



News Release

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July 26, 2010

2010-05-ITF

IMPORTANT WETLAND PROTECTED ON BOWEN ISLAND

VICTORIA — In celebration of its 20th anniversary, the Islands Trust Fund announced its landmark achievement of creating its 20th nature reserve, Fairy Fen Nature Reserve on Bowen Island. The Province of British Columbia recently transferred the 18-hectare parcel to the Islands Trust Fund through the provincial Free Crown Grant program. The new nature reserve protects a rare wetland ecosystem and undisturbed forested area.

“This new acquisition for the Islands Trust Fund is very exciting for our island” said Nerys Poole, Islands Trust Fund Board member and Bowen Island Councillor and Municipal Trustee. “Our community places a high value on protection of natural areas. We are very grateful to those members of the community who worked so hard to ensure this rare treasure is protected forever. “

Fairy Fen’s protection is a success for not just Bowen Island, but for the conservation of British Columbia’s rare ecosystems as a whole. Fairy Fen is described by biologists as one of the most undisturbed, biologically diverse and ecologically rare fens in southern British Columbia. A fen is a wetland fed by ground or surface water and is neutral or alkaline in its chemistry, supporting a high diversity of plant and animal species. The nature reserve protects unique plants such as Labrador tea, bog St. John’s-wort, bog cranberry, and a wide variety of sedges and mosses. Western Bluebirds use Fairy Fen as part of their migration route, Pileated Woodpeckers are often heard in the trees and Bald Eagles frequent the skies above.

Efforts to acquire Fairy Fen began more than five years ago when the Islands Trust Fund asked the Bowen Island community to select its highest priority areas for the Free Crown Grant program. Once Fairy Fen was confirmed as the first choice, the Islands Trust Fund partnered with the Bowen Island Conservancy to satisfy the conditions of the transfer, including raising the funds needed to pay for the appraisal, land survey and management plan.

“We are so grateful for the existence of the Free Crown Grant Program and the Islands Trust Fund’s access to this program. Without it, Fairy Fen might not have the protected status it has today,” said Peter Drake, Chair of the Bowen Island Conservancy. “With the headwaters of Huzar Creek now protected forever, we are keen to find innovative ways to protect the entire watershed in the future“.

The Islands Trust Fund and the Bowen Island Conservancy will consult the Bowen community about wise management of the property. For example, boardwalks and viewing platforms would allow visitors to enjoy the beauty of the fen without trampling and compacting the deep organic soils of the Fen. Please contact the Bowen Island Conservancy (peterdrake@shaw.ca) to make a donation to help build boardwalks at Fairy Fen Nature Reserve.

The Islands Trust Fund is a regional land trust that works with private landowners and island communities to permanently protect the unique environment of the islands in the Howe Sound and Strait of Georgia. Since 1990, the Islands Trust Fund has protected more than 1,000 hectares of natural area. Fairy Fen is the third nature reserve the Islands Trust Fund has protected on Bowen Island.

"CREATING A LEGACY OF SPECIAL PLACES"

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

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