



# Our Backyard

Volume 10  
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Summer 2010

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

## From The Editor

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Editor

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With all of the 'bad-for-the-environment' news we hear, it's nice to be able to focus on some great things happening locally. I hope that reading this newsletter is as therapeutic for you as it is for me. I know that many of you who read this are involved in restoration projects yourselves, and may get stressed about how many things (invasive species, garbage, trampling) are impacting our protected areas. It's very important that you don't always dwell on how bad things are, but take some time to see how much of a difference you are actually making. Here's what I recommend doing one day on your site, and remember that your site might not be a park, it could just as easily be your backyard (or both). Instead of weeding, spend at least an hour watching the wildlife that uses the areas you've restored. Sit by some flowers, and see the many pollinators that depend on them, and listen to the bird songs surrounding you. If you have wetlands, get close enough to watch the aquatic life while the swallows forage over your head. Make sure you see how much of a difference you are making, and who you are making it for. It is too easy to forget about all the amazing creatures that are benefitting from your great work.

Here are some other ideas to help keep your spirits up this summer:

- Collect seeds from native plants in your yard to propagate next year
- Seed save some of your vegetables (start with peas, lettuce, and tomatoes)
- Go on a nature field trip
- Take a green vacation (<http://blog.conservancy.bc.ca/ecotourism/conservation-holidays/upcoming-holidays/>)
- Visit a museum (The Royal BC Museum has a "Behind the Scenes" exhibit on right now showcasing BC's incredible natural history)
- Go to a nearby intertidal zone and explore. Some of the lowest daytime tides happen in the summer
- Remove a patch of invasives on your property, or help a neighbour/family member do the same
- Volunteer on a restoration project



I hope that this newsletter provides you with enough hopefulness to avoid environmental burnout. If you would like to find out more about anything in this newsletter, please contact me. And please continue to submit articles – the next issue of *Our Backyard* will be the Fall issue in September.



Killdeer nest discovered near wetland restoration at Haliburton Community Organic Farm.  
Credit: Pauline Davis



# Free Home Energy Upgrades for Low Income Renters and Homeowners

by Peter Sundberg

BC Hydro has a program to help low income renters and homeowners make their homes more energy efficient. The Energy Conservation Assistance Program (ECAP) provides energy assessments and free installation of energy saving products to qualifying low income households with high energy usage.



Free energy-saving upgrades include:

- Compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Faucet aerators
- Low flow showerhead
- Hot water tank wrap
- Basic comfort draft proofing
- Thermometers for the fridge and freezer
- Nightlight that's light on energy use
- And more!

Qualifying households may also be eligible for free:

- Refrigerator upgrade
- Advanced draft proofing
- Insulation upgrades

If your Hydro bills are over \$500 a year, and your household qualifies as a low-income according to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut Off (LICO) you may be eligible for the free upgrades. Call BC Hydro at 1.877.431.9463 or visit <http://www.citygreen.ca/bc-hydro-energy-conservation-assistance-program-ecap> to apply.

City Green also offers a range of energy efficiency services for those who do not qualify for ECAP, including:

- Home energy assessments for the LiveSmart BC grant program
- EnerGuide Rating Service and ENERGY STAR programs for new homes
- Thermal Imaging Assessments with an infrared camera to detect hidden home problems and find solutions
- A comprehensive search tool of over a hundred energy efficiency programs for the affordable housing sector at [www.affordablewarmth.ca](http://www.affordablewarmth.ca)

## On the Dunes at Cordova Shore

by Kimberly House

This summer, Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) is coming to your backyard with information on habitat restoration and conservation. The Cordova Shore, which extends from the mouth of Noble Creek in Saanich to north of TIXEN/Cordova Spit in Central Saanich, contains some of the rarest ecosystems in British Columbia. The coastal bluff along the south end of the Cordova Shore is home to many plants and animals that have adapted over centuries to hostile conditions such as constant salt spray, waves, winds, storms and heat. Despite this, these species are extremely vulnerable to threats and disturbances, and need our help to survive.

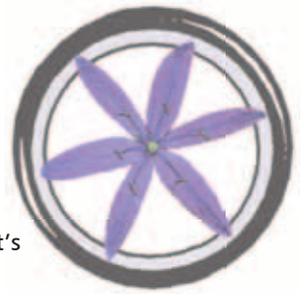
HAT is working with the Tsawout First Nations and the CRD on the "Cordova Shore Good Neighbours Project", which aims to educate residents and visitors in these sensitive areas about the worth of the natural life and beauty that exists there. With a focus on sparsely vegetated sand dunes, coastal bluffs, intertidal zones, and estuaries, we will be offering free information packages and property visits for landowners who are interested in participating in this project. The visits can provide naturescaping prescriptions, invasive plant identification, and information on erosion prevention or water infiltration, as well as opportunities for residents and community groups to practice ecological land care techniques through hands-on workshops.

