

Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT) Report

Regional District of Nanaimo

Area B Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee October 21 2024 Meeting



GaLTT Activities Since Last POSAC Meeting:

May 15th. Four members of the Honeysuckle Woods project team (Hugh Skinner, Rob Brockley, and Anne Landry from GaLTT and Kristina Baerg from Gabriola Island Memorial Society) were in attendance at the BC Legislature on May 15th to watch local MLA Doug Routley formally present the “Save Honeysuckle Woods” petition, signed by nearly 1,200 Gabriolans.

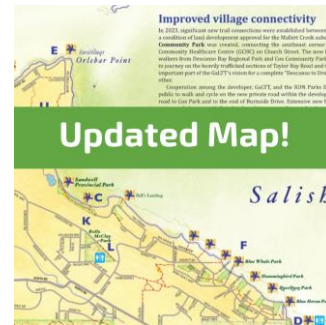
Later that day, the project team had a 30-minute meeting with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (“MoTI”), Rob Fleming, and his senior staff. They were joined by MLAs Doug Routley and Sheila Malcomson. Rob and Kristina briefed the Minister on the Honeysuckle Woods proposal, pointing out that the undeveloped Barrett Quarry has never been used for gravel extraction and that MoTI has other gravel source options on the island. Rob highlighted the high conservation value of the 40 forested acres while Kristina focused on the need for a new natural burial site due to capacity constraints at the existing Gabriola Cemetery.



The Minister listened attentively to the presentation and asked several questions about the property and the proposal. The Minister agreed to have his staff look more carefully into MoTI’s continuing need for the property and to provide GIMS and GaLTT with the outcome of that analysis, including any potential future actions. The project team left the meeting with

a positive feeling that progress has been made and look forward to receiving MoTI’s formal response.

May 18th. GaLTT New Trails Map. The cover looks the same, but the insides are quite different! The new edition 4.5 became available on May 18 at the GaLTT information table at the Saturday Market, and with local vendors.



May 8th and 15th. GaLTT Invasives Work Parties. On May 8th, volunteers took out broom from the roadside in front of the South Firehall.

Since then, there have been two more Drumbeg work parties. Twelve people did their part to assist Mother Nature in a Mother’s Day work party, removing more very tall broom between the trail and the northern park boundary. On May 15th, over a dozen members of the Gabriola Lions joined GaLTT volunteers there to further extend the cleared area.

Since May 1st, GaLTT has removed broom from almost 7,000 square feet of parkland, revealing nine juvenile Garry Oak trees! Our next step will be to start restoring this area in the Fall by seeding and planting native grasses, flowering plants and some native shrubs.



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May 11th. GaLTT at GVFD FireSmart Open House. Invasive Species committee members were also busy on Saturday May 11th, providing information on invasive plant management and offering broom cutting demonstrations to people attending the GVFD Open House.

“Test burns have proven these plants to be especially volatile due to the high oil content and dead material that accumulates under the healthy and old plants. When left to spread, Broom grows rapidly crowding out native plant regrowth. It also poses a significant challenge for fighting fires in urban forested areas due to dense growth restricting movement.” ([BC FireSmart article](#)).

GaLTT supplied some dead broom which GVFD members set on fire (very easily!) to show its flammability. They then showed how to put it out using fire extinguishers.



May 19th. GaLTT Trails Work Party – 11 eager volunteers pre-built boardwalk sections. The total length of the boardwalks is 20 metres. These were installed at 2 different locations in future work parties.

June 2nd GaLTT Trails Work Party – 8 volunteers (12 hours) commenced building a new trail in Haven Woods as part of a comprehensive area plan to relocate and decommission area trails.

May 31st. GaLTT Invasives Work Parties - May continued to be a busy month for the Invasive Species committee and its volunteers!

Broom removal work parties were held on Petroglyph Trail and on Stalker Road and GaLTT also sent a small team to remove invasives on two of the Islands Trust Conservancy (“ITC”) nature reserves where this is GaLTT’s responsibility - Link Island and Burren’s Acres.

The ITC now asks us to report the quantity of invasive plants we remove, and we counted a total of 1763 tansy ragwort plants and 156 thistles pulled on Link Island and 787 broom plants of varying sizes removed at Burren’s Acres.



