

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

Park Plan



The Park Needs a Voice

By its distinctive blend of topography, trees and other vegetation, by the views it commands from its slopes and its beach, by the quiet that can still be found, and finally as a wildlife habitat and wilderness preserve, Mount Douglas Park ranks among those special lands that have inherent value for what they are in themselves, not just for what we can get out of them.

Like a work of art and, indeed, like each individual human being, the Park's value does not lie in how it can be exploited. This value does not imply that people should be excluded any more than the insects, flora and fauna that inhabit the Park. Nor does it mean that our activities within it should be purely those of aesthetic or other forms of contemplation or investigation.

People, however, have a greater capacity than other species to destroy the Park's harmony and integrity. Hence we have a need to formulate, and commit to checks upon our activities that will respect the animate and inanimate features in the Park upon which its intrinsic value depends.

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Mount Douglas Park

1889-2016

A Brief History

Mount Douglas Park, the topography of which survives from the Ice Age, currently comprises 184 hectares of floral and fauna wealth in Saanich. First Nations paddlers traveling from the San Juan Islands to Vancouver Island pulled their canoes up on Mount Douglas Beach. The “hill of cedars” was also a stopping place for the Songhees Nation on their way to and from Fort Victoria. In 1843, cedar trees cut to build the fort at Victoria, were hauled along what is now Cedar Hill Road.

James Tod, son of Hudson Bay Company chief trader John Tod, bought land near the mountain in 1853 and farmed there for 52 years.

On September 30, 1889, thanks to Sir James Douglas, the Province of British Columbia granted Mount Douglas to the Corporation of the City of Victoria “upon trust to maintain and preserve the same as a public park or pleasure ground for the use, recreation and enjoyment of the public”. The trails in the Park are named after early settlers in Gordon Head. Several owe their course to the tracks made by James Tod’s sheep over a hundred years ago. In the 1880s a wagon road was built to connect Cedar Hill Road to Cordova Bay through the Park following the old First Nations trails. By the early 1900s a road had been completed along the shoreline of the Park through the site of the present picnic area. Even in the very early days, despite the distance, the people of Victoria came to the Park to enjoy the tree shade and sunny beach. By 1902 one could walk to the Park from the Royal Oak station of the V & S Railway, a distance of three kilometres. Late in 1915 a bus route through the Park was established.

A Royal Commission was issued to O.C. Bass K.C. in 1930, “to inquire into the management, regulation, protection and control of...Mount Douglas Park.” This was in response to a storm of complaints from concerned citizens about gravel excavation, garbage dumping, tree-cutting and goat grazing, as well as the construction of an alternative route to Cordova Bay.

A restaurant, and then a tearoom in the Park attracted many visitors during the 20s and into the 50s. During the 30s improvements to the Park gave employment to victims of the Depression. The huts built for these men in the Park picnic area were later, and up to the early 50s, used as a youth hostel. Churchill Drive, the road to the summit and its 360° panorama, was constructed in 1938. During WWII, the military had a radio direction finding installation at the summit built on an octagonal concrete base which provides the foundation of the existing summit lookout.

On September 30, 1989, Mount Douglas Park celebrated its 100th anniversary. This seemed an appropriate time to form The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society, to work at keeping the Park in its natural state so all might enjoy the treasures it provides for this generation and all to come. On November 22, 1992,

after lengthy controversy concerning a new road through the Park and a proposed building on top of the East Summit, Saanich Council met on the summit of Mount Douglas and enacted a renewal of the original Trust. This charter can be seen inscribed on a bronze plaque at the summit parking area and on the "Charter Rock" in the lower Churchill parking lot.

Document Structure: This Park Plan sections includes a goal, policies and implementation actions. The goal is meant to express a desired ideal. Policies are statements that will assist in achieving the goal. The implementation section describes actions consistent with policies and goals. The goals and policies should remain constant over time, whereas implementation actions will be removed when effected and replaced by new ones if needed. Some sections might not contain all three components.

1 Mount Douglas Park Charter

The lands known as Mount Douglas Park are hereby reserved in perpetuity to the protection and preservation of the natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public.

This land has been transferred by the Province of British Columbia to the Corporation of the District of Saanich on the condition that it be maintained and preserved as a public park.

With this charter, the spirit and intent of the original crown grant of 1889 is maintained while its scope is expanded to include within Mount Douglas Park all adjacent municipal parkland present and future, so that the whole will continue as a wilderness preserve for generations to come.

Proclaimed this 22nd. day of November 1992 by the council of the Corporation of the District of Saanich on behalf of the citizens of Saanich.

2 Society Goals

The goals of the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society, *formalized in its 1990 constitution*, are:

- to safeguard the welfare of Mount Douglas Park;
- to protect, and enhance the natural values of the Park;
- to encourage expansion of the boundaries of the Park;
- to encourage and participate with Saanich in the preparation of a long-term plan for the Park, designed to maintain it in its natural state in perpetuity.

The following sections expand on these overall goals.

3 Acquisition

Goal: Where suitable, to acquire land adjacent to the Park for inclusion in its boundaries.

While Mount Douglas Park, as the major Saanich natural park, must be maintained with care and integrity, it should not be considered in isolation, but as an intrinsic part of the broader neighbourhood and region of the municipality.

Lands suitable for acquisition would include adjacent dominant geographical features and also those that would provide improved, safe and convenient access.

Policies:

1. The District of Saanich should be prepared to act when opportunities arise to acquire additional land for the Park.
2. Extend the park boundaries to provide buffering between natural areas, agricultural and urban uses.
3. Mount Douglas Park is an important node on a greenway network connecting Gordon Head with Blenkinsop Valley. Encourage and support acquisition of linkages between the Park and this greenway.
4. Ensure that the enhancement of greenways and entrances with a natural setting are part of any plan for development on the fringes of the Park.
5. Create an urban to natural park transition zone on all road approaches to the Park.

Implementation:

1. Provide a safe connection between the Mercer & Blenkinsop Trails. Consider a trail, separated from the road, on the east side of Blenkinsop Road. This likely requires some acquisition.
2. Two properties at the southwest end of Westbank Street have been purchased by Saanich allowing for the closure of the unconstructed portion of Westbank as a road. Following the original plan, conversion to park status of these acquired properties along with the closed section of Westbank needs to be completed.

4 Access

Goal: To provide public access to the Park while preserving the natural state of the Park.

Policies:

1. Prioritize non-motorized access and transit modes.
2. Prohibit unauthorized vehicles on fire roads, trails, and off paved roads.
3. Permit cycling only in paved areas, specifically Churchill Drive and parking lots

4.1 Parking

Mount Douglas Park serves the region, not just the local community; therefore many visitors will arrive by modes other than walking.

Goal: To provide adequate parking for cars recognizing that peak parking demands will exceed available capacity.

Policies:

1. Do not convert any additional park land for parking.
2. Permit parking only in designated locations.
3. Prohibit parking along road edges that are wholly in the Park, specifically Churchill Drive, Ash, Cedar Hill and Cordova Bay roads.

Implementation:

1. Provide improved access to the Mercer Trail, most likely with a Blenkinsop Road marked crosswalk at the Mercer trailhead.
2. The Beach Parking lot normally has ample parking when other lots are full during peak times, hence visitors are encouraged to access the main Park from this lot. This presents a dilemma as dogs are prohibited in the area surrounding this parking lot during the summer months. Provide a clear route for walkers with on-leash dogs to access the main Park.

4.2 Bicycle and Walking Access

Goal: Encourage Park access using human power.

Policy:

1. Provide bicycle racks at all Park trail access points.
2. Provide safe road crossing at all trail access points.
3. Construct an access from Westbank Street.

4.3 Public Transit

Goal: Provide convenient Park access using public transit.

Policy:

1. Provide conveniently located transit stops for Park access in safe locations near the Churchill entrance, near the beach parking entrance and at the Cordova Bay Road entrance.
2. Recognize transit stops are not only used to access the Park, but are also used by nearby residents.

Implementation:

1. Provide a transit stop closer to the Churchill Drive Park entrance.

2. Move the Cordova Bay Road stop closer to the beach parking lot entrance. Note that there is no trail access nor off-road waiting area at the current stop. This stop is used by Park visitors but also by nearby residents from Gordon Head.

4.4 Fire

Goal: To take precautions to protect the Park from fire.

Policies:

1. Maintain necessary fire access roads in the Park.
2. During periods of extreme fire hazard in the Park, restrict vehicle and/or pedestrian access to any or all sections of the Park.
3. Actively enforce the prohibition of building fires in the Park. Including beach fires.
4. Actively enforce the prohibition of smoking in the Park.

5 Trails

Attractive, well-defined trails in the Park enhance visitor experience and prevent proliferation of opportunistic trails that damage natural features. Trails that the public should use all have names; unnamed trails are opportunistic trails that should not be used. The proliferation of these ad hoc unnamed trails represents a threat to the Park natural environment.

Goal: To provide passage in the park in a way that allows visitors to enjoy and appreciate the natural environment as a wilderness preserve while carefully preserving it for generations to come by minimizing adverse effects of trails and trail use on the Park's natural character.

Policies:

1. Different sections of the Park have different characteristics, ranging from the picnic area to the remote wilderness areas. Require trails to reflect these different characteristics.
2. Take steps to keep walkers on named trails. Close ad-hoc trails and restore the understory vegetation.
3. Avoid a long straight corridor perspective by making trail alignment meander following natural contours.
4. Where invasive plant removal has significantly removed understory, use natural/windfall/debris where possible, and split rails where not, to limit trail width and consequent habitat destruction. Split rail fencing has the positive benefit of not only protecting sensitive areas, but also highlights the special nature of what is being protected.
5. Limit trail maintenance for the most part to removal of obvious hazards and the repair of damaged areas by:

- cutting through blockages caused by fallen trees; keeping cut sections large to discourage firewood collection. Clear fallen trees on trails back to just outside trail edge to provide natural constraint on trail widening.
 - removing overhanging dead timber.
 - filling in wet or muddy patches and providing water control.
 - protecting against erosion, braiding, ballooning or lateral sprawl, and delta formations at trail intersections.
 - trimming trail bordering vegetation and overgrowth to allow clear passage without widening trail corridor.
6. Support wheel-chair access in parking areas, the old road (from the beach parking lot north end), the picnic area and the summit parking area observation deck. Park trail surfaces are not suitable for access by wheel-chair or scooter, especially not in all seasons.
 7. Designate as horse trails, those to which horses can do little or no damage and are sufficiently wide so that walkers and horses can safely pass when they meet. Restrict horses to these designated trails. Horse manure contains weed seeds. Consider waste catchers for horses.

Trail Categories:

The following categories differentiate trail sections by the trail construction and character. A primary characteristic is the trail surface. Is it compacted gravel, a natural tread, or is it merely a marked route over rock? As one travels a trail, its category might well change to reflect the number of users and the trail location.

- **Fire Roads**
 - Surface: Permeable, suitable to support occasional vehicles, such as service trucks to Weir, fire access.
 - Width: No wider than necessary for fire access.
 - Signage: Consistent with Developed Trails.
- **Developed Trails**
 - Rating: Easy. Expect occasional obstacles such as roots or rocks and very steep grades in some locations. Generally not suitable for strollers or buggies, but some isolated section might be passable.
 - Natural tread as much as possible. Minimize occasional pathway blend (6.35 mm minus crushed gravel aggregate) solid base surface limited to severely wet areas.
 - Width: maximum 2 m, preferably less.
 - Signs: Sign posts show a green circle with a walker on relatively level ground.
- **Natural Trails**
 - Rating: Moderate. The natural earth tread enhances the feeling of the natural settings.



- Alignment: Follows natural contours around land humps, trees and other small obstacles.
- Width: Varying 0.75 to 1.5 m
- Signage: Sign posts show a blue square with a walker on rolling ground.
- **Rugged Trails**
 - Rating: Difficult. Generally steep, traversing loose rock surfaces with exposed heights. Sturdy hiking shoes recommended. These trails are unimproved providing the maximum natural park experience.
 - Width: Narrow single tread.
 - Signage: Sign posts show a black diamond with a walker on a steep slope.



Implementation:

1. Refer to Pedestrian Crossings section for trail crossings of roads.
2. Actively address trail water issues. Lack of water control has led to serious erosion. It also is the cause of significant trail spread and also side trails.
3. Protect exposed tree roots along trails
4. Review overall trail strategy to reduce the proliferation of ad hoc unnamed trails including a determination of trails that should be recognized and those that should be closed.
5. Recognize the North Ridge Trail in conjunction with improvements over rock sections.
6. Cut steps into areas where trails traverse large rocks. Acquire necessary tools.

6 Dogs

Dog walking in Mount Douglas Park is very popular and there are many benefits to the dog owner and to the dog, and this should be maintained. Unfortunately, there are environmental, social and safety risks associated with increased dog usage in the park. These include:

1. Failure of dog owners to properly bag and dispose of their dog's excrement. This can lead to the damage of native species, health risks for visitors of the parks (particularly children) and is especially problematic for invasive pullers.
2. Since Saanich has only a loose statement that dogs must be under effective control, many dog owners allow them to run freely in the park. When these dogs run off the trail, they pose a significant threat to the native species. In addition, not all other park users are comfortable in the presence of free-running dogs. This is especially true for children, for the elderly and for people with allergies or fears.

