

## SPRING 2023 Newsletter

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

— Margaret Mead

### RHCS AND THE TREES NEED YOU MORE THAN EVER!

RHCS has posted the following on [change.org](https://change.org):

*I agree that we need to preserve and protect the diverse collection of unique trees on the səmiqʷəʔelə/Riverview lands for the benefit of all now and in the future, to support mental health and wellness, environmental education, and the enjoyment of the lands as an urban park.*

It is time to voice your support to keep səmiqʷəʔelə/Riverview an urban green space for the benefit of all now and in the future.

Please click on this link and sign it:  
<https://chnq.it/cGJYrPmk28>



### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT RIVERVIEW

BC Housing has increased their obstructive bureaucracy towards the RHCS.

#### Historical Walks are History

- For many years, RHCS has been offering historical walks led by a member of the Burke Mountain Naturalists (BMN) and a pastor who worked at Riverview. However, this year to our dismay our application for a license for our historical walk was rejected by BC Housing (BCH). The following is the BCH response:

*"Thanks for taking the time to put together some details about your Heritage Walk. Unfortunately, we cannot approve this tour as səmiqʷəʔelə/Riverview has a complex history. Out of respect for those who consider themselves survivors of significant harm and trauma associated with the hospital, we don't feel it's appropriate to be offering a tour on this sensitive topic. As you know, the land has been occupied by the kʷikʷəʔəm First Nation since time immemorial and heritage on the site extends beyond buildings. In addition to respecting survivors of the hospital, the land's brief history as a mental health facility should not dominate the public understanding of the area."*

- For many years, Riverview as a mental hospital also helped many patients to wellness through the medical and therapeutic efforts of many qualified and caring medical staff. We are disappointed by BCH's decision to stop heritage walks. This is yet another obstacle to our group's work of encouraging the public to walk among the trees and learn about the complex history of the buildings of səmiqʷəʔelə/Riverview.







## Will RHCS Tree Walks Be History Soon Too?

Since BCH was put in charge of the Riverview lands, they began imposing fees on our tree walks:

- At first RHCS was charged \$125.00 per tree walk
- The next year it was \$250.00 per tree walk; Minister of Housing Selina Robinson waived these fees
- BCH did not permit tree walks during Covid despite being an outdoor activity
- In 2022 BCH restricted walks to 5 only on evenings or weekends (previously 10-12 done per year), implementing a \$824.25 fee for each evening or weekend walk after the first 5 per year. Here is the cost breakdown they reported to us:

*The cost charged for all Special Events can be found on page two of the attached Special Events form. In summary, here is a breakdown for what you were charged for the Oct 2nd tour. [2022]*

Weekend Event Coordinator Fee: 127.50/hr x 4 hours	\$510
Administration	\$275
GST	\$39.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$824.25</b>



Community members enjoying a tree walk hosted by RHCS

- In October 2022, RHCS met with BCH to propose replacing the \$510.00 fee for the staff liaison ("weekend event coordinator") who monitors our walks with an audit-based design approach (used by government) but they rejected it
- In March 2023 RHCS resubmitted a comprehensive audit-based design approach in writing for reconsideration.

You can see the audit proposal we submitted at: [Audit Proposal](#)

- On May 4, 2023, we received a response from a BCH representative unknown to us, Sara Goldvine, VP Communications and Public Affairs:
- Our audit proposal was rejected with the following comment that it **"does not adequately remove the risk of non-compliance that is assured by the liaison program."**
- And that **"RHCS will be required to pay all associated Special Event fees as of January 1, 2024."**

We asked for reduced fees, and **surprise**, BCH will soon be charging us onerous fees for every tree walk we do. Do these fees seem appropriate for a non-profit group who offer free public tree walks on Sunday afternoons on public lands?







# The Riverview Horticultural Centre Society

RHCS has been receiving positive comments and new members from the public at the following community events.

- TriCities Urban Forest Forum (TUFF) at Douglas College March 7th
- Sizdah Bedar at Gates Park April 2nd
- Coquitlam Earth Day at Town Centre Park April 22nd
- Fingerling Festival at Noons Creek Hatchery Port Moody May 6th



Above: RHCS President, Marilyn Anderson, with the MP of Port Moody-Coquitlam, Bonita Zarillo, at the Fingerling Festival, May 6th 2023.



Various members of RHCS attending community events in 2023



An Invitation was sent to Minister of Housing Ravi Kahlon for a personal tree tour by the RHCS. We are hopeful that we can arrange a tour soon.





## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF ADVOCACY 1992 – 2022



*Cake Cutting at the Celebration of 30 Years of Advocacy for RHCS*

In December 1992, the Riverview Horticultural Centre Society (RHCS) was founded as a non-profit group with a vision to save the trees and prevent further development on the 244 acres left of the original 1000 acres which was set aside in 1904 as a sanctuary and residential treatment facility for the mentally ill and for a BC Provincial Botanical Garden.

In December 2022 supporters gathered to celebrate 30 years of advocacy for the trees and for a centre for mental health excellence.

The feature presentation was given by Douglas Justice, Associate Director, Faculty of Science, UBC Botanical Garden. An expert in his field, Douglas Justice gave an informative talk about the value and importance of trees on the səmiqʷəʔelə/Riverview lands. Here are a few highlights from Douglas Justice's talk:

*"Is this collection unique? Yes in fact it's unique in that there are a number of trees that are what we would call champions."*

*"We can't say strongly enough that the trees and this kind of landscape is a healing landscape and I think that's something that we should not lose sight of. Development is necessary in places, but I think there are also places where we need to be aware that there are better uses for the land than houses."*

*RHCS "has been so instrumental in keeping Riverview from being destroyed... That vision I think is a worthy one and I think we just need to continue to keep the pressure on politicians."*



*Guest speaker Douglas Justice*

All three levels of government were represented and showed their support: Bonita Zarillo, NDP MP Port Moody-Coquitlam, Fin Donnelly, NDP MLA Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, and Coquitlam Mayor Richard Stewart.

See the whole talk by Douglas Justice and others at the following link  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leGNsYIYKxg>





## TREE WALKS

Our tree walks typically have started in March, but in these last few years the BCH requirements for insurance and licensing have become increasingly challenging to complete in a timely manner. As a result, we had to cancel our planned tree walk in April.

The following must be completed every year:

- Archaeological training for volunteer gardeners
- A 5-million-dollar insurance policy with specific BCH approved wording
- BCH then issues a 7-page legal license for our tentative tree walk dates
- The gardening portion of our license requires a separate procedure with each volunteer signing electronically in a specified order
- BCH then issues a gardening license
- Prior to each tree walk an individual special events license must be submitted by RHCS. The actual permit which allows us to proceed with the tree walk isn't issued by BCH until a few days before the tree walk date has been approved

## Tentative Tree Walk Dates subject to approval by BCH

- Sunday, May 7th 1pm – 3pm
- June 25th 1pm – 3pm
- Thursday, July 20th – 10am – 11:30am
- Wednesday, August 16th – 1pm – 2:30pm
- Sunday, September 17th 1pm -3pm
- Sunday, October 22nd 1pm – 3pm

Please go to our website [rhcs.org](http://rhcs.org) for the most current information

## TREE FEATURE: THE INCENSE CEDAR

The Incense cedar "*Calocedrus decurrens*" is a beautiful aromatic conifer. It belongs to the Cypress family (Cupressaceae), but is not a true cedar. Its form is narrowly columnar when young, taking on a broadly conical form with age. The Incense cedar can reach heights 100-130 feet and can live for well over 500 years. However, in cultivation it is more likely to reach a height of 30-60 feet.

The small distinctive female cones open in early fall and are commonly described as resembling a duck's bill. The cinnamon-coloured, exfoliating bark is thick and deeply fissured, helping to protect the tree from moderate fires.

