



# News Release

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## **GAMBIER COMMUNITY CELEBRATES NEWEST PROTECTED AREA**

VICTORIA — The Mount Artaban Nature Reserve was filled with pride as Gambier islanders gathered under blue skies on Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> to celebrate the grand opening of the newly protected area and to hike to the mountain's summit.

The Islands Trust Fund took ownership of the 107 hectare (264 acre) nature reserve in 2008 through the provincial government's Free Crown Grant program. To satisfy the province's conditions for the transfer, the Islands Trust Fund partnered with the Gambier Island Conservancy to fundraise over \$40,000 to cover the costs of the land survey and a management plan which was completed in 2009.

"With many of the fundraising campaign's key contributors present, Saturday's 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 Torgrimson, 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. "

"This ceremony was a landmark event for Gambier Island and the Conservancy," said Peter Scholefield, Gambier Island Conservancy President. "The establishment of the Mount Artaban Nature Reserve is a significant achievement towards our goal of preserving our island's diversity and enhancing our knowledge of its ecosystems. "

Torgrimson and Scholefield performed the honours of unveiling the hand-crafted signs that now mark the trail entrances to the reserve. The Mount Artaban Nature Reserve and adjoining protected areas offer an exhilarating hiking experience. Island residents and visitors can enjoy trails that extend from the Long Bay and Brigade Bay waterfronts to Mount Artaban's peak. The trail system also extends south through Halkett Bay Provincial Marine Park.

With a consultative planning process completed for the property, the management objectives for the Mount Artaban Nature Reserve will include conserving key natural ecosystem values and accommodating low-impact recreational use of the reserve. The completed Mount Artaban Nature Reserve Management Plan can be seen at [www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca).

The Islands Trust Fund is a regional land trust established in 1990 to help preserve and protect the unique character and environment of the islands in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. The Islands Trust Fund protects natural areas through voluntary land donations, conservation covenants, land purchase and stewardship education programs. With the generous support of island communities and landowners, the Islands Trust Fund has protected more than 982 hectares of natural and cultural values on 75 properties.

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Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis