

## TREES AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE GORGE TILlicum AREA

An old Chinese proverb states 'The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is right now.' We certainly have enjoyed the trees planted by previous generations here in the Gorge Tillicum neighbourhood. The big elms lining Colquitz Avenue, the gorgeous ornamental trees along the Gorge and the bushy pines in Hampton Park are all examples of public tree planting programs from the past that we enjoy the results of today.

There are so many benefits to a healthy urban forest, it is hard to list them all. Along with summer shade and habitat for wildlife, trees also provide cooler air temperature nearby, increase stormwater absorption, reduce soil erosion, mask the sounds of traffic, provide food and filter air pollutants. In exchange for some minimal care and attention, trees can give us all these things and as an added bonus, some serious mental health benefits. Research has shown that that regularly spending time around trees provides a wide range of human health benefits, from lowering stress and anxiety to even boosting our longevity. Planting additional trees is considered a win/win measure when developing a plan for climate action as not only do trees reduce CO2 levels due to photosynthesis, they also help mitigate some of the adverse effects of a warmer climate by providing shade and cooling in urban environments.

In the past, tree loss in our area has mostly been due to land use changes for housing, roads and development, however, now climate change is posing a new additional challenge. Hotter dryer summers, with long periods of no rain are becoming



Photo: Vera Wynn Williams

Colquitz Avenue with its large boulevard trees.

more frequent and in succession are causing the loss of trees, even native trees, that are unable to adapt to the new regime. A walk through Cuthbert Holmes Park shows, for example, that Western Red Cedar trees have been heavily impacted by recent summer droughts and many of them are dead or dying, even those in restoration areas. Ornamental trees that aren't faring well include other moisture-loving species such as birch, some varieties of dogwood and maple varieties. In addition, the warmer temperatures especially in winter, are bringing new pests and diseases that threaten tree health.

*continued on page 4*



We welcome comments—please let us know what you think of your newsletter!

**Editors:**

Vera Wynn-Williams 250-516-4903  
v.wynnwilliams@gmail.com

Meghan Mergaert  
meghanmergaert@gmail.com

Gabe Epstein  
gabe.epstein75@gmail.com

Green Pages: Dorothy Chambers  
dotmat@shaw.ca

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**Advertising Inquiries:**

Phil Lancaster  
250-514-1492  
philplancaster123@hotmail.com

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All 3,800 copies of this newsletter are delivered by volunteers, and we could always use more help. Please contact Scott Karpes at 778-679-3545.

## GTCA BOARD MEETINGS

The Board normally meets at 7pm the second Thursday of each month from September to June. Please check our website for the most up to date information. Everyone is welcome to attend board meetings. If you want to put an item on the agenda please email our president one week in advance. Please email [info@gorgetillicum](mailto:info@gorgetillicum) if you would like a copy of the agenda in advance of the meeting.

## GTCA MEMBERSHIP

GTCA membership is open to anyone who resides in the community, both owners and renters. Your membership not only helps pay for community events and this newsletter, but your support also helps to give the GTCA more significant influence when advocating for our community. For membership information, please see this newsletter's back page or our website.

## GORGE TILlicum COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The GTCA boundaries are the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet shorelines, the Trans-Canada highway to the north and Harriet/Burnside East/Whittier/Harriet to the east.

To learn more about Saanich Community Associations and view the boundaries, see <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/community-associations.html>

### Board of Directors

**President:** Vera Wynn-Williams  
[v.wynnwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:v.wynnwilliams@gmail.com)

**Chris Bullock**  
[chrisbullock@shaw.ca](mailto:chrisbullock@shaw.ca)

**Vice President:** Phil Lancaster  
[philplancaster123@hotmail.com](mailto:philplancaster123@hotmail.com)

**Mauricio Curbelo**  
[mauricio.curbelo@gmail.com](mailto:mauricio.curbelo@gmail.com)

**Communications Coordinator:**  
Gabe Epstein  
[gabe.epstein75@gmail.com](mailto:gabe.epstein75@gmail.com)

**Meghan Mergaert**  
[meghanmergaert@gmail.com](mailto:meghanmergaert@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Chris Kask  
[chriskask@hotmail.com](mailto:chriskask@hotmail.com)

