

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2013 Nominee Profile

Richard Blagborne, Saturna Island

- Category:** Individual
- Project:** Saving and restoring the Fog Alarm Building at East Point Park
- Nominator(s):** Maureen Welton
- Letters of Support:** N/A

Project Description:

Richard Blagborne initiated and led the restoration of the Fog Alarm Building, which was scheduled for demolition as part of federal lighthouse de-staffing programs. The building, originally housing the apparatus that made the deep sonorous fog-horn sound, has been completely renovated and now houses storyboards, a media centre, historical photos and written archives charting the island's history. Richard sought and received the support of dozens of community members, raised \$70,000, and sought assistance from MP Elizabeth May, Parks Canada/Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, Senator Pat Carney, the Capital Regional District, Saturna Community Club, Saturna Island Parks and Recreation and Heritage Canada. In May 2013 the building will host a symposium with top cetacean experts to celebrate the progress made since Moby Doll, the first orca in captivity, was captured. The building, staffed by over twenty volunteer docents, is likely the most visited spot on Saturna Island.

Richard has been a catalyst for other initiatives and collaborations on Saturna, including: the Saturna Ecological Education Centre, the Saturnina longboat project and the Saturna Heritage Committee. These projects provide education for visitors and residents, leadership for youth, and attract visitors to Saturna Island.

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2013 Nominee Profile

Chris and Judith Plant, Gabriola Island

- Category:** Individual
- Project:** Promoting and demonstrating sustainability through book publishing
- Nominator(s):** Heather Wardle
- Letters of Support:** N/A

Project Description:

Judith and Chris Plant are the visionaries and leaders of New Society Publishers, a Gabriola-based book publisher that is a global leader in books on sustainability with over 150 titles. New Society Publishers has been located on Gabriola Island since 1996 publishing best-sellers such as "Our Ecological Footprint." New Society Publishers' mission is to publish books that contribute to building an ecologically sustainable and just society, and to do so with the least possible impact on the environment, in a manner that models this vision.

Under Judith and Chris' leadership, New Society Publishers was the first carbon-neutral publishing house in North America. In 2001, they committed to publishing all their books on 100% post-consumer recycled paper, leading the book publishing community in Canada. Recently, New Society has introduced a unique component to its thriving ebook program -- New Society's Guide To Environmentally Responsible Digital Reading.

Chris and Judith have been dedicated to benefiting Gabriola Island through New Society Publishers. They have a policy of hiring locally, and have employed local people in editing, design, marketing, and information technology. When Douglas & McIntyre bought the company in 2008, Judith and Chris ensured that it remained based on Gabriola and that their team stayed intact. Chris and Judith re-acquired New Society Publishers in 2013 and continue to actively support the community through monthly donations to not-for-profits, regular donations to fundraisers and by offering a unique employee benefit which allows employees two hours paid community volunteer work per week on a rotational basis. In addition to demonstrating sustainability through publishing, Chris and Judith have been active participants in the bioregional movement for over 25 years and in their work for a post-carbon future, they maintain ties with various networks of transition-town dwellers, permaculturalists, publishers and others.

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2013 Nominee Profile

Jan Slakov, Salt Spring Island

Category:	Individual
Project:	Environmental and social justice leadership
Nominator(s):	Bob MacKie
Letters of Support:	Island Pathways President Brenda Guiled Member of Parliament Elizabeth May

Project Description:

Jan Slakov lives her life in a way that reflects her deep love for the world and her distress about human actions that threaten the earth's ecosystems and create pain and suffering for people. Jan "walks her talk".

Jan's actions and lifestyle are consistent with her desire for a peaceful, just society that genuinely honours and cares for the earth. She models how people can make daily decisions that limit harm to the earth's natural diversity and its ability to support human civilizations. For example, Jan travels mainly by bike and bus and spends her money and time getting old equipment to work, rather than buying mass-produced "planned obsolescence" items.

As a busy organizer and collaborator on Salt Spring Island, Jan eagerly supports community initiatives that promote sustainability and social justice. Groups she supports include: "Stewards in Training", the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, "Salt Springers for Safe Foods", Transition Salt Spring, Copper Kettle; and the Gulf Islands Alliance.

Currently, Jan is coordinating "Bike to Work Week" for Salt Spring and other Gulf Islands. Jan has served on the board of West Coast Climate Equity. She is also active with the Citizens Climate Lobby. Through the CalmUnity group that she was instrumental in founding, Jan worked to help Salt Spring islanders with widely differing values to communicate constructively.

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2013 Nominee Profile

Ana Miriam Leigh (Posthumous), Denman Island

Category:	Individual
Project:	Twenty years of support to women facing violence on Denman Island
Nominator(s):	Denman Island Women's Outreach Society
Letters of Support:	N/A

Project Description:

Ana Miriam Leigh established the Denman Island Women's Outreach Society (DIWOS) in 1993 in response to the lack of services for women experiencing violence on Denman Island. Ana knew that people in crisis without counseling, safety, housing and economic sustenance for themselves and their children could not fully participate in the decisions affecting their lives. Her aim was to help women and their children to be self-sufficient, self-caring, and secure enough to be full citizens. For more than 20 years she was the unpaid co-ordinator and main force driving DIWOS projects. She engaged more than 200 women in projects as employees, volunteers and participants, and reached out to countless more community members. Over the years, Ana secured over \$500,000 in grants to provide community programs such as:

- the Denman Island Women's Outreach Society crisis line;
- crisis work training on how to find safe housing, undertake safety planning for women and their children, and how to support women through the medical, legal and court processes;
- Theatre of the Oppressed workshops to help women develop skills for economic and personal survival;
- projects that explored what keeps women in violent relationships; and
- projects that supported women to develop a business plan and put it into action.

Ana also helped the Denman Island community to collaborate and communicate. She organized non-violent communication (NVC) forums and workshops and promoted the use of NVC in community meetings and projects to resolve conflict. She also liaised with police, doctors, social services and other agencies to improve response to gender-based violence on Denman Island. As DIWOS closes in 2013, a new group is emerging to continue working for equality for women and girls on Denman Island; carrying on Ana's legacy.

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2013 Nominee Profile

Lasqueti Island Forage Fish Team

Category: Group

Project: Monitoring beaches for forage fish habitat

Nominator(s): Charlotte Taylor

Letters of Support: N/A

Project Description:

The Lasqueti Island Forage Fish Team is a group of 20 to 30 volunteers, ranging in age from early 20s to 60s, who monitor local beaches for the possibility of forage fish habitat. For the last one and half years, volunteers have collected samples of beach sediment using a scientific methodology, then send the samples for analysis to detect the presence of forage fish eggs.

The team has been responsible for the acquisition of spill kits at the docks, and also for making available fuel-absorbent pads to community members. The team and this project has generated community awareness of the importance of protecting beaches because forage fish spawning habitats are crucial to the health of the marine food chain. The local marimba band also held a fundraising concert for the team which helped fund the group and enhanced community engagement.

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2013 Nominee Profile

Mayne Island Conservancy Society

Category: Group

Project: Shoreline Care Program

Nominator(s): Jessica Willows

Letters of Support: N/A

Project Description:

The Mayne Island Conservancy Society's Shoreline Care Program started in 2008. The purpose of the program is long-term monitoring of marine ecosystems. Over the past five years 135 volunteers have contributed 1,300 hours to the project, including children and youth. The intermediate class (Grades 4 – 8) of Mayne Island school is involved in monitoring an intertidal site.

The program has included inventory, mapping and monitoring of Mayne Island eelgrass and kelp bed ecosystems; a base-line study of forage fish spawning on six beaches; a kayak-based bull kelp monitoring methodology, and activities to raise public awareness of the value, significance of near-shore ecosystems and the need to protect them. All program activities have been conducted through knowledge sharing with the Seagrass Conservation Working Group, guided by scientific advisors, with the goal of ensuring results are useful to land use planning and local/ regional conservation initiatives.

The project has led to the development of the Mayne Island Shoreline Atlas which provides a map-based shorezone rating system designed to inform the Local Trust Committee and land-use planners of sensitive marine ecosystems to help them minimize impacts on marine habitats (protection) and to help the community identify areas for future restoration.

This work supports climate change mitigation efforts because eelgrass and kelp beds sequester carbon (blue carbon) in addition to maintaining marine ecosystem health. Mayne Island Conservancy Society minimized the release of carbon from this project by designing its kelp mapping protocol so that the work is done from kayaks.

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2013 Nominee Profile

Salt Spring Island Water Council

- Category:** Group
- Project:** Leadership on water issues on Salt Spring Island
- Nominator(s):** Salt Spring Island Conservancy
- Letters of Support:** N/A

Project Description:

The Salt Spring Island Water Council, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, provides a forum for sharing information on the quality and quantity of Salt Spring Island's surface and groundwater resources. The Council undertakes research and analysis, advocates for appropriate government legislation, regulations and policies and educates the public. All of the agencies and individuals responsible for providing, protecting, conserving and managing drinking water on the island benefit from this work.

The Council meets bimonthly in public with representatives of fourteen water districts. Over the last decade, it has addressed a wide range of topics, including potable water supply and demand, watershed management, water quality, water conservation, groundwater, septic systems and storm water management.

Recent highlights of their work include: support for the Cusheon Lake Watershed Management Plan and the coordination of the St. Mary Lake Watershed Management Plan, two low-flush rebate programs, a Soft Path (conservation) Strategy with the POLIS Institute (UVic) and a groundwater workshop. Another project was a community dialogue and expert panel talking about the complexities of the current problems with St. Mary Lake.

The Water Council has also worked in cooperation with the Water Preservation Society and others to produce a brochure on St. Mary Lake; has made submissions to the Local Trust Committee on the proposed Riparian Area Regulations and is currently collaborating to support a Simon Fraser University hydrogeological study of impacts of climate change on Salt Spring Island's groundwater resources.