

## Victoria & Islands - Uplands Park Nature Tour

by Marian McCoy, P.Ag.

On a chilly and wet Earth Day, Saturday April 22nd, BCIA members and friends met at Cattle Point in Uplands Park to attend a tour hosted by the Victoria and the Islands Branch, and led by botanist and restoration professional, Wylie Thomas.

Uplands Park in Oak Bay has one of the highest concentrations of species at risk in Canada. It also has a massive invasive species problem, and is heavily used by tourists and residents. As such, it's been subject to a variety of restoration efforts for several years, and it is slowly becoming a success story. [MORE on page 2](#)

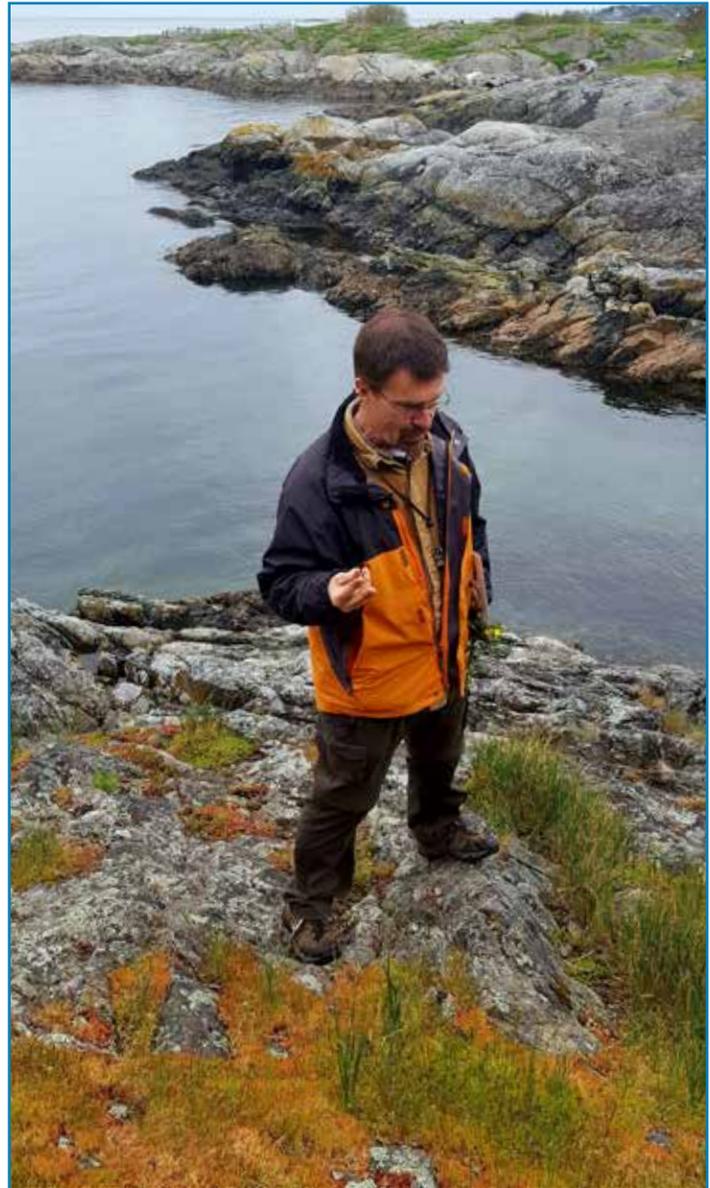


Photo: Wylie Thomas describes some of the rare plants that occur near the spray zone at Cattle Point. Photo by: Erwin Allerding

## BCIA and Branches recognize young scientists

This spring BCIA and five branches provided awards and support to future scientists and agrologists. UBC presented the BC Institute of Agrologists Scholarship award to Kitty Cheung, who is in the BSc in Applied Science program, and the BC Institute of Agrologists Dean Blythe A Eagles Scholarship to Thea Sturdy, who is in the Applied Biology with a major in Food and the Environment. [MORE on page 3](#)

## Vancouver Branch - Foraging Event

BC Rainforest Lunch and Walk: Wild Plant and Mushroom Foraging at Jericho Park

By fortunate coincidence the BMO Vancouver Marathon was on the same day as the foraging event, allowing us the opportunity to cheer on the elite athletes before we started the tour. The sun was shining and wild edibles were all around us. We began looking at the different edible parts of the dandelion plant, a common weed for some and a delicious edible plant for others. It all depends on your perspective. [MORE on page 3](#)

## Vancouver Branch - Discover the Fraser by Boat – Industrial History, Wildlife and Remedial Efforts along the Fraser River

by Jenny Beugeling, P.Ag.

The Fraser River Boat Tour had a great turn out of almost 70 people from both the Vancouver Branch and Fraser Valley Branch. We all joined together for an afternoon on the water, riding the Paddlewheeler boat down the Fraser River. While on-board, our Paddlewheeler guide immersed us in the history and evolution of the shoreline, pointing out wildlife along the way.

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Photo: View of Port Mann Bridge. Photo by: Kevin Christie

## Victoria & Islands - Uplands Park Nature Tour - cont'd

Since 2014, Wylie has been leading mechanical and chemical invasive plant control in the park, using funding from the federal Habitat Stewardship Program and District of Oak Bay.

Wylie started our tour by explaining the ecological importance of Uplands Park. There are nine federally endangered species of plants, two threatened, and three of special concern. Provincially, there are 14 red-listed and 10 blue-listed species. Two rare Garry oak associated ecosystems occur in the park: maritime meadows, and vernal pools / ephemeral wetlands. Uplands Park is a biodiversity oasis in an otherwise urban setting.

Wylie then lead us through the interior meadows, pointing out several extensive stands of herbicide-treated stumps, evidence of past treatment of invasive trees and shrubs such as privet (*Ligustrum* spp), European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and ornamental cherry (*Prunus* spp), as well as Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), common hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), and English ivy (*Hedera helix*).

Since 2014, more than 720 invasive trees have been felled by chainsaw-wielding Oak Bay Parks staff. Nearly all of the freshly cut stumps were treated with herbicide (those that weren't have resprouted – for now). Wylie has been experimenting with various label-compliant applications and formulations of herbicides containing either glyphosate or triclopyr, with good success in most cases.

Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) was widely established in the park, and Spurge-laurel (*Daphne laureola*) still is. Control of these species is by hand removal. In 2014, crews and volunteers removed 416 cu yards of biomass across 7.5 hectares in the park. In 2015 and 2016, the focus was mainly on Scotch broom, with nearly all of the interior meadows being cleared. In 2016, Cattle Point was the focus, with a big push to remove ivy smothering the ground. From September 2016 to March 2017, workers and volunteers removed 132 cubic yards of ivy. A lot!

The over-arching goal of the funded work is to expand and protect the severely degraded critical habitat of the 24 listed species. Restoring habitat for native species is also a goal.

Walk along the meadow trails, or along the shoreline among the wind-stunted oaks and you'll see a variety of native shrubs emerging where invasive plants once formed monocultures. In the woodlands and meadows recently freed of ivy and Scotch broom, we saw camas (*Camassia* spp) and many other native species emerging by the thousands.

To contain disturbance, Wylie has also been establishing marked trails, using signage and ropes or rocks placed on the ground to discourage the many desired paths that braid through the sensitive meadows. He interacts daily with park users, explaining the project and the value of the park. Response has generally been supportive, although some users object to being told where they can and can't walk, or run their dogs. We ended the tour along the shoreline of Cattle Point, as showers turned to driving rain. But the cold and wet didn't dampen our appreciation of how hard work, experimentation, and sustained effort can reveal the resilience of native species.



Dense patches of shooting star (*Dodecatheon* spp.) emerged in Uplands Park a year after Scotch broom was removed.  
Photo: Marian McCoy

## Okanagan Branch's Brown Bag BX Cidery Family Farm Tour



Large rod was formerly used as hormone repellent for bats.



Okanagan branch members on Brown Bag Cidery tour





## Vancouver Branch - Discover the Fraser by Boat – cont'd

When our guide said “look at the dolphins” you could see people rush to the side of the boat until they realized that a “dolphin” is a rusty old pile used for log management, which was still interesting but it would have been really interesting to see a real dolphin in the Fraser River.

The water was calm and the weather turned out perfect, making it a great day to be on the water. Our 3-hour voyage took us up river from New Westminster Quay towards Maple Ridge and back. There were many photograph opportunities, as we sailed under the different bridges. Being on the water gave us a different perspective of the Fraser River and the operations along the shoreline. On our sail back to the Quay three Keystone Environmental Ltd. projects were highlighted; the CN Thornton rail yard, a former sawmill and woodwaste facility and the hydrophone monitoring for the old Port Mann bridge blasting. Also, key considerations when investigating properties along the Fraser River were discussed, such as the BC Ministry of Environment defined boundaries when selecting aquatic life freshwater and marine water use standards for your site, tidal influences and background metals. It was a fun-filled interactive day of learning and soaking up the beauty of our surroundings. One member described the day as “an excellent outing with just the right mix of history, science, good food & drink and ambiance”. Thanks for everyone who came out and to those who submitted their photographs for the newsletter.

*Photos of boat tour contributed by Geoff Lewis, P.Ag. and Kevin Christie, P.Ag.*



Views of the Fraser River

