May 29th and 30th will be days to celebrate past achievements and to help support the present and future goals of the SSIC. This year brings SSIC into its 10th year of work to protect and restore the beauty and health of the natural world of Salt Spring and its surrounding waters. A recent letter from one of the founders, Maureen Milburn, beautifully describes the start of this organization and it is included below.

March 26, 2004

To the Board and Committee Members of SSIC,

As we all know it's almost impossible to keep a secret on SSI, especially from someone who lives in Fulford. So even though I had heard of our upcoming anniversary and some sort of recognition for founding members, I was truly surprised and touched to receive such a beautiful expression of thanks in the mail. Your card touched off a whole range of memories dating back to the earliest days of SSIC and especially reminded me of how and why our conservancy was founded. It had to do with one individual, Martin Williams.

In 1993 Martin Williams indicated that he was interested in selling part of his property for parkland --and at a significantly reduced market value. The property on Mt. Erskine would provide trail access to the Crown Lands and much needed parkland on the north end of the island. In 1988 under the auspices of the Island Watch I had established a committee to save our Crown Lands from threat of sale by the current government. There I met the indefatigable Fiona Flook representing the Trail and Nature Club.

Deciding to work for the campaign to buy the Williams property, Fiona and I went to the market every Saturday where we delivered our pitch. There we met islanders anxious to save our Crown Lands and dedicated to conserving as much acreage as possible. It was a difficult time for conservation on the island, we had just lost the 6,000 acres of MacBlo lands and huge tracts of the island were being logged at a great rate. Sounds familiar doesn't it?

Through a concerted community effort, enough money was raised to purchase the Williams property. I still remember the quarters from schoolchildren dropping them into our pot like wishes into a well. Unfortunately negotiations with Martin Williams over the purchase proved inconclusive and we lost, or at least I believed we had lost, a tremendous opportunity for our island. But what of the money the community had raised? There was no on-island organization capable of holding the money for another land purchase so it was dispersed all over.

Continued on page 9
Our Mandate: Preserve and Protect

- Peter Lamb

Recent events have demonstrated the urgent need for a more focused consideration of environmental issues in land use planning of our Island. The well-known “preserve and protect” mandate of the Islands Trust surely demands that concern for the environment play a key role in community development plans and yet, too often, it is relegated to a minor concern – that of how to mitigate the inevitable environmental damage.

Your Conservancy is participating in two initiatives to address this important issue for our organisation. First, we are working with our Trustees and planning staff on the establishment of an Environmental Advisory Committee and a supporting Environmental Scientists Registry, which would provide the Trust with advice and recommendations on the environmental aspects of specific development proposals. The current Official Community Plan, adopted in June 1998, envisaged such an Advisory Committee in its Plan Implementation along with similar committees covering Agricultural and Heritage issues. After 6 years, only the Agricultural Committee has been established.

Second, we are participating in a dialogue with the business community and social services to consider a more sustainable approach to community development. Representatives from each sector recently met to explore the values that are guiding change and how to collaborate to integrate social, environmental and economic objectives into our community’s development. Discussions are continuing with a possible Community Conference to be planned later this year.

I am hopeful that constructive debate of these and other planning issues will lead to appropriate changes to the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw to better reflect the critical importance of preserving community values and protecting natural features which are the very essence of the Islands we hold in Trust for all British Columbians.

Board Update

A summary of major items recently discussed by the Board.

Planned Stewardship Program: Grant applications submitted and five successful applications achieved.

2004 Budget: Approved by Board

By-Law Amendments: For approval at AGM

Crown Lands: Update on SSI parcels.

Channel Ridge: Environmental concerns

Environmental Planning: Discussions with Trust on proposed Environmental Advisory Committee and Scientists Registry.

Fundraising: Planned Giving Program

Tenth Anniversary: Plans for celebrating our 10th year of operation. May 29th at Meadon Hall (Legion)

AGM Announcement

SSI Conservancy 2004 Annual General Meeting Will Be Held May 18th 2004 at the Lion’s Hall 7 pm.

Guest Speaker: Emily Gonzales, Ph. D
Dear Members of the SSI Conservancy:

-Karen Hudson

Thank you for your support! Unless you got this newsletter from a local business or friend, you are reading this newsletter because you are a member of SSIC. If you are a renewing member, thank you for continuing to support this worthwhile organization. If you are a new member: welcome!

This is an exciting and busy time for the Conservancy and for the Conservancy office. We have had standing room only at our regular educational events recently, the voicemail at our office has filled up several times in the last few months, the volume of emails has increased dramatically and we have begun several new projects.

The Conservancy is undertaking a new stewardship project entitled the Salt Spring Island Conservancy Land Stewardship Program 2004. This project is modelled on our successful South and West Salt Spring Stewardship Project in 2000. The new project will educate Salt Spring Islanders about land stewardship and assist interested property owners in identifying, sustaining, and enhancing natural habitats on their property through education, individual site visits, written recommendations and possibly land protection mechanisms such as covenants. We have received grants totalling $47,550 from the Salt Spring Island Foundation, the Bullitt Foundation, Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and the Habitat Stewardship Program of the Canadian Wildlife Service. This project will target properties that contain Garry oak, associated ecosystems and Species at Risk (SAR). The project will target high priority properties of Garry oak and associated ecosystems and Species at Risk, outreach and education (site visits and information through educational articles in the newspaper, the Acorn and workshops).

Kate Leslie has been hired as the Coordinator of Stewards in Training, the Andreas Vogt School Program. The pilot project will lead 8 classes from the SSI Middle School on field trips to the reserve in May and June. Approximately 30 volunteers will be trained to lead and assist in the program. Through a guided hike and interactive hands-on activities, students will learn about forest ecology, succession and common and endangered plants on the nature reserve.

The Conservancy has another international intern: Yvette Ruesen is here from the Forest and Nature Management Program at Larenstein University in Holland. From March 22 until June 1, Yvette will be studying the spring flora of the Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve.

Emily Gonzales is a PhD student from the Centre for Applied Conservation Research at UBC studying the effects of herbivore and non-native plant competition on Garry oak ecosystems in our Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve and in other Southern Gulf Islands.

