

Guide Earns \$50,000

Strong sales of the new *BC Marine Parks Guide* are paying off for the B.C. Marine Parks Forever Society (BCMPFS). *Pacific Yachting* presented the BCMPFS with a \$50,000 cheque at the magazine's annual Vancouver Boat Show exhibitors' party. The funds are proceeds from the sale of nearly 5,000 copies of the guide since it was published last October. The BCMPFS is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to acquire land for future parks. Published in partnership by *Pacific Yachting*, the BCMPFS and BC Parks, the guide is a full-colour official reference to more than 80 coastal parks; all net proceeds will go to BCMPFS. Many thanks go to Parks staff, both in Headquarters and in the District, for their assistance in supplying information for the publication and ensuring that the material was accurate.

The book is available for \$16.95 plus taxes at selected chandleries and bookstores, or direct from *Pacific Yachting* (604) 606-4644. □



PHOTO: SEA SNAPS

Pacific Yachting publisher Rex Armstead (right) presents B.C. Marine Parks Forever Society president Keith Stockdale (left) with a cheque for \$50,000, assisted by Vicki Haberl of BC Parks (second from left) and PY editor Duart Snow.



*Undisturbed flood plain ecosystems
Gitnadoix River Provincial Park.*

Ecological Integrity: A Conservation Direction for BC Parks

by Brandin Schultz, Victoria
Ecological Integrity Project Manager

Are we at a crossroads in the conservation, preservation and management of protected areas in British Columbia? Currently there are over 600 parks and ecological reserves now in the system – and more on the way – and almost 12% of the province is classified as a protected area and under the jurisdiction of BC Parks. Now more than ever this organization must subscribe to sound, progressive conservation management principles to adequately conserve and protect the land and environments entrusted to the agency.

Recently, many government agencies and conservation organizations across the globe have begun to recognize that in order to achieve or maintain preservation of biodiversity and natural processes in protected areas, one must effectively manage for ecological integrity as the fundamental objective of the park system.

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Articles from readers are welcome. Deadline for material in the next issue is July 1, 2000.

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("Ecological Integrity..." continued from page 1)

In fact, one of the major conclusions from the final report of the Legacy Panel in 1999 was that the protection and maintenance of the ecological integrity of provincial parks and protected areas should be the priority in managing and planning for British Columbia's protected area system.

In recognition of this message, our agency has initiated a number of new programs, including developing a staff training plan, designed to bring the objective of managing for ecosystem conservation and ecological integrity to the forefront of our park management efforts.

What is ecological integrity?

Ecological integrity refers to whole and complete biological systems, including species, landscape elements, and natural processes. A more technical definition used by Parks Canada suggests that ecological integrity is: "the condition of an ecosystem where the structure and function of the ecosystem are unimpaired by stresses induced by human activity, and the ecosystem's biological diversity and supporting processes are likely to persist". And finally, the 11 member Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks concluded that: "An ecosystem has integrity when it is deemed characteristic for its natural region, including the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes. Ecosystems have integrity when they have their native components (plants, animals and other organisms) and processes (such as growth and reproduction) intact."

How can I learn about ecological integrity?

BC Parks has initiated the design and development of a staff training program scheduled to begin this fall that will inform and educate staff about what ecological integrity is and how we may plan and manage

for it. The intention is to provide staff with the skills and tools to manage for and protect the integrity of the natural and cultural values and features of the park system. As well, it is hoped the course material will be able to better equip personnel with information and material needed to develop and deliver appropriate outreach messages related to ecological integrity.

Why is managing for ecological integrity important?

Given the scale of human influence affecting parks and protected areas, BC Parks must increasingly engage in active management in order to maintain ecological components and processes where they are needed. Human activities and facilities such as roads, urbanization and high levels of visitation in and around parks may have serious consequences on the animal and plant communities that make up these ecosystems. Increasing impact on natural features and biodiversity means declining ecological integrity which means the natural processes and environmental value of the protected area are diminishing as well.

What are some threats to ecological integrity?

Within parks, some infrastructure such as visitor/tourism facilities or road networks tend to remove or fragment wildlife habitat and facilitate potential invasion of exotic species, while high visitor use often leads to a reduction of native species and an increase in foreign species. Outside protected areas, land use practices such as mining, forestry or agriculture can also fragment wildlife habitat, create barriers to natural movement patterns and allow new uncontrolled access points to protected areas. As well, policies of the past and historic practices such as forest fire suppression have interfered with natural systems and resulted in significant changes in the composition of the ecosystem.

