



# LIGHTHOUSE PARK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

February, 2012

#17  
www.lpps.ca

## President's Message

by Alexandra Mancini

I would like to thank all our enthusiastic volunteers for another great year in 2011. We collectively spent about 740 hours on invasive plant removal and restoration activities. Lighthouse, North Piccadilly and Caulfeild Parks are much improved for all our efforts.

North Piccadilly Park received particular focus in 2011, with group events led by Dr. Richard Beard, our neighborhood liaison. Significant headway was made removing ivy from areas east of Claymore Creek and one area was replanted in November with native plants provided by the Lighthouse Park Preservation Society. Fortunately, most of this park is expected to recover naturally without replanting. We will continue clearing ivy there on Saturday, March 3rd.

In August 2010, our Society funded a successful project to remove Japanese knotweed from Caulfeild Park. The District of West Vancouver continued in early September, 2011 with stem injection treatment of other knotweed locations in this park. A major infestation at the south end of Pilot House Road was tackled with impressive initial results, see photos below. Restoration planting will be essential once we have confirmed total eradication of the knotweed. We also made restoration progress at the historic site of the former pilot house and garden; more non-native blackberries, ivy and laburnum seedlings were removed and native understory plants added. A special thank you goes to Ray Bradbury who faithfully watered our new plants throughout their first hot summer!

October brought a significant milestone with the launch of our website [www.lpps.ca](http://www.lpps.ca). Phew, we did it! We welcome your feedback about additional information and features that you would find helpful.

A major highlight last year was our "Take Only Pictures" juried photographic exhibition at the West Vancouver Memorial Library, from November 6, 2011 to January 7, 2012. The goal was to illustrate the diversity and fragility as well as the beauty of West Vancouver's Six-Park Network. In addition to the 25 photographers who took part in the juried exhibition, Roy Edgell kindly loaned us 10 of his remarkable historic photographs of Lighthouse Park. It was standing room only at the opening ceremony. The well-known nature photographer, Ron Long, presented a compilation of the photographs with a highly educational commentary. The day was capped off with the presentation of four People's Choice Awards. Many thanks to Ron Long for his tremendous help with the organization, to Lens & Shutter for their awards, to the Library for their collaboration in hosting this event, to the judges and to all the photographers for their superb photographs! It was especially rewarding to hear from some participants how much they enjoyed exploring the smaller parks like Klootchman and North Piccadilly. The photographs will be posted on our website soon for all to enjoy.



Japanese Knotweed, *Fallopia japonica*, Caulfeild Park, before & after stem injection. Photos: Alexandra Mancini

### Inside this issue:

<i>President's Message</i>	1
<i>Squirrels of Lighthouse Park</i>	2-3
<i>Nature Room</i>	4
<i>Members' Activities</i>	5-6

Lighthouse Park Preservation Society is a membership based non-profit organization formed in 1998 to:

- protect the natural integrity of Lighthouse Park;
- promote public awareness of its natural features;
- and support the development of biological zones near the park boundaries.

President - Alexandra Mancini

Vice-President - Jeff Marliave

Past President - Marja de Jong Westman

Secretary - Areta Sanders

Treasurer - May Loudon

Membership - Aline Brown

Directors:

Elspeth Bradbury

Ed Donaldson

Keith Wade

  
WEST VANCOUVER  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## SQUIRRELS of LIGHTHOUSE PARK

by Keith Wade, Ph.D.

2

In the mostly hidden and nocturnal world of small mammals, squirrels stand out as exceptions — lively, vocal, and inquisitive creatures familiar to everyone. The family to which they belong, the wonderfully named Sciuridae, includes besides the various tree squirrels, ground squirrels, prairie-dogs and chipmunks, the marmots, which are the relative giants of the family. Until quite recently, the only diurnal squirrel to be seen in Lighthouse Park was the native Douglas squirrel or “chickaree”.