What all of this means is that your support is needed now more than ever to manage and fund all of these new projects. We need a few volunteers to help in the office; the Celebration Committee needs more members. We need volunteers to help out at events and we need a dozen people to volunteer one Saturday this summer to sell raffle tickets in the Market in the Park for our 3rd Annual Bench raffle.

To continue to run these and other programs, we rely on the continued assistance of our members. Please help by:
• Renewing your membership AND signing up a friend;
• Volunteering time for our 10th Anniversary Celebration May 29-30
• Making a donation of art or antiques for our auction on May 29th
• Sign up for a shift at the Saturday market for our annual bench raffle

Thank you for joining us, and for helping out in so many ways. We can’t do it without you! KH.
Tie a Yellow Ribbon Around the Garry Oak Tree

In Depth

A few Salt Spring Islanders attended a workshop held by the Garry oak Ecosystem Recovery Team in Victoria a few weeks ago. They found out what they already knew, Garry oak ecosystems are extremely rare. In Canada, they occur only in BC. They exist almost exclusively within a narrow strip along the coast of southeast Vancouver Island and on the adjacent islands. At this workshop were maps of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands showing where the Garry oak Eco-systems were in 1800 and what is left of them today.

It was astounding to discover that there used to be a large meadow of Garry oak in the Fulford Valley that has completely disappeared. During the past 150 years, most of the Garry oak habitat in British Columbia has been cleared and converted for agricultural, residential and industrial development. Now, less than 5% of Garry oak ecosystems remain in a near-natural condition and that, too, is threatened.

Garry oak and associated ecosystems are home to more plant species than any other terrestrial ecosystem in coastal BC. They support many species that exist nowhere else in Canada. At least 694 species of plants, 7 amphibians, 7 reptiles, over a hundred birds, and 33 mammals flourish here. 800 species of insects and mites are also directly associated with Garry oak trees. One of Canada's richest ecosystems is also one of its most endangered.

On Salt Spring we have a few Garry oak meadows left. All have been compromised by encroaching shrubs and trees, animals grazing, and especially development. Aboriginal people in the past tended the Garry oak ecosystems, using fire and cultivation as management tools. The edible bulbs of camas and other species were harvested. So important were these plants that the Victoria area was originally known as Camosun, or “place to gather camas.”

Garry oak ecosystems may have a special role to play in BC's adjustment to global warming. It is predicted that our climate will become like that of California. With Douglas-fir ecosystems retreating from their current range, Garry oak vegetation could provide the important biological material to repopulate the void. The Garry oak ecosystems were necessary for the past, and are for the present and future.

In one of our finest moments, Salt Spring Islanders saved the largest stand of our Garry oaks, when Burgoyne Bay was purchased by the Nature Trust of BC from Texada Land Corporation. The location of perhaps our second largest area of Garry oaks on Salt Spring Island is on Channel Ridge, dotted with Garry oak in its classic patchy occurrence. They are spread over a large area, one lovely meadow after another with arbutus and fir separating them. The largest and most spectacular meadow has already been extremely compromised by development and we are in jeopardy of having a detrimental impact on the rest.

The Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory Manual recommends the establishment of an adequate vegetated buffer around each ecosystem as they are particularly vulnerable to adjacent land uses and sensitive to changes to the surface and groundwater regime that nourishes them. Construction of trails, roads and houses in addition to other activities will also disturb them. The open stand structure of Garry oak meadows and their proximity to developed areas makes them particularly vulnerable to the intrusion of non-native species and other impacts resulting from increased access.

What can we do to help protect what is left of our Garry oak ecosystems? We can get the Trust...
Tie A Yellow Ribbon...

Continued from page 4

Conservancy Interests

Channel Ridge Village

- Peter Lamb

Site development of the proposed Channel Ridge Village has commenced. The Conservancy raised some concerns and suggestions about areas of ecological significance, particularly wetlands and Garry oak/arbutus habitats. Wetland ecosystems are most productive and most threatened habitats in the world so we were delighted see that a major wetland on the site is to be retained in its natural state and that a vegetated buffer will now be left around the marsh. Also, that setbacks have been provided from significant Garry oak meadows just outside the village site.

We acknowledge the cooperation and responsiveness of the private owners, Channel Ridge Properties, to our concerns. They have also noted their interest in community input into the disposition of “the 800 + acres that will still be in a largely natural and untouched state” after the Village is completed. The Conservancy is prepared to assist the owners in providing long-term protection of these lands for the benefit of the local residents as well as the broader community on the Island.

Can You Help The Garry Oak?

The Education Committee of the Conservancy has many brochures and posters on the Garry oak (Woodland) eco-system that they will happily give out to anyone who would like to distribute them in their neighborhood or hand out. Contact Salt Spring Island Conservancy Office 538-0318.

Crab Grass

Jean Gelwicks, SSI Resident
gellam@saltspring.com
537-4859

Tie A Yellow Ribbon... to enact a well-reasoned and scientifically based development permit around Garry oaks. We can ask the Trust to form an Environmental Advisory Committee to provide assistance in all environmental issues which is a recommendation suggested back in 1998 in sections A.7.3 and D.1.1.2.11 of the Official Community Plan. We can all read Part D of the Official Community Plan entitled - The Island Environment – and insist that it is important and should be referred to constantly when doing any planning on the island.

If you live near or in a Garry oak meadow, keep broom and other invasive species away from Garry oak meadows, collect Garry oak acorns and grow your own trees, learn all you can about protecting Garry oak habitat by getting in touch with the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (www.goert.ca) or the SSI Conservancy and most of all talk to others about the importance of saving them. We need to speak for the meadows, the oaks and all the species that live there. Garry oak meadows were used as places to establish peace treaties by the early coastal people. Sitting under a lovely Garry oak tree every now and then, to remind us of what is really important, might be a good idea. Since 90% of Salt Spring Island is privately owned we rely on individual landowners to care about the land.

