



GABRIOLA LAND AND TRAILS TRUST

2235 North Road, Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X7 - email: info@galtt.ca - website: www.galtt.ca

CONTENTS

Presidents Report - page 1
A Walk for All Seasons - page 2
Membership Report - page 3
NAPTEC - page 3
Gifts and Tools - page 3
Spurge Laurel - back page

2007

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

Kerry Marcus

Vice-President:

Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley

Secretary:

Carol Boyce

Treasurer:

Richard Welsh

Directors:

Randy Young

Judy Preston

Christine Purfield

John Gambrill

Tom Cameron

Bob Smith

John Orr

Colin Masson

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Kerry Marcus

As the 4th year of the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT) draws to a close, it is a good time to reflect on our accomplishments. Since 2004 Gabriola's protected land has increased by almost 870 acres, thanks to the work of volunteers in the community as well as GaLTT. Our volunteers have worked with amazing energy on many kilometres of new trails in our parks and neighbourhoods. As a non-profit charitable organization, GaLTT's land acquisition fund has blossomed incredibly to a useable amount that will eventually enable us to secure land for future park, trail or conservation use. The Board has been actively working with several owners of land with possibilities that meet our mandate: "to secure, develop and sustain a network of parkland and trails on Gabriola Island for the benefit of the public, and to preserve sites of environmental, historical and social importance".

GaLTT continues to work with other Land Trusts, the Regional District of Nanaimo and with numerous private land owners in strategic areas where trails connections are important to the Descanso to Drumbeg objective. We have

urged the Gabriola Islands Trust to engage in the Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program, as other Regions have, as a means to encourage land owners

to protect environmentally sensitive features of their property in return for land tax relief. (see details on page 3)

GaLTT Projects

For the last three years we have produced a popular and informative map of Gabriola's authorized public land trails. New walking loops and connections are welcome additions for those who enjoy outdoor recreation and all contribute to GaLTT's goal of establishing an inter-connecting network of parks and trails "from Descanso to Drumbeg".

GaLTT volunteers and funding constructed the Yogi Trail Loop and the trail connection from the bridge to River Place in Cox Community Park. Both are now widely used trails. There is still work required to complete a safe crossing over Taylor Bay Road into Descanso Regional Park, before the RDN will install signage to identify the Park. GaLTT also has funding to provide some interpretative signage within the park.

Petroglyph Trail Community Park land was donated some years ago in a land subdivision project. We have developed a rough but useable connection from the western edge of the Heritage Park through to Petroglyph Way.

Trails have been cleared on undeveloped road access land between Cresta Roca and Timber Lane (2005), from Stalker Rd to the beach north of Drumbeg Park (2006), and between Clarendon and Berry Point (2007).

Keen GaLTT volunteers were at the Farmers Market all summer chatting to folks about what we do and why. They answered lots of questions and sold a steady supply of shirts, maps, and art cards as well as an impressive number of new memberships and renewals. On a July Market Day, member Isabella Uzaraga played her harp for donations for GaLTT and raised \$50.

On Gabriola Day, a small group representing different trail user groups proudly carried the great GaLTT banner in the parade, and our information table was set up along with the other festivities at Twin Beaches.



continued on back page

Land Trust Alliance of BC (LTABC) 2007 Annual Seminar Series

By Colin Masson

This past March, on a rainy and windy weekend I headed to the Cowichan Outdoor Centre to attend the LTABC Annual Seminar Series, on behalf of the GaLTT Board. While I was unable to participate for the full weekend, I quickly realized that the event provided a gold mine of information and experience related to everything about land trusts, community stewardship and conservation. With up to 100 individuals representing over 50 community land trusts, regional trust funds, committed sponsors, First Nations and other interests, I focused my networking on neighbouring Gulf Island land trusts and learning of their challenges and successes. The major accomplishments (parks/conservation covenants/trails/education etc) of the Galiano Conservation Association, Salt Spring Island Conservancy and Denman Conservancy over the past decade demonstrate what can be achieved through persistent effort and community commitment - truly motivating for us.

