



SPRING/SUMMER 2011

# The Heron

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE ISLANDS TRUST FUND

## Moving towards your vision for the future

New Regional Conservation Plan identifies top 7 conservation goals for the islands.

We asked what is important to you; you answered



Healthy island communities living in harmony with the natural world



Networks of protected areas providing safe homes for native species



Engaged islanders and community groups protecting key habitats

## Now we have a plan to get there

To achieve this common vision for the Islands Trust Area, the Islands Trust Fund has set seven new conservation goals in the 2011-2015 Regional Conservation Plan. With five-year objectives and an action plan, the Regional Conservation Plan will act like a trail map, telling us what we need to get done in the next five years to get us closer to our goals.

We didn't create the plan alone. Over a dozen local land trusts from the islands came together to develop the conservation goals and objectives. We also heard from islanders and conservation experts. We found the process exciting, bringing together everyone working on important conservation issues in our region to identify a shared vision and actions we could work on together. We are thankful for everyone's time and input.

Many of the goals and objectives are ambitious, but we've heard a unanimous cry that this work needs to be done. The

Islands Trust Fund has agreed to identify 3,000 hectares of high biodiversity areas for conservation and develop a plan to protect as much as we can, whether by acquiring them for nature reserves or working with private landowners to protect them with covenants. We've also committed to finding a way to integrate human activities, such as farming, forestry and settlement into natural habitats in a way that maintains biodiversity and functioning ecosystems.

### You've been a driving force behind island conservation

We need partners to transform this long to-do list into a list of successes. You've supported the Islands Trust Fund, spearheading great conservation successes on the islands. You protected Brooks Point, Medicine Beach, Squitty Bay and Mt. Erskine. You've enabled us to work with 80 property owners to protect more than 1,000 hectares of privately-owned land forever. We are confident that with your continued support and involvement, these goals can be achieved.

### So stay tuned...

We hope to give Douglas-firs, Garry oaks, orchids, salmon, and all the plants and critters in between something to celebrate! Thank you for all you've done so far to give island ecosystems a secure home. We hope to follow your lead, keeping our islands natural and beautiful.

Thank you to Vancity who funded the development of the 2011-2015 Regional Conservation Plan.



Islands Trust Fund

## Conservation Goals for the Islands

1. Stop habitat loss by securing new conservation areas
2. Enhance habitat in existing conservation areas
3. Promote a respect for nature among private property owners
4. Help islanders protect biodiversity on working landscapes
5. Improve marine ecosystem protection in the islands
6. Encourage local government to prioritize biodiversity
7. Build a strong, coordinated network of conservation partners in the region

## Past, Present and Future

### One family's motivation to protect their land

BY CHRISTINE PRITCHARD, ITF STAFF

**Y**ou give to conservation. Whether it's your time, energy, land or money, you've dedicated some portion of your life to protecting the earth.

Acts to conserve nature are almost always selfless.

So what moves you to give? What inspires you to donate your money to purchase a nature reserve? What moves you to write your local politician encouraging them to pass legislation to protect endangered species? What convinces you to protect your own land for the future?

I phoned Arthur Kikuchi, an islander who recently protected his land with the Islands Trust Fund to ask him what inspired him to give his gift to nature. He invited me to his newly protected property to find out.

On an overcast day last November, I travelled to the Kikuchi's North Pender property. As I donned my gumboots and introduced myself to Arthur, four children unloaded from his van gathering timidly around their father. As we set out from the road the children followed Arthur's footsteps, seemingly unsure of where we would venture first. But once we reached the outskirts of the property's wetland, curiosity took hold and the children scattered to find treasures among the swamp lanterns and reeds.

A short distance into our walk, Arthur rushed to a spot in a clearing and excitingly called his children over. Pointing from the sky to the ground, he spoke quickly to the children in Japanese.

*"Our legacies are what we leave behind. I want to leave this protected place behind for my children, their children and the next generations in my community. That's what makes me most happy about the covenant."*

log perforated with hundreds of circular holes. Woodpeckers had obviously had a feast.

"There are no people here, no human intervention. It's amazing to watch nature run its course, not minding all the people around it" he said. "New plants grow as old plants die and return to the earth. Everything follows a cycle, uninterrupted."

As I approached, I saw he was standing over a log.

"This tree was standing just last week" he explained to me. "It was designated as a wildlife tree in the baseline report".

As I looked at the log, it became obvious why it received the designation.

The jagged stump was brimming with insects; the



**Arthur's family inspired him to give to nature; the legacy set by his parents and future hopes for his children.**

Nature delights Arthur. As we ventured deeper into the forest, Arthur began to tell the story of what inspired him to protect this piece of North Pender.

Arthur moved to North Pender Island because the landscape reminded him of Japan where he grew up. Arthur's passion for the natural environment was nurtured from a young age by his father, a lifelong naturalist who specialized in the protection of wetlands and forests. Since he was a young boy, Arthur has always wanted to carry on his father's work, protecting the land. He runs an organic farm on North Pender.

In 2009, when Arthur received an inheritance after his parents passed away, he chose to continue his father's vision by purchasing this forested lot with the intent to protect it in its natural state. With the help of the Islands Trust Fund, the Pender Islands Conservancy Association, and the Nancy Waxler Morrison Biodiversity Protection Fund, Arthur and his family permanently protected the property with a conservation covenant. It is now called the Kikuchi Memorial – Frog Song Forest Covenant.

"I wanted to use the money they left me to do something that would make them proud," said Arthur. "So I covenanted the property. Whenever I come here, I feel my parents' presence. They never saw the property, but it's their lives, their work that protected it. I know they'd be proud of this legacy".

Arthur's children don't understand the legalities and financial aspects of the covenant. But they do understand that the trees, plants, frogs and wetland will be here forever. They explore the covenant area with the awe and wonder of children: touching moss, smelling mushrooms, feeling the slime of a slug, measuring the weight of a deer bone found among the trees. They discover and investigate, using their senses to guide them. When I ask

what they love most about visiting the covenant, Arthur's daughter says, "Climbing and playing in the trees. It's better than any playground!"

This special legacy created through the life work of his parents will remain permanently protected beyond Arthur's lifetime; a gift to future generations. Arthur's outlook on the present and future is inspiring. "People can't own the land. We're only borrowing it from the future" Arthur says, as he points to his children playing among the branches of a nearby cedar. "When we die, we can't take what we own with us. Therefore, our legacies are what we leave behind. I want to leave this protected place behind for my children, their children and the next generations in my community. That's what makes me most happy about the covenant".

Placing a covenant on a private property is a long term commitment and costs money. It's a donation, a gift that can result in property and income tax benefits. Arthur and his family show us that it's more than just a gift to a land trust like the Islands Trust Fund. A covenant is a gift of nature to the future. Arthur hopes his story inspires more islanders to give this gift of forever protected ecosystems to their communities.



**Thank you to the Kikuchi family who protected their property through the Kikuchi Memorial—Frog Song Forest Covenant. Inside the covenant area sits a wetland singing with the chorus of tree frogs and an older forest with trees more than 100 years old. The protected area links two existing protected areas, providing a safe corridor for wildlife travel.**

## New program on Lasqueti makes private land conservation more affordable

### You can save up to 65% on your annual property taxes by protecting your land with a conservation covenant

Islanders typically don't protect their land to save money. However, as there are costs to protecting land, money can be a limiting factor. Our local government, the Islands Trust, recognized that and responded. They partnered with regional districts and the Province to make private land conservation more affordable. The program they came up with – NAPTEP (the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program) – rewards landowners with up to a 65% exemption on their annual property taxes when they protect their land.

To qualify for NAPTEP you need to register a conservation covenant on your property, protecting significant natural features on your land. A covenant is a legal promise to never remove native plants, use pesticides, or build in the covenant area. The covenant is registered on the property's title, holding future landowners to those same restrictions. A covenant is a promise to leave the natural area on a property alone; a gift of permanence to a community.

Those of you who donated covenants through the pilot program and those of you who wrote letters supporting expansion of the program to other islands showed our local and regional governments that with a little help, private landowners can be a driving force in protecting natural spaces in their communities. In recent years, NAPTEP has been expanded from the islands in the Capital Regional District and Sunshine Coast Regional District, to the islands in the regional districts of Nanaimo, Cowichan Valley, and Comox Valley. This year, the program expands to Lasqueti Island and nearby islands in the Powell River Regional District

To learn more about NAPTEP, its tax benefits and costs, and the natural features eligible for the program, visit us at [www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/naptep.cfm](http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/naptep.cfm).

## Be an Ambassador of Conservation!

Do you know someone who might want to protect the natural area on their property? Here's how you could help keep the natural areas in your community green forever.

1. Introduce a friend or neighbour to private land conservation. Contact us to receive printed material about covenants and land stewardship that you could share with someone who might be interested in protecting their land.
2. Tell others about your experience. Have you protected your property with a covenant? Tell people about it. Your story might encourage others to do the same.
3. Host a neighbourhood open house. Get your neighbourhood talking about the future of the forests, wetlands, streams and beaches in your community. Islands Trust Fund representatives are available to talk to your neighbours and friends about opportunities for private land conservation in your neighbourhood.

# The Race to Save Land - Your Support Made It Easier

## Donations to the Opportunity Fund support campaigns to protect three island properties

**W**e asked you last year to support island conservation. You responded! Your donation to the Islands Trust Fund is helping to protect three special island properties.

Each year we learn of properties that, after having been kept beautifully natural, are suddenly at risk of being sold, developed or destroyed. With your donation to the Opportunity Fund, the Islands Trust Fund can lessen the burden of the administrative and legal costs that local land trusts face when racing against time to protect special properties. Your gift to the Opportunity Fund saves ecosystems at risk.

Please consider continuing to support these and other acquisition projects by donating to the Islands Trust Fund today. Gifts to the Opportunity Fund can be made online at [www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/donationform.cfm](http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/donationform.cfm) or by mail to: Islands Trust Fund, 200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8R 1H8

Your gift is protecting land! Thank you



### New Nature Reserve on Salt Spring!

Perched high on southwest Salt Spring Island sits the new Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve. The Salt Spring Island Conservancy purchased the property with financial support from an Opportunity Fund grant and funding from the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Shaw Communications and BC Nature, as well as several private donors and the Indridson family.

The new 130 hectare nature reserve forms the southern end of a 2,400 hectare continuous greenbelt extending over half the length of Salt Spring. The land features a lake, streams and many small wetlands. Biologists have found nine species at risk on the property—so far.

### Effort to Protect Property on Galiano

The Galiano Conservancy Association is racing to secure the remaining \$1.3 million needed to purchase a 75 hectare waterfront property before it is sold on the open market and potentially subdivided. With an Opportunity Fund grant, the Islands Trust Fund shared in the administrative costs needed to launch this acquisition project.

Once the property is purchased, the conservancy will start its inspiring plan to create a learning centre offering multi-day outdoor education for disadvantaged and inner-city youth. Ecosystem restoration and sustainable farming on the property will become a key component of the learning centre's program.

### Working to Protect the Last Piece of the Puzzle

The Salt Spring Island Conservancy is working to protect the missing piece of a 500 hectare protected area around Mt. Tuam. The small property is a biodiversity hot-spot, with six federally-listed and three provincially-listed species known to frequent the land.

Your donation to the Opportunity Fund is assisting with the administrative costs associated with this complex land transfer.

**Photos by Robin Annschild, Galiano Conservancy Association, Salt Spring Island Conservancy**

# Who Protects Nature?

## Our youngest donor brings a whole new meaning to 'investing in our future'

**A**t six years old, William McDermott is the youngest person to donate to the Islands Trust Fund. His gift came in the form of nickels, dimes and quarters—a portion of his allowance he hopes will save habitat. Representing 25% of his income, this is likely the biggest contribution of a person's personal wealth we have ever seen.

Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods*, and a growing body of scientific evidence, identify strong correlations between children's experience in the natural world and their ability to learn, along with their physical and emotional health. With neighbourhood forests, wetlands and creeks quickly falling victim to houses, roads and parking lots, the health of our nation's young generation is in jeopardy. Fewer children have access to natural areas where they can play and explore, while incidences of learning disabilities and diseases associated with inactivity continues to rise. Here on the islands, however, you've helped protect the natural areas in which William and other island children play. Now, with his donation to conservation, William is continuing that island tradition of investing in the future.

