green Gifts

Celebrate the season with less waste by giving experiences or gifts that are made to last.

Experiential gifts: Gift a membership or subscription to a service they enjoy, a gift card to a local restaurant, tickets to the museum or Butchart Gardens, or take them for a hike in one of our spectacular regional parks.

Homemade gifts: Because who doesn't love a homemade gift? Examples include preserves, cookies, a knitted toque, bath salts or a painting.

Gift your time or services: Offer to baby/pet-sit, take a few family photos or cook a meal for them.

Gifts that are made to last: Long-lived items such as heirlooms, quality camping gear or cookware.

Low-waste gifts: Assist them in reducing waste with gifts like reusable to-go cutlery or containers, beeswax wraps or cloth napkins.

Second-hand gifts: Peruse online classified ads and local thrift or vintage stores for gifts.



Staff Profile: Eva Gribbon

Eva has been working as a Restoration Assistant since July 2023.

What do you most enjoy about working in regional parks?

I love the regional parks volunteer community that I have been welcomed into! What an amazing group of people. It has been so fun getting to know volunteers while working together on our various restoration sites in the CRD regional parks system. I'm constantly blown away by the time and effort volunteers put in. I also love the diversity of restoration sites we visit (even within the same park!).

When I started, we were working on the Himalayan balsam in Mill Hill by the creek and it was such a nice escape from the summer heat down in the shade. Now, we are popping up Mill Hill each week to remove broom and daphne with the air cold and crisp (my favourite) and we are seeing yarrow, rattlesnake plantain, honeysuckle, and noticing that the arbutus trees are bursting with berries. What a beautiful place to steward!

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I have always loved nature, some of my most cherished childhood and teenage memories are centred in the outdoors, from the Goldstream Salmon run to winter snow camping in Manning Park... and everything in between. I did a BSc in Anthropology, where I specialized in forensic osteology (study of human bones in a criminal context) and archaeology. Late in my degree I did 3 co-ops with BC Parks and that's where I began to see a real career in the environmental sector. After completing my undergrad, I became a Park Ranger with BC Parks for a year and a half. Now, I have completed my MSc in Environmental Practice, where I focused on developing a monitoring program for the pacific chorus frog in an Esquimalt park. It's safe to say I'm amphibian obsessed! In my spare time I'm either scrolling through iNaturalist confirming amphibian identification or sewing my next textile project.



Stay Safe with Jake



Danger Trees

As the season changes to winter, it's important for us all to stay safe in our regional parks. Many of you are Restoration Volunteers, and are with a staff member (like myself) who has extra training and certification in Danger Tree Assessment to help keep us all safe while we work. However, Park Steward volunteers and many Stewardship Groups volunteer without staff members - not to mention that many of us also enjoy the regional parks in our leisure time - so I wanted to pass on some tips and tricks for staying safe from dangerous trees.

Regional parks and trails remain open year-round and in all kinds of weather, including in high wind and precipitation events. It's important to exercise care and caution, watch for falling branches, changing wind conditions, over-saturation of soil, and slippery surfaces.

The #1 Safety tip is avoid forested and near-forested areas during high winds (40km/h+) - monitor Environment and Climate Change Canada for weather alerts and wind warnings! Also keep in mind that large amounts of rain (like the atmospheric river we had at the beginning of December) can over-saturate soils and weaken the structural integrity of trees - leading to falling trees.

Signs to look out for that make a tree potentially hazardous:

- Rotten or decayed wood (fungi!)
- Excessive lean
- Heavily imbalanced weight distribution
- Weak union - growing in tight V shape, with the junction being weakest point
- Root problems - root rot, soil compaction, root lifting/destruction, excess water, exposed roots
- Missing large areas of bark, or big cracks / lightning damage
- Cavities in the tree
- Missing leaves close to the trunk - a healthy tree's leaves fall from outside inwards, and missing leaves on the inside first means root nutrient delivery issues.
- Uneven canopy distribution
- Excessive insects (sign of decay unseen)
- Vines growing over the tree (like English Ivy!) - suffocates the tree, creates extra wind resistance.
- Dead or falling branches

With Climate Change, more extreme weather events, along with drier summers are impacting our ecosystem more, creating the possibility of more downed trees.

Stay safe out there!

- Jake Stead, *Stewardship Technician*

Park Updates



Capital Regional District (CRD) purchases former Royal Oak Golf Course

The CRD has purchased the former Royal Oak Golf Course, a 10.92-hectare (27 acre) parcel of land adjacent to Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park in the District of Saanich. The land shows ecological restoration potential and is also located within a critical habitat zone for the barn owl (*Tyto alba*). Through ecological restoration, the landscape could potentially support a wider diversity of species. In the spirit and practice of reconciliation, the CRD will continue to collaborate with local First Nations to determine appropriate actions that respect Indigenous rights, uplift Indigenous governance and strengthen government-to-government relationships. The CRD is having active discussions with local First Nations on the future of this property.

Learn more about this land acquisition [here](#).



Goodbye Galloping Goose Gorse

This fall, parks staff addressed a huge population of invasive gorse along a section of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail in Langford. But that's not all! As some of you may be aware, CRD Regional Parks staff recently collaborated with CRD Integrated Water Services to repurpose dredgings from the Charters reservoir - this material is essentially free, organic compost that is rich in nutrients and that has no contamination risk. The salvaged material was used in this restoration project as both a planting medium for alder seeds and as a way of smothering out the gorse. Since then, the organic material has been used in other work, including volunteer-assisted restoration projects at Mill Hill and East Sooke regional parks!