



## THE RHODODENDRON RAVINE IS OPEN ONCE AGAIN!

Years of planning, studying, and fundraising have all been worth the effort. Visitors to Dominion Brook Park now have a new area in the park to enjoy.

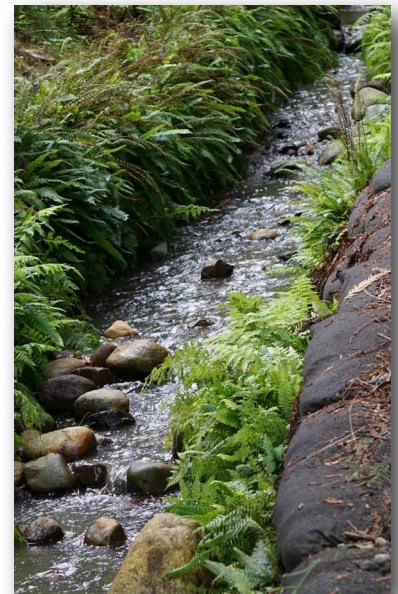


On September 30, the Rhododendron Ravine was officially opened to the public with about 70 invited guests and local residents in attendance. Thank you for coming out and celebrating this momentous occasion.

As members, you will know that work on the ravine restoration has been going on for several years, with progress made as funds became available. The push to complete it this year was motivated by Canada's sesquicentennial. Your Board of Directors wanted it to be a Canada 150 project and pursued various funding opportunities, with success.

The Greater Victoria Saving Credit Union Legacy Fund and the Toronto Dominion Friends of the Environment Fund each gave the Society a grant of \$10,000 and the District of North Saanich Council approved \$50,000 for the project. Donations from Society members made up the balance of what we needed. Peninsula Rock Products and Brackenhurst Farms Ltd. donated rock and gravel.

We contracted Murray Benson to carry out the work. His company's experience working in waterways shows in every aspect of their approach to the job. The care, the skill and the artistry is evident. Cliff Halliday, with the District of North Saanich, was the project manager on site and can be credited with the entire effort running smoothly.





Our sincere thanks go out to these organizations, businesses, and individuals who made the realization of this project possible.

Now the stream bed is restored, the slopes are stabilized, and a trail winds its way through the ravine. The upper brook crossing provides a viewpoint to the seasonal waterfall.

But the work does not stop there. We have opened up a whole new area to plant and maintain. The next project is to re-establish a collection of rhododendrons and companion plantings in the Ravine.

Come and walk our new trail, and pause for a moment at the stream crossing to enjoy the water cascading over the rocks. It is a good place for quiet reflection and to appreciate this gem of a Park that we have in our community.

## HATS OFF TO OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM!

Once again, I'm searching for the words to say thank you. Every year the volunteers go above and beyond the call of duty to keep your Park in the best condition possible. They work in the cold and wet, in the heat, showered by pollen, and scratched by blackberries and other noxious weeds. In rubber boots in the brook to plant over 2000 deer ferns in the last three seasons, taking part in the ravine restoration project.

Many of the volunteers have been with us for years and years, dedicated - whatever their physical condition (we have a medical update each Wednesday). Fortunately, this year we were able to add a number of new recruits and hopefully they'll continue in the 2018 season. We actually do have fun while working with like-minded people and there is that moment of satisfaction for a job well done.

Park goers have been generous in the praise of the volunteers. Many have approached and asked to have their thank you forwarded to the volunteers.

We have our Wednesday team but there are others to thank. Our winter doggie bag man, walkers who clean up assorted debris and regulars who keep an eye on the Park and report misdeeds; all contribute in their



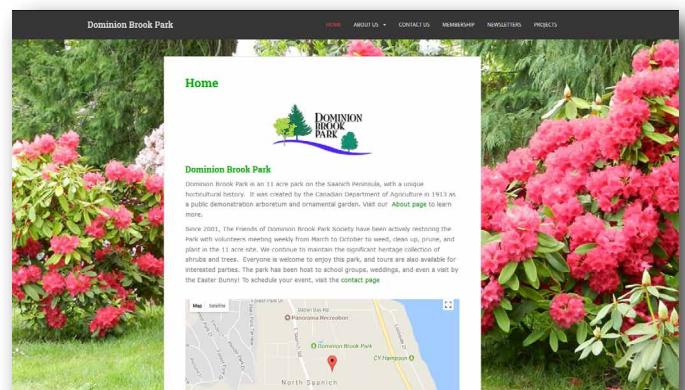
own way. Cliff Halliday and his team from the Parks Department at the District of North Saanich have always been the backbone which enables us to be a successful partner in caring for the Park.

Without the efforts of all volunteers, we would not be the viable Society which enables us to give the gift of an amazing Park to all.

# Thank You!

## WE HAVE A NEW WEBSITE

We are pleased to announce that we have a new look and feel to our website! The new website has a clean uncluttered design, improved functionality, and better compatibility with mobile devices. The new website, launched early September, is located at the same address: [www.dominionbrookpark.ca](http://www.dominionbrookpark.ca). Let us know what you think. Send us your feedback at [contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca](mailto:contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca).



