

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Youth internship program helps restore sensitive parkland along Koksilah River

DUNCAN, BC – A group of youth in the Cowichan region are gaining valuable work experience and helping restore sensitive habitat areas within a sub-regional park as part of a new youth internship program. The project is led by the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre in partnership with the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) with support from the Cowichan Watershed Board.

During the internship the team of youth aged 15 to 20 will gain experience in invasive plant species removal as they work to remove Himalayan blackberry from the lower riparian area of Bright Angel Park along the Koksilah River. They will also be planting native species and monitoring this enhancement work, including mapping invasive plants removed and newly re-planted areas. The project will also include weeding, planting of native wildflowers and installation of new signage to enhance the native pollinator meadow in the park.

“Bright Angel Park is a real jewel within our local network of parks in the South Cowichan region, with walking trails, playgrounds, and swimming holes set amongst magnificent forest stands of cedar, hemlock, maple and black cottonwood” said Elizabeth Aitken, Parks Volunteer Coordinator for the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “This is a great example of the community-supported efforts that can help us further enhance these natural habitat areas that are invaluable within parks across our region. I am thrilled to have our CVRD Parks Volunteer Program back up and running this year after a hiatus during the pandemic, and encourage anyone interested in becoming involved with similar efforts at a CVRD park within their community to reach out to us.”

Lunch-and-learn sessions are included with the youth interns each day, where participants engage with experts in the field on topics including invasive plant species management, natural areas ecological restoration and forest management. The Regional District is supporting these youth internship restoration efforts through the CVRD Parks Volunteer Program and Invasive Species Management Program.

“Given the increasing damage we’re seeing to riparian areas in our local watershed from climate-related droughts and flooding, it’s great to get these young people out on the ground doing and learning about ecosystem repair,” said Jane Kilthei from the Estuary Nature Centre. “And it’s wonderful to work in partnership with CVRD Parks and the Watershed Society. We’re grateful for Eco-Action funding support from Environment and Climate Change Canada to be able to do this work.”

Visit the CVRD website for more information about its [Parks Volunteer Program](#), or join the Parks & Trails Volunteer Program [Facebook Group](#).

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