While the seminars covered a wide range of practical and relevant topics some of the ones which I thought important to GaLTT's interests included;

- Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery
- Land Trusts Standards and Practices Building Membership
- Successful Outreach Campaigns for Land Trusts
- Encouraging Covenants, Eco-gifts and Managing 'Conservation-lands'.

I found the weekend event to be informative, stimulating and motivating. Perhaps the cumulative lesson that I left with, was the crucial importance for organizations, (especially developing groups such as GaLTT), to be strategic in what we do with our time, energy and money. I heard many examples of the benefits of planning and operating in a long-term (5-10 year) time frame, of developing an inventory of 'target' lands and of fostering enduring community relationships.

This seminar also provided a broader context for us as an organization, and left me realizing that while GaLTT has made an excellent start, we must continue to develop and to effectively focus our collective effort so that we may add our island successes to the growing provincial land-trust legacy.

Join members of the GaLTT Board in attending the 2008 Seminar Series to be held in Manning Park on April 11th to 13th, 2008.

PARK WALK FOR ALL SEASONS

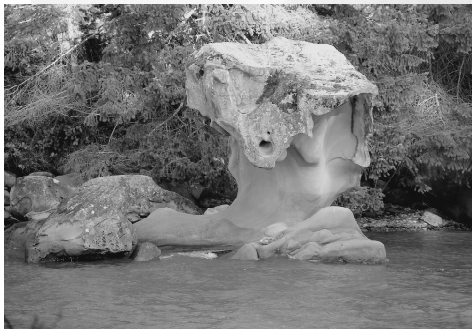
By John Gambrill

This walk links Descanso Bay Regional Park and Cox Community Park, following trails that give an introduction to finding your way around the two parks. The full walk as described is about 4.5km, and can be scaled back (as shown on the map) to a shorter 3km loop.

Personally I prefer rambling through these parks, taking time to absorb the varied coastal landforms and vistas, and return again and again to enjoy those special seasonal treasures – wildflowers in Spring, tide-pools in Summer, Fall colours and mosses in the forest, and waterfowl wintering-over in the sheltered bays. The walk is on established trails, and the main safety concern is simply to watch where you are putting your feet. Remember that the most hazardous moments in hiking are going downhill, especially if the surface is wet. Always stop if you want to take in the view. Remember, you are on Gabriola time so enjoy the wandering there are no prizes for finishing first.

From Taylor Bay Road, the entrance into Descanso Bay Regional Park is well signed. Follow the gravel access road into the park for about 200m and at the "Day Use Area" sign turn left, down to the parking area by the beach. The trail starts just to the right of the notice board. The trail leads up a gentle slope, keep to the left at any fork and soon you reach a plaque that gives a brief history of the park. To your right is the original McDougall family residence dating back to when the park was private property. Plans are still being formulated on future park usage, and there is interest in restoring the house to provide sheltered space for group activities in the park.

At the headland just beyond the residence, is the vista of Descanso Bay, with Protection Island & Newcastle Island across the channel, and Nanaimo and Mount Benson beyond. In the Spring, if the tide is low and the sandstone rocks are dry, scramble down to the lower rock ledge and look along the rocky bank at the mass of wildflowers and flowering shrubs that cascade down the rocks. In Summer, the smooth warm rocks make a perfect seat for watching the sunset.



Back on the trail, continue clockwise round the headland with the residence to your right. As you pass the residence take a look to your left at the bay through the trees, and if the tide is high and morning sun is shining you may be lucky enough to see the resident Descanso sea monster basking in the water at the far side of the bay. Keep on the trail down to the split rail fence at the head of the bay. Cross the footbridge and at the far end of the fence look for the narrow trail that winds up to some amazing rock formations. Follow the trail up,

with the sea on your left and the rock formations to your right. If you have young children with you, hold their hand on this section as the drop-off to the bay is steep.

At the top of the slope you reach McConvey Road, turn right and walk this quiet rural road back towards Taylor Bay Road. This section of McConvey has the woodlands of Cox Park on your left and Descanso Bay Park on your right. Again, in Spring wildflowers abound along the right side of the road. At Taylor Bay Road you can see the rock YOGI figure on the bank across the road. No, it is not a poor imitation of "Yogi bear", the rock figure was erected by the Youth Organization of Gabriola Island in the 1960s, and is now an island landmark. Walk a few metres to your left along Taylor Bay Road, then cross the road (watch for traffic) to the signed trail entrance into Cox Community Park.

