



the Heron



Summer 2013 a newsletter from the Islands Trust Fund



“May this be a place where beavers can be beavers, and people are observers of the wonders of nature”

– Vision for the new nature reserve as defined by the community

Galiano Conservation Network Reaches 500 Hectares New acquisition links protected areas across Galiano Island

Residents and visitors of Galiano Island will soon be able to hike from the shores of Trincomali Channel across to the Georgia Strait thanks to the completion of a conservation network spanning the width of the island. Earlier this spring, the Islands Trust Fund became the proud owner of a 40-hectare property linking conservation areas on the east and west side of the island.

Islands Trust Fund Ecosystem Protection Specialist, Kate Emmings, worked with the Galiano Conservancy Association to complete key parts of the new 500-hectare conservation network. As a Galiano resident and mother of a 2-year old naturalist-in-training, she felt privileged to be a part of a major conservation acquisition on her home island.

“As a conservation planner, I celebrate this network of forests, wetlands and cliffs. Plants and animals will be able to migrate between two major watersheds, as well as from sea level up to Galiano’s central ridgeline without threat from logging or residential encroachment,” said Kate. “As a Galianoite and mother, my heart rejoices knowing this stunning wild space will always be natural – a place where my son will grow, learn and explore.”

The new 40-hectare property encompasses a previously unprotected portion of the Great Beaver Swamp. One of the largest wetlands on Galiano, the Swamp is a regular watering hole for river otter and mink, and a vital piece of the island’s freshwater system.

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Above left: Kate Emmings’ son Dylan and his uncle look out onto Great Beaver Swamp

Above: Signs of beaver activity

Below left: Wetland loving Yellow monkey-flower



Your support made this happen!

Your donations to the Islands Trust Fund made this property a success story for conservation and species-at-risk. Your support helped pay for the survey needed to complete the transfer of the property. Without you we would not have been able to see this project through to acquisition.

Each time we undertake a new acquisition – a new protected place in the islands – the costs we face are diverse and substantial. We are so grateful for donors who continue to support our work protecting these island gems. Thank you!

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Beavers frequent the trails looking for saplings that would suit their wetland home. Birds of prey sail on the warm air currents rising from the property's rocky ridge. Visitors are treated to the sounds of many bird species, including those of the sociable Band-tailed Pigeon, or the unexpected squawk of an otherwise majestic Great Blue Heron.