Setting new standards for sustainable living supports threatened natural habitats. If you are part of the Noble Creek Watershed in Saanich and would like to book a free and confidential visit, please contact 250-995-2428 or [Todd@hat.bc.ca](mailto:Todd@hat.bc.ca). Any other residents interested in being involved in this project or finding out more information may also contact us, or visit [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca).



# IT TAKES A WHOLE COMMUNITY...

by Michelle Colussi



Despite the fear and uncertainty surrounding the economy, climate change and peak oil—or perhaps because of it—people around the world are beginning to look towards new ways of living, in league with nature and in harmony with the planet and in each other. In towns and cities around the world, individuals, groups and communities are working towards this end. It's happening at the grassroots level. It's spontaneous. It's inspiring. It's full of hope. And it's growing.

The Transition Movement began in Totnes UK in 2005 and has since grown to be over 300 cities and towns around the world. There are 17 "official" Transition Towns in Canada – all working in similar and different ways toward greater resilience and less reliance on fossil fuels. Find out more about the international movement at [www.transitionnetwork.org](http://www.transitionnetwork.org)

Transition Victoria: a regional initiative, is a place where those interested in a more sustainable, self-reliant way of living, can gather to exchange ideas, share resources, learn from what others are doing, become inspired, take action, and encourage each other. It is a grand and ambitious social experiment. None of us pretends to have all the answers. But we're learning. We're having fun. And we're doing it together.

Let us know if you are interested in exploring opportunities to collaborate, or hearing more about Transition, and check out these (and more!) groups and projects at: <http://transitionvictoria.ning.com/> Join us!

- Re-Skilling: The Linen Project – contact Denise at [ddunn@pacificcoast.net](mailto:ddunn@pacificcoast.net)
- Reclaiming the Commons: Robin Hood Gardens – contact Ana at [ana@sierraclub.bc.ca](mailto:ana@sierraclub.bc.ca)
- Food: Nut Tree Project – contact Tamara at [sunsonghealing@yahoo.ca](mailto:sunsonghealing@yahoo.ca)
- Education and Child Development: School Curriculum Pilot – contact Sandra at [sdhaywood@shaw.ca](mailto:sdhaywood@shaw.ca)
- Green Energy: Solar Can Heater Project – contact Geoff at [geoffreyderuiter@gmail.com](mailto:geoffreyderuiter@gmail.com)
- Vibrant Communities: Neighbourhood Change Agents Network – contact Elaine at [eweidner@pacificcoast.net](mailto:eweidner@pacificcoast.net)
- Sustainable Mobility: Walk-In Movie Night & Transit Myths – contact Patricia at [patricia\\_m@shaw.ca](mailto:patricia_m@shaw.ca)

## Swan Lake

By Scott Mair

On a hot summer day what better place to be than Swan Lake? The cool of the forest, breezes off the lake, bees buzzing from flower to flower, dragonflies darting after their dinner, turtles sunning themselves at the waters edge, snakes basking on the rocks, and birds singing in the meadows – there's always something to see and do at the nature sanctuary.

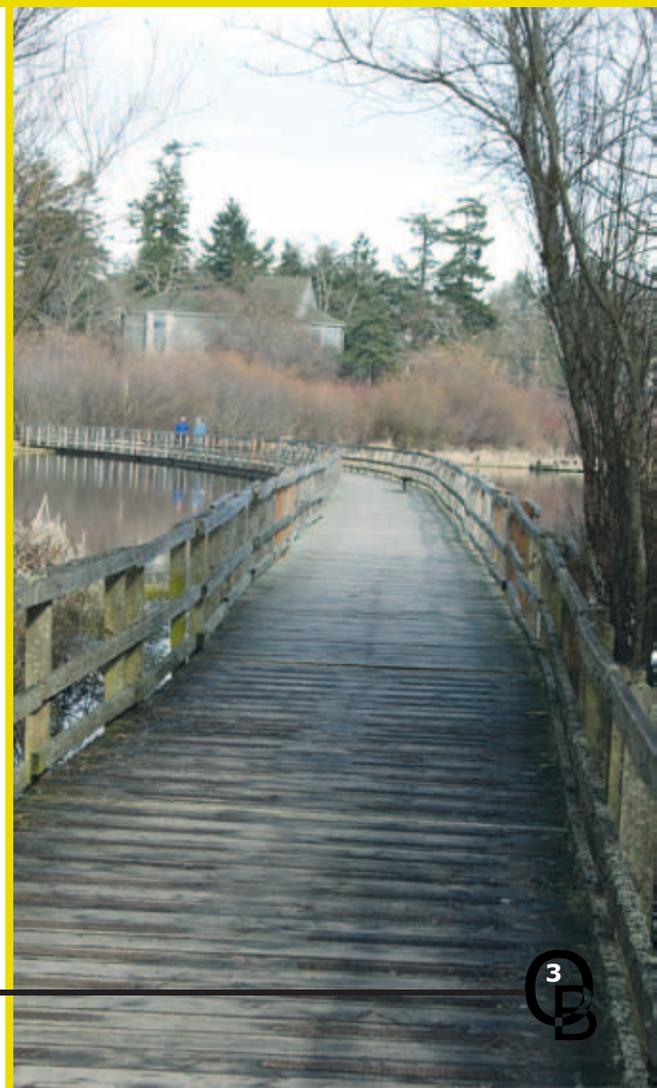
If you want to learn more about the critters and plants you happen across, join us for one of our special events. Drop-in any time from noon to 3 pm on the first and third Tuesday of the month as we explore a different subject each time: July 6, Big, Wet Rodent Day; July 20, Reptile Day; August 3, Insectmania; and August 17, Frog Day.

For the young people in your family, Swan Lake again offers its award-winning day-camps – Nature Explorers for kids 7 to 11; Biology Buddies for naturalists 4 to 6 years; and Big & Little helps adults explore nature with their 4 to 6 year-olds.

For families, Swan Lake reprises their popular Creature of the Summer Night walks (from 7:30 – 9:30 pm on July 28 and August 13) and the Christmas Hill Hike at 10 am and 2 pm on August 12 – if you've not been to Christmas Hill you owe it to yourself to check-out this spectacularly beautiful Garry oak oasis just north of Swan Lake.

Let's not forget the adults – twice a week, 9 am on Wednesdays and Sundays, Swan Lake hosts guided bird walks, or join entomologist Gordon Hutchings on July 14th for an introductory course on dragonflies.

For more information on Swan Lake programs visit [www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca).



Sponsored by Environmental Services of the District of Saanich



*Our Backyard now features a regular update about Saanich's Garry Oak Restoration Project. This update replaces the GORP newsletter, GoRestore.*

*by Marian McCoy, [Marian.mccoy@saanich.ca](mailto:Marian.mccoy@saanich.ca)  
GORP Program Leader and Saanich Parks Natural Areas Technician*

## ***Suddenly, it's summer!***

It must be summer, because the grasses have reached dizzying heights in the GORP sites and everywhere else.

Managing invasive and agronomic grasses as part of ecological restoration is a huge challenge. For GORP, this means balancing the cumulative negative effects of competitive grasses with the risk of damage by mowing and cutting to native plants, birds, insects and other organisms that live among these grasses. Add to this the number and size of areas we are trying to restore.

So far, the best prescription seems to be carefully timed mowing, manual cutting of seed heads and rhizomes, raking up thatch, and re-planting with suitable native grass species. This approach has been applied at several GORP sites in the past, and we'll continue along this path, adapting as we observe and learn.

### ***Summer work parties***

Now that the weather is truly warm, the GORP work parties have switched to Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Here's the schedule:

***14 July Playfair***

***21 July Mount Doug summit***

***28 July Little Mount Doug***

***4 Aug Chatterton Hill***

***11 Aug Mount Tolmie***

***18 Aug to be announced***

Extra work parties might be scheduled if needed. We'll try to give at least a week's notice via the GORP volunteer email list. If you're not on that list and you'd like to become a volunteer, please let me know.

### ***Volunteer recognition and training event***

We are planning a day of training on ecological restoration methods, a celebration lunch, and an afternoon walk to visit nearby restoration sites. This event is planned for October and will target site stewards and regular volunteers.

To find out more about GORP and to stay tuned on upcoming events, check out the website at [www.gorp.saanich.ca](http://www.gorp.saanich.ca).

See you out there!

# Upcoming Events

## Habitat Acquisition Trust

[www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca) 250 995-2428

### Birding at Low Tide

Sunday, July 25, 11am – 2pm

Island View Beach Regional Park

Observe wild birds through high-powered scopes and visit the tidal touch tank! See the bird of prey demonstration and watch the ScallyWags Dog Agility Group stars. This special family event is co-hosted with CRD Parks.

### Super Dog Day

Saturday, August 14, 11am – 2pm

Island View Beach Regional Park

The dog days of summer are super on the beach with your pet! See the amazing Wonder Dogs perform stunts. Take the dunes tour with biologists and other dog lovers to learn about the wild side of the seaside.

## Saanich Recreation Free Programs

[www.saanich.ca/resident/recreation](http://www.saanich.ca/resident/recreation) 250-475-5408

### Gentle Walk & Talk

Thursdays, 9:30-11am

July 22 Gorge Waterway

Meet at the Gorge Waterway Park, near Canoe Club, at end of Tillicum Rd.

July 29 Lambrick Park to Sierra Tyndall Park

Meet at Gordon Head Rec Ctre. Main parking lot, 4100 Lambrick Way off Feltham

### Capital City Discovery Walks

Saxe Point Park – Highrock Cairn Park

July 28, 9-11am

Meet at Saxe Point at the end of Fraser St. in Esquimalt

### Music In The Park

Tuesdays, 6-8pm

Bring your picnic dinner and blanket and enjoy a free evening of music in a local park. Food is available for purchase. For info: Julie Wallace, 250 475-5408

July 20 Brydon Park, Malaika Marimba

July 27 Rudd Park, Kuba Oms

Aug. 24 Meadow Park, Tom Morrissey

### RiverSong: Life Along the Colquitz

BC River's Day Sunday, September 26, 1-4pm

Cuthbert Holmes Park

Celebrate the 20th anniversary of Cuthbert Holmes Park through arts, culture and environmental stewardship. Sponsored by Saanich Parks and Recreation in partnership with Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Park. For more information contact Diane Thorpe, Community Arts Specialist [diane.thorpe@saanich.ca](mailto:diane.thorpe@saanich.ca) or (250) 475.5557.

## 11th Annual Playfair Fun In The Park Picnic

Sunday, July 18th

Meet your neighbors and fellow members of the Quadra/Cedar Hill Community Association. Festivities will run from 12 to 3:00 pm and include:

- Face Painting by the kids clown to entertain us all
- Music from a great band
- Lots of kids games and all kinds of fun
- Tug of War for all of the "tough people"
- Hot Dogs and refreshments by donation

Bring a blanket or chair and enjoy a wonderful day in our lovely park. Playfair Park access is off either Cumberland Road or off Rock Street where you can enter the parking lot. Parking is limited. We encourage you to walk or cycle if possible.

## Victoria Natural History Society

[www.naturevictoria.ca](http://www.naturevictoria.ca)

### Dragonflies for Beginners (Field Trip)

Saturday, July 17, 1pm

Monday, Aug 2, 1pm

Meet at the Beaver Lake Retriever Ponds at 1:00 p.m.

### Hurricane Ridge Alpine Flowers (Day Trip)

Sunday, July 25, 5:45am

This bus tour takes us to the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Centre in Washington's Olympic National Park to enjoy alpine flowers at their peak. Check the VNHS website for more details and costs.

### Tufted Puffins, Brown Pelicans & More (Day Trip)

Sunday, August 15, 5:45am

This bus tour takes us to Cape Flattery, the most northern point on the west coast of the continental United States, to enjoy the plants and animals found along the way. Check the VNHS website for more details and costs.

### Natural History Night (every 2nd Tuesday)

Tuesday, Sept. 9, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

### Botany Night (every 3rd Tuesday)

Tuesday, Sept. 16, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

### Birder's Night (every 4th Wednesday)

Wednesday, Sept. 22, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

### Marine Night (last Monday of the month)

Monday, Sept. 27, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

# Upcoming Events

## The Centre for Arts, Ecology & Agriculture

Foxglove Farm, Salt Spring Island

[www.foxglovefarmbc.ca](http://www.foxglovefarmbc.ca) 250 388-6800

## Seeds for Change: Organic Seed Production

July 20-23

In addition to the basics of growing seed organically, we will cover how to determine if you are starting with good seed stock and how to improve and refine a variety if it has been poorly maintained.

## Foxglove Festival

July 25

There will be live music, guided tours, kids activities, and a farm stand burgeoning with farm fresh produce.

## Farm, Arts & Culinary Camp for Kids (7 to 12)

July 26-30

This is a rare opportunity for campers to have a hands-on farm experience.

