



# News Release

Suite 200-1627 Fort Street Victoria BC V8R 1H8

Telephone **250.405.5151** FAX: (250) 405.5155

Toll Free via Enquiry BC in Vancouver 604.660.2421. Elsewhere in BC **1.800.663.7867**

itfmail@islandstrust.bc.ca www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca

October 9, 2008

2008-04-ITF

## **GABRIOLA COMMUNITY CELEBRATES OFFICIAL NAMING OF ELDER CEDAR NATURE RESERVE**

VICTORIA — Gabriola Island residents gathered recently to celebrate the official naming of the Islands Trust Fund's Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve, formally known as the UREP lands.

Snuneymuxw linguist and elder Dr. Ellen White honoured the nature reserve with a Hul'qumi'num name – S'ul-hween X'pey or Elder Cedar. Dr. White translates the word 'elder' to mean more than old; it has connotations of unseen ancestors and guardians. A stroll along the nature reserve's trails can reveal the true meaning of the name – visitors may feel the presence of ancient spirits in the veteran cedar giants that watch over this quiet place.

"This is a very special day, because this is a very special place" said Gabriola Land & Trails Trust President Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley at the event. "I am delighted that we have the chance to gather to celebrate this jewel, a place that individuals and groups from across the island worked so hard to preserve and protect."

The Islands Trust Fund Board received the Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve from the Province of British Columbia in 2006 as its first Free Crown Grant. Members of the Gabriola Land Conservancy and the Gabriola Land & Trails Trust led the campaign to protect this land. The 65-hectare (162 acre) forest contains the last remaining stand of old-growth trees on Gabriola Island. Stoney Creek and several other streams cross the property, bringing vital nutrients and biodiversity values to the forest. Wetlands scattered throughout the property provide habitat for amphibians and food sources for many bird species. The property protects several at-risk plant communities and animal species including the band-tailed pigeon and the red-legged frog.

"When we protect natural areas like forests and marshes, we not only get to enjoy the natural beauty but we also receive real and measurable benefits such as clean air and clean water" said Leigh Ann Milman, President of the Gabriola Land Conservancy.

The naming event was a celebration of the community's dedication and effort in protecting the forest. Island residents worked for more than 15 years to have the Elder Cedar property protected for its ecological values and popular walking trails.

"The transfer of this property from the Province to the Islands Trust Fund was a big win for our community," said Sheila Malcolmson, Gabriola Island Trustee and Islands Trust Fund Board Chair. "Former trustees Susan Yates, Jack Sickavish and Gail Lund, and current trustee Gisele Rudischer all worked to enshrine the community's wish to protect the UREP lands in Gabriola's Official Community Plan, and this ended up being key to the Province agreeing to transfer the lands. And without the constant efforts of Leigh Ann Milman of the Gabriola Land Conservancy and the vital support of our former MLA Mike Hunter, efforts to protect the property may have been lost."

The Snuneymuxw First Nation was also instrumental in the efforts to protect the Elder Cedar property. By graciously excluding the land from their Treaty Settlement claim, the Snuneymuxw allowed the Islands Trust Fund to apply to the Crown for its transfer for conservation purposes.

---

"CREATING A LEGACY OF SPECIAL PLACES"

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

---

The Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve offers a magical hiking experience. Anyone using the nature reserve trails in the last few months may have noticed changes to its trails. To protect the fragile plant communities and preserve the unique character of the diverse forest, the Islands Trust Fund is working with the Gabriola Land & Trails Trust (GaLTT) to maintain the trail system in a way that protects the sensitive ecosystems in the nature reserve, while providing recreational opportunities for islanders. The trails are open to walkers, bird watchers, photographers, botanists, or anyone looking for a peaceful retreat in a beautiful place. The reserve is closed to bicycles, horses, and all-terrain vehicles. The Islands Trust Fund requests that visitors to the Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve tread lightly on the protected land. If treated with respect, this community jewel will continue to offer the rich experience of visiting a mature forest for generations to come.

This fall, GaLTT will work to remove invasive species such as Scotch broom, holly and ivy from the reserve. The exclusion of horses and bikes will prevent the further spread of invasive species. If you are interested in participating please contact GaLTT at [info@galtt.ca](mailto:info@galtt.ca). Those interested in learning more about the management of the Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve or its history can view the management plan online at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/pdf/itfmgmtplancedar.pdf>.

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 984 hectares of natural and cultural values on 70 properties with a combined value of more than \$32 million.

– 30 –

## CONTACT

Jennifer Eliason  
Manager, Islands Trust Fund  
250.405.5191

Sheila Malcolmson  
Chair, Islands Trust Fund Board  
250.247.8078