



Newsletter Number 11
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Gabriola Land and Trails Trust

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by John Peirce

It has been a busy and successful Summer and Fall for GaLTT. In addition to our regular trail work parties and presence at the Farmers' Market, we have been cleaning up invasive tansy ragwort around the island, looking at the Lock Bay density transfer proposal, arranging trail licences, discussing covenants, and holding a Strategic Planning Workshop.

The most significant new developments are the recent signing of our first Trail Licence and the successful negotiation of our second one. A landowner grants such a licence to GaLTT to allow a trail across their property to be used by the public for non-motorized travel. Under the licence, GaLTT assumes the liability risk through its insurance coverage. To our knowledge, this approach is a first in the Gulf Islands for a private organization to undertake. Trail licences provide us with many opportunities to open up critical trail connectors and formalize trails that may have been used by the public informally for years.

During recent discussions of the Trail Licence idea, we have had several suggestions from the community for new connectors. We also have several older connector-trail ideas that the RDN was supposed to organize, but they no longer have the staff resources to develop new Trail Licences. If you have ideas about where new Trail Licences would be appropriate, please contact us (info@galtt.ca).

On the covenant side, we had an excellent day in August walking the Elder Cedar Nature Reserve with staff from the Islands Trust Fund and the Nanaimo Area Land Trust (NALT) discussing how that covenant will work and how we will carry out annual inspections. We also have facilitated conversations between another landowner and the Islands Trust Fund, and we hope that a new covenant protecting open space on Gabriola will be announced in the near future.

We continue to raise public awareness about the management of invasive species as part of



Sandwell wetlands.

our trail management initiative. Great progress has been made in Drumbeg Park and elsewhere on removing Scotch Broom. This past summer we focussed on removing toxic Tansy Ragwort while it was in flower, with great success. Particular thanks go to GaLTT member Nick Doe who single handedly clipped tansy flower heads all along both North and South Roads!

The Lock Bay density transfer proposal is a complex rezoning proposal which involves transferring 9 potential residential densities from the "donor" lands abutting the 707 Community Park and Coats Marsh to the "receiver" lands along Daniel Way, including the salt marsh area behind the berm of the beach at Sandwell Park. We have a small sub-committee studying this proposal. Our initial response to a referral from the Islands Trust was that the Donor Parcels are highly desirable, but that there are many problems with the



President John Peirce & member Sally Robinson announce GaLTT's second trail licence.

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President's Report (continued from page 1)



President John Pierce and Treasurer Tom Cameron thank Diane and Bill Cornish for becoming the first Gabriolans to hold a Trail licence for the trail that connects Barrett Road to Rollo park.

details of the sub-division proposal as presented. These problems include the lack of viable access to the shore, inadequate protection of the salt marsh, steep slopes, and riparian areas, and a concern by neighbours about increased pressure on groundwater resources in an area already affected by newly permitted bulk water extraction. GaLTT has had one meeting to date with the applicant and had a very fruitful discussion regarding our concerns. We hope that whenever a revised proposal is submitted, our concerns will be directly addressed with changes to the proposal and much more specific plans for protecting the environmentally sensitive areas in a meaningful way.

On October 22 we held a Strategic Planning Workshop at the Community Hall to help the Board update its Strategic Plan and guide our efforts for the next several years. The meeting was well attended by about 10 Board members and 15-20 GaLTT members, including three candidates in the upcoming election. Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley ran the meeting smoothly, and everyone agreed that there was a high level of energy in the room and several novel ideas to consider. Dyan will be summarizing the results of the meeting and the Board will translate the ideas into a new Strategic Plan, which we will share with membership early in the New Year.

One negative situation that we need to address is declining membership. Our membership is down from a high of over 250 to fewer than 100 families. This year alone, over a hundred families have not renewed their membership. Whether this is a result of the challenging financial times or perhaps a bit of apathy because there have been no burning issues, we are not sure. Direct e-mail appeals have produced very limited response. If you are not sure whether your annual membership is current, please check with us—it's likely to have expired. We now also offer a five-year membership as a way to avoid annual renewals. Your tax-deductible membership fees aid GaLTT's work in establishing and maintaining trails and boardwalks. Also, our ability to influence community decision-making depends upon having a broad and representative membership! If you support the work we are doing, please renew your own membership AND encourage your friends and neighbours to join GaLTT.

TRAIL UPDATES



Member John Switzer shows his collection of beach litter



Phyllis Farad and Lynne Young show that trail building is not all men's work!



GaLTT and Commons members work together to salvage materials

TRAIL WORK PARTIES

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Randy Young, who is the organizer of the bi-monthly trail building and maintenance work parties, the on-going job of creating, repairing and upgrading trails on the public lands of Gabriola is in capable hands. His wife Lynne is often seen in the thick of things as well. Work party locations are available on our website and are also advertised in the Souder (and Shingle?) and occur every second Sunday from 1:00-3:00 pm.

The spring and summer work parties focused largely on the invasive plant species as described in the "Invasive Plants" article. As well GaLTT initiated a beach clean-up day encouraging the public to join in a work party clearing the shore from Hummingbird Park to Joyce Lockwood Park or to work in beach areas closer to where they lived.

Randy is an active member on many fronts in our community and I quote: "Posac members came and helped stain posts yesterday, my garage is full. I'm waiting for sign nameplates and direction arrows from the RDN Parks." Randy is talking about the signage that GaLTT, in conjunction with the RDN, will be coordinating in the 707 Acre Park. The Guided walks (described in another article) led by Bob Weenks were very positively received by visitors and locals who expressed a reluctance to enter the park in fear of losing their way. Signage will be a welcome and a necessary safety measure.

In a true spirit of recycling Donald Butt and his wife donated lumber from a deck they were replacing and along with members of the Commons nails were removed and boards were

taken to be used at the Commons for extension of their walkway to the common garden.

If you also have materials in good condition that could be used for trail building or maintenance contact Randy Young (ranyoung@shaw.ca)

FARMER'S MARKET

GaLTT maintains a presence at the Farmer's Market from May through to October and would like to thank those members who volunteered their time and energy to assist in the staffing of our table. As always many members find the table an easy and accessible way to renew their annual memberships. As well we sold many copies of the book *Hiking the Gulf Islands of British Columbia* by Charles Kahn. It is his third edition of this book and was hot off the press this past April. There are a few copies left and they can be obtained by calling Barb Hague at 247 7675. A great gift idea!

Trail maps are also a popular item and it is our intention to have a new and expanded version available in the Spring.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Gabriola Lands & Trails Trust has recently been offered the charitable donation of publicly traded shares. This type of donation is very efficient for a donor as there is no tax on the capital gains. At the October board meeting, it was decided that GaLTT will establish a brokerage account with Credential Securities Direct to facilitate this type of donation. Credential Services is a discount brokerage firm that is aligned with Coastal Community Credit Union. It will take some time to put this in place but it will be a progressive step for our organization and members. We will provide more information on the website advising our members and the general public of this new charitable donation service.

GaLTT will also register with Canada Helps to make electronic charitable donations to the organization fast and easy. To facilitate this type of transaction GaLTT is upgrading our account at Coastal Community Credit Union to allow AFTs (Automated Funds Transfer). Electronic donations will likely be a prime fund raising tool for our future. We will be asking members to consider signing up for small monthly donations in support of our costs associated with placement of trail licences and conservation covenants through NAPTEP of the Islands Trust Fund. The beauty of a monthly donation program is that it is simple, painless and out of sight.

Tom Cameron, Treasurer

*Bob Weenk leads
a guided walk
through the 707
Acre park*



SUMMERTIME GALT GUIDED WALKS

For the first time this summer Gabriola Lands and Trails Trust offered a series of guided walks on select trails. This proved to be a successful endeavor and we hope to repeat similar walks in the future to encourage Gabriolans to use the trails that we have worked so hard to maintain.

