



# Gabriola Land & Trails Trust

*Newsletter #3 Jan 2007*

*Conserving and connecting the natural areas and neighbourhoods of Gabriola Island*

**Presidents Report** A few people with common goals can accomplish a great deal by working together. In 2003 the then new Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Area B Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) put together a few folks previously unknown to each other. Gabriola at that time had only 70 ha of park (*Island Trust Fund Regional Conservation Plan 2005*).

A small group of people, including some members of the first POSAC committee, recognized that an additional community based entity was required to raise funds for new park acquisitions and projects in excess of our tax dollars. The founding group gathered additional skilled and interested participants through newspaper pieces. In the fall of 2004 the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT) was registered under the BC Societies Act.

GaLTT set out to work closely within the community, with local governments and in support of the objectives of the Gabriola Island Official Community Plan. In partnership with government agencies, community volunteers play a very important supporting role and can accomplish a great deal. GaLTT adopted a goal similar to past parks related groups, to establish an interconnecting network of parks and trails from "Descanso to Drumbeg".

Since 2004 GaLTT volunteers and funds raised have contributed to new trail development in Cox Community Park, Petroglyph Trail Community Park, and on Undeveloped Road Access points. In 2005 events in the community led to an incredible addition of 350 ha to Gabriola's protected area (parks and nature reserves). GaLTT played an important role by encouraging dialogue in the community.

## Why Public Parks and Trails are important

More public land may result in a greater attraction for tourism on Gabriola, be that good or bad, however the real purpose of GaLTT's work lies right here at home. Conserving land and connecting neighbourhoods builds healthy, quality recreational opportunities for a healthy community. Trail connections increase efficient non-vehicle transportation options for getting across the island, walking or cycling to the village centre or the ferry and for our children to get to school. Trails that are authorized for public use protect land owners against trespass and public liability, and provide maintenance options through tax dollars or community fund raising.

**Membership Report** Membership stands at 179. If you joined or renewed your GaLTT membership after September 2006, your membership runs until December 2007. If you joined prior to Sept 2006 please don't forget to renew your membership for 2007. You can do this by finding a member/donor form on the website, or contacting us below. Help us to reach the 200 mark, talk to friends and colleagues about our work and encourage them to join us.

**Treasurer's Report** Our year end report will be tabled at the 2007 Annual General Meeting. Members wishing a copy may request one through the contacts below.

## Charitable Status Granted

Our Charitable Status application was finally approved in September 2006 approximately one year after the initial application. We are very pleased and grateful to Carol Boyce and her late husband Stewart for the great work done on the application. The rest was easy!

**Fundraising** The bank account is doing very well thanks to the very keen Acquisitions and Fund Raising Committee, and amazing community support. The Gabriola Quilters donated a fabulous quilt and appliquéd cushion as summer raffle prizes. Members sold tickets all summer at the Farmers Market and raised over \$4000. Sales of T-Shirts, water bottles and art cards contributed to a very successful season. Thanks to all of you who donated your time and energy to help with sales and to those who purchased tickets, GaLTT goods and memberships. We have funds to cover survey and equipment costs and a very nice start on a land acquisition fund.

**Policy and Planning** Policy development is important if not the most exciting work. A Strategic Planning session in May set some future objectives and an Acquisitions Policy Framework has been adopted.

**Projects and Grants Progress** Once again with the generous assistance of the Gabriola Recreation Society our second map brochure, "*21 Walks on Gabriola*" showing Gabriola's authorized parks and trails was produced in the spring of 2006. 2000 copies were distributed free to residents with community newspaper delivery, and mailed to members at the time. Additional copies are still available through the Visitors Information Center, Pages Marina and Board members at the cost of a \$1 donation to GaLTT.

**Whose Map is That?** Dee Lauder and the Mid-Island Co-op teamed up in the summer of 2006 to produce and post a very nice large map at the gas bar, along with copies for sale. Unfortunately GaLTT was referenced on the map in ways that made it appear to be our map. Unfortunately and unintentionally there were a few instances of trails displayed over private land, which led to some uncomfortable public accusations of GaLTT promoting private land trespass. GaLTT is working explicitly to raise awareness about private land trespass and encourage the public to use public access routes! We contacted both parties to respectfully request some edits to the Co-op map to clarify GaLTT's involvement and to resolve advertising private land trespass. Those edits have now been adopted on the hand-out copies.

**Stewart Boyce Memorial Fund** Founding member Stewart Boyce sadly passed away on May 21, 2006. Stewart and his wife Carol were very active in the founding of GaLTT. Among many other things Stewart and Carol were instrumental in the success of GaLTT's charitable status application. Stewart's family and friends have donated more than \$3,000 towards land acquisition in his memory. If you wish to contribute contact us below or find a member/donor form available on our website.

For more information check our website at [www.galtt.ca](http://www.galtt.ca), contact us by phone at 250-247-8066, or by email at [info@galtt.ca](mailto:info@galtt.ca)

Earth Day 2006 Earth Day was a perfect sunny spring day to celebrate our parks from “Drumbeg to Descanso”. GaLTT volunteers planned and hosted guided walks in the new 707 Acres Community Park, in the Island Trust Nature Reserve (former UREP lands), and in Cox Community Park. Many came out to enjoy broom bashing and bird watching activities at Drumbeg Park and Nick Doe’s popular and informative geology walk at Descanso Regional Park. An entertaining skit on composting and a delicious pot luck picnic dinner at the bay completed a very enjoyable and social day.

