

BROADMEAD & AREA COMMUNITY

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025

RITHET'S BOG IN PERIL



MOREAU
REAL ESTATE TEAM
LESS TALK. MOREAU ACTION.

Buying or Selling?

Connect with us for real estate advice, market updates or how we can assist with your next move.
MOVETOVICTORIA.COM 250.744.3301



RE/MAX
CAMOSUN
Real Estate Services Since 1982



DANIELLE MOREAU **BLAKE MOREAU** **JENNIFER CHENG**
PERSONAL REAL ESTATE CORPORATION PERSONAL REAL ESTATE CORPORATION REALTOR

scan to learn more about us!



fūdo
Japanese Restaurant



425 - 777 Royal Oak Dr. (Broadmead Village)
778-265-3328




ARTISAN BISTRO

Café · Restaurant · Broadmead

CALL 250.590.9333 / 350-777 ROYAL OAK DRIVE / WWW.ARTISANBISTRO.CA



Wiseman & Mills
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

Murray Wiseman, B.Comm, CPA•CA, IFA, CFF

Tel: 250.744.3543
Fax: 250.744.3546
murray@wisemanmills.ca

102 - 4430 Chatterton Way
Victoria BC V8X 5J2
www.wisemanmills.ca

artisan dental
broadmead village

Dr. Chélise Kasun Inc. B.Sc., DMD

250-479-8100
510-777 Royal Oak Dr.
info@artisandentalvictoria.com

www.artisandentalvictoria.com



The Broadmead Story
is going online!

Read about the history of the Broadmead development.

Watch for this interesting write-up on our website:

www.broadmead.ca





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Doug Baer

BARA's small Board continues to work on behalf of the residents on the community. It meets monthly to discuss developments in the community, including actions of government which may affect us all and to plan events and activities that will benefit the community. I owe a special vote of thanks to the individuals who serve on the Publications Committee (Wayne Neumann, Nancy Ball, Nancy Craig and Bruce More) for all of their hard work putting together issues of this newsletter.

BARA's Events Committee will soon be planning a Community Day event at the Broamead Mall, probably in mid-September. We unfortunately do not yet have an exact date and it is likely that the event will occur before the next issue of this newsletter is released. If you are a member of BARA, you will receive email notification. If you are not a member of BARA, you will need to check our website (www.broadmead.ca) for an announcement. The event usually includes exhibits and displays from non-profit organizations, children's activities, musical entertainment as well as hot dogs, coffee and other food giveaways.

BARA will be taking part in a Saanich consultation on traffic calming. Traffic calming is one of the ideas behind Saanich's Road Safety Action Plan, which was passed earlier this year. One example of traffic calming is the set of efforts to slow down traffic along Emily Carr, with speed reductions from 50kph to 40kph and "constrictions" (short road narrowing) at the park and at the Lohbrenner intersection. Are these enough, too much or just about right? Emily Carr residents might be particularly interested in providing us with input so we can best represent their wishes and concerns. It is possible that the consultation, which will occur on May 6, will occur after this issue of the newsletter has been distributed, but Broadmead residents should still give us their perspectives as we believe that we will still be able to provide input after the May 6 event.

BARA's Green Spaces committee has been working to preserve the highly sensitive ecosystems in Rithet's Bog, with further details provided in articles in this issue and in the Fall 2024 issue. It is our view that urgent action is needed or else we will lose unique and irreplaceable ecological features. Action to save the Rithet's Bog ecosystem(s) has been very slow. BARA will continue to keep residents informed of any progress that is being made.

A group of volunteers from BARA, the Cordova Bay Association for Community Affairs, and the Falaise Community Association did a lot of work to try to

arrange for an All Candidates Meeting at Claremont Secondary School with candidates for the recent federal election. Unfortunately, we ran into a snag: on the one date where we could both secure the venue and all interested candidates were available, Elections Canada was running an advance poll at the school. We initially thought that this would not be a problem, since our all candidates' meeting and the advance poll would be in different, separated sections of the school with different entrances. Unfortunately, Elections Canada did not share this view and we had to cancel the event, since we did not have enough time to secure a new venue on exactly the same date (other dates not being workable). We also ran into the difficulty (similar to the difficulty we faced with the last provincial election) of one candidate not wishing to participate (we would have run the event anyway had this been the only issue). The three community associations will once again collaborate in the Fall of 2026 to make efforts to put on an all candidates meeting for the municipal election to be held then. We will not, at that time, face the problem of having to organize an event on very short notice.

BARA is in need of volunteers to help bolster its efforts. Our Board has an historically low number of hard-working individuals keeping the organization going. Please consider joining our Board (nominations sent in by email in advance appreciated but we will also accept nominations at the May 27 Annual General Meeting itself). If you are not sure about committing to serve on the association's Board, you may wish to consider joining one of BARA's committees: Publications, Events, Green Spaces, Covenants, Transportation & Traffic. Just send us an email (info@broadmead.ca).