The Incense cedar grows best in moist, well drained deep soil, but will adapt to a wide range of soil types. It will thrive in full sun to part shade. Once established, the Incense cedar shows good drought tolerance, and is relatively carefree.

You can find a superb multi-stemmed Incense cedar just outside the gates to Serenity Garden on the *səmiqʷəʔelə* / Riverview Lands



*Incense cedar (above) and its bark (left)*





## FINNIE'S GARDEN SHED BOTANICAL PAINTING

By Gay Mitchell

In 2004, Norma Gillespie asked me to design a mural for Finnie's Garden on the Riverview Lands. I had helped with The Riverview Horticultural Centre Society's Treefest, artists displays and demonstrations.

The concept of this piece was developed with the hope that many people would continue to walk and rest at the site of the painting in Finnie's Garden. I imagined a teaching panel of 50 indigenous and naturalized plants, flowering species, many of which grew in the garden itself.

I began by preparing preliminary drawings of each species. Negative cut-out shapes of the plants were used to spray coloured and metallic acrylic paint to the surface. This allowed me to design the composition, taking into consideration the placement, shape, colour and size of the plants to create an overall design. I chose familiar and common species that could be easily recognized.

Using permanent black ink marker, I drew the plants freehand as I referred to my original researched drawings. Then, the acrylic paint colour was applied by brush. My dear friend, visual artist Laura Babak-Nagy, assisted me to help provide colour to the plants. The painting is a bittersweet reminder of our close friendship, and that of our families, as Laura died shortly after the completion of our collaboration.

Finally, I rendered the names of the plant species in English and Latin in black and metallic mauve permanent markers. Long time friend and Finnie's Garden fence and trellis maker Niall Williams applied approximately 7 coats of clear acrylic varnish to the painted surface to protect the work.

My grateful thanks to Laura Babak-Nagy and Niall Williams for dreaming along with me. And especially to Norma and Don Gillespie and RHCS and BMN friends, and all those who cherish this unique place.

RHCS appreciates the work and talent of Gay Mitchell. Her personal recollection creating the mural illustrates that it is more than a painting. To read the full article go to our website [rhcs.org](http://rhcs.org)



Mural on shed at Finnie's Garden



## TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

The annual RHCS membership of only \$5.00 is due for renewal for the year 2023/2024. Everyone will have received a reminder and invitation to renew their dues. We trust you will continue to be part of our society as we endeavour to preserve the arboretum and lands of səmíqʷəʔelə/Riverview. Each membership gives us a stronger voice and a greater presence in our community that cannot be ignored. Encourage your friends and neighbours to join.

Membership form available on our website [rhcs.org](http://rhcs.org)



**RENEW or JOIN NOW!!**

The Riverview Horticultural Centre Society

RHCS invites you to join us in supporting our efforts to keep the site of BC's first botanical garden, the Riverview Hospital Lands, intact.

**SUPPORTER APPLICATION**

DATE: / / 202  
month day year

Supporter: \$ **5**

You are invited to make a DONATION: \$

TOTAL Amount Enclosed: \$

Please make cheques payable to: Riverview Horticultural Centre Society

NEW  or RENEWAL

Yearly membership is due on April 1st

We Value your Continued Support & Appreciate all the help

**TAX RECEIPTS:**

- RHCS is a registered charitable organization
- Donations of \$20 or more will be automatically receipted.

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Mail to:  
The Riverview Horticultural Centre Society  
P.O. Box 64616, #108-1960 Como Lake Ave, Coquitlam, BC, V3J 3R0

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

604-290-9910 trees@rhcs.org www.rhcs.org

**MEMBER FEEDBACK**  
Send us your thoughts, suggestions, and any responses from your MLA's actions to [riverviewRHCS@outlook.com](mailto:riverviewRHCS@outlook.com)

Membership form, available on our website [rhcs.org](http://rhcs.org)

**Spring has sprung!**  
Take a walk and see for yourselves.



Spring blossoms at Riverview