Douglas Squirrel, *Tamiasciurus douglasii*

Photo: Keith Wade

This attractive and highly vocal small squirrel is distinguished by its upper brown surfaces and contrasting tawny-orange undersides, the two separated by a black stripe. The under surfaces may be a somewhat paler buff colour in winter. They are active throughout the year, building summer nests or “drays” constructed of bark, moss and twigs high in tree branches but spending winters in more cosy tree cavities. Like most squirrels, they eat a wide variety of plant materials, particularly the seeds of conifer cones, which they energetically cache for later use. Mounds of scales and cone cores discarded on the forest floor are evidence of a squirrel’s favourite eating spot.

In B.C. the Douglas squirrel occurs only in the south coastal mainland, its place being taken everywhere else in the province, including Vancouver Island, by the closely related red squirrel (not to be confused with the much larger and not closely related red squirrel of Europe). These two squirrels are considered “vicariads” meaning that they diverged from a common ancestor sometime in the past.

In the nineteenth century, the eastern grey squirrel, native to eastern North America, was introduced to England to “bring friendliness to its estates and public gardens”. Highly adaptable and “friendly”, the grey squirrel fulfilled this mandate with a vengeance. In 1909 and again in 1914 some grey squirrel were introduced to Stanley Park. Well before the 1960’s they had reached saturation levels but had not strayed appreciably beyond the park boundaries. In a U.B.C. wildlife management course in 1962, we were told that the grey squirrels could not “escape” through the dense urban area bordering the park. How wrong this pronouncement turned out to be, for in the next decade the animals became well established in many Vancouver suburbs and by the 1970’s were appearing on the north shore. For a time I wondered how they had made their way over here. Then around 15 years ago, I mentioned the mystery to an environmental science class I was teaching at Capilano College. A student approached me after class and told me she had worked at a wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centre off the North Shore, where it was common practice to ask volunteers to release healthy animals in wooded areas near their

homes. She had personally released grey squirrels on the north shore a few years earlier. This species now thrives everywhere on the north shore.

The eastern grey squirrel is larger than the Douglas squirrel and in a different genus, and thus not closely related. It has several distinct “morphs” — the grey, the black and the increasingly common grizzled form. Like the spirit bear, two colour morphs may occur in the same litter. The grey morph is much more common in eastern North America, while the black morph is more common here. The better concealment value of black in our more somber landscapes has been suggested as a possible reason.

In England the native red squirrel declined to near extinction as the grey interlopers’ populations rapidly increased. My wife and I moved to the north shore in 1969 where we live on the edge of a forested ravine. We saw and heard Douglas squirrels daily until the arrival of their bigger cousins many years later. Now Douglas squirrels are a rare sight, while black and grey moochers are here virtually all the time. The obvious conclusion is that the newcomers have displaced the native species. Exactly how they would do this is not at all obvious as overt competition is very difficult to observe and document, and the results to measure. However, it is known that two species cannot use the same basic resources in the same area, or in other words occupy the same niche. One species inevitably gains the upper hand. The Douglas and the eastern grey squirrel, it seems clear, do not occupy exactly the same niche. The Douglas squirrel is a coniferous forest dweller while the eastern grey squirrel prefers deciduous or mixed forests and is clearly more adaptable to human modified environments.

Northern flying squirrels also live in Lighthouse Park but are very seldom seen because they are active primarily at night. Studies indicate, however, that they are quite numerous. They are beautiful creatures, with soft lustrous grey fur and large dark eyes. Gliding membranes extend from the wrists to the ankles down the length of the body. With arms and legs extended, these membranes allow them to glide 40 or more meters from one tree to another. None of our native squirrels hibernate, but the flying squirrels do snuggle together in small groups in a single nest on cold winter days.

Another member of the squirrel family found in Lighthouse Park, is the active little northwestern chipmunk, an animal much more often encountered in our north shore mountains. Like other chipmunks, the northwestern chipmunk has horizontal stripes on both its head and body, has a thinner tail than tree squirrels, is about half the bulk, and tends to forage close to the ground. For a decade or so no chipmunks were seen in Lighthouse Park, but happily in the last couple of years there have been sightings once again.



