



GaLTT Newsletter

Gabriola Land & Trails Trust

January 2019 • www.galtt.ca • info@galtt.ca • PO Box 56, Gabriola, BC V0R 1X0

COMMUNITY BROOM CUT AND BBQ

Sunday, April 29th noon to 4 at Drumbeg Park

Free hot dogs and snacks, children's activities

Bring your tools or borrow ours to join the broom cut.

Email broom@galtt.ca for more information.



The aims of Gabriola Land and Trails Trust are to secure, develop, and sustain a network of parkland and trails on Gabriola Island for the benefit of the public, and to preserve sites of environmental, historical, and social importance.



Invasive plant removal

May broombashing

GaLTT's and Lion's kick-off BBQ and Broombash event April 29 at Drumbeg Provincial Park was wonderfully successful with about 80 volunteers. BC Parks sent a team to help, and to gather and remove the huge pile of cut broom to be composted in Nanaimo. We cleared the camas meadow of small and large broom—just in time, as the camas were already starting to bloom there along with spring gold. All through May volunteers continued to cut broom around the island and either left it in place to rot down, or transported it by truck to Somerset Farm to be chipped into mulch.

Thanks to Lions and GaLTT volunteers, Wild Rose Nursery for their truck, Somerset Farm (the Boultons) for letting us stockpile and chip the broom on their land, and countless others for supporting us with labour in their neighbourhoods, or by using the Village Foods gift card for their grocery shopping. We have made a huge dent in Gabriola's broom problem. THANK YOU ALL.

Image credits, clockwise from top left: Nola Johnston, Lou Skinner, Village Foods, Anne Landry, Anne Landry

Photo : Anne Landry



Other hard-working GaLTT volunteers attacked the **summer invasive** Tansy ragwort in Elder Cedar Nature Reserve, Coats Marsh, the Government land, and the connecting licensed trail to Nelder's Pond.

New trail building and old trail maintenance

Volunteer trail stewards kept us aware of what needed attention and our work crews kept all our trails neatly trimmed. In early in March, GaLTT's crew reinstalled signage on the licensed trail running through two parcels of private land from Garland Avenue (behind the Community Hall) through the forest including the Peirce family's Garry oak grove, to Lois Lane, off Stokes Road.

MERLIN'S TRAIL— beautiful new connections in the South end

In April GaLTT was delighted to sign a trail licence agreement with Linda and Peter Hellenius on their beautiful property. This new trail follows a pretty creek and connects Murray Road to the existing Evans Road Trail, which runs from Gray Road to the waterfront at Pylades Channel. GaLTT's trail-work crew brushed out the new sections of trail in mid-April and constructed a small bridge over the creek to protect its banks. The new trail creates several options for walking loops within this south-end neighbourhood. Many thanks to the Hellenius family.



Photo : Nola Johnston

707 COMMUNITY PARK TRAIL WORK

To kick the new year off, Rob's volunteer crew braved the drenching rain to complete a new trail into 707 Community Park from McCollum Road near Fawn Place.

Brockley's trail-work crews started the hard work of widening, clipping, and levelling the narrow, bumpy, and twisting **Tin Can Alley Trail**. Their goal was to make this well-travelled connecting trail more cyclist-friendly. Next step was for a small army of volunteers to wheelbarrow in and spread a thick protective layer of gravel/mulch mix over the roots, giving greater comfort to cyclists too. The whole job took several vigorous work parties, but resulted in spectacular trail improvement. **Our thanks to the Gabriola Recreation Society for a grant that paid for supplies for the Tin Can Alley upgrade.**



Photo : Anne Landry

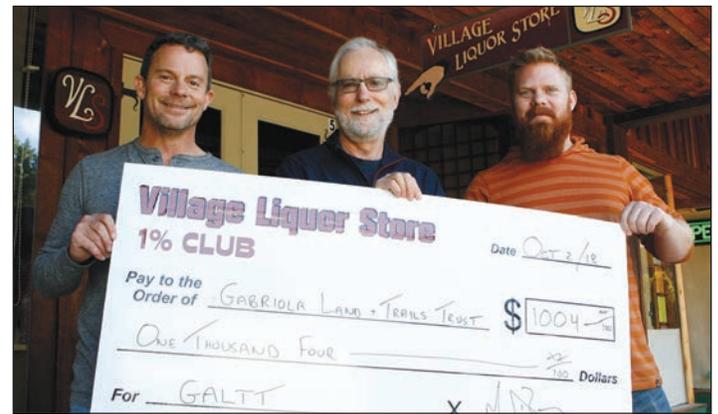


Photo : Derek Kilbourn, Gabriola Sounder

Thank you to Mike Brown at the Village Liquor Store who generously donated 1% of their September sales to GaLTT. These funds will support future trail work.