BARA Board

President: Doug Baer
Vice-President: Bil Heatherington
Treasurer: Larry Statland
Secretary: Wayne Neumann
Directors: Jake Boguski
Jennifer Cheng
Bernd Schweitzer

Newsletter Production and Distribution

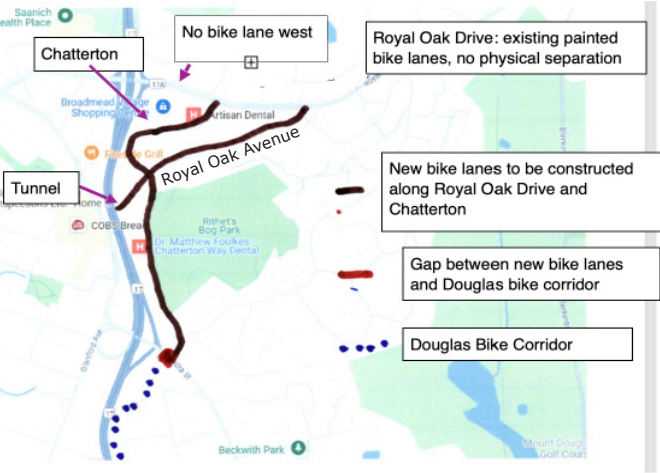
Ad Hoc Editorial Team
Doug Baer, Wayne Neumann, Nancy Ball
Layout Manager: Bruce More
Graphics Contributor: Nancy Craig
Advertising: Ross Taylor
Distribution: Jennifer Cheng
Barb Lawton & 35 carriers

Contact BARA: info@broadmead.ca

NEW BIKE LANES FOR CHATTERTON & ROYAL OAK AVENUE

Doug Baer

As part of Saanich’s Active Transportation Plan, the municipality will be constructing bicycle-related road improvements along two Broadmead roads later this year (2025). The entire length of Chatterton and the entire length of Royal Oak Avenue are slated to be upgraded to include cycling amenities of some sort (see map, Figure 1).



At the time of this writing, planning had not been finalized but it was expected that Chatterton would receive protected bike lanes similar to those recently constructed along Mann Avenue, while no decision had been made regarding the type of improvement to be seen along Royal Oak Drive. According to a report submitted to Saanich Council earlier this year, the total estimated cost of this project will be \$780,000. This is considerably less than the \$2-4 million per km. typically budgeted for active transportation improvements; most other active transportation projects in Saanich involve simultaneous improvements in sidewalks and roadways but suitable sidewalks already exist along both Chatterton and Royal Oak Drive.

Street Parking and Bike Lanes

The new bike lanes along Chatterton will not affect residential street parking because most of the road already has no parking. A few street parking spaces used by business customers/clients at the north end of Chatterton might be affected. Along Royal Oak Avenue between Chatterton and Royal Oak Drive, residential parking is almost never seen given the long driveways along the street. Moreover, it is not clear that separated bike lanes will be installed here given the low traffic density on the street: many AAA (“All Ages and Abilities”) bike infrastructure guidelines” suggest that separated lanes are not necessary when traffic densities are

below 1,000 vehicles/day (the latest counts were around 750). Gateway Baptist Church has expressed concerns over the loss of parking for Sunday services, but there have been consultations to help resolve any issues. Perhaps the biggest improvement needed if Royal Oak Avenue east of Chatterton is to become a bike route would be a speed reduction along the street, with the replacement of the current 50kph limit sign with a sign showing a lower speed restriction.

The small, narrow stretch of Royal Oak Avenue west of Chatterton ending in a cul-de-sac for cars and a pedestrian tunnel under the Pat Bay highway for cyclists and pedestrians may be a different matter. Here, the narrow street is typically crowded with parked vehicles including vehicles which are too high to fit into the underground parking facilities of the nearby condo complex and Royal Oak Mall shoppers who, instead of driving across the Pat Bay Highway, park here and then walk under the underpass to the mall. Separated bike lanes would remove this parking, probably from both sides of the street. Leaving this section “as is” would not be without precedent: south of Royal Oak Drive, the much busier Lochside Drive (forming part of the Lochside Trail) sees parking on both sides of a narrow road conflicting with cyclist use but there are no plans over the next 20 years to do anything about this. An argument for not acting is that in these narrow sections of the street, which is not a through street, cars are driving so slowly that serious collision injury is unlikely. However, even low speed collisions (at less than 20kph) can lead to serious though perhaps rarely fatal injuries. Whatever solution is adopted to this challenging section of street is not likely to fully satisfy all parties.

How Useful to Cyclists?

The section of Royal Oak Avenue east of Chatterton, providing a route parallel to Chatterton (see map) and is slightly shorter than travelling west along Royal Oak to Chatterton then south along Chatterton. Given the completion of a full separated bike route along the length of Chatterton, its utility is small, but on the other hand it will probably not be a very complex or expensive project (with no separated bike lanes).