## Field to Plate: Summer Nightshades with Chef Laurie Munn (Cafe Brio)

August 8

Explore flavour differences and preparation techniques based on the farms natural cycle. Begin by harvesting nightshades (tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant), followed by cooking demonstrations.

## Farmstead Cheesemaking

August 15

The workshop will emphasize 'natural cheesemaking', with a focus on simple, hands-on techniques that can be easily reproduced at home or on the farmstead.

## The Artisan Baker

August 22

Heather's wood fire oven will be well stoked for this exploration of various artisan-style breads.

## Small Scale Grain Production

August 24-27

This workshop is intended for anyone wishing to grow grains for their own consumption or for supplying small-scale regional users such as bakers, maltsters, or livestock producers.

## Preserving the Harvest

August 29

There is nothing like cracking open a jar of tomato sauce, pickles or jam in the peak of winter and being instantly transported back to the flavours and smells of summer. Join Chef David Mincey.

## Growing Tree Crops for Home & Market

Aug. 31 – Sept. 3

Join orchardists Harry Burton, Bob Duncan, and Michael Ableman to learn about site selection, fruit varieties, orchard establishment, soil fertility, grafting, pruning, pest and disease control, harvest, post harvest, and marketing of fruit

## Backyard Poultry

September 12

The "Chicken Lady" will teach you the simple skills needed to acquire and care for your own backyard flock.

## Swan Lake

Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

[www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca) 250-479-0211

## Intro to Dragonfly Watching

Wednesday, July 14, 7 – 9pm

Field-trip, Saturday, July 17th

\$25 Members / \$35 Non-Members.

## Reptile Day

Tuesday, July 20, 12 – 3pm

Come and join us for our annual reptile bash. Live reptiles, games, crafts and face painting. Crafts \$3.

## Creatures of the Summer Night

Wednesday, July 28, 7:30 – 9:30pm

Friday, August 13, 7:30 – 9:30pm

Sharpen your night senses with owl prowling and raccoon trailing.

Pre-registration required. \$4 Members / \$6 Non-Members.

## Insectmania

Tuesday, Aug. 3, 12 – 3pm

They're creepy, they're crawly and they're cool. Hands-on exploration, live bugs, crafts, songs and games. Crafts \$3.

## Christmas Hill Hike

Thursday, Aug. 12, 10am – 2pm

Suitable for all mobile ages.

## Fabulous Frogs

Tuesday, Aug. 17, 12 – 3pm

Long sticky tongues, breathing through skin and webbed feet! Join us for a puppet show, hands-on displays, live animals and froggy crafts. Crafts \$3.

## Guided Birdwalks

every Wednesday and Sunday.

Meet at the parking lot at 9 am.

## Volunteer Opportunity

Glendale Gardens in partnership with Saanich Parks is looking for volunteer gardeners to help restore the lands known as Outerbridge Park. Duties will include invasive plant removal and maintaining the trails and lands as a park and nature sanctuary.

Volunteers will work Thursday mornings from 9:00 – 12:00 noon. Please contact the Coordinator of Volunteers at: [volunteers@hcp.bc.ca](mailto:volunteers@hcp.bc.ca)

or contact Glendale Gardens at 250-479-6162.

# Upcoming Events

## CRD Regional Parks

www.crd.bc.ca/parks 250-478-3344

### Intro to Plants that Heal (Course)

Thursday, July 15 and 22, 6-9pm

Francis/King Regional Park (Age: 15+)

Join us for this introduction to the medicinal use of native plants.

You must pre-register by July 9. Cost: \$15.00 + tax.

### The Amazing Race (Drop-in Event)

Thursday, July 22, 11am-2pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Age: 5+)

Park interpreters will start you on this nature-based race through the forest. Win prizes too! Meet at the Nature Centre in the main Beaver Lake parking lot.

### Cougar Capers (Guided Walk)

Friday, July 23, 1-3pm

Saturday, August 28, 1-3pm

Francis/King Regional Park

Investigate the life of a cougar on this informative walk and talk. Meet at the Francis/King Nature House off Munn Road.

### Going Bug-eyed (Drop-in Event)

Thursday, July 29, 11am-2pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

They're creepy, they're crawly and they're cool. Look for the CRD tents at Beaver Beach.

### Snake Day (Drop-in Event)

Thursday, August 5, 11am-3pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Watch snake shows, play reptile bingo and more. Look for the CRD tents at Beaver Beach.

### Canoe Adventures (Guided Paddle)

Sat/Sun, August 7, 15, 21 or 29, 8-11am

Thursday, August 12, 6-9pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Canoe equipment and instruction are provided (no experience necessary). You must pre-register. Adult \$15/Child \$8.50.

### Hiking Park to Park, Teen Adventure (Guided Hike)

Wednesday, August 11, 11am-3pm

Francis/King Regional Park (Age: 14-17)

A new CRD Parks adventure series geared for teenagers. Wear sturdy footwear and bring a lunch. Meet at the Nature Centre off Munn Road.

### Ha-bat-itat (Guided Walk)

Friday, August 13, 1-2:30pm

Francis/King Regional Park

Discover the world of bats. Meet at the Nature Centre off Munn Road.

### Nature CSI (Guided Walk)

Tuesday, August 17, 10-11:30am

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Age: 5+)

Fine tune your investigation skills and learn to be a nature super sleuth! Meet at the info kiosk in the main Beaver Lake parking lot.

### Blood and Guts (Drop-in Event)

Thursday, August 19, 11am-2pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Learn more about animals that make their living by eating meat.

Drop in at the CRD tents at Beaver Beach.

### Forest Feast (Drop-in Event)

Friday, August 20, 11am-2pm

Francis/King Regional Park

Celebrate uses of West Coast wild plants with activities, displays and guided walks. Meet at the Nature Centre off Munn Road.

### Teen Adventure Paddle (Guided Paddle)

Wednesday, August 25, 1-4pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Age: 14-17)

Canoe equipment and instruction are provided (no experience necessary). You must pre-register. \$15/Person.

### Forest Fossicking (Guided Walk)

Thursday, August 26, 11am-12:30pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Join us as we look for all things small. Hand lenses and field guides provided. Meet at the Nature Centre in the main Beaver Lake parking lot.

### Bountiful Berries (Guided Walk)

Saturday, August 28, 1-2:30pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Age: 5+)

Join us on a walk and even taste jams made from some of these natural delights. Meet at the Nature Centre at Beaver Beach.

### Hawk Watch (Special Event)

Saturday, September 25, 11am-3pm

Francis/King Regional Park

Join CRD, the Victoria Natural History Society, and Pacific Northwest Raptors for live displays and activities as well as viewing opportunities with spotting scopes. The 20-minute hike up to the viewpoint requires sturdy footwear along a steep and rocky trail. Bring binoculars, water and a lunch. Drop in anytime between 11am and 3pm at the parking lot off Becher Bay Road.

# Turtles at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

By J.M. Pope

"Turtles at Swan Lake? I didn't know there were turtles at Swan Lake. I've never seen one!" That's what most people say when asked about turtles.

The truth is there are two species of turtle in the lake; the native Western Painted Turtle and the non-native Red-Eared Slider Turtle. The Pacific population of Western Painted Turtle is red-listed. Red-listed species are those that have been legally designated or are being considered for legal designation as Endangered or Threatened. For more information visit <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sterk/red-blue.htm>.

Red-Eared Slider Turtles are native to the southern United States and it is illegal to release them into native habitats. The same is true for all amphibians and reptiles that you may have in your care. The impact of this non-native turtle on native turtle populations is not yet clear and could be harmful.

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary has confirmed a small population of Western Painted Turtles and is now working with biologists Christian Englestoft and Kristiina Ovaska to improve the quality of turtle habitat. This summer we are rehabilitating a nesting area, installing basking logs in the lake, and conducting a population inventory.

June is the busiest month for nesting turtles. When a turtle wants to lay her eggs, she looks for a patch of unvegetated soil that she can dig into. To create patchy grounds on warm south facing slopes that will encourage nesting activity, we are removing patches of invasive plants from areas surrounding the Nature Center where turtles are known to nest, as well as creating a turtle nesting garden.

This month, thirteen new turtle basking logs were installed along the shore of the lake. Basking logs are very important to turtles, they help raise the turtles body temperature; improving their ability to reproduce and overall health. As soon as the logs were in the water, a family of mallards hitched a ride on the logs and turtles were climbing aboard! Turtles have since been observed using the logs to bask in the sun nearly every day. Most of the logs can be seen from the boardwalk and the new Founders Wharf, so take a moment to do a little turtle watching!

If you come to do some turtle watching you will want to know what kind of turtle you are looking at! The key to identifying these turtles is to look for colour patterns: red colouring on the underside of the shell for the Western Painted Turtle and a red stripe on each side of the head for the introduced Red-Eared Slider Turtle. Enjoy!

