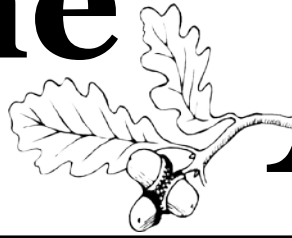


the Acorn



The Newsletter of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy

Number 45, Fall 2010

Celebrating Our Accomplishments



The SSI Conservancy was started in 1995 by a small band of dedicated women who led an ambitious campaign to raise the community funds needed to purchase the Mill Farm. This 160-acre property was the largest unprotected stand of old-growth trees on Salt Spring Island.

We have become the leading local organization protecting the natural environment of Salt Spring Island. We have:

- raised \$720,000 for seven land protection projects,
- put in countless volunteer hours researching and negotiating agreements and partnerships, and then raising those funds,
- helped secure over 2600 acres of ecologically valuable land on Salt Spring.

Currently, we own 240 acres of nature reserves: the Andreas Vogt, Manzanita Ridge and North View reserves and the summit of Mt. Erskine (co-owned with partners). We were the first conservancy in BC eligible to hold conservation covenants and we now hold 13 of them, protecting 754 acres. Two covenants protect watersheds for drinking water lakes.

We have grown from a group of volunteers working on one project to an organization with over 600 members,

hundreds of active volunteers and an office with a small part-time staff. Last year, volunteers contributed over 5300 hours of their time to SSI Conservancy projects.

Our public education program has expanded to include monthly talks on natural history topics and workshops for the public. Our award-winning Stewards in Training school program provides nature education for 700 grade school children every year.

Since 2004 we have received federal Habitat Stewardship Program funds to work with landowners to help them manage their natural habitats. Our Stewardship program now employs two part-time biologists. They have worked with hundreds of landowners, discovered 6 rare or endangered species previously unknown on Salt Spring and found new populations of over 30 other rare species. 🐦

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President's Message



“Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got till it's gone.”

Snippets of songs often flit through my mind, and these lyrics from Joni Mitchell's song “Big Yellow Taxi” seem to surface again and again. To me they reflect a deep truth about our nature as human beings. All too often, in many spheres of life, we take things for granted. We obsessively focus on the future and what we don't have (and think we need). Meanwhile, we lose sight of the present and familiar and how precious they are – until one day, they are no longer there, and we feel an eerie sense of loss and regret.

This truth is no more evident than in our attitude towards the natural world. Take our beautiful Salt Spring Island landscape of forest, marshes, streams, lakes, and shore, scientifically classified as the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem. Biologists tell us that it is the rarest and one of the most-endangered ecosystems in BC. We certainly appreciate its beauty. However, because we live here and experience it every day, we tend to lose sight of how wonderful it is, and tend to assume that it will always be here – until one day ...

The article on the cover of this *Acorn* highlights the Salt Spring Conservancy's wonderfully successful 15 years. All these achievements have been made possible through the support of you, our valued members and donors, and the dedication of our many volunteers. Thanks to all of you.

Thanks also to our talented and enthusiastic staff who are truly marvelous.

I would be remiss, in this my first message as your new president, if I did not single out for acknowledgement Maureen Bendick, our immediate past president, and Bob Weeden, president before her. They have given selflessly of their time and great talents to this organization, and continue to do so. They provide an inspiring, if somewhat daunting, example to follow.

We have a year of great challenge and opportunity ahead of us. Let's get on with it!

~ Ashley Hilliard



The Natural Landscape Benefits our Community

Protecting the natural landscape is a benefit to our whole community because it:

- protects standing forests, which are home to wildlife and play a valuable role in slowing climate change by holding carbon,
- protects watersheds, vital on an island where many rely on local lakes for drinking water, and
- provides recreation and preserves the beauty of the island (appreciated by islanders and thousands of visitors every year).

As a local conservancy, we have a skilled team of volunteers and staff who know the island and are experienced in land conservation issues.

- We work with conservation partners, negotiate legal agreements and write grant applications for national funding sources.
- We restore and manage the nature reserves entrusted to us.
- We work directly with landowners to help them manage their own property.
- We sponsor public education and school programs about our local environment and the importance of protecting it for future generations

Our work is critical because the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem covering Salt Spring Island is the rarest in the province. Over 45 species of rare or endangered plants and animals live in the wild areas of Salt Spring.