We are in jeopardy of losing a beautiful area of Garry oak meadows on Salt Spring Island. I am afraid we are behaving a bit like the inhabitants of Easter Island who looked on while the last of the trees were chopped down, knowing it was their demise. I am not suggesting this is our demise but I am beginning to think we should all tie yellow ribbons around the Garry oak trees to remind us of how few of them are left.

Jean Gelwicks, SSI Resident
gellam@saltspring.com
537-4859
Jedediah Island

-Bob Weeden

Half a planet and half a world’s time away primordial magma had bulged to the surface, floated here, collided with another continent adrift, anchored. It rose, fell, drowned and dried and drowned again. Last night in the sibilant dusk we found it here, following a map a stranger made. I thought it a miracle, yet for our personal forevers here it has been, here it will be.

The map that placed it here also gave the island a unique shape, a fleeting exactness we call random to avoid admitting that it is both unpredictable and inexplicable. The island, once crushed and grooved by unimaginable ice, now lies just so in the moving streams of salt water and air, bounding the path of industrious tugs and deflecting the arrowed flight of seabirds.

The entire island is cracked into an infinity of pieces that lie drowned or breathe with ebb and flood or rest uneasily above the tides. The sea-salted pieces are shaped for the soft flex of seal bellies, are notched for hermitic cormorants, are cantilevered for the convenience of kingfishers. The upland blocks are mildly but forever beaten by rain in free fall. Under ubiquitous moss, wild electrons etch and soften every stony surface. Like desperate octopi, tree roots find every fault and expand into them with the startling force of salt and water equalizing across cell membranes.

I dream all this the night we make first camp, and the dream extends past the boundaries of dawn and awakening. Daytime mind and open eyes find a scale of time more comfortable to live in, a reality less fiercely assaulted by chaos, a setting more lovely, than blind night’s inward rummaging could bring.

The scene at our tent’s open door is indeed beautiful. Scattered trees frame the way to water’s edge, a shell and rock beach on a lagoon a few hundred meters across connected to the sea by two armspan-passages. Across the lagoon sun-struck ledges rise in stairs of crisp moss to a wooded hill. The inland half of the lagoon rises gently west to an upland embayment, a bowl of deeper, moist soil through which a slow stream winds.

Surely a marshy forest for millenia, this bowl has been a meadow for at least a few human lifetimes. It is a meadow measured in seconds by the bold wings of ravens, in minutes by the high steps of fearful deer. The meadow made the island a place for human hope to root. Hope built the house on its seaward rim, this neat, grey, simple house whose gables look out of tiny upstairs bedrooms. Hope built the barn that warms the horse that eats the hay that measures the meadow in bales. Hope planted the plums and cherries, walnuts and hazelnuts, pears and apples still fruiting in the yard. Something more than hope planted lilacs, figs, and spring crocuses.

The farm is abandoned now, I don’t know why. A tragedy, perhaps, someone dying near at hand or far away whose death slashed across these lives. Or they found that nature, here, is better at cedars and sedges than fescue or figs. Or they became lonely.

Whatever the reason, the family of house and barn and meadow left. The windows are boarded, the doors padlocked. Unwatered, the fig is barren. Daffodils struggle in a sea of grass that has drowned the crocuses. Hardhack and alder invade the meadow.

There are survivors. The lilacs nestling ‘round the house bloom each May. The old orchard’s ranks are barely thinned, and an ancient white horse the farmer couldn’t catch waits for wind or passers-by to shake the fruit from gnarled and rheumy limbs.

Inuit Song

And I think over again my small adventures
When from the shore wind I drifted out in my kayak
And thought I was in danger.

My fears, those small ones that I thought so big,
For all the vital things I had to get and reach.

And yet there is only one great thing,
the only thing to live to see,
in huts and on journeys:
The great day that dawns
And the light that fills the world.

There is joy in feeling the warmth come to the great world
and seeing the sun follow in its old footprints in the summer night,

We do not feel proud enough of being alive.
Conservancy Interests

By-Law Amendments
- To Be Voted on At our May 18th AGM

- Bob Weeden

Conservancy members who go to our AGM on May 18th will vote on some changes to our by-laws.

Here is the language:

Resolved
By Special Resolution, be it resolved that the following changes be made:

Title. Delete hyphen from “By-Laws”.
Part 3 13. Add “(3) Members shall be notified of general meetings by mail, e-mail, or notice in the local newspaper of widest circulation.”
Part 4 22. (2) Add “(except 26(3))” before period.
Part 5 26. (1) Insert “approximately” after “business.”
Part 6 32(1) add phrase underlined below:
“The directors may delegate any, but not all, of their powers to committees consisting of a director or directors and one or more Society members appointed by the directors.”
Part 7 41. Delete “this” and replace with “his/her”
Part 7 42 (1) (a) after “society” delete semicolon and add “except as delegated by the president or board.”

“Resolved
By Special Resolution, be it resolved that the following changes be made:

Part 2  4 Delete and insert new 4 as follows:

“4. A person may become a member in either of the following categories by the means described:

(1) Regular Member – A person who has applied to and has been accepted by the directors for membership, and has paid prescribed membership fees. He/she shall have full voting rights. Directors may define subcategories of regular members, provided that such subcategories and their prescribed fees are effective after approval by members at an annual general meeting.

(2) Honourary Life Member – a person awarded such status by a unanimous vote of directors at an annual general meeting for outstanding and longstanding service to the Conservancy. An Honourary Life Member has full voting rights and need not pay annual membership fees.”

(End of resolution 1)

“Resolved
By Special resolution, be it resolved that the following changes be made:
Part 8 46. Delete
Part 8 47 Renumber as “46” and renumber all succeeding sections as required.

(End of resolution 3)

UPCOMING CONSERVANCY EVENTS

| APRIL 23rd | BOB BURGESS on WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS |
| APRIL 24th | ON-SITE WALK TO 3 DIFFERENT SYSTEMS |
| MAY 9th    | Birding with Bob, 1:30 pm |
| MAY 16th   | BIRDING with BOB, 1:30 pm |
| MAY 18th   | SSIC AGM: EMILY GONZALES Protecting the Garry Oak Meadows and an explanation of research on Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve. |
| MAY 19th   | ANDREAS VOGT N.R. WALK |
| MAY 29th   | Robert Bateman Slide Show: MAKING PLEASING PLACES And Live and Silent Auction (Meadow Hall)!!! |
| MAY 30th   | Tour to Pleasing Places on SSI |
| JUNE 18th  | JAN KIRKBY, SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS ON SALTSPRING ISLAND |
| JUNE 19th  | WALK TO 3 VERY SPECIAL SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS LOCATIONS |

Conservancy’s Ten Year Celebration

Presentations start at 7:00 pm at the Lions Hall
All Walks meet at 10 am at ArtSpring Parking Lot
Please pre-register for walks – space limited
Salt Spring Island Conservancy - (538-0318)

Spring 2004
Conservancy Interests

Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve Hiking Map

- Charles Dorworth

Many thanks to members for their patience! The SSIC Hiking Map is now complete though minor changes will occur as improvements are realized. Expect the addition of a switchback at the east end which will alleviate erosion during wet periods as the trail is increasingly used. During these first years, please remain on the track and allow adjacent vegetation to proliferate. We are placing guide logs beside the trail in places. These will gradually deteriorate and will no longer be required as vegetation defines the trail edges. Similarly, the marking tapes will be removed once we are certain they are not required.

White numbered posts may be noticed. These mark plots used by our Student Aide Yvette Ruesen who will provide us with a complete listing of the plants on the AVNR this year. Thereafter the stakes will be allowed to deteriorate. Notice the exclusion cages placed by UBC Graduate Student, Emily Gonzales to permit an estimation of the effects of deer and feral sheep on native plant regeneration. These will also be removed when Emily has completed her work and she will provide us with the information she gains once it is recorded in her dissertation. Please do not trespass on adjacent private lands. Apart from the trail and plots, we hope to keep the AVNR largely untouched and allow it to regain its pre-logged status.

Beyond that, the views are splendid and opportunities to enjoy this splendid gift from Cordula Vogt and Oda Nowrath are yours to pursue. GOOD HIking!

The Reserve may be reached from the southern part of STEWART ROAD with a right turn onto JASPER Rd., thence to JENNIFER a continuation of Jasper and, at the top of the ridge, another right turn onto SARAH WAY. At the end of pavement on Sarah Way (a widening allows some parking), one might turn right again down the Rocky Road (Right of Way Rd.) to a parking area at the end.”

Endowment Fund - We have one!

- Bob Weeden

The Victoria Foundation now has $10,000 in an endowment account for your Conservancy.

Last fall the SSIC board approved a contract under which the Victoria Foundation holds the principal of the endowment in perpetuity. After taking out its management fee, it pays us about 4.5% interest. Our earnings for 2004 should be $450 or so.

Wanting to start an endowment in our anniversary year, the Conservancy raised the $10,000 by quietly contacting 8 longtime local supporters. In coming years most growth in the principal likely will come from unsolicited major gifts and bequests.

An endowment yields predictable yearly income. On the other hand, it needs to be big if its earnings are to be significant in annual budgets. If the principal were $100,000 today our earnings would be less than 8% of our predicted expenditures. Still, imagine the outlay in volunteer time to raise $4500 from some sort of fundraising event!

We are all really pleased to get a start on our endowment, and we are very grateful to our generous donors who responded so quickly and emphatically to our request.

For more information about how to donate to the Conservancy endowment fund, please contact the Conservancy office at 538-0318.
found myself dreaming of children dropping quarters in buckets with no bottoms.

The land trust movement in British Columbia was just beginning. Our neighbours on Galiano had formed a Conservancy and they served as an outstanding model of what could be accomplished. And they were more than willing to help us out. In 1995, a group of committed women, including Ann Richardson, who wrote our constitution and applied for our Society papers and our ability to hold covenants, Fiona Flock, Nancy Braithwaite, Ailsa Pearse, Mallory Pred, Heather Martin and I founded what is today SSIC.

Within months of our founding, the old growth forest known as the Mill Farm was threatened with sale to a logger so we launched a successful fundraising campaign and in 1996 along with the CRD Parks and the Provincial Government we went to court to purchase the land. It was an exciting time as the defeats of previous years faded and our island became a “can do” place to form private and governmental partnerships to buy and preserve land.

When, almost nine years later SSIC purchased Martin Williams property, our acquisition of that land brought an extraordinary sense of closure along with the recognition that, when it comes to saving land, energy and persistence are our strongest allies.

Today, when I sit with you at Board Meetings, I am amazed at how much we have accomplished. I continue to marvel at your intelligence and dedication to land conservation and environmental education and applaud the breadth and scope of our programmes.

I want to offer my sincerest thanks and wish you renewed enthusiasm for the next decade. And guess what? I’ve never met Martin Williams. I don’t think he shops in Fulford.

Sincerely,
Maureen Milburn

On May 29 and 30 there will be a 10th Anniversary celebration, fundraiser and recognition event at Meaden Hall (the Legion). The weekend will include a silent and live auction featuring antiques, arts and crafts and interesting services and experiences from firewood to a fabulous East Indian dinner for 8 delivered to your home, to a stay at a beautiful Salt Spring accommodation. The silent auction items will be available for viewing all day on the 29th and the evening will include a live auction under the energetic direction of Arvid Chalmers. There will be food and entertainment.

Robert Bateman, longtime supporter of the Conservancy, will be presenting his unique slide show on “making pleasing places” on Saturday evening before the auction. The evening should be informative, interesting and fun...with good food and enjoyable company.

On Sunday May 30th there will be guided tours of 2 SSI properties that have special meaning. The Andreas-Vogt nature reserve and the Maxwell Lake watershed will be available for guided tours with knowledgeable leaders. There will also be visits and tours of SSI special places--examples of lovely old gardens, exemplary organic vegetable gardens (large and small), oceanfront habitat and protected forests. Some of SSI’s most precious natural treasures will be on display for those who wish to see them.

Please advise your friends and neighbours to set aside the weekend of May 29 and 30 for these unique opportunities.
From Such Slender Reeds, the Blackbird Sings

-Bob Weeden

Call them what you will: rare, endangered, threatened, at-risk, listed - they are all in trouble. Mostly, their trouble is people. Mostly, if you want to help them - if that's possible at all - you have to spend a lot of money or keep somebody from doing something they want to do, or both. So protecting plant and animal species is impossible without political will, laws that carry out that will, and big budgets. This short article surveys federal approaches in Canada and the US to endangered species protection, and even more quickly reviews BC's laws and follow-up action.

In the hot political debates of environmental issues in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, the feds pretty well captured the lead roles. Partly due to the nature of federalism in the US, but also to the swing of the power pendulum toward Washington, DC and away from the states at the time, this means that federal legislation and programs dominate the field of protection and recovery of species at risk. It makes sense. For one thing, federal treaty-making powers and control of international and interstate commerce in wildlife are crucial. For another, federal agencies control one-third of all the land in the US, far more than the share held as state public land. Finally, federal authority over marine habitats and species makes them more effective actors offshore, though needing state partners nearshore.

US federal legislation was born with a kittenish whimper in 1966, letting the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) list native vertebrate, molluscan, or crustacean species at risk and buy habitat for them. The first tooth was given to the tiger in 1969 when an amendment made it a federal crime to import or export endangered wildlife (which meant listing species all over the world!). By 1973 Congress was ready to produce a whole jawful of teeth, dull or cracked as some later proved. The Endangered Species Act that year - authorized the FWS and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to list any plant or animal species or subspecies; - classed as a crime a violation of any regulation made under the Act; - authorized recovery plans and critical habitat designations; - required all federal agencies whose projects (including state projects with federal funding) affected listed species, to consult with FWS or NMFS; this included military agencies, but an amendment in 2003 weakened the law's application to the Department of Defence.

Congress imbedded a fascinating philosophical choice in the devilish details of creating Critical Habitat Areas (CHA). The lead agency must consider economic factors when setting CHA boundaries: it can decide to make a small shift in boundary to allow for a major economic gain. Once the CHA is there, however, and an agency promoting a project asks for advice, FWS/NMFS only needs to consider biology. At that point, dollars can't trump survival.

Has the US law worked? Yes and No. The listing process requires science and dollars and political chutzpa. It has always been slow, and under the Reagan and Bush-Bush regimes it was (is) positively glacial. Although public support for the concept has been high, specific cases can be made to seem asinine. Stop a big hydroelectric project to save an ugly 3-inch fish? Get real! Forego a $100 million golf resort for a dozen pairs of butterflies no one ever sees? Weird, man!

There have been successes. A drab plant (furbish lousewort) living on scoured sections of the St John River separating Maine and New Brunswick did stop...
From Such Slender Reeds...

Continued from page 10

a dam. "Extinct" in 1979, rediscovered in 1981, the black-footed ferret now numbers 400 breeders in pens, with 1000 offspring taken into the wild. Ferrets eat prairie dogs, so the rodents had to be protected, which allows threatened burrowing owls to keep finding fresh holes in which to nest and take cover. Huge amounts of money have been spent, but to quote MasterCard ads, “Some things are priceless.”

In Canada the provinces - some of them - acted first. BC was the earliest, with amendments to the Wildlife Code in 1971 that empowered the wildlife ministry to list species and issue regulations to protect them. Later, BC’s Forest Practices Code Act, Ecological Reserves Act, and Fish Protection Act patched in a few more authorities. Unhappily, 33 years later, there are few protective regulations, and of 68 animal species and 224 plant species, living in BC, and on national species - at - risk lists, only 4 have been tucked under the cover of provincial law.

Over the years other provinces and territories have put laws on the books, but their reach is scant and implementation lags. Canada - wide, the situation in 2004 is much as a Canadian biologist described it in 1976: endangered species legislation at the provincial level is “piecemeal, jumbled, and cosmetic.”

Canadian federal interest has focussed on coordination, not regulation. The feds helped to form an Advisory Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (1978) to pull together biological data. Another partnership group (1988) was formed to write recovery plans. Action, if any, was up to the provinces, and still is.

In 1996 the feds and provinces pledged to develop compatible legislation. The federal response was Bill C- 65, “An Act respecting the protection of wildlife species in Canada from extirpation or extinction.” Finally made legally effective earlier this year (2004), this law is at best a disappointment. Talk of coordination continues. The earlier data - collection partnership continues, but politicians are in charge of listing. After listing there is a time frame for recovery planning, but an action plan must follow that, for which there are no deadlines. Any regulatory protection must come from provincial action except that feds are told to protect dens, burrows, and nests of listed species on federal land. (Sorry, dear, we have a roof but the cupboards are bare.)

Even good programs backed by decent legislation face huge difficulties in either Canada or the US. Any recovery process that must restrict accustomed use of private lands - and most do - confronts the weight of long political tradition. Money for recovery work always will be less than needed, which puts recovery agencies squarely into the priorities game. In the US experience big animals with fur and feathers win over beetles and snails, and species down to the last handful float to the top of the list. The result can be that species playing keystone roles in ecosystems are ignored, “merely threatened” species get scarcer, and scarce money goes to hopeless cases. (However, hopeful surprises can happen, witness the California condor, alive because of drastic and costly action today when biological opinion was that the species was doomed.) Moreover, if agency courage is high and recovery of a species actually does force abandonment of a mega-project, you can expect a fierce fight to protect basic legislation from crippling amendments.

We are, in short, deeply ambivalent about protecting companion life from extinction even when we are the cause of the problem and know we can do something about it. Politically, interest is broad but not deep. Brave legislative preambles peter off into feckless details. Confronted with a hard trade-off, politicians look for ways to favour economic interests. We do, truly, want to save endangered species, but only if it doesn’t cost much. It will be a banner day when, after public debate, political leaders shave health, education, or safety-net programs - or raise taxes - to buy life for a plant or animal confronting extinction.
British Columbia’s Species at Risk
-A Risky Business

- Rachel Bevington

An unfortunate reality in British Columbia right now is that our endangered species are not protected.

