

Volume 48



August 2016

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Dominion Brook Park is in need of volunteers for two key positions in its operations: field work coordinator and historian/presenter. These positions would be of interest to those with an interest and enthusiasm for heritage, horticulture, and community green spaces.

Field work coordinator

A volunteer is needed to plan and guide the weekly and seasonal maintenance work in Dominion Brook Park.

- assessing the maintenance needs in the Park and setting priorities in line with the mandate set out in the Stewardship Agreement with the District of North Saanich, Centre for Plant Health, and the Friends of Dominion Brook Park;
- working with and assisting the District of North Saanich Parks Department with care and maintenance of the Park;
- assigning and guiding the work of 8-15 volunteers at the weekly work party (March to October); and
- working with professionals, e.g. arborists, pruning specialists, etc.

Experience working with volunteers and gardening knowledge would be an asset.

Historian/presenter

A volunteer is needed to take responsibility for

- the historical records;
- current record keeping (*Minute Book*);
- plant database and photo collection; and
- presenting information to the public about Dominion Brook Park.

With its unique horticultural heritage, century old trees, and rhododendron collection, there are regular requests for tours and presentations. This is a great opportunity to learn about the history of the park and the significance of some of its shrubs and trees.

Experience in public speaking and presenting required.

For more information contact Joan Gibb at 250-656-4185 or email contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca



PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THESE INTERESTING OPPORTUNITIES!

RAVINE UPDATE

2015 was a busy year in the ravine as the restoration of the streambed finally began. Nearly 70 meters of streambed was retained, a stream crossing constructed, and nearly 1,000 deer ferns were planted. In 2016 we plan to complete the final 11 meters of the lower streambed.

Fund raising is now under way for the restoration of the upper reaches of the stream and construction of the trail system. We rely on community support in the form of membership and/or donations to the Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society. When complete, the Rhododendron Ravine will be the *'jewel in the crown'* of this beautiful Park. Visit our website for a slide show presentation of this year's Ravine Project accomplishments!



Ravine Project
Before & After
Deer Fern Planting

MORE THAN A CENTURY IN THE PARK

WE HAVE HISTORY - since the inception of the Federal Government's Dominion Experimental Farms program throughout Canada and our own Dominion Experimental Farm in North Saanich (1912), it has been an integral part of Peninsula history and beyond. There was no division between the Farm and Park until late in the 20th century.

The clearing team in 1912 accessed every team of horses available, along with the men, to undertake the massive job on the 120 acre site. One of those men was John Marshall whose name is now on the street leading to the Park. He became Head Gardener on the Farm and his daughter married the Head Foreman of the Farm with a special interest in the Sunken Garden (Sam's Garden). To further the history of that family, John's granddaughter is a volunteer, with Sam's Garden as her special area of interest.

Marshall was not the only one with a street named after him. If you've ever driven to the airport from Sidney, you have used Stirling Way. It was named after Cyril Stirling, who created the world famous Stirling Pea and gained the highest agriculture award the Island has ever won when the pea was shown

at Agricultural events throughout North America. He also grew rhododendrons from seed, something never done before on the Island.

And then there was Bert Sansbury who was the Farm's chicken man with 1000 White Wyandote birds to supervise and one (Princess Victoria) becoming the best egg layer in the land. Sansbury won international acclaim for his work with poultry. Sansbury School on Lowe Drive was named after Bert who was considered one of the most respected members of the Sidney community. It is also noted he was a great practical joker.

Each of those gentlemen has grandchildren and great grandchildren living on the Peninsula.

William Macoun was the Dominion Horticulturist with the Department of Agriculture who, with obsessive detail, created our Experimental Farm and Park. He was famous in his own right but his father, John Macoun, Botanist & Surveyor, was known well enough to be on a Canadian stamp. He retired to Sidney and was buried here until the Canadian Government moved him and his wife back to Ottawa, with appropriate pomp and ceremony. I'm sure he visited his son's Park. His son-in-law A. O. Wheeler, who was connected to



Bert Sansbury and Princess Victoria

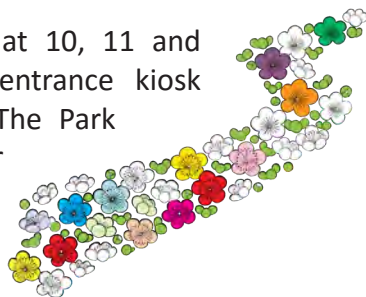
Sidney, as his wife was a resident, became Surveyor General of India and involved in the first attempts to scale Mount Everest.

There is much more about the Park, with its trees/shrubs collected from Nurseries from around the world, all with stories of their own and those men and women connected to its creation making it a very special place.

ON THE TRAIL AGAIN...

Dominion Brook Park will once again take part in the popular North Saanich Flavour Trail event on Sunday, August 21, 2016.

Tours will be conducted at 10, 11 and noon beginning at the entrance kiosk on East Saanich Road. The Park has a wonderful 104 year old history with rare specimens from all over the world and stories to match.



After the tour, join us for coffee/tea and cookies at the Picnic Shelter, a former BC Electric Railway station at the bottom of the Park. Chat with volunteers and Board members about future plans for the Society. Check out the progress in our Rhodo Ravine Restoration Project.

VOLUNTEER WORKING BEES

Dominion Brook Park
Wednesday morning work parties
9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Join our team of enthusiastic supporters to continue the restoration of the Jewel of the Peninsula. Experience not necessary and work levels for all ages - come and have fun with us!

Contact Joan Gibb for more information: 250 656-4185, or contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca



A heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers who help out in the park!

FEATURED PLANT

Pseudotsuga menziesii (Douglas Fir)

An evergreen conifer native to Western North America. The common name honours David Douglas, Scottish botanist, who introduced it to cultivation in 1826. The name is misleading since it is not a true fir – not a member of the genus *Abies*.

The specific epithet is *menziesii*, after Archibald Menzies, Scottish physician and rival naturalist to David Douglas. Menzies first documented the tree on Vancouver Island in 1791.

The Coast Salish name for the tree is used in the Halkomelem language is *la:yelhp*.

Two local legends give the tree an interesting twist. Long ago during a huge forest fire, a little mouse asked for sanctuary in a big leaf maple and red cedar, but all said no, they would burn to the ground. The Douglas Fir however said, “with my thick bark, I can survive”. The Little mouse climbed into a cone for safety and was joined by all his friends.

A second version is during a cold, cold winter with no food to be found, the little mouse was starving, but the Douglas Fir said, “climb into my cone and you will find seeds to keep you alive”. His many friends found out about his secret and joined him in the cones to survive the winter.

So if you will look closely at the photo of the *Pseudotsuga menziesii* cones, you will see little mouse hind legs and tail sticking out from the fir cone.



Visit www.dominionbrookpark.ca/ravine-project
for a slide show presentation of this year's
Ravine Project accomplishments!



For more information on Dominion Brook Park, please visit www.dominionbrookpark.ca/
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