



the Heron



Autumn 2019 A newsletter from the Islands Trust Conservancy, for Canada's Islands in the Salish Sea

islandstrustconservancy.ca



Salish View Nature Reserve on Lasqueti Island

Rare and Endangered Species Protected Thanks to You!

Have you ever heard of **batwing vinyl**? Me neither and there's a good reason why. There's not much of it around.

This is one of the reasons it is so important that the piece of paradise on the southeast corner of Lasqueti Island, directly adjacent to Squitty Bay Provincial Park, was protected in July 2019. The Salish View Nature Reserve, a 160 metre-high ridgetop on the coast with 270-degree views of the Salish Sea, is not just stunningly beautiful. It's also home to several rare and endangered species. Batwing vinyl is just one of them.

Salish View protects a very large occurrence of batwing vinyl (*Leptogium platynum*), scattered in 14 patches throughout the reserve. This leafy "jellyskin" lichen is federally listed as Endangered and is protected under the *Species at Risk Act*. Although only three locations in Canada were known in 2011, recent surveys have brought the total number up to 18 sites including the recent discovery at Salish View. Biologists that surveyed the land also found the rare northern red-legged frog (*Rana aurora*), and the little brown myotis bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), listed federally as Endangered.

The protection of this Nature Reserve was made possible thanks to you: caring supporters of Islands Trust Conservancy and Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy, the Sitka Foundation, and the Clayden Family. "We'd like to thank all of the 150 individual donors plus landowner Wayne Bright who generously donated 20 per cent of the market value to kick-start the campaign," said Gordon Scott, President of the Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy.

The Ecological Gifts Program of Environment and Climate Change Canada generously funded the Species at Risk surveys. Understanding which species are present will help the Islands Trust Conservancy manage the reserve effectively to protect these rare and interesting species. ...Cont'd next page



Reconciliation Declaration July 16, 2019

The Islands Trust Conservancy acknowledges that the islands and waters that encompass the Salish Sea have been home to Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. We recognize that we are all intertwined in the ecosystems that are the lands, waters, culture, and ecology that embody this place.

The Islands Trust Conservancy will strive to create opportunities for knowledge-sharing, understanding and collaboration as people come together to preserve and protect the special nature of the islands within the Salish Sea.

The Islands Trust Conservancy is committed to the protection and preservation of this place through processes that respect and honour reconciliation and mutually respectful relationships with Coast Salish Indigenous Peoples. We express our recognition for the past, present, and future stewardship and knowledge that has been shared by Indigenous Peoples and are humbled and grateful.

For more information visit our website: islandstrustconservancy.ca/about-us/first-nations-and-reconciliation/



Left: Kate Emmings of Islands Trust Conservancy thanking Lasqueti Islanders for protecting this land. **Right:** While there are currently no maintained trails or recreational access to Squitty Bay Nature Reserve, Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy and the Islands Trust Conservancy are exploring opportunities for a viewpoint trail on Salish View Nature Reserve.

Monitoring of the property is the joint responsibility of Islands Trust Conservancy, Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy and the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust Society.

“Lasqueti Islanders show us that they believe in the ‘Preserve and Protect’ mandate of the Islands Trust — donating their money, their creativity and their time to protect natural places,” said Kate-Louise Stamford, Chair of the Islands Trust Conservancy Board. “The Islands Trust Conservancy is proud to be able to support this passion through partnerships to protect natural areas for all species.” 🌿

To learn more about the history and management plans for Salish View Nature Reserve go to our website: [Islands Trust Conservancy](https://islandstrustconservancy.ca) and search for “Protected Areas” on Lasqueti Island.

If you are considering donating land or are interested in the Ecological Gifts Program call Kate Emmings, 250-405-5191, or email kemmings@islandstrust.bc.ca or visit islandstrustconservancy.ca/how-do-i/covenant/

New Covenant — An Undeveloped Refuge Preserved!

When Betty Swift and her family first sailed out to Link Island near Gabriola Island, in 1963, they camped among a flock of feral sheep originating from previous owners in the 1880s. The land had been logged between the 1930s and 1950s, putting pressure on the sensitive ecosystem.

Under the Swift family’s stewardship the forests are now maturing into second-growth Douglas-fir and Arbutus forest with occasional Garry oak and cedar. There are several remnant

patches of old-growth forest left on the island. Fifteen years ago, in hopes of reducing browsing, the Swifts asked friends to round up the sheep and barge them to their farm on DeCourcy Island. This proved ineffective because an expanding deer population continued to browse down the understory plants. “Theories of land management have changed over the years” says Betty, “but our focus on conserving this island has not.” With more and more trespassing over the years, the family became increasingly worried about protecting this undeveloped refuge.

