



# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

## NEWSLETTER

### VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

#### VISION

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*“We, the Musqueam, will work together to take care of our territory so the following generations will know how to be self-reliant. We will remember our own history and as well, use our traditional teachings to take care of everyone and everything on this earth”.*

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Happy Holidays everyone!

As the year 2020 draws to a close, we take the time to reflect on the year. This year has proven to have its share of adversities, with the world still coping with COVID-19 and the difficulties the pandemic brings. In light of that, it is important to hold each other up and navigate through these hardships together, especially during the holiday season. Environmental Stewardship has continued to work towards a clean and green environment during these times and strive to keep everyone and the community healthy and safe.

Take care,

Yeganeh Asadian, M.Sc., P.Ag., Environmental Stewardship Department Manager

## STANLEY PARK AQUATIC LIFE



According to a new report on Stanley Park's ecological health, the aquatic life in the area (specifically Beaver Lake) is not doing very well. The report, done by the Stanley Park Ecology Society, found 46 native species at risk in the area, including brown bats, western grebe and double crested cormorant.

Although the park experienced an increase in tree cover has increased over the years due to 15,000 trees and shrubs being replanted, the fresh water ecosystems are experiences very poor water quality and have been issued a "red alert". Water temperatures are high and oxygen levels are extremely low, almost reaching lethal levels for amphibians and salmonids. A conservation projects manager has assessed the quality of aquatic ecosystems in the park and has noted invasive species presence is high, and are known for tolerating these habitat conditions. Native species are becoming rarer and haven't been sighted in the fresh water in many years, such as the northern red-legged frog.

A major factor in the decline in water quality in Beaver Lake is due to the introduction of white and pink water lilies. The lilies were first introduced in 1938 in celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of jubilee of Dutch Queen Wilhelmina. The lilies have made the lake their home, and each summer the lilies cover most of the water's surface. Once the lilies have died, the biomass that they produce is so much that they fill up the lake and warm the water substantially (in the last 80 years, the lake has shrunk to almost half its size, being close to 4 hectares today).

There have been some initiatives to address temperature increases and oxygen decreases in the park. One of the plans was to dredge a part of Beaver Lake in an effort to create cooler and deeper areas, however this project has yet to take place. Other restoration and habitat enhancement projects for the park include building nest boxes for wood ducks and swallows, constructing a boardwalk in Cathedral Trail in Beaver Lake Lost Lagoon, and invasive species removal.

The report highlights the importance of understanding the current ecosystem conditions, how they're doing and what is changing ecologically. This information is essential in developing stewardship and management plans to protect species and habitat in the park. For the next report, to be released in 2030, SPEC hopes to include traditional ecological knowledge of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations in order to develop a more holistic picture of the park's ecological integrity as well as take into account land use in pre-park times.

## COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF ENDANGERED WILDLIFE IN CANADA (COSEWIC)



**COSEWIC**  
Committee on the Status of  
Endangered Wildlife in Canada

**COSEPAC**  
Comité sur la situation des  
espèces en péril au Canada

Many are familiar with the term Species at Risk and the federal *Species at Risk Act*. However, did you know there is another organization that works on protecting and managing species at risk? This organization is called the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), and they conduct very important work in protecting species at risk in the country.

Established in 1977, COSEWIC was designed to provide a science-based classification of wildlife species facing the risk of extinction. COSEWIC plays a role in the *Species at Risk Act* as the body to identify and

assess a species status. COSEWIC species status is not legally binding, however its reports and data are shared with the government and the public.

COSEWIC works as an independent committee of wildlife experts and scientists whose primary focus is to identify species at risk in Canada and assign conservation status of wild species. COSEWIC has many roles in developing strategic conservation for wildlife and species at risk, including status reports, wildlife species assessments, special reports, and news & events for the public to participate and engage in current wildlife issues and ways to contribute.