Director's Desk

"I don't want my donation wasted on administration costs." How often have you heard this sentiment expressed? Of course, we all want to make sure the money we give goes directly to the people who need it for health care, for emergency or food aid and many other worthy causes. But 'overhead' or administration costs are the very expenses that ensure that the money you donate to a charity is spent wisely. A certain amount of administration is needed to make sure money goes where it is intended, is spent as it should be and that transactions are properly accounted for.

The reason I bring this up is that our annual report (available on our web site) shows 'Office and Administration' at 36% of our expenses. Some people might wonder if this seems high, especially compared to charities that try to keep their administrative costs below 15%. But is it really too high for what we do? Not at all! Unlike other kinds of charities, as a land conservancy we have a permanent obligation to administer the land and conservation covenants we hold. If the land and covenants we administer had a dollar value that could show up as 'income' in an annual budget, the proportion of our total income spent on administration would appear much smaller indeed. Our administration expenses go toward maintaining an office (staff, rent, computers, utilities, office supplies), keeping permanent records and files, bookkeeping and financial audits, liability insurance for public use of our nature reserve and other costs.

We depend entirely on donations to pay these expenses as well as for our education and other programs because such administration expenses are usually not eligible for project funds received through grants. Despite the recent good news that we have once again received federal funds for our species at risk work, that money does not fund our administration expenses. It also doesn't fund our other programs, such as public education and our Stewards in Training school program. You can see where all this is going, I am sure ...

Annual appeal: By the time you read this you may have received an annual appeal letter from me. I urge you to think about what it is worth to you to have a strong local land conservancy working to benefit our community long into the future. In the appeal letter, you will see more ways than ever to make donating as easy as possible, including donating on-line or through monthly account withdrawals. I am very happy to see that more people are opting to make regular monthly donations. I am sure they are finding it easier on their budget to give a smaller amount regularly than a larger amount once. We certainly find it helps us to know what our steady income will be each month.

The Acorn Fund: Earlier this summer we began working in earnest on building an endowment fund, called the Acorn Fund. The point of this is to ensure long-term



Robin Ferry, Nora Layard and Jean Gelwicks taking care of our booth at the fall fair.

financial stability for the Conservancy by accumulating a substantial fund. The income from the fund would then generate funds to support administration and program costs. Funds directed to an endowment must remain in that fund, so they continue to earn income forever. This is a way to ensure a kind of immortality for your major donation, because it remains as part of the capital that continues to generate income long into the future. Our goal eventually is to have \$2 million in such a fund over the next 5 to 10 years, but this year we are aiming to make a substantial start on this with a goal of \$500,000. If you would like to support our work financially, but can't manage it at this time, you might want to consider leaving a bequest.

Our endowment fund is a wonderful way to leave a legacy on Salt Spring.

~ Linda Gilkeson



Living with Nature - A Guide for Newcomers to Salt Spring Island has been a huge success. If you know someone new to the island or who is thinking of moving here, please gift them one of our guides. They are free, beautiful and available at Salt Spring Books, Sabine's, Island Trust Building Inspector's Office (above the Post Office) and the Conservancy office.

School program



Superintendent Jeff Hopkins (right) receives the award on behalf of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy

We got some incredibly wonderful news early this summer. Unbeknownst to us, Jeff Hopkins (Superintendent of School District 64) submitted our name, the Stewards in Training School Program, for the BC School Superintendents Association's Award of Recognition. This award is presented each year to an individual or organizations for their contribution to enhance public education.

We won!

This came as a complete surprise to us, as we did not know the award existed. In their letter to us they say:

"The BCSSA would like to publicly acknowledge the Salt Spring Island Conservancy's dedication to providing programs and support to hundreds of school-aged learners each year through the Stewards in Training ecological immersion program, exposing children in a positive way to our natural world. We commend Salt Spring Island Conservancy in your unending support of public education in this regard."

Mr. Hopkins says every superintendent in the province can submit names and the competition is stiff. Only one or two are awarded each year, so this is a big deal! A big thank you goes to Mr. Hopkins for thinking about us and taking the time to nominate us.

This award truly goes to each one of our volunteers for helping make this possible. We also cannot thank Sarah Bateman and Cate McEwen enough for all their work towards making this program truly an award-winning program. Well done everyone!

This is the good news. The sad news is that we are losing both Sarah Bateman and Cate McEwen as our brilliant coordinators. They are moving on to new challenges. In their own words:

Sarah: "I would like to take this opportunity to let everyone know that in the fall I will be starting a full time teaching

position with the Middle Years Shared Ecological Education Centre Program (MY SEEC). I will be working with 42 students and Steve Dunsmuir - who started the SEEC program on Saturna Island. This means that I will no longer be able to coordinate the Stewards in Training program. I have enjoyed every aspect of this program, especially getting to know all of the enthusiastic and interesting volunteers who so generously give their time to mentor kids in nature. "Cate and I will both remain on the Stewards in Training committee and we would welcome anyone else who would like to play a role in the planning of this program. We hope that it will always be expanding and evolving in ways that encourage children to develop a sense of wonder and curiosity about the natural world."

Cate: "I would like to use this opportunity to thank all volunteers whom I have had the pleasure of working with over the past 3 years for achieving together some fabulous moments and days out in the field with the students.

"Collectively, the program has gained support, volunteer effort extraordinaire and awards of excellence. A winning formula. I am also stepping down from the post of coordinator. I will continue to work in other avenues of environmental education, as well as a volunteer with the school program. See you out there - where the birds sing, the mud oozes, and the kids run freely."

We have been truly blessed to have Sarah and Cate as our coordinators. The program has thrived under their coordination. They have been brilliant. We are so pleased that they are both staying on the School Committee so we can continue to work with them.

Luckily for us, Kris Fullbrook has agreed to take on the role as coordinator of the Schools Program. Kris has been a stellar volunteer for the program for a number of years and took over for Cate when she took a medical leave. Kris knows the programs, volunteers, the sites and teachers and has been a valued member of the School Committee. So we sadly let Sarah and Cate go and happily welcome Kris.

There will be a party for all 2010 school program volunteers with Cate and Sarah in attendance, Nov. 5th from 4 to 6 p.m. at 164 Wilkie Way. We hope all volunteers who have ever worked with Cate and Sarah will attend to celebrate another successful year, thank both our out going coordinators and welcome Kris. It will be a great party and we promise a lot of great photos!

The fall program is for grades 1-3 at Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park. Look on our web site www.saltspringconservancy.ca for more information. If you would like to volunteer please contact the office at 538-0318. We would love to have you!

~ Jean Gelwicks

School Program Chair



School Program Images

The Stewards in Training School Program received a grant from Mountain Equipment Coop this year to help us collect, categorize and organize the thousands of photographs we had been collecting in various coordinators, volunteers, teachers and School Committee members computers, over the last seven years.

With the grant we purchased the Light Room software program for organizing these photos which has worked like a dream. We have now collected all these photographs into one place and given each photograph a number of keywords to sort them by e.g. photographer, date, place, grade level, and activity, etc.



Our new Stewards in Training coordinator Kris Fullbrook and students at Burgoyne Bay.

The most fun, after organizing all the photos into categories, was making a number of “slide shows” that we could use right away:

- Best of Burgoyne Bay 1-2-3 program
 - Cultural and Natural Stewardship
- Best of Ford Lake 1-2-3 program
 - Wetlands Stewardship
- Best of Burgoyne Bay 4-5 program
 - Marine Stewardship
- Best of Cusheon Cove 4-5 program
 - History and Forest
- Best of Ford Lake 6-7
 - program Water Stewardship
- Best of Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve 6-7 program
 - Garry Oak Ecosystem Stewardship
- Best of Ganges Harbour grade 8 program
 - Planet Ocean

We also created Power Point shows that we can use in a variety of different situations, including a short 6 minute show on the Stewards in Training Program; pre-trip presentations to show in the classroom; the best of the best of all our pictures in one show; and a great comprehensive overview of our

Upcoming Events

Oct. 22 (Friday) - Climate Change and the Future of our Garry Oak Forests. Dr. Marlow Pellatt, coastal ecologist for Parks Canada. He will talk about his research using fossils and records in the layers of lake sediments to trace back through time the prevalence of Garry Oak and Douglas fir in this region. Climate models predict that global climate change will cause ecosystems to migrate northward and higher in elevation. Dr. Pellatt will talk about how this will affect Garry Oak ecosystems and how to plan for protected areas to conserve them. Community Gospel Hall, 7:00 pm at the Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road. Admission is by donation.

program.

