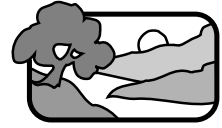


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# The Heron

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Islands Trust Fund

Issue 7, Fall 2004

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## Islands Trust Fund: Your Regional Land Trust

Between Vancouver Island and the British Columbia mainland, sheltered from the wild waves of the Pacific Ocean, 470 islands shine like emeralds on an intricate necklace. The Islands Trust Area is recognized as one of the most ecologically significant regions of the world. More than 69 plants and animals are at risk in the region, and their future survival depends on healthy, protected habitat.

The Islands Trust Fund, the conservation land trust of the Islands Trust, was established in 1990 to preserve and protect unique ecological and cultural properties in the Islands Trust Area. The vision of the Islands Trust Fund is to create a legacy of special places in the Gulf Islands, protecting both natural and cultural features in perpetuity.

As one of BC's leading conservation trusts, we work with island communities to protect special places in the region by encouraging, undertaking, and assisting in voluntary conservation initiatives. Since 1990, we have protected more than 600 hectares (approximately 1,500 acres) of land on 50 properties. To achieve our vision, we will continue to rely upon generous donations from landowners and the public.

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## Birthday Calendar on Sale This Fall

We are proud to present this attractive birthday calendar featuring unique island properties owned and covenanted by the Islands Trust Fund. Displaying the talents of local photographers, the calendar showcases the extraordinary beauty of these protected places, from the distinctive sandstone shoreline of the Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve on Denman Island to the historic millstone holes at the Coats Millstone Nature Reserve on Gabriola Island.

Each page of the calendar provides lots of space for you to record important birthdays and anniversaries, so you can use the calendar year after year. We hope it will serve as a perpetual reminder of the value of conserving special places on the islands.

Proceeds from the sale of the calendar will be dedicated to a new Opportunity Fund that will provide funding to local conservancies for land protection projects in the Gulf Islands. Details regarding the application process for the fund will be available in spring 2005.

Look for the calendar on sale this fall in local businesses, at Islands Trust offices, or complete the order form on page 4 and get an early start on your holiday shopping.

Special thanks to calendar sponsors Beacon Hill Communications and BC Ferries.



# Islands Trust Fund Celebrates 50 Protected Places

We are celebrating the milestone of 50 protected places in the Islands Trust Area. We share this success with our partners and island communities, whose vision and dedication have been fundamental to this achievement.

The contributions of generous landowners, individuals, foundations and local conservancies have resulted in the protection of over 600 hectares of unique ecosystems. These lands include 13 nature reserves or nature sanctuaries and 37 privately owned properties protected by conservation covenants. The combined value of these properties is over \$10 million.

In 2004, we worked with the Pender Island Conservancy Association to protect rare Sharp-tailed Snake habitat on North Pender Island (the Sharp-tailed Snake Covenant). In addition, we were partners with Habitat Acquisition Trust

and the Galiano Conservancy Association in protecting the largest body of freshwater on Galiano Island (Laughlin Lake Covenant). We also worked with a group of landowners on Saturna Island to protect 22 acres of mature forest through the Old Point Farm Covenant.

“Partnerships are the cornerstone of our work,” says Ardice Neudorf, our Ecosystem Protection Specialist. “Collaboration with local conservancies, foundations and individual islanders is essential to our success.”

Celebration of this milestone is an opportunity to reflect on our goals for the future. We have confirmed our vision to protect at least 25% of the remaining natural ecosystems in the Trust Area in addition to a variety of significant cultural landscapes that help preserve the scenic, rural and marine character of the Islands Trust Area.

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## People Behind the Places

### **Barrie Morrison, Islands Trust Fund Board Advisor and landowner**

“My wife Nancy and I purchased part of the land lying on either side of Cottonwood Creek on North Pender Island in 1980. As the years went by we became increasingly concerned with development that was eating away at the neighbourhood ecology. With the aid of Islands Trust Fund and Pender Island Conservancy Association we put in place a perpetual conservation covenant on Cottonwood Creek.”