Board member Tom Cameron and member Phyllis Fafard guided the first walk in Cox Park. Both Tom and Phyllis have a wonderful depth of knowledge both about the history of the park and the extensive plant life found within it. There was plenty of time for questions as we strolled along and it was a delightful way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Bob Weenk, another board member and an active walker himself, led two groups into the 707 Acre Park on two consecutive Tuesday mornings. The first walk guided us into the park from "the Stumps" on North Road and took us into the park from that direction. While GaLTT, in conjunction with the 707 Management Plan, will be involved in putting up signage in the park this has not yet been done. The purpose of these walks was to give Gabriolans a sense of security about using the walking trails without fear of

getting lost.

Bob's second guided walk left from the South Road entrance and we were able to see how you can get to the same trails from two different accesses. Tom Cameron was able to add to Bob's information about the history of the Park and the vegetation that is returning after the logging that took place in the area several years ago.

Bob's rules of thumb for walking in the 707: "At the north end or if you are walking north, downhill is out of the park, usually toward Ricki, Jeannette or South Road. In fact the whole park, with the exception of the marsh in the middle, slopes to the north. Also, being aware of outside features like Mount Benson or the smoke from Harmac is useful. Depending on the season and time of day, watch the shadows. The sun is usually southerly, more or less, so shadows point northerly, toward the North and South Road exits. It's tough to get lost; however, it's certainly possible to emerge a long way from your entrance point. I don't recommend novices going in on foggy days or after a fresh snowfall. Once the signs are up, all this will become less important and will make the area safer for visitors and residents alike."



*Tom Cameron
gives some
history of Cox
Park as he
begins his
guided walk.*



Drumbeg "Broom Bash"



The invasive Daphne laurel crowds out native salal.



*Controlling
Scotch broom
in Drumbeg
allows the
Camas lily to
bloom*



*Cinnabar moth larvae seen on Tansy Ragwort naturally
destroys the plant.*

Any plant that crowds out the indigenous flora of an area is considered an invasive plant in that area. In order to protect our natural vegetation GaLTT decided to spearhead several initiatives over the spring and summer of 2011 that would assist in the control of Scotch Broom, Tansy Ragwort and Daphne Laurel. GaLTT members and the general public were encouraged to manage the control of these plants on their own property and join in the GaLTT work parties in parks and in other public areas.

The first of these events was a "Broom Bash" in the early spring and was done in conjunction with members of the Lions club. Working together we were able to clear a large area in Drumbeg and were rewarded by the return of the Camas lily meadows which were once prevalent in this area. Ongoing education of the nature of this plant is found on our website and in the brochure that is available by request or at any of our market tables.

The second focus was the clearing of Tansy Ragwort as GaLTT encouraged landowners to pull these bright yellow summer flowers from nearby areas and invited work parties to clear blooming plants before they went to seed. People reported collecting garbage bags full of the flowering heads of these plants where they will allow them to decompose until next spring. Apparently,

once rotted they make very good compost. (See the work done by member Nick Doe on our website!)

The final initiative focused on Daphne Laurel, a handsome plant that as one person at the market commented, "It is a plant that looks like it should be there!" GaLTT board member David Boehm explains that there is damage done to the sensitive Douglas Fir ecosystem as Daphne Laurel grows above the Salal and crowds it out. Daphne Laurel can be highly toxic to certain people causing skin irritation when handled without protective covering. Young children may be particularly sensitive. Birds love the berries and as the seeds are not digested they are easily spread.

Like most plants these three plants are most easily eradicated as young plants and we encourage land owners to watch for their emergence in the spring when they are easy to pull and before they go to seed after flowering. We also remind you that for more mature plants GaLTT provides the use of the "EXTRACTIGATOR".

GaLTT would like to thank everyone who assisted at any of the work parties or who held their own work parties in the attempt to control these plants on Gabriola. It is an ongoing process.

(For more information on any of these plants or use of the extractor check our website www.galtt.ca)