The last step was to place all the “best of” photos of each program, as well as one about the program as a whole (comprehensive overview) on our web page www.saltspringconservancy.ca, so that teachers, parents and students can access them. We are hoping that parents and students will visit the Conservancy web site before coming out on a field trip, to get an idea of the good time they are going to have and how to dress properly and come prepared. We also hope to use our “shows” in fundraising, volunteer recruitment and celebrating our one of a kind award-winning program.

We are making the collection of photos a part of the coordinator’s annual responsibilities, so that our images will stay current and organized.

Thanks to Sarah Bateman and David Denning for all their work on this project and for Mountain Equipment Coop for making this project a reality by giving us the funding. Please go to our web page and have a look for yourself at our new shows. We hope you will be impressed.

~ Jean Gelwicks





BOOK REVIEW

THE INSIDE SOLUTION

Review: Jeremy Rifkin, *The Empathic Civilization*. Tarcher/Penguin 2009.

Rifkin sees that the human story can be told as a succession of discoveries of new energy sources. Fire. Grain crops. Wind and water. Fossil carbon. Atoms. Each produces an initial surplus (you reap more energy than you sow) which is converted to more people and material wealth. The ever-present dark side of this growth is increasing destruction of nature. The surplus disappears and the countryside is less able than before to support people. The society depending on the surplus collapses or gives way to a new structure.

Big changes in the way people communicate accompany each exploitive surge. Oral exchanges among hunting cultures gave way to abstract symbols, standing for numbers, things and ideas, in the first grain-based cities. These were enormously elaborated as readable language in the heyday of Rome – which also invented the postal system. The printing press and early stages of popular literacy accompanied emergence from the Dark Ages into the “soft” industrial societies exploiting wood, water power and horse power. Then electricity, and now electrons.

These changes in the means, speed and geographic reach of communication challenge our capacity as individuals to understand what others experience. Nature’s answer is empathy, a powerful endowment appearing early in childhood. If nurtured at its start empathy is capable of amazing extension far beyond people met face to face, beyond people known only at a distance, and beyond humankind to other life, to abstractions such as nations, ecosystems and the biosphere. Genetically, empathy begins as a generalized possibility. Its eventual mature expression depends on need and exercise. You can’t empathize with the unknown. As

well, and crucially, empathy doesn’t seem to have had the strength to slow the careening train of population growth, consumption, waste production, and destruction of the biosphere. Individually we may empathize with a biosphere out of kilter, but that doesn’t automatically make us behave better toward it.

Enter a new phenomenon, the apparent satiation of the human appetite. The modern industrial era has brought wealth to a bigger proportion of society than ever before, and has brought so much wealth to some that they can’t possibly use it. Three decades of study throughout the West show that beyond a buying power of about \$25,000 in today’s dollars, a person’s satisfaction with life – the level of felt happiness – does not increase with more. It may even decrease. Wants then take a softer form, for example the desire for better relationships, more esthetic surroundings, better health, etc. This suggests a tipping point at which the desire to consume material goods wanes but the capacity to empathize is kept high by the challenges of instant, universal, multi-faceted communications. We can hope this post-modern empathy is muscular, because empathy without subsequent action is mere sentiment.

What we can hope for, Rifkin says, is to experience, through consciously nurtured empathy, a rising of cooperative aspects of modernity and a waning of competitive processes: more communalism, less individualism. Or, more desirably, a growing-up process that focuses first on individuality, as is now the case, then gives way to learning the values and means of living in community.

~ Bob Weeden

Dorothy Cutting: Steward

This year's nominee from the SSI Conservancy for the Islands Trust Community Stewardship climate change Action Award was Dorothy Cutting. We are proud to announce that she won! I think you will agree, she well deserves this recognition.

At a particularly difficult time in Dorothy's life, she traded in the family car for a used Volkswagen Van, piled in her three kids and set off on a camping trip from Florida to Disneyland in California. She decided to visit all the National Parks she could on the way. As she and her family sat, night after night, listening to the Park Rangers explaining the natural wonders of each park, her life changed. She fell in love with the natural world. After Disneyland, she headed the family up to Seattle and fell in love again, this time with the Pacific North West. As soon as she could, she moved her family to the Seattle area.

