

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2005 Award Winner Profile

Winner: **Mayne Island Japanese Gardens Volunteers**

Category: Group/Organization

Project: Creating a memorial garden to honour the Japanese families of Mayne Island

Nominator: Brian Haller, Mayne Island

Project Description:

Dinner Bay Park on Mayne Island was originally a Japanese farmstead before World War II. A group of dedicated volunteers have spent endless hours of rototilling, weeding, removing trees, and fostering community support for building the garden. The park is intended to recognize the efforts of the past settlers and enhance the lives of people living on Mayne Island and people visiting the island. The park has honoured the descendents of the original Japanese settlers twice. In May, 2002 the garden was officially dedicated by Iona Campagnola. A memorial plaque was also erected showing the location of the original farmsteads on the island with the names of the families.

All labour has been volunteered, with every plant and feature in the garden donated by islanders. The park is self-sustaining through donations from visitors.

Three volunteers were specifically acknowledged in the nomination: Don Herbert, whose vision and untiring efforts got it going and stayed the course; Tosh Saito, an inexhaustible workhorse and role model to all of unselfish community giving; and, Allan Cheek, resident historian who continually worked on the garden, traced all living descendents, and created and paid for the memorial plaque.

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2005 Award Winner Profile

Winner: **Hornby Water Stewardship Project**

Category: Group/Organization

Project: Water testing and public education to protect water quality

Nominators: Hornby Island Local Trustees Tony Law and Eleanor Kneffel

Project Description:

The main objective of the project is to help residents protect the island's groundwater through educational seminars and workshops, runoff water testing and private well testing. The second objective is to protect the surrounding marine waters from pollution.

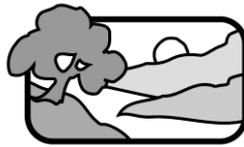
When the project was conceived, there were no other communities or islands in the Gulf of Georgia on which to base a water stewardship program. Community consultation and involvement were key factors in the success of the project. Since 1996 the Hornby Water Stewardship Project has trained 23 water testers to Environment Canada standards; organized three septic system workshops; conducted more than 800 runoff water tests and produced a comprehensive report on the tests; tested wells monthly to determine whether pollution patterns correlated with the runoff study results; and, sponsored public meetings on well construction/protection and water borne diseases.

The group has also participated in numerous studies and conferences, such as the Royal Roads University College small-lot study of development with relation to water use; the Diana Allen Groundwater Geochemistry Study of Hornby Island and the Coastal Zone Canada conference in Victoria. It has provided numerous private well tests for residents and promoted rainwater collection by providing water barrels for sale, as well as sponsoring the Rainwater Harvesting Workshop with the Islands Trust.

The group has published information on septic system care and water conservation; and, produced a poster on water conservation. As well, the group has erected several signs for public education, ranging from the 'No Sewage Dumping' float at Tribune Bay, the 'Conserve Protect our Groundwater' signs at

the aquifers designated in the Bill Hodge Report on Hornby aquifer study, the 'Groundwater is a Shared Responsibility' sign at the ferry terminal and the 'Hornby Island is a Water Conservation Zone' sign at the Hornby Co-op.

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2005 Award Winner Profile

Winner: Katherine Dunster, Bowen Island

Category: Individual

Project: Conservation work and promotion of the 'slow islands' movement

Nominators: Judi Stevenson, Salt Spring Island;
Jan Kirby, Pender Island;
Susie Washington Smyth, Priscilla Ewbank, GSX Marine Coalition, Saturna Island;
Thetis Residents and Ratepayers Association;
Pender Islands Trust Protection Society;
Chris Bowers, Gabriola Island
Alan Shatwell, Bowen Island
Melinda Auerbach, Lasqueti Island
Ken Millard, Galiano Island

Project Description:

Katherine Dunster is a tireless crusader for the ecological and community health and well being of the islands in the Islands Trust Area. She has been active for many years in a variety of projects. She was instrumental in the Salish Sea Community Mapping Project, sat on the Islands Trust Fund Board and contributed hundreds of hours of field work expertise to help establish the ecological significance of properties under consideration by the Trust Fund Board for protection. She has also been involved in inventorying Crown Lands on Bowen Island and reconstituted the Bowen Island Farmers Institute.

She worked on developing a management plan and partnership agreement for the McFadden Creek Heronry property on Salt Spring Island and contributed time and expertise to the work of the Citizens for Responsible Land Use in their efforts to preserve and protect the unique area known as Walker Hook. She also acted as an expert witness for the GSX Marine Coalition at the gas pipeline undersea crossing hearings.

Kathy is an active member of the Land Trust Alliance of BC, as well as serving on its Board of Directors. More recently, in August, 2004, Kathy launched the 'slow islands' movement to revitalize the rural way of living on the islands. In her 'slow islands' papers and presentations, Kathy has challenged islanders to think more deeply about what it means to be rural and how the goals of the world-wide 'slow food' movement to honour and preserve ways of preparing and sharing food are similar to some of the goals we have for our islands – to grow things carefully, preserve local traditions, live in harmony with the land and its limits, value handmade things, and slow down to listen, look and learn. These ideas have great potential to inspire and direct us in managing our islands' growth and to protect the rural settings and natural ecology of the Gulf Islands.

Kathy's personal goal is truly to preserve and protect her beloved islands and she has given unstintingly of her time and valuable expertise to do all that she can to conserve the ecological values and natural beauty of the islands in the Salish Sea.