Link Island (21.45 ha) is located within the core traditional territory of several Coast Salish First Nations. It is in the DeCourcy Group: southwest of Nanaimo between Stuart Channel and Pylades Channel, nestled between Mudge Island and DeCourcy Island. An islet known as Spider Monkey Island (0.17 ha) at the south end of Link Island is included in

the Covenant Area. Link Island is connected to Mudge and DeCourcy Islands at low tides. Almost a hundred years ago a notch was cut in the sandstone above the low tide mark to allow boat access between Link and DeCourcy Islands.

Attending a 2009 Islands Trust Conservancy information meeting on NAPTEP (Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program) marked the beginning of a legacy-building process for the Swift family. Betty and her three children decided that the best land management option for the land was to maintain ownership but with conservation restrictions. Conservation covenants placed on land require a survey and have implications on the future value of that land and on property taxes. The Swift family's case was further complicated by their being US residents, with more tax implications. Success in placing a conservation covenant on Link Island relied on the collaborative efforts of the Islands Trust Conservancy, the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust, and the Ecological Gifts Program through Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Link Island has approximately 3.3 km of shoreline, of which approximately 2.9 km is within the covenant area. The shoreline includes high cliffs and low rock formations, with intricate sandstone formations and offshore kelp beds.

Below: Swift Family Link Island NAPTEP Covenant. **Right:** The faces of generosity: from left to right, Don Ewing, Holly Swift, Ted Swift, Betty Swift, Barbara Swift, and Eric Strandberg. PHOTO CRYSTAL OBERG

Acting Manager of the Islands Trust Conservancy, Kate Emmings says, "The islands are facing significant and increasing development pressure. We are so pleased to support the conservation vision of landowners such as Betty Swift and her family to protect and preserve the land." Betty is relieved that a stable plan is in place. "The process felt a bit daunting at first but it quickly became exciting! It was a long time dream to protect the island and perhaps contribute a resource for research in the future. It's just so satisfying to know that the natural areas that we enjoy today will continue to benefit future generations." 🌿

If you are considering placing a conservation covenant on your land or are interested in NAPTEP call Kathryn Martell, Ecosystem Protection Specialist at 250-405-5176 or visit islandstrustconservancy.ca/how-do-i/covenant/



Your Hard Work Yields Magical Results

What happens when you combine 31 eager volunteers with tools, on 16.5 ha of a protected forest, on a wet and soggy day, and professional trail builder Riley McIntosh? The start of a very special trail system on Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserve on Thetis Island!

Thetis Island is almost entirely privately owned and so the creation of a nature reserve and a public trail is a significant first. Thetis Island Nature Conservancy (ThINC) has coordinated the trail building project, supporting the Cowichan Community Land Trust to obtain a McLean Foundation grant towards the trail design, building, and signage. Thetis Island Residents' and Taxpayers' Association (TIRRA) supplied additional funding and labour, and many community members are giving time and talent to remove danger trees, attend the trail building workshops, and to photograph the progression of the project. Two Penelakut youth are actively engaged in the trail building with Riley McIntosh and joined the trail building crew.

As magical as all of this is, the magic started much earlier — seven years ago when ThINC, with Islands Trust Conservancy, the Cowichan Community Land Trust, Sitka Foundation, the Gosling Foundation, the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and individuals like you, shared a vision to



Trail Building in Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserve, Thetis Island

create this nature reserve, and then raised \$560,000 to secure its protection.

You made magic happen in Fairyslipper Forest, and for that we thank you!

While we know you'll want to rush over and check out the new trail, it is not complete and there will be 10 work sessions in all to complete the loop walk. We hope to have the trail open to the public in April 2020.

For details about the Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserve and the management plan that guides activity there, **please visit the Islands Trust Conservancy website under "Protected Places."** 🌿

Neighbours Share a Big Vision

This is a story about how conservation takes a village. Sometimes a tract of land, such as Link Island, is protected in a single motion (see pg. 2). At other times an area that deserves protection is privately held among multiple families, and a long-term view is needed. This is the reality for Valens Brook on Denman Island.

Valens Brook has special ecological significance. It is a waterway with a diverse riparian forest. Salmon spawn here, as the creek runs through a lush, maturing forest of cedars, firs, ferns and sedges.



"Things just got a whole lot safer around here for me!"

Northern red-legged frog
at Valens Brook Nature Reserve

The riparian ecosystem supports a great diversity of species, including northern red-legged frogs, salamanders, Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons and beavers. The area surrounding the Valens Brook Nature Reserve remained rural and wild up to as early as the late 1960s, but since then properties have been subdivided and houses built.

In 2012, Marilyn Wan and Dr. Kal Holsti were worried about the effect crowding, habitat destruction and increased septic leaks were having on Valens Brook and the salmon that spawn here. They subdivided their property under Section 99 of the *Land Title Act*, donating the natural portion of their property (4 ha) as a nature reserve while retaining a small portion of their property for their own personal use. And so Valens Brook Nature Reserve was born.

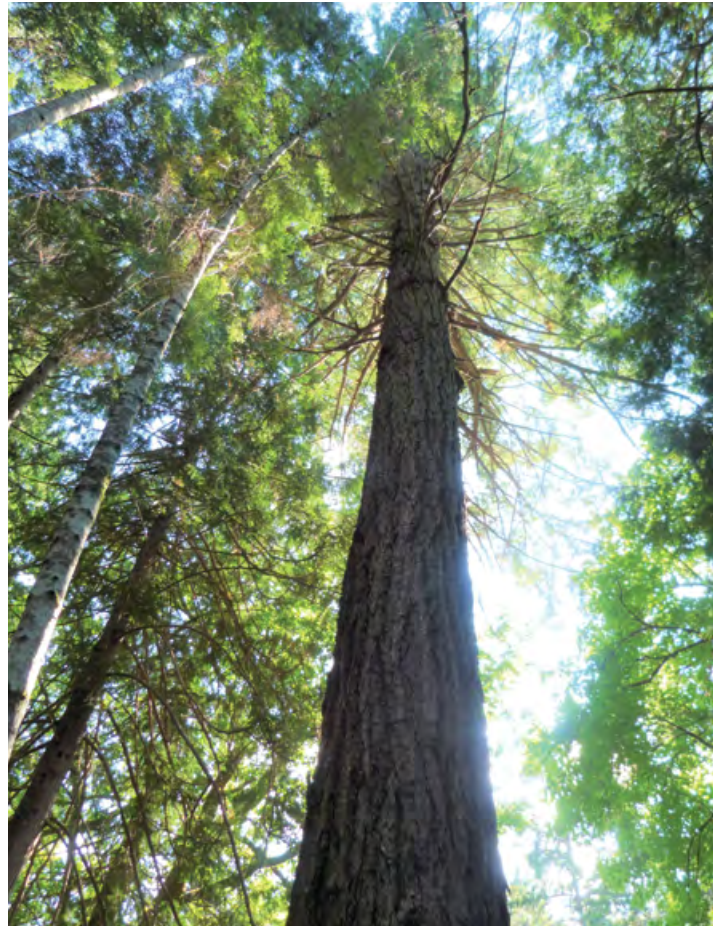
Valens Brook Nature Reserve's primary purpose is to provide a green buffer to the Valens Brook waterway and the generosity of Wan and Holsti planted a seed in the minds of their neighbours. Biologists Luise Hermanutz and David Innes recognized their land's similar natural values and were equally concerned about the future of the brook and land. They also subdivided their property and donated the natural portion to add to the nature reserve. Both lands were also donated through Environment and Climate Change Canada's Ecological Gifts Program resulting in income tax receipts.

"Protecting our property was part of a bigger vision started by Kal Holsti and [previous landowner] Jenny Balke," said Luise Hermanutz. "As ecologists and scientists, we recognize the importance of Valens Brook in protecting the watershed, salmon, and the Coastal Douglas-fir region. Denman Islanders are conservation minded, so we hope the entire Valens Brook will someday be protected". Hermanutz and Innes hope that their recent donation will inspire more to do the same.

"In the islands, private landowners hold the key to protecting the beauty and vitality of our natural environment," said Kate-Louise Stamford, Chair of the Islands Trust Conservancy Board.

"We look forward to working with others who are inspired by the donations of their neighbours." 🌿

Another slice of diversity in the woodland of Valens Brook Nature Reserve protected.



Generosity expands Valens Brook Nature Reserve

To learn more about the history and management plans for Valens Brook Nature Reserve visit islandstrustconservancy.ca/protected-places/places-protected-in-the-islands/all/denman-and-hornby-islands/valens-brook-nature-reserve/

If you are considering placing a conservation covenant on your land or are interested in NAPTEP call Kathryn Martell, Ecosystem Protection Specialist at 250-405-5176 or visit islandstrustconservancy.ca/how-do-i/covenant/





Dead Boat Society swings into action as it lifts a beached boat off Medicine Beach Nature Sanctuary. PHOTO PAUL SCARNATI

Dead Boat Society Strikes!

When a pristine nature sanctuary such as Medicine Beach on Pender Island is defiled by an upturned and beached boat, who are you going to call? Dead Boat Society, naturally.