**Edward Pullman**  
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**Secretary:** Arden Little  
[ardenlittle@shaw.ca](mailto:ardenlittle@shaw.ca)

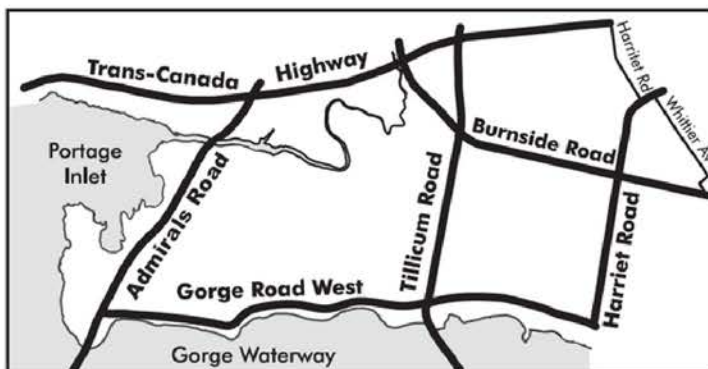
**Paul Savinkoff**  
[savvykod@gmail.com](mailto:savvykod@gmail.com)

**Membership Coordinator:**  
Scott Karpes  
[skarpes@hotmail.com](mailto:skarpes@hotmail.com)

**Michele Sealey**  
[MicheleSealey@gmail.com](mailto:MicheleSealey@gmail.com)

**Katherine Brandt**  
[kmbrant@telus.net](mailto:kmbrant@telus.net)

**Reb Stevenson**  
[rebstevenson@gmail.com](mailto:rebstevenson@gmail.com)



### How to Stay in Touch



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[info@gorgetillicum.ca](mailto:info@gorgetillicum.ca)



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As always, the GTCA has been busy with a variety of initiatives. As you will see from this issue, one of our key focuses for this year is adding more trees in our neighbourhood. We have a dedicated group working on encouraging planting more trees and lobbying for better maintenance of our existing trees. This includes trees on the boulevards.

Our Arts & Culture Working Group plans several events over the next six months. They are also working hard to get another mural along Burnside Road.

Planning is also underway for our signature event - the Gorge Canada Day Picnic. Unfortunately, this year we have the added challenge of the road works along Gorge Road, but we will still host a fantastic event.

We continue to be frustrated by the many levels of bureaucracy at various levels of government and getting things down efficiently. It all seems unnecessarily complex, from getting murals approved to seeing developments break ground to getting a wharf fixed. The wharf is a particularly frustrating example.

Over a year ago, the Gorge Tillicum Community Association contacted Staff/Council to enquire about the long delay in repairs to the wharf in Saanich Gorge Park, below the Gorge Bridge, at Tillicum Rd. It had been 2 years (now going on 3 years) since the ramp to/from the wharf had been removed due to the need for repairs. Apparently, this one is being held up by the need for federal approval, and we still have no timeline.

The wharf had been in place for 100 years and is/was a widely used and cherished piece of historical infrastructure. For over 10 decades, it has been used by boaters, swimmers, fisherpeople and, more importantly, in countless rescue operations. This wharf sits just below the rapids below the bridge. It has been utilized over the decades many times to help save lives as this is a common place for boats to capsize. Yet despite the safety concerns, the bureaucratic machine seems stalled.

Finally, we are planning our AGM on April 20th. This year we are delighted to hold it at the newly built Victoria Scottish Culture Centre. This stunning venue, just over the Admiral's Bridge, is a beautiful addition to our community, and we are excited to have them give a presentation and tour. We hope to have you join us.