“British Columbia has no stand-alone endangered species act. The provincial Wildlife Act protects virtually all vertebrate animals from direct harm, except as allowed by regulation (e.g., hunting or trapping). Legal designation as Endangered or Threatened under the Act increases the penalties for harming a species, and also enables the protection of habitat in a Critical Wildlife Management Area.”
– Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management Website

The national standards for endangered wildlife in British Columbia are outlined in the Federal Species at Risk Act, c-29. (read the Act at http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/s-15.3/text.html) This Act chases its own tail in circles and never really gets anywhere meaningful when it comes down to finding ways to protect species that are at risk of going extinct or becoming extirpated from BC.

This Act has created a body called the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council made up of the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and relevant provincial ministers, whose responsibilites are to:

(a) provide general direction on the activities of COSEWIC, the preparation of recovery strategies and the preparation and implementation of action plans; and

(b) coordinate the activities of the various governments represented on the Council relating to the protection of species at risk.

Therefore this body has no imperative to create concrete changes in the numbers of species that are presently on the lengthy Species at Risk Lists in Canada.

This Act directs that any competent minister can enter into conservation agreements with “any government in Canada, organization or person to benefit a species at risk or enhance its survival in the wild.” Well, considering that their competency is yet to be decided, who is going to take these actions on, and when are they expected to make these agreements?

The Act suggests many ways that these other organizations or persons could and should take action to help prevent species at risk from going extinct, but the Act assumes that individuals are prepared to take on the responsibilities that I believe the public expects to be that of the governments involved.

This basically outlines what we already know: that community action is the only viable conservation option in the pressing issue of Species at Risk. This is especially true in BC, where protection for Species at Risk under the Wildlife Act is little more than a suggestion.

There is the odd encouraging story about Species at Risk in British Columbia. Individual people have spear-headed massive campaigns and taken on huge responsibilites to try to make a difference in the survival of some of our most critical species. Dr. Andrew Bryant has worked tirelessly to preserve the genetic diversity of the Vancouver Island Marmot so that captive breeding programs for this species could become a reality.

“As of January 2002, there were 13 marmots at the Toronto Zoo, 15 marmots at the Calgary Zoo, 12 marmots at Mountain View Farm in Langley, and 7 marmots at the Mount Washington facility. A total of 10 marmot pups have been born in captivity since the captive breeding programs began.”-http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca

These desperate measures are needed in desperate times. This marmot has a population of less than 100 animals, and is one of the world’s most rare mammals. But it is not protected by our governments! What degree of loss is the government waiting for before it commits some money or people-power to preventing this endemic species’ loss from the face of the earth?

Thankfully, groups like your Conservancy are committed to creating really change in the fight for Species at Risk. With the help of our friends, we are launching our 2004 Stewardship Program which may just help to curb the loss of some of our island’s identified Species at Risk.
Volunteers Needed for Our NEW School’s Program “Stewards in Training”

-Jean Gelwicks

The Conservancy is going to be working with the schools and we are excited.

This is a Pilot Project and if successful will be expanded in the future. This Spring we will be working with eight classes of grades 6/7 split from the Middle School. This year the focus of the science curriculum is on ecology. Students will be studying topics such as biological succession and environmental degradation. Our project is aimed at supporting this science curriculum and providing an on-site and hands-on experience for students at the Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve owned by the Conservancy. Lesson plans and material will be provided for the classroom teachers to use, and visits will be made to every class (by our project coordinator/biologist) to prepare students for the field experience and after the onsite experience to reinforce what was learned.

Students will be bused to the Nature Reserve and posed questions that we are exploring ourselves as owners. These are questions about eco-systems and how they work, what we know and what we need to find out to become a good steward of the land. Students will rotate through four or five learning stations where there will be an emphasis on interactive involvement. Students will be presented with scientifically accurate information about SSI ecosystems, emphasizing Garry oak/Douglas Fir, and how human behavior can threaten or preserve these areas.

Our coordinator/biologist will train approximately 30 Conservancy volunteers to run this program, allowing the Conservancy to establish an ongoing program that will carry on beyond the timeframe of this project. This is where you come in. We need people to help once the students arrive on the Nature Reserve. We will be splitting the class into small groups and we need volunteer to help teach at each of the stations and work with kids as they do a variety of activities. You do not need any science or teaching background but both of these would be an asset. The only requirement is the desire and the time. We are hoping to train 30 volunteers so that we won’t overwork anyone. Most of the field trips to the Nature Reserve will be on Fridays. If you are interested or want more information please call Kate Leslie at the office at 538-0318 or by e-mail at kleslie@island.net.

The Conservancy is pleased to announce that Kate Leslie has been hired to coordinate the Stewards in Training schools program. Kate comes to us with an extensive background in environmental education and ethnobotany. Kate will be the person who will be coordinating and training all volunteers. She looks forward to meeting and working with all our volunteers.

Don’t forget to come to your AGM! 7 pm Tuesday, May 18th at the Lion’s Hall. See you there!
Scotch Broom – To Remove or Not To Remove

- Charles Dorworth

A weed is merely a plant which is growing where we do not want it; no more, no less. In general, weeds are successful species and tend to displace plants that we prefer. Some weeds are toxic, some are armed but, whether we look at agricultural fields or lawns, greenhouse beds or watercourses, the very simple definition above seems to serve quite well. Nature had no weeds of consequence until humans began moving plants about, establishing mass plantings of food and other commercially useful plants and changing environments.

Scotch Broom (Cytisus scoparius) is among the more prominent weeds on Salt Spring Island and is ubiquitous among sites on which the overstory, or tree canopy, has been removed or thinned. The shoots were, in fact, tied together about a pole to be used as brooms in Scotland. A related “broom”: Genista sp., is still used in Italy, particularly on village streets and cobble, where users claim it to be far superior to straw both for cleaning the streets and because of its durability.

By all accounts, C. scoparius was first imported into Canada by Col. John Colquhoun Grant of Sooke, B.C., approximately 160 years ago where he was able to establish the plant on his farm after one or two unsuccessful attempts. As it happened, Grant obtained his seeds in the Canary Islands rather than in Scotland. Grants Road still delimits one boundary of the old Grant farm in Sooke. One presumes that he imported the plant as a reminder of the grand yellow flowering on the hills of his old country, Scotland. In fact, it’s well worth the time to view and walk up the mountain known as Arthur’s Seat at the south boundary of Edinburough when the broom is in flower. By the same token, putting bias aside for the moment, the broom along B.C. roads can be equally lovely during the flowering interval.