Northwestern chipmunk, *Tamias amoenus*

Photo: Keith Wade



The Phyl Munday House contains the only nature room in West Vancouver and it is open to the public. Together, the Girl Guides of West Vancouver and West Vancouver Parks staff have created several hands-on activities on the flora and fauna of Lighthouse Park. Since 1988 the nature room has been opened to the public on Sunday afternoons from 2:00—4:00 p.m., hosted by volunteers like Sue Ward, pictured here. During the peak seasons of spring and summer, almost 100 visitors an hour spend time in the nature room.

If you love Lighthouse Park, are interested in nature, and enjoy meeting people from around the world, you could find hosting the nature room a rewarding experience. To volunteer, please contact May Loudon at 604-926-3174, or send an e-mail to [lighthouseparkps@gmail.com](mailto:lighthouseparkps@gmail.com). You will receive a warm welcome and “on the job” training.

Photos: Stan Ward



*For these events, wear sturdy footwear, old clothes and work gloves and bring clippers if possible. For more information go to [www.lpps.ca](http://www.lpps.ca).*

**Saturday, February 11th & Sunday, 12th**

**9:00 a.m. - Noon**

### **Caulfeild Park - Ivy Pull**

Meet at the anchor on Pilot House Road.

LPPS volunteers and Caulfeild Park neighbours are invited to join this event organized by the West Vancouver Parks Dept.

**Saturday, February 18th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

### **Lighthouse/Trails Parks - Ivy Pull**

Meet at the lower kiosk in the parking lot of LHP.

**Saturday, March 3rd, 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

### **North Piccadilly - Ivy Pull**

Meet at the junction of Piccadilly North & Clovelly Walk, north of the railway crossing.

**Saturday, March 17th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

### **Klootchman Park - Ivy Pull**

Meet at the park sign on Howe Sound Lane.

**Saturday, March 31st, 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

### **Caulfeild Park - Planting/Restoration**

Meet at the anchor on Pilot House Road.

**Saturday, April 21st, 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

### **Caulfeild Park - Mulching**

Meet at the anchor on Pilot House Road.

**Saturday, May 12th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon**

### **Lighthouse Park - Broom Pull**

Meet at the upper kiosk in the parking lot.

## MONTHLY BIRD COUNTS

Meet at the upper kiosk in the parking lot in Lighthouse Park on the **first Sunday of every month at**

**8:30 a.m.**—February 5th, March 4th,

**7:30 a.m.**—April 1st, May 6th, June 6th, July 1st, August 5th, September 2nd.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**SATURDAY, JUNE 16th, 2012**

**2:00-3:00 p.m.**

Sk'witsut Hut, Lighthouse Park

followed by guest speaker **3:00—4:00 p.m.**



Pacific White Sided Dolphins , *Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*  
Photo: Kathy Heise

**Kathy Heise**

**“Pacific White-Sided Dolphins:  
aerial acrobats of the B.C. coast”**

Kathy Heise is a graduate student and Research Associate at the Vancouver Aquarium, who became interested in dolphins during the 1980's whilst working as a lighthouse keeper. Her studies involve recording the behaviour of dolphins in captivity and in the wild, most recently documenting the return of white sided dolphins to Howe Sound.

## EDUCATIONAL TALKS &amp; WALKS

River otter, *Lutra canadensis*

Photo: Keith Wade

**“SMALL MAMMALS OF  
LIGHTHOUSE PARK”**

with

Dr. Keith Wade

SATURDAY, MARCH 10th, 2012

2:00—4:00 p.m.

**West Vancouver Memorial Library  
Welsh Hall**

Dr. Keith Wade is an ecologist and biogeographer, who counts Lighthouse Park as one of his favourite places, ever since his “discovery of it in the mid 1950s”. His chief interests and areas of expertise are the broad distribution patterns and evolutionary backgrounds of the world’s flora and fauna, and to that end he has led many natural-history study trips throughout the world, especially Africa, Central & South America.

**“OWLS & HAWKS”**

A presentation by O.W.L.

Saturday, May 5th, 2012

2:00—4:00 p.m.

**Phyl Munday House  
Lighthouse Park**

Many species of owls and hawks occupy the same lower mainland habitats, the owls by night and the hawks by day. Come and learn how these major predators are adapted for survival and how the O.W.L. rehab centre takes care of injured birds of prey. Live birds will be part of this presentation.

Great. Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus*