

Hastings Park – ParkWatch during the PNE

August-September 2008

0. Introduction

This document is a summary of 12 different ParkWatch (PW) reports conducted by members of the Hastings Park Conservancy (names given below). It documents the state of the park during the 2008 Pacific National Exhibition (PNE), and so it can be compared with the ParkWatch report conducted immediately prior to the beginning of the PNE (Aug. 15, 2008) and the June-July 2008 report. The observations made in each report have been integrated into a single report to allow the reader to see the larger picture emerging from the team, and also to show how independent reports give stronger support for certain observations. Separate observations that are organized under the same heading are given chronologically. Images are sometimes given to support an observation, but since many more images were taken than could be incorporated in this summary report, some are not included here.

Date range: Aug. 18-Sept. 1 (see below)

Completed by: John Alderete (JA), Virginia Downes (VD), Les Leighton (LL), Pat Miller (PM), Georgina Nicholson & Jacques April (GN-JA), Armin Strohschein (AS), Christina Struik (CS),

Report dates and weather conditions (initials identify the writer of the PW report):

8/18, 10:30am to 5pm (GN-JA), mostly sunny with some clouds

8/19, 1:20pm (CS), light rain

8/20, 1pm (VD), overcast, cool with light drizzle

8/22, 5:30pm (JA), overcast

8/25, 11:40am (CS), partial cloudy, but warm

8/26, 12:15pm (CS), sunny

8/27, 7pm (PM), overcast with threatening rain

8/28, 1:30pm (VD), rain

8/29, 2:00pm (AS), some sun and clouds

8/29, 6:30 (LL), sunny

8/31, 12:20pm (CS), sunny with light wind

9/1, 1:30 (LL), sunny with clouds

1. Sanctuary

1.1 Structures

8/20 (VD): Garbage container, fence and trailers at southwest corner encroaching on sanctuary (below left) and runoff puddles from behind the fence (below right).



8/22 (JA): Graffiti noted in 8/15 report remains

8/25 (CS): Bridges clean, though on some concrete posts slime mold grows from the indented lines; no garbage can on floating bridge.

8/28 (VD): Benches installed in sanctuary (see below)—will they stay after the fair?



1.2 Wildlife

8/18 (GN-JA): 5 mallard ducks and dragonflies observed

8/19 (CS): Observed birds: black-capped chickadees, female mallard eating fries on grass by eating area, many crows by picnic area, several mallard ducks in big pond

8/20 (VD): Very little activity; a few mallard ducks spotted.

8/22 (JA): Great blue heron seen on long in upper pond (see below), approximately 30 mallard ducks seen by floating bridge



8/25 (CS): Sighted: white-crowned sparrow on telephone wire, crows hanging out by picnic area, cedar wax wings by mini pond, blue and black striped thick dragonflies under pond-connecting bridge, orange-crowned warblers in reeds, black-capped chickadees, pair of yellow warblers, several bumble bees, goldfish young swarm under east bridge, 9 mallard ducks.

8/26 (CS): Cedar wax wings by picnic area/small pond. Black-capped chickadees seen. Great blue heron on middle log fish hunting. King fisher (female) hunting in upper pond. 10 mallards seen. Cabbage butterfly by reeds below rock terrace. Northwestern crows flying around. Bush tits by floating bridge.

8/27 (PM): 20 Mallards observed, they seemed to be keeping to west side of upper pond. Great blue heron at south end of upper pond. No other birds seen, not even crows - perhaps due to very loud noise levels coming from Playland, Coca-cola Bowl and main stage (so all three directions). Rat feeding along edge of lower pond, adjacent to outlet of stream channel.

8/28 (VD): A dozen or so Mallards observed, and one Northern Flicker.

8/29 (AS): 8 mallards, 6 crows, 1 blue heron, and 1 rat seen.

8/29 (LL): Birds observed: 1 Glaucous-winged Gull , 2 North-western Crows , 7 Mallard Ducks, 1 Chickadee.

8/31 (CS): Birds observed: northern flicker, dragonflies over pond, 12 mallards, black-capped chickadees, northwestern crows, song sparrow, bush tits.

9/1 (LL): Birds observed: 2 Mallard Ducks, 1 Northwestern Crow.

1.3 Vegetation

8/18 (GN-JA): Morning glory has strong foothold choking vegetation in sanctuary (statement in August 2007 PW report concerning controlling urban wilderness still valid); a large deciduous tree located in the southwest side of Sanctuary has fallen over. PNE staff have removed the large tree and have replaced the tree, although with a much smaller tree.

8/20 (VN): Buddleia in bloom but no butterflies seen. Beautiful Touch-me-nots are blooming. Tent caterpillars in tree south of floating bridge (below left). Lovely Mountain Ash berries for winter (below right). Also, lots of creeping buttercup and bindweed and Himalayan blackberry at south end of floating bridge.



8/26 (CS): The ground is covered in morning glory on southwest side of pond.

8/28 (VD): Fireweed looking bedraggled in the rain! Beautifully flowering touch-me-nots. Leaves of Vine Maple look pretty in the rain.

8/29 (AS): The south east part of the sanctuary is totally overgrown with morning glory. Vegetation needs maintenance.

1.4 Terrain

8/18 (GN-JA): Recent addition of fine gravel to paths.

8/27 (PM): Slope adjacent to Buddleia garden on west side of Sanctuary (above boat launch) is increasingly being used as a foot path.

8/28 (VD): Large hole dug at Stone Terraces (below left). Himalayan blackberry east side by path. Masses of bindweed everywhere (below right). *ParkPartners could help with clearing these invasive species.* Path up from floating bridge at south end is not wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair.



1.5 Pond

8/18 (GN-JA): Water levels extremely low (both upper and lower pond) and water quality very poor, with no water circulation; scum floating on water observed.

8/19 (CS): Water level by floating bridge and in upper pond very low (see below).



8/20 (VD): Very low water levels at both ponds, with no circulation between the two. Human footprints in mud east of floating bridge (below left), and garbage that becomes exposed at such low water levels (below right).



8/22 (JA): Water level of lower pond extremely low (see below); water level of upper pond seems to have risen slightly since 8/15 report (perhaps because of recent rain)



8/25 (CS): Water is oily in small lower pond. Water levels are higher than on the 19th but still low overall. Water is slimy, oily by pipe going into pond under the east bridge; lots of goldfish there. Same condition under floating bridge.

8/26 (CS): Low water level in lower pond, oily composition. Many little goldfish, some slime on edge of big pond.

8/27 (PM): Water level has come up in the upper pond due to recent rain. Water level in lower pond still low. There was an oily sheen on the exposed mud at the south end of the lower pond. Similarly sheen on water at west side of upper pond, just offshore of boat launch.

8/28 (VD): Very low water levels in spite of rain. *When will the leak be fixed?* No circulation between the two ponds. Some Duckweed by floating bridge.

8/29 (AS): The water level is up (lots of rain), but there is no circulation or filtration. So it looks like swamp water. The water looks oily in places (see below). Beer cans floating in pond.



8/29 (LL): Water level better than same time last year, although the lower pond is quite low. Waterfall not flowing and weeds abundant along its normal flow area. Cans and bottles floating in ponds in places – several beyond reach at the floating bridge area. Many goldfish seen.

8/31 (CS) Lower pond has very low water level. Water in upper pond by east bridge is very slimy. Still some goldfish seen, but I didn't see half as many before. Upper pond water level is okay. Slimy quality observed under floating bridge.

1.6 Park Activities

8/18 (GN-JA): PNE tour guide in the Sanctuary, Adrienne, was pleasant and knowledgeable on small plants and vegetation, but misinformed on other issues. For example, she did not accurately know why pond is devoid of water, nor did she understand the relationship between Hastings Park Conservancy, ParkPartners, the PNE and the Park Board. Relatively few people at the PNE on this day, only 2 observed in Sanctuary.

8/19 (CS): Sanctuary trails largely empty, but couple with stroller and another couple seen by launch area and 12 people seen in the east picnic area.

8/20 (VD): Huge “bouncy” installations for kids which have to be paid for (4 tickets). Not being used. No security present. Covered tables at north end of Sanctuary – not being well used

8/22 (JA): Many people seen enjoying the park, either on walks or sitting and eating; 3 couples, 2 groups of 6+ people, 1 man with stroller, 2 single people observed

8/25 (CS): Man seen on walk, mom and child walking through quickly, family of five eating in picnic area by red barn, 3 more people eating, 7 cars parked on road between park and Renfrew, man walking around on road.

8/26 (CS): 8 picnic benches of people eating. Playland woman walking through park. 11 more people walking on path.

8/27 (PM): Very few people in the Sanctuary – mostly PNE staff who appeared to be on their break. The Sanctuary certainly isn't show-cased by the PNE – instead, it's made to look as uninviting as possible with the east gate in the metal fence only partially open so that you're not sure whether you should even be entering. Definitely a missed opportunity. Picnic tables and benches set along walkway on northwest side of Sanctuary – a few people were gathered there, including several kids playing catch. No security in evidence.

8/28 (VD): Very few people eating under cover at the north end. Note some recycling bins have been placed. Why not one for every garbage bin? No security apparent. Cars parked on the south perimeter road. *Note: Some on the grass!*

8/29 (AS): Almost no one in the park. Sanctuary tour was conducted by Adrienne, who is very nice and knowledgeable about plants.

8/29 (LL): Kids playing at water's edge at lower pond. Several PNE staff patrolling Sanctuary or cutting through to reach other side of fair.

8/13 (CS): Someone eating in north picnic area. 1 PNE worker cleaning. 1 person sitting on rock terrace. 1 PNE worker patrolling. 26 people walking. 3 on bench above boat launch.

1.7 Miscellaneous

8/18 (GN-JA): Garbage found at shoreline of upper pond; cars parked on service road parallel to Hastings St.; lots of noise coming into Sanctuary from Playland and bandstand.

8/19 (CS): Sanctuary quite clean, with the following exceptions, few cigarette butts on ground, some litter in upper pond to left from platform with rocks, some litter in small plants on playland side of bridge with metal rails. There are many garbage cans in east picnic area.

8/19 (CS): Firehouse on grass in north entrance, running along inside of pond fence.

8/20 (VD): Graffiti observed on 'Caution' sign and litter observed along south pathway (below left). Several cars parked along access road parallel to Hastings St. Several campers parked in Playland by east bridge. One Mallard swimming next to piece of garbage in low water by east Bridge (below right).



8/22 (JA): 15+ cars seen parked on the access road on the south end of the park; very little litter found anywhere in the park (several young adults walking around picking it up)

8/25 (CS): Wiring for little lights goes up trees by picnic area; no tree damage observed (see below). Path by Red Barn picnic area has discarded sweater and underwear and toilet paper on it; but paths generally clean. Garbage on inside of fence by fire hose in many places. It is very noisy because of the music and playland rides. Garbage in rock terrace area by and on benches. Garbage near open gate to park by Playland (near washroom building). Pop and beer bottles in large pond; 6 visible from floating bridge.



8/26 (CS): Some paper garbage on bridge over area between ponds, and boat launch area is relatively clean, except two pieces of cardboard and a bus ticket in the water. Many cigarette butts by benches near picnic area across from red barn, other garbage in the area too. Grass areas with trees beside path have noticeable amounts of garbage. Garbage on rock terraces too. Still a lot of garbage on plant and pond side of wood fence beside path.

8/27 (PM): Litter strewn around at Stone Terraces and along walkway at north edge of Sanctuary near food concessions and picnic tables definitely detracts from the aesthetics of this part of the park.

8/28 (VD): Garbage by East Bridge and discarded Holsten beer cans seen. Case of empty beer cans at floating bridge. More garbage in other parts of sanctuary, including used sushi tray, cans, graffiti on top of garbage can near east Bridge partially cleaned off. Graffiti on tree at Stone Terraces (see below) and on container parked inside SW entrance to Sanctuary.



8/29 (AS) RV and campers are parked on the east end of the sanctuary. Cars are parked half on the grass, despite the wide road (see below). Beer cans and garbage seen, despite lots of litter gatherers. The usual encroachment on green space.



8/31 (CS): Some garbage on north east bridge. A lot of garbage on path near west entrance despite garbage cans, especially from probiotic drink handouts. Lots of garbage everywhere. Pop and beer cans by bench west of floating bridge. Noise from Playland and main stage very loud.

9/1 (LL): Litter, cans and bottles floating in the ponds.

2. Italian Gardens

2.1 Structures

8/18 (GN-JA): Graffiti-free! Fountain and water channel flowing; grass bocce court finally returned to original state (see below) after demanding that the PNE do so for 3 or 4 years. It took intervention from the Park Board and PNE board to make this happen after PNE made unauthorized changes.

8/18 (CS): Water fountains with good flow, except northmost one.