### **Sue Ellen Fast, President of the Bowen Island Conservancy and Chair of Cape Roger Curtis Trust Society**

“Islands Trust Fund and Bowen Island Conservancy worked together to protect

the McIntyre Covenant Lands and the Singing Woods Nature Reserve.

I became involved in conservation because I thought it would help to bridge the gap from what it is known in science and management and get this information out to people who do care.”

### **John Millen, Co-chair of the Denman Conservancy Association**

“When I came to Denman Island, I got involved with people who were working for the conservation of the forests. One of the best things that has happened recently on Denman is the protection of Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve. One of the benefits for me is I’ve been going regularly to take photographs. This role

is very satisfying and creates increased opportunity and incentive to enjoy the forest.”

### **Louise Bell, ITF Board Chairperson and Denman Island Local Trustee**

“I have been a Board member for six years and Board Chairperson for five years. I do this work because it’s happy work — you’re dealing with people who want to do good things and want to make good things happen. It’s very satisfying to work with landowners and island organizations who care about land protection and stewardship education. Also, our staff are really dedicated. They’re experts, and that makes it easy for the Trust Fund Board.”



**L to R: Barrie and Nancy Morrison, Sue Ellen Fast, John Millen, Louise Bell**

# New Property Tax Exemption Program Coming to CRD in 2005

The Islands Trust's Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) will be launched for islands in the Capital Regional District in 2005. These islands are Galiano, Mayne, North Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna and South Pender, plus many smaller islands.

The NAPTEP offers rewards to landowners already protecting their property and provides a strong incentive to others considering placing covenants on their land.

Qualifying owners who place a conservation covenant on their property will see a 65% reduction in property taxes on the protected portion of their land. The covenant must be held by the Islands Trust Fund and meet its minimum standards to qualify.

This fall, current covenant holders will be invited to apply for the tax certificate. In 2005, the tax incentive will be available to those entering into new covenant agreements with the Trust Fund Board.

The initiation of this program is a significant step toward addressing obstacles to conservation of sensitive ecosystems on the islands.

Over 90% of land in the Islands Trust Area is privately owned, and almost all of this land is classified and taxed as residential by the BC Assessment Authority. The market value of residential land is based on its "highest and best economic use", or for its potential for development.

Although no local services such as water, sewage, garbage collection or fire protection are available on most of these properties, landowners may face a tax rate 20% higher than in the city of Vancouver.

By offering incentives to conservation such as the NAPTEP, we hope to address some financial obstacles to conservation faced by owners of natural areas and help prevent the incidence of 'logging for taxes'.

"Private landowners' contribution to the public interest is significant when you realize that 90% of lands on the Gulf Islands are privately owned. Wildlife habitats, watersheds, scenic amenities and trails are all dependent on private land stewardship," said Trust Fund Board member Kim Benson, who spearheaded the nine-year campaign to initiate the NAPTEP. "I think that people who are doing a good job to conserve natural areas should not face disincentives to conservation, especially now that market value assessments are so high."

Tax incentives for conservation are not new. The provinces of Ontario and Prince Edward Island have tax incentive programs which recognize and encourage the retention of green and open space. The state of Washington has had Open Space Taxation Legislation for the last 30 years.

Application forms for the NAPTEP will be available early in 2005, and Islands Trust Fund staff will hold information sessions on the islands at that time. More information about how to qualify and apply for the tax certificate is available from Islands Trust offices or at [www.islandstrust.bc.ca/stewardshipprograms](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/stewardshipprograms) under Natural Area Protection.