June. GaLTT Invasives Work Parties - Three more broom work parties were held: Petroglyph Way (June 5th), Honeysuckle meadow (June 9th), and the trail running from the north Firehall to Tin Can Alley (June 12th).



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The most effective time to cut invasive Scotch broom is while it's blooming or has formed immature green seed pods - typically from early May until mid-June.

During that 6 week period, GaLTT had 9 very productive broom work parties, meaning thousands of seeds won't have a chance to start new plants!

June 1st. GaLTT Annual End-to-End Walk. Our End to End walk from Descanso campground to Page's Resort on June 1st was a celebration of our local trails for BC Trails Day - a reason many people visit and move to our island! 65 people (and a handful of well-behaved dogs) walked and talked along the approximately 15 km route, finding both trail connections and a community of walkers.



May 11th. GaLTT Guided Winter Walk Series. Forest researcher, Rob Brockley, and [local author, Amanda Lewis](#), challenged us to look beyond the big trees in S'ul-hween X'pey Nature Reserve to what makes a forest ecosystem unique. From the candelabra Elder Cedar to Gabriola's oldest crab apple tree, swamp lanterns and old man's beard lichen, the lucky walkers came away with a new view of the forest.

June 2nd and June 16th and July 28th. GaLTT Trails Work Parties – Volunteers rerouted and started new trails in Haven Woods. Haven Woods is private property and not a public park as some people may believe. The owners signed a GaLTT trails licence a few years ago

(one of 27 and counting!) to allow the public to access the trails on their property. For personal reasons, they have requested that one of the many trails on their property now be closed to the public while, concurrently allowing construction of a new trail away from the now closed.



July 4th. GaLTT Stroll 'n Sip – Ravenskill Cidery. On a glorious summer evening, 25 walkers explored Coats Marsh Regional Park and the 707 before enjoying a cold Gabbies cider. Thank you for hosting us, Ravenskill!



July 14th. GaLTT Trails Work Party. Two new volunteers joined our team of 6 on Sunday for trail maintenance between posts 59 and 67 in the 707 Community Park. The smaller trails on the island can get overgrown with vegetation and require occasional trimming and clearing. Thank you, volunteers!

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July 20th. GaLTT 20th Anniversary Celebration – Almost 100 GaLTT supporters gathered at Twin Beaches on July 20th to celebrate 20 years of GaLTT activities. The weather cooperated, hotdogs were grilled to perfection, and the music was superb!

Retired forest researcher, Rob Brockley, began by offering a land acknowledgement before first president, Kerry Marcus, introduced the event. Current president, Hugh Skinner, invited everyone to celebrate and appreciate our accomplishments.

Most of GaLTT's past presidents were with us to enjoy green and white cupcakes prepared by Ground Up Cafe. Thank you to Nester's for donating hotdogs and condiments and Jake Galbraith for live music. As always, GaLTT's dedicated volunteers and Board members planned, prepared and participated in all the fun and games.

GaLTT has become a significant part of Gabriola life and we are looking for new volunteers to guide our work through the next 20 years. Trails, Conservation, Education, Advocacy and Fun... there's a supporting role for everyone with GaLTT! Find us at a Saturday Market or email volunteer@galitt.ca to learn more about opportunities to give back to GaLTT and Gabriola.



July 18th. GaLTT Stroll 'n Sip – Volunteer leaders, Karen and Kerry, led 22 walkers on a stroll in the 707 before a sip at the Golf Club on a beautiful evening

July 21st. GaLTT Invasives Work Parties – Six volunteers (9 volunteer work hours) made short work of the patch of tansy ragwort on Paisley Place and then moved on to tackle more plants in the area of the Gabriola Community Health Centre on Church Street. We're happy to see we're not the only people tackling tansy ragwort, but are concerned that some plants are getting left on or by the road, complete with flowers.



Help Spread the Word (Not the Seeds!) 🌻

Tansy ragwort behaves like dandelions, so even after being picked these flowers will still go to seed.

Seeds from whole or severed plants left on the road are likely to spread even further afield on car tires!

Tansy ragwort flowers need to be cut, bagged, and disposed of.

Do not leave flowers attached to the plant or loose in the environment.

Flowers can be added to your green curbside organics cart.

The stem and leaves can simply be left on the ground where they were growing (not the road!) to decompose.

