



# the Heron



A newsletter from the Islands Trust Conservancy, protecting islands in the Salish Sea | [islandstrust.bc.ca/conservancy](http://islandstrust.bc.ca/conservancy)

SPRING 2022

# Celebrating the newest protected places on the islands

*Moss Mountain p.2*

*Woodpecker Forest p.4*



Moss Mountain Covenant on Salt Spring Island  
Inset: Woodpecker Forest Nature Reserve, SDAYES/North Pender Island PHOTOS: C. SMITH

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# Moss Mountain Covenant

## Protecting 45 hectares on Salt Spring Island

Thanks to the actions taken by islander Gay Young 45.4 ha (112.2 acres – approximately the size of 10 BC Place Arenas) of land has now been protected on Salt Spring Island along the Sansum Narrows. It provides a critical wildlife corridor linkage between Stoney Hill Regional Park on Vancouver Island and Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park and Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve on Salt Spring Island. Gay (with the support of her family) placed a conservation covenant on this property with the Islands Trust Conservancy.

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**“Given the current climate crisis it seemed like a great way to contribute,” says Gay Young. “It was a family decision between me and my three children. We felt the land needed to be protected forever.”**

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When asked what they wanted to protect most she answered – the trees. “We had 112 acres of mature trees. I don’t want them to be destroyed – they are so important and are doing a great service for us as carbon sinks. It was my job to protect them.”

The covenant area contains a wide range of ecosystems including mature forests, seasonal creeks, wetlands, mossy bluffs, prairie oak, arbutus woodlands, and rocky shoreline. It protects nine provincially listed ecosystems and three documented species at risk of extinction - including the Endangered Little Brown Bat, which was detected during summer bat surveys in 2021.

“Conserving land to protect cultural heritage and ecosystems is a way that individuals can take direct action to help stem the loss of biodiversity and bolster resilience in the face of climate change ,” says Kate-Louise Stamford, Chair, ITC Board. 🌿



Gay Young at Moss Mountain Covenant PHOTO: C. SMITH



Drum detail. PHOTO: L. WILCOX

### Acknowledgement

Islands Trust Conservancy acknowledges that we work within the treaty lands and territories of the BOKÉĆEN, K’ómoks, Lək’wəḡən, Lyackson, MÁLEXEL, Qualicum, Quw’utsun Tribes, scəwáθən məsteyəxʷ, Scia’new, səliłwətaʔt, SEMYOME, shíshálh, Skwəwú7mesh, Snaw-naw-as, Snuneymuxw, Spune’luxutth, STÁUTW, Stz’uminus, təʔamən, toq qaymúxʷ, Ts’uubaa-asatx, Wei Wai Kum, We Wai Kai, WJOLELP, WSIKEM, Xeláltxw, Xwémalhkwxuʔop qaymúxʷ, and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm.



Fairyslipper Orchid



Skunk Cabbage



Pileated Woodpecker

Pacific Madrone

Rough-skinned Newt



Northwestern Garter Snake



Ocean Spray



# Woodpecker Forest Covenant

## on SDAYES / North Pender Island

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of islanders Peter Paré and Lisa Baile, an additional 3.63 ha of land near the existing Lisa Baile Nature Reserve has been protected on SDAYES / North Pender Island. This newly-protected area builds on existing protected lands to create nearly 17 hectares (41.5 acres – approximately the size of 4 BC Place Arenas) of protected land along Clam Bay Rd. Connected protected areas provide movement corridors for wildlife, and help buffer impacts of climate change. This new protected area will aid in stemming biodiversity loss on the island.

Lisa Baile first protected land near their home back in 2021, with the creation of the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve. When the lot next door came on the market, Lisa and Peter decided to act. “We bought the lot next door with the goal of placing a conservation covenant on part of it to protect it,” says Peter.

Lisa and Peter state climate change and a strong desire to protect endangered Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems are what motivate them to keep finding ways to protect more

land on North Pender. “We want to protect as much rare and endangered Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems as we can,” says Peter. “The development on these islands has led to a progressive loss of trees – which are one of the best carbon capturing devices out there – we have to do more to protect what biodiversity is left.”


Woodpecker Forest contains several at-risk ecosystems, including rare Douglas-fir and Western redcedar stands. There are remnant old-growth and wildlife trees scattered throughout the forest, and a wetland that supports river otters, amphibians, an incredibly diverse bird community (including several species of woodpeckers) and at least one bat species. There is a public trail through part of the wetland that is to be maintained by Pender’s Alternative Transportation Society’s Moving Around Pender Project (MAP). This conservation covenant will be jointly managed in partnership with the Pender Islands Conservancy Association.



Left: Some of the many species found within the covenant. PHOTOS: L. BAILE Above: Lisa & Peter at Woodpecker Forest. PHOTO: C. SMITH

**“It is our hope that each little piece we can protect and set aside will help protect not just the rare coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems, but people as well in the face of climate change.”**

**– Lisa Baile and Peter Paré.**

“Thanks to the generosity and actions taken by Gay, Lisa and Peter, these incredible places – full of rare and wonderful ecosystems and species that they value – will remain protected and intact,” says Kate Emmings, Manager at ITC. “I’d count that as a win for residents, a win for nature, and a win for generations to come.” 

### **Protect Land You Love**

This property was protected using a conservation covenant in the [Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program \(NAPTEP\)](#). For qualifying properties, NAPTEP provides landowners with a 65% property tax reduction for the portion of the property protected by a conservation covenant. Waterfront and large lots with proportionally higher values and taxes stand to benefit the most from the program.

Our website provides information and resources to help you determine if a conservation covenant is right for you and your property.

Visit <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/conservancy/protect-nature/conservation-covenants/> for more information.

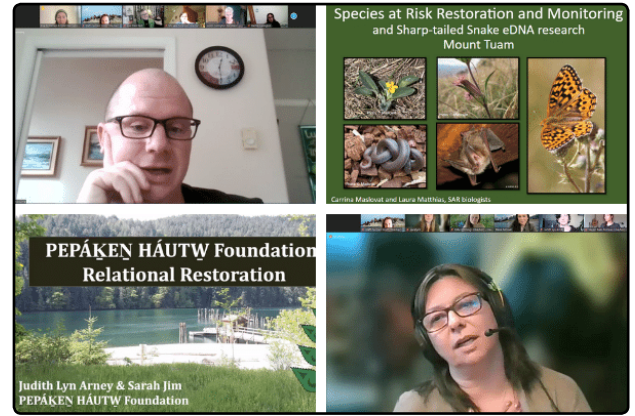
**Conservation Covenants and voluntary actions by private landholders are critical to stemming biodiversity loss on islands in the Salish Sea.**

# Species at Risk Gathering hosts 60+ experts in March 2022

Species-at-Risk Program Coordinator, Wendy Tyrrell, helped organize the first ever ITC Species Gathering on March 17, 2022. The full day digital event brought more than 60 individuals from across the islands together to discuss the issues around addressing species and ecosystems at risk from extinction in the Salish Sea. The day featured a keynote presentation from Ruth Simons of the Howe Sound Biosphere project and presentations on eco-cultural restoration initiatives and new techniques for monitoring species at risk (like e-DNA sampling).

Wendy will take feedback from this group to inform an ongoing workshop series and future gatherings to help enhance partnerships for on the ground actions for species/ecosystems at risk and culturally significant species and ecosystems on islands in the Salish Sea.

For those who missed out on the day we were tweeting highlights and learnings from the ITC Twitter handle @IslTrustConserv – Check out our tweets at <https://twitter.com/IslTrustConserv>. 🌿



Wendy Tyrrell, Species at Risk Program Coordinator (below) hosts the ITC Species Gathering on March 17, 2022



This project was undertaken with the financial support of:  
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Sharp-tailed Snake at Cyril Cunningham Nature Reserve on Salt Spring Island.. PHOTO LAURA MATTHIAS

## Updates from the field

With field season kicking off we were thrilled to receive an update from biologist Laura Matthias who found an endangered Sharp-tailed Snake using one of the artificial cover objects they placed last spring on the Cyril Cunningham Nature Reserve on Salt Spring Island! Sharp-tailed Snakes are a species-at-risk on the islands and very little is known about these small, non-venomous snakes that spend the majority of their lives underground.

In 2018, field biologists Laura Matthias and Carrina Maslovat began a project to develop an innovative, non-invasive eDNA sampling technique to research the elusive

Sharp-tailed Snakes. eDNA refers to the genetic material that organisms leave behind in the environment (from things like skin, feces or mucus). eDNA sampling is a fairly new tool that has been used mainly to detect rare aquatic species – adapting it for land-based species is an exciting next step.

We have been working with field biologists Laura Matthias and Carrina Maslovat at different suitable protected sites on this work on Salt Spring, Thetis, and SDAYES/North Pender islands. Read more about their work [here](#).

We'll be keeping our fingers crossed that more snakes continue to find and utilize these structures! 🌿

# The power of art, language & connection to land.

Writer and artist Eliot White-Hill ([Kwulasultun](#)) breathes deeply on the trail in the old forest. A raven follows him, calling out in guttural tones. He knows that he is standing in the presence of Elders in the S’ul-hween X’pey (Elder Cedar) Nature Reserve on Gabriola Island. “Our history lies in the trees” he says, “They are our roots. A connection to the wisdom and knowledge of our people”.

Eliot’s great-grandmother Snuneymuxw linguist and elder Dr. Ellen White honoured this special place with a Hul’qumi’num name. When she passed away a few years ago he realized just how spoiled he had been to be able to be with her at any time. He is keenly aware of how much knowledge went with her, and has become ‘obsessed’ with exploring ways to continue sharing her knowledge between generations.



**“Eliot’s art helps to tell the powerful stories of the history of this place.”**

**- Geraldine Mason**

When ITC approached him to design a new sign for the Nature Reserve, he saw it as an opportunity to tap into Hul’qumi’num knowledge. He turned to Elders - like Geraldine Mason - to help him in this journey. While creating the art for the new sign for the nature reserve Eliot wanted to portray the deep sense of history and connectedness.

**“These trees are our whole world. They are our roots and a connection to a time before. And they are almost all gone.”**  
~ Eliot White-Hill (Kwulasultun), writer and artist.



Elder Cedar viewing platform. PHOTO: A. LANDRY

**“Sharing our art will form a connection that will create space where empathy and understanding can flourish across cultural divides.”**

**- Eliot White-Hill**

Geraldine’s passion lays in using specific language to describe history. She explores the significance of place, and asks questions like ‘why were camps here?’ She has learned that the people who came here were harvesting, collecting, and preserving for winter – they were not idle. She plans to share this history of the land and research online in the future, with place names and a virtual tour.

The [S’ul-hween X’pey \(Elder Cedar\) Nature Reserve’s](#) new sign design is set to be recognized with Eliot and Geraldine, ITC, The Gabriola Land and Trails Trust, Nanaimo & Area Land Trust, and the Snuneymuxw First Nation in the late Spring/Summer of 2022. 🌿



# Giving thanks to those legacy leaders who remembered us in their Will



## Betty Swift, Link Island

Betty had a lifelong commitment to conservation and stewardship of ecologically important lands. Her long-time dream to ensure the conservation of Link Island led to her donation to ITC as a “life estate” bequest and a nature preserve closed to public access. Current family members will continue stewarding the island throughout their lifetime knowing her vision has been achieved. Betty’s family hope Link Island will become a foot-hold for climate-change research in the Salish Sea.



## William Tempest, Victoria

As a water resource engineer, William had a lifelong interest in the natural sciences. His friends described him as a ‘quiet environmentalist’. For 50 years he and a group of friends and work colleagues regularly met on Hornby Island to fish, hike and discuss world affairs. William bequeathed 10% of his estate to ITC, which will be put towards conservation on Hornby Island.




## Susan Bloom, Salt Spring Island

As a philanthropist and conservationist, Susan believed strongly in grassroots organizing and worked to help small groups of passionate people do extraordinary things. ITC was selected to receive funding by Bloom’s estate trustees, in recognition of the conservancy’s efforts to preserve our natural heritage. In her memory her estate bequeathed \$100,000 in support of continued conservation efforts on islands in the Salish Sea.

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### Questions? Contact us!

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