

HAT Chat

Habitat Acquisition Trust

Giving and Caring



Over the past few months a lot has been going on at HAT. The summer weather has been hit or miss, but our dedicated staff has been out engaging the community in variety of ways while encountering some interesting adventures along the way. This past month has seen two of our staff members swell up due to wasp stings while out working in our protected areas; they are deflated now and reflecting on their experiences of ground wasp nests and eyes swollen shut. Just for the record, we love bees and wasps, our staff is just somewhat allergic to them! However, we have moved on from visits to the doctor to focus on what has been an incredibly successful summer.

As always our successes have come from our members, donors and community supporters. We received an outpouring of support from our members in terms of monthly donations, membership renewals and volunteer time offered and these factors have lead to our projects being powerful enough to make a difference in our community. In the window front of our office we are proudly displaying all of the newspaper articles we have been featured in throughout the summer and our staff can tell you that this exposure and the projects we are able to do, would not exist without the support we get from our members. You may think that your yearly membership or monthly donations are minimal in terms of actual monetary value but combined with a plethora of members doing the same, it results in our organization having the flexibility to reach higher than ever before. We are able to take on more people in our Good Neighbours Project, spend more time in our covenants, and with children in nature. As someone new to the organization, I have been amazing to see the dedication of our members; every single member I have spoken with or met has been welcoming, inspiring and dedicated to the goals of our organization.

Donations for our organization come in a variety forms and although they may vary in terms of money or property, they are all working towards the same goal: protecting land perma-

nently. We have recently been focusing our efforts on learning about a term some of you are familiar with called 'Planned Giving'. It is an interesting aspect of non-profit fundraising and more and more is becoming a vital way to keep organizations stable in these tough economic times with less funding.

Planned Giving or 'Gift Giving' can best be described as the following: "Planned giving involves tools and techniques to facilitate gifts to charities typical involving the assistance of professional advisors who attempt to maximize tax incentives and balance financial, personal, family and philanthropic objectives" (Planned Giving Guide of BC). One of the most common types of planned giving and something that we have been fortunate to receive here at HAT, involves

placing a bequest in your will and leaving a legacy that will be cherished for eternity as it will go towards protecting land in perpetuity. "There are a number of ways this can be accomplished in a will including leaving a dollar amount to a charity, leaving a percentage of one's estate to a charity, or in some circumstances leaving one's whole estate to one or more charities... [sic] Another benefit of bequests is the simplicity - they can easily be added to your will while you are doing your other estate planning" (PGGBC). Leaving legacies can allow you to know that you are leaving something more than just a donation; you are leaving something permanent that will have positive effects for years to come and help an organization reach its desired goals.

I find that planned giving can be intimidating and a bit awkward to discuss as it touches on a lot of serious issues and emotions but I think the best way to learn more about planned giving is having an open conversation. Our staff are very open and caring people who understand the issues that come with discussing planned giving. My suggestion is to come down to our office or give us a call and discuss what leaving a legacy is all about. We are always here to listen and engage with our members, as we mentioned before they are the reason we are able to protect land and carry out these amazing projects.

Peter Papagiannis - Community and Development Coordinator



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#yyj #conservation

The above image is something called a "QR Code" which stands for 'Quick Response'. We will be using more QR codes throughout the year to engage with people in a variety of ways and want you to get on board! With any smart phone, simply scan the QR code with any barcode scanner and see where it takes you!

Recently here at HAT we have delved deep into the abyss known as the internet. We are constantly trying to work on expand our presence online and have been experimenting with different social media tools available and we hope that you will join us in a new community that takes place solely online.

We understand it can be intimidating to participate in Facebook, Twitter etc but fear not, we have your back. Once you get on board you will be hooked. It will also provide you with some amazing resources and content such as pictures, videos and current events. Please help us grow our online community in order to grow our HAT community and continue to protect land permanently. We promise it will be a fun ride.

Conservation Community Article

Where we invite other non-profits to feature an article!

The Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW), located in Victoria waters, are the smallest of four resident communities within the eastern North Pacific Ocean. Unlike other resident communities, the SRKW is comprised of only one clan (J), which includes 3 pods (J, K, L). SRKWs are the only killer whale population listed as endangered by COSEWIC. There are approximately 87 individuals that make up this small population and on any day in the summer months, hundreds of boats from harbors in Victoria and Vancouver surround this majestic cetacean.

Since inception, Cetus Research and Conservation Society has documented that on average almost one hundred times a day these endangered fish-eating whales interact with boats in such a way that changes their behavior. When one boat comes too near, it causes them to have to expend more energy to get away or change their swimming path, and this may impact their ability to eat or communicate. When in a single day up to one hundred boats contact an endangered species, already struggling to find decreasing food sources in an increasingly toxic environment, the future looks bleak.

Cetus works to reduce that number through monitoring and outreach. Through our Straitwatch program, we aim to monitor and educate all boaters to stay further than 100 meters from the whales; to not park in their swimming path; and to not drive more than 7 knots within 400 meters of whales, so the threat of vessel disturbance plays less of a role in their already challenging lives.

Cetus was established in 2005 with goals of mitigating risks to Cetacean species - researching and identifying the problems or threats, and then creating and implementing programs to solve them. Over time, one of Cetus's programs, Straitwatch, has documented a 15% increase in boater compliance with the Be Whale Wise Guidelines. Moreover, since 2005, humpbacks have been downlisted from 'threatened' to 'special concern' and the northern resident killer whale population has gone from 215 whales in 2001 to 255 in 2010. Unfortunately, since 2005, the endangered killer whale resident population on the Southern tip of Vancouver Island has yet to show signs of recovery. During the 1970's their numbers were as low as 70 and the population recovered to almost 100 in the early 1990's; however, the population declined to the low 80's again recently, and this endangered population's numbers have stayed at that level ever since.

- Linda McGrew, Cetus



The Private Lives of Turtles Revealed



HAT's biologists are like private investigators snooping into the lurid lives of our secretive neighbours. Using radio telemetry and remote cameras, we've recorded the very revealing behavior of certain matronly female painted turtles at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Moving slowly from hibernation sites in April to basking logs in June, one of our marks was recorded laying eggs in the experimental land plots prepared by

Kristiina Ovaska and Christian Engelstoft in July. All of this monitoring is helping us gain a better understanding of the only native pond turtle left on Vancouver Island. Our researchers are applying what we have learned to important turtle colonies in the Alberni Valley and at Elk-Beaver Lake. A timber company operating near the Airport wetlands of Port Alberni is now following a management plan developed through our Species At Risk project to protect a significant population of turtles, and user groups at Beaver Lake are working with us to protect known nesting grounds from disturbance. Our Endangered coastal subspecies of Western Painted turtle includes less than several hundred mated pairs. Fragmented aquatic habitats, road crossings, abductions, and urban development are taking their toll on the turtle populations, but citizens can help. Please report any turtle to HAT and take photos of the top and bottom of their shell, noting the location and date. Reports from the public guide our efforts to educate landowners who share habitat with painted turtles.

-Todd Carnahan, Habitat Acquisition Trust

Conservation Connection 2011

We are pleased to announce the return of our biggest event of the year on Friday, September 30th at Royal Roads University. Conservation Connection is coming back for its eleventh year and it will be nothing short of spectacular with panels galore, a nature walk and one very special keynote speaker. CBC's "Quirks and Quarks" host Bob McDonald will be this year's keynote speaker (presented by Vancity). It is hard to describe how excited we all are! Being a longtime fan of his radio program and young enough to remember his great television show, it will be a pleasure to have someone so dedicated to science to speak about issues affecting our conservation community. That is what this day is all about, learning from each other on what we can do to grow as individuals, groups and as a community to foster conservation in our region. Registration can be found on our website at www.hat.bc.ca and if you are too busy to spend a full day with us, you can register to just hear Bob's talk in the afternoon. Registration is \$40 for a full day of panels and a delicious lunch and refreshments; a discounted rate of \$30 is available for volunteers, non-profits and students. We really hope you can join us for what will be a memorable day of learning.

Habitat Stewardship

Cutthroat Custodian Ian McKenzie remembers when Firehall Creek was just a ditch in a gravel lot. Five years ago he led a partnership project to establish native plant cover over the waters flowing towards Bilston Creek. Their success in revegetating a reach in the Luxton Fairgrounds that used to degrade water quality has been nothing short of spectacular. *(Editor's note - See the photo on rear cover!)* Ian's grassroots initiative (Bilston Creek Watershed Habitat Protection Association ~ BilstonCreek.org) has restored plenty of native cutthroat trout habitat over twenty plus years of rehabilitation projects from plantings and fish ladders to pools and riffles. HAT's Bilston Creek Watershed Good Neighbours Project recognized Ian and forty other landowners as Habitat Stewards this summer. They join the ranks of over 300 HAT stewards from Sooke to Galiano Island. Join HAT at Witty's Lagoon on September 17th to see the Wonder Dogs Show at 11:30am, and to thank our Habitat Stewards for their commitment to Bilston Creek's trout.

-Todd Carnahan, Habitat Acquisition Trust

SUMMER LOVING, HAD US A BLAST!

This summer has flown by for all of us here at HAT and we wanted to thank everyone who came out to support us at various events around the Capitol Regional District. From Strawberry Fest to Witty's Lagoon to Ocean's Day, we were genuinely thrilled about the amount of interest we garnered from the general public and our dedicated members. Check out our website for all the upcoming events and special gatherings we have planned for the fall.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GREAT SPONSORS

GENERAL

- Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
- Victoria Foundation

LAND PROTECTION

- Province of B.C.
- Vancity enviroFund
- Environment Canada

GREEN SPOTS

- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council

SPECIES AT RISK STEWARDSHIP

- Capital Regional District
- Vancouver Foundation
- Environment Canada

Conservation Connection 2011



VICTORIA FOUNDATION



Vancity

September 30th at Royal Roads University
\$40 (\$30 for non-profit staff, volunteers and students)



THROUGH THE EYES OF AN INTERN

Alicia Butula Reflects On Her Time With HAT

My name is Alicia Butula, HAT's 2011 Outreach Intern. I have spent the last 16 weeks working to assist HAT in protecting Victoria's natural features. In September, I return to the University of Victoria to continue my undergraduate degree. This summer I saw the many ways HAT effectively helps the public protect and understand the natural environment, through land-contact visits and the Good Neighbours Project in the Bilston and North Latoria Watersheds on Victoria's Westshore. I saw how effective public outreach can alter the people's attitudes and actions towards endangered creatures like the Sharp-tailed Snake and towards their backyards.

I experienced the thrill of locating an endangered Western Painted Turtle through HAT's Species at Risk outreach. The Species at Risk outreach revealed how imperative it is that HAT and other groups continue to locate and protect the last populations of species that are emblematic of endangered ecosystems. I visited many of HAT's legally protected properties and saw how effectively these properties can permanently protect nature. I learned about the important role dedicated land trusts play the protection of endangered Garry oak meadows, the last of Victoria's wetlands and the continually lessening amount of green spaces that make life so wonderful on Vancouver Island.

Finally, this summer I coordinated various events and activities and was often asking for help from complete strangers. From these experiences, I saw just how eager residents of the region are to get involved with habitat restoration, with environmental education and the protection of endangered species. I was amazed at how enthusiastic HAT's volunteers and members are to help HAT succeed. So as I head back to school, I want to thank the HAT community for providing me this wonderful opportunity.

- Alicia Butula, Outreach Intern



Habitat Steward Ian McKenzie overlooks Firehall Creek - Photo by Todd Carnahan

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