3. Unleashed dogs tend to run through the natural habitats scaring any ground nesting birds and picking up and spreading invasive species. They also are regularly seen splashing in the creek during the sensitive salmon spawning season or when fry or smolts are present.
4. The issues related to dogs are compounded by commercial dog walkers who sometimes bring large groups of dogs into the Park and allow them to roam off leash without effective control.

Currently there are trail user counts for only a few years, but subjective observations suggest the number of visitors has steadily increased and there is every expectation that visitor counts will continue to increase. This growth creates the challenge of accommodating the increase in visitors while protecting and preserving what most have come to enjoy, the natural environment and the very reason for them coming to the Park.

Goal: To balance good opportunities for dog walking while ensuring visitor safety, trail inclusiveness for all users, protection and preservation of the natural environment and sensitive ecosystems.

Implementation:

1. In 2009, the Pound prepared a report for Saanich Police, on the dog situation in Mount Douglas Park, and concluded that further leash control restrictions might be needed in future, a conclusion we support. That report should be updated now.
2. Require and enforce that all dogs in the Park be on a leash.
3. Modify Saanich bylaws to prohibit dogs from entering creeks, tributaries, ponds, marshes and wetlands in the Park.
4. Restrict the number of dogs under a single person's control when walking in the Park to a maximum of three dogs.

7 Communication Facility

The communication facility located near the summit of Mount Douglas exists as a trespass against the Park, the original Crown grant and the Trust. Its existence is inconsistent with the natural park setting. The only benefit to the Park is the revenue, which can contribute to the expansion and enhancement of the Park.

Goal: To preserve the Park in its natural state without human intrusions other than trails.

Policies:

1. To remove the communications facility, along with all visible indications of its existence when technology advances make the facility obsolete.
2. The original trust of 1889 must apply to the entire Park, including the communications site while it remains.
3. Control the current temporary use of the communication facility.

- Saanich Council has limited the use of the facility to government emergency services and cellular telephone services. There must be no other commercial use of this facility.
 - Minimize the number of microwave disks on the tower by prohibiting the use of the facility as a microwave node for any service.
 - Require each user to regularly provide justification for their continued use of the facility.
4. Keep modifications to the communication facility in harmony with the natural setting of the Park.
- Do not increase the size of the single tower or add new towers.
 - Changes to the tower antenna arrays must not increase (and preferably lessen) the visibility of the structure.
 - Visitors to this area expect a natural setting without man-made noise. Ensure there is no noise emanating from the facility building. Muffle air conditioning and fan noise, ensuring levels are below one sone.
 - The facility building must remain hidden as much as possible.
 - Bury service lines for power and communication.

8 The Summits

Goal: To preserve the natural character of the summits.

8.1 Main Summit

Goal: To preserve its status as the primary tourist summit destination.

This summit trail is paved and has a 360 degree panorama at the summit.

Policies:

1. Support a summit area plan that preserves natural areas while providing well defined access trails to rock bluffs enjoyed by visitors.

Implementation:

1. Make this summit the obvious destination for casual arrivals.
2. Repair existing asphalt path to summit, specifically the broken steps.
3. Create and protect defined natural area preservation zones on summit.
4. Consolidate the parking, warning signs and other signs near trail start.

8.2 East Summit

Despite the intrusion of the transmitter tower, the east summit is quiet and relatively untouched and is more rugged and isolated. It requires attention to reduce environmental damage caused by careless visitors.

Goal: To maintain and preserve as a more natural, rugged and secluded summit.

Implementation:

1. Restore the east summit, as far as possible, to its original natural state.
2. The trail from the summit parking area across the rocks to this summit has been damaged by ad hoc trails, as has the summit plateau. These areas need restoration.
 - a. Improve the trail from the summit parking lot to the east summit.
 - b. Create a well defined trail on the summit.
 - c. Create and protect defined natural area preservation zones on summit.

8.3 Summit Parking Area

Goal: Provide limited visitor parking along with an entrance to the observation deck and summits.

Policies:

1. Support measures that enhance the summit parking area as a more park-like natural environment with restoration planting.
2. Ensure the continued health of adjacent trees; plant additional large trees and vegetation.

Implementation:

The main summit has a paved trail while the east summit trail is in the rugged category. Configure summit parking lot and observation deck to make the Main Summit Lookout the primary destination for casual visitors while discouraging them from accessing the east summit.

1. Provide an information kiosk near main summit trail start that is consistent with the kiosk at bottom of Churchill Drive.
2. Create a trail along the west side of the parking area that connects the observation deck with the new kiosk and the summit trail. Consider cutting a new access in the deck wall.
3. Create a trail that connects the observation deck at the southwest corner of the parking area with the main summit trail.
4. Protect roadside vegetation by prohibiting overflow parking along the Churchill Drive shoulders.

8.4 Minor Summits

There are two minor summit areas in the Park. Little Mount Douglas and a large, but less pronounced summit area bounded by the Tod and Mercer Trails.

Goal: Protect these minor summit areas and their natural environment as special places in the Park.

Implementation – Little Mt. Doug:

1. Monitor summit area and be proactive in preserving its natural state.
2. Improve the southern trail only to make it safe, control erosion and stop trail spread.
3. Control water erosion on northern trail. Cut steps in slippery rock sections.

Implementation – Tod / Mercer Area

This is a large open Garry Oak area with many beautiful moss covered rocks covering the higher sections. Many years ago the eastern section was cleared of broom at considerable expense. Subsequently the western area has been cleared of invasives resulting in a beautiful area with natural vegetation and ground nesting birds. Many ad hoc trails are evidence that people and dogs roam anywhere.

1. Create and protect defined natural area preservation zones for this entire area.
2. Determine appropriate access trails, by enhancing existing trails or creating entirely new trails.
3. Close ad hoc trails.

9 Mount Douglas & PKOLS

Some First Nations refer to this mountain as PKOLS. There is nothing wrong with multiple names, there are examples of this such as Lake Constance and Bodensee both referring to the large lake bordering Germany, Austria and Switzerland and in Saanich there is Glencoe Cove / Kwatsech Park and Craigflower / Kosapsom Park.

The possible conflicting narratives between Mt. Tolmie PKAALS and Mount Douglas PKOLS should be reconciled by First Nations.

It needs to be recognized that the Park name is distinct from the mountain name. If Sir James Douglas had not made the park designation, we would likely see housing developments on all sides of the mountain.