To be realistic, William probably doesn't understand the long-term significance of his gift. When he thinks about his neighbourhood's forest, visions of worms and spider webs are more likely to dance through his head. We hope that your and William's investment means the hearts and minds of all island six-year olds are obsessed with the critters of the outdoors!

**We placed William's donation in the Opportunity Fund and will use it wisely to protect a special property in the Gulf Islands. Thank you William!**

William and his family live on Salt Spring Island. His favourite spot on the island is the beach on Price Road, where he spends hours trekking, collecting shells and rocks, and investigating all the wonderful wildlife on the beach and in the tides. A close second to the Price Road beach is the fairy walk on the Mt. Erskine—a place he calls "magical".

William is protective of the natural world. He picks up trash he finds on the beach and watches out for "critters". He's been known to rescue a crab or two. When outdoors, William loves to ride his bike and dig in the dirt. His mom guesses what he loves most about the outdoors is the room to play and the freedom to get messy. One of his favourite books is *Where the Wild Things Are*.



# Protecting Fairy Habitat...

## New nature reserve protects the landscape that sparked a young girl's imagination

**A**Imagine a clearing, hidden deep in a forest of cedars and Douglas-fir, shadowed by surrounding hills. You might only stumble across it when lifting one of the thick branches of needles that hide it from view. Once inside you're as light as air, floating atop a bed of moss and plants which blankets the watery earth below. Each of your footsteps sends quivers in the earth around you.

One summer day, eight-year old Flora Dunster stood amongst the reeds and moss of this mysterious clearing. Flora had accompanied her mother, who was conducting a wetland inventory of this special place, as an "apprentice". Tiny sticky sundews glistened in the sun, dragonflies dashed around. Flora was charmed – possibly by fairies, but definitely by the magic of the moment. And so, on the advice of Flora, the pair celebrated the existence of this magical place by calling it Fairy Fen.

That wetland inventory of Fairy Fen on Bowen Island revealed an island gem – a peat-forming fen that was intact and undisturbed, something incredibly rare in the Islands Trust Area. It is a fascinating place that floats between aquatic and terrestrial. The moss-covered ground is firm enough to walk on. But poking a walking stick into the soggy earth reveals water hiding just below the surface. Coastal reindeer lichen, Labrador tea, bog cranberry and yellow starry feather-moss are just a sampling of the plants found at Fairy Fen. In the inventory, the fen scored



Fairy Fen Nature Reserve is located on southern Bowen Island, east of Cape Roger Curtis. Recognizing the sensitive nature of this ecosystem, the Islands Trust Fund is working with the local community to develop a management plan for the nature reserve. The plan will set out the best method for preserving the unique features of Fairy Fen in the future. Once complete, the Fairy Fen Management Plan will be posted on our website at [www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca)

one of the highest possible scores for ecological importance, making it a top priority for protection.

At that time, the fen was located on provincial Crown land and there were commercial recreational interests in the property. The Bowen Island community was worried about the future of the fen and lobbied for its protection. They asked the Islands Trust Fund to try to acquire the property as a nature reserve.

Thanks to your efforts, Fairy Fen is now protected as the Islands Trust Fund's 20th nature reserve!

With the support of Bowen islanders and Vancity, the Islands Trust Fund worked in partnership with the Bowen Island Conservancy to complete the transfer of Fairy Fen and its surrounding mature forest (18 hectares) from the Province to the Islands Trust Fund. It was no easy feat – the project spanned more than five years. With the property now protected as a nature reserve, the Bowen Island community can breathe easy knowing the fen – the headwaters of Huzar Creek – is protected forever.

Last September, we gathered with some of you to celebrate the protection of Fairy Fen. In the quiet clearing of cattails, sedges and moss, we reflected on the efforts that went into conserving this very rare ecosystem.