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July 2024. GaLTT Wind Phone Bench. In 2010 Japanese garden designer Itaru Sasaki [set up an old telephone booth in his garden](#) so that he could speak to a loved cousin who had died of cancer by “talking” to him on a phone that is not connected to any “earthly system”. The idea of wind phones as a way to process grief spread around the world, and now there’s one on Gabriola, incorporated into a resting bench created by woodworker Jamie Doig and installed by GaLTT in the 707.

The goal of Sasaki’s wind phone was to help people reflect on loss and find comfort and healing. “Because my thoughts couldn’t be relayed over a regular phone line, I wanted them to be carried on the wind.” Although the original wind phone was created in reaction to an individual loss, after the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011 the wind phone was made publicly accessible so that grieving survivors could call family and friends who died in the disaster.

Since the original phone was installed tens of thousands of people have visited it, and hundreds of other wind phones have been built around the world, including several in Canada.

Our wind phone lives in a box under a beautifully crafted resting bench made by Jamie Doig, who has donated many benches to our community, including the one that this bench will replace (which will be moved to a new location). A small signboard beside the bench explains the context and purpose of the wind phone.

We hope that our wind phone can help those who are grieving in a way to find peace. It is located on the Jeanette Trail (approximately 300m from the trailhead) where it sits under a large bigleaf maple tree, one of the most accessible trail locations on Gabriola. While the trail is relatively flat for most of the distance to the bench, the final 100m does rise up. There are [stumps](#) along the trail for people who have mobility issues to stop and have a rest.



August 1st. GaLTT Stroll ‘n Sip – On August 1, walkers channeled their inner billy goat as they hiked up the cliff face from Descanso campground and on through Cox Park, under Jim Strachan’s capable guidance. Members of GaLTT’s invasive committee (Chair, Alison Thomas, pictured) seized the opportunity to pick tansy ragwort along the way and set an example for others who joined in. The Skol welcomed us to their patio for a cool drink after.



August 6th. GaLTT Invasives Work Party – 13 volunteers (20 volunteer work hours). We started off in the 707, working on a large patch of tansy ragwort a short walk in from post 89 (before and after photos below). With that many volunteers we were able to deal with it quite quickly and the team then went in different directions to work in other areas. A small group took out more plants on the roadside bank below the Medical Centre, while another group headed on to the

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Golf Club to clear the large patch of tansy ragwort growing between the parking lot and South Road.



August 4th. GaLTT BioBlitz Event. On a beautiful low-tide morning at Descanso Bay regional park, enthusiastic budding naturalists searched for sea creatures to ID using the iNaturalist phone app. Other citizen scientists fine-tuned their iNaturalist skills on terrestrial plants and insects.



August 11th. GaLTT Trails Work Party. Garland – Lois Land Boardwalk installation. The existing boards here were placed by local trail users where the trail becomes muddy in wet weather.

GaLTT volunteers installed a new narrow boardwalk here to replace worn-out boards. Boardwalks aren't just built for the convenience of people or to keep them from getting their feet muddy! They're built to protect ecosystems.

August 15th. GaLTT Stroll 'n Sip Walk. On our last Stroll and Sip of the summer, 28 walkers enjoyed the cool Douglas fir forest of the Marcus trail license and on through the road allowance trail off Clarendon. Past president, Norm Harburn, and current president, Hugh Skinner, led us on a 45 minute loop around upper Berry Point that ended with drinks at The Surf, overlooking the ocean.



August 2004. “**Drumbeg Restoration Donations**” campaign launch. GaLTT initiated an appeal for donations to add to the \$3000 BC Parks grant for restoration work in the Drumbeg Provincial Park meadows. The donations focussed on the following elements.

- \$5 buys seeds to cover two square meters
- \$15 buys 5 small plants to cover half a square meter
- \$150 buys a whole tray of 50 small plants.

By early September 2024, GaLTT had received \$6000 in donations, far exceeding our expectations!

September 8th. GaLTT Trails Work Party. 707 Community Park. Trails Trimming.

September 15th. GaLTT Invasives Work Party. Drumbeg Provincial Park. Volunteers removed small broom, blackberry, and invasive grasses from the new restoration area in the back meadow.

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September 22nd. GaLTT Trails Work Party. Keith Drive Boardwalk installation.