10 Soundscape

There are several areas in the Park where automotive and other urban sounds are not heard, the largest area being the plateau on the north side of the Park. These might well be the only such areas in Saanich.

Goal: Protect the unique Park soundscape from urban noise.

Policy:

1. Improve awareness of the soundscape and inform people about its value, especially the areas free of urban noise.
2. Actively oppose any changes to Cordova Bay Road or surroundings that might degrade the soundscape quiet sections on the north side that are free of traffic noise.

11 Roads

The ambiance along the road in the Park provides many of the motoring public with their initial, and in some cases, only impression of the Park. This can influence their respect and support for the Park.

Experience suggests that roadside litter encourages more litter, whereas a clean roadside tends to stay clean. Similarly, no one wants to be the first to park or drive over natural vegetation growing close to the road edge, but there is less hesitation to be the second.

The urban to natural park transition is exemplified by the "Mount Douglas Park Way", the Cordova Bay Road protected tree canopy, the Glendenning Road approach and prior removal of poles and wires along Ash to allow restoration of the tree canopy.

Goal:

- To emphasize the natural park setting along all existing road sections in the park.
- Support an urban to natural park transition zone on all road approaches to the Park.

Policy:

1. All roads in the Park should provide exceptional park-like experiences. Road edge boundaries should be pavement abutting natural vegetation with no intervening bare earth. It must be noted that road sections with curbs achieve excellent road to nature boundaries.

The natural park native vegetation should be as close to the road edge as possible. Wide gravel shoulders to support the asphalt road edge should be kept to a minimum in the Park. Consideration should be given to other alternatives for road edge support that allow vegetation growth. In areas where the vegetation has been damaged, native species should be planted.

2. Protect road overhead tree canopies.
3. Keep road edges free of litter.
4. Prohibit road edge parking along all roads in and adjacent to the Park unless specifically designated as road side parking.

Implementation:

1. Schedule "B" to Tree Preservation bylaw, 2014, No. 9272 protects the Trees forming canopy over the road for Mt Douglas Corridor Trees (Significant Tree Area from Shelbourne Street to 4550 Cordova Bay Road). Extend section 9272 to include Ash Road and Glendenning Road.
2. Stop the canopy tree trimming along Cordova Bay Road in contravention of the Tree Preservation Bylaw. Power lines along Cordova Bay Road running north from the beach parking entrance take a circuitous route to serve only the nearby washroom. Remove these lines and replace them with underground lines under the paved parking lot running direct to the washrooms.
3. Stop the canopy tree trimming along Cedar Hill Road in contravention of the Tree Preservation Bylaw. These lines serve only the beach parking lot area and might be buried under Cedar Hill Road or moved to Ash Road, a shorter distance. (See Utility and Service Lines section)
4. Enhance the road to Park transition, bringing the natural park setting close to the edge of the road.
5. Utilize alternatives to the current one metre shoulder to protect the edge of the asphalt, such as different road edge construction.
6. Where there is no road edge curb, place logs along road pavement edges to protect park vegetation and restrict motor vehicle travel to the paved road.

11.1 Churchill Drive

Mount Douglas is a natural park and Churchill Drive is a paved intrusion into this natural setting, but it does exist and does satisfy the access needs for some.

During the hours when Churchill Drive is closed to vehicular traffic, it has become an overwhelming success and extremely popular among walkers heading to the summit and back, especially when the trails are wet. One often sees parents with young children along with various types of baby strollers being pushed. During car-free periods, people enjoy healthy exercise, free from motor vehicles.

Over time, the number of walkers has increased and will continue to increase. In response, more time should be reserved to allow people to enjoy the park without motor vehicle noise, fumes and safety concerns.

Goal: Enhance the non-motorized user experience.

Policies:

Shift the emphasis on Churchill Drive from serving motor vehicles to one that favours non-motorized use.

1. Increase car-free hours on Churchill Drive.

2. Enhance priority for non-motorized users.
3. Enforce 25 kmh speed limit along Churchill Drive.
4. Implement traffic-calming measures, especially near lower parking lot.
5. Prohibit parking anywhere along Churchill Drive except in designated locations.
6. Do not salt Churchill Drive.
7. Do not plow snow on Churchill Drive - Recognize the historical use of this road for sledding and tobogganing after snowfalls.

Implementation:

1. Revisit the hours when walkers can enjoy this car free opportunity versus when motorists can drive to the summit taking into consideration the significant increase of walkers on the road. Specifically, extend the car-free time until 2:00 pm daily.
2. Discourage after dark dumping by changing closure time to daily at dusk (end of civil twilight – when it's too dark to read without artificial light).
3. The poor road condition is a built-in traffic-calming measure. Therefore, let the road merely be patched as required
4. Along its route to the summit, Churchill Drive has several steep, curving sections that are shaded during winter months resulting in 2 °C lower temperatures. These areas are subject to black ice or snow accumulation even when lower sections are quite dry. Limit public motor vehicle travel on Churchill Drive during such periods. Because the Parks department cannot monitor road conditions on a daily basis, apply seasonal closures of the road as was the practice prior to as well as the first many years it was a Saanich park.

11.2 Cordova Bay Road

Cordova Bay Road, like the transmitter site, exists as a trespass against the Park, the original Crown grant and the Trust. Its existence is inconsistent with the natural park setting, which must be preserved. According to the Bass Commission, the original road construction was illegal. The road was fixed in its present location when the park was transferred to Saanich from the Province.

Viewed in isolation, no road should run through the Park because of the serious and recognized potential for environmental damage, as well as damage to the many natural values of the Park including its unique soundscape, and because it is in conflict with the original Park grant. However, Cordova Bay Road does exist and the Society supports policies that minimize the impact on the surroundings while providing a safe traveling environment for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Saanich Engineering Services and its consultants have predicted that cliff erosion will cause sections of the road through the Park to collapse without

remedial action. In consultation with the interested parties, a plan of action has been developed (the Sandwell report), which the Society supports.

Goal: According to the Park Charter, the integrity and the character of the Park has priority, so Cordova Bay Road and any future remedial efforts must support, and not compromise, that character.

Policy:

1. Do not move the road from its present location as fixed by the Province when the Park was transferred to Saanich.
2. Support the Sandwell Engineering report for stabilization of the cliffs while enhancing the beach and foreshore.

Implementation:

1. While the road still exists, institute measures that better support the adjacent natural environment and support the public's enjoyment of the environment through traffic-calming measures to reduce speeds and traffic volumes through the Park (e.g. reinstate the 40 kph limit through the Park, maintain the road weight restrictions).
2. If and when qualified and objective engineers determine that the road has become unsafe for general traffic and too costly to maintain, it will be closed permanently and the land returned to the park.