A sandy beach, Medicine Beach Nature Sanctuary has archaeological and First Nations significance. Exceptionally rare in the Gulf Islands, the Sanctuary's saltwater marsh — a mix of freshwater runoff from forested uplands and salt water from incoming tides — supports a unique collection of plants. Great Blue Heron, Western Grebe and Belted Kingfisher are just some of the bird species visitors see in the marsh. The site has become a sanctuary for migrating and breeding populations. Removal of a “dead boat” in such a location needs to occur with minimum impact, and that's what happened last August. Thanks to Pender Island Conservancy Association (PICA) for their ongoing support in these efforts.

Medicine Beach has long been enjoyed by the Pender community as a place to walk, swim, or lounge by the oceanside. Please help



Done! Medicine Beach Nature Sanctuary is all cleaned up. PHOTO PAUL SCARNATI

us protect the sensitive plants that grow here by staying on established trails. Please keep some distance between yourself and the any birds or waterfowl in the marsh to prevent disturbing or scaring nesting birds. Also, please keep dogs on a leash and remember to pick up after them while visiting the sanctuary. 🌿

For details visit our website: islandstrustconservancy.ca/protected-places/places-protected-in-the-islands/all/pender-islands/medicine-beach-nature-sanctuary/

Your Land Management Plans Approved

Several nature reserves received new or updated management plans in 2019. The new Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserve on Thetis Island had its first management plan approved by the ITC Board this summer. As Fairyslipper Forest will be the first publicly accessible protected area on Thetis Island, its management plan features recommendations for establishing a hiking trail that will provide opportunities for nature appreciation while protecting sensitive species and habitats. (For details see Fairyslipper Forest Trail building page 4).

Management plans for Brigade Bay Bluffs, Long Bay Wetland and Mount Artaban Nature Reserves on Gambier Island, originally prepared in 2005, were updated. Key management recommendations for these neighbouring properties are to restore areas disturbed by historic logging and to develop an ecologically sound wildfire mitigation and response plan.

ITC is grateful to all those who participated in this process for Brigade Bay Bluffs, Long Bay Wetland, Mount Artaban and Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserves. Monitor for opportunities to have your say on current ITC management plans in progress: islandstrustconservancy.ca. 🌿

Islands Trust Conservancy nature reserves are managed to maintain, preserve and protect the natural features and values of ecosystems. As part of our commitment to reconciliation, our nature reserves are also managed to preserve and protect sites of cultural or sacred significance. Our management plans provide background information on historical, physical, cultural and ecological characteristics and set out the goals and objectives of property management for each nature reserve. They detail the management issues associated with the property and provide recommendations for short-, medium-, and long-term management actions to resolve issues and meet management objectives. This work is supported by core funding from Islands Trust.

The ITC management planning process typically involves community engagement through an online questionnaire and an open house, invitations to First Nations to participate in management planning, and collaboration with local conservation partners.

Welcome to Susan Hannon, our new Board Trustee!

Susan Hannon is a retired Ecology Professor from University of Alberta. Her research expertise is in forest ecology, impacts of habitat fragmentation, forest birds and conservation. She taught Ecology and Conservation courses for 25 years. She has also served on numerous boards and worked in land stewardship with private landowners. Dr. Hannon's primary focus now is on active conservation in Garry oak and coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems. She runs the nest box program on Salt Spring Island, worked in Garry oak ecosystem restoration and removal of invasive plants, and is a member of the the Advisory Planning Commission for the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee.

We welcome the breadth of knowledge and expertise that Dr. Susan Hannon brings to the Islands Trust Conservancy Board. 🌿



At right: Dr. Susan Hannon, doing what she loves best! PHOTO SUBMITTED

Support your islands today!

When you donate to Islands Trust Conservancy every dollar of your donation goes directly to protecting endangered island habitats. 100%.

Your donations of \$20 or more will receive an official donation receipt for income tax purposes.*

➤ To donate online visit islandstrustconservancy.ca/donate/give-now/

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\$500 \$100 \$50 \$_____

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*Islands Trust Conservancy is a qualified donee as a Crown agent under B.C.'s *Islands Trust Act*. Islands Trust business # 122013576 RT0001

Our name has changed!

Notice that Islands Trust Fund is now **Islands Trust Conservancy**. This amendment to the *Islands Trust Act* more accurately reflects our “preserve and protect” mandate.

“BC has a whopping 1,807 species at risk” and “protecting nature is the best strategy to fight climate change”*.

Are you ready to protect the islands you love and fight climate change? Ask us how:

Contact Kate Emmings by phone at 250-405-5191 or email kemmings@islandstrust.bc.ca

*The Narwhal, May 3, 2019

thenarwhal.ca/b-c-has-a-whopping-1807-species-at-risk-of-extinction-but-no-rules-to-protect-them/

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