



Gabriola Land and Trails Trust

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2008

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT FALL/WINTER 2008

As we approach the end of 2008, GaLTT is moving ahead with renewed resolve to meet our ambitious goal of creating a network of trails from Drumbeg to Descanso by 2010. To accomplish this we have identified fourteen projects which will help us connect from one neighbourhood to another. Some of the projects involve Crown Land and some involve private holdings. As in all aspects of life everything boils down to relationships. We are delighted to have developed relationships with a number of landowners who are interested in exploring the possibility of creating trails on their properties. And we are pleased to have established good working relationships with local and provincial government departments as well as with other community organizations who share similar objectives. Although we are in the early stages of developing these projects, as a Board, we are optimistic about a successful outcome.

Over the past year we have achieved a lot. We have completed a contract with the Islands Trust Fund to carry out a number of activities in the Elder Cedar Nature Reserve Management Plan and have a second contract to remove invasive species and provide assistance with signage in the reserve. Our Trails Team has been instrumental in getting this work done and in getting members involved. We offered workshops and lectures to members on topics such as Garry oak, camas lily ecosystems, and mushroom foraging. GaLTT members were given priority for the mushroom workshop which sold out in two days! A second workshop was scheduled. Our membership and communications committee is working hard to ensure that we provide value for your membership

fee. We've put out newsletters, revised and printed more trail maps and staffed tables at every Saturday market and most Christmas Fairs.

Over this past year, we have worked to increase our profile with government, establishing strong working relationships with the RDN and Islands Trust and submitting position statements to the Provincial Budget Consultation Process and the Provincial Pest Management Plan.

Looking back on the past year, GaLTT has accomplished a lot – none of it could have occurred without the support of our membership. We have approximately 200 members – this includes both individual and family memberships so the total number of members is higher. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank you for your continued support. Our objectives are to meet our mandate and your needs as members. Any ideas you have as to how we can do that are greatly appreciated. Send them to info@galitt.ca. In the meantime, our 2009 AGM will be held February 4th 2009 – please mark this date on your calendars. We are committed to making it fun and informative, as opposed to dry and boring.

Sincerely,
Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley
President



Invasive Tansy Ragwort page 4



Photo by Margy Gilmour



Mushroom workshop with Jessica Wolf, page 2

Mushrooms on Gabriola

On November 22nd, GaLTT sponsored two, half-day mushroom identification and foraging workshops with biologist Jessica Wolf. Each workshop included 16 participants and both sessions were fully subscribed. The sessions included a two hour lecture, and one hour in the field. GaLTT member Dean Gaudry graciously allowed us to forage on his property.

Jessica focused on choice edibles that are easy for beginners to identify. Participants got to look at and handle chanterelles, including the winter chanterelle, sweet tooth and belly button hedgehogs, cauliflower, oyster, angel wings, lobster, morel, cat's tongue, fat jack, rosy gomphidius, and bleeding milkcap.

In addition Jessica busted a few myths and confirmed a few facts. For instance, it is not true that mushrooms have no nutritive value. In fact, mushrooms have much to recommend them, besides tasting great. They are low in fat and calories. Some are high in proteins - for instance a king bolete has almost as much protein as a similar amount of soybean. Various mushrooms contain vitamins D, K, A and C depending on the species.

We also learned that just because a mushroom is edible, does not mean anyone can consume a large quantity. Some people can have a potentially life-threatening allergy to a particular mushroom, just as some folks can to wheat or milk. The trick is to consume a small amount of a new mushroom first (i.e. two teaspoons cooked) and wait 24 hours to see if you have any side effects. There are approximately 10,000 mushroom species across North America, and 2 thousand on Vancouver Island. Of these, approximately 12 species can be fatal. Eating mushrooms can be dangerous, especially in a culture where foraging knowledge has not been passed down from generation to generation.

No doubt, the people who attended the workshop were motivated by a desire to know more and to be safe. And then of course, there are the names. Who wouldn't be drawn to a pastime that involved searching for shameless stinkhorn, yellow brain jelly and blushing fragrant tooth?

For more information about mushrooms you can visit Jessica's website at: <http://www.jessica-wolf.ca/mushroom-resources.html>.



Elder Cedar Dedication

Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley



On September 27th, I had the pleasure of participating in the naming and celebration of the Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve. This 65 hectare (162 acre) reserve is special for many reasons. The most obvious is the serene beauty of this ancient forest with its giant cedars, towering Douglas firs and moss covered maples. A circular trail takes you from the entrance, across giant stepping stones in the seasonal creek, through dense under-storey growths of fern, salal and mahonia, in a loop which again crosses the streambed where the creek pools in the winter, and back to the entrance. I walk this trail often, and everyday it is different; changing with the season, the weather or the time of day. The trail is relatively flat but does have some challenging logs to step over, streams to cross and ancient root systems of huge trees to navigate.