11.3 Ash Road, Cedar Hill Road

Implementation:

1. Eliminate impromptu pullout and parking areas along these roads.
2. Remove power lines along Cedar Hill Road. Either bury them or possibly bury them under Ash Road (shorter distance).

11.4 Ash, Cedar Hill, Cordova Bay Roads and Beach Park Entrance Intersection

This intersection involves many conflicting automotive, cycling and pedestrian movements. The large number of jay-walkers crossing from the beach area to the upper park highlight the need for a safe crosswalk here.

Policy: Provide a safe crossing area for walkers while improving vehicular movements for motor vehicles and for cyclists.

Implementation:

1. Work with Saanich Engineering to develop a more functional intersection of the three roads and the Park entrance.
2. Include a pedestrian crossing in a redesigned intersection with an adjacent bus stop.

3. Consider a roundabout at this intersection taking care that it functions for cyclists.

11.5 Pedestrian Crossings

Concerns have been expressed that some pedestrians take dangerous advantage of crosswalks and enter them without due caution. Conversely, some vehicle drivers take dangerous advantage of unmarked but legal crosswalks by not stopping for pedestrians attempting to cross at valid trail crossings. A marked crosswalk provides the additional safety benefit of concentrating road crossing walkers at one safe location, especially where there are many jay-walking locations.

Goal: Provide safe passage to park trail users at all trail – road crossings.

Implementation:

1. Construct the following crossings:
 - Douglas Trail at Ash Road (Likely requires pedestrian activated flashing lights)
 - Cedar Hill Road halfway between Churchill Drive and Ash Road
 - Near the beach parking lot entrance for access to the main Park and the transit stop
 - Mercer trailhead across Blenkinsop Road

12 Creeks, Ponds and Wetlands

Several water features scattered throughout the Park significantly contribute to the natural environment. These features include Douglas Creek, tributaries, ponds, marshes, wetlands and seeps. If properly protected and preserved, these water features will contribute to the welfare of birds and animals and enjoyment of the public.

Goal: To preserve and enhance Douglas Creek, tributaries, ponds, marshes, wetlands and seeps as an integral component of the wilderness preserve.

Policies:

1. Prohibit entry to ponds, wetlands and seeps by people or dogs.
2. Include protection and preservation enhancements of Park water features that would improve their natural function and their visual appeal. (Note that this has been successfully completed with the weir pond, with tributaries one, two and three and with the tributary one pond.)

Implementation:

1. Establish an inventory identifying, mapping and describing ponds and wetlands.

2. In addition to entry prohibition, provide physical mechanisms such as boardwalks, fencing and signage to protect tributaries, ponds, wetlands and seeps where people or dogs might illegally enter them.
3. Modify Saanich bylaws to prohibit dogs from entering creeks, tributaries, ponds, marshes and wetlands in the Park.

12.1 Douglas Creek

Restoration of Douglas Creek has enhanced its ecological value to the Park as a successful salmon spawning creek, and also as a beautiful Park natural feature to be enjoyed by the public. The creek riparian area and creek banks need protection from off-trail people and dogs. Controlled methods of viewing and enjoying the creek need to be provided.

Goal: To maintain and enhance Douglas Creek as a salmon spawning stream and as a beautiful Park asset.

Policy:

1. Provide ample viewing locations along the trail for the public to appreciate and enjoy the creek.
2. Protect the creek riparian zone vegetation from off-trail people and dogs.
3. Protect the creek banks from erosion, often caused by loss of stabilizing vegetation or by off-trail dogs or walkers descending towards the creek.

Many Saanich residents and Park visitors are unaware that Douglas Creek is a successful salmon spawning stream containing cutthroat trout along with young salmon at various stages of development during most of the year.

Implementation: Install more interpretive signs providing information about the creek, the fish and threats to this ecological feature.

12.1.1 Douglas Creek Habitat

Past municipal engineering practices have made Douglas Creek part of the municipal drainage system, with altered hydrology and degraded water quality. Recent efforts to restore the Creek to its natural functioning state requires the following policies:

Policies:

1. Ensure that the quality and quantity of the water reaching the creek from the watershed is controlled to ensure the salmon spawning habitat is sustained.
2. Take steps to require residents to reduce or eliminate storm water leaving their property. This can be achieved with water discharge levy techniques, by taxing non-permeable surfaces, by utilizing dry wells, by disconnecting gutter downspouts, by installing rain gardens or other reduction techniques.

3. Actively support efforts to protect creek spawning beds and creek banks from storm surge damage, including watershed management actions that reduce storm surge volumes.
4. Consider altering the watershed storm water pipe system to reduce storm water surges by constructing an overflow bypass system or systems. It is possible to divert a portion of the storm water so it does not enter Douglas Creek.
5. Actively pursue opportunities to daylight the Creek upstream of the Park.
6. Research has established that road runoff is toxic for salmon, but simple filtering through sand and earth mixtures reduces this toxicity. There are now filter technologies suitable for catch basins or for filtering water from several basins. Work with Saanich engineering to implement a storm water filter system.
7. Whenever development or roadwork is planned in the watershed, install catch basins, rain gardens and swales to ensure naturally-functioning water flow, so that water of good quality enters the Creek. Addressing storm water quality that is destined for Douglas Creek must be a priority.
8. Involve the community in watershed restoration and stewardship of the Creek and the adjacent riparian ecosystem
9. Ensure Park management priorities support a fully functioning riparian and aquatic ecosystem.

Implementation:

1. Continue creek restoration, introduction of fry, parr and carcasses until there are self-sustaining stocks of salmonids using the creek.
2. Require any development in the watershed to have zero storm water release. The current policy states only that there must not be an increase in storm water release from a property with new development. Other communities have achieved this.
3. Identify sources of water to maintain summer creek flow. Anecdotally there are three springs in the watershed. Take action to determine the validity of this and if true, take action to preserve these sources.

12.1.2 Hydrometric Stations

There are two hydrometric stations along Douglas Creek that continuously measure and record water flow levels, water temperature and water pH.

The hydrometric station at Ash Road was established by the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society in 1998 and has functioned more-or-less continuously since then. It is an important installation, because it records the changes in hydrology in the Creek over time. These parameters are critical because they record baseline measurements as well as the results of changes in the watershed.

A second hydrometric station at the creek weir was established in 2016 by the CRD in conjunction with our Society. This station measures water flow volumes, temperature and pH.

Goal: To maintain the hydrometric collection stations as a primary source of objective data related to the salmon habitat.

12.1.3 Weir, Pollutant Separator

Goal: To support the weir concept as an interceptor for floating pollutants and its storage pond as a creek enhancement that also provides for settlement of suspended sediments.