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("Ecological Integrity..." continued from page 2)

How can we manage for ecological integrity?

It is important to recognize that parks and protected areas cannot be managed as isolated places within the greater landscape. Few parks are large enough to sustain a complete and functioning ecosystem by themselves. Therefore, managing for ecological integrity requires an ecosystem management approach which recognizes the interconnectedness of ecosystems and their components both within and outside of parks. Managers must also recognize the importance of allowing natural ecosystem processes to take priority over human use or intervention. Information must be collected about the area to establish a baseline and basic understanding of

the various ecosystem components and processes and how they work together. Threats and stresses to the ecological integrity of the park must be identified monitored and assessed. When changes or trends exceed acceptable limits it is likely the ecosystem is experiencing a loss in integrity. As there are limits to the amount of stress and impact an ecosystem can absorb, acceptable uses and activities in each protected area must be determined. Recreational activities, developments and visitor access to protected areas must be evaluated in terms of their impact on ecological integrity and incompatible uses must not be permitted.

Whose job is it to manage for ecological integrity?

Everyone in BC Parks plays an important role in conserving the

biodiversity and natural processes. From proper accounting procedures for monitoring of conservation-related expenditures; to progressive recruitment policies and practices which select highly qualified and knowledgeable personnel; to office staff whom can supply related information directly to the public; to the various staff whom manage, plan, develop and direct the ongoing operational and day to day programs and projects of the agency. Learning about what ecological integrity is and how you can help maintain and protect it is an ongoing process, and a challenging one for every staff member. The ecological integrity project is designed to help with this learning and provide information and guidelines for staff to assist them in this task. □

E-Teams Battle Weeds in Okanagan Parks

by Andrew MacLeod, E-Team Communications

Bull thistle, parasitic dodder, leaf spurge and Russian knapweed are thriving in BC Parks in the South Okanagan-Similkameen. Invasive and tenacious, they've been successful enough to earn a spot on a list of 18 plant species Environment Youth Teams have targeted for removal and control.

Two Legacy E-Team crews organized by Katim Enterprises Ltd. began identifying, mapping and removing weeds May 22, and will continue until the end of July. "Weed invasion can significantly degrade our wild habitat," says Lisa Scott, the environmental consultant contracted to train the crews.

The invading plants – which also include purple loosestrife, thistles, toadflaxes, sulphur cinquefoil and hound's tongue – often out compete native plants, says Scott. Plant biodiversity, wildlife habitat and forage availability can all be reduced.

A crew based in Summerland will

work at Trout Creek, Sun-Oka, Vaseux Lake, Inkameep and Mahoney Lake parks. The second crew, based in Osoyoos, will work in Boundary, Johnstone Creek, Kettle River, Haynes Lease, Haynes Point and Fields Lease parks.

The crews will identify areas where weed control is a high priority, map areas to monitor, and remove dense weed clusters using natural methods. They will also collect seeds from native grasses and help educate local ranchers and the public about weed control.

The effort is part of a new emphasis on conservation for Legacy E-Teams, the branch of the program that employs 16-24 year olds on projects in BC Parks. One-third of the 53 Legacy crews this year will work on conservation projects.

As with all E-Teams, at least 20 per cent of crew time will be spent in training. Along with plant identification, the training schedule for the

Summerland and Osoyoos crews will include tick awareness, cactus avoidance and rattlesnake safety. □



An E-Team crew member receiving "noxious weed identification" training from a MELP representative, in the South Okanagan.

Wildlife Viewing

by Andy Smith, Strathcona District

I cannot think of too many outdoor pursuits that do not have the potential to bring us in contact with wildlife. In fact some, like kayaking, is appealing to many because of the opportunities to view wildlife, such as sea otters, marine birds and whales. Other sports, such as climbing, caving, mountain biking and nordic skiing, just to name a few, while not done for viewing benefits, can still bring you in close proximity to wildlife. As a result, we should consider how our activities affect or impact the wildlife around us.

Most animals see, hear and smell us long before we actually see them. We are sized up and depending on what we are doing and how far away we are, they decide to either defend themselves, monitor you, or high-tail it out of the area. How close is too close? Generally, if you cause wildlife to stop what they are doing, then you have ventured too close. An animal that stops feeding because of a "threat" is wasting valuable time and energy. It is much better to use binoculars, but even still, keep in mind that animals use eye size as one indicator to judge a threat. The bigger the eye, the more perceived threat there is. Therefore, let the binoculars do the work and do not be tempted to sneak increasingly closer.

