



*"...to conserve and connect the natural areas
and neighbourhoods of Gabriola..."*

Gabriola Land & Trails Trust

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Honouring Randy and Lynne Young

At its AGM in February 2016, GaLTT awarded honorary life memberships to Randy and Lynne Young in grateful recognition of their enormous contribution to the development of Gabriola's fine trail system.

They have both been GaLTT members since its creation in 2004, and Randy became a Director in 2006. Very soon he was leading trail work parties on the new Yogi Trail in Cox Park. He remained the organizer for volunteer trail work, breaking and maintaining trails, building boardwalks, and clearing invasive plants, until he retired from the Board in January 2016.



Randy inspired volunteers to join work parties every second Sunday for YEARS, somehow managing to make the prospect of working in the rain and mud fun and interesting! Lynne was also always cheerfully at the work parties, signing in the crew, tracking hours, and taking photos. Lynne regularly provided transport for hikers on GaLTT's trans-Gabriola treks, not to mention hosting

many great Christmas parties for the Board. They both continue to volunteer on the GaLTT trail work crews.

A plaque has been mounted in their honour on the new footbridge (which was inspired by Randy) to the Kensington Lands beyond Joyce Lockwood Park.

Guided walks

We kicked off 2016 in fine style by walking a beautiful frosty forest trail loop in the New Year's morning sunshine. Kerry Marcus led us through Crown lands, starting from the top of Degnen Road North.

In the spring, Rob Brockley guided a lovely coastal forest walk through Joyce Lockwood Park and the Kensington (Crown) Lands, enjoying the varying ecology as the group moved from damper low-lying areas to drier upland environments. Later in the summer, during July and August, Rob, Kerry, and Bob Weenk guided evening trail walks in Elder Cedar Nature Reserve and 707 Community Park.



Trans-Gabriola treks

On a cool sunny Fall day in 2015, 18 walkers left Silva Bay and trekked to Surf Lodge, making brief stops at Tait Road and Tin Can Alley to snack and wait for new-comers. At the end, the Surf's beer was most welcome. About 30 people joined GaLTT's guides this June to walk from Descanso Bay Park to Silva Bay. Some chatted, some strode, and some dawdled to look at the wild flowers, but all enjoyed the refreshments at Silva Bay pub afterwards. Gertie carried everyone back to their cars after both treks.

Forest bathing—*shinrin-yoku*

Last summer, Rob Brockley introduced Gabriolans to *forest bathing* by leading a quiet walk around Elder Cedar Nature Reserve. The forest bathing concept is inspired by the Japanese practice of *shinrin-yoku*, which roughly translates to 'taking in the forest atmosphere'. In Japan, frequent leisurely forest walks have become a cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle and preventative health care. Rob says a good forest bathing experience doesn't require special knowledge: "It's all about quietly and deliberately tuning in to the natural world and letting the healing properties of the forest enter the body through all five senses." Discovering forest bathing about 10 years ago, Rob realized he had been instinctively practising it for most of his life: "Being in a forest has always been a special experience for me. The sights, sounds, and smells never fail to refresh my mind and spirit."

Trail licences

GaLTT recently signed a new trail licence with Nelder Boulton, granting public access to Nelder's Pond Trail. This trail is an important link in GaLTT's longterm goal of public trails "from Descanso to Drumbeg". Such licences protect the land owner by specifying that GaLTT has responsibility for maintaining and insuring the trail. Conditions under which the owner can withdraw from the arrangement are laid out in the licence. The licence automatically ceases if the property changes hands, unless the new owners wish to renew it. GaLTT now has over a dozen such licences, increasing our connectivity.



Volunteer trail-work crews

After Randy retired, Rob Brockley took over the task of organizing GaLTT's trail-work crews. They've been extra busy this year with several special projects supplementing regular trimming and clearing activities.

Cox Park signage

A year ago, RDN parks department delivered sturdy wood signposts for new directional signs designed by Rob. Randy's crew installed them throughout Cox Park. Thanks all!

Boardwalk building

After Arbutus Lumber's generous donation of a truckload of lumber, our work crews got to work keeping your feet dry. They have built new boardwalks on both sides of the new footbridge; on Wilkinson Way trail to 707; and in Petroglyph Park—and they're still working!



Robinson Woods

Despite terrible October weather, energetic GaLTT crews filled in a hazardous old disused well and removed the unsightly, broken fencing. This required some temporary disturbance of the trail and shrubs near the well site, but another energetic crew soon brought in a pile of bark mulch, a dozen wheelbarrows and rakes, and lots of energy to return the area to its former tranquil beauty, while the landowner happily "supervised" the impressive work.

Footbridge in Kensington Lands

Last September, Randy's trail work crew carried a narrow aluminum walkway (bought by GaLTT) through Joyce Lockwood Park, and installed it across the gully to improve trail access to Kensington Lands. Wood decking was attached, and the frame locked into place above the old rotting wood "bridge". That's better!



Before



After

Trail stewards

At the February 2016 AGM, Libby King and Chuck Desorcy from Greenways Land Trust (Campbell River) spoke to us about their work mid-island with several streamkeeper groups, and their "Adopt-a-trail" program. Inspired, Rob Brockley proposed inviting Gabriolans to be stewards for their favourite trails.

The stewards are asked to inspect their best loved trails as they regularly walk them, and report to Rob any needed maintenance work. Stewards are not obliged to do the work themselves (though that's always welcome!). Rob ensures that the needed work, such as clipping overgrown shrubs, improving drainage, or removing fallen trees across trails, is scheduled for the regular twice monthly volunteer work crews.

The response has been very positive, with a couple of dozen regular stewards working all around the island. If you'd like to become a trail steward contact Rob at rbrockley@shaw.ca.

Reporting vandalism

Our volunteers must repeatedly replace the protective fence and signage around the big old cedar in Elder Cedar Nature Reserve after it is vandalized. If you know who is doing this please report this illegal, destructive activity to the RCMP.

Generous donation from Arbutus Building Supplies

In early April, Arbutus generously donated and delivered a load of slightly flawed lumber for GaLTT to use to build boardwalks over muddy trail sections.

Thankyou!

Poirier photo raffle

The winning raffle ticket for this beautiful photograph of Elder Cedar forest by Gabriola's John Poirier was drawn by John at the Thanksgiving Farmers' Market.

The winner was Linda Tyler (now of Qualicum) who was delighted to have this reminder of her life on Gabriola. Second prize of lovely jewellery made and donated by Judy Preston was won by Gabriolan Tessa Spero.



John and Judy's generous donations allowed GaLTT to raise nearly \$1000 for our work on Gabriola's parks and trails. THANK YOU!

Big tree registry

David Boehm, Rob Brockley and Ron Bilquist have been out bushwhacking for the last couple of years, looking for Gabriola's BIG TREES. They've listed nearly 80 now—not as big as most giant West coast trees, but the Gulf Islands' relatively dry Coastal Douglas-fir ecology is challenging.

Visit the website: www.gabriolabigtrees.galtt.ca and email us about your favourite big tree if we've missed it.

Self-guided walk brochures

In the spring we developed three self-guided walk brochures that give detailed walking directions and describe and picture the plants that can be found on our trails in:

- Haven Woods
- Cox Park
- Kensington Lands beyond Joyce Lockwood

New Mudge Island park

In September we were asked for help by the Mudge Island Land Trust Association (MILTA) and RDN representative Howard Houle because "Lot 25" adjacent to Dodd Narrows was for sale. This beautiful lot (like a mini Drumbeq) has long been informally used by the public as a picnic and viewing area and had earlier been identified by the RDN as a desirable location for a Community Park. Our Board met with MILTA on Mudge to discuss funding ideas. To buy it,



MILTA donated \$8000, GaLTT donated \$10,000 from our earmarked land acquisition fund, RDN provided \$12,000, and the rest of the cost will be funded through RDN Area B taxes over the next 5 years. **These are the first GaLTT funds to be used for land purchase.**

Trans Canada Trail

The Trans Canada Trail initiative aims to build ... "the longest and greatest recreational trail in the world, connecting Canadians from coast to coast to coast." In August, GaLTT contributed \$1000 to the initiative, and this will be matched dollar for dollar thanks to Jack Cockwell, patron of TCT, and the Government of Canada.

Partners with the museum

Last spring, when they were redeveloping their native plant garden, we co-produced with the Gabriola Museum an attractive brochure about our native plants. We are working on a similar brochure about Gabriola's invasive plants, and will share a community-wide initiative next spring to combat the worst invaders.

Broombashing, etc...

Last January GaLTT's volunteer crews took advantage of the wet soil to hand-pull young broom plants in Drumbeq and Petroglyph Parks without disturbing the soil too much. They "extractigated" lots more big broom plants in Drumbeq Park and piled them onto invasive blackberry, killing two birds with one stone. In April another group met to clear the broom away from the gloriously blooming camas lilies and spring gold in the meadow.

In February the Gabriola Guides worked in the Petroglyph Conservancy Area, making it broom free for this year. Good work! Also Lynne Young reported that "Hilary Masson and her eight home school *Adventure Camp* kids, used our small extractigators very effectively one morning on the small broom in Drumbeq." Lots of *Daphne laureola* was removed over the year too, and David Boehm wages war single-handedly on Gabriola's Giant hogweed. David has also initiated a campaign to eliminate Japanese knotweed from Gabriola.

Streamkeepers

Our Gabriola Streamkeepers have continued their excellent work monitoring Gabriola's streams and wetlands all year. They have learned to use and maintain their newly acquired instruments, and continue to work with GES students when they can.

Board & Society development

It's not all about trails. Board members spend much thought and time ensuring that GaLTT is as effective as possible and complies with national standards and laws. This year with the help of Wave Consulting we re-examined our policies and procedures on land acquisition and stewardship to ensure that they comply with Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices. In the next year, we must also make changes in our by-laws to meet the requirements of the new Societies Act.

In October several Directors attended Land Trust Alliance of BC's seminar series to explore how to better "tell our story" in our community; plan for organizational longevity and succession; develop strategic alliances with other organizations; and ensure that we manage our covenants effectively. We came back reinvigorated and happy to know we're mostly on the right track!