



## Islands Trust

### **2004 AWARD WINNER PROFILE**

**WINNER: SALT SPRING ISLAND  
RESIDENTS FOR RESPONSIBLE LAND USE**

**CATEGORY: GROUP/ ORGANIZATION**

**PROJECT: PRESERVATION OF WALKER HOOK  
SALT SPRING ISLAND**

**NOMINATOR: SALT SPRING ISLAND CONSERVANCY**

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#### **Project Description:**

The purpose of the Salt Spring Island (SSI) Residents for Responsible Land Use is to prevent the destruction of Walker Hook, to protect the sensitive ecosystems and archaeological heritage of Walker Hook and to prevent the industrialization of a rural residential and agricultural neighbourhood. The Residents for Responsible Land Use group have filed an environmental appeal with the Environmental Appeal Board against the permit that allowed Sablefin Hatchery Ltd. to dispose of their effluent into Walker Hook. The project is ongoing with the outcome of the Environmental Appeal still to be heard.

This group of volunteers, spearheaded by Donna Martin and Sharon Bywater, informed themselves about the process that was attempting to change a sensitive ecosystem and archeological site into a large-scale aquaculture hatchery run by a Venture Capital company. The group sought legal opinions, initiated a letter lobbying campaign to government agencies, and informed the community.

The Residents for Responsible Land Use group organized a site visit for the Penelakut Elders to the Walker Hook so that they could see the burial site of their ancestors. The group also organized an educational forum with the Penelakut Elders in the community to hear how their lives have been affected by the digging up of skeletal remains of their ancestors at Syuhe'mum and how their customs require that they watch over and look after their ancestors for all time.

Members of the Residents for Responsible Land Use group were interviewed by CBC, CKNW, the Times Colonist, the Diftwood, and the Vancouver Sun, which resulted in programs and stories and about Walker Hook. They distributed out over one hundred information packages to environmental organizations, government agencies, First Nation groups, media, and scientists. The doors have been opened to acknowledging First Nations long-time use of the islands before colonization and the beginnings of a relationship between our communities built on respect.