While bright clothes may be great for safety, more subtle colours are favored for wildlife viewing. Your clothes should be unscented and if possible, "rustle free".

Do not try to lure animals with food. Although you may think you are helping them while getting a good close-up view, your food may harm their digestive system, make them dependant on handouts and even lead them into dangerous situations once their fear of humans has been eliminated. The result could be eventual death.

BC Parks Headquarters has just produced a new brochure *Wildlife Viewing: Respecting and Protecting Wildlife*. The following Wildlife Viewing Code of Ethics are taken from this brochure. If you would like to receive a copy of this brochure, call (250) 387-4550. □

Wildlife Viewing

Code of Ethics

As wildlife viewers, our goal is to watch animals behaving in natural ways in their natural habitats. We respect the needs of wild animals for space, natural vegetation, and ecological community. We recognize our responsibility to know the consequences of wildlife viewing.

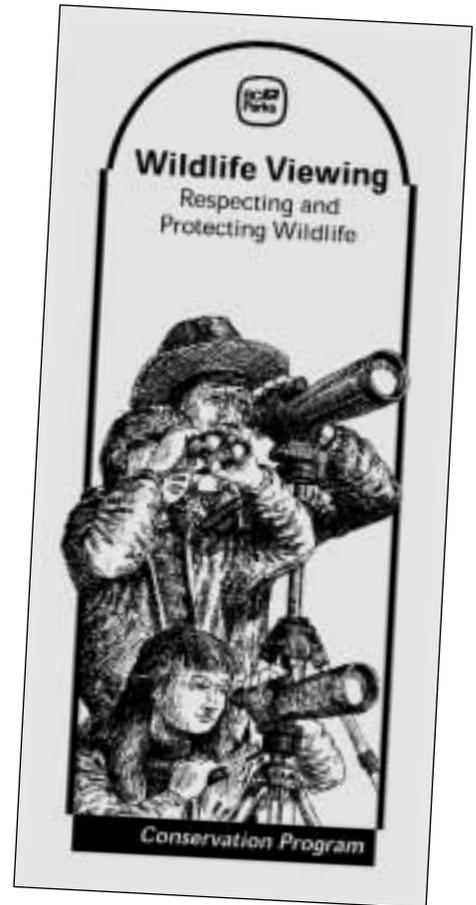
As guiding principles we agree:

- To view or photograph from a distance that respects the needs of wildlife, using proper equipment such as binoculars, spotting scopes and telephoto lenses. Before approaching wildlife we will learn the special needs of each species and to recognize their alarm signals and behaviours.



View or photograph wildlife from a distance that respects the needs of wildlife.

- To avoid noises or actions that might stress wildlife or cause animals to waste energy in unnecessary flight.
- To be patient, remembering that we are guests in wildlife habitat.
- To avoid approaching animals that are breeding, nesting, brooding or



raising young, because parents and young are especially vulnerable at these times. We will learn the places and times to avoid these situations. We will not approach young or baby animals.

- To keep pets on a leash around any wildlife, and avoid bringing pets into sensitive wildlife habitat.
- To avoid trampling or damaging vegetation.
- To respect the rules and regulations of protected areas. Trails, roads, closure areas and other management features are designed for safety and welfare of visitors, natural vegetation and wildlife.
- To be respectful of other wildlife watchers and property owners.
- To give back to nature for the gifts of wildlife viewing we receive, through conservation work for wildlife, wild land preservation, native vegetation renewal and through helping others learn the ethics of wildlife viewing. □

Dreams Do Come True

by Cheryl Noble, Victoria

As most of you may have heard, I had the honour of joining the 2000 Ladies Canadian Championship Curling Team at the World Championships in Glasgow, Scotland.

This team from British Columbia, of Kelley Law, Julie Skinner, Georgina Wheatcroft, Diane Nelson and coach Elaine Dagg-Jackson called me shortly after they won the Canadians in March and asked me to travel with them as their alternate player in case someone became sick or injured. You can imagine my shock to be asked to represent our country at this international event. The 2000 Mens Canadian Championship Curling Team also happened to be from the Vancouver area. We all left March 27 for a competition that will be etched in our minds forever.