The sign "Yogi Trail" leads you to a clearing where, on your right, the Yogi Trail starts (there should be a "Yogi Trail" sign). This was the first trail built by GaLTT volunteers in 2004/5 and provides a woodland walk through typical coastal forest terrain. The thick canopy of trees brings a change in plant life – less flowers and more shrubbery and mosses. You cross a couple of winter creeks that take runoff from the higher ground down into Descanso Bay, and before you know it you have reached the end of the trail at an old logging road. Turn left and follow this old logging road uphill into the woods. At an "S" bend in the trail, take a look through the trees on your left at a majestic stand

continued...

of mature big-leaf maples. In the Fall the area just glows with yellows of the leaves, and in Winter the mosses, lichen and ferns growing in the trees give a true rainforest feel to the area.

Shortly, you reach a junction, with a trail ahead, and a trail on your left leading up a steep slope. The steep trail is the return route, and the straight ahead trail is the "there and back" route to the bridge over the marsh area, and the River Place entrance into the park.

River Place Section: Continue straight ahead, and the rocky cliff formations to your left are a sign of past geological upheavals that formed Gabriola Island. Soon the trail forks, the left fork is closed off as this leads into private property, so take the right fork which leads along a winding forest trail for about 700m to a bridge that spans a wetland marsh area. Beyond the bridge the trail winds up a short hill to the River Place entrance to the park. This entrance allows for longer circular hiking routes that incorporate Spruce Road and Orlebar Point. For now, our walk involves retracing your steps to the junction at the start of this paragraph.

Return route: At the junction, turn off the main route and take the trail up a short hill. Follow this trail, keeping to the left at any forks, until you reach the clearing where you started the Yogi Trail. Again take the Yogi Trail, and when you reach the T-junction at the end, this time turn right and Taylor Bay Road is a few metres away. Cross the road (watch for traffic) and return to starting point of the walk via the gravel access road into Descanso Bay Regional Park.

I hope you enjoyed the walk, and remember to return in another season it will seem like a new walk.

'A Park Walk for all Seasons' trails map...

The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)

This is an Islands' Trust initiative that is of interest to GaLTT and our members.

NAPTEP is a property tax exemption program that encourages landowners to protect the natural beauty or cultural aspects of their land. The Islands' Trust has been working with some of the Gulf Islands, most notably those falling under the jurisdiction of the Capital Regional District, to allow for a covenant to be placed on a qualifying property in return for a property tax exemption of 65% on the protected portion of the land. For more information please see the following website:

<http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/naptep.cfm>.

This is a program that GaLTT would like to see extended to Gabriola. Islands' Trust is continuing discussions with other regional districts, including the Regional District of Nanaimo, in an effort to expand this worthwhile initiative.

A GIFT FOR ALL SEASONS!

GaLTT sells a range of logo sports clothing, which you may have noticed at our display table at the summer market and in recent craft fairs. There are T-shirts (adult sizes S-XL, youth M-L) at \$18 and \$12 respectively. Many summer and winter toned colours are available. Hoodies are always a popular cover up this time of year and come in both youth (\$30) and adult sizes (\$40) in a more limited range of colours. Sweatshirts are available in adult sizes M – XL only, mainly in dark colours. Fleece vests are a popular item in both ladies and unisex styling with a full range of sizes and some colour variety at \$40 each. A new item this fall is a reversible unisex vest in adult sizes, pale blue polyester with logo on one side and black fleece on the other, \$45. If you are interested in any of these items please

call Carol Boyce at 247-7895. These clothing items are not only a useful addition to your wardrobe but also a good way to support GaLTT and our trail building and conservation efforts.

MEMBERSHIP

GaLTT has at present 145 paid up memberships – 32, individual, 107 family, 4 corporate, and two volunteer memberships. As there are at least two people included in a family membership, this means that approximately 214 people are represented in that category, giving us a total membership in excess of 252 people.