Implementation:

The weir and pond are significant man-made features in the Park. The pond slows water velocity so that suspended material has a chance to settle instead of flowing into the creek itself. The weir is intended as an oil interceptor, but it only works during low water flow times and fails during overflow surges.

1. Redesign and reconstruct the weir to meet those purposes, specifically to address when the water and pollutants simply flow over the weir.
2. Trap rubbish so that it is not continually littering the Creek, the beach, and the marine environment.
3. Monitor with a system of data sheets (so that weekly inspections will represent conditions over time) and a spill recording system created so that spills can be tracked.

13 Beach, Shoreline, Foreshore

Besides serving as a sandy, walkable connecting link (of a kind unique in Saanich) between Gordon Head and Cordova Bay, the beach is an outstanding example of a functioning coastal ecosystem. The eroding cliff face, the dynamic beach, the intertidal zone, and the sub-tidal zone complete an outstanding suite of interrelated systems in the Park.

Goal: To maintain the beach in a natural state as a major community asset with connectivity to the Cordova Bay Beach.

Policies:

1. Vigorously support the conservation of this ecosystem.
2. Manage the beach with a 'nature knows best' philosophy. Management initiatives that are deemed necessary must be based on solid ecosystem management principles
3. Halt the homogenization and simplification of marine ecosystems associated with the beach. Therefore:
 - reduce effluent in the Creek

- establish and enforce a “no-take zone” so that shellfish, seaweed, plants, rocks and souvenirs are not removed from the beach.

Implementation:

1. Install the new Saanich interpretive sign called “Natural Shoreline, Natural Treasure”.
2. Catalogue the rich biodiversity of the intertidal and sub-tidal zones.

14 Special Events, Permits

Special events include use of the picnic area by organized groups, bicycle hill climb time trials restricted to Churchill Drive, or other group events.

A permit system provides a mechanism to convey Saanich park expectations to permittees, to obtain feedback, especially from those doing research, to develop a profile of park use and to control usage and access (e.g. reserve picnic area). Currently the permit system is not well-defined and certainly not known by Park users.

Goal: To allow Park use for events consistent with the Park setting.

Policies:

Saanich Parks Department should control special events or group events using a permit system with clear policies regarding Park use including provisos such as:

1. The requirement and expectations for a park use permit must be well-defined. The public must be aware of the permit requirement.
2. At the conclusion of the event, no trace of the event should remain in the Park.
3. Limit events in the natural areas of the Park to those that are consistent with and support these natural areas.
4. Limit signs advertising or marking the event. Specific advertising locations should be specified at the time of permit issuance.
5. Nothing should be attached to trees, especially nails used to attach signs.
6. Require permits for research, educational and other events in the Park. The permit should require follow-up documentation describing the result for the subsequent use by others.

15 Playground

Goal: To maintain the recreation area at its present size and location.

16 Old Quarry

In 1998, Saanich Council provided a grant to study the restoration of the old quarry in the Park on the edge of Cordova Bay Road. The study, completed in February 1999, calls for sequenced restoration. Some of this restoration has taken place but future work on this plan has been blocked by engineering installation of a drainage system.

Goal: To make this site consistent with, and an asset to, the natural park that surrounds it.

Implementation:

1. Restore quarry according to plan.

17 4550 Cordova Bay Road (The “Motel”)

Although no longer operating as a motel at 4550 Cordova Bay Road, many of the same issues remain. Specifically, the southern parking area and a portion of the driveway is 100% within the Park. There is also a large boat stored in the Park.

Goal: To reclaim and restore all lands in the park boundary that have been used by the 4550 Cordova Bay Road property owners.

Implementation:

The current operation at 4550 Cordova Bay Road encroaches on the Park.

Initial action should include:

1. Since the parking, driveway and boat storage encroachments remain, there must be provision of some benefit to the Park in exchange for temporary use of the encroached area in addition to rent for that land use. Define a termination date or a renewal date such as three years. Temporary use of the parking by 4550 Cordova Bay Road, which is 100% within the Park, might be accomplished by enabling public access to and use of the parking area. For example, remove the “Private Drive” sign, install a “Mount Douglas Park public parking” sign at the access from Cordova Bay Road and limit parking to 2 hours.
2. Removal of any and all non park related materials, including the boat, stored in the Park.

18 Information and Recognition

Goal: To balance the benefit provided by non-natural man-made features against respect for the natural environment.

18.1 Interpretive Signs, Plaques, Cairns & Monuments

Any proposed interpretive sign in Mount Douglas Park must first be determined to be consistent with the Park Charter, must provide a clear enhancement to the natural park experience, blend in harmoniously with the landscape without detracting from the Park, its ambiance and character and invite reflection about Park values.

Many individuals and groups have deep attachment to the Park, and many of them have made, and will make in future, major contributions to it. However, permanent physical markers describing these contributions, ultimately detract from the Park's core values, original dedication and are not consistent with the Park Charter.

Policies:

1. Interpretive signs should be minimized, consolidated and be of current value to park users. Redundant and obsolete signage should be removed.
2. Plaques, other than the Park Charter and the current summit map wheel, should be limited to benches (See Park Furniture and Memorials sections) and never used as recognition for donations, events or achievements.
3. Cairns, monuments or memorials are non-natural structures and detract from the natural park setting. There is no rationale for them in the Park.
4. Minimal corporate logos may appear, in special cases, as a footnote on interpretive signs.
5. Signs not installed according to these policies are non-conforming and should be removed.

18.2 Park Furniture

Appropriately sited and designed benches can enhance enjoyment of the Park.

It should be noted that the Park capacity for benches with plaques has essentially been reached. If existing bench plaques do not have a defined lifetime or expiry date, there is little or no future opportunity for new dedications.

Goal: To provide a limited number of strategically located benches throughout the park.

Policies:

1. Maintain the present bench style.
2. Determine the installation location through consultation.
3. Support the current Park furniture program that includes non-memorial plaque wording.

4. Plaque messages may not be personal epitaphs but convey a general sense of welcome and inclusiveness.
5. The bench will be maintained for ten years, after which it may be renewed once for another ten years. At the completion of its term, an attempt will be made to return the plaque to the donor.

18.3 Memorials

Saanich Parks has discontinued the practice of allowing memorials on benches and has replaced that program with a broader Park furniture program. The Park furniture benches are similar to the old memorial program but the plaque inscription is now of a more generic welcome message and is no longer a memorial.

Goal: Prohibit memorials in the Park.