**Vera Wynn-Williams, GTCA President**

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 7:00 - 8:30 PM  
VICTORIA SCOTTISH COMMUNITY CENTRE



1803 Admirals Road - On Site Parking Available

*Please Join Us For:*

- Board Elections
- Annual Report Presentation
- Presentation and tour of the recently opened and spectacular new Victoria Scottish Community Centre
- Meet & Greet with your neighbours

**Refreshments Will Be Served**





The last time Saanich produced an Urban Forest Strategy report in 2005, the Gorge Tillicum area had one of the lowest tree canopy percentages in the municipality estimated at between 10 and 25% tree cover compared to 36% in the District as a whole[1]. Recognizing the key role that the urban forest plays in both biodiversity as well as climate action, and realizing the threats to its health, Saanich has endorsed a challenging goal in the Saanich Climate Plan; to double the rate of planting trees in order to plant 10,000 new trees by 2025[2]. Obviously, we'd like to see lots of these trees end up in the Gorge Tillicum area!

The Tree subcommittee of the Climate and Environment Working Group has been meeting since fall of 2022 to take action for the urban forest in the Gorge Tillicum area. The committee is currently working on an inventory of the trees on public boulevards in the neighbourhood and will shortly be canvassing residents for their interest in planting additional trees both on the boulevard and on private property. Our goal is to rapidly increase the number of trees planted in the neighbourhood in order to achieve the 3:30:300 rule adopted by Saanich Council and developed by Cecil Konijnendijk van den Bosch, professor of Urban

Forestry at UBC. This new rule of thumb for urban greening:

- 3: Everyone should be able to see at least 3 trees from their home
- 30: Communities should ensure a 30% tree canopy in all neighbourhoods
- 300: Everyone should have a park within 300m of home

The Tree committee intends to determine which areas in the GTCA area currently do not meet the 3:30:300 rule and to focus efforts in those areas. Linkages between greenspaces to create green corridors or pollinator corridors using boulevard plantings and tree canopies is also under discussion. If you are interested in participating in this endeavour, we are looking for help with the inventory and door to door contacting of residents to obtain permission for boulevard tree planting. You can contact the tree committee by emailing [triciademacedo1@gmail.com](mailto:triciademacedo1@gmail.com).

**Tricia deMacedo**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Urban-Forest-Strategy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/sustainable-saanich/saanich-climate-plan.html>

## Get a Boulevard Tree

You can request a **FREE** tree through **Saanich's Partnership Tree Planting Program!** You even get to pick the tree species. Check online at: <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/natural-environment/trees/partnership-tree-planting-program.html> Or email [parks@saanich.ca](mailto:parks@saanich.ca) directly.





## THINKING OF SOLAR PANELS?

I had solar panels installed on my roof almost five years ago. It's a relatively small system, capable of generating 4.35 kw at maximum output. However, I have never reached the maximum because the panels face different directions so it is physically impossible for all of them to be at maximum exposure at once. In practical terms, I expect to get around 30 KWH on each sunny summer day. So far, I get an annual average of 5.5 MWH, which translates to around 40% of my annual usage. The panels are guaranteed for 25 years and are maintenance free.

When I decided to have the system installed, I delved into the mass of confusing information available on-line and eventually discovered that BC Hydro offers what is called a 'net-metering' connection, meaning that I use the provincial grid as a battery to store and draw electricity. The value of what I generate is deducted from my annual bill. In total, I save around \$700 per year on the cost of electricity. This may seem a little out of whack given that electricity costs approximately 10 cents per KWH but some of my electricity is billed at 'step 2' rates, which are higher.

The system cost me just over \$10,000, including installation, and there were no rebates at the time of installation. However, electricity costs have increased and I'm fairly confident they'll increase more. From one perspective, this looks like a poor investment, as it will take about 14 years to recover my costs. However, I see it differently. I see a

return of 7% per annum as an immediate return that is likely to grow considerably as the cost of electricity goes up.

There are drawbacks to the system, but not many. When BC Hydro is out of service, my system shuts down to prevent a charge going into the grid that might hurt repair crews. I could fix this by installing storage batteries or by buying an EV adapted for two way charging. However, I bought a used Nissan Leaf at the same time that I installed the solar panels and am too delighted with it, even after 5 years, to want to invest in another car. So, for now, I'll just take the savings in hand and let the future open up new possibilities.

