

## **Hwmat'etsum (Mount Maxwell): An experiment in ecological approaches to forest fire risk reduction**

### ***Field Trip Summary***

This full day field trip is to the Climate Adaptation Research Lab, an experimental restoration watershed on Salt Spring Island. The watershed is a microcosm of the current state of much of the densely populated coastal forest of eastern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands (Coastal Douglas-fir and Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones). Participants will learn about and visit several novel restoration treatment sites, led by a multidisciplinary team of practitioners from the region. Opportunities for discussion will be extensive, as this forested watershed is subject to complex social, environmental and jurisdictional constraints. Characteristic of forests across this region, the site has undergone more than a century of intensive forestry, wetland drainage and other changes, leaving behind a biologically simplified forest at increased risk of fire and drought. A fire in this watershed could prove catastrophic, endangering drinking water supplies to 40% of the population, threaten nearby farms and residences, and one of the largest protected Garry Oak stands in the region. Participants will tour the upper watershed along with fire, forest, and hydrologic practitioners in order to examine the legacy land use effects and how they continue to be key drivers of current vulnerability. The group will visit several experimental treatment areas where various fire and drought risk reduction restoration techniques have been adapted and applied. This will be ideal for practitioners, researchers, students and land-managers interested in developing climate adaptation strategies that address multiple values, while also reducing risks associated with fire, drought and other weather extremes.

This field trip will be heavily dependent on all attendees being on time to connect to the various transportation methods. This tour will depart the Pan Pacific at 7:30 a.m. by bus to the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal. The group leader will load everyone onto the ferry and accompany you through a ferry transfer and onto a waiting van on Salt Spring Island. The ferry trip will give participants the scenic opportunity to cross the Strait of Georgia and view the Gulf Islands. Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided along with water. Additionally, lunch will also be provided. Meals are also available for purchase on the Tsawwassen-Victoria Ferry. Once attendees are returned to the ferry terminal on Salt Spring Island, the group leader will return with the group and help them to navigate all ferry transfers and bus loading. Attendees should expect to arrive back at the hotel around 10:30 p.m. The field trip cost includes all transportation, ferry tickets, morning and afternoon snacks, and lunch. Attendees will be responsible for purchasing their own dinner on the ferry during the return trip to Vancouver.