In order to get over the jetlag and to relax prior to the competition, we stayed for a couple of days at the Letham Grange Castle near the eastern border of Scotland. This castle was previously a private home and was transferred into a small hotel resort with its own 4-sheet curling rink (which had chandeliers to light the ice) and two rolling golf courses. Needless to say, we were in heaven and wanted to move the world competition to the castle.

So, back to Glasgow – ready for the competition.

Our Canadian teams were bag-piped into the arena amid a sea of red and white – flags in every size, shirts, hats, banners, coats – it was truly unbelievable. Almost half of the spectators were from Canada.

The week went by very quickly. Both the Ladies and Mens teams played well and, after round-robin play, finished first overall in both their divisions. We had now reached our first goal – making the playoffs. Both teams won their semi-final games and the world trophy was now within our reach. We were



2000 Ladies Canadian Championship Curling Team wins the World Championships in Glasgow, Scotland. (Left to right: Elaine Dagg-Jackson, Coach; Cheryl Noble; Diane Nelson; Georgina Wheatcroft; Julie Skinner; Kelley Law.)

focused, confident and with all the support received over the past years, we were both crowned World Champions.

We marched up center ice, holding hands and waving to the crowd – we were the World Champions! “Enjoy the moment” were words we keep saying, even now, as the weeks have passed, and we have all returned to our normal lifestyles. This was a special moment in all of our lives.

None of this happens without the support of family, friends and co-workers. I can't say enough about all the well-wishes and congratulations that everyone has given me. But most of all, I would never have been able to pursue a goal I've had for years without the support of my co-workers here at headquarters. They have always been very understanding while I've travelled to various curling competitions throughout the winter season, having to fill in for me while I'm away and I'm sure always wondering why I was so obsessed with this sport. Now they know!

Of course, none of this would have happened if I hadn't attended my first BC Parks bonspiel about 20 years ago. Dreams do come true. □

Special Visitors to Manning Park

by Kathie Eldred, Okanagan District

Norm Snihur, a retired pilot, volunteers his time and his Robinson R22 helicopter at the Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society (OWL) in Delta.

This is the second time that Norm has visited us. He brought two first-time visitors with him: Sherry, an employee of OWL, and a Boreal owl. The owl had encountered a concrete wall and had spent several months at the rehabilitation centre. Ready and willing to be released, the owl sat on the side of his box for a brief moment before flying off for a quick tour of the area and then on to explore the park, much like others visitors do.

Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society is a non-profit volunteer organization that rehabilitates birds of prey on a donation basis. For more information call (604) 946-3171, visit them on the web at <http://www.realm.ca/owl> or look for their quarterly newsletter the *Hooterville Rag*. □



Thanks to volunteers such as Norm Snihur and the Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society, this Boreal owl is ready to return to the wilderness.

Feed the Tree Program

by Dave Forman, Strathcona District

In most places you would consider feeding a tree with water and fertilizer. In MacMillan Provincial Park we are encouraging people to feed the tree with their donations.

Last December we worked with an E-team to move a portion of a hollow log to a location near the entrance of the park. The E-team then cemented a self-collection vault, along with metal bars to hold up sections of the log, into the hollow log. A chute was welded to the lid of the vault and extended through a hole cut into the tree. After fitting a faceplate to the front, our tree was ready to accept donations. To compliment the donation box, a sign was installed asking park visitors to "Feed the Tree".

Visitors were advised that donations would be used in the park for trail work, revegetation projects and sign improvements. While not the busy season, approximately \$1000 was collected between December 20, 1999 and March 17, 2000. This year we hope to raise enough funds to improve the loop trail, which leads to the tallest tree in the park. □



Feed the Tree donation box, with back and front view (insets).



Conservation or Recreation?

by Dave Foreman, Strathcona District

A significant number of recreational users at MacMillan Provincial Park are trampling the plants in Cathedral Grove.

With an estimated 750,000 visitors per year viewing this beautiful stand of old growth Douglas-fir trees there is cause for concern. Visitors wanting to get closer to these giants often leave the trails and are unaware they are trampling the fragile environment beneath their feet.

The result has been the formation of small trails distinguished by remnants of trampled plants. Over the years we have tried to educate visitors to this problem with signage and brochures. Crushed rock has been placed on main trails to direct traffic and lessen impacts, but success has been mediocre until recently.

Three years ago a plan was developed to improve the trails and control visitor traffic. With funding from FRBC additional rock crush was added to trail surfaces and split rail fencing was installed.

Work began by anchoring 4 x 4s along the edges of the trail. The trail surface was then covered with 3/4 minus crushed gravel and compacted in place. A modified split-rail fence was installed abutting the 4 x 4s to define the edge of the trail.

Once the fence was finished the area behind the fence was re-vegetated. Although the fence is only about four feet high, people are not stepping over it to get closer to the giant trees. The small plants found on the forest floor are making a comeback and even growing through the fence in some places.

How does the public perceive the fence in the park? To date we have not had one complaint about the fencing from the public.

Was the project a success? Time will tell, but early indications show that people are now staying on the trail where fencing exists, and plants on the forest floor are slowly making a comeback. In other unfenced areas, plants are still being trampled. Plans now exist to continue with additional trail resurfacing and fencing this year utilizing an E-Team crews and funds from our new donation tree (see **Feed the Tree Program** in this issue). This new project will allow us to protect even more of the forest floor.

Is this a conservation project or a recreation project? Although the project is designed to deal with recreational users and their impacts, the clear benefit here is to the plant community. □

An Ecosystem Creating Its Own Space?

by Hans Roemer, Victoria

Ecological Reserve 37 is located on the steep, southwest-facing slopes of Mount Maxwell on Saltspring Island. The main objective of creating this ecological reserve in 1972 was to protect a representative sample of the Garry oak woodlands that occur on this part of Saltspring Island. The quadrangular piece of crown land that now forms the 65 ha reserve contains two major rocky Garry oak openings, surrounded by Douglas-fir forest. An equal area of Garry oak woodlands occurs in the adjacent part of Mount Maxwell Provincial Park and a still greater amount of this rare ecosystem borders these protected areas on private land. Added together, this is the largest undeveloped area of the Garry oak ecosystem that remains in the province.

In 1980, and then again in 1994/95, alarming reports were received about infestations of the western oak looper, *Lambdina fiscellaria somnaria*, in this reserve. At high population levels the larvae of this medium-sized moth can completely defoliate Garry oak trees. The stands in the ecological reserve indeed presented a sad picture at the height of the infestations when trees were stripped of between 60 and 100% of their leaves. However, in keeping with the "natural benchmark" philosophy for ecological reserves, and considering that these loopers are a native component of the ecosystem, suggestions for intervention were repeatedly turned down.

Records at the Pacific Forestry Centre indicate that in both infestations the severe phase lasted two to three years, with low or non-detectable population levels between them.

A curious occurrence is that the western oak looper does not stop with the oak trees. It seems that, after finishing off the oaks, it proceeds to defoliate the adjacent Douglas-firs. The stressed Douglas-fir trees are subject to secondary attacks by Douglas-fir bark beetles,

Dendroctonus pseudotsugae, and usually die. Most Garry oak trees survive one or two defoliations, although dead branches are a common sight. Oak looper defoliation followed by Douglas-fir beetle attack was documented in both cases by Canadian Forest Service entomologists. Defoliation of both oaks and firs by the looper was also documented for another Garry oak area, Christmas Hill near Victoria, around 1960.

After becoming aware of the symptoms on Mt. Maxwell I realized in the mid-1980's that dead Douglas-firs and dead branches on Garry oaks in the Mount Tzuhalem Ecological Reserve near Duncan may also be due to the same dynamics. This reserve is only 10 kilometres away across the water as the crow flies. Was this a chance coincidence?

Recently, I had the opportunity to wander through the Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserve and through several other Garry oak openings on the same mountain slope, outside of the two protected areas. In each of these stands a similar, consistent picture presented itself: All Douglas-firs that had been growing scattered among the oak trees were dead. Many firs that had been growing in close vicinity to oak trees surround-



Garry oak woodland on the slope of Mt. Maxwell looking at Sansum Narrows with Mt. Tzuhalem in the distance.

ing the oak woodland were also dead. Mortality among the oaks themselves was relatively minor, although dead branches were common. Dead Douglas-firs included average-size and large specimens. This was after the decline of the most recent infestation and seemed to show clearly that Douglas-firs were more severely affected by this interaction of native insects than the Garry oaks. At Mt. Tzuhalem Ecological Reserve large, dead firs had been in evidence for a long time. It can only be surmised that these were killed by earlier cycles of oak looper/Douglas-fir beetle attacks.