The other drawback is that BC has no established system to recycle solar panels, which contain toxic materials. This seems odd given that our federal government now offers incentives up to \$5,000 to get people to install them, but I'm confident that the future will bring a solution, even though California, a jurisdiction that began pushing solar solutions 25 years ago, has failed to come up with one. We're just so much smarter about these things!

All things considered, I'm very happy with my system, not least because it has meant that I save \$700 a year - even with charging my car. The other unexpected benefit is that the panels shade my roof in summer.

**Phil Lancaster**



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## NEW FENCING



Photo: Dorothy Chambers

Alongside the Colquitz River estuary, down at the Admirals Road end of Cuthbert Holmes Park, new permanent fencing has been installed.

This whole site is closed to all park users. It is an area of very high sensitivity for ground resting and nesting resident and migratory birds who visit the mud flats to feed, at the entrance to the river tributary.

## A RARE VISITOR



Photo: Angela Wyatt

A rare visitor to Cuthbert Holmes Park, and also recently seen at Swan Lake, the Northern Shrike is a robin sized predator of birds, small mammals and insects.

Shrikes are rare among songbirds for their lifestyle of hunting and eating animals. They often kill more prey than they need at one time, but they don't let it go to waste. They will store food for later by impaling their prey on spines or barbed wire, earning the nickname "butcher birds."

## PLEASE HELP OUR RAPTORS



Recently, two owls have been found dead in Cuthbert Holmes Park. In January, a dead Great Horned Owl was reported to 1-866-341-BIRD (2437), the call centre for sick and dead wild birds. That owl will now undergo an investigative necropsy.

In Dec. another dead owl was found but not reported, and no species nor cause was identified, the owl was just left. Both owls were found very close to the currently active nest within the park.

Please make a report to 1-866-341-BIRD (2437). Put this number in your cell phone directory.

You will receive a response and efforts will be made to collect the owl to determine cause of death. The information statistics obtained are so important to protect our raptors from rodenticide poisonings, and identify spreading viruses. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/wildlife-wildlife-habitat/wildlife-health/wildlife-health-documents/wild\\_bird\\_mortality\\_investigation\\_protocol.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/wildlife-wildlife-habitat/wildlife-health/wildlife-health-documents/wild_bird_mortality_investigation_protocol.pdf).

**Thank you,  
Dorothy Chambers**



## SALMON IN THE CITY



Photo: Dorothy Chambers

This fall Coho spawning season saw about 400 salmon and 150 SeaRun Cutthroat Trout make their way up the Colquitz River.

Cheers.

*The Salmon in the City crew !*

## IMAGINE TILlicum ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WITH TREES!

If you think that our children's schools should have trees, shade and landscaping that doesn't look like urban moonscape, please consider joining a GTCA committee to start the long process leading to change.

A project like this needs a leader! Is it you? It also needs many hands. Will yours be among them? If you want to help, please contact us through our website, attention: Phil Lancaster.



Lots of pavement and no trees.

### Help Keep our Parks Clean & Safe



- Dispose of garbage and dog waste in the receptacles
- Please report overflowing garbage cans or illegal dumping to Saanich Parks at [parks@saanich.ca](mailto:parks@saanich.ca) or 250-475-5522
- Report camping & campfires to the Saanich Police non-emergency line at (250) 475-4321



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### Our 2022 Strawberry Tea Volunteers

We're looking forward to another Gorge Canada Day Picnic, coming up July 1, 2023! The planning committee works for many months on this event and lots of wonderful people help make it happen. We could use a few more volunteers this year, so if you can lend us a hand on July 1st, we want to hear from you. You can email us at [info@gorgecanadaday.ca](mailto:info@gorgecanadaday.ca).

We need people for varying times from 7am to 5pm for the following:

- Assist Saanich staff with the Gorge on Art event...checking artists in, monitoring morning set-up, helping at the Saanich table with art activities.

- Assist Saanich staff with the Kids' Zone... morning set-up & afternoon take-down, helping at the Saanich table with activities.
- Work on the Strawberry Tea team...prepping food on June 30th, set-up and take-down on the 1st, and serving and cleaning at the Tea in the afternoon.

