



Gabriola Land and Trails Trust

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2008

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley

GaLTT's year has started off energetically. We had the most well-attended AGM since the election of the first board, due in large part to having an interesting and entertaining speaker, Dr. Brenda Beckwith, who gave a great presentation on Garry oak ecosystems. Before we knew it Earth Day was upon us and we were guiding walks and bashing broom. GaLTT successfully bid for a contract with the Islands Trust Fund to begin the process of cleaning up the Elder Cedar Nature reserve by removing garbage, taking out danger trees and putting stepping stones in the creek to protect the creek bed. We were able to do this with the support of our enthusiastic members who turned up in sun and rain to get the job done. All of a sudden it was May and Dr. Beckwith joined us again to talk about camas lilies. And on it goes.

As the new president of GaLTT, I am very thankful for Kerry Marcus' leadership in leading us through our first four years. Building a new organization takes skill, patience, and the ability to envision the future and create a structure that will get you to your objective. Kerry did a great job and I am thankful to be taking over a well-functioning organization with committed board members and a supportive membership.

The purpose of the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust is 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. The vision the board established was to create a network of public trails and parkland that would link neighbourhoods from Drumbeg to Descanso by 2010. That

date seemed a long way off in 2004. All of a sudden we are asking ourselves, can we achieve our vision by 2010? We have two choices: we can abandon our original vision, or we can make an all out effort to achieve it. Well, we love a good challenge, so abandoning our vision is not on the table. Our progress has definitely been aided by the creation of the 707 regional park. And our hard-working trails group continues to develop trails on public road accesses. Our fund-raising efforts have given us a solid nest egg in the event that we have the opportunity to purchase a property. And we are talking to landowners who are interested in providing access through their property or in protecting a specific feature. So what else can we do? There are several ways you can help us to realize our vision:

- If you or someone you know is interested in creating a trail or preserving an ecosystem, we would be happy to provide you with information on tools such as eco-gifting, creating covenanted rights of way across private property so that trail connections can be made, or creating covenants to protect sites of ecological and/or historical significance.
- You can contribute to our acquisition fund through donations of cash, publicly traded securities, personal property (e.g. trail-building tools), land, life insurance (GaLTT becomes the beneficiary) or bequests.
- You can join us on our bi-weekly trail building projects;
- You can renew your membership and encourage your friends to join.
- You can visit us at the Farmer's Market and purchase hoodies, sweatshirts, T-shirts, gift cards and trail maps.

I am confident that with the support of our membership we will be able to realize our vision. On Earth Day 2010 I look forward to walking with you from Drumbeg to Descanso.

Now I'm trying to imagine 2010 and what our new vision should be!



parkland that would link neighbourhoods from Drumbeg to Descanso by 2010. That

WHAT IS A GARRY OAK ECOSYSTEM

by Christine Purfield

Recently, Dr. Brenda Beckwith visited Gabriola at the invitation of GaLTT to give a well attended talk on camas lilies and their place in the Garry oak ecosystems. Dr Beckwith is currently the Senior Laboratory Instructor for the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria and she has been studying plant ecology and ethnobotany for almost 20 years. Future newsletters will feature some of the plants Dr. Beckwith identified on her short visit here, and in this newsletter we will start at the beginning – just what is a Garry oak ecosystem anyway? According to the Garry oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT – [HYPERLINK "http://www.goert.ca" www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)), “A Garry oak ecosystem is one with naturally occurring Garry oak trees (*Quercus garryana*) and some semblance of the ecological processes and communities that prevailed before European settlement”. While the trees themselves are very attractive, the ecosystem that develops around them consists of “a rich mosaic of plant, animal, and insect species”. The flowers that Dr. Beckwith concentrated her talk on, camas lilies, are just one of the many beautiful species that exist in a Garry oak ecosystem.