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Islands Trust

2005 Award Winner Profile

Winner: Hilary Brown, Hornby Island

Category: Individual

Project: Ongoing work of almost seven decades to make Hornby Island a better place to live

Nominator: Heron Rocks Friendship Centre Society, Hornby Island

Project Description:

Hilary Brown has worked to improve life on Hornby Island since she came to the island in 1937 to the present – almost seven decades. She was instrumental in establishing a credit union, in the absence of any other banking facilities on the island, in 1941, often going to the school to accept deposits from the children whose school savings club was part of the credit union. In 1954 when the local grocery supplier fell off a ladder and could no longer continue his business he offered the premises to a group of islanders who were discussing the concept of a Co-op store. Led by Hilary Brown, the group took up the challenge and Hilary was the first store manager. In 1967, after operating a campground on their property for a decade, Hilary and her husband, H.B. Brown, embarked on a new experiment – the first co-operative campsite in British Columbia. A detailed set of covenants were permanently placed on the land two years later as part of the sale of the property to the co-op.

Soon after the Islands Trust was established in 1974, she was appointed as chairperson, a demanding position that she filled for nearly three years with grace, dedication, intelligence and foresight. In May, 1977 the president of a new association to establish a community library was none other than Hilary Brown. The New Horizons library came into being in 1984 after years of effort finding funding through grants to hire an architect and workers, and organizing local fund-raising efforts.

In the 1980s Hilary became increasingly concerned about the impact of an escalating real estate market on housing for older island residents, women and individuals on the lower end of the socio-economic scale. In 1988 she initiated a project, with six other islands, to identify common issues, resources available and

options for the future. Workshops and a conference on seniors housing followed and the Elder Housing Society became official in January, 1992. Today, the society is constructing its seventh dwelling.

In 1992, Hilary, with her friends and associates, founded the Heron Rocks Friendship Centre Society, which focuses on island-based concerns and far beyond – from an ongoing inventory of local bird life to workshops on environmental challenges to water stewardship projects. A special fund for youth has also been established and thousands of dollars have been raised to sustain the fund. The fund has supported dozens of youth from Hornby and Denman Islands who attended leadership camps, workshops, artistic ventures and other activities. Today, Hilary Brown continues to actively participate in the Friendship Centre programs.

“I had left the property to the Heron Rocks Friendship Centre in my Will. However, since I perhaps may follow my family’s record of the longevity, I felt that transfer of the ownership should happen now. Also, frankly, I want to be part of it so long as I can be helpful,” says Hilary Brown.

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2005 Honourable Mention Winner Profile

Winner: Denman Conservancy Association

Category: Group/Organization

Project: Annual house and garden tour fund-raising

Nominator: Cindy Critchley

Project Description:

The annual house and garden tour is an innovative way to raise funds for Denman Conservancy Association projects and to foster awareness of the need to protect this special place. The first tour started with Sandy and Des Kennedy in 1991. It was a new idea at the time, with Victoria one of the few places to have a house and garden tour. The city tour idea was adapted to the rural island as a fund raiser for conservation projects. In that first year, 13 houses, plus the community hall were featured on the tour and it exceeded everyone's wildest expectations by raising more money than any other single fundraising event in the islands' history. Since its inception the idea has spread to many other communities. 2005 marked the 15th anniversary of the tour, with a new added emphasis on demonstrating sustainable living practices.

The tour involves almost 200 community volunteers, attracts more than 1000 visitors and raises funding (gross revenue in 2004 was approximately \$21,500) for association projects such as an ongoing land acquisition program. That program has resulted in preserving the Lindsay Dickson property, now held as a nature reserve by the Islands Trust Fund and managed by the Denman Conservancy Association and raising funds to acquire the Winter Wren Nature Reserve. Other projects are: the conservation covenant project, which includes procedures, information materials and templates; continued work to establish a conservation covenant on an important marsh; a landowner contact program for land stewardship; and, local ecology education programs.

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2005 Honourable Mention Winner Profile

Winner: Nicholas and Naomi Wilde-Van Ginkles, Pender Island

Category: Individual

Project: Work to sensitize the community to the environmental impact of chemicals

Nominator: Peter Easthope, North Pender

Project Description:

Nicholas and Naomi are twins who are natural-born sensitive detectors of chemical toxins due to the unusual character of their immune systems. Inspired by their love of nature and belief in social responsibility, and with a deepened first hand experience of the harmful effect of chemicals, the twin's environmental activism has contributed significantly to sensitizing the community on Pender Island to the environmental impact of chemicals. The purpose of their work is to effect reductions in the use of chemicals and to participate in developing education programs that can instruct people on the impact of our environment and our lives.

Nicolas and Naomi have been environmentally active over the past five years (they are 14 years old) in promoting ecological sustainability. They have co-founded numerous environmental youth initiatives, including the Pender Environmentally Conscious Kids, and participated in regional and national environmental youth initiatives. In 2001-2002, the twins launched a 'pesticide reduction' campaign on Pender Island, intended to directly reduce the introduction of chemicals into the environment by encouraging the use of alternative organic practices. Those committing not to use pesticides put award plaques on public display. This promoted increased awareness and a further shift to alternative organic practices on a continuing basis.

They have helped to organize and participate in a variety of environmental projects from beach cleanups and broom pulling to developing input for the Loretta's Wood management plan and organizing a student voting exercise in parallel with the 2004 federal election. They have also contributed to writing educational plays and creating posters.

Nicholas and Naomi spoke at the Healthy Island Celebration in 2002 and were delegates to the International Children's Conference on the Environment in Victoria in 2002. They have been selected as members of the 18-person trans-Canadian Youth Round Table of the Environment sponsored by the federal government. The federal environmental minister also asked them to write a report on pesticides for consideration within the federal government's ongoing review of pesticide products and issues.

Naomi and Nicholas' remarkable knowledge of the issues, their enthusiasm and their unbounded energy directed to sustaining our ecosystems, made all the more impressive by their youthfulness, has a powerful impact on those who come in contact with them.