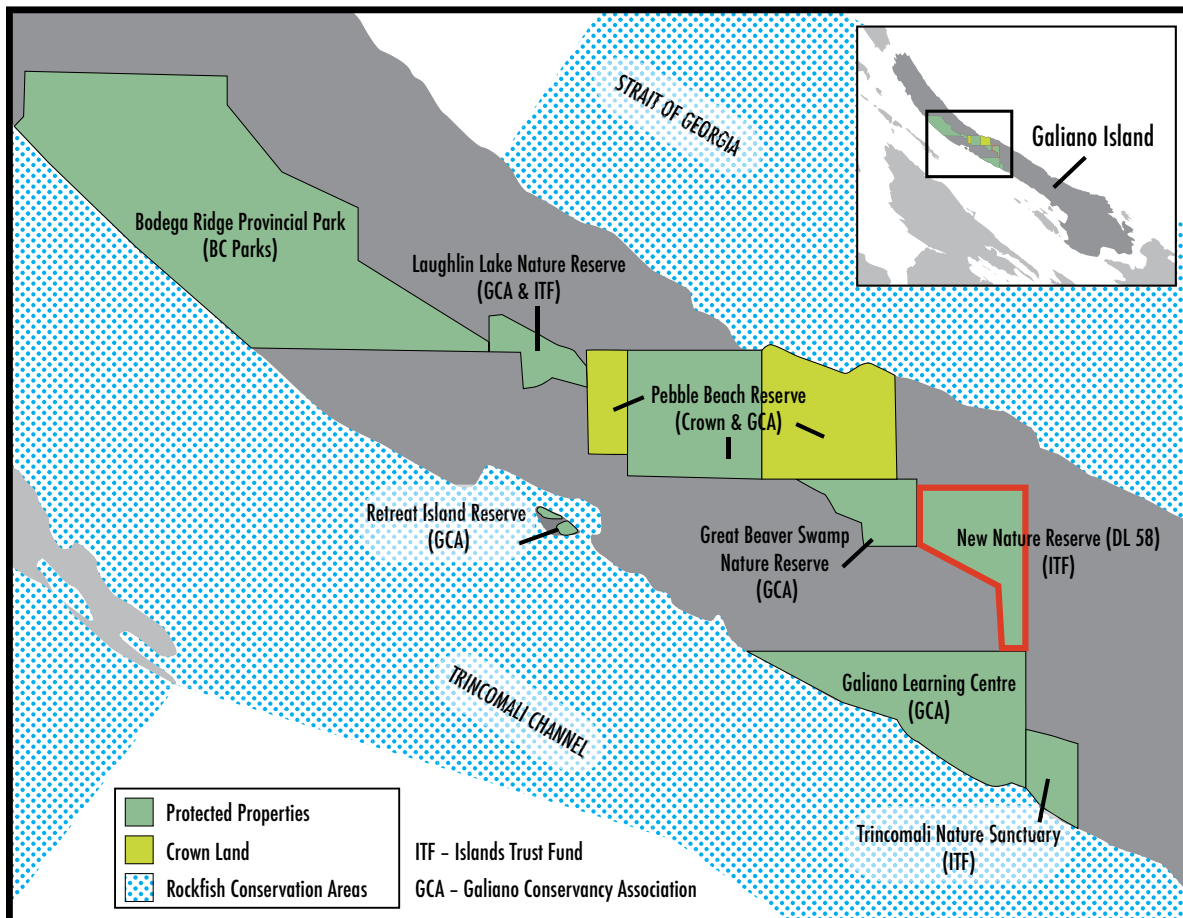
Ken Millard and the Galiano Conservancy Association had the vision to create a network of protected lands across Galiano Island. Since 1998, the Conservancy has worked to fulfil that vision,



strategically forming the partnerships needed to protect the Galiano Learning Centre, Great Beaver Swamp, Cable Bay and Laughlin Lake nature reserves. The conservation network then joins with the Islands Trust Fund Trincomali Nature Sanctuary to the south and Bodega Ridge Provincial Park to the north to complete the protected corridor.

The Conservancy negotiated the acquisition of this particular property with the private landowners, and raised a good portion of the funds for its purchase. The money raised was matched by the Nature Conservancy of Canada with the support of the Government of Canada through the Natural Areas Conservation Program. The Conservancy recruited the Islands Trust Fund to assist with subdividing the nature reserve from the remaining private property. The Islands Trust Fund then completed the acquisition using private donations to the Opportunity Fund.

The new nature reserve has yet to be named. The Islands Trust Fund is looking for inspiration from residents, visitors, or admirers from afar to help create a signature title that invokes the beauty and diversity of the property in the mind of visitors. If you have an idea, please email it to us at itfmail@islandstrust.bc.ca. If your name idea is selected, we'll send you a copy of our 50 Protected Places Birthday Calendar as a thank you.



Top left: The view from the new DL 58 nature reserve overlooking the Beaver Creek valley
 Left: The newly acquired nature reserve now links 500 hectares of protected land

Mid-Galiano Conservation Network

Your Support Will Protect Rare Waterfront Habitat

Campaign to save Brooks Point gains momentum

With a burst of good news, we have joined forces with the Pender Island Conservancy Association (PICA) to save Brooks Point. Earlier this year, PICA persuaded the Capital Regional District (CRD) – the owner of Brooks Point – not to subdivide and sell a portion of the property, provided PICA could raise the funds needed to pay off a portion of the loan on the property. The Islands Trust Fund has offered to help, and will match the first \$5,000 in donations received for the campaign. This means, for a limited time you can double your donation to Brooks Point by donating to the campaign today.

Brooks Point and Gowlland Point are well known landmarks on South Pender Island. Both points were protected as regional parks just over 10 years ago. However, the beach and woodland connecting the two points remained privately owned. When the missing piece of the protected area became available in 2010, the CRD partnered with TLC The Land Conservancy of BC to buy the property. The CRD borrowed the money needed to make the quick purchase. TLC and the community groups agreed to raise a portion the money needed to pay off the loan.