## PARK TOURS

by Ian Cameron



About a year ago (well, that can't be right, as the weather was nice, but it was some time ago) my wife and I visited Dominion Brook park for the first time in a long time, and I was impressed by how good it looked. Not as good as it looked when we courted there in 1980 or so, but a lot better than the last time we visited, ca 2010.

I took a leaflet, and visited the website, where I learned that the Board was looking for a 'presenter/historian'. Having both of those in my armamentarium, I volunteered, and before I knew it I was:

- a) hired;
- b) on the Board of Directors;
- c) trying to remember the name of every single plant in the park (both scientific and pet. "That's *Taxus baccata* Melford, but I call it Brenda") as well as the history of each one, as Joan Gibb toured me around. Twice.

I started doing tours in April, when Joan left to spend a month or so in somewhere ending in 'stan' (I got the better of the deal.) The first tour was for the Elder College, offered by Panorama Leisure Centre. Since then I've done ten more. They break down as follows: two garden clubs, four walking groups, one 'we get together once a week for a gab and a picnic' (Lord knows where they picnic at this time of year, he writes as the rain beats down) and three for the Flavour Trail.

Interesting folks, interesting questions, quite enjoyable. Most often heard remark: "That's a good question," (from me.) Translation: "I don't know."

If anyone reading this wants a tour, let me know. You can request a tour through the contact us form on our

website [www.dominionbrookpark.ca](http://www.dominionbrookpark.ca) or by emailing [contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca](mailto:contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca). The best times are late April/early May; next best June/July, then August/September. I'll do them from October through March, but you better wear rain gear. I figure groups of six at a minimum (unless you want to make a donation, or join, then two will do.)

## BOARD MEMBERS WANTED

We have several vacancies on the Board of Directors of the Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society which we hope to see filled in time for the Annual General Meeting in April 2018.

What is required?

- Prepare for and attend meetings once a month for 1 to 2 hours. (No meeting in December or April).
- Attend the Annual General meeting with Society members in April.
- Contribute to the development of strategic priorities and work plans for the year and help see them achieved.
- Participate in special tasks or projects

Who should apply?

People from the community who:

- Have an enthusiasm for Dominion Brook Park
- Are committed to the management objectives for the Park
- Desire to give back to their community
- Enjoy working collaboratively and constructively with others

If you are interested, please send an email to [contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca](mailto:contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca)

*Get involved, make a difference*







## FEATURED PLANT

CHITALPA tashkentensis “Pink Dawn”

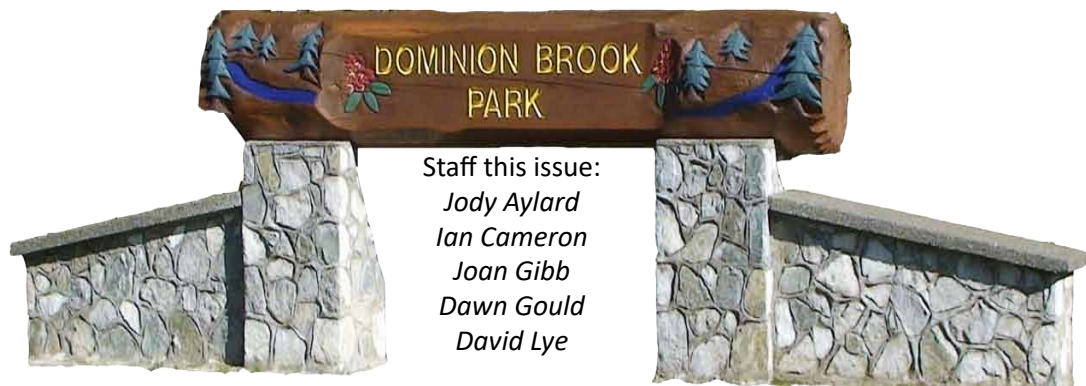
The Chitalpha is a cross between *Catalpa bignonioides* and *Chilopsis linearis*. It was an unlikely combination hybridized at the Uzbek Botanical Gardens, Tashkent, Uzbekistan in the 1960s (then the Soviet Union) and brought to the US in 1977.

The *Chilopsis* is a desert tree and has the ability to survive dry heat but the Chitalpa can withstand low

temperatures and tolerates mild seaside zones, both of which are climates known to us. It grows up to 6m and requires well drained soil in full to partial sun.

The Chitalpa can start flowering in late spring and flowers until late fall. The blooms are very azalea/orchid-like, similar to those of the *Catalpa*. One of the extras with Chitalpas is that they provide nectar for hummingbirds but will attract butterflies, bees and other beneficial insects.

The Society thanks all volunteers who help out in the park.  
Your helping hands make a difference!



For more information on Dominion Brook Park, please visit [www.dominionbrookpark.ca](http://www.dominionbrookpark.ca)  
To contact the Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society please write to Box 20007, Sidney, B.C. V8L 5C9  
email : [contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca](mailto:contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca)