

TREE KEEPERS SOCIETY

Newly formed in the community of Capitol Hill



LEARN MORE ABOUT US:

*Statement of Purpose and Values of
Capitol Hill Tree Keepers Society**

PURPOSE

Capitol Hill Tree Keepers Society

Purpose: to form and maintain a group of neighbours who respect the ecology of the forest on the northern side of Capitol Hill. As stewards of this forest area, this group has formed a Society, and will work in cooperation with the City of Burnaby and other entities in the wise management and preservation of that forest. The purposes of this Society are:

1. to recognize that the forest and the individual trees provide a healthy and enjoyable resource for the neighbourhood and visitors,
2. to protect a valuable space which can be conserved and sustained through thoughtful environmental restoration.

*This Society was registered in June 2022 as “BC Society S 0076559” under the BC Societies Act.

BACKGROUND

Capitol Hill Tree Keepers Society

Background: the once abundant and flourishing forest on the NW side of Capitol Hill in North Burnaby has been disturbed many times in the past 150 years. Logging, roads, houses, refineries, electric power lines and petroleum pipelines have all had their effects. Those disturbances have enabled people - including members of this Society - to build and live on the hill. We are focused on a forested area of about 176 hectares, bounded on the north by the Trans Canada Trail. We acknowledge that there are important trees beyond this rough boundary, on other parts of Capitol Hill, and those are not less valued. We hope our focus on this area will inspire others to focus on trees and ecology in their surroundings.

We acknowledge that the trees and forest on Capitol Hill, and our homes and buildings, are on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples. The northern side of Capitol Hill is defined as a Conservation Area by the City of Burnaby and is currently protected under the City's Tree Bylaw. Our Society's goal is to focus on additional care and preservation in light of the increasingly higher summer temperatures, variable and uncertain rainfall, and Burnaby's need for canopy-shade and cool.

VALUES

Capitol Hill Tree Keepers Society

1 Creating a stronger community. Neighbours who are committed to preserving the forest in a co-operative and engaged manner can provide mutual support for the community in times of need. The goal of the Society is to incorporate new residents and neighbourhood youth in planning for environmental stewardship of this Conservation Area utilizing Burnaby's Forest Management Strategies through direct observation, future modelling, and best practices. The forest will thus be a medium for forging local interactions and relationships.

2 Focusing step-by-step on small sections of this large area. The Society's scope refers to all the forested land beyond the north ends of streets from Gamma in the west to Bessborough/Highfield in the east, running north to the edge of the Trans Canada Trail. Given this size, the Society and the City of Burnaby would work phase-by-phase on small parts of this large area. Each of those steps will give the members and other neighbours satisfaction that some of their objectives are visible and being achieved. How this will be accomplished should be established through consultation and consensus, with the understanding that some activities are very long term objectives.



VALUES

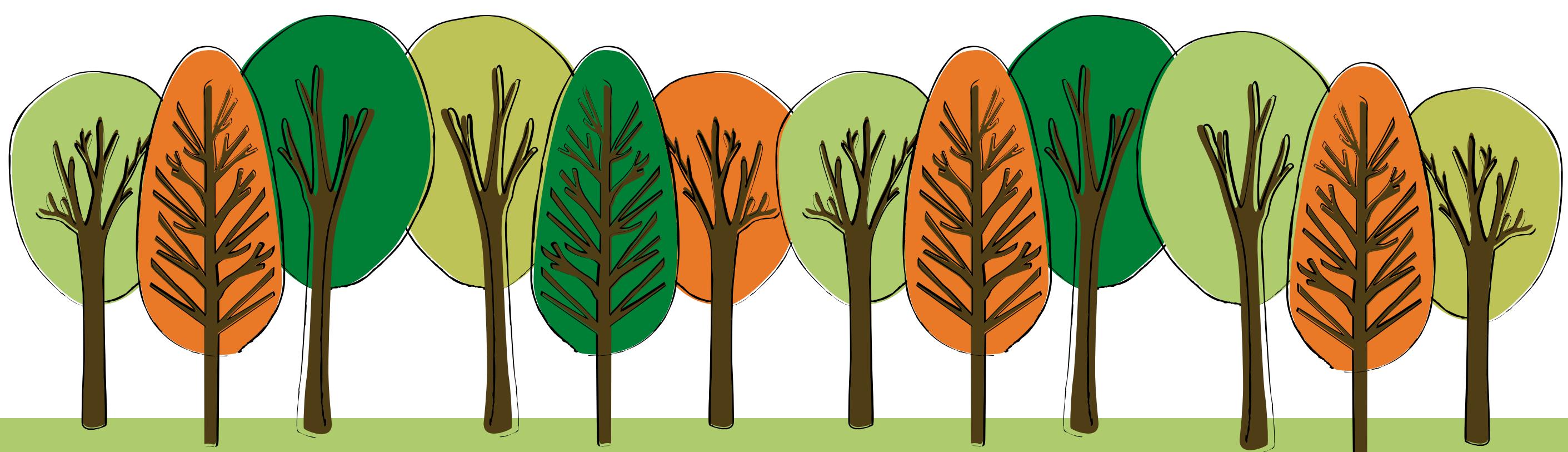
Capitol Hill Tree Keepers Society

3 Ensuring the involvement of children and youth. In ten years, when today's eight year old is eighteen, she would develop, through involvement in these activities, both knowledge and affection for this forest. Then, we expect, she would care for it and other forests in her future. The presence of Confederation Elementary School ten minutes' walk away from this forest offers a significant opportunity. The willow tree at the end of North Delta was once a gathering place for kids to play, and can be again. Children should feel comfortable, welcome, and safe in the Capitol Hill forest. Openings in the forest made for earlier purposes (e.g. houses) should be maintained as open spaces for children and others, and not be allowed to close in again.

4 Keeping a forest of mixed tree species. People remark on the strength and height of the evergreen trees on the hill, and at the same time enjoy the break-out canopy of leaves and growth among the deciduous trees, the light and shade that they create. Intervention to assist small new trees already growing, plantings of new coniferous trees in conjunction with invasive species control will create and restore Biodiversity in this forest.

5 Managing thickets and glades. These are very old terms for the forest, but still useful. NW Capitol Hill gets little direct sunlight except in high summer. A thicket is crowded with bush, hard to penetrate and thus safe for small birds and other wildlife which seek protection there. Woody debris which is good for insects may lie on the thicket floor. But our forest is also punctuated by openings (glades), some of them left by removal of houses or caused by other forces like the December 2006 mini-cyclone. We prefer to keep those glades open because they provide opportunities for environmental restoration. This alternation between glades and thickets is of value to the Society.

6 Adapting to fire risk. North Capitol Hill borders on the refinery, which poses a large incendiary risk with huge concentrations of flammable liquids. Although the probability of a fire is low the consequences on the hill would be severe. The forest floor has a lot of debris which would be fuel in case of fire. The heavily-used forest trail off the north end of North Delta Avenue had a massive alder windfall crash across it in 2021. While some tree debris should be left for ecological reasons, we need further study of the forest health and fire prevention strategies in alignment with the Burnaby Fire Department and the Urban Forest Management strategy. The presence of active fire hydrant #742, located above the refinery and on the road deep within the Capitol Hill forest is a definite benefit in planning for fire, and long term maintenance of Scenic Highway provides emergency and restoration access to the eastern end of the road.



VALUES

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7 Management of invasive species and nurturing native plants. The City defines invasive species like ivy and holly (as in the invasive Species Act) and has techniques for their control. As the forest evolves the Society can assist in monitoring the 'old' invasive species and spread of new invasives. The Society also notes that some of the bigger holly trees are the homes or refuge of many species of birds. At the right time in the season the Society and City can cooperate in efforts to control invasive species. This may involve replanting and nurturing native plants, including food plants which support wildlife.

8 Sharing the trail. On a sunny dry day up to 50-60 people pass through this forest, accompanied by up to 30 dogs. Some come running on the narrow trails, some whizz along on bikes, and others pass slowly by. Just as in a park or on a street we need to cultivate a tolerant and supportive climate for everyone. We note that some people, including small children, are nervous around some dogs, and dog walkers need to be mindful of this. The forest is therefore a medium for our relationships, where we all come to together.

This Statement is a living document, and will be amended by members of the Society, in consultation with other interested parties from time to time. Thus, like our Society, this Statement will evolve to address new circumstances.



Thank you and join us!

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