The other reason this place is special is that it was transferred from the provincial government to the Islands Trust Fund (ITF) as a result of the combined efforts of many individuals and groups over more than a decade. A key to this success was the willingness of the Snuneymuxw First Nation to have this parcel removed from the lands set aside for treaty negotiations. It is a demonstration of what can occur when people work together for a common purpose.

Some people have asked what having the park designated a reserve means and how it differs from a park. The simple answer is that the reserve's intent is to preserve and protect the natural values of this area. That means that trees will naturally blow down and decay and that paths will be maintained only by the activity of humans and wildlife as they use them from day to day. In terms of our use of the reserve, it means that we need to keep to the trails on foot, not venture into the forest, and not remove anything. Due to the nature of the terrain, wheelchair access is limited. Management activities will be restricted to keeping the trail reasonably safe and protecting the at risk species and plant communities. This is where the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust comes in.

For the past two years, GaLTT has been contracted by the Islands Trust Fund to assist with the management of the reserve. Our first tasks were to improve the trail by clearing significant impediments and to protect the endangered plant communities by blocking vehicle access at entry points and creating two creek crossings. Those of you who have used the trail will have noticed the beautiful, large stepping stones at the first creek crossing. Due to the proximity to a road we were able to get a machine to place those stones in the creek, with minimal damage to the forest floor and creek bed. We are very thankful to Thor Simrose for his assistance with this. The second crossing was more of a challenge, as it is far from the road and bringing in a machine was not an option. So we used pairs of concrete blocks strapped together to get over the creek and seasonally wet areas. Although not as aesthetically pleasing, they do the job of keeping trail users from disturbing the creek bed and causing increased erosion. Getting the blocks to the site was quite a challenge; volunteers used wheelbarrows and brute strength to get the blocks from the entrance to the second crossing – close to 1/2 km.

Our next tasks are to post signs at the entrances and exits to the Nature Reserve to make trail users aware of permitted activities and to remove invasive species such as Scotch broom, English ivy and holly before they encroach on the native plant community. We started broom bashing and ivy ripping in late October and will continue to work on this project over the winter. We welcome members who would like to help us with this important work. Notices of the work parties are sent out about every two weeks by email. Your support in helping us with this work not only has tangible benefits in terms of preserving

a very special ecology, it also adds to our trail building and acquisition funds. If you would like to pitch in, please contact Randy Young at ranyoung@shaw.ca. The Gabriola Land and Trails Trust is very pleased to be partners in sustaining this beautiful forest for the enjoyment of generations to come.

Trail trees for privacy needed!

As GaLTT clears and maintains trails - particularly on beach accesses - we often hear from property owners that one of their main concerns with the public using the trails is their loss of privacy. To help alleviate these concerns, one of our trail team members, Bob Smith, came up with the idea of planting small trees along the sides of the accesses. Once these trees mature, the homeowner can be assured of privacy while allowing the general public to enjoy our beautiful beaches and ocean.

Bob and his trail team are currently looking for trees about one foot tall with small root systems, located in relatively soft earth. If you think you have some on your property that might fit the bill, please contact Bob through info@galitt.ca giving your name and contact phone number or email address.

Petroglyphs and Much More

by John Gambrill

GaLTT volunteers have opened up and improved several public rights-of-way on Gabriola Island. The following walk uses two of these trails to link natural beauty and cultural history with a good 6.5 km walk. I have followed this route a dozen times, but each outing reveals fresh surprises, depending on the season and the weather. So don't say "done that one" - take a fresh look at these special places.

Start at the United Church on South Road, opposite Price Road; the trailhead is by the Petroglyph Sign in the parking lot. Two reminders before setting out: there are several farms along this route, so please ensure dogs are on a leash, and for safety reasons remember to walk on the left side of roads, facing oncoming traffic.

From the Petroglyph Sign, the trail follows a fence through woodland, and soon opens into a meadow, and to the first of the petroglyphs carved in the sandstone rock clearings. Without fail, I feel the meadow is a special place. It is not only the petroglyphs, but the secretive setting and silence of the meadow, walled in by old Garry oak and fir trees. The history of the petroglyphs and the purpose they served, both at the time they were made and to following generations, has been lost, but they are powerful images and must be respected and cared for (a

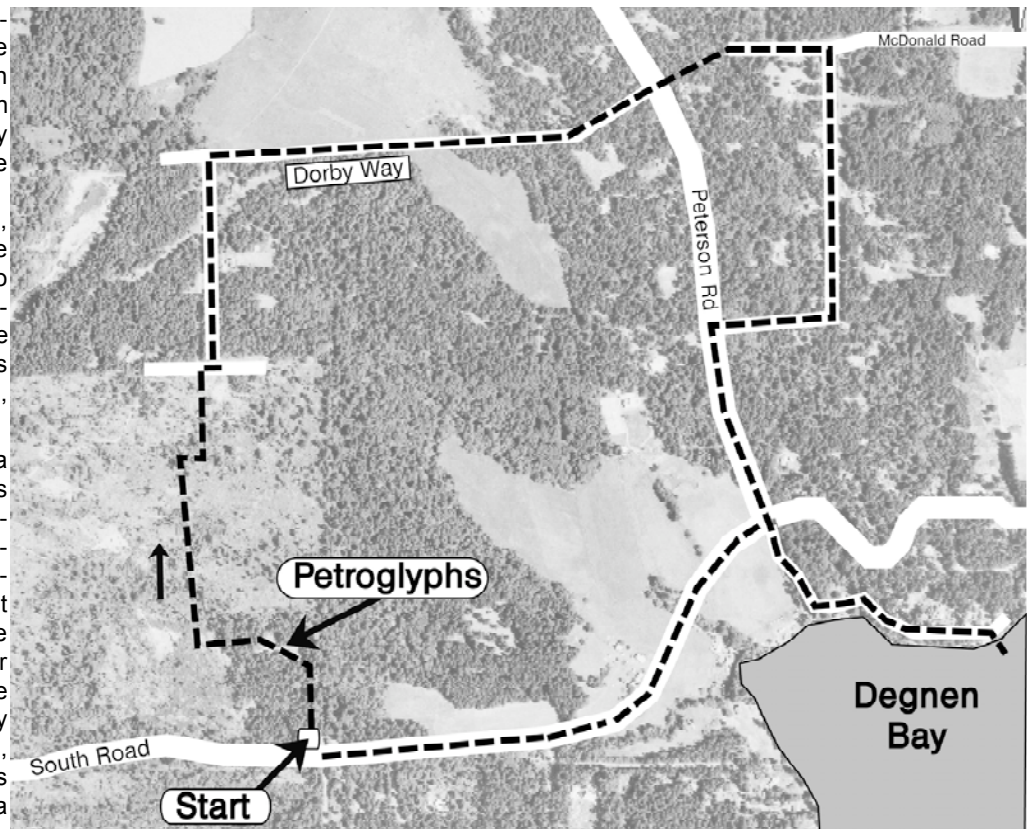
polite reminder to not walk over any rock clearings). Every visit here sends me away with a "must read more about petroglyphs" good intention. The displays at the Gabriola Museum, and the museum's magazine *Shale* are excellent starting points. This is a place to visit in any weather; in fact, rain brings the images to life -- you see images that almost disappear on dry days. In the spring, wildflowers carpet many areas of the meadow, and it becomes very much a where-can-I-step exercise to avoid damaging plants in this classic Gulf Islands eco-system.

The trail winds uphill through the petroglyph clearings to the top of the meadow. On the way you pass a fallen Garry oak tree, uprooted in recent times by wind or old age. Is the ancient tree dead or alive? In winter you'd say dead, but return in spring and new leaves appear on the fallen limbs. Also, look around the base of the tree for signs of new shoots growing from the roots. It's a survival mechanism for the Garry oak. OK, there's a way to go yet, so find the trail as it leaves the top of the meadow, walk through the woods for 50 m and then turn right at a wooden Trail sign. This section of the trail, built by GaLTT volunteers, is on an easement between private properties, so please stay on the trail. After about 0.5 km, the trail takes an abrupt right turn, followed shortly by an abrupt left turn, then continues on until it reaches a gravel road (Petroglyph Way). Turn right and then left onto Crocker, and at the bottom of Crocker turn right onto Dorby Way. As you

walk along Dorby Way a pastoral scene unfolds before you, with a large family-operated farm on your left. The size of the pasture gives an appreciation of the human effort of the early pioneers to clear the land of trees and stumps. When you reach the T-junction with Peterson Road, look for a power pole directly across Peterson. The trail continues through the woods to the left of the pole. This is the most recent of the trails opened by GaLTT. A section of this trail is subject to flooding in winter months, and if the trail is flooded just return to Peterson at the T-junction (at least you know where the trail is!), turn left on Peterson and walk to South Road. Skip the next paragraph.

Back to those continuing on the trail through the wetland to McDonald Road. For those interested in native plants, look in the wetland for aquatic plants which are at their best in spring. The trail brings you onto McDonald Road, and after 100m turn right onto Perry Road. Continue along Perry Road, which curves right and joins Peterson. Turn left on Peterson and walk to South Road.