The section of Royal Oak Avenue west of Chatterton provides a connection for cyclists from throughout Broadmead (and further afield, from Falaise and Cordova Bay) to reach the Royal Oak Mall. The pedestrian tunnel under the Pat Bay Highway had a steel bar to prevent cyclist and motorcycle use, but this was removed within the last few years, allowing cyclists easier access to the tunnel. Nonetheless,

the tunnel itself was not designed for both cyclists and pedestrian and will comfortably support only one direction of cyclist travel at a time when there are no pedestrians using the tunnel. Moreover, its low overhang creates difficulty for taller cyclists or cyclists with bicycles configured for Dutch-style upright seated cycling. The likelihood that this tunnel will be improved in the future is very low, as it falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and Transit and not the municipality.

It is possible that Saanich planners envisage the use of Royal Oak Avenue west of Chatterton as the primary route by which cyclists travelling along Royal Oak Avenue (e.g., cyclists from Broadmead going to Camosun or cyclists from Royal Oak going to Uvic) can cross the Pat Bay Highway, given the highly dangerous nature of the bridge crossing along Royal Oak Drive. But this entails a detour of approximately 3km, and it seems unlikely that most cyclists will find this to be a satisfactory route for this purpose. While Saanich considers Royal Oak Drive east of Chatterton to be a completed form of cycling infrastructure and is working on improving infrastructure to the west of the Pat Bay highway to form a contiguous route through to Helmcken, the short portion between Chatterton and Elk Lake Road is not part of Saanich’s priority bicycle network planning.

The cycling lanes along Chatterton will, ultimately, connect with cycling infrastructure along the length of Quadra Street to the City of Victoria Boundary. Cyclists from Broadmead will be able to cycle along Quadra to reach the Lochside Trail and then cycle downtown, or to cycle all the way downtown via Quadra. However, the Quadra infrastructure is not part on the “short term priority” list and timing for the completion of the medium term list projects (which include Quadra) has recently been extended from 15 years (completion by 2040) to 20 years (completion by 2045).

Saanich Engineering is currently pondering two issues: how to deal with including bike lanes in



The gap between Dieppe (Douglas connector bike route) and Chatterton, viewed from Dieppe



Pedestrian tunnel under the Pat Bay Highway

the portion of Chatterton between Emily Carr and Quadra (a short section which is much more challenging than the remainder of Chatterton) and whether or not to attempt to make a connection between the Quadra/Chatterton intersection and the sidewalk connecting Quadra Street with Dieppe Street less than 100m. to the north.

Dieppe Street forms the north end of a cycling route referred to as the “Douglas Connector” (dotted blue line on map on previous page). This route reaches south along Douglas Street (not to be confused with Douglas in downtown Victoria) all the way to Saanich City hall, where it connects to the Lochside trail. While low-traffic Dieppe will be left “as is”, with only paint markers to indicate cyclists are to share the road with cars (suitable for low-traffic streets), sections of Douglas to the south will be improved with bike lanes or other improvements over the course of the next few years as part of Saanich’s short-term priority project plan.

Connecting Chatterton bike lanes with the top end of the Douglas connector represents an engineering challenge, but not an insurmountable one. Along the <100m section of Quadra (see the red-coloured box in Figure #2), there are five lanes of traffic (versus the normal 4 along Quadra north of McKenzie) and some provision for a short two-way bikeway would not be impossible. Without this additional connection, the only way for cyclists to get safely from Chatterton bike lanes to the Douglas corridor is over sidewalks. A connection would make a big difference: given that Quadra street improvements are decades away, this short connection would mean the difference between Chatterton remaining a “bikeway to nowhere” for one or perhaps two decades and Chatterton immediately providing a through-to-downtown connection for cyclists east of the Pat Bay highway. Moreover, even when cycling lanes are eventually added to Quadra Street, it is highly likely that the Douglas corridor route will be much better used than its parallel Quadra Street route because it is a slightly more direct and more pleasant route to City Hall, the Uptown Mall and downtown Victoria.

DEAN MURDOCH

Mayor of Saanich

The Warm Embrace of Summer: Events to Look Forward to This Season



As the days grow longer and the sun shines brighter, the familiar warmth of summer envelops us, filling us with excitement and anticipation.

This season isn't just about escaping the cold and wet weather. It's also about the return of a whole bunch of summer events that bring

communities together and offer a rich mix of cultural, musical, and recreational activities.

I'm looking forward to the return of our hallmark summer events in Saanich.

The season really kicks off with the annual Gorge Canada Picnic and Gorge on Art. A great family-friendly event that gives us a chance to celebrate on Canada Day.

One of my absolute favourite events is Strawberry Fest. This year it is on Sunday, July 6 at Beaver Lake Park, 11 am to 4 pm. I love to see people gathering with family and friends on a warm summer afternoon and enjoying ice cream and strawberries together.

I always look forward to Music in the Park, which runs every Tuesday evening at Parks across Saanich (July 8 to August 26). Cadboro Bay Festival is always a popular event with families (Sunday, August 10 at Cadboro-Gyro Park, 11 am to 3 pm).



Check out Saanich's events calendar for a list of all the summer community activities:

<https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/news-events/events-calendar.html>

More than just community events, this summer offers so many outdoor outings. We've got hundreds of

hiking trails in our beautiful parks; regional trails for biking, scooting, running or walking; beaches for swimming and warming your toes in the sand; and playgrounds, ball courts and fields to get out and play. There's something for everyone to enjoy in Saanich!

We have expanded our outdoor family attractions with a splash pad and upgraded playground at Rutledge Park. You'll also find the very popular splash pad and playground at Beckwith Park.

Families looking for biking activities will love McMinn Park's newly improved bike skills course. Don't forget about the Tripp Station bike skills park (4050 Lochside Drive).

Saanich is the perfect place to get outside and soak up the summer sun. Grab your sunglasses and sunscreen, and let's enjoy all the fun the sunny weather brings!

Save the Date for our Annual

NEIGHBOURHOOD GARAGE SALE

JUNE 14th | SATURDAY 9AM - 1PM

COX LIDSTONE MCLEAN REAL ESTATE GROUP

We will be advertising and providing signage for every home that participates.

Contact us to register for this free event:
250-744-3301 admin@clmvictoria.com

IS IT TIME FOR YOU TO SELL?

Take advantage of our Free Market Evaluation service and let's figure out if the time is right for you. **Let's Talk 250.744.3301**

Not intended to solicit properties already listed for sale.

LANA POPHAM

MLA Saanich South

The Agricultural Land Reserve, Supporting BC Farmers And Food Producers Since 1973.



On April 18, 1973, the BC Government passed the Land Commission Act — the first of its kind in Canada — ushering in a law to preserve BC's best farmland.

In my view, it was the most progressive land-use tool of its time.

The Act reserved approximately 5% of BC's total land base for agricultural production and future food security.

Without the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a huge amount of farmland in BC would have been lost forever. The establishment of this reserve — which protects land specifically for farming — was a bold and fundamental shift in thinking.

Now, 52 years later, with the current situation around tariffs and growing interest in buying more BC and Canadian food, the ALR is more relevant and important than ever.

Between tariffs, climate-related weather events, and rising production costs for farmers and food producers, our food system is under pressure and in the spotlight.

During my recent visit to the Okanagan, I met with many farmers determined to overcome last year's extreme weather. They're not giving up — and everyone in BC is thankful for that.

As Minister of Agriculture and Food, I will continue to be the wind at the backs of BC's farmers, especially during challenging times. Earlier this year, our government provided \$5 million to help farmers adapt to climate change. More recently, we announced a new \$10 million fund to support tree fruit growers affected by crop damage last winter.

So far, it looks like this will be a bumper season — and that's great news for BC's farmers and for everyone who enjoys the fruits of their labour.

This year, more than ever, please support our BC farmers and food producers — and Buy BC!

A great sleep. A better you.
Life changing.



FAWCETT
MATTRESS
.COM

Meet your neighbour... **Robyn Walle**

Broadmead has been home to my family for over 40 years, and now, to my husband and our young sons.

I am a Principal at Baker Tilly's Sidney location, and specialize in estates, personal taxes and a wide range of owner-manager business needs, including financial statement audits and reviews. My team of professionals take a meticulous approach to ensure your financial affairs are in excellent hands.



YOUR FULL-SERVICE ACCOUNTING FIRM AND TAX SPECIALISTS

7 - 9764 Fifth Street, Sidney www.btvic.com

250-386-0500

BEFORE AND AFTER BROADMEAD BACKYARD

Caitlin and Zack Matfin



When we moved into this house in 2022, we were so excited to have a backyard with so much potential. After living in the space for a year, we loved the amount of sun the yard gets throughout the day, and we wanted to make the most of it - somewhere we could hang out, entertain, and enjoy time with friends and family.

Initially, it started as a checklist of smaller upgrades: replace the fence, install sprinklers, maybe add a patio. But as we talked it over, those smaller ideas snowballed into a full backyard transformation. We knew we'd be working towards a deadline, as our wedding was coming up the following summer, and we wanted to have the yard done in time to have our family and friends over for a Backyard BBQ Reception as part of the festivities.