Currently there are two categories of memorial Park benches. Those that were donated prior to the 2008 implementation of the Park's 10 year policy ("grandfathered" bench memorials) and those donated after the policy change. Those donated under the 10 year policy will automatically expire 10 years from the donation date, with one possible renewal. For grandfathered bench memorials, the donation agreement was silent with regards to their lifetime.

Policies:

Over time, eliminate existing Park bench memorials:

1. Plaques installed prior to the Saanich ten year limit shall expire in 2018 (ten years after the Park's 10 year policy was enacted in 2008.) with one potential renewal. This likely will require Council support.
2. The only form of commemorative naming in the Park shall be trails already named after early settlers.

18.4 Donations

Goal: Provide a mechanism for recognizing significant donations that enhance the Park.

Policies:

1. Donations or contributions, where recognition is desirable, are best acknowledged by newspaper articles, newsletters or thank you letters. In exceptional cases recognition should be integrated in the interpretive signage program, not through individual signs and never with a plaque, cairn or monument.

19 Utility and Service Lines

The power lines in the Park extending from Churchill Drive along Cedar Hill Road to the beach parking lot entrance and then 100 m north along Cordova Bay

Road serve only the beach parking area washrooms and overhead street lights. They serve no other purpose or other area.

Goal: To bury all utility and service lines that cannot be removed.

Implementation:

Actions to bury overhead power and communication lines must recognize that burial must avoid tree root damage.

1. Along Cedar Hill and Cordova Bay Road, remove all overhead lines. This might be accomplished in several phases:
 - Lines serving the beach parking lot building follow a circuitous route from the beach parking entrance overhead for 100 m north along Cordova Bay Road, then into the Park near the children's play area then finally underground back south to the washroom building.
Bury lines serving the beach parking lot building and sewer pump station: remove overhead lines along Cordova Bay Road currently serving this facility and replace them with lines buried under the beach parking lot directly to the washroom building (buried distance is slightly more than 100 m).
 - Remove power lines along Cedar Hill Road between Churchill Drive and beach parking lot entrance and replace them with buried lines possibly entering along Ash Road (assuming that this would be less costly than the current route because of the shorter distance).
2. Power and communication lines serving the summit: Consider these lines in two sections; the lower section in the treed area and the upper section that is visible from Gordon Head.
 - Bury service lines for power and communication. If changes to the existing lines are required, bury them.
 - Lower section: Currently there is pressure to trim trees in an effort to protect the lines. Burying them would remove this pressure.
 - Upper section: The telephone poles are unsightly against the skyline, and inappropriate in the natural park setting.

20 Park Vegetation

Not all Park visitors adhere to the true spirit of the “Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints” philosophy. Even leaving nothing but footprints can be problematic. Even a few off-trail footprints can trample sensitive plants and make a new trail. This problem is addressed in the Trails section.

Friendly reminders of the relevant by-laws have had limited success, as some people continue harvesting mushrooms or fiddlehead ferns even when informed. Evenings and weekends bylaw enforcement is not available.

Goal: To preserve and enhance the existing natural ecosystems.

Implementation:

1. Saanich Parks to take action to enforce prohibitions on illegal collection of native plants in the Park. Consider installation of multi-lingual signage.
2. Provide municipal enforcement to directly interact with those illegally collecting plants. This enforcement must be available on weekends and evenings and supported by citations and the court system.
3. Provide an official park personnel presence (Ambassadors, Interpretive Guides, Parks staff) at random hours on random days to further educate the public.

20.1 Plantings

Mount Douglas Park's old growth forest has some of the biggest Douglas firs on the South Island providing an important component of the Park's natural setting. The preservation of dying and decaying trees forms an integral part of this ecosystem. It is also recognized that some plantings in the Park are desirable for restoration of the natural ecosystems.

Goal: To ensure that all restorative planting is consistent with the Park's natural ecosystem.

Policies:

1. Plant only indigenous species, recognizing that climate change might alter the choice.
2. Trees that must be topped or cut down must be left in situ (see bylaw) as Wildlife Trees unless they are actually blocking a designated (named) trail.
3. Decisions to remove native trees should only be made in consultation between Saanich and the Friends of Mount Douglas Park.
4. Maintain a species inventory (endangered and otherwise).
5. Prohibit specific recognition, especially plaques, for donated trees.

20.2 Garry Oak

Goal: To support the restoration, health and retention of the Garry Oak ecosystem.

20.3 Invasive Species

Non-native or introduced species thrive in our local climate, displacing native vegetation, damaging the natural ecosystems, and depriving native wildlife of food sources. Invasive species in the Park include English Ivy, Scotch Broom,

Himalayan Blackberry, Garlic Mustard, Daphne, English Holly and numerous non-native garden escapees.

Serious threats to the Park's natural environment come from invasive plant species grown on neighbouring private properties and from illegal dumping of garden waste. Such waste often contains bulbs, seeds, and root remnants of non-native plants that germinate and spread from the original dump site and simply cannot be completely removed from the Park. These invasives are some of the biggest threats to the Park's natural environment.

Control of certain invasive species can be beyond the manual methods used by volunteers. Where these manual methods are ineffective in controlling a particular invasive species, then best practices may dictate the careful application of a treatment by trained staff. We support this approach by Saanich or CRD staff.

Goal: To remove all invasive species in the Park.

Implementation:

1. Maintain an invasive species report card indicating the extent and nature of the problem.
2. Maintain an on-going record of success in areas cleared of invasives.
3. Take action to eliminate dumping of garden waste in the Park by informing adjacent lands owners and providing contact numbers if such dumping is observed.

21 Park Fauna

The Park fauna includes mammals (deer, raccoons, squirrels, otters and other small mammals), birds (Eagles, Turkey Vultures, woodpeckers, seagulls, ducks, ravens, crows and many others) and aquatic life (salmon, cutthroat trout and invertebrates) to name a few.

Not included are non feral animals such as released domestic rabbits.

Goal: To preserve and protect natural fauna inhabiting the Park.

Policy:

1. Monitor, protect and preserve habitat for birds, animals and aquatic life.
2. Take action to prevent threats to inhabitant survival, including intrusions by visitors or pets.

There are several varieties of ground nesting birds in the Park that are vulnerable to disturbance. The months from April through July are the most common nesting months and the most critical times for bird survival. Visitors off-trail can disturb these nests, but off-leash dogs are a greater threat.

Quail and pheasants used to be seen on the Park neighbourhood boundaries, but free roaming pet cats seem to have eradicated them.

The natural hunting instincts of many dogs is also a threat to the Park animals. Dogs will pick up and follow a scent to the detriment of the source animal.

Implementation:

1. Develop an inventory of Park fauna. For birds, this might consist of a viewer's guide to where in the Park to best view the birds and at what time of year is optimal for viewing.
2. Educate the public about how to protect animals and their habitats in the Park.
3. Require dog owners to keep their pets on a leash.
4. Require the control of free roaming cats.