**Number and status of species at risk in the commercial forest 2009 and 2019**

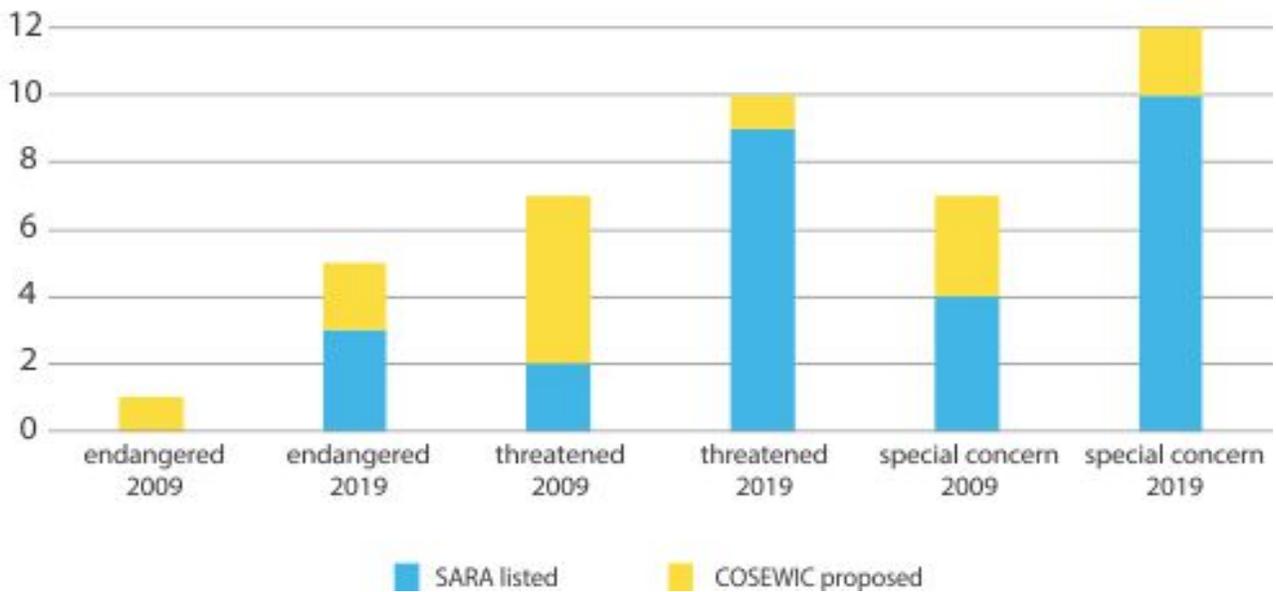


Figure 1 – Species at Risk Chart from with SARA and COSEWIC for the Commercial Forest in Saskatchewan

**Upcoming events for COSEWIC include:**

- COSEWIC membership - winter 2021
- Species specialist subcommittee membership - fall 2021
- COSEWIC call for bids - winter 2020
- COSEWIC November 2020 Virtual Wildlife Species Assessment Meeting – November 28<sup>th</sup> – December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020



## CANADIAN BAN ON SINGLE USE PLASTICS FOR 2021



In Canada, single-use plastics is the largest source of plastic pollution in freshwater environments. This high source of plastic pollution was a major influence on Canada's approach to forming a zero-waste strategic action plan for 2030. Earlier in October, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) announced developments regarding Canada's strategy to achieve zero waste by 2030. One of the key components of the plan is to focus on single-use plastic items that are more present in the environment and are not often recycled. Based on this, the Government of Canada is proposing a ban on the following items:

- Straws (many establishments have switched to paper straws)
- Plastic cutlery (knives, spoons, forks)
- Plastic bags at checkouts
- Coffee and tea stir sticks
- Six-pack rings for cans
- Carry out and take-home food containers

Many alternatives have already been developed for these items, including biodegradable containers and more recycle-friendly material. The ban is scheduled come into effect at the end of 2021. The Canadian government is asking Canadians to share their comments on the ban by December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This legislation will ban the above items in an effort to mitigate harmful single-use plastic items that are filling space in the environment and polluting aquatic habitats. The ban will also affect items that have readily available alternatives.

For more info, please see the Government of Canada’s discussion paper:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/canadian-environmental-protection-act-registry/plastics-proposed-integrated-management-approach.html#toc0>

To comment on this proposed legislation, please email the following by December 9<sup>th</sup>:

ec.plastiques-plastics.ec@canada.ca.

## MUSQUEAM SOLAR PANEL STREET LIGHTS



ESD is pleased to announce the installation of 2 solar panel street lights in front of the administration building and cultural centre. The solar panels charge a rechargeable battery, which powers an LED lamp during the night. These lights were designed and developed to provide suitable lighting for low-lit areas around the buildings and to help in reducing energy consumption, which helps offset and conserve energy use that is required to power the infrastructure.

