



Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society

OCTOBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

New Fence Installed to Prevent Camping on WPS Reserve

Every summer, WPS receives numerous reports from neighbours about people camping on the WPS reserve lands adjacent to the St. Mary Lake swimming beach on Tripp Road. The beach is next to a small parking area right next to two old logging roads leading into the WPS property.

We respond to numerous calls by going out and asking the campers to leave, usually without incident. This could be a bit scary for board members. There was also a constant threat of fire—yes, some of these campers lit fires in the woods. Campers also left trash and human waste, resulting in an unpleasant clean-up job for WPS Board members and volunteers.

This year, your Board of Directors took what they thought was the most responsible step. They had a fence installed across the access way to this area. They put up new signs and plan to install better signs in the future with information about WPS and the reserve.



In addition to consulting our primary neighbour, board members put a lot of thought and discussion into deciding the type of fence to install. Of course, the most determined person could still find their way in, but we believe we've taken the responsible step to discourage camping. As soon as the fence began to go up, the camping has apparently stopped. So, the fence appears to be a success thus far.

A big thank you to Chris Drake of Coast Alive Recreational & Ecological Services for an environmentally sensitive fence installation—a difficult job given the slope of the hillside.

Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society

presents

Don Hodgins, Ph.D., P.Eng.
Specialist, Water Resources Engineering

Fresh Water — What do we have? How much is left?

St. Mary and Maxwell Lakes

Salt Spring Library Program Room
Thursday, October 26, 2017 at 7:30 pm

FREE

Thank you to those of you have renewed your membership. If your mailing label is highlighted, we have not received your renewal yet. If that is you, please consider renewing.



Ecosystem Restoration and Stewardship in the WPS Covenant

The WPS property and covenant, rising from Tripp Road to Cormorant Crescent and across to the Channel Ridge trails, is a great example of a mature coastal forest. As owners of this area, WPS has a number of environmental stewardship activities it should complete to maintain the health of the ecosystem.

In the Benchlands, three invasive plants are most problematic: Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), and Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*). After over 4 years of effort, many parts of the Benchlands have been transformed, but invasive plant control must be ongoing to be effective. Although very few Scotch Broom are old enough to flower, they are still sprouting and can quickly return to a state of dominance if the small plants aren't removed. The Blackberry can be cut low and crushed down, and when possible, the root mass removed. And Thistle must be prevented from flowering to reduce its population size.

Invasive plant control, however, is only one part of ecosystem restoration. To truly eradicate invasive plants, conditions must change to favour native plant species. Because of heavy deer browsing, few native species are able to attain the size and health needed to outcompete the invasives, so planting natives in fenced exclosures is highly beneficial. Already a number Garry Oaks have been planted, and now would be a great time to expand the size of the deer exclosures and the diversity of the native plants inside.

Another important property stewardship activity is to reduce the risk of wildfire, especially along Tripp Road. There are two main concerns to address: that a fire starts and/or that a fire spreads. To reduce the chance of a fire starting, small, fine fuels such as long, dry grass or suspended twigs need to be crushed into the soil so that they decompose. To reduce the chance of a fire spreading and increasing in intensity if it does get started, small- and medium-sized branches can be broken and layered into shady depressions. The goal is to convert the dry, suspended fuel to rotting masses that sequester carbon and increase moisture retention.

The calendar on the opposite page gives a basic schedule for how to approach the stewardship of the WPS lands, but it is by no means rigid. All of these restoration activities take time and effort, and for the best results, a mix of environmental professionals and enthusiastic volunteers is required.

—Chris Drake, MSc



Rainwater Harvesting Tour

Saturday, October 14
11:00am – 3:00pm

Tours start every half hour, first one at 11:00am, last one at 2:30pm.

Tour rainwater collection systems from the north end to the south end,
small to large, simple to high tech.

FREE

Maps available at Islands Trust, CRD office, Nature Works, Morningside Café, WPS Facebook or WPS website (www.ssiwaterpreservationsociety.com). If you are receiving this newsletter electronically, click on the link below:

<http://library2.ssiwatersheds.ca/?mdocs-file=1015&mdocs-url=false>

The above link is a direct download, so after clicking it, go to downloads folder on your computer.

“We never know the worth of water till the well is dry.”

—Thomas Fuller, Gnomologia, 1732



Restoration and Stewardship Calendar

This calendar was prepared by WPS Board Member Chris Drake. It outlines the timing of tasks for the WPS St. Mary Lake reserve lands but you may find it helpful to plan work on your own property.

Our first work party is this October. Join us in planting Garry Oak seedlings and compatible plants and installing deer exclosures at our Garry Oak restoration project. For details, email us at ssiwps@gmail.com or call 250-537-1577.

RESTORATION ACTIVITY	CONTROL SCOTCH BROOM	CONTROL HIMALAYAN BLACKBERRY	CONTROL CANADA THISTLE	PLANT AND MAINTAIN NATIVE PLANT ENCLOSURES	REDUCE WILDFIRE HAZARD
January	pull small plants when soil wet	dig out roots when soil wet			
February	pull small plants when soil wet	dig out roots when soil wet			small and medium fuel to forest floor
March	pull small plants when soil wet	dig out roots when soil wet			inspect for new fuel sources
April	pull small plants when soil wet	dig out roots when soil wet	pull emerging plants	mulch	inspect for new fuel sources
May	cut broom in bloom	dig out roots when soil wet	pull emerging plants	weed and mulch	inspect for new fuel sources
June	cut broom in bloom	cut down to base	cut or pull when in bloom	weed and mulch	cut roadside grass
July	cut broom in bloom	cut down to base	cut or pull when in bloom	water and weed	cut roadside grass
August	cut broom in bloom	cut down to base		water and weed	
September	pull small plants when soil wet	cut down to base			small and medium fuel to forest floor
October	pull small plants when soil wet	dig out roots when soil wet		new planting	small and medium fuel to forest floor
November	pull small plants when soil wet	dig out roots when soil wet		new planting	small and medium fuel to forest floor
December	pull small plants when soil wet	dig out roots when soil wet			small and medium fuel to forest floor

Many Thanks, Members!

A big THANK YOU for renewing your WPS membership for 2017. Many of you gave an additional donation, which is very much appreciated. We currently have 138 members, some new to WPS. If you haven't renewed yet, please consider doing so. Memberships received during the last quarter of the year are applied to the following year's membership.

Every year at this time, we remind our members that our success depends on the participation of our membership as board members or as volunteers. A current pressing need is having a bookkeeper or accountant to help with monthly reconciliation of bank statements and tracking of expenditures. If you can help, please email Maxine at ssiwps@mail.com or call 537-1577.



Thank You to Everyone who Contributed to the Study's Success

In follow-up to the article about the 2-yr Cusheon Watershed study that appeared in the last WPS newsletter, WPS, Drew Bodaly, and Maggie Squires thank the many volunteers and "citizen scientists" who contributed to the project's success.

Citizen science is the participation of lay citizens to collect scientific data. The project would not have been possible without the assistance of citizen scientists. The dedication of WPS member Larry Appleby and WPS Board member Usha Rautenbach to weekly stream-sampling over a 2-year period was outstanding. Overall, the incorporation of citizen science allowed the Blackburn Lake Project to include more sampling than could have been done easily by the two volunteer scientists involved, meant a lesser work load for the project scientists at least in the field, and created opportunity for discussions about science that were appreciated by all. Involvement of citizen science volunteers benefited the project and volunteers. Professional scientists gained local knowledge of streams and lakes, and citizen scientists acquired knowledge of scientific approaches to stream and lake sampling.

Many other Salt Springers, including Maxine Leichter, John Borst, Gale Robinson, Geoff Gay, Yvonne Blick, Ian Van Wyck, and Anna Haltrecht, Dr. Malcolm Bond, Wayne Hewitt, and Wilfried & Wiebke Ortlepp supported field work. The Cusheon Lake Stewardship Committee (CLSC) shared data and contributed to efforts to understand lake processes.

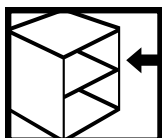
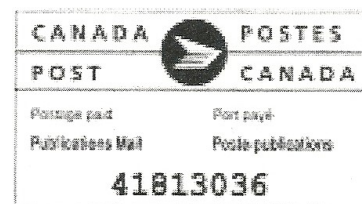
Dr. Ralph Turner (RT Geo Ltd.) provided advice, lent the project an array of field equipment, and led the initial installation of water level data loggers. Drs. Carol Kelly and John Rudd (R&K Research Ltd.) provided advice and guidance. Lorrie Hunt and David Denning lent lake sampling instruments. Dr. John Sprague, who conducted previous culvert flow work in the Cusheon Lake catchment, suggested sampling of additional streams. Chris Laughlin of Island Health assisted in designing a sampling program to identify possible phosphorus sources in the vicinity of the Blackburn Lake outflow.



SSI Water Preservation Society

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COUNTRY GROCER TAPES
Please put your tapes in **Box 73**