"Standing here in this truly beautiful place shows us why the community worked so passionately to protect Fairy Fen," said Christine Torgrimson, Chair of the Trust Fund Board. "Communities are the true heroes in these stories, and we are so thankful to the Bowen Island Conservancy and the Bowen community for helping us make sure this exceptionally rare treasure remains natural forever."

"To continue to flourish, Fairy Fen's ecosystems needed the highest degree of protection we could afford to them" said Alan Whitehead, a Bowen Islander intimately involved in the nature reserve's protection. "It's difficult for small communities to convince federal and local governments to grant Ecological Reserve status to properties. The islands are so lucky to have the Islands Trust Fund's nature reserve program. The Islands Trust Fund provides a locally-made solution to meaningful, high-value land protection."

### NOTE:

*As you may have heard, Parks Canada has proposed a national park for Bowen Island, and the preliminary concept map includes the Islands Trust Fund's Bowen Island nature reserves. This is simply a preliminary concept. The Islands Trust Fund has not yet committed to the transfer of any land to Parks Canada, and would only consider transferring a nature reserve to another agency after consulting donors, neighbours and the community. The transfer of ownership of a nature reserve would only occur if it's determined that the ecological features of the property would be better protected by another agency.*



Lois (on right) guiding a walk through the Islands Trust Fund's Brigade Bay Nature Reserve

## A Gift of Possibility

### Gambier Island natural areas get boost from legacy gift



**D**r. Lois Kennedy, who passed away in the spring of 2010, was passionate about her island community on Gambier. After retiring from environmental science in 1989, Lois and her husband moved to the island, where Lois dove into community activities and issues.

Lois became president of the Gambier Island Community Association, and her characteristic energy could be found at most community meetings and events. She was an optimistic force on the island and always ready to take on new projects.

Lois' dedication to the protection of the natural world was evident in her community involvement. In 1995, Lois became a founding Director and guiding light of the Gambier Island Conservancy at the time the Islands Trust was undertaking a

damaged island ecosystems.

After relocating to Gibsons, Lois served on the boards of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association, the Community Foundation, the Iris Griffiths Centre and the Water Summit. Her passion for Gambier never faltered; Lois continued to serve as a director of the Gambier Island Conservancy until 2007.

As a final contribution to her community and the island she loved, Lois left a gift of \$100,000 to the Islands Trust Fund in her will. In leaving this bequest, Lois tasked the Islands Trust Fund to use it wisely to purchase, enhance or maintain public conservation lands on Gambier. The Islands Trust Fund and the Gambier Island Conservancy will work together to develop the best strategy to use Lois' donation to achieve conservation success that would make her proud.

**Lois believed strongly in island conservation. She entrusted the Islands Trust Fund with a donation of \$100,000. Her gift will be put towards natural area conservation on Gambier Island.**

review of the island's Official Community Plan. As detailed data on Gambier's natural environment was sadly lacking, Lois joined other volunteers to secure grant monies and, through the Streamkeeper's, assess and map the island's watersheds and streams. Lois fought passionately for the protection of Gambier's forests, streams and lakes. She led several initiatives to restore

*"In a perfect world devastation would never occur. But even in our imperfect world, there are still success stories that are a testament to the powers of local environmental knowledge, determined community advocacy and stewardship...No one will ever hurt this wetland again. My heart sings."*  
*Lois writing about the Islands Trust Fund's Brigade Bay Nature Reserve on Gambier Island.*

Lois' gift is just a piece of her legacy on Gambier Island; she will be remembered for the characteristic energy, passion and dedication she gave to saving natural areas for the future.

# Support island habitats. Give a gift to conservation

## Our 100% Promise

**W**hen you donate to the Islands Trust Fund, every dollar of your donation goes directly to conservation projects in the islands. 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. That means your entire donation will protect endangered island landscapes."

## Please donate today

All donations of \$20 or more will receive a tax receipt for income tax purposes.

**YES!** I want to help protect natural habitat in the islands

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# Thank you for your support!

**T**his past year, individuals and organizations helped the Islands Trust Fund and its partners protect rare ecosystems and habitat. Our successes would not be possible without each and every one of you.

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The Islands Trust Fund also received gifts in tribute of the marriages of Doug and Pam Hooper, and Darren Noble and Hali Strandlund.

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