

# Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT) Report

Regional District of Nanaimo

Area B Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee February 10 2025 Meeting



## GaLTT Activities Since Last POSAC Meeting:

In early April Sarah Kopjar took over as GaLTT President, Hugh Skinner is still on the Board as Past President and welcome advisor. Sorry there are no photos with this report because I'm still getting up to speed with all my jobs as president.

**AGM** – On March 29<sup>th</sup> we held our AGM at the Gabriola Golf Club with an at-capacity turn out. The presentation on Rewilding Your Property was very well received. There seems to be strong interest on Gabriola for preserving and enhancing native habitat and biodiversity. This fits well with the RDN's recent biodiversity initiatives.

**Membership Drive** – Throughout March we held a membership drive, it was successful, with 60+ new members joining. GaLTT now has 407 memberships and over half of these are joint memberships, more than 600 people are supporters of GaLTT.

**Community Engagement Committee** – Completed four scheduled community Winter Walks. GaLTT began these walks during COVID lockdown and they are still popular even on the rainy days. Each year we have a different theme. The walks are scheduled for Saturday mornings to encourage any Gabriolans especially families to join and learn about the trails.

CEC is also working with the grade 6/7 class at the school to encourage them to use the trails. The goal is also to improve fitness and before the end of this school year they will complete their own End to End Walk.

The GaLTT led community End to End walk will take place on Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> to coincide with BC Trails Day. We will start at 10 a.m. at the log church on South Rd. across from Silva Bay Marina and end at the Haven. All are welcome.

**Invasive Species Committee** – For over 15 years GaLTT has worked to remove Scotch Broom from the island, especially in Drumbeg Provincial Park. In

February/March the focus was on the front-meadow, then they switched to removing Daphne along various trails and covenant areas. Now that broom is in bloom their efforts are again in Drumbeg but not in the front meadow because the Camus is now blooming. Hugh just reported that he has also seen Camus in the middle-meadow where he has not seen it before. This is the reason for removing the broom so that the native plants can once again thrive so it is satisfying to see good results. Work parties take place every 2 weeks.

ISC also encouraged groups to get together to tackle invasive plants in their own neighbourhoods in particular as a way to celebrate Earth Day with an Invasives Blitz. This, combined with new regular presentations to the Gabriola Garden Club, will hopefully result in more Gabriolans getting involved in removal and restoration.

We recently received a request from volunteers at Morrell Nature Sanctuary for copies of the Invasive Plants pamphlet. It's wonderful to have such positive feedback to our work.

In addition ISC combined efforts with the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department to advertise and facilitate a yard waste drop-off event. This helps people to FireSmart their property and remove the invasive plants so they are less likely to regrow or spread. Great community collaboration.

ISC will meet with Kaitlin Fader (our RDN liaison for invasives removal and restoration work) on May 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss on-going and future work.

**The Trails Committee** – Work for the Trails team recently included:

Work parties:

- 7 volunteers place metal mesh on 40 metres of boardwalk at The Commons. An additional 65 metres still to be completed when additional mesh is available.

**We respectfully acknowledge that the lands we steward are part of the traditional and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.**

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- 10 volunteers started work in Gabriola Sands Provincial Park, placing gravel on the muddy area at the Vehicle Access Gate. Two more work parties followed. This was a joint effort with the Accessibility sub-committee, it improved access for Parks maintenance vehicles, GVFD and park visitors especially in the winter and for those using walkers or strollers. In the future BC Parks plans to alter the gate so people in wheelchairs can get around it.
- Now Trails work parties are in the process of replacing sign posts in the 707 where the wooden posts have rotted.

Fallen Trees Cleared:

- 1 tree cleared from Merlin's Trail. Fortunately not too many trees fall at this time of the year.

**Accessibility sub-Committee** – this committee's work overlaps with the Trails Committee. We are eagerly awaiting the findings of the Descanso Bay Regional Park Accessible Beach Access Feasibility Study. We've been told the coastal engineer and accessibility consultant is currently working on the concept design, construction cost estimate, maintenance considerations and outline of permitting and regulatory requirements. This is timely because on May 8 we received a request for advocacy for better beach access at Drumbeg and/or Joyce Lockwood, this from a Gabriolan who now has disabilities related to MS. We also note that beach access in general was a significant request in the Recreation & Parks master plan draft.

**Submitted by Sarah Kopjar**

*We strive to conserve and connect responsibly*