



News Release

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GABRIOLA ISLAND COUPLE BECOME FIRST TO JOIN PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM

VICTORIA — Stanley and Maxine McRae are the first landowners on Gabriola Island to receive an annual property tax exemption recognizing the permanent conservation covenant they placed on their property.

The Islands Trust introduced the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) to the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area in 2009 to encourage private land conservation in the region. The program offers a 65% reduction in property taxes to landowners who register a covenant through the program.

Saving money isn't the biggest reward for the McRaes' conservation efforts. Since purchasing the property thirty years ago, the McRaes have been delighted with the colourful displays of camas, fairy-slipper orchids, and shootingstar in the spring. The McRaes' forest full of Douglas-fir, cedar, and arbutus provides habitat for passing wildlife throughout the year.

"The luscious fern undergrowth in our forest and the colourful wildflowers in the meadow are just two of our favourite places scattered throughout the property" said Maxine. "This property remains as one of the island's last untouched properties. It's peaceful to share this special place with the wildlife that visits us."

"It's important that this wildlife continues to have a sanctuary, a safe place to retreat to as our population grows and development continues," added Stanley.

The McRaes' covenant protects more than seven hectares of land. The covenant ensures that the property will remain in its natural state forever, regardless of who owns it in the future.

"The new McRae covenant – Gabriola's first NAPTEP conservation covenant – demonstrates the leadership role Stanley and Maxine continue to play in our community," said Sheila Malcolmson, Gabriola Island Trustee and Islands Trust Chair. "The McRaes' commitment to our island's future is lasting and will remain a legacy forever. I'm glad the Islands Trust could be a part of that process, offering a program that makes the protection of natural areas affordable to island landowners."

The covenant is held by the Islands Trust Fund, the conservation arm of the Islands Trust. NAPTEP is available to Islands Trust area landowners in the following Local Trust Areas: Galiano, Gambier, Gabriola, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna and Thetis. To date, 18 island landowners have protected their properties through the program. To learn more about NAPTEP, please visit the Islands Trust Fund online at <http://islandstrustfund.bc.ca/naptep.cfm>, or contact us by phone at 250-405-5186 (Victoria) or toll free through Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867 (604-660-2421 in Vancouver).

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