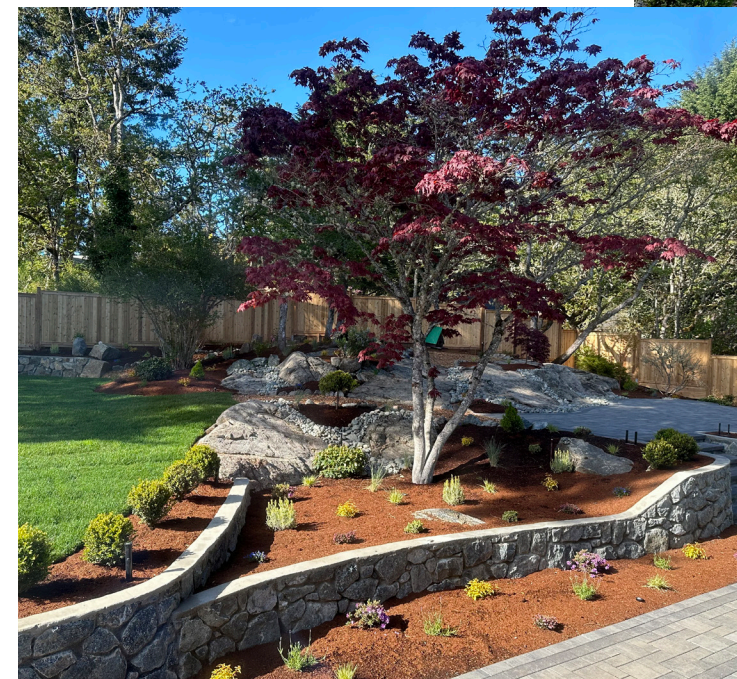
It began with a loose plan - lawn on the left, patio on the right - and we relied heavily on the skill and creativity of the tradespeople we worked with to bring the rest to life. Starting in the fall, two stonemasons helped us outline the basic layout. After a pause through the rainy winter months (and living with a very muddy yard!), a team of three landscapers took over in the spring. They spent a month working in the yard and handled everything from the interlock patio to the new fencing, planting, and irrigation system.



We supplemented their work with our own small projects on the weekends. The previous homeowners were avid gardeners, and we wanted to preserve or repurpose as many existing plants as possible, so we spent many weekends digging up plants and re-homing them in new corners of the yard.



Instead of traditional wedding shower presents, we asked our loved ones to gift us their favourite plants or cuttings from their gardens. As a result, the yard is filled with plants that remind us of our favourite people! The final touch was the arbor my father-in-law built us as a wedding gift, it really brought everything together and made the whole space feel special.



We're so happy with how the yard turned out, we had a wonderful time sharing it with our family and friends at our Wedding BBQ and can't wait to enjoy the space for many years to come!



MEET YOUR NEIGHBOUR: BIL HETHRINGTON

By Nancy Ball

Since moving to Broadmead in October 2021, Bil and his family have come to appreciate the unique charm and calm of this beautiful neighbourhood.

Originally from Calgary, their journey to Broadmead includes

time spent living in the Netherlands before settling on the West Coast. Drawn to the area by its abundance of large trees, wide streets, and serene aesthetic, Bil describes Broadmead as a relaxing and peaceful place to raise his children.

Bil's professional background is rooted in the energy industry, a field that shaped his upbringing and instilled in him the value of "work before play"—a piece of advice that has stuck with him throughout his life. Outside of work, Bil is a passionate musician. He once toured across North America with a rock band and remains musically active. He's currently on the lookout for a drummer to jam and create music with, keeping his passion alive and kicking.

In addition to his musical pursuits, Bil is an active volunteer and community contributor. He serves as a Director at Large on the Broadmead Resident

Association and also holds board positions with the Land Conservancy of British Columbia and the Public Affairs Association of Canada. While he's still relatively new to his role with the Resident's Association, Bil is enthusiastic about getting more involved in local initiatives that foster neighbourhood engagement.

When asked about how Broadmead has changed over the years, Bil admits he hasn't noticed significant shifts since his arrival. However, he's hopeful about the community's future and believes that there is great potential for growth in terms of connection and infrastructure.

"There isn't a strong sense of community here—at least not yet," he says, "but I think that can be improved by encouraging more interaction among neighbours and increasing opportunities to gather."

He suggests that neighbours can play an important role in building a welcoming and close-knit community by simply being friendly,

introducing themselves, and keeping an eye out for one another. Attending the Annual General Meeting and participating in neighbourhood events are great ways to start forming those bonds.

Bil and his family enjoy exploring local gems like lakeside Trail and the nearby beaches of Cordova Bay. For him, it's the simple moments—like a peaceful walk surrounded by nature—that make Broadmead special.

Looking to the future, Bil hopes to see the unique character of Broadmead preserved, especially its natural beauty and tranquil atmosphere. At the same time, he believes the community could benefit from more shared spaces.

"There's a lack of community infrastructure," he notes. "For example, we don't have a community centre, and that's something I'd love to see developed."

To anyone considering moving to the area, Bil has this to say:

"I truly believe that Broadmead is one of the most beautiful neighbourhoods in the city."

With its tree-lined streets, welcoming atmosphere, and the involvement of neighbours like Bil, Broadmead is certainly a place to watch—and to grow.



Do you or someone you know like to participate in this "Meet Your Neighbour" article? Important to feature and support others in our community. Please call/text Nancy Ball at 250-880-8818 for more info.

