



Welcome Christine Torgrimson!

Our New Executive Director

We are welcoming Christine Torgrimson as our new executive director, beginning January 2. “We feel very fortunate to have someone of Christine’s caliber join us at this juncture,” said Ashley Hilliard, SSI Conservancy president.

“Christine has a wealth of experience with conservancies, non-profit board and staff development and fundraising, and diverse citizen efforts dedicated to making the world a better and healthier place.”



In her words: “I am so pleased to have this opportunity to dedicate my skills and experience to the Conservancy, as well as my knowledge of Salt Spring’s unique natural habitats and highly engaged community. My favorite work has always been with conservancies. They always attract such positive and constructive people who care deeply about the places in which they live.”

“The Salt Spring Island Conservancy is a gem of an organization—with five nature reserves and 13 covenanted properties totaling over 1,000 protected acres, frequent and much-loved educational events, a fabulous Stewards in Training Program annually engaging about 700 elementary school students, and a Habitat Stewardship Program working with dozens of landowners to protect species at risk. With a rich array of talented board and staff members, as well as dozens of volunteers who devote more than 6,000 volunteer hours a year, the Conservancy is a phenomenal force of passion and dedication to the island.”

Christine’s initial priorities will be to build on the excellent work that retiring Executive Director Linda Gilkeson has accomplished in her four years at the Conservancy. “Linda has really helped polish the internal workings of the organization, as well as guide it through an impressive time of growth. She played a key role in acquiring the new Alvin Indridson Reserve, which added 320 acres of prime habitat to the organization’s holdings. Linda also helped launch the Acorn Fund—the Conservancy’s endowment.” Linda is moving on to devote her energy to writing and teaching about organic gardening and pest management.

Building the endowment will be a key focus for her. “Conservancies assume long-term responsibilities to steward species and habitats, and we must ensure that the organization will be strong and stable for the long-term. I’m confident that, given the island’s demographics, the love and passion so many

people have for its beauty and integrity, and the Conservancy's solid reputation, we can build a solid funding base for the future." She feels that responsibly managing the Conservancy's current land holdings is also a priority along with encouraging efforts to purchase and covenant other properties with important ecological attributes, while supporting other important programs and aspects of the organization.

Most of you know Christine as the past chair of the Islands Trust Fund Board. "My four years with the Trust Fund gave me a richer understanding of the incredible natural values of the islands in the Salish Sea, as well as an enhanced experience with conservancy operations and policies." She also served from December 2008 through November 2011 as an elected island trustee, making decisions about land use on Salt Spring.

Throughout her 35-year career, Christine has worked as executive director, associate director, development director, board member and consultant with dozens of conservation and community organizations. From 1999 through 2007, she served as consultant, staff and strategic advisor with the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, a Canada-U.S. organization partnering with over 100 citizen organizations, businesses and governments to maintain and restore the unique natural heritage of the Yellowstone to Yukon region. She also co-founded one of the largest and most successful U.S. land trusts—the Montana Land Reliance—which helps farmers and ranchers protect the natural and open space values of their properties, now collectively totaling almost 900,000 acres. She has been a Salt Spring resident for 15 years and holds a B.A. in Journalism and an M.S. in Counseling.