Here, as a single mum with two years of college under her belt, she raised her family, took up kayaking (especially on the west coast of Vancouver Island) and eventually became a powerful political force for the environment. It is a long story, as she knew nothing about politics when she began, but in the end she was a huge supporter of parks and one of the major movers to getting the Washington State Shoreline Management Act passed into legislation, which still stands today.

In 1992, her kids grown up, Dorothy decided to move to Salt Spring Island. On a plane trip back east, she picked up a copy of Robert Hunter's book 2030: Confronting Thermageddon in Our Lifetime and her life changed again. At an age when most people are sitting back in a rocking chair and baking cookies, she is devoted to raising awareness about climate change. Dorothy feels it is her responsibility, as a person who loves the natural world, to do what ever she can to make a difference on this issue... and she definitely has.

At the age of 71, with the sponsorship of the Canadian Sierra Club, Dorothy departed from Mile Zero of the Trans-Canada Highway in Victoria, bound for the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa in her new Honda Civic Hybrid. Her

goal was to deliver to each Member of Parliament a copy of Hunter's book. As successful as this trip was, (she gave hundreds of interviews about climate change across the country and in Ottawa was met by David Anderson, Bob Hunter and a team of National media), it did not make the change Dorothy hoped it would. But it did give Dorothy a reputation on SSI as a "will do" lady.

In 2006, she set off again on another "Climate Crisis" trip in her Honda Hybrid. This time her destination was Inuvik. "I want our neighbours in the north to know that we care about what is happening to their homeland and their way of life," said Dorothy, referring to the many effects of

Arctic warming.

Meanwhile, back home on Salt Spring Island, Dorothy has come to be known as the climate change lady. She never rests. She has designed and financed posters, bumper stickers, and postcards to send to politicians. She has started many petitions, and personally written (and persuaded many of us to write) hundreds of letters and emails to policy makers.

She has become a permanent fixture at the Saturday Market over the last eight years talking to thousands of people about climate change. She

has worked with the SSI Energy Strategy group, Institute of Sustainability Education and Action, SSI Conservancy, Island Pathways, the Fritz theatre, the local secondary school and other groups, to bring in guest speakers, movies and support special events around climate change, too numerous to mention. During all this time, she continues to read and to keep up with the latest information coming from the lead scientists on climate change. Slowly, this grandmother has become a wealth of sound information on the topic. When she had a question, she asked the experts. Eventually the likes of Professor William Calvin, Bill McKibben, Dr. James Hansen, Professor Andrew Weaver and Guy Dauncey all got to know Dorothy well.

Two years ago, Dorothy decided the best thing she

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Where Have all the Flowers Gone?

Island-born Tara Martin, PhD ecologist with Australia's famous Commonwealth Science and Industry Research Organization, told a fascinating story at a Conservancy public event this August. It is a plot played out with a thousand variants every year around the world, but Tara set it firmly in place right here, right now.

If you read publicity write-ups or were among the audience listening to the live performance, you'll remember the gist of it. Deer are abundant on Salt Spring Island because nothing kills enough of them to offset fawn crops. Too few drop-in predators, which we kill as soon as we can. Too few cars driven furiously and inattentively. Result? The deer strip much of the island of its ground-covering plants, including all but a few covering remnants of our natural lily diversity. Birds of ground-hugging and understory habitats are reduced. Tara dressed this up with understandable science and with beautiful - sometimes stark - images and sound tracks of bird calls that ranged from lonely solitudes in the deer-beaten patches to full choruses where deer are absent. All of us who live with legs moving and eyes open could relate her story to remembered experience, but Dr. Martin put it all together with compelling conviction.

From here on this is me talking, not Tara, not the Conservancy.

Flowers and birds: now that hits me where I live. I admire deer as much as the next guy or gal, but enough already. (I'll regret saying this, but there is an odd parallel here with my feelings about people.) So what to do?

Two choices: something or nothing. Letting come what comes isn't part of our basic Conservancy character, though. We formed to take action to secure natural communities by whatever means are feasible and hold promise. Now we know that deer, unchecked by effective predation, warp and pauperize wild communities. And we know that inevitably



Ecosystem at Manzanita Ridge

- and it is never long - deer will be the architects of their own ruin. We can predict the not-so-distant future under good old lazy fare. The roughly 4000 deer now on the island, subsidized by access to gardens and recent cut-overs, will continue to skin off forest undergrowth. They might even get more numerous: I'm amazed at the number of twin and triplet fawns each spring, indicating does in decent health. The spring bouquet of wild lily blooms will become a thing of grandmother memory. Cars will maim and kill more deer, sometimes at cost to driver and car. Gardeners will build bigger fences and have more roaming guard dogs. Waning winter months will bring more wedge-thin fawns and yearlings into open sheds where they die in the night. Vultures will hang by the dozens in April skies.

Does this compel us to act? Not necessarily. Maybe, realistically, we can't take up such an energy-exhausting, long term cause as an add-on to everything else we do. Maybe we sense that we don't know what to do, or that anything with a hope of being effective will also be divisive within and beyond the Conservancy.

My own feeling is that the whole community needs to consider the situation and decide what to do. The Conservancy isn't the fount of all wisdom any more than it is where all responsibility rests or all action starts. Maybe we do have a finer sense of ecological perspective than most; if so, we should use it to encourage real discourse and become midwife to action strategies the whole island can adopt. One thing for sure: we'll know enough not to promote the idea that there is a magical balance point where nature stops, satisfied, to rest. You can't find such a point in the remotest wilds, and it certainly isn't to be found anywhere around people.

~ Bob Weeden



The Honourable Gary Lunn announces funding for the Salt Spring Island Conservancy



SSIC's Robin Annschild and Linda Gilkeson listen to the Honourable Gary Lunn

Salt Spring Island is rich in biodiversity, home to over 45 rare and endangered species. As 2010 is named the International Year of Biodiversity by the United Nations, our work at the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, protecting sensitive ecosystems and biodiversity, is more important than ever.

As over 90% of the island is privately owned, the Conservancy's Stewardship Program works directly with numerous landowners to educate them about Species at Risk on their lands, encourage their participation in monitoring, and provide guidance and assistance with long-term conservation options for those wishing to protect their property in perpetuity. Protecting ecosystems helps to safeguard biodiversity and maintain the ecosystem functions that humans rely on, such as clean air and water.

In August, the Honourable Gary Lunn (Minister of State for Sport) made a trip to Salt Spring to announce federal funding of several projects in the coastal region through the Habitat Stewardship Program, including the Salt Spring Island Conservancy's Stewardship Program. Project manager, Robin Annschild, as well as Executive Director, Linda Gilkeson, both spoke at the event thanking the Minister for recognizing the importance of and need for ongoing funding of conservation organizations in this 2010 Year of Biodiversity.

The funding received from the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program enables staff to continue our valuable work with landowners on the island, protecting sensitive ecosystems and restoring habitat. It also allows us to discover new populations of species on the island, some that have never been found before on Salt Spring. For example, this year biologists working with the SSI Conservancy discovered two new species, (the endangered White Meconella and a rare snail called Threaded Vertigo) which were previously unrecorded on the island.

Additional generous funding for the Stewardship Program has been confirmed from Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Public Conservation Assistance Fund, British Columbia

Transmission Corporation, Salt Spring Island Foundation, Islands Trust Fund, and CRD Grants In Aid.

For more information on our Stewardship Program or information about Species At Risk found on the island, please visit our website at www.saltspringconservancy.ca.

~ Laura Mathias



Ali Jones Wins 2010 Conservancy Scholarship



The Salt Spring Island Conservancy awards a \$1000 scholarship annually to recognize local students for excellence in environmental studies and action. This year's winner is Ali Jones, who graduated from Gulf Island Secondary School in June.

Ali was an active participant in the Salt Spring community, even though she lived in Duncan and had to commute to the Island. While Ali joined several other students in the category of excellent grades, her commitment to conservation singled her out as the best candidate for this award.

Ali was a member of the environmental club at GISS called EAGER (the Environmental Action Group Encouraging Responsibility) and of the Streamkeepers group in Cowichan Bay. Her outstanding volunteer work for the Nature Conservancy of Canada in Duncan developed into a job at the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve to remove invasive species and to maintain a native plant nursery. Ali has become extremely knowledgeable about the native and invasive plants and also likes art and drawing, so it's no surprise that she specializes in drawing wildflowers.