You can help protect our turtles. If you see a turtle digging a nest in the sanctuary, please note the species (Painted or Red-eared Slider), the location of the nest in relation to a fixed point (bench or sign post), the number of eggs laid, and the time and date.

Basking logs are not easy to get, so a big thanks to Barry Gates of Malahat Ecoforestry Ltd. for supplying the logs and to Inder Taneja for donating a whole tree, downed in a recent windstorm.

Remember: Never capture turtles, or pick one up (they do bite!), or disturb them in any way. Turtles are protected under the Wildlife Act and must not be disturbed. Any sightings can be reported to the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary at 250-479-0211.

# 2010 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD WINNERS

## Individual Citizen - Lynda Grant

Lynda, a Saanich resident, has been involved in a wide variety of environmental endeavors over the last twelve years. She is passionate about invasive species removal and the native plants of our region, particularly endangered Garry oak ecosystems. Some of her accomplishments include: volunteering within native plant gardens; removing invasive plants and caring for native plants in Playfair Park, Dawson Heights, Mt Douglas and elsewhere in Saanich. Lynda is a member of the Native Plant Salvage Group and the Victoria Native Plant Study Group, and maintains her own native plant garden.



## Volunteer Organization - Gorge Waterway Initiative (GWI)

The Gorge Waterway Initiative (GWI) is a collaborative, community-driven group of organizations concerned with protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural features of the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and the surrounding watersheds. Since 2005, the group has participated in projects such as: restoration of oceanfront sites; free public lecture series; interpretive signage for the Gorge and Portage Inlet; a nest box project for Purple Martins; and participation in many community events around the Gorge, including Oceans Day. The group has done much to raise awareness of this unique and environmentally sensitive area of Saanich.

## Business/Commercial - City Green

City Green offers services that help Saanich residents and businesses invest in the energy efficiency of their homes and buildings; which reduces energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Since 2005, more than 1300 Saanich homeowners have had energy efficiency audits through City Green. In addition, City Green teams up with utilities and municipalities, including Saanich, to help communities reach their wider climate action goals and commitments. Revenue from City Green's services is invested in the organization and into services for low to middle income households. City Green has created a successful enterprising non-profit model that also benefits the environment in Saanich.

## Youth Group/School - Lochside Elementary School

In 2005, Lochside School started a recycling program, which now diverts huge volumes of materials from Hartland Landfill. The program has grown every year since then, thanks in large part to the students who go the extra mile to recycle everything possible. The school is now considering reducing garbage collection to once per month. The goal for the future is to reduce the amount of recycling that needs to be done by focusing on reusing and reducing as well.

## Biodiversity Conservation Award - Horticultural Centre of the Pacific

The Horticultural Centre of the Pacific was nominated for the establishment of an ethnobotany trail to honour Saanich First Nations and their connection with the environment. Visitors to the centre can walk the trail and learn about Native plants and their uses by First Nations. The trail increases the visitor's understanding of the value and beauty of our native trees, plants and wildflowers and the biodiversity that we enjoy in Saanich.

## Sustainability - Gorge Tillicum Urban Farmers

GTUF has emerged in the Gorge Tillicum area over the past couple of years, attracting a large group of over 60 members interested in local organic food production, food security and sustainability. They have regular meetings to share information, tips and plants and are very active as a Google group. They have organized garden tours, and have created a strong learning, and community education focus. They are currently working with the Gorge Tillicum Community Association and Saanich Parks to establish a community garden in the area and are exploring ways to market local produce. All in all, a vibrant group worthy of recognition.

## Long Term Achievement - Lawrence Bomford

Lawrence has given his time to Saanich organizations for many years. He has Chaired the Rainbow Neighbourhood Ratepayers Association where he advocated for green space in his neighbourhood. Since 1986, he has volunteered at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary and has also served as Chair and Director of the Swan Lake Board. In addition to all this, he has been a community representative for Saanich Community Association Network as well as several Citizen's Advisory Boards. He also volunteers at Haliburton Community Farm. Lawrence's over-riding concern for the preservation and security of local agriculture and the environment has led him to be a model and source of inspiration and expertise for friends, neighbours and the community. For this lifetime of community service, Lawrence truly deserves the Long-term Achievement award.

## Honourable Mention - Youth Group/School - Strawberry Vale Elementary

This group is receiving an honorable mention for their work to reduce waste and to educate their student body about sustainability and environmental issues.