*"What a **wonderful surprise** to stroll through the Keith Road connector the other day and see the brand **new boardwalk at the north end**. We walk that trail **several times a week** and as the rainy season approaches **that particular section becomes very challenging to navigate** without becoming wet or muddy or both. The new boardwalk will make for a dry and easy passage all year round. **Thank you all!**"*
- neighbourhood resident

September 29th. GaLTT Invasives Work Party. Drumbeg Provincial Park. Volunteers removed small broom, blackberry, and invasive grasses from the new restoration area in the back meadow.

October 6th. GaLTT Trails Work Party. Keith Drive Boardwalk – mesh installation. Volunteers installed wire mesh on the recently installed boardwalk.

October 13th. GaLTT Invasives Work Party. Drumbeg Provincial Park. Volunteers removed small broom, blackberry, and invasive grasses from the new restoration area in the back meadow.

GaLTT Fallen Tree Removals from Trails (June to August 2024):

- 2 trees cleared in SXNR (Elder Cedar)
- 1 tree cleared on the Tait -Elgie trail
- 1 from the River Place trail in Cox Park
- 1 from the Keith Dr ROW trail

- 1 from the trail from Bonny View Rd to Seymour Rd
- 1 from the Three Gates trail in the 707 CP

GaLTT Trails Trimming (June to August 2024):

- North Degnen to Meeting Tree
- Keith Rd to Canso
- 707CP - Tin Can Alley, Granite, Goblin, Jeanette, Trail to Nowhere, Post 55 to Elgie
- Elgie to Tait
- Nelder's Pond to Federal Lands
- McDonald to South Rd
- Pequot to SXNR (Elder Cedar)
- SXNR – NE trail from Windecker, North Trail, main loop trail
- Merlin's Trail & Evan's ROW
- Robinson Woods
- Islands View & Thompson Trails
- Costa Roca connector to McDonald
- Dragon's Lane beach access
- Haven Woods – centre trail from King Rd, Vanilla Leaf Loop
- 707 CP – SP13-10-27-25, SP52-54-59, SP49-60, SP50-51-52, SP86-88, SP57-56, SP1-3, Wilkinson Way
- Joyce Lockwood – beach accesses and connector to Pequod, Cliffside trail to waterfall, plus connector to Elder Cedar
- Honeysuckle – Colleen, Rollo Park and McClary connectors and to Moby Dick
- Lois Lane to Garland (grassy section)
- All DeCourcy Drive beach accesses
- Seymour to Bonnie View (Lakehaven) trail loop Clarendon-Chichester-Berry Pt. Trail loop

GaLTT Trail Licenses:

- A new Trail Licence was signed with the Gabriola Commons and signs were installed.
- A new Trail Licence has been signed with owners of the property adjacent (East) to Haven Woods. Signs are ordered. New trails

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in Haven Woods will connect with this trail licence.

- A new Trail Licence was signed with the owner of a property that enabled a trail connection between Pat Burns Drive and Duthie Avenue.
- A Trail Licence was signed with the new owners of TL-010, south of Haven Woods.

Winter walks are under preparation.

GaLTT Nature Stewards Program:

115 Nature Stewards participants confirmed in the program with pledges covering over 230 acres.

There are currently 8 properties on our "wait list" and so these will be scheduled to visit in the fall, including a 40+ acre parcel.

GaLTT Nature Stewards Watershed Community Outreach Project:

RDN Watershed outreach planning for Castell Creek. Funding was confirmed for this Phase 3 of our project. This program is funded through the RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) Stewardship Seed Funding program.

Future GaLTT Activities and Events:

GaLTT Work Parties: Every Sunday, alternating weekly between Trails and Invasives.

GaLTT Volunteer Appreciation Event – November 2, 2024 @ Gabriola Golf Course Clubhouse.

GaLTT has received approval from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (“MOTI”) for the installation of a bench on an undeveloped portion of Taylor Bay Road, overlooking Taylor Bay beach. The bench will be installed this fall.

GaLTT is awaiting confirmation of an Islands Trust Conservancy (“ITC”) 3 year management services agreement. The services will include the installation of boardwalks, and removal of invasive plant species, in Elder Cedar (S’ul-hween X’pey) Nature Reserve as well as the removal of invasive plant species on Link Island.