

Things soon will be **buzzing** along the Lochside Trail

By Francesca Loro, Stewardship Coordinator, Peninsula Streams Society and Lora Morandin, Pollinator Partnership Canada

If you've biked or walked along the Lochside Regional Trail past the Monkey Tree Pub and north of Cedar Hill Cross Road, you may have noticed the grassy field on your right. This weedy patch, situated next to Blenkinsop Creek and owned by BC Hydro, will be the site of a Garry Oak meadow restoration project this year, led by local stream and habitat restoration group Peninsula Streams Society.

Restoring the area with native plants will create a vibrant Garry Oak meadow full of pollinators such as butterflies and native bees that will benefit gardens, local agriculture, and the environment. In addition, this project will result in creation of a beautiful oasis of nature in the heart of the city, demonstrating how humans can interweave conservation within urban areas.

Clearing weeds and planting will begin in late summer 2018 under the guidance of native plant experts from Saanich Native Plants. Plants will be chosen that attract native bees and other pollinators, many of which are in serious decline. Native bees and other native pollinators rarely sting, are solitary (unlike non-native honey bees), and are essential for crop pollination and ecosystems. Stewards, including students from nearby Reynolds High School, will help monitor bees and other pollinators into the future, under the guidance of pollinator specialists from the Pollinator Partnership Canada. Maintenance, periodic mowing, weeding, watering and potential plant additions will be undertaken in subsequent years of the project.

Project support has been provided by the North Quadra Community Association, and funding from BC Hydro, the Province of BC, Victoria Real Estate Board, Donn Mann Excavating Ltd., Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (PCAF) and Greater Victoria Savings & Credit Union Legacy Fund.

For more information, to volunteer to the project:
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