The question arises then, why try to kill it? It’s here, it’s alive, let it live. Pine Cone said “let it be” in an article in the Driftwood a couple years back. A letter writer to the same tomb opined that killing of this imported species could be compared with bigotry toward persons from other countries. Again; the inevitable victim construct, coupled with mixed metaphors which arise when concepts of human sociology are applied to other species.

In fact, we humans thrive on imported species. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that >99% of all agricultural and floricultural species used in the U.S.A. were either imported or had been extensively altered through genetic selection and breeding.

The question, however, is valid and requires attention if we plan to expend time, effort and money on broom removal. Let us consider terminology:

1. A “noxious species” is one deemed by B.C. Agriculture to be sufficiently damaging that its removal is mandated by statute and land owners are required to remove same and prevent its reproduction. This term is widely accepted elsewhere as well.
2. An “indigenous species” is one that existed here when we arrived, or so far as we’re aware. The terms “native” and “endemic” are also used.
3. A “non-indigenous species”, “alien species”, “imported species” and other similar terms is one which was brought into Canada or, sometimes, from one side of the continent to the other.
4. Species termed “intrusive” or “invasive” are usually imported species which proliferate with sufficient success to displace indigenous species.
5. A “naturalized” species is a non-indigenous species which has been around for a while and is a de facto part of the local flora.

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These terms are often misused and, with exception of the term “noxious”, are common terms for which no or various definitions may be found. Their use is a matter of convention and convenience rather than formal documentation.

Scotch broom is generally considered to be a highly invasive, non-indigenous species. It is attractive during flowering in the earlier parts of its life, but degrades thereafter into straggling, partly-foliated broken shrubs. It forms root nodules which harbour a bacterium which accumulates or “fixes” nitrogen, a point often made in its favour. Red Alder (Alnus rubra) is a native plant which harbours the bacterium Frankia alni. Both the tree and the bacterium are indigenous species which contribute nitrogen to enhance soil fertility, as do at least one hundred recorded species of plants worldwide. Scotch Broom was imported or propagated and planted to deter roadside erosion and reduce development of woody high crowned species on right-of-ways. Other native species are available which achieve the same goal and are not disseminated thereafter by birds and road-maintenance equipment. In a reverse situation, European countries imported our Black Locust (Robinia pseudo-acacia) for the same reason and it has been a pest there ever since. New Zealand has been trying to clear away early and now intrusive plantings of Canadian Lodgepole Pine (Pinus contorta) which threaten native flora in several national parks.

Scotch Broom is not a natural part of the North American scene in nature any more than is a cat by a bird nest. These are things that have been brought in and not properly managed. Their removal or containment is entirely justified in order to mitigate the damage they cause. We, humanity, created these problems by our ill-considered actions and we must now deal with the results.

Only two seemingly valid reasons exist to not remove broom. First, removal is difficult, costly and often unsuccessful because of the long-lived seeds which accumulate beneath broom plants. Secondly, removal is expensive, being one of the reasons B.C. Agriculture has not named Scotch Broom a noxious species. Another reason is political: lower mainland nursery growers applied pressure on the government to not declare broom a noxious species. It is easier to term broom a naturalized species and keep the vociferous element content.

The following non-technical key may assist in separating among “brooms”:

**Dichotomous Key:**

1a. shrubs spiny Ulex europaeus (Gorse)  
1b. shrubs not spiny go to 2  
2a. shrubs rounded Spartium junceum  
2b. stems not rounded go to 3  
3a leaves deciduous, (Spanish Broom)  
   unfoliate when young go to 4  
3b leaves not deciduous, (Red Alder)  
   trifoliate when young go to 5  
4a pods fat and hairy all over Cytisus striatus  
4b pods flat, hair on margins only Cytisus scoparius  
5a inflourescence indeterminate Genista monspessulana (blooms over long period)  
5b inflourescence determinant Genista spp. (blooms short time only)

-Excerpted from THE BROOM QUARTERLY, Oregon Department of Agriculture, date and author unknown

Why then remove broom? From a naturalist’s standpoint, broom is sufficiently invasive that it will displace native species, some of which may be rare or highly desirable. From a farmer or forester’s standpoint, broom occupies valuable space in fields, pastures and forest replant operations. In dense stands, this somewhat resinous species represents a fire hazard. In all respects, Scotch Broom is a weed which lacks valid redeeming virtues.

Can we eliminate Scotch Broom?: We could, most likely, but probably will not. The person years required to achieve eradication, even on Salt Spring Island, would be expensive. The present Government is anti-environmental and unlikely to show concern for conserving either endangered or rare species. Any environmentally positive move is left in the hands of the citizens.

Can we control broom?: Yes! Just do it!! The best time to achieve success is when broom seeds have developed to about one half their mature size. Achieve
Natural History

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the goal by:
1. Pulling-out plants with stem diameters of ~0.5 cm or less from wet soil. Take care when pulling from sensitive spots, as with moss which covers rocks, by simply pulling the plants up between ones fingers while holding down the moss. Such plants will often break-off once the soil is hard baked. Seed will not have been formed at this age and any wet season may be used.
2. Larger plants should be cut-off at ground level, being certain that no lateral branches remain. Most of these plants will die if cut at milk-seed stage.
3. Broom pulling devices are often successful in removing the plants but tend to disturb the soil to an extent that latent broom seeds germinate. Broom pullers are particularly useful where the soil is to be planted and it’s desired that entire broom plants be removed.
4. Small plant “hand-pulls” can be executed in subsequent years, often at a walking pace, until the broom seed bank is expended. Broom seeds may remain viable 40 years in the soil but the percent of successful germination decreases after several years.

These are general recommendations only. Certainly, one should not gambol thru the broom with centimeter rule in hand. Rather, do the logical thing. If pulling broom plants brings up a cylinder of roots and little soil, do it! If pulling results in significant soil disturbance (never mind your back!), demur and cut the stems as above.

The single most effective means of controlling broom is with a forest overstory. If (especially) conifers can be brought from seedling size to “free to grow” status, at approximately 3-4 M of height, forest floor broom will be suppressed and killed, as it is shade-intolerant.

Finally, what to do with the severed broom? Unless it is on a golf course, cemetery or seems to present an unpleasant sight to the landowner, merely leave it. If possible, disseminate the plants over the land such that large plants do not touch one another in order to minimize fire danger. After a couple years, even the largest plants will degrade and add biomass to the soil.

We all need a success storey from time to time, especially when the bugs are biting the day is hot and ones arms are scratched despite (don’t forget gloves!). For an example of a successful broom removal, go to Beacon Hill Park in Victoria and walk the hill on the east side in Spring. The older locals could remember Camas on the hill, but younger folks could recall seeing only broom. Bring on the Girl Guides! These good lassies got into the broom patch under the direction of a leader from Swan Lake Sanctuary and now one can once again see Camas on the hill. But success will be fleeting and discouraging without follow-up removals for those critical few years after the big effort. As a non-success storey, one might view a field of perhaps 5 acres on the east side of the highway near Duncan, all cleared of broom by machine (dragged out) and now completely repopulated. The thought was there. The will was there. The technology was lacking.

So, broom away, by all means. The results will only be positive. The Salt Spring Island Conservancy will be holding monthly broom removals during 2004. Watch your ACORN, your e-mail notifications, or ask someone with e-mail to notify you if you are not online. We shall have at least one grand bash of a broom removal at our new Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve in the spring, and all will have an opportunity to see our splendid new Reserve. This was a most splendid gift to the people of Salt Spring Island and elsewhere by Cordula Vogt and Oda Nowrath, and we are determined to maintain it with distinct bias toward preservation and proliferation of native species.

COME TO PARTICIPATE AND CELEBRATE THIS SPLENDID GIFT FOR OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS!
Saturday, May 29th
Salt Spring Island Conservancy presents
A Tenth Anniversary Celebration!

Robert Bateman
Salt Spring Island Premiere Showing
Gardens of the World
Slide Show

Live Music too!
Tickets on Sale at Salt Spring Books

Call for Submissions!

You are invited to submit articles to the Acorn on any topic, including: the Conservancy’s history, natural history, complexity articles, stewardship, and fundamental conservancy interests such as political policies, accountability and issues beyond SSI borders. If you have any ideas, write to us at ssiconservancy@saltspring.com or bevington@uniserve.com or PO Box 722, SSI, BC, V8K 2W3. Thanks!

Office Update:

Donations of any of the following would be gratefully appreciated: Office Chairs, Digital Camera, Laptop Computer, Small Refrigerator, Telephones and GPS Unit.

Small Actions Help!

Please remember to put your shopping receipt in the green Conservancy receipt box at GVM, and to say “Community Chest #58” at the check out at Thrifty’s. You can also credit the Conservancy when you take back your bottles to the Salt Spring Refund Centre (Bottle Depot at GVM). Every little bit helps keep our programs running!

Spring 2004
Volunteers

Recognizing Volunteers

Hi there! There’s a new person on the island, but don’t be afraid, it’s just temporarily! I am Yvette Ruesen, a forest and nature management student from the other side of the pond, the Netherlands to be more precise.

I am here for 3 months (end March till mid-June) to, hopefully, reinforce the SSIC team by doing a Spring flora analysis on the Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve as an internship for my university.

I have been on Salt Spring Island before; I took a year off in between college and university and spent it in Canada. First I did volunteer work in Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario, after that I travelled through BC. When I stayed on Salt Spring Island I promised myself that I would try to find an internship here by the time I would be in university. I am happy to say that I kept my promise!

I think I will have a wonderfull time here, especially when the rain will be replaced by the sun...

Haiku Contest

The Winning Haiku Entry was written by Nancy Van Patten! Congratulations Nancy!

Where
In what mist-laced haunts
or rough green edges of the world
does contentment lie?

Honourable Mention:

Ghostly garments hang
Amongst the lowering cedars,
Diaphonous laundry.
- By Nancy Van Patten

Ruckle Park ramblings
lead to Garry oak meadows –
we and rain their stew’rds
- by Jill Willmott

through rapid cloud shifts
the valley below
appears, disappears
- by Elehna de Sausa

No vision, we perish
Who can do what is needed?
Concerned Islanders!
- by Andrew Young

Bright morning sun,
Frost on the field turns to mist –
Floats away.
- by Matthew Coleman

Thank-you to all the entrants! These are very inspiring poems. We had so many wonderful entries, it was hard to choose just one of your poems. The Honourable Mentions will receive a pack of our Conservancy Cards as a prize! Elehna de Sausa suggested that our entrants might enjoy visiting a BC Haiku website called: www.bc.haiku.ca

Our next poetry contest is to be a sonnet. This poem is written in iambic pentameter and has 14 lines. The topic for this poetry contest is Death and Rebirth (appropriate to Autumn, of course). The sonnet does not have to contain these words in any way. The prize will be brunch for two at Tree House South!

To enter simply send your poem by e-mail to The Editor at bevington@uniserve.com or by mail to Acorn Death and Rebirth Sonnet Contest, c/o The SSI Conservancy, PO Box 722, SSI, BC ,V8K 2W3. Unlimited entries allowed! Judges will be the Acorn Editorial Committee. Deadline July 31st 2004. Winner Announced in the September Issue of the Acorn.
Featured Artist - Carey Ann Schaefer

Born in 1973, Carey Ann Schaefer graduated with a BFA from the University of Victoria in 1998 and since has exhibited in Canada, the U.S., and Germany. She has received grants from the B.C. Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, and VistaMedia Corporation to conduct public art projects. Schaefer has completed self-published art books some of which are housed in the special collections of the Canadian Public Library. Currently living and working in Brooklyn, she most recently finished a residency at Klondike Institute of the Arts and Culture in Dawson City.