



The

HERON

FALL 2009

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE ISLANDS TRUST FUND



Islands Trust Fund

Through NAPTEP, landowners have created natural legacies protecting nearly 60 hectares of sensitive island habitats.

Individuals Making a Difference Through NAPTEP

Sara and Richard Steil enjoy the peace and quiet of their island home. The North Penderites are no strangers to the hustle and bustle of city life, having lived on the lower mainland for over 50 years. But throughout that time, the soft call of the island lured the Steils to its shores. Tranquility is an important part of the couple's lives.

Now, the busiest sounds drifting through Sara and Richard's home is from the property's resident Pileated Woodpecker looking for dinner in a nearby cedar. The Steils made the move to North Pender 15 years ago. Since that time, they've come to appreciate the unique flora and fauna that make the Gulf Islands special to British Columbia and the world.

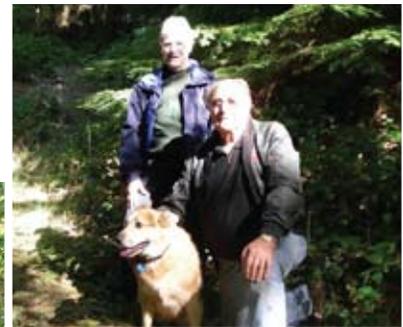
With Shelby, their canine companion leading the way, Sara and Richard have explored and enjoyed each nook and cranny of their 1.5 hectare (3.68 acre) property many times. Its wetland hosts amphibian critters and visiting Great Blue Herons. Grand fir, western redcedar, arbutus and bigleaf maple stand tall over the property, with wild strawberry, western trillium and sword fern blanketing the forest floor below.

The destruction of natural environments is a concern to Sara and Richard. "When we lived on the lower mainland, during years of what seems like long ago, many of the areas there looked like the Penders do today – beautifully natural," said Sara. "I've had to watch as the communities we loved were developed ruthlessly. That type of destruction breaks my heart."

Learning from that experience, the Steils have worked to protect Pender Island from a similar fate. They protect and care for their property's natural habitat today, and enlisted

the help of the Islands Trust Fund to continue that protection into the future. Sara and Richard worked with the Islands Trust Fund to register a conservation covenant on the natural parts of their property. The Steil's Woods covenant, co-held by the Pender Islands Conservancy Association, prevents future owners of the property from destroying the natural features that Sara and Richard cherish. It ensures the Pender community will never lose this natural space to development.

SARA AND RICHARD STEIL WITH SHELBY.



THE STEIL'S WOODS NAPTEP COVENANT.

In recognition of this legacy, the Steils receive a 65% exemption on their annual property taxes through the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP). Administered by the Islands Trust Fund, NAPTEP lessens the property tax burden of conservation-minded landowners.

We applaud Sara and Richard for their commitment to land

conservation and nature, and for their support in protecting significant island habitat. But they will tell you it's only part of their nature. "We only want to make sure we can do our part in ensuring Pender remains natural into the future" said Sara. "It means the world to me to know that this place will be protected beyond my lifetime."

Every Story Has A Beginning

As one of the first covenant donors to enter the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP), Nina Raginsky helped us create the NAPTEP we have today. She blazed the trail for the many conservation-minded landowners who followed her by registering covenants on their own properties. By acting as an eco-conscious caretaker for her land, Nina sets an example of how we can live in harmony with the environment around us.

Nina donated the Walter Bay NAPTEP Covenant on Salt Spring Island. The covenant area is rich in cultural history, traditionally used by Coast Salish First Nations as demonstrated by a 5,000-year-old midden site on the property. The waterfront property protects riparian area around Mawhinna Creek as it empties into Ganges Harbour. Species-at-risk inhabit

the property, such as Western Grebe, Great Blue Heron, and Common Wood-nymph butterfly. Beyond the covenant boundaries, Harbour Porpoise venture to the refuge provided by the bay to give birth. Nina's covenant is part of a larger provincial and federal effort to protect Walter Bay, its shoreline and upland area. The area is safeguarded by the Ministry of Environment for fish and wildlife purposes and the bay itself is closed to boaters to protect the natural fish nursery.

Since Nina's donation, sixteen other NAPTEP covenants have been donated to the Islands Trust Fund. The program protects nearly 60 hectares (150 acres) of natural habitat on the islands. Thank you to Nina and all the other conservation champions who preserve special places in the Islands Trust Area.



WALTER BAY NAPTEP COVENANT.

Message from the Chair

You and I care for a very special place. The islands hold 46 percent of British Columbia's globally significant Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems. The region serves as a stronghold for the highest density of species at-risk in the province; more than 100 endangered species are nestled into these islands. The list of creatures hovering on the edge of survival here ranges from Edith's Checkerspot butterfly, to Sharp-tailed Snake, to the yellow montane violet.

I don't find comfort in knowing that the ecosystems we share the islands with are in such danger. But I do celebrate our ability to do something about it. The conservation of special places, like the islands of the Trust Area, has been my life's passion. I'm excited to join you in protecting the homes and habitats of this region's species at-risk.

The Islands Trust Fund works with local conservancies and community groups to preserve island habitats. Each year we embark on new partnerships to conserve special places. Since 1990, we have acquired 19 nature reserves and have signed 58 conservation covenants with private landowners. Since 2005 alone, the amount of land protected by the Fund increased by 64 percent.

We've been busy, and our many partners and supporters have been busy. Without your help and dedication to this crucial work, this vital habitat might not have been safeguarded for the future. We understand that you may have many priorities in life, but I hope that the preservation of island ecosystems is high on your list. I want to take this time to assure you that it remains at the top of ours. We made a promise to you to protect these properties in perpetuity, and we will keep it. We are firmly committed to the long-term stability of the ecosystem values we protect today. And with your help, we look forward to increasing the areas protected in the future.

Tough economic times force us to assure the certainty of our future. Acquiring and continuing to protect the habitat we care for costs money. The Trust Fund Board is committed to ensuring a lack of funds is never an excuse to let our guard down in the effort to protect the islands. We are working to diversify and stabilize our funding sources, and create safeguards for the future maintenance of existing protected areas. If you want to help us build these safeguards, please contact me or our staff and we would be happy to discuss how we can ensure that our protected areas – your community natural treasures – remain safe and pristine forever.

I want you to know the Islands Trust Fund board and staff are here for the long term and will keep rising to the challenge of protecting the Trust Area. With your help, we will continue to support individuals and communities working to preserve special places throughout these remarkable islands.



Christine Torgimson
Trust Fund Board Chair

Transitions

This August, we said good-bye to Trust Fund Board member Bruce

Whittington. Bruce sat on the Board for more than five years, contributing vital ecosystem knowledge to the work of the Islands Trust Fund. We appreciate the opportunity to work with Bruce, and wish him the best in his new elected role as Councillor of the Town of Ladysmith.

Community and Rural Development Minister Bill Bennett appointed a new member, **Robert Grant**, to the Trust Fund Board. Robert practices civil litigation in Vancouver as a partner with the national Heenan Blaikie law firm. He holds a Bachelor of Law and Masters of Science from the University of British Columbia and a Masters of Law from Harvard Law School.

When Robert first visited the Gulf Islands in 1999, he fell in love with the seductive landscape, "I thought this must be the most spectacular place I'd

"I thought this must be the most spectacular place I'd ever seen".



ever seen". After becoming a Denman Island property owner in 2002, Robert quickly became aware of the growing pressures facing island ecosystems. "After discovering how quickly the natural environment of the islands could be lost without public oversight, I wanted to preserve these remarkably diverse landscapes for the enjoyment of future generations" said Robert. "I hope I can begin that work with my appointment to the Trust Fund Board".

The Trust Fund Board consists of three elected trustees and up to three members of the public appointed by the Minister. To view the names, biographies and contact information of the current Board members, please visit the Islands Trust Fund at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/contact/board.cfm>

Mount Artaban Nature Reserve: a Profile of a Special Place

HIKING THE MOUNT ARTABAN TRAIL.



CELEBRATING THE PROTECTION OF A SPECIAL PLACE, MOUNT ARTABAN NATURE RESERVE.

Under blue summer skies, the Mount Artaban Nature Reserve filled with pride as Gambier islanders gathered recently to celebrate the grand opening of the newly protected area. The ceremony was a landmark event for the community and the Gambier Island Conservancy, who led the funding campaign to protect the mountain.

"With many of the fundraising campaign's key contributors present, the grand opening was as much a tribute to the community's spirit and vision as it was a celebration of the natural legacy created by the protection of the mountain," said Christine Torgimson, Chair of the Trust Fund Board. "Due to the outstanding generosity of private individuals, businesses, local governments and community groups, the permanent protection of Mount Artaban will forever be a reality. "

The highlight of the day's event was a hike to the mountain's summit. The celebrants, aged 11 months to more than 70 years, enthusiastically made the 614-metre climb to the top of Mount Artaban where stories were shared about the history of the mountain's protection. The demanding climb to the peak was a fitting way to commemorate the community's long journey to protect Mount Artaban.

For the Islands Trust Fund, the journey to preserve Mount Artaban doesn't end here. The habitats we protect depend on us to maintain them into the future. Mount Artaban Nature Reserve is home to old-growth trees, a wetland, several at-risk plant communities and a source of clean water for the surrounding community and aquatic habitats below. With the help of the community, the Islands Trust Fund recently completed a management plan for the property, which sets out the best methods to preserve these features for the future. The Islands Trust Fund is grateful to islanders for not only helping with acquisition campaigns on the islands, but also for the help and local knowledge they provide in the management of our properties. Together, we can work to ensure the ecosystem values we all worked so hard to protect will continue to delight generations to come, through effective stewardship and care.

Those interested in learning more about the management of the Mount Artaban Nature Reserve can view the management plan online at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/mgmtplans.cfm>

Where Have All the Flowers Gone...

Not just flowers, but frogs, songbirds, snakes and butterflies too.

The Gulf Islands are ecologically unique within Canada. A diversity of plants and animals—many of them rare—should be thriving in our area’s Mediterranean-type climate. But human activities have altered much of the rich mosaic of ecosystems that once covered the islands. Today, the remaining fragments scattered throughout the islands are called *sensitive ecosystems*.

Sensitive ecosystems need to be preserved and protected not only for our communities, but also for the at-risk species that rely on them for habitat. Sensitive ecosystems protect biodiversity, contribute to wildlife corridors and provide learning and recreational opportunities for all of us.

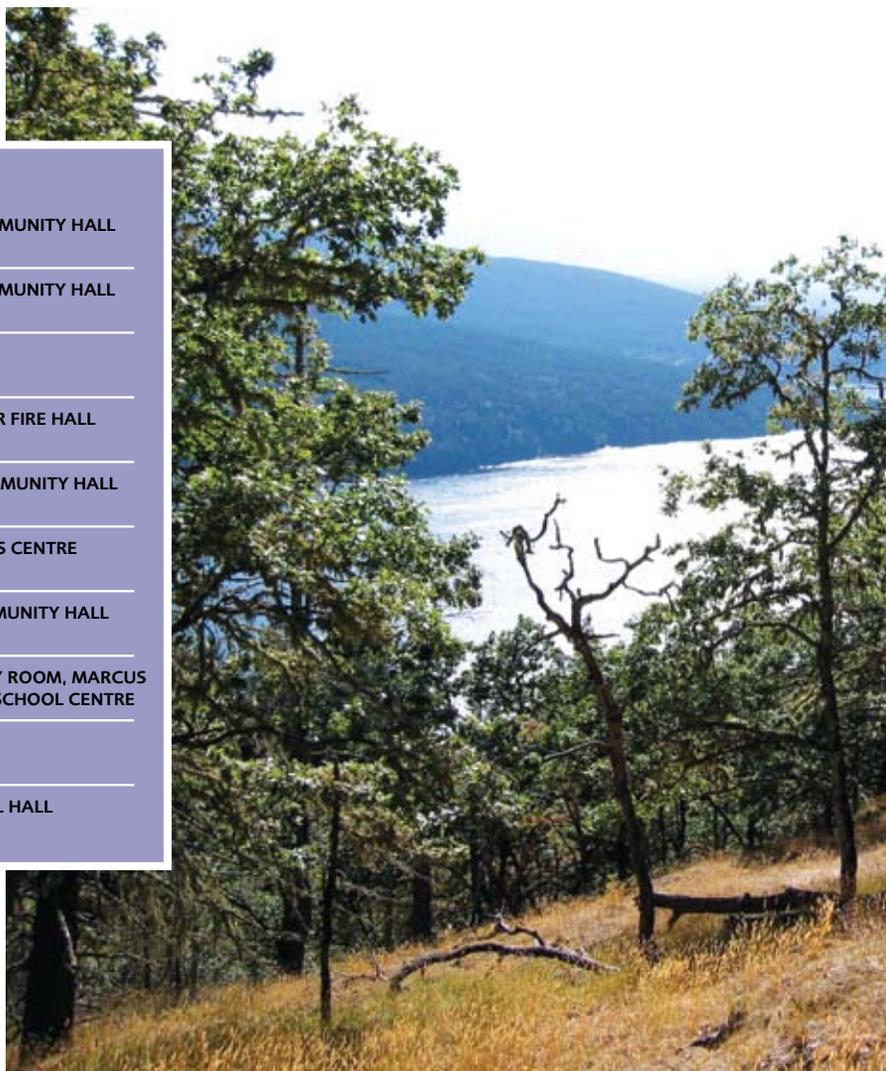
The first step in protecting sensitive ecosystems is to figure out what natural habitat is left and where it is. To do this, the Islands Trust Fund and the Islands Trust has partnered to create Ecosystem Mapping for the entire Trust Area. The maps, based

on field data collection and aerial photographs, identify the location of ecosystems on each island in the Trust Area. We hope these Ecosystem maps will provide a strong scientific basis for better habitat protection on the islands.

Have fun exploring your island with the virtual and actual mapping tools used to create your community's Ecosystem Maps

Join Kate Emmings, Ecosystem Protection Specialist with the Islands Trust Fund, as she takes a journey into the world of ecosystem mapping. Kate will be hosting community open houses on nine of the thirteen major Islands Trust islands throughout November to review the new mapping and receive your feedback. Drop in early to learn how and why the maps were created, and how they might be used by your community. Stick around to interact with the digital mapping displays and 3-D air photo viewing that will enable you to dive into the many layers of ecosystem mapping. Come out and try your hand at mapping. Everyone is welcome.

Community Mapping Open Houses



ISLANDS	DATE AND TIME	LOCATION
GALIANO	FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH, 2009 2:00PM – 5:00PM	GALIANO COMMUNITY HALL (SOUTH END)
SALT SPRING	SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH, 2009 9:30AM – 12:30PM	FULFORD COMMUNITY HALL
SALT SPRING	SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH, 2009 2:00PM – 5:00PM	ARTSPRING
SOUTH PENDER	THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH, 2009 12:00PM – 3:00PM	SOUTH PENDER FIRE HALL
SATURNA	SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 2009 1:00PM – 3:00PM	SATURNA COMMUNITY HALL
LASQUETI	SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST 2009 11:00AM – 1:00PM	LASQUETI ARTS CENTRE
HORNBY	SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND 2009 1:00PM – 4:00PM	HORNBY COMMUNITY HALL
DENMAN	MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD 2009 3:00PM – 6:00PM	CONSERVANCY ROOM, MARCUS ISBISTER OLD SCHOOL CENTRE
THETIS	SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH 2009 2:00PM – 5:00PM	FORBES HALL
GABRIOLA	SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29TH 2009 11:00AM – 3:00PM	AGRICULTURAL HALL

WOODLAND ECOSYSTEM.
PHOTO BY EMILY GONZALES.

Staying True to Ruby's Legacy

Generous donors breathed new life into the Ruby Alton Nature Reserve this year. The Salt Spring Island Foundation and Salt Spring Island's Benjamin Moore and More store helped the reserve's caretakers restore and refresh Ruby's house and gardens.

Simone and David Bova have lived at and cared for the Ruby Alton Nature Reserve on Salt Spring Island since 2007. The Bovas' practical skills, attention to detail and respect for Ruby's vision have brought warmth and renewed activity back to the Ruby Alton Nature Reserve, making the property a safe and enjoyable place for the community and wildlife alike.

