Coordinator Notes

The AVNR program is the longest running *Stewards in Training* program, initially conceived in 2004. Emily Gonzales' conducted a PhD study of the effects of grazing on vegetation at the reserve. Her thesis is available from the Conservancy. The reserve is monitored by a volunteer warden.

Recommended Resource People

Name	Station	Telephone #	Email Address
Terry Ridings	Volunteer Warden	653-9909	tridings@shaw.ca
Brian Smallshaw	Invasive Species Station	653-4774	b@pixelmap.ca
Jean Brouard	Plant ID	653-2335	johnbro@saltspring.com
Bristol Foster	Wildlife Tree Station	537-9774	bristol@saltspring.com
Jean Gelwicks		537-7146	gellam@saltspring.com
Robin Annschild	AVNR Restoration (French)	653-0039	robinannschild@saltspring.com

Pre-Trip Preparation

Check with AVNR Warden (Terry Ridings) for best site for pulling broom.

Check status of quadrats enclosures.

The following information should be sent to the volunteers:

Directions to Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve

Drive west off Stewart Rd, onto Jasper Rd, then onto Jennifer Rd. Near the top of the hill, turn right onto Sarah Way. There is a paved cul-de-sac with a gravel road going off to the right, please park in the cul-de-sac. There is a small sign post that says "park" in yellow paint. Walk down the gravel road for 5 minutes, staying to the left (you will pass a driveway that is on the right). At the bottom of the gravel road there is a large cul-de-sac. This is where the coordinator will meet you and the bus will drop off the students.

If you look further down the grassy logging road, you will see that the trail into the reserve begins just above, and to the left of the yellow metal horizontal gate.

Set-up

Have volunteers on training day help carry in equipment, the best route is along the eastern property line.

The tarp and outhouse are set up along the view ridge just east of the trail where it takes a sharp turn south. The tarp is set up on the mossy knoll; the outhouse is set up very close to the property line in a little group of firs.

Training day notes:

1. Familiarize volunteers with plants and their locations
2. Advise volunteers of uphill grade and steep climb
3. Students need their backpacks with them at all times for safety reasons
4. Students need to be reminded to stay on the trail and with their group

Plant ID Cards

Organize stakes, plastic covers and clips for plant ID cards. Include with group leaders' clipboards on field day.

In the Field

Opening Circle

Welcome students to the park and set the context. We are going to lead you into a special place. Use examples of how Vancouver was once tall trees, like Stanley Park, or other urban development examples…

Have a brief dialogue on respect – for the park, for others.

Our motto is stay safe, have fun, learn something. How do we stay safe? (Stay with leader so that you can see and hear them, listen to the boundaries set, stay with a buddy at all times.)

Introduce group and activity leaders. Over the course of the day, students should watch for the species for which their group is named, and for their plant to post their Identification card.

The forest changes quite a bit as we hike up from the lower land to the view site. Ask the students to take notice of what changes in the forest they see as they climb uphill. To review, keep an eye out for: your group's species; your plant; and observations of the forest changes.

Interactive Talk at the top of the Reserve (allow about 10-15 minutes)

When the students have reached the view site on the reserve, they find a spot to sit (preferably on rock, try not to disturb moss), have a snack and participate in an interactive discussion.

Invoke a connection for the students by asking leading questions like:

How was the hike? What did you notice? (opportunity for discussion on observations noticed coming up trail) Have you been to a similar place? Climbed a mountain?

Can anyone see any geographical features that will place us on Salt Spring? Where is Fulford Harbour? Where is Mount Maxwell? Mount Tuam? Mount Bruce? The San Juan Islands?

We are in a really special place. Do you know why it is a special place? – elaborate on this. How would you treat a special place?

Forest notes for reference:

Right now we are sitting within a rare ecosystem – Coastal Douglas-fir. The Coastal Douglas-fir zone is limited to a small part of southeastern Vancouver Island, several islands in the Gulf of Georgia (like Salt Spring Island) and a narrow strip of the adjacent mainland. Plant communities and climate similar to this zone also occur in Washington State, on the San Juan Islands (can anyone see any from here?) and in Oregon. Why do you think the Coastal Douglas-fir zone is a rare ecosystem? It is hard to believe this when you see fir trees all around you, but go north, east or south; this isn't the dominant forest anymore. It is rare in Canada and even rarer if you think of North America or the whole world! (it has a limited range and it is also where people want to live; very little of it is protected)

The Coastal Douglas-fir zone is a rain shadow forest. What do you imagine is a rain-shadow forest? This forest community lies in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains. Would it be like the forest at Tofino?

We will be spending our time today in an ecosystem found in association with Coastal Douglas-fir forest and it is called Garry oak woodlands. Garry oak woodlands are open woodlands and meadows with rock outcrops that support many rare species. Among the largest Garry oak woodlands in the world is that found in Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park. Much of the Garry oak meadows elsewhere have disappeared, having been built over. Those that remain are fragmented (i.e. they exist as small pockets of habitat). Invasive species, particularly Scotch broom and gorse, grow over the open woodlands crowding out native species. The City of Victoria is built on what was once Garry oak woodland. In many places, Garry oak meadows have become closed forest as Douglas-fir grow in, a process known as succession. Garry oak meadows also are encroached by invasive species like Scotch Broom.

- ✧ Garry oak ecosystems are disappearing due to urbanization.
- ✧ Garry oak ecosystems are being changed by invasive species.
- ✧ Garry oak woodlands can become grown-in by Douglas-fir, with the absence of fire to halt succession.

The land here at AVNR has been altered by people; it has been logged and most of the mature Douglas-fir have been removed. This offers an opportunity for the Conservancy to restore the Garry Oak habitat which supports a variety of rare and threatened plants and animals.

Today you will learn about the stewardship of a Garry Oak Ecosystem through the study of wildlife trees, invasive species, plant identification and a quadrat study for restoration considerations.

Closing Circle

Once all are assembled in a circle, ask students questions to invoke their connection with the day, for example: What memory will you take away from this field day? When you protect nature what does it mean?

Emphasize with the students that by pulling broom they were helping in habitat restoration, restoring nature's biodiversity. Ask each group how many broom plants they pulled. By being out here today you have made a positive difference.

If time allows, ask students where they saw signs of the plant or animal their group is named after.

Remember to show appreciation for sharing the day in nature with everyone.

(In the past, the bus driver has given the volunteers a lift up the gravel road, back to their cars.)

After students depart, ask volunteers for their feedback from the day.

Post-trip

Hand out evaluation surveys to students in at least two classes. The quotes from these are useful for writing grant proposals.

Email teachers and ask them these two questions: What elements of the Stewards in Training program did you enjoy or find successful? What are your suggestions for improvement?

Clean & store equipment.