After the picnic is done we have a fabulous volunteer wrap party sponsored by the Tillicum Save-on-Foods and 4 Mile Brewing! It's lots of fun and a great way to meet some of your neighbours. Come join us!

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## Upcoming EVENTS

## GORGE PARK CLEAN UP April 22nd

*See back page for details.*

## RELEASE THE FAIRIES : Curb Appeal is coming back to Gorge Tillicum from May 1-14!

Now in its third year, Curb Appeal is a community spirit event that invites everyone in the neighbourhood to create an informal art installation on their lawn, fence, window or anywhere that's visible from the street.

Since last year's "Spring Fantasy" theme was so well received, the same theme will be carried over to 2023. Think flowers, gnomes, bunnies and other bits of whimsy. Always been tempted to introduce a fairy door into your exterior decor? We're giving you the green light to shamelessly go ahead - in fact, stay tuned to our Gorge Tillicum Community Association Instagram and Facebook accounts for details on an upcoming fairy door workshop.

Be sure to include a small sign with the hashtag #gorgecurbappeal so we can track and share your installation on social media.

And remember that Curb Appeal is about participation, not perfection. Anything goes; you could simply hang a paper flower in your window and be done with it, or go for gold and sculpt your



**Spring Fantasy Curb Appeal Installation (2022)**

hedge into a breathtaking oeuvre. We keep mentioning topiary but have yet to see it materialize - will 2023 be the year someone in Gorge Tillicum produces a boxwood butterfly? Consider this a dare.

## COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE - JUNE 10



Ever think how great it would be if everyone had their garage sale on the same day to give everyone's sale more exposure and to avoid having multiple summer weekends of car traffic? This is the concept behind the successful Garagellenium sale in Oak Bay and we want to mimic that here in the Gorge Tillicum area!

The 1st annual Gorge Tillicum neighbourhood garage sale will take place on Saturday, June 10 from 9 am to 1 pm. The sale will be advertised only on social media. Residents & community groups are encouraged to have their own garage sale at their residence or community space on this day. If you would like your sale included on the list sent out via social media, please email [triciademacedo1@gmail.com](mailto:triciademacedo1@gmail.com) with your address (must be within the GTCA area).

This is an initiative of the Climate and Environment working group of the GTCA.



# New to the NEIGHBOURHOOD

## ALBINA STREET SUPPORTIVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



2933 & 2949 Albina Street

This development is a partnership between the Province through BC Housing, the federal government and the Capital Regional District (CRD). 52 new homes with 24/7 support services are now available for people experiencing homelessness in Saanich.

The site will be operated by Our Place Society, which will provide a range of services such as security, life-skills training, employment assistance, counselling, physical and mental health resources, meals, and referrals to addiction treatment and recovery services.

While there was an opening announcement and media stories, this newsletter still needs to be printed. Before opening, the community was also promised a Community Advisory Committee, yet this has yet to happen. A facility tour for partners and the community was cancelled with less than 24 hours notice. We are still waiting to hear more information. As we learn more, we will post to our Facebook page. As they say, stay tuned.

## HOUSING DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

If this list seems unchanging - you are correct! While there was a plethora of activity over the past few years, things have bogged down. Applications take years and years! Even when developments are approved by Council, issues with the developers and their financing and subsequent challenges in getting permits mean this a frustratingly slow process. One wonders how things in the surrounding communities get built.

### Currently moving into the construction stage are:

- 2900 Tillicum Rd. @ Gorge Road (Il Greco) - 53 units in 5 storey building with ground floor commercial.
- 3400 Tillicum Rd. (Old Bingo Hall) - 2, six storey mixed-use, multi-family buildings with ground floor commercial space and underground parking.

### Approved, but awaiting building permits:

- 630 Gorge Rd. W. - 25, 3 bed townhomes
- 1 & 21 Obed - 26 units in three storey rental bldg.

