



ISLANDS TRUST CONSERVANCY

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Conservation Area on Lasqueti Island Protects Mature Forest for Species at Risk

Lak̓ w̓əŋən, METULIYE/Victoria, B.C. — The Islands Trust Conservancy’s new Livingstone Forest covenant protects 11.35 hectares of forest and wetland on Xwe'etay/Lasqueti Island. The covenant provides important habitat for species at risk including the Northern Red-legged Frog, Western Toad, and Little Brown Myotis Bat.

Christine Ferris and Doug Hopwood, long-standing conservation stewards, placed the conservation covenant on their land to ensure long-term protection of the property’s biodiversity and carbon stores. Ferris and Hopwood chose to register the covenant 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.

Lasqueti Island is located southwest of Texada Island in the Georgia Strait. The Livingstone Forest covenant is named after the Livingstone family, who stewarded the land for 60 years prior to Ferris and Hopwood’s purchase of the property in 1992. In August, both families will gather to place a plaque on the property to commemorate Kate Livingstone, who settled on the land in 1912 and raised her six children there. Several of her grandchildren retain their connection to Lasqueti today. The Livingstone Forest NAPTEP covenant is located in the territory of Tla’amin Nation and Qualicum First Nation.

The covenant protects a mature and productive second-growth coastal forest ecosystem and a wetland. The forest, with tree species including Coastal Douglas-fir, Western redcedar, and Red alder, acts as a natural carbon sink, while the wetland is an important water source for local species and provides filtration for groundwater.

“For close to 25 years, Doug and I worked for the Islands Trust Conservancy annually monitoring conservation areas, and we saw how a covenant can allow landowners to protect conservation values while retaining the use of the land. We met many owners who were so grateful to know that the features that make their properties so special will be protected for the long term,” said Christine Ferris. “A big factor in our decision to put a covenant on our land was our awareness of the climate emergency. Conserving forests, along with eliminating fossil fuels, is essential for the future of humanity and nature.”

Protecting Islands in the Salish Sea

“Livingstone Forest NAPTEP covenant is the Islands Trust Conservancy’s first covenant on Lasqueti Island,” said Linda Adams, Chair of the Islands Trust Conservancy Board. “We hope that this gift from Christine Ferris and Doug Hopwood will open the doors to other Lasqueti Island landholders who may be considering conservation options.”

About Islands Trust Conservancy

Islands Trust Conservancy is the 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.

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Quick Facts

- The Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) protects natural landscapes across the Islands Trust region. The support of individuals and partners has helped to protect more than 1,375 ha of land within 33 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 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.

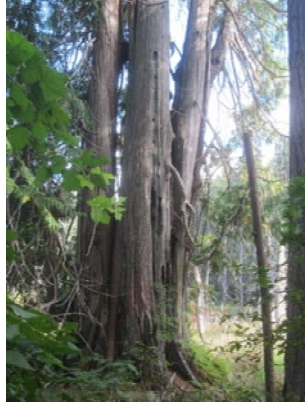
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