SUSAN BRICE

Saanich Councillor

Dear Broadmead Neighbours,



As I write this message the sun is out and I marvel at the beautiful gardens in our Broadmead Community. Thank you to all the hardworking homeowners who toil away so that we can all enjoy the gardens and lawns that are a signature of our neighbourhood. Also,

a special thank you to the Saanich public works crew who have been out cleaning up the parks and boulevards after some dramatically windy days these past few months.

You will have seen reported in the media that the Citizens Assembly studying the advantages and disadvantages of a possible amalgamation of Saanich and Victoria has completed their work. At the time of this writing the Assembly announced a consensus position recommending the two municipalities amalgamate. The final report is expected in May and Council thanks the citizens who devoted long hours to this task. The Councils look forward to receiving the final report and an analysis of the recommendations and after a detailed review determine the next steps. I can say that the job of Saanich Council is to continue to put the needs of the community at the forefront of our decision making, and we will continue to take that approach through this process. We will keep the residents engaged in the months ahead and any change in the municipal structures would require a positive vote in the form of a public referendum.

No doubt as you pass the firehall being rebuilt in our area on Elk Lake Drive you wonder how it's going. Fire Chief Michael Kaye recently gave Council a tour and its impressive just what a significant structure is being built. This important public asset is expected to be completed by summer 2026.

As we observe the changes south of the border, like so many of you I have taken time to reflect on what it means to be a Canadian and have reinforced my commitment to shopping locally and adhering to democratic principle and practices. I expect this July 1st we will sing with even greater enthusiasm and pride. We are Canadian!

Susan Brice...Saanich Councillor

"I couldn't imagine a better place than Tapestry."

Live in an award-winning community for independent seniors. Enjoy personalized services and exceptional wellness-inspired programs. Pursue your passions and live life to the fullest.

Exclusive Fall move-in incentive when renting prior to November 30.

Tapestry Victoria Harbour
TAPESTRY AT VICTORIA HARBOUR
777 Belleville Street, Victoria
TapestryVictoria.com | 250.419.4261
CONCERT PROPERTIES

CONCERT PROPERTIES - TAPESTRY VICTORIA HARBOUR

Your Community Specialist
Visit VictoriaRealtor.com

Downsizing & Negotiating Advisor
Maximize Your Profit in Less Time
Find Unlisted & Off The Market Homes
20+ Years Experience

CALL or TEXT
250.880.8818

NANCY BALL
Helping clients since 2003
VOLUNTEER • NEIGHBOUR • FRIEND
HOME STAGING REALTOR®

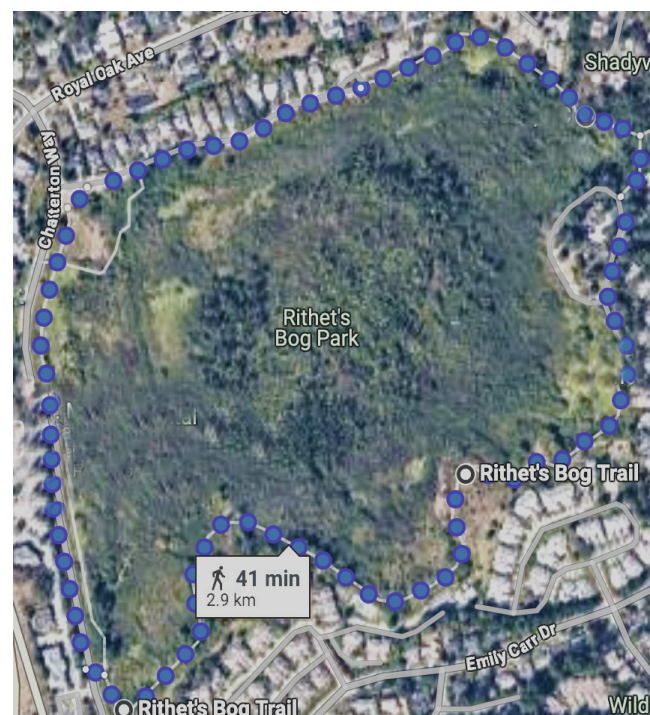
RE/MAX CAMOSUN
Each Office Independently Owned and Operated

RITHET'S BOG PARK

Stewardship Science & Sustainable Planning

The Broadmead Area Residents' Association (BARA) has a mandate is to promote the stewardship of green spaces in Broadmead. These green spaces are one of the defining characteristics of our neighbourhood and the largest and most significant green space in Broadmead is the Rithet's Bog Conservation Park. This 38-hectare conservation area sits along the Western edge of the Broadmead between Emily Carr Road and Chatterton Road and is a popular destination for people who walk the 2.9 km perimeter trail. Rithet's also has natural assets which benefit not just our neighbourhood but Saanich and the broader region.

Concerned about the sustainability of these natural assets, BARA has begun lobbying the District of Saanich to improve conservation management at Rithet's.