What is the significance of this course of events? Ecologists have generally assumed that Garry oak communities on these steep, south-facing sites in the region are created and maintained by periodic forest fires, although evidence of frequent fires such as fire scars on trees are uncommon in some oak areas. As Douglas-firs are nearly as drought-hardy as Garry oaks, they are capable of invading many oak sites, overtopping and eventually shading out the oak trees, barring another forest fire. There are examples, both on Saltspring Island and on southern Vancouver Island, where dead oak trees under taller conifer canopies testify to the validity of this successional scenario. But is it the only scenario? Apparently not; the consistent elimination of Douglas-firs in the oak looper areas indicates that fire is not the only mechanism to maintain the open conditions that will allow Garry oak patches to thrive.

On Mount Maxwell the deciduous woodland community obviously creates its own space! □

The author thanks Bob Duncan, Canadian Forestry Service, and Don Heppner, BC Forest Service, for information and review of this article.

Scoutrees for Canada

by Dave Richmond, Okanagan District

Scouts Canada members from throughout the North Okanagan descended on Kekuli Bay Provincial Park with picks and shovels in hand as part of the National Scoutrees for Canada Program. Their mission was to re-vegetate the newly constructed 70-unit campground with approximately 2000 trees and shrubs. This project was the result of nearly two years of planning with BC Parks, Scouts Canada, and the Ministry of Forests.

When the Kekuli Bay campground construction project was announced to the public in 1998, Bruce Bourne of Scouts Canada approached BC Parks with the idea of incorporating the Scoutrees for Canada Program into the campground construction. The decision was made to hold off the planting until the campground construction was completed.

The fall of 1999 brought Scouts Canada representatives Glen Dick



and Neil Lipniski to the forefront. Glen coordinated the people and Neil organized the vegetation. Mike Carlson from the Ministry of Forests Kalamalka Research Center stepped forward with the donation of over 1600 shrubs and 120 large deciduous trees, and the Vernon Ministry of Forests seedling department offered over 400 pine trees. Several site visits were held to determine the most suitable native tree and shrub species for the various locations. Neil's background as a Forest Technician with Riverside Forest Products Limited was of great benefit in drawing up the final planting plan.

Saturday April 8 was a very impressive display of Scouts Canada's organizational abilities: 445 Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Venturers from 17 different groups participated in the planting project. The campground was divided into 23 separate sections, each with its own planting map, and supply of trees and shrubs. Riverside Forest Products not only donated Neil's time and expertise, but also provided trucks, planting equipment, and 14 supervisors (who chose to volunteer their time). At 8:00 am several volunteers sorted trees and shrubs for the planting crews who started arriving at 9:00 am. Each hour a new crew of volunteers arrived with up to 100 beavers, cubs, scouts, and venturers on site at any one time. Scouts Canada volunteers certainly came prepared, even providing lunch for the nearly 500 volunteers.

Towards the end of the day a small ceremony unveiled the cast bronze plaque to be installed on site recognizing the efforts of Scouts Canada and its volunteers, and BC Parks staff were presented with framed certificates of appreciation from Scouts Canada. The event was such a success that planning is already underway to ensure a second planting day, same time, same place, next year. □

Tenth Annual MELP Squash Tournament

There was a great turnout for the tenth annual MELP Squash Tournament held last month in Victoria, not only in terms of players, but also in terms of supporters! Many BC Parks staff were on hand to "coach" and cheer on their fellow parkies who were playing in the tournament.

This annual tournament is open to all MELP staff, spouses, significant others, MELP contractors plus any participants from previous years' tournaments. Your level of skill on the court doesn't matter as there is a category for everyone, from Novice to "A". It's a great tournament that includes a fun round-robin Squash Social and free squash lessons, plus lots of great prizes.



*BC Parks Squash Team
Back row, left to right: Nancy Chave, Don Macaulay, Paul Bailey, Ken Morrison, Jerry the Moose. Front row, left to right: Derek Thompson, Cheryl Noble, Debby Funk, Colin Campbell.*

This years' winners were:

- A - Aaron Bremner
- B - John Roche
- C - Brian Kenworthy
- D - Wendy Chutter
- Novice - Judy Gibson

Many thanks to organizers, volunteers and sponsors, especially Centre Court Racquets, YW/YMCA, Cedar Hill Recreation Centre and Saanich Squash Association. □