

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2012 Nominee Profile

Stuart Watson, Gambier Island

- Category:** Individual
- Project:** Gambier Fire Equipment Group and Langdale Access Group
- Nominator(s):** Robert Ostiguy
- Letters of Support:** Rick Gayton and Rob Pitman, Keats Island Fire Equipment Group

Project Description:

Stuart Watson's dedicated volunteer work has contributed to the sustainability of Gambier Island's economy and social life.

Stuart proactively responded to a need for fire-fighting capacity on Gambier Island by creating the Gambier Island Fire and Equipment Group to provide fire-fighting equipment and training to Gambier Island residents. For the last ten years he has shown a strong sense of duty to his neighbors and to his island by training islanders and finding funding to equip Gambier Island with fire pumps, trailers, and all the ancillary equipment necessary to combat forest and house fires. There are now three trailers and a make-shift fire hall fully equipped and maintained by Stuart and his group of volunteers. Stuart also created a Gambier Island map that shows residential properties and water source locations to facilitate quick and effective response by rescuers not familiar with Gambier Island. He then developed and maintained the Gambier Island email database, which has made a huge difference to community communication on Gambier Island, an island which has 85% non-resident property owners and some communities that are not connected by road. Stuart is generous with his time and readily shares his experiences and knowledge with anyone who shows interest.

In 2009, BC Ferry Services announced its plan to close a dock at the Langdale Ferry terminal to private boats, restricting the ability of islanders to transport necessary supplies and people to and from Gambier and Keats Islands. Stuart devoted many hours to the Langdale Access Group, ensuring that Islanders' concerns and views were presented and shared during a negotiating process, which was brought to a mutually successful conclusion in 2011.

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2012 Nominee Profile

Margot Venton, North Pender Island

Category:	Individual
Project:	Legal action to protect the Southern Resident Killer Whale
Nominator(s):	David Boyd
Letters of Support:	N/A

Project Description:

Everyone in the Southern Gulf Islands loves the Southern Resident killer whales. These whales reflect the wild heart of the Salish Sea ecosystem and are an intelligent, inspiring species.

The *Species at Risk Act* places a mandatory duty on the federal government to protect species and their habitats. Margot Venton, a lawyer with Ecojustice, filed a lawsuit in 2008 with assistance from lawyer Lara Tessaro on behalf of nine local and national environmental groups, alleging that DFO was in violation of the *Species at Risk Act* and that DFO fundamentally misunderstood its obligation to protect critical habitat. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) argued that existing policies and programs were sufficient to protect the critical habitat of this critically endangered population. The Federal Court ruled in the whales' favour in 2010.

That victory was short-lived as the government appealed the court decision. Margot argued the appeal, assisted by lawyer Tim Leadem. In February 2012, the Federal Court of Appeal upheld the trial decision, confirming that DFO had failed to adequately protect the whales' habitat. Finally, in April 2012, DFO confirmed that they would not appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

This precedent-setting legal victory will ensure that wide-ranging and long-lasting changes are made to environmental protection in the Trust Area region. Fisheries management must change to accommodate the whales' particular affinity for chinook salmon. Marine traffic will have to become more respectful of the whales' need for peace and quiet. Industrial practices will have to change to prevent pollution of the air and water. The cumulative impact will be a substantial long-term improvement in the

environmental quality of the Islands Trust area. Indeed, by setting such a strong precedent, the case will benefit all marine and terrestrial species in the Trust Area that are endangered or threatened.

The victory increases the likelihood that our grandchildren will share the same thrill that we enjoy when the whales appear.

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2012 Nominee Profile

Anne Macey, Salt Spring Island

- Category:** Individual
- Project:** Enhancement of agriculture and food security on Salt Spring Island
- Nominator(s):** Ashley Hilliard, President, Salt Spring Island Conservancy
- Letters of Support:** N/A

Project Description:

Anne Macey is a driving force, a cheerful leader, a tireless promoter, and an encouraging spirit who has brought about positive changes for agriculture and food security on Salt Spring Island.

Anne has served the agricultural community on Salt Spring Island for many years in many ways. As Chair of the committee to develop Salt Spring Island's Area Farm Plan, Anne was instrumental in bringing together community members, ministry staff and local government in an extensive collaborative process to create a plan for the long-term enrichment of agriculture in the community. When it was released in 2008, the Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan was one of the few of its kind in the province.

As Chair of the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance (created as a direct result of the 2008 Area Farm Plan), Anne worked tirelessly and selflessly to help implement the Plan's recommendations. Anne has played a key role in getting the initial Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust board off the ground and has been a vocal advocate and leading volunteer for the local abattoir that is scheduled to begin operation this spring. Anne consistently demonstrates a determined, but always cheerful way of working with community members and bringing them together in a collaborative way.

Anne, as Chair of the Salt Spring Agricultural Alliance, also sits as a member of the Salt Spring Island Climate Action Council.

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2012 Nominee Profile

Gabriola Island Health Care Foundation, Society and Auxiliary, Gabriola Island

Category:	Group
Project:	Gabriola Island Urgent Care Clinic
Nominator(s):	1. John Hodges 2. Gabriola Island Ratepayers

Letters of Support: Gabriola Land and Trails Trust and Derek Kilbourn, Editor and Co-Owner, Gabriola Sounder Media Inc.

Project Description:

The Gabriola Island Urgent Care Clinic was initiated six years ago by a small number of people concerned with the lack of access to emergency care and adequate health care services for residents of Gabriola Island. It was also intended to help recruit and retain qualified medical professionals.

Most of the Gabriola Island population became fully engaged in the process of planning and fundraising for the Centre. Local residents and visitors raised more than \$1.3 million, and more than 500 volunteers provided 95% of the labour, from planning to design to construction. Local building trades also contributed materials and machinery. Community volunteers will manage the building into the future. This project demonstrated that a collective of citizens can conceive and execute a complicated project that is normally the responsibility of various levels of government.

The high level of collaboration was accomplished by open public conversations that encouraged input from diverse sources. Positive collaboration with Gabriola Health care providers and organizations, the BC Ministry of Health and the Vancouver Island Health Authority created an inclusive planning process and helped provide funding support towards the recruitment of an additional on-call family practice physician for Gabriola Island.

The new Gabriola Island Urgent Care Clinic will operate within an integrated health services framework and act as a focus for community-based services and well-being initiatives. It may well result in lives saved and will benefit islanders who would otherwise be forced to leave the island to be closer to emergency services.

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2012 Nominee Profile

The Hornby Quilters Project, Hornby Island

- Category:** Group
- Project:** 36 years of fundraising through the yearly Hornby Quilt
- Nominator(s):** Mary MacKenzie
- Letters of Support:** N/A

Project Description:

The Hornby Quilters Project raises funds for Hornby Island non-profit organizations while raising awareness of the goals and aspirations of community organizations. The project has run for 36 years, raising \$252,000 (an average of \$7,000 per year), involved hundreds of volunteers, and benefitted more than sixty non-profit agencies

The first quilt was conceived as a fundraiser for Hornby Residents' and Ratepayers' Association in 1976 by Eleanora Laffin who, with a friend or two, made the first pictorial quilts and sold tickets. Over the years, more people collaborated and created an informal quilting group to keep a wonderful idea going by producing astonishing, historical pieces of art.

The project modernizes the traditional quilt process by turning it into a themed project. For instance, the 1978 quilt depicted Island wild flowers and the 2012 quilt will depict the essential element - water. The funds raised in 2012 will benefit the Hornby Water Stewardship Project and the First Edition, a free community newspaper aimed at keeping residents informed about issues affecting them.

This large, sustained project attracts an eclectic collection of participants and supporters on the island. Every year, twenty-five to thirty people create squares on the relevant theme with some unifying fabrics, another group of ten or twelve then assembles and stitches the work. Volunteers sell tickets every day from June to September. The interactions between quilt creators, ticket sellers and the public offer wonderful opportunities to generate awareness of island issues, foster appreciation of island life and promote protection of the island.

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2012 Nominee Profile

Saturna Ecological Education Centre, Saturna Island

- Category:** Group
- Project:** Building an ecological school on Saturna Island
- Nominator(s):** Priscilla Ewbank
- Letters of Support:** N/A

Project Description:

The Saturna Ecological Education Centre is a joint project with School District #64 to create a live-in environmental centre on Saturna Island for 12 elementary students per semester. The Saturna Ecological Education Centre site, or Haggis Hollow as it is known, has innovative buildings that use state-of-the-art wood sections and other newly developed design features. The school's mandate is to teach, live and learn in a natural system on a micro and macro level on Saturna Island. The school encourages stewardship of the land and provides the opportunity for students to study and understand their impacts on the environment. Integration into the local community is key. The students are valued members of the community and in turn, respect and value the community.

