

Parksville Wetlands Outreach Event – March 8

The City is pleased to partner with fourth year Vancouver Island University geography students on an education/outreach project for the Parksville Wetlands. Over the past month, students have familiarized themselves with the wetlands and wish to invite the public to the Parksville Wetlands Mini BioBlitz on Friday, March 8 from 9.30 to 11.30 am. The 35.9 hectare wetlands were purchased by the City in 2017 to be maintained as a park in perpetuity for the enjoyment of residents.

What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz is a rapid biological survey of flora and fauna that embraces citizen science, connecting local community members, students, faculty, knowledge holders, naturalists, and scientists to identify as many species as possible within the allocated timeframe. One benefit of conducting a BioBlitz is the data collected by participants can provide a snapshot of biodiversity and species richness within the region or area of interest. Other benefits associated with a BioBlitz include an increased regional knowledge of changes to species abundance, habitat for species at risk, as well as changes in invasive species distribution over time when held frequently at the same location.

Wetlands walking tours to be offered

As part of the BioBlitz, students will lead two brief informative walking tours at 10 am and 11 am. If interested in one of the two thirty-minute tours, residents should wear warm clothing and sturdy footwear and bring along a plant/animal identification guide if possible.

What are students hoping to accomplish?

With this partnership, the VIU geography program and the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute will benefit from learning opportunities. Students look forward to the public joining them to gain further expertise and to help document the flora and fauna in the wetlands. Students wish to highlight the work in collaboration with the City to create an educational outreach plan for the wetlands intended to protect and celebrate the sensitive ecosystem and the service it provides. The event will provide students an opportunity to engage with the community to determine how they wish to use the wetlands and acquire the information needed to create the education plan.

WHO	City of Parksville, VIU geography students and MABBRI
WHAT	Mini BioBlitz and Wetlands Walking Tours
WHERE	Parksville Wetlands (foot of Despard Avenue near Springwood School)
WHEN	Friday, March 8 from 9.30 to 11.30 am Guided walking tours at 10 and 11 am
WHY	A chance to discover the Parksville Wetlands and help VIU students with their research

An open house hosted by the City and VIU geography students is planned for Friday, March 29 in the Forum, 100 Jensen Avenue East to update and present the education and outreach plan to the community.

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