

You Can Get There From Here

The Rhodo Ravine Project

The adage “you cannot get there from here” simply does not apply to the Rhodo Ravine Project. The “there” is, of course, the renovation and rehabilitation of the Rhodo Ravine, once the jewel in the crown of this historical park. The “here” is our starting points. We have completed Phase one. This was the conceptual landscape and engineering design, coupled with the cost estimates for the stabilization of Dominion Brook itself, and of course the construction of the paths, bridges, weirs, etc., in the Ravine. The completion of this phase was integral to the project, not only to make requests for funding proposals but also to give us the roadmap on how to proceed.

So now we have the roadmap and this year one more step has been taken.

The go ahead has been given to Kerr Wood Leidal to proceed with the Environmental Assessment of the aquatic and wildlife habitat in the ravine. Visitors to the Park are not able to access the ravine at the moment, however sightings

of owls near the ravine have been of particular interest recently. We are awaiting the results of the assessment with great curiosity. Who knows what else makes its home in the Ravine?

Once this task has been completed a report will be prepared to support the required environmental approvals necessary for any future work in Dominion Brook Park.

The restoration of the Ravine is by any measure an immense undertaking. However any journey begins with one step. We have now completed more than two.

The development of this ravine began a 100 years ago as a part of the original 11 acre park, with over 60 different rhododendrons shipped from the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University. With our volunteers, members, and



Rhododendrons in the Ravine

supporters, coupled with the District of North Sannich and the Centre for Plant Health, the ravine restoration has a sound base from which to build. Hopefully another 100 years will not be needed.

Dominion Brook Park will be part of the Flavour Trail scheduled for the 25th of August. Join us for a tour and have a peek at the ravine!.

Work in Progress

Dogwood Tree Services, a long time supporter of the Park, removed the dead Chamaecypress Lawsoniana 'Alumii' at the bottom of the Pond. It succumbed to a fungal disease.

The method of removal was fascinating to watch, cuts in just the right places, rope attached and the tree slowly descended and quietly met the ground. No shouts of 'Timber' or loud noises.

The afternoon also included 14 students from the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific attending a class on tree removal as well as information and instruction as they toured every corner of the Park. Because of our collection of mature trees and shrubs, many of the specimens would not be familiar to students. Their lecturer, Don Botterill, had questions and answers at each location and hopefully the students will retain their new knowledge and remember the amazing classroom.

Three of our Hollies are suffering from *Phytophthora ilicis* which required an inground injection by Dogwood to help them overcome this particular pathogen. There are signs of regeneration but it will take a season to be absolutely sure.



Thank you Dogwood Tree Services
for your generous support of
Dominion Brook Park!



On the Flavour Trail Again

Dominion Brook Park is once again participating in the North Saanich Flavour Trail event. We will be hosting guided tours on August 25 at 10, 11 and 12 noon leaving from the Kiosk on East Saanich Road. Look for the signage.



The tour ends at the picnic tables with coffee/tea and cookies. Check out our Ravine Restoration display and chat with Board members about happenings at the Park.

Kudos to Brian Robinson



*Brian (3rd from left)
at the Official Opening, 2000.*

Before the beginning, Brian Robinson, former Works Superintendent in North Saanich, was a stalwart supporter of the citizen's initiative to rescue what is now Dominion Brook Park.

It was with his guiding hand and knowledge that the fledgling society was able to participate in the Stewardship Agreement between the Federal Government, District of North Saanich and the Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society. There were the first lease options of five years and then our 25 year lease with an option for another 25 to be

negotiated, standards and procedures to be set for the volunteers.

Because of his wise counsel and co-operation within the District's Parks Department, the Society has been able to accomplish much in the maintenance and restoration of the Park.

We thank Brian for all he has done for us and wish him well in his new position as Manager of Public Works and Parks for the Town of Sidney.



*Brian Robinson lending a
helping hand.*

Special Visitors: *Bubo virginianus*

Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) inhabit many parts of North and South America from the Arctic to Patagonia. They are also known as hoot owls, cat owls or winged tigers with their prominent ear tufts and large yellow eyes resembling cat eyes and with an aggressive nature. Canadian Great Horned Owls are darker in colour.

When ready to nest, they do not build their own but instead seek out existing sites such as tree holes. They are nocturnal but often appear in the late afternoon or at dawn as did our owlet to the delight of many Park goers. It is wise to stay away from young owls and their nests as Great Horned Owls are not afraid to attack if they feel their family is threatened. Their size can be up to two feet with a wing span 4-5 feet.



There is much information on the Internet about the Great Horned Owl but one of the most interesting facts is that they are the only animal that eat skunks.

This issue is much better in colour: www.dominionbrookpark.ca/newsletter38.pdf

Featured Plant

ABIES PINSAPO - 'SPANISH FIR'



A species native to southern Spain and Northern Morocco. Related to other species of Mediterranean firs it is considered the Andalusian National Tree as the natural habitat for this rare fir is in a remote mountain region of Spain. It was close to extinction after the last ice age and today is considered an endangered species due to loss of habitat and increasing fire risk because of warming climate changes.

It is a stately and majestic specimen slowly growing to 20-30m tall under the right conditions. The leaves are 1.5-2cm long arranged radially all around the shoots and are strongly glaucous blue-green. Cones can be 9-18cm long with a wide range of colour from greenish pink to reddish purple before maturity. It likes full sun and well drained soil.

We were pleased to receive this unusual and rare specimen as a donation to the Park to add to the collection.

...and last a few reminders:

At the last AGM the members voted to increase the membership fee from \$ 15.00 to \$ 20.00 per year.

The Elder College will once again tour the park. The program is scheduled for September 16, 1:30 to 3pm.

Contact panoramarecreation.ca for more information.



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For more information on Dominion Brook Park, please visit <http://www.dominionbrookpark.ca/>
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