

## Important Milestone reached at Dominion Brook Park!



## WE HAVE HIT THE 10,000 HOURS MARK!!!

As we close down the 2015 work season, we have reached a milestone of hours spent in the maintenance and restoration of the Park. As our loyal band of volunteers toil each week to maintain the appearance of the Park, we can take pride in the accomplishment of every Wednesday spent together. It was a year of maintenance which means weeding, weeding, weeding and raking, raking and raking and more of the same. Not always an exciting prospect but without exception, every time while in the Park, brought a compliment and a sincere thank you from a visitor(s) to be passed along to the volunteers.

The main focus this year was the Ravine restoration and after all the necessary studies, permits, etc. were obtained, the work began with a contractor to re-establish Dominion Brook. This was a professional job completed on time and on budget. However, after lining the brook with a geomodular vegetative wall system, it was the volunteers' time to shine. On a regular Wednesday two hour work morning, the team (14) cut the bags, stabbed (with especially made dibblers) the growing medium to insert the deer fern plugs (*Blechnum spicant*) – all 967 of them. It looks grand! The whole team was there with two exceptions plus two guest volunteers, Joe Daly, Landscape Architect, who has been involved since the inception of the plan, and David Lye, FDBPS's Chairman. It was a marvellous accomplishment done in record time. The team was rewarded with coffee and homemade goodies.

Our last day also was a record of work well done. You can see by the photo the size of the blackberry patch on the south side of the Park. It was a project long on the books and in one morning with eight volunteers, it was done. It now can be managed by weedwacking until the canes give up in disgust.

Once again, as with every year, our success would not be possible without the District of North Saanich's Cliff Halliday and his team who work along side us on Wednesday mornings. Cliff's experience and advice are invaluable. We also owe thanks to the Centre for Plant Health for their co-operation. And to the volunteers who make it all possible, **Thank You!**



## **RHODODENDRON RAVINE UPDATE**

The ravine restoration project is the biggest undertaking to date by the Friends of Dominion Brook Park. The main objective is to restore the once famous Rhododendron Ravine by:

- Controlling ongoing erosion at the upstream end of the ravine
- Re-grading the channel slope and stabilizing the ravine slopes
- Re-establishing trail access through the ravine
- Saving and re-establishing the rare rhododendrons and adding new rhododendrons and appropriate companion plantings

The last few years have seen a considerable amount of planning, assessments, studies, mapping and surveys. This enabled us to meet the regulatory requirements, properly estimate the scope and cost of the project and to sequence the work. At a cost of over \$36,000, this was considerably below the original cost estimates. All of this work has been funded by membership fees, donations and various grants and has also benefitted from the time donated by experts and ongoing support from the District of North Saanich.

### **WHERE WE ARE TODAY:**

This year the rehabilitation work began. The very dry summer helped to create good working conditions in the ravine. As luck would have it though, we received the first heavy rainfall in months, just as the excavating team moved in with their machines. Despite some weather delays, 65 metres of the lower stream bed was stabilised and rehabilitated and a crossing site constructed that will connect the pathways. In one of the weekly Wednesday work parties, the dedicated group of volunteers planted over 1000 deer ferns in the landscape bags along the stream banks and at the trail crossing. **(Click [here](#) to see photos of the project).**

The work done this year is just the beginning. The next steps include assessing the structural integrity of the weir and stone bridge and then completing the last 11 metres of the

lower streambed rehabilitation to the bridge. Developing the pathways to the crossing will require us to clear and reshape the banks and then construct trails in the ravine along the rehabilitated streambed and up the ravine sides.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT**

Support in various forms has allowed us to make significant progress and we owe thanks to the many who made it possible:

- Members of the Friends of Dominion Brook Society through membership fees and donations.
- the District of North Saanich for its ongoing support.
- the Centre for Plant Health for its cooperation.
- the Saanich Peninsula Community Foundation who provided a \$2000 grant.
- Murray Benson Excavating, Peninsula Rock Products, Kerr Wood Leidel Associates.
- Joan Gibb and her volunteer brigade who work in the Park weekly through the spring, summer and fall.

**WAYS YOU CAN HELP:** This summer we accomplished more in the ravine than we thought possible but the work came at a cost of over \$30,000 and our coffers are nearly empty. Completing the remaining work depends on continued success with fundraising. There are a number of ways you can contribute.

Grants can be an important source of funding. If you are aware of foundations or granting organizations that provide financial support to endeavours such as Dominion Brook Park, please let us know by sending an email to [contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca](mailto:contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca)

Donations from our members form the biggest source of project financing. This year a generous member donated 100 shares of a stock from their portfolio, providing us with funds for the ravine and the member with a healthy tax receipt. As a registered charity we issue tax receipts for any gift of 20 dollars or more. If you would like to approach us about a donation, please send a note to the email address above, along with your phone number, and one of the board members will contact you. None of the work we do would be possible without your generous ongoing support.

**Thank You!**



**FEATURED PLANT: *Acer japonicum* 'Aconitifolium' (Japanese Maple)**

Of the remaining Maples in the Park, most planted in the 60s, this specimen has the best Fall colour with ruby-crimson leaves that remain on the tree for an extended period of time. Rounded and shrubby in appearance. It sits quietly for much of the year but in October/November becomes the highlight in the north border of the Park.

It was acquired from Lloyd Smith Nurseries in Pitt Meadows and planted on March 24, 1964, under the name *Acer* 'filicifolium'. Its leaves are deeply lobed and cut giving an almost fern-like appearance. After falling they make a wonderful sight on the ground resembling a Persian carpet.



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