As with many seaside homes, the 1930s-era house had begun to display its age from its many years standing guard to Fulford Harbour and the Salish Sea. With a generous donation of exterior paint from Benjamin Moore and More, David diligently restored the weathered boards of the Ruby Alton house. The house now proudly boasts the sunny complexion reminiscent of when Ruby called it home.

Ruby was an avid gardener. but her famous gardens fell into disrepair without her hard-working hands to tend them. A grant from the Salt Spring Island Foundation and the pruning, planting and careful attention of the Bovas have restored some of the vibrant colour of Ruby's treasured gardens.

When Ruby Alton bequeathed her property through her will, she was clear in her wishes that this place remain a community space, enjoyed and loved for its beauty. The beach and meadow are open to the public and can be accessed by the entrance gate at 661 Isabella Point Road. For anyone interested in touring the home's rainwater harvesting demonstration site, appointments can be made through the Islands Trust Fund's office.



Thank you to the Salt Spring Island Foundation and Salt Spring Island's Benjamin Moore and More store for helping the Islands Trust Fund maintain Ruby's legacy for the community to enjoy

TOP INSET: RUBY ALTON, PHOTO SALT SPRING ISLAND ARCHIVES.

THE RUBY ALTON NATURE RESERVE HOUSE AND GARDENS, BRIGHT AND COLOURFUL.

A Bequest for the Future

Born and raised on Salt Spring Island, Ruby Alton held a bushel of wisdom about the water and land found around her home. She was intimate with the ways of the sea, the shore, her gardens and the forest. During her childhood, she relied on the gifts of the island for food. That resourcefulness followed her through her adult life and she became a source of immense knowledge to her younger neighbours.

When Ruby was dying, her thoughts were on the future. She had watched in sadness as farmland and forests were wiped out for fancy houses and asphalt. Ruby, characteristic of her determined and plucky nature, set out to make a difference, even in her death. Ruby bequeathed her cherished property and a cash endowment to the Islands Trust Fund. Her forest, house, heritage orchard and gardens are now and forever protected as the Ruby Alton Nature Reserve. This land may have sustained her in life, but in death, her gift will forever sustain the land.

Many people, like Ruby, choose to leave a legacy at the end of their life through a bequest. A bequest is a gift to an organization made in a donor's Will. Such gifts can take a number of forms, including gifts of money, land, securities or personal property. Motivated by a love for nature, concern about degradation, or the wish to ensure that future generations continue to have access to natural features, people leaving bequests to conservation organizations across British Columbia are one of the main drivers to sustaining the beauty of this wild place.

With our core operating budget supported by the Islands Trust, the Islands Trust Fund is a stable, long-term organization that can dedicate 100% of all donations directly into 'on-the-ground' conservation work on the Gulf Islands. Whether we receive land or cash, we can assure donors that their gift will benefit island ecosystems and inhabitants in perpetuity.

To learn how to leave a lasting legacy to the Islands Trust Fund or another island conservancy in your area, please contact Christine Pritchard at the Islands Trust Fund at (250) 405-5171 (Victoria) or toll free through Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867 (604-660-2421 in Vancouver).

Bequests to conservation organizations across British Columbia are one of the main drivers to sustaining the beauty of this wild place.



Partner Spotlight

Conservation success in the Islands Trust Area would not be possible without dedicated community members. Many local island conservancies and community groups devote countless on-the-ground hours to protecting natural places. Working together, we can continue to care for the future of the islands in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound.

Galiano Conservancy Association

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the Galiano Conservancy Association is one of the oldest community-based land trusts in British Columbia. Formed in 1989 as an instrument for community-based acquisition and conservation of land and habitat, the conservancy has become a broad-based organization working to preserve, protect and enhance the quality of the human and natural environment on Galiano Island.

Galiano Conservancy Association conserves land through direct acquisition and provides access to nature for education purposes. The conservancy works closely with the local community school, providing interactive and engaging outdoor education programs. The conservancy also engages the community in ongoing ecological restoration programs.

Through its land conservation activities, the Galiano Conservancy Association is vital in helping the Islands Trust Fund achieve the objectives of the 2005-2010 Regional Conservation Plan for the Islands Trust Area. The conservancy's recent project – the acquisition of the Great Beaver Swamp— not only protects the last remaining block of this large natural ecosystem, but also increases the number of protected wetland ecosystems in the Gulf Islands, where wetlands only constitute 0.8% of the land base. The Great Beaver Swamp is one of the largest wetlands on Galiano, an island where surface water is scarce – especially in the summer months. It provides valuable habitat for birds and amphibians and is a regular watering hole for Black-tailed deer, River otter, mink and other mammals. It also feeds Beaver Creek which flows northeast to Cable Bay.

In 2008, the Galiano Conservancy Association received a grant from the **Islands Trust Fund's Opportunity Fund** to help in its efforts to protect the Great Beaver Swamp. The donated funds helped in a boundary adjustment that added a missing piece of the swamp to the protected area. If you would like to join us in helping Galiano Conservancy Association and other conservancy organizations protect special places in the Gulf Islands through the Opportunity Fund, please visit our website at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/donationform.cfm> to make a donation or purchase the Islands Trust Fund 50 Special Places Birthday Calendar. 100% of all donations and sales proceeds go to supporting local conservation projects in the islands.

Thank You. We Appreciate Your Support!

This year, individuals and organizations helped the Islands Trust Fund protect rare ecosystems and habitat. Our successes would not be possible without each and every one of our supporters:

Benjamin Moore and More, Louise Bell, Elisabeth Boshier, Dr. and Mrs. David Collins, Lyndis Davis, Elizabeth and Joseph Jarvis, Charles Kahn, Marilyn King, Lawrence Newland, Nerys Poole, Salt Spring Island Foundation, Sara and Richard Steil, Sunshine Coast Regional District, Eric Tabb. And other anonymous donors.

Explore the islands year round with the Islands Trust Fund **50 Protected Places** Birthday Calendar



The Islands Trust Fund's 50 Protected Places Birthday Calendar is a perpetual calendar that lasts year after year. This calendar features the work of local photographers and highlights the stunning beauty of our protected places.

100% of all proceeds go to the Opportunity Fund to benefit local conservation projects in the Gulf and Howe Sound Islands.

\$17.95 each or two for \$29.95

Buy the Islands Trust Fund **50 Protected Places Birthday Calendar** online at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/donationform.cfm> or by phone **250-405-5186** and support the conservation of special places on the islands.

ISLANDS TRUST FUND

Board Members Louise Bell, Denman Island; Michael Dunn, Mayne Island; Robert Grant, Denman Island; Nerys Poole, Bowen Island; Christine Torgrimson, Salt Spring Island

Staff Shawn Black, A/Manager; Kate Emmings, Ecosystem Protection Specialist; Christine Pritchard, Communications and Fundraising Specialist; Jeff Ralph, A/Property Management Specialist; Natalie Tamosiunas, Secretary

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A Tribute to the Gulf Islands and Howe Sound

Due to the generosity of many, we have protected more than 985 hectares on 77 properties. Please help protect more special areas throughout the islands.

YES! I want to help protect natural habitat in the Islands Trust Area

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

I would like to order _____ Birthday Calendars (\$17.95 each or 2 for \$29.95)

MY DETAILS

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov/State _____ Postal/Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I am willing to let my name be known as a supporter: yes no

I WISH TO DONATE BY

Cheque (made payable to the Islands Trust Fund)

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Expiry Date _____

Signature _____

PLEASE SEND ME INFORMATION ABOUT

How to make a land donation to the Islands Trust Fund

How to donate a conservation covenant to protect my land

How to leave land or money to the Islands Trust Fund in my Will

Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program

Please add me to your e-mail list for Islands Trust Fund updates

PLEASE MAIL TO

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

If you have any questions, please call **1-250-405-5186**

To donate online, please visit

<http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/donationform.cfm>

The Islands Trust Fund will issue a charitable tax receipt for all donations of \$20 or more.

The Islands Trust Fund is defined as a Qualified Donee by the Canadian Revenue Agency.