



CONSERVANCY

Conservation in Action

Protecting Your Land

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The Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem covering Salt Spring Island is one of the rarest ecosystems in Canada. This dry maritime ecosystem includes endangered Garry oak meadows, dry coastal bluffs and wetlands. Over 45 species of rare or endangered plants and animals that live in this ecosystem have been found on Salt Spring.

Only 2% of the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem is protected by parks and nature reserves. With 90% of the land on Salt Spring in private hands, the actions of individuals are vital in protecting this unique landscape.

You can help protect the land you live on – no matter what size it is, or whether you rent or own.

We invite you to join as a member, become involved as a volunteer or support our work through donations. Your involvement will help us remain a strong organization, capable of continuing to protect our island in the future.

We always recommend that you consult with your lawyer, financial advisor, insurance or tax advisor to plan your charitable donations.

To find out more about stewardship, covenants or land donations, please contact us:

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Printed through the generous support of

Canada
The Government of Canada
Habitat Stewardship Program
for Species at Risk.



Be A Wise Steward Where You Live

How we manage the land we live on can affect the surrounding landscape. Here are some ways to protect our natural environment:

- in wooded areas, leave standing dead trees to provide food and nesting sites for wildlife and allow fallen wood to stay on the ground to decompose;
- leave wide zones of native vegetation around lakes and streams;
- remove invasive plants, such as Scotch broom, gorse and ivy that smother native plants;
- landscape with native plants suited to the local site; make sure septic systems are well maintained and working correctly.

If you would like to learn about the special features of your land, including the plants and animals that live there, we invite you to:

- visit our office to borrow references and field guides;
- come to talks and nature walks we sponsor regularly;
- participate in our stewardship program, which helps landowners manage their property to protect its natural values. We have special projects that protect habitat of such endangered species as sharp-tailed snake, Western painted turtle and yellow montane violet.

Protect Land with a Conservation Covenant

A conservation covenant is a legal agreement designed to protect significant ecological values of a property. It is a voluntary agreement made between a landholder and conservation organizations, such as the SSI Conservancy.

The terms of a covenant are flexible and can be tailored to fit your circumstances. Usually, the portion of the land with house and garden is not included within a covenanted area. The landholder keeps all rights that are consistent with the terms of the agreement, including controlling access to the land and selling or bequeathing it. In other words, the land is still yours. Once a covenant is granted, it is permanent and registered against the title. It must be respected by future owners and contains provisions for enforcement.

Tax Benefits of Conservation Covenants:

Besides the satisfaction of knowing that the features of your land will be protected, there can be significant tax benefits. Through the Natural Areas Property Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP), land within the boundaries of the Islands Trust, which includes all of Salt Spring, may be eligible for a 65% property tax reduction on the portion of land under the covenant. This tax benefit continues for future owners. Through the federal Ecological Gifts Program, conservation covenants on ecologically valuable land may qualify for a charitable donation receipt and relief from capital gains tax.

Donate Ecologically Sensitive Land

If you wish to see your land protected as a nature reserve for generations to come, you may want to donate, or in some cases sell it, to a land conservancy. Not only will you be leaving a legacy that benefits the whole community, but you will know that the land is protected forever.

Tax Benefits of Land Donations: Under the federal Ecological Gifts Program, there are generous income tax incentives for donating ecologically valuable land. Donors are relieved of capital gains tax on the property and receive a charitable donation receipt that can be applied over 6 years to offset their income taxes. A special subdivision policy for land in the Islands Trust area makes it possible for landowners to subdivide a property so that they can donate an ecologically valuable portion of their land. The SSI Conservancy may also consider purchasing ecologically sensitive land and in some cases, tax benefits may be available.

Please contact us for more information on all of the above options.