Parks and Trails Projects Update

The Petroglyph Trail Community Park. This 5 m wide trail access was generously dedicated by Mike Jenks several years ago in a large lot subdivision to provide public access options to the old roads and trails that were to be decommissioned as the lots were sold and developed. The linear park follows lot lines to connect the crown land heritage site near the United Church on South Rd to Petroglyph Trail Way off Crocker Rd. In 2006 GaLTT volunteers began working to rough out a basic trail within the park boundaries. The result is useable but rough in places and still requires work to solve some winter water issues, finishing and signage. Please take care to stay within the boundaries and avoid trespassing on the adjacent private property.

Stalker Rd Beach Access. Through the late summer and fall the Trails team got to work on a relatively newly created Undeveloped Road Access leading off Stalker Rd near Drumbeg Park, to the shore northerly of the park. Brian and Holly Henning donated a Sunday to survey and flag a proposed route. Randy Young, Bob Smith and John Gambrill led work parties every second Tuesday, carefully hand sawing through challenging windfalls, filling and leveling. A nasty hazard tree was causing concern and as we reviewed the options to remove it, a wind storm occurred that did the job. The large maple landed right on the new trail, creating the next challenge. The team used careful ingenuity, a come-along and a buck saw to cut and pivot the large trunk off the trail. Why hand tools you might ask? Land owners such as the Ministry of Highways and the RDN do not authorize power equipment used by volunteers due to liability concerns, so explicit permission and certified operators are required. GaLTT’s liability insurance for our volunteers does not cover power equipment.

The Islands Trust Nature Reserve (a temporary name) was established in 2005 (finalized in 2006) through a free crown grant and the work of many people over many years. This 64 ha property of mature forest is located on North Rd across from Degnen Rd and is held by the Islands Trust Fund. A management planning process is underway to be finalized in March 2007. You can provide your comments to the planners at Taara Environmental, 46054 King Avenue, Chilliwack, BC V2P 3B5 Ph: 604.795.4969 [www.taara.ca](http://www.taara.ca)

The 707 Acres Community Park (a temporary name) was established through a density transfer re-zoning in 2005 as a (RDN) Community Park with strong support from the community. This is the first land to be designated the under the “wilderness recreation” zone in the Official Community Plan. The permitted uses of the land will be dictated by the zoning and a community management planning process in the future when regional parks budget and staff time are available.

The park is a large undeveloped area of young regenerating forest. An existing network of rough old logging roads and trails provide the current access. Some of these old roads and trails lead on to private

land and will require decommissioning. Existing access points are from the end of Ricki Rd, Jeanette Rd, Mary Rd, Fisher Rd, off North Rd in the “tunnel”, and off Coats Rd. A new access point is planned along the undeveloped road access across from Tin Can Alley.

The RDN has installed a locked gate at Ricki Rd and a large trench at Fisher Rd to control unauthorized vehicle access. A garbage inventory has been done for an assessment of the effort and the expense to remove it. GaLTT volunteers installed trail markers on 2 simple walking routes that were described in our 2006 “21 walks on Gabriola” and assisted the RDN to erect temporary signage at some of the popular park access points. Walkers can follow the Red Trail loop off Fisher or the Yellow Trail loop off Jeanette. Other old routes are as yet unmarked and walkers or cyclists must take very good care to keep from getting lost or straying on to private land.

Cox Community Park GaLTT and POSAC volunteers, working with RDN staff, worked through 2004 and 2005 to create and redirect trails in Cox Park to enhance the parks’ usefulness and connectivity without private land trespass. We have grant money remaining to complete a safe connection to Descanso Park and develop interpretive signage when volunteer and RDN staff time becomes available.

Area B POSAC Dissolved! In May 2006 Regional Director Berni Sperling revised the terms of reference so that he became an ex officio member of the POSAC committee. At the Dec 12 meeting of the Regional District Board Director Sperling moved discussion of Area B committee to *in-camera*. The minutes record that the last item passed was the motion “that the Gabriola Island Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee be dissolved.” This action seems both irregular and counter productive for our community. Now there is no formal public advisory process for input to RDN on parks priorities, issues and policy for Gabriola or Mudge Is. The GaLTT Board is very concerned and will be following up at the RDN Board level. If you are concerned as well, we encourage you to contact Director Sperling (bernisperling@gmail.com) or call 250-247-9673 directly for an explanation.

Board Meeting Schedule The Board of Directors meets monthly on the second Tuesday of the month at the Women’s Institute Hall 7:30 – 9:30 pm. Observers and pre-arranged delegations are most welcome to attend. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting will be held Saturday Feb 24 at the Community Hall. Further details and the 2007 meeting schedule will be announced soon in the newspapers and by email.

Thanks to Our Supporters Special thanks to all of you, our members, who provide moral, financial and material support to GaLTT’s purpose, and as well to the many community businesses and individuals who have generously contributed services, materials, tools and expertise to projects.

Succession planning for the Board The Board Nominations Committee is actively seeking additional Board members for 2007. If you have some time, interest and skills to share contact us by email or telephone listed below.

Officers: Kerry Marcus, Colin Masson, Carol Boyce, Richard Welsh Board Members:, Tom Cameron, Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, John Gambrill, Paula Maddison, Judy Preston, Bob Smith, Jane Woods, Randy Young

For more information check our website at [www.galtt.ca](http://www.galtt.ca), contact us by phone at 250-247-8066, or by email at [info@galtt.ca](mailto:info@galtt.ca)

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