



ISLANDS TRUST CONSERVANCY

News Release

200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C., V8R 1H8

Telephone: 250-405-5186

itcmail@islandstrust.bc.ca islandstrust.bc.ca/conservancy

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Expansion of Conservation Covenant on North Pender Island Protects Habitat for Rare Species

Lək̓ʷəŋən, METULIYE/Victoria, B.C. — Islands Trust Conservancy's Nighthawk Hill covenant has been doubled in size to protect 1.879 hectares (4.6 acres) of forest, woodland, and rocky outcrops on North Pender Island. The covenant includes protection for the provincially red listed Douglas-fir – arbutus ecological community and provides important habitat for species at risk including Common Nighthawk, which is a species of Special Concern under the federal Species at Risk Act.

Andy Nowak and Mary Reher came to Pender Island in the 1980's and bought a property in 2000. As development pressure increased on the island, they felt it was important to place a conservation covenant to protect and steward the vulnerable species and ecosystems on their land. The Nighthawk Hill conservation covenant is registered through the Islands Trust's Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) which will lower future property taxes on the area protected by the covenant.

North Pender Island is one of the Southern Gulf Islands in the Salish Sea. The Nighthawk Hill covenant is located in the territories of the Coash Salish Peoples. In April, family, friends, and Islands Trust Conservancy staff will gather on the property to celebrate this accomplishment.

Arbutus and Douglas-fir are sparsely distributed throughout the covenant which provide habitat for diverse species including Common Nighthawk, after which the covenant is named. In 2004, Andy and Mary first observed a Common Nighthawk nesting on the ground on the ridge. "Each year in June, the Nighthawks arrive. We listen to their calls and booms at dusk and dawn, and watch them along the ridge all summer. This is indeed, Nighthawk Hill," says Andy Nowak.

"Stepping up to do our part is a choice that is congruent with our values and how we live," says Mary Reher. "Despite years of conservation and lobbying efforts, both on Pender and further afield, it seems our private property is the only thing we can really protect in a direct way. Placing a covenant on this land feels very enabling; it feels good to know we did something of substance to preserve the earth and its creatures, and encourage other private landowners to do the same."

"Nighthawk Hill NAPTEP covenant was created with support from a \$4,615 grant from the Morrison Waxler Biodiversity Protection Legacy Fund," says Risa Smith, Chair of the Islands Trust Conservancy

Board. “These funds covered the costs associated with a land survey of the conservation area. We are grateful for the generosity of the Morrison family.”

About Islands Trust Conservancy

Islands Trust Conservancy is a conservation land trust for over 450 islands of the Salish Sea and is a part of Islands Trust. Since 1990, the Islands Trust Conservancy has protected more than 1,360 hectares of island ecosystems. This success is thanks to the vision, support, and generosity of donors and partners. Learn more online at islandstrust.bc.ca/conservancy.

About the Morrison Waxler Biodiversity Protection Legacy Fund

The Morrison Waxler Biodiversity Protection Legacy Fund was created in honour of Barrie Morrison and Nancy Waxler Morrison to support landowners with the cost associated with registering a section 219 *Land Title Act* conservation covenant on their lands on North and South Pender Islands. It may be used to pay all or a portion of a landowner’s costs of providing a survey plan, a baseline report, a land appraisal, and legal and registration costs related to granting a conservation covenant. To learn more about the fund, email itcmail@islandstrust.bc.ca.

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Quick Facts

- The Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) protects natural landscapes across the Islands Trust Area. The support of individuals and partners has helped to protect more than 1,375 ha of land within 34 nature reserves and 79 conservation covenants on islands in the Salish Sea.
- More than 65% of land on islands in the Salish Sea is privately held – meaning that individual, voluntary conservation actions are critical to protecting biodiversity and addressing impacts from climate change in the region.
- A conservation covenant is an agreement that is registered on a land title to protect natural features on privately held land. It is designed to be perpetual and to bind future landholders.
- The Islands Trust Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) offers a 65% property tax reduction on the protected portion of land when landholders place a conservation covenant on land with the Islands Trust Conservancy. The program is unique to the Islands Trust Area in British Columbia.
- B.C. is the most biologically-diverse province in Canada – but it is also a hotspot for biodiversity loss.
 - More than 100 species listed in the federal *Species at Risk Act* as being at risk of extinction are found in the Islands Trust Area. Protecting habitat is one of the best ways to prevent species from becoming at risk of extinction and aid in the recovery of those currently at risk.

Press Assets

Media has been made available for download to support this news release. You can [access these assets here](#).

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Contact

For all media enquiries please contact Micaela Yawney, Communications Specialist,
Islands Trust Conservancy, 250-405-5183, myawney@islandstrust.bc.ca