Ali is putting the scholarship to good use. This fall she started her studies toward a Bachelor of Science degree and major in Biology and Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. Congratulations Ali!

Funds for SSIC scholarships were originally donated by Marilyn Thaden-Dexter in honour of William David Dexter and we are hoping to continue this scholarship award in the years to come. If you would like to contribute, contact our office.



Conservancy hosts Sharp-tailed Snake Recovery Team meeting

This September the Salt Spring Island Conservancy hosted the Sharp-tailed Snake Recovery Team meeting to talk with researchers and team members about the endangered Sharp-tailed Snake. A Recovery Team consists of members from a number of agencies, organizations, and independent scientists that are involved in the management of a species at risk. Members collaborate on research and planning, and work towards protecting a species from further declines or extinction.

Sharp-tailed snakes are found on southern Vancouver Island and a few Gulf Islands, including Salt Spring. Conservancy biologists have worked with many landowners for several years to identify new locations of the snake, educate the public about this species, and assist landowners in enhancing habitat on their properties. We work closely with the Sharp-tailed Snake Recovery Team to determine where our future efforts should be focused for the protection of this endangered species.

At the meeting, Conservancy biologist Robin Annschild gave a presentation about the extensive work we have done over the years on Salt Spring, how important the role of local landowners has been in discovering new populations of this snake, and what we've learned about the distribution and habitat needs of this species.



The Conservancy plans to continue surveying for the snakes in suitable habitat, update our habitat mapping, work with landowners to promote stewardship and awareness of the snakes, and continue to offer support to landowners interested in long-term conservation options for their properties.

It is refreshing to know that there are many dedicated and knowledgeable professionals and landowners working to protect the numerous species at risk that are found on Salt Spring. Their commitment and determination are an imperative, and often undervalued, component of the recovery of rare species.

~ Laura Matthias



Dorothy Cutting, Continued from page 7

could do was to start a climate change web page of her own. It is called West Coast Climate Equity. She has a board of directors of eight and an advisory board that reads like a climate change "Who's Who". They believe it is essential to provide current, honest and accurate information on climate change to help people act in time to prevent immeasurable harm to humanity and our Earth's biosphere. The web site had 12,000 hits the first year and 127,000 the second. As of this month it is getting about 6000 hits a week. Please check out www.WestCoastClimateEquity.org and have a look at her website for yourself. It is one of the best sources of up-to-date, accurate and understandable information on climate change you will find.

This website takes up to 40 hours a week of Dorothy's time, during which she researches and posts new stories and studies about climate change. None of Dorothy's work is paid. In fact, she gives generously to many environmental organizations on and off the island that she feels are making

a difference.

Dorothy is devoting the remainder of her life to climate change because, "this planet is unique and beautiful". As Dorothy says, "Our civilization is headed full steam towards catastrophe, so we need to make turning it around our top priority. This is my way of contributing to the turn-around." Her motto is: "Do what you can and you can do more than you think you can." If everyone would contribute a fraction of what Dorothy is doing, we will be successful in the turn-around.

The Salt Spring Island Conservancy is proud to have nominated Dorothy Cutting for the Islands Trust Community Stewardship Award. She has done more to educate Salt Spring Islanders and all Canadians about climate change than anyone else on our island.

~ Jean Gelwicks



The Conservancy thanks our funders:

Stewards in Training

Rotary Club of Salt Spring Island
 TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
 Nature Canada (Parks & People Program)
 Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program
 Mountain Equipment Coop

Stewardship and Species at Risk

The Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship
 Program for Species at Risk
 Habitat Conservation Trust Fund
 Islands Trust Fund
 Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team
 BC Transmission Corporation
 Capital Regional District
 Canadian Wildlife Federation

Office and Education

John Lefebvre
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 Jill Louise Campbell Art Gallery
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The Acorn is the newsletter of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, a local non-profit society supporting and enabling voluntary preservation and restoration of the natural environment of Salt Spring Island and surrounding waters. We welcome your feedback and contributions, by email to ssic@saltspringconservancy.ca or by regular mail. Opinions expressed here are the authors', not subject to Conservancy approval.

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