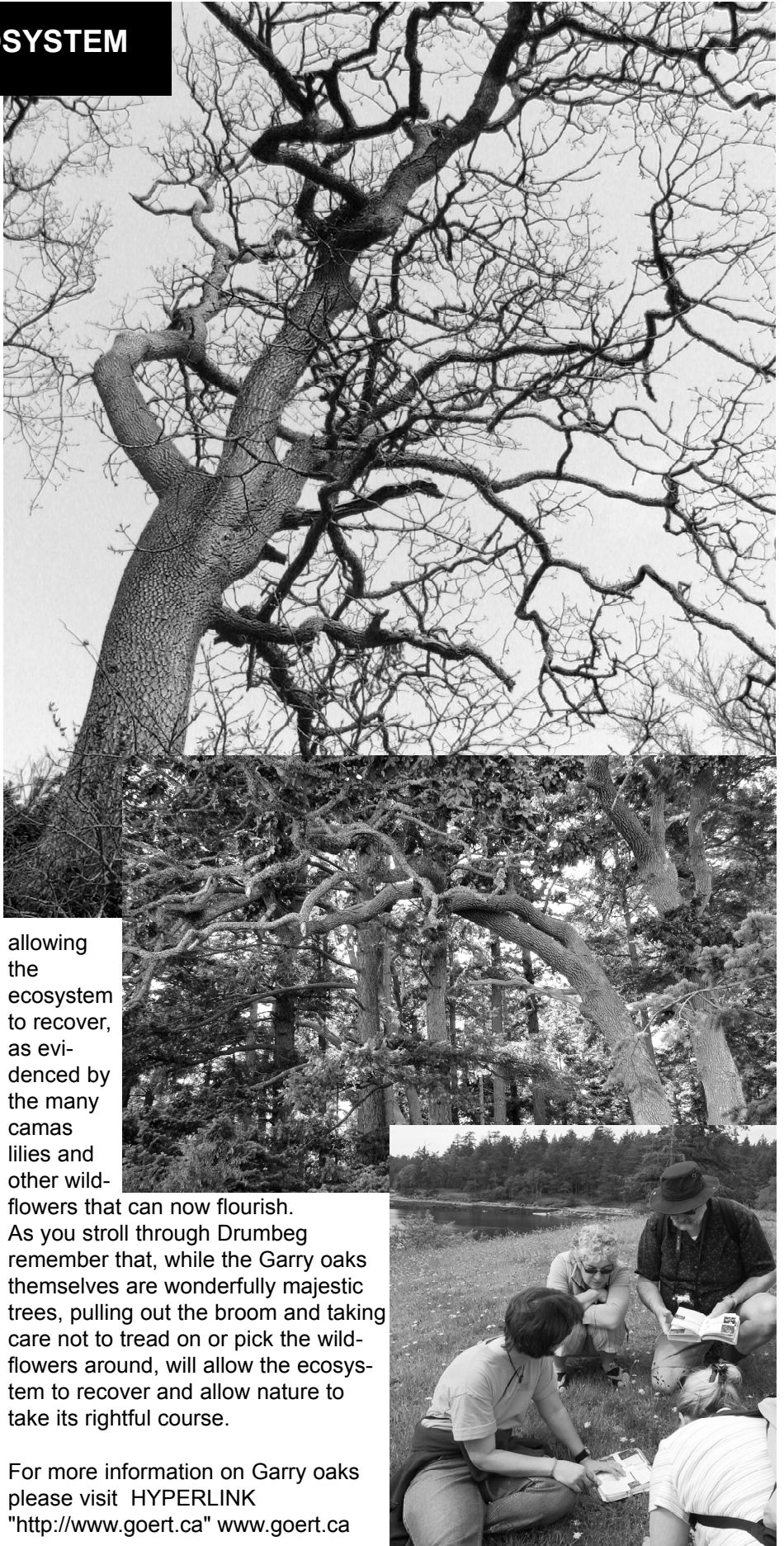
Prior to the European settlement, Garry oak ecosystems could be found throughout southeastern Vancouver Island and they played an important part in the lives of the First Nations of the region. First Nations selectively burned the woodlands and meadows to allow berries, nuts, and root vegetables – such as the camas – to thrive. When the settlers arrived, much of the land was cleared for farmland and pasture thus disturbing the delicate balance of nature and the flora and fauna. The significance of this is that the Garry oak ecosystem is home to “more plant species than any other terrestrial ecosystem in coastal British Columbia” (GOERT). Due to the invasion of non-native species, such as broom, and land development for agricultural and urban use, less than 5% of the original habitat remains.