Biodiversity

In "District of Saanich State of Biodiversity" Rithet's is identified as having high biodiversity. Rithet's very well may have the highest biodiversity of any site in Saanich. This biodiversity is a function of its diversity of wetland as well as terrestrial systems.

Seventy percent of the wetlands in Saanich have been lost to development. Of the remaining 30% much has been fully degraded. Rithet's still has wetland systems with intact native vegetative communities. These systems are unique to Saanich and are the home to many species that also can only be found here.

These unique wetland systems are currently at risk as the result of water management, global climate change, and invasive species. Without active conservation management, these natural assets will likely be lost.

Conservation is much easier than restoration.

Water Management

Water management has been, and continues to be, a determining factor in the wetland habitats at Rithet's. There has been very little water management at Rithet's since the Ducks Unlimited restoration in 2002. If the current management regime continues, we will likely lose our native wetland communities and biodiversity.

Water management is framed as being very complicated. This described complexity creates the perception that water management requires so much planning that it can't be addressed. Over the past 20 years, and multiple generations of park management, the need for water management has always had to wait: until a new hire, until a comprehensive management plan, until a restoration plan, until a hydrology study, until... Currently the wait is for the Integrated Stormwater Management Plan. This plan is five years off. Meanwhile the last remaining bits of wetland vegetative communities continue to degrade. (See Fall '24 Bara Newsletter.)

There are a range of actions that could improve wetland conditions. Such actions could be implemented now and include:

- Resume meetings with the conservation partners including Saanich departments having authority for water management as well as conservation.
- Fix the weir to function as designed.
- Replace the weir with additional capacity and functionality.
- Modify the weir to increase capacity.
- Block the central ditch culvert.
- Plug agricultural ditches.
- Begin systematic removal of willows in wetland systems.
- Connect Chatterton ditch to the wetland.
- Build a boardwalk along the lower sections of the perimeter trail to accommodate trail access with a higher winter water table.
- Release beavers into the site.

Water management starts somewhere. We don't have to do everything, but we should start doing something. Any rewetting would help.



Possibly the last example of a native fen vegetative community in Saanich



The Weir

In 2002 there was a major restoration at Rithet's accomplished by a partnership between Ducks Unlimited Canada (Ducks), the District of Saanich, and the Rithet's Bog Conservation Society (RBCS). There were four aspects of this restoration:

1) **Management Agreement.** A management agreement was adopted between Ducks, Saanich, and RBCS. The partners were intended to regularly meet to oversee the continued management of the wetland systems. This agreement is still in effect although the partners have long ago stopped meeting, the management committee served a useful purpose then and would serve a useful purpose now. It should be reconstituted. Membership could initially include representatives from Saanich Parks, Engineering, Planning, Creeks and Waterways and Rithet's Bog Conservation Society. One of its purposes could be to look for additional third party environmental non-governmental organizations such as Ducks Unlimited to help partner at Rithet's.

2) **Willow Removal.** Willows contribute to natural succession of wetlands towards terrestrial systems, and in a natural landscape are part of the continued cycle of creation and destruction of wetlands. In order to promote a wetland system, the willows along the Western side of the conservation park were removed.

3) **Plug Central Ditch.** At the start of the 20th century a ditch was dug through the center of the site to drain it for agricultural use. Subsequently Rithet's was in agriculture for over 80 years and a legacy of this land use is a series of agricultural ditches. Some of these ditches still function today and continue to drain the site. In the 2002 restoration the central ditch was plugged on the upstream side. Additional ditch plugging was part of the original restoration plan but funding supported only the single plug.

4) **Installation of the Weir.** The most significant part of the 2002 restoration effort was the installation of the weir in the Southwest corner which regulates the water table for the site. The height of the weir was

set to optimize bog habitat in the central bog forest. (In 2002 there was no remaining bog habitat; the Bog habitat was destroyed as a result of the installation of the central ditch nearly 100 years earlier) Recently we are seeing the effects of climate change at Rithet's as the summers get longer and dryer and the summer water table gets lower and lower. Systems that would stay inundated into the Fall have been drying out as early as June. In Retrospect it would have been better if the weir had been set higher.

Since the 2002 restoration the management team stopped meeting, there has been little to no willow control, and the weir fell into disrepair.

Currently the weir is watertight at 28cm. below the original design specification. (-28 cm at the weir equates to an approximate 100,000,000 litre water deficit going into our longer and dryer summer season which has a devastating effect on the wetlands). Saanich has attempted some temporary repairs, but they have not been effective. The weir channel should be dredged of accumulated sediment to allow access to the weir and the full set of stop logs replaced and effectively sealed. This project should proceed expeditiously to limit degradation of the wetlands.

While weir stop log replacement is a shorter-term solution, the long-term solution requires replacement of the existing weir with more modern equipment that gives greater control and flexibility to adjust water levels. This is a bigger project that will require



planning including a water management plan that considers not only hydrology, but also the impacts of climate change and vegetation management on hydrology. Well executed weir stop log replacement will give time to develop a well thought out plan for weir replacement, but it is not an excuse to avoid weir replacement.



December 4th, 2024 Meeting

This past Fall BARA began lobbying Saanich councillors to raise awareness of the need for water management at Rithet’s. These efforts resulted in a motion being past at council instructing Saanich staff to meet with BARA. This meeting took place Dec 4, 2024. In attendance at this meeting was Senior Saanich Parks management, the president of BARA, the president of RBCS, and the Pulling Together lead steward of Rithet’s.

The goal of the meeting was to request water management to conserve wetland systems at Rithet’s. As a start to this process BARA specifically requested that Saanich:

- 1) Resume conservation management meetings with the original management partners including Saanich departments that have authority over water management as well as conservation.
- 2) Repair the weir to function as designed.

Update April 2025

We recently asked for an update from Saanich and were told,

“Provincial wetland biologists, GeoBC, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Saanich staff are working in collaboration to assess the extent of current vegetation and change in plant communities over time. By learning about the health of the ecosystems, changes over time and possible climate change impacts, we can make more informed decisions to protect the amazing biodiversity and sensitive species at Rithet’s Bog.”

Saanich has also acknowledged the need for the inspection and maintenance for the weir.

“The inspections will continue this spring and summer to determine what short-term fixes may be needed. ”

We have asked if there will be any action this spring to try and retain water going into the summer and have yet to receive a response.

Hydrology Study

One impediment to addressing water management at Rithet’s has been the lack of a hydrology data. In the Fall of 2023, the Province initiated a hydrology study at Rithet’s installing 13 groundwater data wells 2 rain gauges and 2 water level gauges at the weir. After a year and a half of monitoring the Province’s funding has run out. Saanich is unable to continue this study.

“Long term data would be great to support maintenance and management plans of the bog and park, but after some discussion, we determined that we wouldn’t have the time to do so with our other priorities. ”

Conclusion

Since the 2002 restoration, Saanich has maintained Rithet’s Bog Conservation for recreation with little investment in conservation. As all municipalities, Saanich has limited resources and should be commended for recognising the importance of natural assets and allocating resources for natural areas in Saanich, but Rithet’s has not been a priority.

If you are worried about conservation of critical wetland habitat at Rithet’s we encourage you to let Saanich know your concerns and request investment in water management and conservation at Rithet’s.



GR

GABRIEL ROSS

Furniture - Lighting - Accessories

1319 GOVERNMENT ST. | 250-384-2554

GRSHOP.COM

Vision...
Well Framed

Eyewear for the whole family.

artSEE

EYEWEAR

Broadmead 250.881.8252

Oak Bay 250.595.2773

www.artSEEeyewear.ca

Mary Brookes

PERSONAL REAL ESTATE CORPORATION

Licensed Since 1989

If you have any real estate questions or concerns, allow me to put my 35+ years of experience to work for you. I love what I do and am honoured, every time, when someone chooses to work with me.

Broadmead has been my home for over 21 years...and counting!

Contact your Resident Realtor directly:

250-889-2621

MaryBrookes@RoyalLePage.ca

ROYAL LEPAGE

TOP TIER

MEMBER 2023

ROYAL LEPAGE

NATIONAL TOP 10%

2022-2023

ROYAL LEPAGE

Coast Capital Realty

110-4460 Chatterton Way, Victoria BC, V8X 5J2

ROYAL LEPAGE

AWARD of Excellence

2023

ROYAL LEPAGE

DIRECTOR'S PLATINUM AWARD 2023

YOUR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!

BARA is in desperate need of volunteers to help us fulfill our mission to build community and represent the community's interest to the municipality. Please consider joining our Board of Directors (send nominations to PresidentBARA@gmail.com) or one of our committees:

- **Publications** – responsible for this publication
- **Events** – organizes Community Day and other events.
- **Covenants** – responds to questions from residents about Statutory Building Schemes ("covenants") in Broadmead.
- **Social Media and Technology** – responsible for the organization's web page and social media presence.
- **Parks, Trails and Green Spaces** – identifies concerns re parks, trails and conservation areas and brings these concerns to Saanich Parks and other agencies.
- **Transportation** – monitors pedestrian and cyclist safety issues as well as traffic concerns.

We also need volunteers to help us deliver this newsletter twice a year!

JOIN BROADMEAD AREA RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION AT:

[HTTPS://BROADMEAD.CA/MEMBERS/](https://broadmead.ca/members/)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2025 Annual General Meeting of the Broadmead Area Residents' Association will be held at 7pm on Tuesday, May 27 at Gateway Baptist Church , 898 Royal Oak Avenue (lower level).

Guest speaker: Brent Reems, Saanich Chief Administrative Officer

BARA memberships will be sold at the door for those who would like to join or renew their memberships.

An agenda will be distributed by email to current members of the organization prior to the event. **Your attendance needed.**