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## Rithet's Bog Update - Restoration Work Primed to Begin This Summer!

### BARA Bugle (Broadmead Area Residents Association Newsletter), Spring 2002 - Sharon Hartwell

Many thanks to all of you who wrote, phoned or sent email to Saanich Council in response to last issue's article! You made an impact. And if you haven't yet contacted Council, ***there is still time to make your voice heard***. Parks has decided to delay making its submission to Council on Rithet's Bog until a work plan has been finalized and approved by all parties involved. If the Bog is important to you, please let Council know!

### What has been happening since last Fall?

#### Lobbying

Late last year, U Vic PhD candidate Karen Golinski presented her hydrology study of Rithet's Bog, commissioned by Saanich, to the Saanich Environmental Advisory Committee, chaired by Councilor Carol Pickup. This 42-page report, "**An Overview Assessment of Hydrology and Water Chemistry at Rithet's Bog**"\*, details the problems with water level fluctuation and water quality at the Bog, and makes a series of recommendations for correcting them. A follow-up presentation by Rithet's Bog Conservation Society (RBCS) described how Ducks Unlimited (DU) had been contacted and was willing to design a rehabilitation plan for the Bog in partnership with Saanich Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and RBCS. Both presentations were well received by the Committee, *which will make a positive recommendation to Council!*

#### Developing a Work Plan

Ducks Unlimited, DFO, Saanich Parks and RBCS have met several times. We have identified information gaps, outlined best possible outcomes, and plotted the following course of action: DU hydrology engineers will meet with Saanich surveyors and engineers in February to complete detailed survey work at the Bog; a water license application will be made to the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection; DU engineers will develop a draft work plan for review by the entire group; after fine-tuning, Parks will take the plan to Council; if approved, work will take place during late August and early September of 2002 – a *year ahead* of the original schedule!

#### Fish Fry Survey in preparation for a Water License application

Before a simple water license can be granted, DFO must be satisfied that no salmon or trout are present in the Bog. A 'fry trapping' survey was carried out in early December to determine this. Mesh catch-and-release traps baited with salmon roe were set at 8 points around the perimeter of the Bog; no salmon or trout were caught (so the application will go ahead), but what we did catch was very heartening. The 60 stickleback, 2 rough-skinned newts and 4 predacious water beetles indicate fairly 'clean', uncontaminated water. They also provide useful baseline information for continued monitoring after rehabilitation work has been completed.

#### Good News – Water Levels Are Up, Willows Are Down

Thanks to this winter's heavy rains, the Bog itself is looking great - water levels are much higher than in recent years. There is an impressive stretch of open water near the Dalewood end of Chatterton Way, where Parks maintenance staff painstakingly removed a 100-metre strip of willows last August. The hope is that the willow roots will die after being under water for several months during the winter. We'll have to wait till spring to know for sure, but in the mean time, wildlife is already taking advantage of the area. A Great Blue Heron can frequently be seen there, hunting for sticklebacks and frogs, and ducks are arriving in preparation for the breeding season.

#### Regular Volunteer Work Continues

Broom cutting, blackberry and poison hemlock removal and litter pick-up are ongoing activities. If you are interested in volunteering, or have questions about our activities, please contact Sharon Hartwell at 479-0491.

Thanks for your ongoing support!

**Sharon Hartwell, President**  
Rithet's Bog Conservation Society

*\* a copy of Karen's report can be borrowed from the Saanich Parks Office at 1040 McKenzie Ave. (Phone 250-744-5341).*

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