### In the development application stage:

- 992 Gorge Rd. W. - 58, 3 bed strata townhomes
- 3143 Tillicum - 77 micro-units in a 7 storey, mixed use residential building.
- Tillicum/Obed/Albina - 200 rental units, 5 storey building on Tillicum + 4 storey bldg on Albina.
- 2921 Earl Grey - 39 unit, 5 storey rental building

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## Keep Waste in its Place, Avoid Illegal Dumping.

Illegal dumping and abandoned waste are the result of improper disposal of unwanted items. This ends up being unsightly, encourages illegal dumping and sends a message that illegal activity is permissible in a neighborhood.

We've all seen materials left in boulevards with the hopes of having someone show up and take it. However, these materials are often damaged and end up being unusable. Think of that wet sofa you've seen left at the curb; it is unlikely to be picked up for reuse. Unfortunately, removal and disposal of abandoned waste often falls on our municipalities at the taxpayer's expense – So, if you're doing some spring cleaning or preparing to move, don't abandon the items you no longer want. You can follow these five recommendations to plan for proper disposal!



1- Does your item really need to be replaced? Reducing our consumption is the first step to reducing the amount of waste we create. You can make a huge difference by taking care of your items and prolonging their usable life.

2- Give your items a refresh! Updating the décor in your home? Give your outdated furniture a new look by repainting or re-staining old wooden furniture or upholstering your couch with a more modern fabric. This will make all the difference!

3- Find your usable items a new home. With technology we now have a broader reach from the comfort of our home. Advertise your materials for free on multiple online platforms and others in need of what you no longer want can do all the work to come and collect. Donate to local charities – depending on the items free pick up may be provided.

4- Can you recycle it? Most of the items we see abandoned can be recycled for free under various

stewardship programs. A great example are electronics like TV's, vacuums, and small kitchen appliances- these can all be recycled. Find your closest depot on [myrecyclopedia.ca](http://myrecyclopedia.ca)

5- It is time to say goodbye! Anything that cannot be reused or recycled should be properly disposed of at garbage facility in the capital region. You can make it easier by arranging a community disposal day with your neighbors and coordinate a shared visit and transportation to bring all the items at once.

Doing the right thing may not be as costly as you think! You can also help your neighborhood by reporting abandoned waste or witnessed illegal dumping to your local municipality.

For more information, visit [www.crd.bc.ca/dumping](http://www.crd.bc.ca/dumping)


**Submitted by CRD Environmental Services  
April 2023.**





**GORGETILlicUM**

Gorge Tillicum Community Association,  
P.O. Box 44152, Victoria, BC V9A 7K1

www.gorgetillicum.ca |  /GorgeTillicum

## Membership Application

Membership in the GTCA is by calendar year. In December of each year, those paying membership fees during December may designate them to be the fee for the upcoming calendar year and, in such cases, membership is valid from January 1st to December 31st of the following year. Join or renew by mail or online on our website!

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

\*EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\*This will be added to our distribution list for occasional emails regarding upcoming events or community issues.

If you are paying for other members of your household, please list the other Members' names:

\_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT:

Please enclose payment and mail to above address

Individual: \$5/each x \_\_\_\_\_ memberships = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Couples : \$10/each x \_\_\_\_\_ memberships = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \$25/each x \_\_\_\_\_ memberships = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: Your extra support helps offset Newsletter and other costs. Thank-you! + \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Payment Enclosed = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### DETAILS:

Membership is open to any resident or property owner who is 19 years old or older living at a fixed and officially recognized street address within the Gorge Tillicum neighbourhood and to businesses and other organizations operating at a fixed and officially recognized street address within the Association territory.

# Gorge Park Cleanup

**Saturday**  
**April 22, 2023**  
**9 am - noon**  
**(rain or shine)**

**Free coffee and donuts.**

Join us in Gorge Park,  
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Most supplies are provided but  
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**Paul Gerrard**

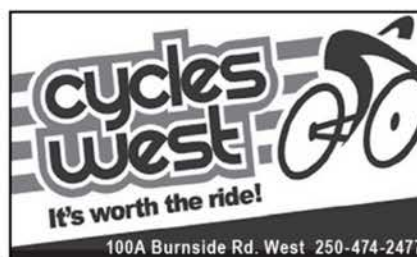
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