At South Road, cross the road and take Degnen Bay Road down to the bay, and follow the shoreline to the government wharf. The wharf is a great place to just take in the atmosphere of the bay, and the eclectic collection of boats. From the wharf, retrace your steps to South Road, turn left and follow South Road, past the Gray farmstead, to the starting point at the United Church.



THE CHRISTMAS QUANDARY

If you are like many of us, you have already got all the socks, neckties, scarves, costume jewelry and knickknacks that you need. And probably many of your friends and family are in the same boat. If you would like to give something that requires no wrapping, will never have to be recycled or consigned to the drawer where you keep all the gifts you have no use for, consider a gift donation to GaLTT. It can be any amount you want. All you have to do is email us at info@galitt.ca; tell us how much you would like to donate, and on whose behalf, before December 15th, 2008. Once we receive your donation, we will send a card to the person for whom you are making the donation to let them know of your gift. All donations will go into our Acquisitions Fund. Tax receipts will be issued. What a great gift!

CONTEST! CONTEST! CONTEST!

Calling for innovative, creative, and environmentally friendly ideas! GaLTT has found itself the owner of 100 water bottles, beautifully inscribed with the GaLTT logo, a wondrous deep blue in colour, made out of a very strong plastic. When we bought them for sale they were supposed to be the best on the market! Now we know they likely contain Bisphenol-A, the element in plastic products which has been banned by the Canadian Government. We would like to put them to an environmentally friendly use and need ideas. So THE CONTEST!!! Submit your ideas and we'll award a vest, hoodie or sweatshirt of choice to the winner and a T-shirt of choice to the 2 best follow-ups. Send your ideas to info@galitt.ca. We'll notify the winners and publish the ideas in our next newsletter so that those of you who own a GaLTT or similar water bottle have recycling options. And, please do not drink out of them anymore.

JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS!

GaLTT has a number of clothing options to help dress up a loved one this holiday season and support GaLTT at the same time! Contact Barb Hague at 250.247.7675 or email barb_hague@hotmail.com. T-shirts (\$10), Sweatshirts (\$20), Hoodies (\$25) and Vests (\$30)

Tansy Ragwort— an invasive species

(<http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/tansy.htm>)

See photos on front page.

This poisonous plant has a firm foothold on Gabriola; its yellow flowers can be seen everywhere on the island – by the side of the road, in fields, in pastures, and in woodlands. Tansy ragwort is a biennial to short-lived perennial plant belonging to the Sunflower family. It is native to the British Isles and was likely introduced to North America as a medicinal herb, but now causes environmental deterioration from Hope, south throughout the

Fraser Valley, and north on Vancouver Island to Nanaimo, where it was first recorded in 1950 (Royal Provincial Museum).

You'll know it as soon as you see it (see photo on front page); a low-growing rosette of leaves is produced in the first year, followed by erect stems of 1 to 4 feet high in the second and often subsequent years. The daisy-like bright yellow flowers, evident from July to September, produce an abundance of seed which is easily transported by wind, water, and animals. One ragwort plant can produce in excess of 150,000 seeds which can lie dormant on the soil surface for 4 to 5 years, or over 20 years if buried. People often confuse tansy ragwort with the common tansy plant, but the latter does not have the ray flowers and has leaves which are sharply toothed (see photo on front page).

The plant itself is not necessarily toxic, but when its alkaloids are combined with liver enzymes after ingestion it can cause liver dysfunction and sometimes death. Cattle and horses are most seriously affected followed by goats. Sheep are not as easily hurt by this weed and in fact are used in some countries as a form of biological control.

If you have tansy ragwort on your property, hand pull isolated plants and small patches and remove as much of the root as possible. Don't let ragwort go to seed! For heavily infested areas you must mow often and thoroughly and remember that plants mowed after flowering can still produce seed.

For more information on tansy ragwort and other invasive plants common to Gabriola, check out <http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/>

This Holiday Season give a green gift that is sure to be appreciated!

The Islands Trust Fund's "50 Protected Places Birthday Calendar" makes a great gift.



Why?

- It lasts year after year. No more re-writing birthday and anniversary reminders on a new calendar each year.
- It features the talents of local photographers
- It showcases the beauty of the Gulf Islands
- It makes a unique, useful, and attractive gift
- 100% of all proceeds go to the Opportunity Fund to benefit local conservation projects on the beautiful islands of the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound

Buy the Islands Trust Fund 50 Protected Places Birthday Calendar online at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/donationform.cfm> or by phone at (250) 405-5171 and support the conservation of special places on the islands.