Project partners are

- School district #64 Superintendent, Jeff Hopkins
- Saturna Island Community
- Saturna Ecological Education Society (SEES), a Liaison group
- Saturna Island School Trustee, Susanne Middleditch
- Cameron Fraser Saturna Elementary teacher and vice principal
- Saturna Islander builder, architect, project manager, Richard Blagborne
- Haggis Farm, where the school is located.

The project benefits the Saturna community by keeping the elementary school viable and retaining or attracting young families to the island. It can benefit visiting high school students from all over southwestern BC by teaching them about ecological concepts using the unique ecosystems of the Gulf Islands, along with community values and skills. The people who collaborated to make the centre possible worked with determination, enthusiasm, trust and vision.

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2012 Nominee Profile

Dr. Donald Marshall, Bowen Island

Category:	Individual
Project:	Initiatives to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle
Nominator(s):	Colleen O'Neil
Letters of Support:	N/A

Project Description:

Don Marshall has committed the last 15 years of his life on Bowen Island to resource recovery. He has served, and continues to serve, on numerous committees whose mandates have been to find a way to reduce, reuse, and recycle our “garbage”. He works tirelessly on the ground while continuing to educate others through workshops, seminars and research. Don connects with others who work in the same area and readily shares what he learns as a local resource recovery educator. Don’s volunteer work has included:

- Bowen Island Recycling Depot Society (1998 - 2012)
- Compost Bowen, Board Member (2007) (transformed into Zero Waste)
- Zero Waste, Chair (2008 - present)
- Sustainability Community Advisory Committee – Committee of Bowen Council - 2006 - 2009
- Solid Waste Resource Management Advisory Committee (Committee of Bowen Council) (2011- present)
- Knick Knack Nook Re-Use-It Store, Collaborative / supportive / advisory role – 2008-2009
- Bowen In Transition (2010 - present)
- Suzuki Elders, member 2011 - present

Don is a well-respected community member who goes out of his way to build bridges throughout the community to make Bowen Island more sustainable and resourceful. His work is very well received: eighty percent of Bowen Islanders use the Recycling Depot, and the re-use-it store is so profitable, it not only supports itself, but financially supports three other organizations. Don and his new solid waste management committee are now developing new strategies for organic waste collection for Bowen Island.

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2012 Nominee Profile

Peter Karsten, Denman Island

Category:	Individual
Project:	Conservation Projects and Programs
Nominator(s):	Denman Conservancy Association
Letters of Support:	N/A

Project Description:

Peter Karsten is nominated for this award in recognition of his recent activities; although he has a lifetime of activities that demonstrate his deep commitment to the preservation, protection and appreciation of our natural world. Peter is truly a force of nature, an inspirational leader, a doer, a creative person, an educator and a tireless worker. As an artist, environmentalist, and retired CEO, Peter unites and transcends the diverse groupings that characterize island communities and involves the whole community in the projects he leads.

Examples of his achievements during the past year alone include:

- His initiative and hard work were instrumental in the activation of three new parks on Denman Island: Stanehill Park (a little over a year ago), Morning Beach Park, and Maple Park, and particularly the construction of a long staircase to access Morning Beach.
- Peter serves as a director and Co-Chair of the Denman Conservancy Association and chairs the Outreach Committee. He serves on (and until recently chaired) the Parks Committee of the Denman Island Residents Association and serves on the association's Wildlife Advisory Committee (which he earlier founded to assist injured wildlife). Peter is heavily involved in all the work of his committees, and liaises with the Denman Residents Association, the Comox Valley Regional District and B.C. Parks
- Peter's efforts to support the recovery of Purple Martins included organizing a tour of his aviaries, educational talks, an art sale for which he created all the drawings, paintings and sculptures, and building and installing new bird houses. An international expert in breeding endangered birds, he also mentors children in this and other nature projects.

- Peter was involved in the building of a community dock, and created not only the sign for the dock, but also a small replica of the sign as a recognition gift.
- He helped build a bridge for the Island Equines group to protect a stream.
- He designed and built a memorial bench with a carved eagle in the back, helped install it and then volunteered for a committee to develop policies for future bench requests to the Denman Conservancy Association.
- Peter was instrumental in organizing a scientific speakers program involving prominent biologists. Peter arranged the speakers, advertising, venue, entertainment and housing.