8/20 (VD): Lots of temporary structures have been installed. Car painting around cow statue area & Community Stage.

8/25 (CS): Christopher Columbus has a white left eye.

8/27 (PM): The green fabric shrouding attached to the fences along the “corridor” between the skate bowl and the main stage area is extremely unattractive. Why is this treatment necessary?

8/28 (VD): Missing decorative drain covers replaced with plywood (see below).



2.2 Vegetation

8/18 (GN-JA): Poor maintenance evident in this formal, structured garden. Some attractive bedding plants present but horsetail and other weeds in abundance. Real lack of plantings in other beds. Yew hedge still looks like sections are dying even after replanting done this spring (see below). Previously reported dead trees in allee now removed but not replaced.



8/19 (CS): Grape vines healthy. Grass is green and well-kept. Christopher Columbus gardens clean and cropped, bees seen and Halo-Candese Plaza flowers blooming nicely.

8/20 (VD): Usual main walking entrance from Renfrew St formal garden looks well maintained and pretty. New turf by Garden Auditorium (Terrain observation).

8/25 (CS): Very little paint on grass because of car painting station. Some of the grapes are ripening. Herbs and grass by Columbus fragrant and looking good. Confratellaza plants are healthy and looking nice, but need some weeding. Plants are lush from all the rain.

8/26 (CS): Dandelions growing between bricks by immigrants memorial monument.

8/27 (PM): Katsura tree along east side of North-South allee looks like its dying. Grass along west edge of north-south allee is worn away leaving a strip of mud. Combination of yellow *Rudbeckia* and ferns in the bed along the main east-west allee looks great.

8/28 (VD): Garden at S end looks luscious, but ivy will take over. One flower bed is completely empty (below left). Grass at east allee has become a mud patch (below right).



8/29 (AS): gardens need some maintenance. Probably looked better two weeks ago.

8/31 (CS): Red paint on tree near the painted van (north of cow). Also paint on tree west of cow. Grass under and around painted vehicles has a lot of paint on it.

2.3 Park Activities

8/18 (GN-JA): Vehicle painting activity available but few children taking advantage.

8/19 (CS): many activities today, including several people eating lunch, people watching shows and exhibits like the painted car, many litter patrol people seen.

8/20 (VD): Jungle Book enactment is very popular. Gardeners working trimming box hedges. Main Stage with Dal Richards not well attended.

8/25 (CS): 9 people eating on edge of park, 2 walking through to home improvement show, 15 people painting the vehicles on the grass, 5 seated on top of grass hill, 1 couple eating close to vines, woman on cell by gargoyle fountains, all fountains working today.

8/26 (CS): area full of diners. Kids climbing on concrete with flags on top of grassy hill. More people sitting on hill. About 10 people painting. 5 sitting on benches in north east of Italian gardens. 3 sitting on concrete around cow on little hill. 10 more walking through on paths.

8/27 (PM): Very people in the Garden with the exception of those sitting around the picnic tables near the concessions lining the allee.

8/29 (AS): Lots of kids enjoying the water works. Garden area almost empty and very quiet.

8/29 (LL): Much activity and use by people resting, watching the stage show, kids playing in the water features. Cleaning people walking about picking up litter.

8/31 (CS): 1 family near cow. 4 people near painted cars on grass. Show on stage has about 40 spectators. Kids playing in water works. Family lunching at long picnic bench, south side. all picnic benches by stage full.

2.4 Miscellaneous

8/18 (GN-JA): This year PNE has left the dirty outhouses with no running water in place for eastside basketball court and skate bowl users.

8/19 (CS): Very little garbage on ground, garbage cans well placed. Lighting polls for night set with supports instead of embedded in the ground (see below).



8/20 (VD): Trip hazards: electrical cords at W end of Jungle Book area and cords covered by hump of blacktop on path, but exposed on grass (below left). More blacktop and spike on E allee may cause permanent damage (below right).



8/25 (CS): Some garbage on bench under vines closest to Renfrew street.

8/26 (CS): A lot of garbage seen by immigrants memorial monument, west benches, path, and grass. 2 bikes locked to weird bike rack.

8/28 (VD): Some graffiti seen on the ArtCars.

8/31 (CS): About 20 crows perched on grass. Beverage cans and other garbage on grass north of grape vines by Renfrew St. Some garbage by Columbus. Garbage in area of long bench, south side.

3. Momiji Garden

8/18 (GN-JA): Closed for “VIP” guests and events. Not able to assess vegetation, activities and wildlife due to lack of access. “VIP” area with tents, gas heaters, A/V equipment and stage in pond. Can only peer through the bushes.

8/29 (AS): Closed to public. No one in the garden.

3.1 Structures

8/19 (CS): Garden setup is as follows, lounge tent for staff on grass, extending through a Japanese maple in between branches, stage in pond, cocktail tables, tent, long tables on lawn.

8/20 (VD): Huge billboard advertising Fair commercial sponsors encroaching on west side. Waterfall flowing well—looks pretty. Temporary tents, tables, heaters, stage & Coca Cola garbage bins set up in VIP area (see below).



8/27 (PM): Empty VIP tent.

8/28 (VD): VIP temporary tents have guy ropes variously attached.

8/29 (LL): Tents and Audio equipment at lower end of Gardens.

3.2 Vegetation

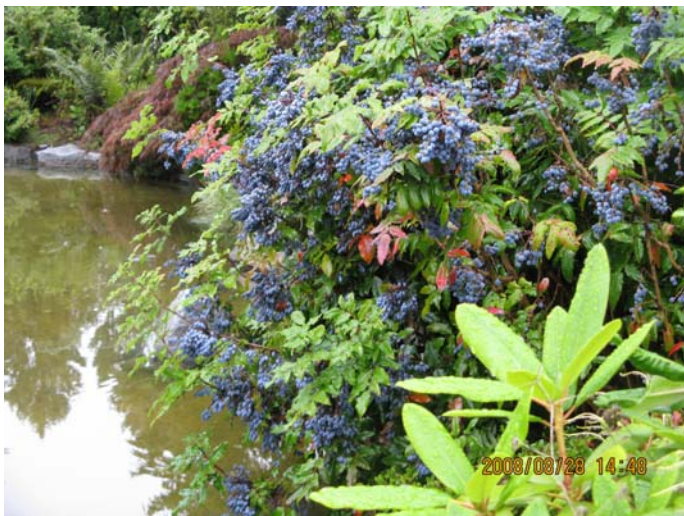
8/19 (CS): Grass is well-kept, pond water clean, fountain flowing, waterfall river clear.

8/20 (VD): Mostly well maintained though some bindweed removal and trimming required (see below).



8/25 (CS): Oregon grape fruiting nicely.

8/28 (VD): Beautiful blue berries on the Oregon Grape (see below).



3.3 Park Activities

8/19 (CS): Many PNE staffers around, and several chickadees seen.

8/20 (VD): One person attending VIP tent.

8/25 (CS): One man listening to headsets in gazebo. Low activity here.

8/27 (PM): 2 attendants at north entrance to Garden – apparently waiting for VIPs. Not being VIPs, we were refused entry into the Garden.

8/28 (VD): Two attendants waiting hopefully.

8/31 (CS): A wedding is starting soon.

3.4 Miscellaneous

8/19 (CS): 'Please enjoy Momiji Gardens' sign placed by the blocked entrance to it. Many garbage cans and recycling bins in garden.

8/20 (VD): Well maintained flower bed by Garden Auditorium.

8/25 (CS): Still set up for VIP events, but everything fairly clean. Northern flicker perching at grass, some crows seen, slim blue dragonflies over pond. Pond fairly clear, waterfall flowing well. Black-capped chickadee by waterfall.

8/26 (CS): Dragonflies over water. PNE staff today told me general public not allowed in at all. Water clean, path clean, and waterfall flow strong and clean.

8/28 (VD): Overflowing broken downpipe at the Forum.



8/29 (LL): No litter observed in area. Water features flowing.

8/31 (CS): Water in pond clean. Paper garbage by rocks on grass in southwest upper corner. Many dragonflies seen. Garbage on path in northwest corner by waterfall. Waterfall clean and flowing well.

4. Other Observations

8/18 (GN-JA): Apparent close business relationship between Pattison Group and PNE, includes billboard space rental as well as cars (see below, left). When is the city of Vancouver going to replace the disfigured trees that were part of the greening of Hastings Park at the corner of Cassiar and Hastings? It was the same close business relationship that allowed the Pattison Group and the PNE to cut these trees for better visibility for Pattison billboards, all located in a public park (see below, right).

