

# Trout Lake Nature Hunt

## Bogs

Can you see how wet the ground is? Do you see standing water? Trout Lake sits on a type of wetland called a bog. This small area is the last little bit of that bog in the park. Bogs are one of many types of wetlands in Vancouver, they are made of dead plant material called peat.



Historical photo of John Hendry Park bog ecosystem (1908).  
Photo from City of Vancouver Archives

Peat is made from living plant photosynthesis.

Peat stores carbon which helps fight climate change by taking it out of the atmosphere. This is why bogs and wetlands are so important.

All storm drains in the area flow directly into local waterways, most without any kind of filtration. We need to protect Trout Lake's water for ourselves as well as the birds, fish and other wildlife by:

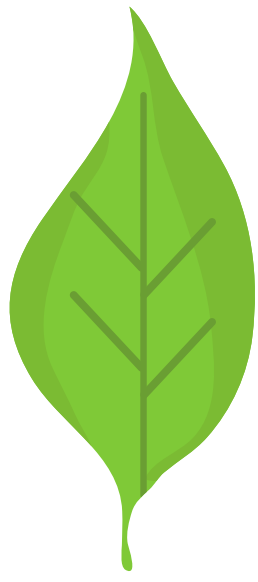
- Washing your car on grass, gravel, at car washes or with just plain water
- Keep cars maintained to avoid oil or other chemical leaks

### **Activity**

Standing water or soggy soils show evidence of a former wetland. Try and find some areas in the park where there is water accumulation.

**Hint:** On the northwest area of the park, between the community centre parking lot and dog park





# Trout Lake Nature Hunt

## Invasive Species (Plants & Animals)

Invasive species are not native to an area, and cause harm to the natural area. This happens when people accidentally bring plants and animals where they should not be.

What happens when invasive species take over?

- Invasive animals eating native plants and animals
- Taking up native plants and animals' space

Common examples you can see in the park are holly, himalayan blackberry, yellow flag iris, and ivy.



Himalayan Blackberry

Help stop the spread of invasive species:

- Don't move soil from one area to another
- Plant native species in your garden
- Check your pet's fur and paws for seeds (prevent seeds from moving)
- Clean your hiking boots after each hike (prevent soil from moving)

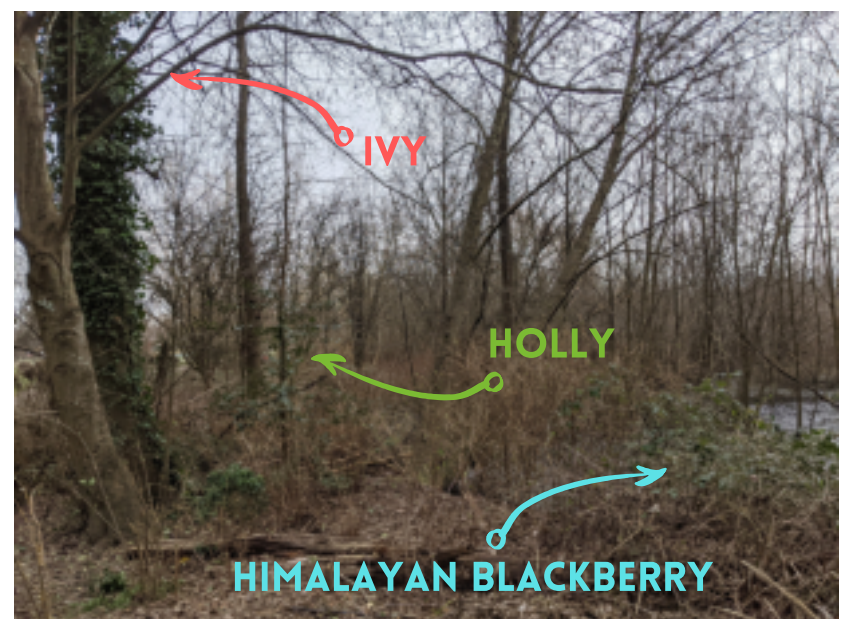
Take a look at all the thorny bushes behind this sign. These are Himalayan Blackberry and they can completely take over an area and prevent any other native plant species from growing.

- Birds eat the blackberries
- Birds poop the seeds in a different area
- Seeds grow, invading a new area
- Mature blackberry plants take away birds' habitats

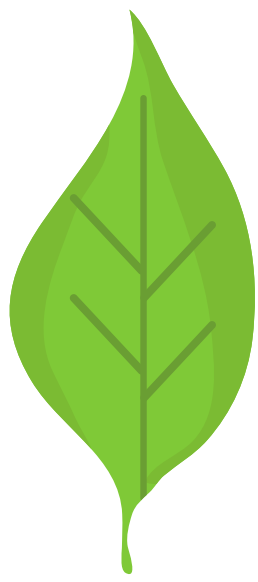
By planting native species around your home, you are helping to provide food and shelter for many native bird and insect species!

### **Activity**

Walk across the bridge towards northwest and look to the left of the path. See if you can find 3 invasive species on the left of your path.







# Trout Lake Nature Hunt

## Native Species

Native plants have existed here for generations and naturally grow here because they are best suited for our local climate. Native plants don't need much help from us to grow. They are not only an important food source, but also nesting and roosting habitats for wildlife. The Parks Board and local stewardship groups like Wildcoast Ecological Society are working to remove invasive species and reintroduce more native plants back into our parks.

Here are some common native plants in Trout Lake Park. See if you can identify them on your walks in the park and around the neighbourhood (do not tread on vegetation).



**Red-osier Dogwood** - Multi-stemmed shrub with red twigs. White blossoms are followed by white berries.



**Oregon Grape** - Blue edible berries, big yellow blooms, and shiny leaves in one drought-tolerant perennial.



**Paper Birch** - It is named for the tree's thin white bark, which often peels in paper like layers from the trunk.



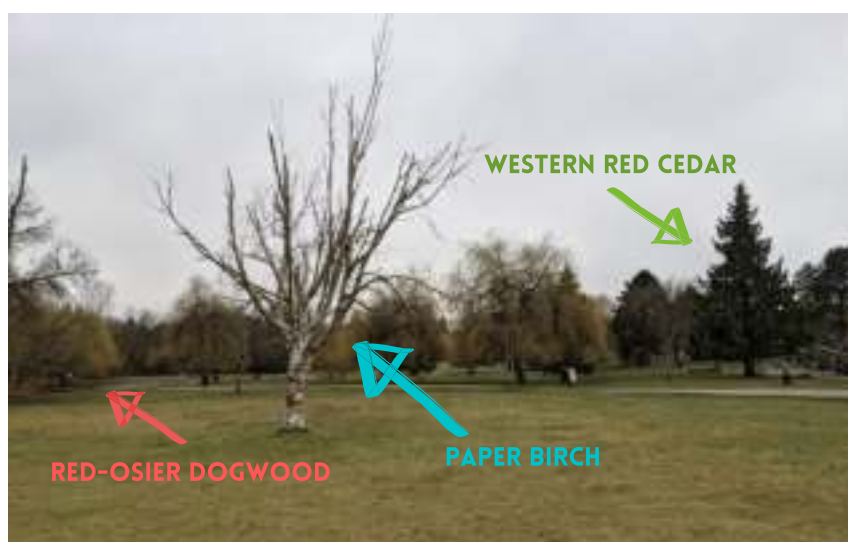
**Indian Plum** - Early spring nectar source for hummingbirds, butterflies, native bees and other pollinator species.



**Western Red Cedar** - Grows up to 60 m tall when mature, with drooping branches; trunk spreading out wide at the base.



**Sword Fern** - Copper-coloured fiddleheads in spring. Distinctive by the notch at the base of each leaf.

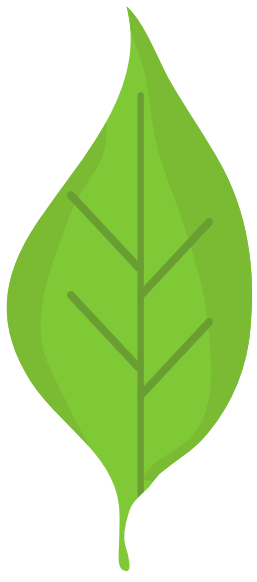


### Activity.

**Take a closer look at these three native species.**

**Can you find any more throughout the park?**





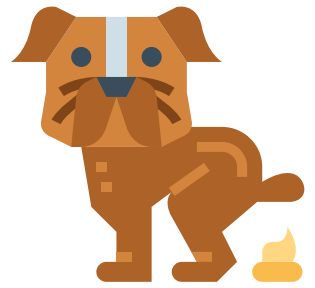
# Trout Lake Nature Hunt

## Dog Poop

### 4 Poopie Facts you may not know:

- **Dog poop is a hazard!** It can contain bacteria, parasites and viruses that are harmful to humans and other creatures.
- **Dog poop creates METHANE**, a serious greenhouse gas. It is NOT Zero Waste.
- **Unscoped poop does not disappear in the rain.**
  - It is often washed into the waterways, contaminating fish and wildlife, helping algae to grow.
  - Parasite eggs from the poop can linger on the ground for years.
- **Dog poop is not fertilizer for vegetable gardens.** However, carefully composted dog waste is good for shrubs and flower gardens.

