

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2013 Nominee Profile

Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society

Category:	Group
Project:	Leadership on water issues on Salt Spring Island
Nominator(s):	Salt Spring Island Conservancy
Letters of Support:	N/A

Project Description:

The Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society has been promoting the protection and preservation of potable water sources on Salt Spring Island for 31 years; making it the oldest environmental group on the island. The Society acquires and manages land for the purpose of protecting drinking water on Salt Spring Island; promotes scientific studies and research into water issues; and raises public awareness of the value of protecting potable drinking water sources and water resources in general. The most demanding of their projects is the ongoing management of the 272-acre watershed preserve on the slopes west of St. Mary Lake, which they own. Management of this property includes working with neighbouring property owners, fencing, dealing with broom and other invasive plants, and land restoration. The Society has also ensured the permanent protection of these properties with a conservation covenant, established in 2008.

Examples of its projects include: working with the Salt Spring Island Water Council and others to produce a brochure on St. Mary Lake's water quality challenges; making submissions to the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee on the proposed Riparian Area Regulations and a current collaboration to support a Simon Fraser university hydrogeological study of the impacts of climate change on Salt Spring Island's groundwater resources. In 2002, the Water Preservation Society worked with others to raise \$1.2 million used to purchase the primary and secondary watersheds of Maxwell Lake, which is now owned and managed by the North Salt Spring Water District.

The Society's commitment to safe drinking water has been felt far beyond Salt Spring Island. From 1984-1994, the Society fought a legal battle to keep gasoline motors off St. Mary's Lake that ended in a Supreme Court of Canada decision that enabled local communities across Canada to declare lakes as 'electric motor only' for the purpose of preventing pollution.