Unfortunately, 66 memberships from 2006 were not renewed this year. We strive to represent our membership on conservation and trail issues and appreciate any feedback you are willing to share. If there are concerns that have stopped you or someone you know renewing a membership, please let us know. Tell us anonymously if you wish, but do tell us! (info@galtt.ca)

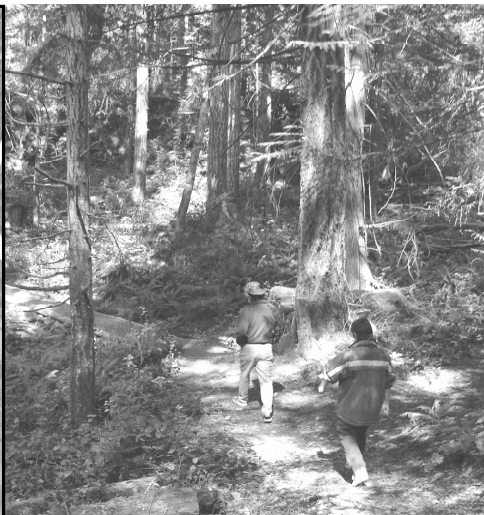
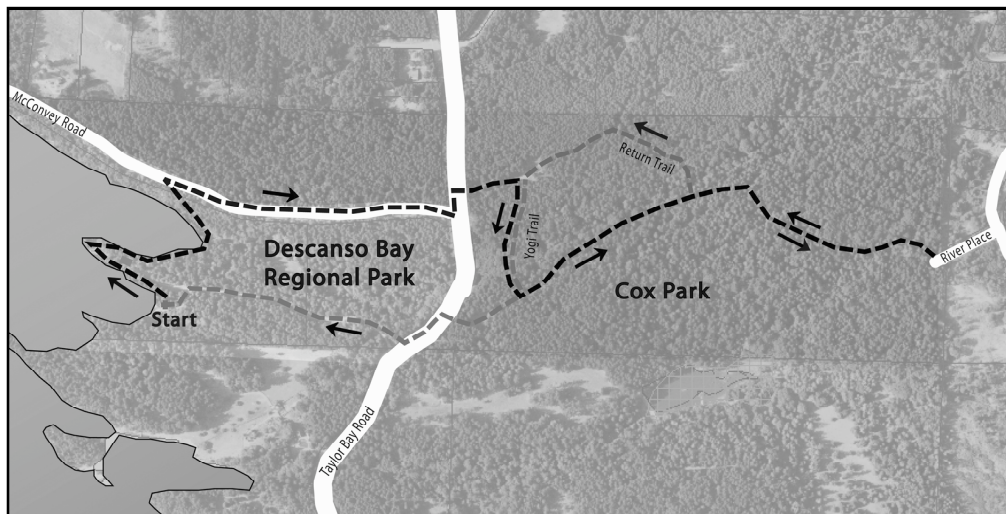
Membership runs on a calendar year basis. The annual membership fees are as follows:

- Individual - \$20
- Family - \$25
- Corporate - \$60
- Volunteer - \$0 (with a commitment to 24 hours of volunteer time).

The membership application form is available for download at www.galtt.ca and don't forget, if you joined after September 2007, your membership is valid for all of 2008!

BASH THAT BROOM WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS!

GaLTT has recently purchased some terrific broom removing tools. These are available to current GaLTT members to borrow at NO CHARGE. For more information and to arrange a loan for your broom bashing, please call Randy Young 247 8541.



President's Report (continued from page 1)

The Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve on North Road (formerly the unnamed area north east of the tunnel on North Road) now has a new official name and a management plan is in place developed through input from the community. GaLTT is working with the Island's Trust Fund on a work plan for clean up actions in 2008.

The 707 acres (unnamed) community park has not undergone a management planning process yet. The RDN continues to work on security issues to curtail vehicle access and dumping. A Management Plan will, amongst other things, help to select trail routes that make sense to mark and maintain, and that stay within the park. The undeveloped road access at Tin Can Alley provides one of the most important linkages in our Descanso to Drumbeg objective. GaLTT has provided a survey of this access, which runs from North Road to the northwest corner of the 707 parkland. Watch for trail building work parties in the spring to develop this important connection.

As 2007 draws to a close I want to thank all of you who work so hard to support GaLTT's objectives, those who support those objectives by becoming members of GaLTT, and most importantly those who promote the protection of sensitive natural areas and the responsible use of public land. Happy winter trails!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Earth Day is a time that we have chosen to celebrate our parks and trails. GaLTT continues to plan Earth Day activities from Descanso to Drumbeg that include guided walks on our favourite park trails, wild flower identification, geological information, broom bashing and a pot luck picnic. Watch for activities in 2008.

MEETINGS

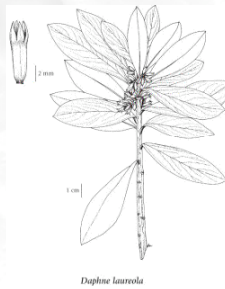
The GaLTT Board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at the Women's Institute Hall. Members and observers are welcome to attend.

The 2008 Annual General Meeting will be held Tuesday evening, MARCH 11 at the Roxy.

GUEST SPEAKER: Brenda Beckwith, Stewardship Manager for the Saltspring Conservancy will make a presentation on Garry Oak Conservation. Brenda is an employee of the Saltspring Conservancy and has a PHD from UVIC having completed her studies on the Garry Oak ecosystems and conservation.

SPURGELAUREL (*Daphne laureola* L.)

Some notes by
Tom Cameron on
his experience with
Daphne. "This
beautiful specimen
is a nasty alien!"



When Charlotte and I first started visiting Gabriola about 8 years ago we admired a vaguely "rhododendron-like" evergreen shrub on our property in 3 or 4 locations. It was in a shrub bed, the garden, along the road, and on some moist forest sites. While I didn't actually fertilize it, I did let it be. Of course it thrived especially as the deer don't seem to touch it. When I learned that this shrub with its attractive foliage, fragrant tubular yellow flowers, and beautiful berries is a toxic, invasive species, I started to pull and use loppers to try get rid of it. While it hasn't spread, it does persist in most of the original sites. I am going to have to flag locations and be more tenacious in my attack. I would like to share some of what I have learned about this nasty plant.

- *Daphne laureola* is the scientific name for the plant often called spurge-laurel or Daphne-laurel.
- It is recognized by WorkSafe BC as a poisonous plant that causes severe skin irritation. Its berries are toxic to humans.
- I have found *Daphne-laurel* in many locations on Gabriola but was only really alarmed when I found some major infestations with specimens over 2m tall. Readers could communicate with me by e-mail about infestations (tomchar1@telus-planet.net).
- Wear gloves when handling this plant, and wash your gloves afterwards. I suspect that this plant is the cause of a "poison ivy-like" skin rash in our household.
- Do NOT use motorized string-trimmers or brush cutter to clear this plant without protective gear including goggles, gloves and adequate breathing masks against particulates and poisonous vapour. New stems and leaves are juicy!
- Do not put the remains of *Daphne-laurel* in your garden compost pile but rather place them in a separate decay pile with shrubs or forest debris.
- Stop the presses. John Gambrell comments that, "the plant does spread rapidly. I am forever removing small seedlings (and I mean hundreds!!) from our property. The birds eat the berries, and seeds are dispersed via their droppings."

Please check these websites to find out what you can do if you encounter this demon plant on your property or on our trails. These sites are good because they also discuss many of the other common invasive species to Gabriola.

Controlling invasive plants on your property. Saanich, Planning, Environmental Services <http://www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/resident/environment/pdfs/invasiveplants.pdf>

Did you know that one of Canada's richest ecosystems is also one of its most endangered? Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team. http://www.goert.ca/documents/InvFS_daphlaur.pdf

City of Nanaimo, Parks, Recreation and Culture, Parks: Invasive Plants Booklet http://www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/Site_Structure/Community_Services/Parks_Re_c_Culture/invasive_plants.pdf

KUDOS AND THANKS

.....go to our many volunteers: the craft fair and Farmers' Market table volunteers, the companies that donate their time and machinery to help clear and maintain trails, the folks who come out and manually help maintain the trails, and, of course, our donors. There are just too many of you to list in the space available, but know that we are truly grateful! Watch for a volunteer acknowledgement corner in future newsletters.