Gabriola is blessed with Garry oak trees, particularly in Drumbeg Park. The war against broom and other invasive plants is

allowing the ecosystem to recover, as evidenced by the many camas lilies and other wild-

flowers that can now flourish. As you stroll through Drumbeg remember that, while the Garry oaks themselves are wonderfully majestic trees, pulling out the broom and taking care not to tread on or pick the wildflowers around, will allow the ecosystem to recover and allow nature to take its rightful course.

For more information on Garry oaks please visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.goert.ca" www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)



A GIFT FOR ALL SEASONS!

GaLTT Merchandise *(Carol Boyce)*
GaLTT is planning an information and sales table at the weekly Saturday market again this year. This is an excellent opportunity for GaLTT members to talk with the general community about the purpose of our organization and the work that has been done on trails and beach accesses, as well as to hear concerns and issues from our fellow islanders. Clothing items are available for sale: vests, some reversible with the GaLTT logo on one side, hoodies, sweatshirts and T-shirts in a variety of colours, sizes S-XL. There are also T-shirts and hoodies in youth sizes M and L in a smaller range of colours. The popular GaLTT trail map will be available for sale and this is an excellent opportunity to renew your membership for 2008 if you have not already done so. So plan on dropping by the GaLTT table often this summer. We are just inside the main door of the Agi Hall to the left. Volunteer to run the table for a Saturday, buy a GaLTT logo t-shirt, renew your membership, have a chat about your ideas concerning conservation and park and trail development on the island.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership runs on the calendar year. The annual membership fees are:
• 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 BROOM WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS!

Attention all broom bashers!
In addition to the GaLTT broom extractigators available for membership use, Camp Miriam has kindly offered the use of their tool specifically for the Berry Point Road and area residents. Those of us who live in that area know how this beautiful, but invasive, non-native plant is taking over our neighbourhoods. Do your bit – Bash that broom! Call Randy (GaLTT 247 8541) or Eric Veale (Camp Miriam 668-9567) for more information and pick up and drop off information.

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

GABRIOLA TRAILS

by Randy Young
(Pick up a GaLTT trail map for specific location information)

INFANT WALKS

The two year plus infants love to walk, but stop often to closely examine flowers and things that we never see. Progress is very slow, and you should take a walker for when they get tired.
Joyce Lockwood
A beach for all the family. At times it even has a rope swing hanging from a tree over the beach.

Blue Heron
In the summer you can go in off Whalebone and back on Tashtego. Beach access is on the right hand side.

QueeQueg
Quietly hidden off Tashtego, and part of the 'behind the house' trail that stretches all the way along Whalebone
Hummingbird
A beautiful wooden sign marks one of the entrances off Whalebone.

Blue Whale
Features aluminum stairs down to the beach.

Barrett Road
Gently down to the beach at the end of Barrett Road.
Sandwell Park
You may have to use your walker, the trail is a bit longer but the Lock Bay beach is worth it. At half tide or lower there are separate stairs half way back. See if you can find all three petroglyphs on the beach.

Fleet Street
A stroller friendly link of the Strand and Fleet Street, you will cross Emilie's bridge on your walk through the woods.
Berry Point (Orlebar Point)
Everyone goes to Berry Point to take pictures of the Entrance Island lighthouse. Today you can hear the sea lions. Can you say "ARRH" many times loudly?

Taylor Bay Park
We fear Taylor Bay and Pilot Bay are quietly slipping into the sea. Locals would prefer to have dogs go to Pilot Bay to leave Taylor Bay for kids.
Decourcy Drive
A great kids beach at the very north west corner of Decourcy Drive.
Drumbeg Park
Bring snacks to eat at the beach front picnic tables.

WINTER SUN
Many of us yearn for a bit of sun when the days are

short and the rest of our snow bird friends have fled to the south. When the brilliant clear sky breaks in the afternoon between storms you need to get out and soak in some rays.

Descanso Bay
Drive down to the last parking space, and walk down past the rotting house. There is a picnic table on the point, where you can sit in the sun and watch the eagles scare the ducks.
Brickyard
Park at the Brickyard and walk south along the beach at most tides. You can return along El Verano from the boat launch for a short walk, or up at the Graveyard and back along South Road.

Islands View
Park at the east end of Islands View Drive, and follow the public access trail that goes diagonally down to the beach. Follow the beach to the east and return for a short walk, or up a hidden trail at the end of the beach and return by Grey, South and Thompson.