Due to recent financial issues, TLC was unable to complete its fundraising commitment, and the CRD again considered the option of selling some or all of the property to pay down the debt. Determined to protect this vital waterfront habitat and the species-at-risk that live there, PICA stepped up to raise the \$300,000 needed to remove the resale option on the property.

The campaign to protect this stunning waterfront property has generated a tremendous outpouring of support, and PICA has been hard at work harnessing this energy. So far, the small island community has raised a remarkable \$175,000, evidence of the strong commitment to complete the regional park. The Islands Trust Fund wants to help raise the remaining \$125,000. Last year, your donations to the Islands Trust Fund made it possible for us to protect a 40-hectare property on Galiano Island. This year, we're asking you to open your hearts to another special island place. Please give generously to the campaign to protect Brooks Point.



Brooks Point is home to rare and endangered species like the Sharp-tailed snake. Swathes of delicate chocolate lilies grow above the beach on this unique property.

photos: A Taylor

YES! I want to help save Brooks Point.

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$ _____

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

City _____

Yes, I am okay with public recognition for my donation to Brooks Point (the Islands Trust Fund only recognizes you, not your donation amount)

Prov/State _____

Postal/Zip code _____



ISLANDS TRUST FUND

The Islands Trust Fund is a qualified donee under the Income Tax Act. You will receive an official donation receipt for any donation of \$20 or more to the Islands Trust Fund. Please make cheques out to the Islands Trust Fund.



Conservation Success Reaches New Heights on Salt Spring Island

With your support, the campaign to save a piece of Mt. Tuam succeeded!

If you've ever travelled from Victoria to Swartz Bay, your first glimpse of Salt Spring Island is likely Mt. Tuam. The mountain, dominated by a large Garry oak meadow, towers over the Saanich Peninsula, Satellite Channel and Fulford Harbour. It stands joyously free from the condos and houses that usually take advantage of spectacular mountain views, a lasting visual reminder of sustained efforts to protect this special place.

This spring, the Islands Trust Fund and Salt Spring Island Conservancy teamed up to protect another piece of Mt. Tuam – 13 hectares of magnificent Garry Oak meadow near the summit of the 600 meter mountain. Thanks to Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program and those of you who donated to our Opportunity Fund, the two organizations were able to negotiate a con-

servation covenant with the private landowner. The covenant protects one of only a very few known populations of yellow montane violet (*Viola praemorsa ssp. praemorsa*) and coastal Scouler's catchfly (*Silene scouleri ssp. grandis*), and the Salt Spring Island Conservancy has identified a further 22 species at risk on the property. Your support of this project through the Opportunity Fund is a big win for endangered species in the islands. With this covenant, we have permanently protected habitat essential to the survival of these species.

Caring for Mt. Tuam

The endangered species that find sanctuary on Mt. Tuam need whole, functioning ecosystems to survive; the microclimates, hydrology, and habitats on the mountain all combine in a way to create unique habitats. But ecosystems do not follow property

boundaries. Since land use activities on any part the mountain could affect the trees, grasses, butterflies and birds of these sensitive ecosystems, a unique approach is needed. A diverse group of landowners and land managers, including conservation groups, BC Parks and Transport Canada, have formed the Mt. Tuam Special Management Area Resource Team (SMART), a group dedicated to managing their land in a way that supports the species at risk and associated habitat on the mountain. The team works cooperatively to address invasive species, access issues, and signage needs, and recently has been preparing a plan for dealing with potential wildfires. The Islands Trust Fund is a member of SMART, and we are excited to be working cooperatively to ensure the unique and special species that live here can flourish forever.

A Nudge in the Right Direction - Sometimes nature needs a helping hand to repair itself

The forests of Brigade Bay on Gambier Island have long provided a bounty of gifts to nearby communities. People of the Squamish Nation came here for summer deer hunting and plant gathering. In recent history, the lands around the bay provided timber and rock to nearby subdivisions that grew along the island's eastern coast.