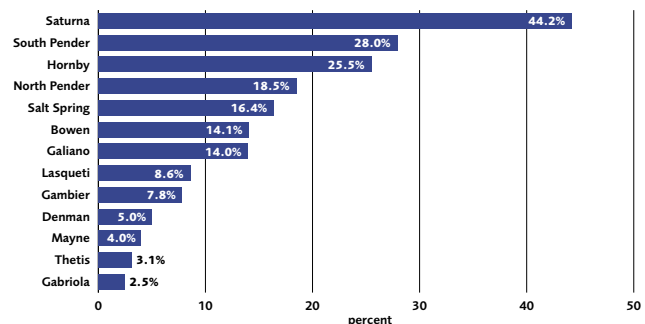
## Kim Benson, Member of the Islands Trust Fund Board and the Islands Trust Executive Committee

Kim spearheaded the campaign to establish the Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) in the Islands Trust Area.

"I grew up on Keats Island where 94% of the land is privately owned. I saw that beautiful, natural places could so easily be lost to logging or development, and I realized that the protection of natural places was dependent on private land stewardship. I became aware that the property tax policy actually encouraged the development of land.

When we began the work to establish NAPTEP we were told, "You will never be able to change the property tax system". It has been satisfying to see a shift in perspective over the years. I have found that if you have a good idea, back it up with the facts and have strong public support, you can be successful."

Percentage of Protected Lands by Local Trust Area and Island Municipality as at September 2004



## Ecosystem Maps Now Available

The Islands Trust Ecosystem Maps (ITEM) are now complete. These maps provide valuable information as to the status, quality and quantity of ecosystems on each island.

The project mapped both natural and modified ecosystems across the entire landscape of the major islands in the Islands Trust Area. The maps will support a Regional Conservation Plan that will identify priority conservation areas for the Islands Trust Area and a protected areas network for each island. The maps are available on the Conservation Planning page of our website.

## Islands Trust Fund Starts Changing its Public Face to Islands Trust Conservancy

The Trust Fund Board has decided to start using the slogan 'the Islands Trust Conservancy' to more accurately reflect the kind of work we do in the Gulf Islands.

Louise Bell, Chairperson of the Trust Fund Board, explains: "By using the words the Islands Trust Conservancy, we hope everyone will easily understand our role in the region. The Islands Trust Fund name has often created confusion. We are not a funding organization or a bank, but rather a regional land trust that accepts donations. We believe that shifting towards the use of the word Conservancy will emphasize the protection of special places in the Islands Trust Area."

We have requested that the Province amend the Islands Trust Act to change the name of the organization from Islands Trust Fund to Islands Trust Conservancy, and to change the board's name from Trust Fund Board to Islands Trust Conservancy Board. This change may take a year or more to complete. In the meantime, we look forward to using the new name as a slogan in our day-to-day work.

For more information about the Island Trust Fund or any of our projects, please contact our office at (250) 405-5186, or email [itfmail@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:itfmail@islandstrust.bc.ca).

## Islands Trust Fund

### BOARD MEMBERS

Louise Bell, Denman Island, CHAIRPERSON  
Kim Benson, Keats Island  
Tony Law, Hornby Island

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## Donation or Information Request Form

All donations to the Islands Trust Fund are tax-deductible. We will direct 100% your donation to our Opportunity Fund for local conservancies, unless requested to direct it to an existing project.

- I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help protect special places in the Islands Trust Area.  
 I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday Calendars for \$17.95 each, or 2 for \$29.95.  I have attached my cheque, payable to **Islands Trust Fund**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to let my name be known as a supporter.  Yes  No

Please add me to the e-mail list for Islands Trust Fund updates by e-mail.  Yes  No

Please send me information on:

- How to make a land donation to the Islands Trust Fund.  How to use a conservation covenant to protect my land.  
 How to leave land or money to the Islands Trust Fund in my will.  NAPTEP (available on the Sunshine Coast and the CRD).

Send to: Islands Trust Fund 200-1627 Fort Street Victoria BC V8R 1H8 or fax to: (250) 405-5155  <b>Questions? (250) 405-5151</b>
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