

CATTLE POINT NEEDS HELP

The precious viewpoint is being restored and degraded simultaneously.

Cattle Point and other sectors of Uplands Park are priceless, urban, natural areas with rare ecosystems that are benefiting from 30 years of ecological restoration. A truly inspiring story.

Conversely, this popular point continues to be degraded by relentless trampling everywhere. This helps spread invasive plants like Carpet Burweed and Crow Garlic, for example. This point may be the most visited site in Oak Bay (no statistics available) but still lacks a clear and formal trail system to direct and control foot traffic. We are losing its rare maritime meadow particularly since 2020 and 2021 with extra traffic apparently caused by COVID and the partial closure of Clover Point to cars by the City of Victoria.

This calls for our attention. The location and value of various signs, plaques, benches, tables, fences and a modest portable toilet added “spontaneously” over the years also need examination. Moreover, the approved installation of a new sculpture (Stqéyá - Soul of a Wolf - <https://www.kentlaforme.com/soulofawolf>) later in 2022 may attract even more visitors. Simply put, this special site needs serious, smart and professional infrastructure that can handle large numbers of visitors including folks with reduced mobility (see p. 2).

This preliminary plan is meant to kickstart a serious conversation. Cost of a detailed plan, construction and maintenance will be estimated pending approval in principle by the District of Oak Bay. Realistically, costs may exceed \$500,000, a sum unlikely available to the Oak Bay park service. Fundraising will likely be necessary.

This plan coincides with the U.N. Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which was endorsed by the District of Oak Bay, and the centenary of Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary in 2023. Cattle Point is a popular viewpoint on this historic bird sanctuary.

A SPECIAL PLACE

Cattle Point is a “living museum” in the District of Oak Bay. It is a perfect window on the Salish Sea, an archeological site, a historic site, an Urban Star Park, an eBird hotspot (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L348477>) and a remarkable natural area. Endowed with natural beauty, it features a rare maritime meadow with vernal pools, seeps and 20 species of rare plants, many at risk (e.g. the endangered Bearded Owl-clover). Uplands Park and Cattle Point’s Garry Oak forest, meadows and associated ecosystems are among the best of the last in British Columbia and Canada.

Thanks to Paul de Greeff, Landscape Architect and Green Shores Expert, and Wylie Thomas, Botanist and Restoration Specialist, for their advice.

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Michael, West Bay Walkway, Victoria Harbour, Sept. 5, 2022. Enjoying nature, fresh air, the sun and the view. Photo: J. Sirois

Ideally, trails and viewpoints at Cattle Point should be accessible to visitors with mobility issues. See <https://www.rickhansen.com>



UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON
**ECOSYSTEM
RESTORATION**
2021-2030