The story is a familiar one. A developer intent on creating a new waterfront community logged and subdivided the land to make way for homes. A wetland and its tributaries were damaged in the process and an ecosystem was thought to be lost. The land remained painted with the scars of extraction.

The typical story might end here, but in this case a local streamkeepers group formed and approached the landowner about repairing

the damage. The landowner agreed and contractors volunteered their time to clear away slash and replace culverts. Residents planted thousands of cuttings and saplings to stabilize the stream banks and wetland edges. In 2005, the developer donated the restored wetland and surrounding upland forest to the Islands Trust Fund. Today, the Long Bay Wetland Nature Reserve stands protected as a testament to the power of a collective purpose and vision.

After the property was donated, one scar remained – a gravel pit scraped out of the hillside over the wetland. We took a wait-and-see approach, hoping the pit would regenerate naturally. But it seems years of heavy machinery on the site had compacted the area too much. After years of giving na-

ture the chance to bounce back, we decided it was time to help it along.

This spring, Property Manager Jeff Ralph and his wife Leah travelled to Gambier Island to set a new path for the pit. Jeff brought in a small excavator to loosen the compacted soil. With a more welcoming habitat created for plants, native seeds were spread throughout the pit. Jeff and Leah placed protective caging around 22 small trees growing around the pit to allow them a chance to grow tall without being browsed by deer.

We'll continue to monitor the site using photos to compare the pit as the seeds start to germinate and a new generation of trees grow. We hope over the years, we'll be able to show you how the area – once grey – becomes green again.



Wading into our Salish Sea Ecosystems

On the lookout for eelgrass meadows

If you've ever floated slowly over the calm waters of an island bay by kayak or boat, you might have looked down to see meadows of green grasses swaying in the gentle rise and fall of the tide. As you quietly watch, that meadow might transform before your eyes from a simple bed of grasses to a forest teeming with life. Minnows and juvenile fish will test their speed, darting between leaves' protective cover. Shellfish will be trawling the sandy bottom. You might even glimpse a water bird in an underwater show of agility.

These elegant eelgrass meadows surrounding our islands serve as the foundation of life in the Salish Sea. The meadows are nursery habitat, offering protection and food for over 80% of the commercially important fish and shellfish species at some point in their life cycles. Dubbed the 'salmon highways', eelgrass meadows are essential to the continuance of all species of salmon along our coast.

Eelgrass meadows are most often found in shallow, sheltered waters. The range of these nursery habitats is limited on our

island coastlines. Where they are found, they're easily harmed by docks that block sunlight, seawalls that alter wave and sediment placement, and runoff carrying contaminants from the shoreline or uplands.

The Islands Trust Fund has teamed up with SeaChange Conservation Society and the Seagrass Conservation Working Group to locate and map eelgrass in the islands. Last year, we mapped the waters around Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, North and South Pender, and Thetis Islands. This summer, keep an eye out for the SeaChange boat around Galiano, Gabriola, Bowen, Denman, and Hornby.

To map eelgrass, our mapping crew reviews existing data showing depth, substrate and wind and wave exposure to determine the areas unsuitable for eelgrass. Then they take to the waters with an underwater camera towed by boat to locate eelgrass in the remaining areas. The resulting maps show us continuous or patchy meadows of eelgrass, as well as areas of suitable habitat where eelgrass could be restored.

Once complete, the eelgrass mapping will help us focus our conservation efforts on the shorelines and watersheds that have the greatest potential to harm this type of marine habitat. The mapping will guide the Seagrass Conservation Working Groups' efforts to restore and replant damaged eelgrass meadows. We also hope local governments will use these maps when considering applications for docks and shoreline development and find ways to mitigate the impact on these sensitive ecosystems. With careful planning, we hope to protect the delicate nurseries vital to fish populations in the Salish Sea.

To see the maps developed last summer, please visit us at www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/initiatives/marineconservation. If you know of an eelgrass meadow near your home, please let us know by sending the location and possibly a photo to itfmail@islandstrustfund.bc.ca. Join us in identifying and conserving eelgrass habitat.

