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Bioblitz brings science to Spring Park

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A successful bioblitz was held in Harrison over the July 15 weekend. With the help of specialists and members of the public, 305 species of plants and animals were recorded. Two teams went out Saturday to explore; one around the townsite and the other to the East Sector woods.

A total of two provincially red (endangered or threatened) listed and four blue (special concern) listed species were identified of which one was federally endangered (Salish sucker), one threatened (barn swallow) and two special concern (Great Blue Heron, fannini ssp., Northern red-legged Frog).

After the opening barbecue on Friday evening at Rendall Park, specialists from BCIT mist netted bats in Spring Park. About 20 members of the public got up close and personal with seven little brown myotis bats (myotis lucifugus).

The South Coast Conservation Program in partnership with the Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition, Stanley Park Ecological Society and the Miami River Streamkeepers sponsored the Harrison event. The Village of Harrison Hot Springs supported the event with tables and poster printing and distribution. Thanks go also to the Friends of the East Sector group for their support of the barbecue and the blitz teams. Vancity's enviroFund and BC Timber Sales funded the event.

A special thanks goes to the Bungalow Motel & Cascade Adventures for table storage and electricity, and to Back Porch for supplying the coffee.

On Saturday at Spring Park, Dr. Mike Pearson displayed live Salish Suckers from the Miami as well as rainbow trout, pike minnow and red shiners. Zo-Ann Morton of the Pacific Streamkeepers Federation surveyed bugs and put them on display for the public. Jeanne Hughes of the Fraser Valley Invasive Plant Council and Carrielyn Victor of Cheam Nation led a plant walk to learn about invasive as well as edible plants.

The organizers are hoping to make this an annual event. Whistler's bioblitz is in its fifth year and takes place August 5 and 6. Stanley Parks inaugural one takes place August 20 and 21. A bioblitz brings together the public, scientists and local stewards to identify as many living things possible in a given place in a given time. Plan to take part and stay tuned for 2012 in Harrison. More information is readily available online.

On behalf of the Miami River Streamkeepers,

Janne Perrin

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