## WINTER EVENTS AROUND VANCOUVER

\* Please note that all events are in accordance with BC Health & Safety Guidelines regarding COVID-19\*

### ❖ Festival of Lights, November 27<sup>th</sup> – January 3<sup>rd</sup>

As of 2020, the annual Festival of Lights is Vancouver’s longest running winter attraction. Taking place at the VanDusen Botanical Garden, the event’s Christmas displays feature over 1 million lights spread out over 10 acres of gardens. The festival is located at 5151 Oak Street in Vancouver. Main parking is just off West 37th Avenue, with some street parking along Oak and nearby side streets. The garden is open for the Festival of Lights from 4:00 pm until 9:30 pm for the entire month of December, except for the 25th as it’s closed on Christmas Day. After Christmas Day, it is open for the same hours, 4:00 pm until 9:30 pm, every day including Boxing Day and New Year’s up until January 3rd. Tickets are \$8 – 14, due to COVID-19 tickets are only available online and not on location.

**❖ Robson Square Ice Skating, December 1<sup>st</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup>**

Free ice skating takes place from December until February on the outdoor ice rink at Vancouver's Robson Square at the corner of Robson Street and Howe. The skating is free and you can rent skates for a reasonable fee. Designed by famous Vancouver architect Arthur Erickson, the public space includes a covered outdoor ice rink in winter. Skating is free on the 6,000 square foot rink and you can bring your own skates or rent them at the facility for around \$5 a pair. Payment is cash only and skate rentals finish half an hour before closing each day.

**❖ Polar Bear Swim, January 1<sup>st</sup>**

A wild annual tradition for many Vancouverites is taking a plunge in the icy waters of the ocean on New Year's Day. The event has been coined "The Polar Bear Swim" and takes place all over the Lower Mainland including English Bay in Vancouver, Panorama Park in North Vancouver, the pier in White Rock, Port Moody, Delta and the river in Fort Langley. The English Bay event in Vancouver attracts the largest crowds. It's a free event, although participants must fill out a registration form which includes a waiver of liability. The event starts with a 100-yard dash to the water and finishes with lots of frozen people. Participants are encouraged to dress in costume and bring a change of warm clothes for after swimming.

**❖ Coastal First Nations Dance Festival, February 25<sup>th</sup> – March 1<sup>st</sup>**

The annual Coastal First Nations Dance Festival showcases Canadian Indigenous artists from BC, Western Canada and the Yukon, as well as out-of-country groups from places like Alaska, Hawaii and further abroad. The event takes place at the Anvil Centre at 777 Columbia Street in New Westminster, with one day of performances for school groups taking place in the Haida House at the Museum of Anthropology. The event comprises of school group, signature evening and festival stage performances from a variety of Indigenous communities. Performances take place at 10:30 am, 1:00 pm and 7:30 pm. Tickets for the Signature Evening Performances are \$30 for adults and \$25 for students, seniors and museum members.

**❖ Talking Stick Festival, February 18<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>**

The Talking Stick Festival is an inclusive multi-day festival that's open to the public and features storytelling, dance, music, theatre and other performing arts and cultural works by a wide range of Indigenous artists. Each year many of the events take place at the Roundhouse in Yaletown, although others take place at various other venues around town. The festival schedule consists of the Wax hoks en Shqalawin Gala, Chénchenstway: Rising – Visual Arts Exhibition, Celebration of Indigenous Dance, Métis Fair, Reel Reservations Films and other festival events such as educational talks and night life activities. For more details on the above and other festival events, visit the Talking Stick Festival website at <https://fullcircle.ca/>

## CONTACT US

For further inquiries regarding the newsletter and our green initiatives, please contact:

**Yeganeh Asadian, M.Sc., P.Ag.**

Environmental Stewardship Manager

[yasadian@musqueam.bc.ca](mailto:yasadian@musqueam.bc.ca)

**Ryan Kadoranian**

Environmental Stewardship Analyst

[rkadoranian@musqueam.bc.ca](mailto:rkadoranian@musqueam.bc.ca)

Office: 604.263.3261

Website: <https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/departments/iga/environment/>

Instagram: @envirostew

Facebook: Enviro Stewardship