## Honourable Mention - Youth Group/School - Reynolds Green Spaces Project

This group is receiving an honorable mention for their ongoing work to restore and revitalize their school courtyard using native plants and sustainability principles.

## Honourable Mention - Sustainability - Judy Fainstein

Judy is being recognized for creating Yes BC as a vehicle to inspire and motivate youth to take action to improve the environment through leadership opportunities.

# Madrona Farm Saved

By Heather Skydt

Twenty four months and almost 3,000 donors later, The Land Conservancy of BC is proud to announce Madrona Farm is saved and will remain in agricultural production forever.

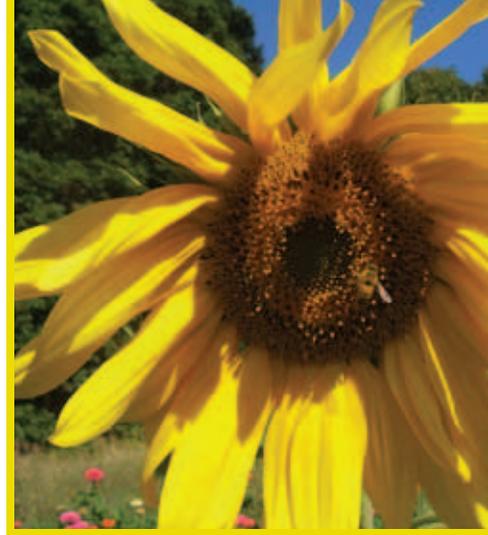
Thanks to overwhelming public support and one last minute donation from an anonymous donor, as well as major contributions from the Farmlands Trust Society, Victoria Foundation and local Victoria residents Ed Johnson, Mel McDonald, and 101-year-old couple Helen and Glenn Saywer, TLC is pleased to add Madrona to its list of "special places" in B.C.

Located just 10 minutes from downtown Victoria, Madrona Farm provides food to more than 3,500 homes in the Greater Victoria area. The 27-acre farm produces a diversity of 105 crops, 12 months a year.

Without a doubt the community support for this campaign has gone above and beyond what anyone imagined. Not only did donations come from all over Canada and the USA, but also England and Singapore. Islanders donated their \$100 climate action dividend cheques and students from post secondary institutions, high schools, and elementary schools fundraised to see this agricultural gem saved. One senior gathered donations from her neighbours in a seniors centre and one hockey enthusiast decided to split half his hockey pool winnings with Madrona. Many local businesses, hotels, and restaurants donated their time and money to see the campaign succeed. Major events such as the annual Chef Survival Challenge, TLC's EcoNight with the Salmon Kings, and Earth Month activities with MayFair Mall all raised funds toward the acquisition.

"This project has changed our lives. David and I are true believers that a community is one of the most powerful forces in nature, and if we all stand together there is no problem too big for us to solve!" says Nathalie Chambers. "Our community now has a working model for sustainable agriculture and food security is on the horizon. Thank you everyone who had a hand in helping this campaign, and especially The Land Conservancy for stepping up to the plate."

The future for Madrona Farm is now very bright indeed. David and Nathalie Chambers will hold the first long-term lease to continue their great work supplying the public and local restaurants with fresh, organic produce. They will also continue to educate young farmers through volunteer programs and school co-op work terms, as well as bi-monthly farm tours for the general public. It is intended that a covenant will be placed on the property to provide further protection. For more information or to become a member of TLC, please visit [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca).



**Madrona Farm's 3rd Annual Chef Survival Challenge** is taking place October 3 from 12 to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$75 at the Madrona farm gate, 4317 Blenkinsop Road, Wednesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or available online through TLC. Proceeds will go towards TLC's Agricultural Program with 10% going to the Island Chef Collaborative. For more info, visit [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca)

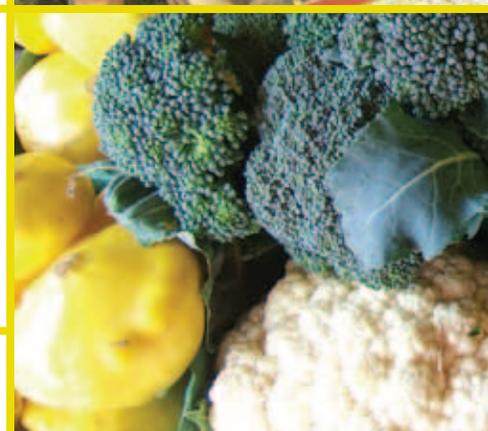


Photo credits: Heather Skydt