Can't Give Now? What About Later?

A gift in your will could mean a secure future for island species without affecting your cash flow today

Planning your estate is an intensely personal and sometimes emotional process. First, of course, you'll want to look after your family and loved ones. But once that is done, you have an opportunity to share the joy you've experienced on the islands with the people you care about.

A bequest is one of the easiest ways you can support the Islands Trust Fund, the places we protect now, and the places that will need protecting in the future. These visionary gifts ensure the Islands Trust Fund can continue our critical work protecting the island places you love.

In the last 20 years, the Islands Trust Fund has protected lands where Peregrine Falcons and Cormorants nest and Sharp-tailed snakes den; where salmon spawn and Nighthawks soar. Help us protect the future of the islands, and the endangered species that need the sanctuaries we create. Please leave a gift to the Islands Trust Fund in your will today.

Anyone can leave a bequest. Simply name the Trust Fund Board as a beneficiary to your estate. A bequest can be large or small. It can name a percentage of an estate or a specific amount of assets.

It can include different types of assets, such as outright cash, securities, life insurance or property. With a bequest, you keep full control over your assets in your life, with no impact on your lifestyle. You can change your will anytime you choose.

When named a beneficiary in a will, the Trust Fund Board will issue an official donation receipt for the value of the gift. This benefits your estate by providing a tax credit that could be applied on up to 100% of your net income in the year of your death and the previous year. But the largest benefit to you is the satisfaction of knowing that you'll help island plants and animals beyond your lifetime.

If you'd like more information about this or other deferred gifts that could help you achieve your goals for leaving a conservation legacy, please contact our fundraising specialist Christine Rikley at 250-405-5171. We're happy to speak with you or your estate advisors about your wishes for the future. Any information you share with us is held in confidence.

Have you already made a bequest for the future of island plants and animals? If so, please let us know your plans so we can thank you.



Support island habitats. Donate today.

Our 100% Promise

When you donate to the Islands Trust Fund, every dollar of your donation goes directly to protecting endangered island habitats. We take no administrative overhead. Our everyday operating expenses, from our wages to our paper and pens, are covered through our partnership with the Islands Trust.

All donations of \$20 or more will receive a tax receipt for Canadian income tax purposes. The Islands Trust Fund is a qualified donee under the Canada Revenue Agency

Save time! Donate online!

<http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/donate.aspx>

YES! I want to help protect natural habitat on the islands

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$ _____

Please designate my donation to: Where most needed

Opportunity Fund Covenant Management and Defence Fund

Lasqueti Island Acquisition Fund Gambier Island Acquisition Fund

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Prov/State _____ Postal/Zip code _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Yes, I am okay with public recognition of my donation.

I wish to donate by:

cheque (made payable to the Islands Trust Fund)

Visa MasterCard

Card number _____

Expiry Date _____

Security Code (back of card) _____

Signature _____

Please mail to:

200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8R 1H8

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Toll free via Enquiry BC: **1-800-663-7867 (604-660-2421 in Vancouver)**

E-mail: itfmail@islandstrust.bc.ca Website: www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca

Welcome back Nuala and thank you Jeff!

In September we are welcoming Nuala Murphy back to her role as Property Manager after her parental leave. To many covenant landowners and conservation partners, Jeff Ralph has been a friendly and familiar face while filling in for Nuala. Our property manager installs signs, stabilizes banks, monitors properties, plants trees and removes invasive weeds, among many other diverse jobs needed to preserve the integrity of our protected areas. We appreciate Jeff's great sense of humour and all the work he has done, and we hope you have as well.

If you have any questions about an Islands Trust Fund protected area – nature reserve or conservation covenant – please contact Nuala at 250-405-5193 or nmurphy@islandstrust.bc.ca.

A perfect gift for someone
passionate about the islands!

Our birthday calendar features the stunning beauty of our island nature reserves captured by local photographers. Record birthdays and anniversaries with this perpetual calendar that lasts year after year.

100% of all proceeds go to the Opportunity Fund to benefit local conservation projects on the islands of the Salish Sea.

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\$17.95
each or 2 for
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Islands Trust Fund

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