



MAIL: PO Box 56, Gabriola, BC, V0R 1X0

EMAIL: info@galtt.ca

WEB: www.galtt.ca

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Harriet Thomas signs her trail licence with GaLTT President Norm Harburn
Photo by Anne Landry

Celebrating new trails

Last summer GaLTT signed a trail licence agreement with UK resident Harriet Thomas allowing public access to beautiful Haven Woods, named for Harriet's admiration of the work done at The Haven. Her forested land stretches from the end of King Road (up behind Twin Beaches Centre) down to Berry Point Road at Fin Road.

She invited GaLTT to extend the trail system in Haven Woods, so in September and October, GaLTT volunteers developed two new trail loops. The first included access to a vanilla leaf meadow around a big maple, which Harriet wanted walkers to enjoy. The second (much tougher work for the volunteers!) extended the trail system toward Berry Point Road before looping back toward King Road.

Through two additional private trail licences with the Brockley and the Jansche families (thank you!), the Haven Woods trail system has since been linked all the way to Cox Community Park via Bruce Lynn Drive. **See the maps (inside this newsletter) of these trails and other new trails since our big trail maps were printed—>.**

Randy Young's volunteer trail-work crews were busy all year

Come rain or snow, our hardy bunch of volunteers is out breaking new trails, maintaining old ones, building and moving boardwalks, and removing invasive plants. When they replaced the boardwalk at Blue Heron Park last winter, they no doubt delighted neighbours fed up with trespassers.



Both photos by Lynne Young

In 2014, 65 volunteers put in a total of 385 hours of hard slog working on our trails.

At the AGM, Randy acknowledged three super volunteers, who had put in the most hours: Sam Betts, Peter McLaren, and Norm Harburn. Randy presented Sam with a new machete and Peter (seen here) with a pouched set of clippers. Mind you, NONE of them put in as many hours as Randy and Lynne Young!



Trans Gabriola treks and guided walks to be continued this year

Last spring and fall, over 30 walkers (including a visitor from Stuttgart who saw our poster at the Market) and half a dozen well-behaved dogs hiked, not too vigorously, the length of Gabriola. We followed 19 km of broad gravel walks, narrow salal-whipped paths, sloped forest trails, and a few stretches of pavement, stopping en route to eat our picnic lunches.

Last May we set off from Descanso Bay Park in light rain to walk to Silva Bay Pub, and in October we started from Silva Bay and ended at Skol Pub, walking in miraculously clear weather after several days of rain. Randy's crews had been out clipping the salal so that we weren't drenched. The pubs were welcome destinations and GaLTT had arranged for Gertie to take us back to our starting points.



Photo by Anne Landry

2015 treks and guided walks

In May and October we'll be doing it again! On May 24 we will start our trek at Silva Bay, and have arranged to finish at Surf Lodge, where the new owners will have a special menu awaiting us. Watch the Gabriola Sounder for details.

We also hope to continue our series of guided walks along beaches and in Gabriola's parks, including the complex trail system of 707-acre Park. See the Sounder for details.



Gabriola Streamkeepers have had a busy, successful year monitoring Gabriola's streams and engaging the community in stream health. Using a generous grant from the Pacific Salmon Foundation, they are building their supply of essential stream-monitoring equipment and display materials.

Last spring, they set up four demonstration stations near Winthuysen Creek in Descanso Bay Regional Park, to demonstrate to the community how they assess stream habitats. They visited the same stream with the Grade 6/7 class from Gabriola Elementary School, to show them how they monitor streams, and also had a display at the June Oceans Day event.



Photo (left) by Tawny Maclachlan Capon and (right) by Chris Hills

In late Fall, streamkeepers erected signs at eight stream crossings on North, South, and Taylor Bay roads, and they are planning more such signs.

They have found lots of pumpkin seed fish and stickleback in most of our streams, and salmon alevin and fry in several. After the rain began in October, Chris Hills was excited to find a mature chum swimming close to the logjam outside the Sandwell salt marsh, where Castell Creek flows to the sea.

GaLTT and solutions for cycling

There has been an exciting growth in all kinds of cycling on Gabriola over the last 10 years and many cyclists ride on our roads and trails. GaLTT wishes to understand the potential and limitations of bicycles/tricycles for transportation and connectivity in our community.

- Can a coalition of cyclists work to improve cycling infrastructure on Gabriola?
- What considerations must we give to the interactions among walkers, cyclists, and horse-riders on our trails?
- Do special bike trails need to be set aside?
- What about partially powered bikes—do they belong on trails?

Given the evolution of partially-powered "e-bikes" of various kinds, it is obvious that some forms of *motorized vehicles* are beneficial for handicapped accessibility as well as for general users. Therefore GaLTT wishes to examine the implications of continuing to restrict all motorized vehicles on our trails. To be part of the solution for cycling problems on Gabriola, please get in touch with GaLTT by e-mail to info@galtt or phone Tom Cameron at 250-247-7587.

Honorary Members

To mark our 10th anniversary in 2014, GaLTT awarded Honorary Memberships to **Sally Robinson** (who covenanted Robinson Woods after licensing it for public trail use) and to **Don & Louanne McCollum** (who have generously donated to GaLTT since its founding) in recognition of their outstanding contributions to Gabriola through GaLTT's work.

Early this year GaLTT also awarded honorary memberships to:

- **John Peirce** for his significant work during his Presidency developing GaLTT's capacity to hold covenants and issue trail licences on Gabriola, and for helping to facilitate BC's first cross-border covenant with American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts (for Robinson Woods).
- **Leigh Anne Milman** for her important conservation work on Gabriola, leading the drives to preserve Elder Cedar Nature Reserve and Coats Marsh Regional Park.
- **Anne Drozd** for her diligent and meticulous volunteer work over the last four years organizing GaLTT's accounting system and membership records.

Speakers

GaLTT kicked off last year with a talk by Katie Blake, conservation coordinator (BC Region) for the Nature Conservancy of Canada. She spoke about NCC's approach to conservation in our modern world and described a successful estuary restoration project in Campbell River.

This February, Dr Kees Groot, retired Fisheries researcher, gave an amusing and informative talk about "The Sex Lives of Salmon", telling us about the physical and behavioural changes that salmon undergo during the spawning season.

Strategic Plan 2015–2020

Last Spring, 28 GaLTT members and directors spent an afternoon under Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley's guidance, discussing possible futures for GaLTT as we move into our second decade. Many good ideas emerged and the board used Dunsmoor-Farley's report as a basis for developing our Strategic Plan for 2015-2020.

The Strategic Plan specifies six strategic directions, each with its associated goals and outcomes:

- appropriate mandate and scope
- enhanced organizational capacity
- comprehensive trail planning and stewardship
- land acquisition and protection
- strengthened intergovernmental; and community relations
- increased public engagement.

The plan was presented to members at the AGM. You can find printed copies of the plan at the library, or you may download a digital copy (pdf) from our website www.galtt.ca.

GaLTT committees

GaLTT's day-to-day work is done by several board committees. Board members participate in the committees according to their personal interests and skills:

- **Executive**
chaired by President Norm Harburn
- **Trails and park management**
chaired by Randy Young
- **Acquisitions, covenants, and trail licences**,
chaired by Rob Brockley
- **Community engagement**
chaired by Kerry Marcus
- **Communications**
chaired by Jenni Gehlbach
- **Streamkeepers**
chaired by Tawny Maclachlan Capon
board representative Chris Hills