Drumbeg Park
Often the bay and the logs are out of the wind but in the sun. If there are any small seedling broom plants, you can have them for free.
707 Acre Wood
It is hard to describe, but there is an open, warm winter face from one of the lookouts on the upper road leading to the stump entrance on North Road. Other walks such as the main line are very open and often warm in the winter.

LOOP TRAILS

Walking the woods is good for both the mind and the body. An hour or two out can put a whole different outlook on the day after you get back. The best are loop trails where you return to the start without having to retrace your steps.
Kensington
Starting from the end of Whalebone in the

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summer, you walk past the beach and over the foot bridge kindly installed by a local resident. Keep to the water side by not following the more travelled trail used by Wild Cherry residents to get to the beach. You pass through an alder wood with a beautiful carpet of open ferns. Eventually you get to the winter waterfall which has slowed to a trickle. Cross the creek and go up to the Kensington main line. Turn right and eventually take the down line that ends at Pequod. A good afternoon hike.

Barrett Hill

Starting from anywhere in the Whalebone Area you go up Barrett Hill. Turn left on Honeysuckle Lane and proceed through the trail at the end that joins to Wild Cherry. From the end of Wild Cherry the Kensington main line follows the cliff line south meeting the down line that reverses and goes north. Part way down a well used trail to the right leads to the beach. Rest on a log and then return along Whalebone.

Rollo Park

A myriad of loops can make use of the trails through the park, one joining Horseshoe to Barrett, McClay and Ritchie.

Berry Point

Park at Berry Point and follow Upper Berry Point Road ignoring the private drive signs because it is a public road allowance. A recent GaLTT trail to the right joins through to Clarendon. Please make sure all dogs are on leash because there may be sheep in a field. Down Norwich hill to Berry Point Road. If it is not July or August and the camp is not busy, Chichester provides a back door route to Berry Point.

Yogi Trail

Descanso Bay Park provides many loops with surrounding areas, starting with the Yogi cross trail, but also using River Place and the big bridge.

707 Acre Wood

Public entrances are available at the end of the Tin Can Alley trail, Mary, Ricki, Jeannette, Fisher and Coats. The stump entrance on North road crosses a bit of the Kensington lands. Printing the RDN web site aerial photo can give a reasonable idea of the web of old logging roads available. At one point we had marked several trails, but the markings were removed.(sigh)

Drumbeg Loop

A beach trail leads from a Stalker corner just before the entrance to Drumbeg Park. At reasonable tides it is then possible to follow the beach south to Drumbeg Park and return via the entrance to Stalker Road.

WILD FLOWERS

Somehow picnic lunches go with wild flowers. These are hidden locations and meadows to view the bounty of spring.

Dragons Lane

At the bottom of Dragons Lane a trail leads to a rocky outcropping and a secluded ocean channel. The skunk cabbage on the way can be ignored, but be careful not to step on the wild flowers by the beach.

Drumbeg Meadow

In spite of the broom, the wildflower meadow is showing too many of the flowers for me to remember the names.

Coast Road

Half way from Fenwick to Withey a trail leads to the beach. The road allowance includes some old apple trees that are now in blossom. Later in the year the apples are good.

Descanso Bay

The bay rocks hold many secrets.

Easthom

Just to the east of the rock slide, a path of wild lilies cling to the rock face.

SUNSET VIEWS

After a good dinner, watching the sun sink in the west is a very peaceful occupation. The best nights have a few clouds to catch the colours.

Berry Point

Beautiful but a bit chilly. The only view point that can be accessed by car on Gabriola. Somehow highways should be about more than transportation, much as it used to be in times long ago.

Surf Pub Deck

Well you have to walk up to the deck. Views enhanced by the beverage of your choice.

Decourcey Park

Half way along the northern Decourcey Drive is a small park. The beach access is a bit stiff, but the sunsets lovely. Is it true that the Decourcy Drive residents announce a 1-10 rating number after the sunset has gone down?

Malaspina Galleries

The must see tourist area. Just out of interest, the gallery roof line today exactly matches a photo taken around 1911.

McConvey

There are three road allowance view points along McConvey Road

Canso

The locals enjoy a road allowance view from atop the steep cliff overlooking Duke Point ferry terminal and Nanaimo.

Trail maps are available at the Travel info centre and the Saturday Market table for a donation of \$1.00.

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.