22 Volunteers

Saanich Parks supports a Pulling Together program, but its scope is invasive plant centric and does not adequately address the wide range of volunteer work in the Park. The most obvious gap is associated with the many facets of creek monitoring and restoration.

We note the current Pulling Together program operates independently and does not function as a partner with our Society on what should be joint efforts.

Volunteers working in conjunction with Saanich on any project in the Park should be afforded the same liability and insurance protection as on a Pulling Together project.

23 Park Ambassadors, Interpretive Guides

Despite kiosks, Park maps and trail sign posts, many visitors would benefit from general Park information (Yes, Salmon return annually to spawn in Douglas Creek, Yes, there is a GPS map of the Park, Yes, a soundscape study has identified many car noise free regions in the Park) or guidance as to which trails are best suited for their desired experience and for their ability.

For some visitors, reminders not to take plants or reasons to stay on the trail instead of breaking a new trail are of value. Or informing cyclists it is OK to ride up Churchill Drive, but is not OK to ride the trails on a bicycle.

An on-site presence of Ambassadors or Guides would offer value to Park visitors while contributing to the appreciation and preservation of the Park. The presence of ambassadors could be related to peak visitor times throughout the week.

Goal: Support a Park Ambassador or Interpretive Guide presence in the Park using trail counts as a scheduling guide.

24 Enforcement

Park Ambassadors along with etiquette and bylaw information should be highlighted in educating the public about the Park, its value, how to preserve it and avoiding threats to the Park. Though education is important, enforcement is also needed.

Goal: Provide by-law and other law enforcement as needed to protect public safety, ecological health of the Park and to comply with Saanich bylaws.

Policy: Recognize that Saanich's policy of voluntary bylaw compliance is not sufficient and that active enforcement is required.

25 Future Park Preservation, Capacity (Looking at the Future)

CRD and Municipal long range plans project an increase in population and density in the Park “catchment area”. The increased density resulting from a shift from single family homes with yards to multi-family buildings with minimal shared “yards” likely will mean a significant decrease in available green space for residents. The combination of population increase coupled with less outdoor green space will put considerable additional pressure on the few remaining natural areas like Mount Douglas Park.

One might envisage two possible diverse futures for the Park. One extreme would accommodate increased visitors with little regard to the preservation of the natural Park environment contrary to the original crown grant of 1889 and of the 1992 Saanich Council Park Charter. Another choice would ensure the Park remains as a wilderness preserve consistent with the crown grant and Council proclamation. The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society strongly supports this alternative through thoughtful planning and diligent action by Saanich and the community.

The latter of these two choices can be achieved if trails are carefully managed, visitors are kept on designated trails and creation of ad hoc unofficial trails is avoided. This will require better education and a change in enforcement by Saanich.

Goal: Establish long term polices that directly support the original crown grant of 1889 and the 1992 Council Mount Douglas Park Charter directives that reserves in perpetuity the protection and preservation of the natural environment as a wilderness preserve for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public recognizing potential pressures from increased population.

Policy: Encourage Saanich Parks to work with Saanich Planning, engineering, the Capital Regional District, Ministry of Environment, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Friends of Mount Douglas Park and others to effect this goal.

26 Board of Directors 2017

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27 Membership Application

Send \$20.00 for a four year membership and this form to

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society
P.O. Box 31002 #301-3980 Shelbourne St.
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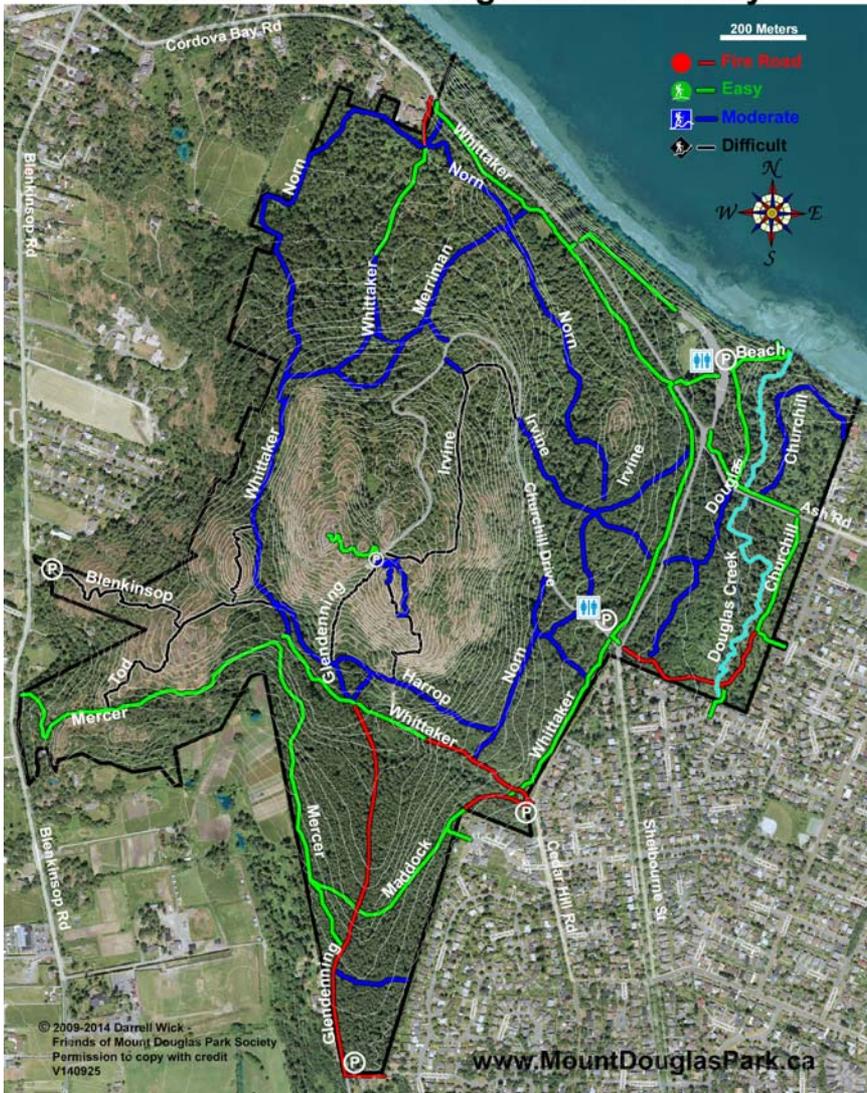
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Donations accepted with thanks!

28 Trail Map

Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society



07/30/2017