HAVEN WOODS

The two private Haven Woods forest properties changed hands this summer and we are grateful to both new owners for renewing the trail licences with GaLTT. New signage has been installed on the trails.



Photo : Rob Brockley

STORM CLEANUP

On top of "normal" trail building and maintenance, in late December our trail work crews (especially Rob & Sue Brockley) spent huge amounts of time and energy dealing with trees that had fallen across our trails in the big storm, as reports came in from our trail stewards. Great work, all!

Photo : Nola Johnston



McCONVEY TRAIL

In early August our wonderful volunteers began the tough work of breaking a new trail in Cox Park on the north side of McConvey Road, to link the existing trail network east of Taylor Bay Rd with the adjacent Descanso Bay Regional Park, creating an expanded walking loop for walkers and cyclists. They finished it in September.



Elder Cedar boardwalks

The **Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve** is owned by the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC). In January ITC contracted a carpenter to build a boardwalk up to and around the big old hollow-trunked cedar, whose roots were being trampled and damaged by too much love and attention from generations of Gabriolans. The beautiful new boardwalk was designed by Cameron



Scouts and their parents helped to spread mulch over the area.

As the co-holder of its conservation covenant, GaLTT periodically accepts contracts from the Islands Trust Fund for needed maintenance in Elder Cedar. They contracted us to construct a wooden boardwalk over a wet and hazardous section of trail near the foot bridge across the creek on the southern portion of the walking loop, so in February, our crew carted wooden frames and concrete supports through the trails to build this boardwalk.

Murray and Laura-Jean Kelly of Topographics, and built using a grant from the TD Friends of the Environment Endowment Fund. Volunteers including local



Gabriola Streamkeepers

Gabriola Streamkeepers have continued to monitor our seasonal streams. In June they did stream-assessment work in **Mallett Creek** and near the mouth of **Dick Brook** where they were delighted to find salmon fry.

Guided walks

Guided end-to-end walk: About 40 people met at Silva Bay on June 3 to walk from one end of Gabriola to the other, mostly on public access trails. A few dropped out at Tait Road, and others joined us there at noon after our picnic lunch. We walked the trails paralleling North Road to connect with the trail network in

707 Community Park before walking down Tin Can Alley Trail to North Road. From there we followed Tin Can Alley Road to the trail system past the clinic, and on through private land (with permissions) and down the roads to Skol Pub. After very welcome refreshments, Gertie took us back to Silva Bay.



Throughout the summer GaLTT led guided walks in 707 and Cox Community Parks and in Descanso Bay Regional Park. The walks included two trails newly broken in 707 since last summer. Some walks were in the morning, others in the afternoon or evening.

Market and other Events

Throughout the summer, our events table volunteers provided information about our parks and trails, and sold trail maps at the Saturday Farmers' Markets. This August, they were also at the Gabriola Arts Councils' Cultivate Festival at the Commons.

PRO PARKS ACTION



Photo : Nola Johnston

In February GaLTT members and other park users met in Drumbeq Provincial Park to participate in a "Day of Action" by signing a petition to the Provincial Government from Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), seeking increased funding to BC's parks.

A FAN LETTER!

I moved to Gabriola in 1965 as a child and had wonderful childhood experiences hiking all around my Degnan Bay neighbourhood from the Gray's farm to the Indian Reservation. This all ended when properties were sold to less community oriented people and fear of forest fires escalated; No Trespassing signs came up everywhere in the 1980s.

Now that I am retired, I reside on the island 3 months of the year and am delighted to find new pathways opening up everywhere on the island. I was so happy to discover "Merlin's Trail" by the beaver ponds (as I call them) this summer.

THANK YOU for all your hard work in establishing and maintaining the trail system. It is truly a joy to walk into the forest again and fondly remember when I use to gallowant there as a child.

*With gratitude,
Susan Strasdine-Barois*

First Nations— Tending the Lands, Tending the Sea



Many of Gabriola’s best-loved walking, horse-riding, and cycling trails are on government lands being held for treaty settlement with local First Nations, in particular Snunéymuxw First Nation. GaLTT has been working to learn about their experience of this land, with hopes of continuing to share in its stewardship.

On February 7, 2018, eminent ethnobotanist Dr. Nancy J. Turner, Emeritus Professor, Environmental Studies, University of Victoria, presented some of her fascinating research. The evening’s proceedings were begun by Snunéymuxw Elder Lolly Good with a personal introduction and prayer in Hul’q’umín’um. Dressed in ceremonial robe and headdress, she brought greetings from Chief Wyse and thanked us for caring for the land.

Dr. Turner’s topic was *Tending the Lands, Tending the Sea—Traditional Land and Resource Management Systems on the BC Coast*. She began by passing around a birch basket made by Mary Thomas while she commented on the large bio-cultural diversity of BC, with many biogeoclimatic zones as well as language groups. She studies the interaction between societies and their environments and also the handing down of traditional knowledge from generation to generation—she showed a delightful picture of a north coast Gitga’at elder and small granddaughter pounding sun-dried halibut with mallets. Such passing down of knowledge is achieved through shared experience, passing of rules (such as never kill needlessly), and by storytelling.

The First Nations have been here in BC for at least 14 thousand years, and to describe them as “hunter gatherers” is too simplistic—Turner considers the term “cultivators” to be more accurate. She spoke of their tradition of burning clearings to keep camas fields healthy, and folding back turf to harvest larger bulbs from deeper levels, leaving higher, smaller bulbs to grow in the loosened earth below. Also, the Tsilqoti’in ceremonially replant sun’iny “mountain potato” (*Claytonia lanceolata*) to help spread these valuable plants with pretty white flowers. She described techniques for taking bark from carefully chosen cedar and birch trees at exactly the right time of year using correct technique, so as to get the right bark for your project while not harming the tree by preventing the sap from running. She also spoke of “learning from the beaver” how to prune and pollard trees in a way that encouraged healthy fruit growth and young shoots that can be harvested, and “learning from the bear” how to scatter some fruit on the ground when berrying to encourage new plants.

She spoke of the coastal peoples’ “kincentricity”, encompassing all relationships, not just human, resulting in respect for other species’ (animal and plant) environments, and described clear evidence of deliberate seed scattering in particular areas. She told how local languages described different aspects of certain plants, showing the cultural importance of a particular use of that plant to each group. She also described large-scale Gitga’at seaweed harvesting techniques and the building of clam gardens, enclosing suitable beach areas with rolled rocks to enhance shellfish growth. She stressed that prime resource areas throughout peoples’ territories were named, owned, managed, and celebrated as places. Their ownership was inherited or bestowed as a gift or in return for a favour. It was not just common property without oversight. Land and resource use were distributed over space and time according to the seasons, and spiritual aspects are critically important, reflected in ceremony.

2018 AGM

Nancy’s talk was followed by GaLTT’s AGM business meeting, attended by 51 members. A new Board was elected, with two members (Heather Kay and Ron Bilquist) retiring, and two new members elected (Laura Boulton and Frank Shoemaker).

Honouring our top trail workers

Our successes are the result of valuable volunteer time and labour. Rob Brockley acknowledged and thanked the most noteworthy of our many trail work volunteers throughout 2017 and awarded each a pair of specialized clippers: (1) Jamie Doig (2) Lars Hulstein and (3) Randy Young. Lynne Young was also thanked for her constant attendance and for taking pictures of the work parties for our Facebook page and newsletter.

Share the Trails



When trail etiquette is observed everyone has more fun: bikes yield to walkers, everyone yields to horses. The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC’s brochure **The Trail User’s Code of Ethics** explains how to share the trails and minimize your impact on the environment: see (http://www.orcbc.ca/pub_list.htm).

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