

## ***Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program***



# **Islands Trust**

## **2015 Recipient Profile**

### **Protect Grace Islet Group, Salt Spring Island**

<b>Category:</b>	Group
<b>Project:</b>	Advocating for the protection of cultural heritage
<b>Nominator(s):</b>	Salt Spring Island Conservancy

#### **Project Description:**

The Protect Grace Islet Group formed in 2014 to support neighbouring First Nations in their efforts to protect Grace Islet's ancient burial site, to protect the islet's ecological features, and to restore the islet to its pre-development state.

Grace Islet's landowner, having acquired a permit from the Province to build on the registered archaeological site, was constructing a house on top of burial cairns. A common belief that united the Protect Grace Islet Group's diverse members was that the provincial development permit contravened the intent of the BC *Heritage Conservation Act*. The Penelakut, Cowichan, Halalt, Tsawout and Tseycum First Nations had all previously requested that the Province of BC prevent the desecration of this burial site.

The Protect Grace Islet Group's members supported local First Nations efforts in many ways: organizing educational events, raising funds for legal costs, hosting First Nations elders, paddling around the islet in protest, making food, writing letters to decision-makers in all levels of government, making films, writing stories and songs, developing mailing lists, updating social media, and holding vigils.

In January 2015, the Province of BC announced it would purchase Grace Islet with the intent of transferring it to the Nature Conservancy of Canada for complete restoration and protection and that it would undertake a review of the province's heritage and archeological laws and policies.