Vancouver dogs produce about 20,500 tons of poop every year. That would fill about 1,100 garbage trucks and produce a lot of methane!



Trout Lake Park is lucky to have **Red Dog Waste Bins**, which limits the amount of waste that ends up at our landfills. Trained people in safety gear collect and separate the poop from the poop bags. Then it is liquified and treated at the Iona Island Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Other ways to dispose of dog poop:

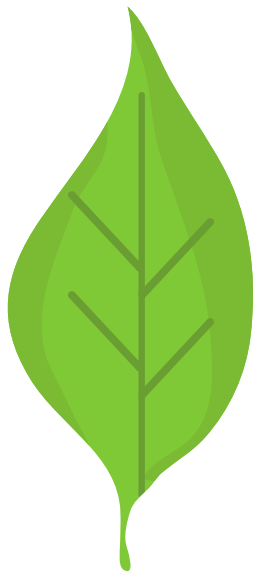
- Flush it down the toilet, without the bag. The bags will plug the toilet.
- Call a dog waste collection service company.
- Make a dog poop composter at home, away from your veggie garden.



### Activity

Keep an eye out for the red bins for dog poop during your walk around Trout Lake. How many red bins can you find?





# Trout Lake Nature Hunt

## Birds

Did you know over 100 different bird species have been spotted around Trout Lake? 165 in fact. It's true!

Trout Lake is a unique place for birds. It is a significant habitat for birds year-round for nesting, raising young and for migratory stopovers.

Birds at Trout Lake are another reason to keep the water clean and provide native plants. Keeping dogs away from the water, except in the off leash area, is important as they can damage native plants and chase birds.

Here are some common visitors at Trout Lake:



Northern Shoveler



Red Winged  
Black Bird



Wood Duck



Great Blue  
Heron  
\*At Risk



Barn Swallow  
\*At Risk



Anna's  
Hummingbird

Photos from The Cornell Lab from ebird.org

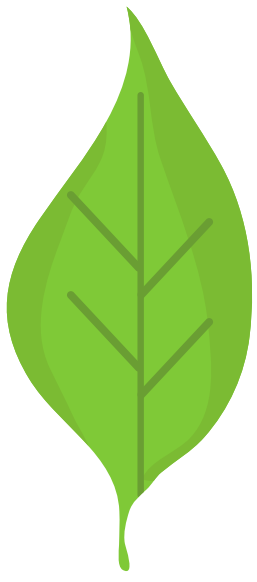
### Activity

Every bird makes a unique call in the spring. Close your eyes and be totally silent for 60 seconds. How many different birds can you hear?

Scan the QR code with your phone camera to access the full list of birds spotted at Trout Lake. Click the bird's name to listen to each bird call.







# Trout Lake Nature Hunt

## Medicine Wheel

The medicine wheel garden at Trout Lake was created on September 24, 2017 as part of the Wild Salmon Caravan, a celebration of wild salmon and Indigenous food sovereignty. It was built by the Cedar Cottage Food Network in partnership with Vancouver Park Board and Trout Lake Community Centre Association.

A medicine wheel is an Indigenous teaching that shows the interconnectivity of different parts of life in relation with the nature and the spiritual world. The design consists of four different parts that represent directions, elements, seasons, or nations among many others. Traditionally, the medicine wheel is used for ceremonious, religious, and healing purposes, or to illustrate cultural concepts. The design of the medicine wheel is based on Ojibwe people's teaching and perspective.

The Indigenous medicine wheel is a symbol made to create sacred space and call forth the healing energies of nature interpreted uniquely to each culture. Medicine wheels represent the alignment and continuous interaction of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual realities. The circle of the wheel shows the inter-connectivity of different parts of life in relation with nature and the spiritual world.

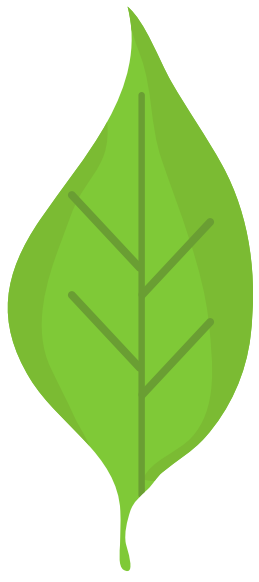


Photo from Cedar Cottage Food Network website

### **Activity**

Can you see the 4 quadrants? Walk slowly through the 4 parts. Read the signs in each quadrant and learn what each section represents. Notice the colours, plants. Feel the wind, smell the air.

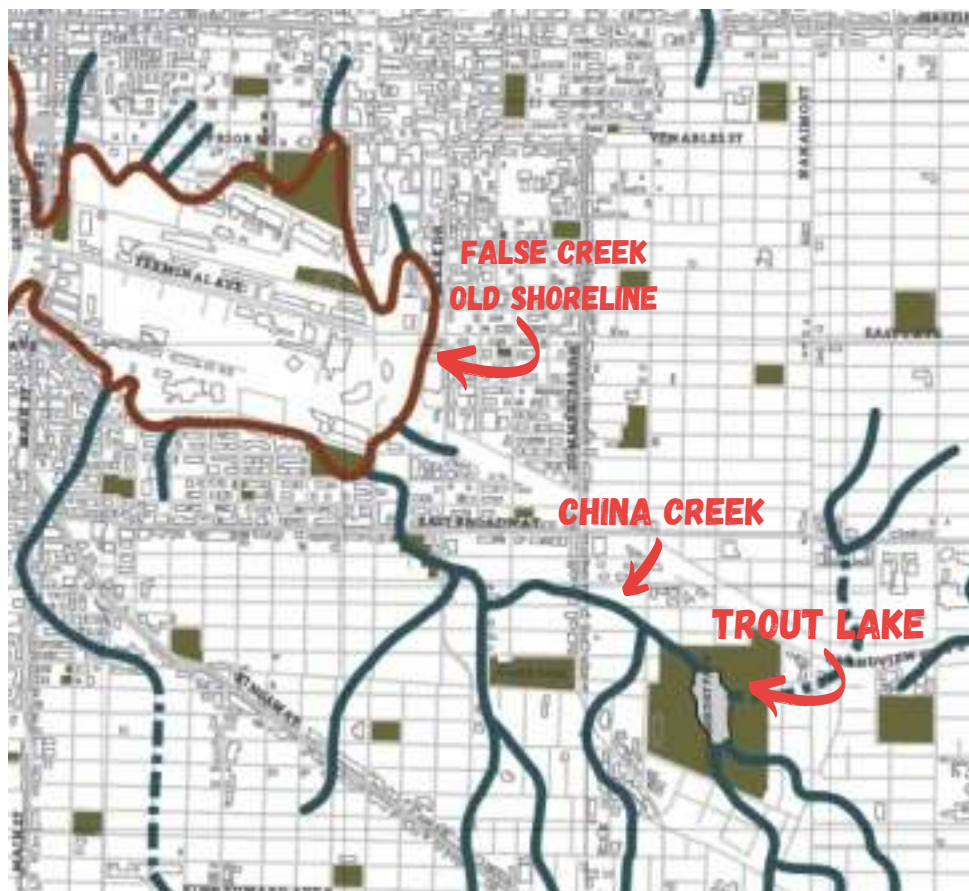




# Trout Lake Nature Hunt

## Creeks & Streams

Did you know that Trout Lake had the largest stream in the area in the 1850s? China Creek flowed from the north end of the lake all the way to False Creek. Trout Lake used to have multiple streams that drained into the lake and flowed out through China Creek, creating a constant flow of water, used by migrating salmon and rainbow trout. Trout Lake was important to the logging industry in the 1870's. China Creek was deepened to create a flume from Trout Lake to supply water and rafting materials to Hasting Mills in False Creek. Look at the map of the old creeks and streams.



We don't see China Creek because after the development of storm drains, the water is diverted into underground drains. This has taken away old migratory routes for the salmon and trout. There are advocates in the city that are working to restore the former waterway above ground from Trout Lake to False Creek. Trout Lake has very little water flowing into it and potable water is pumped through the PVC pipe in the middle of the lake and the dirty water gets pumped out to a waste water treatment plant in Richmond.

### **Activity**

See if you can locate one of the parks storm drains. Water flows from the drain back into streams. Do your part and clear the next drain you come across from any debris or litter.

