

# HAT Chat

Habitat Acquisition Trust



## Rainwolves

600 km north of Victoria, where forest and river meet the sea, a secret lingers under the trees. The fall air is not silent – if the splashes in the river are not enough to announce the return of spawning salmon, then the incessant cry of gulls surely would. Perhaps a Grizzly Bear is wading through the water. Maybe the bear bats a 30 pound salmon into the shallow water before ambling off with the struggling fish into the forest. Maybe the bear grows frustrated as the fish instead swim for the safety of deeper water. This is the Great Bear Rainforest, and this scene is repeated here each fall. It is an ancient forest, fuelled by the carcasses of millions of salmon, each hoping to leave its genetic offspring in the gravel river bottom, and inevitably leaving its body to the forest.

The remains of the salmon are a treasure for the forest, and those who live here. From the smallest to tallest, “salmon” ...both [regions] were forged by the relationship between bears, wolves, salmon, and people. is spread through every living thing in this place. Alongside the gulls, bears, and eagles, insects find nurseries for their eggs, which rapidly hatch and grow, feasting on the salmon’s body. In turn they become food for animals that seem most unlikely to survive on salmon – kinglets, wrens, bats, and the other small animals of the forest. What little remains of the fish will enrich the soil, and provide the energy and nutrients required to grow and sustain this forest.

But while you observe, you in turn are observed. As tide falls, the river drops - and the salmon no longer have the safety of deep water. Now is the time when they are vulnerable to bears, and to the secret salmon predator of the rainforest – wolves. The pack is shy; unaccustomed to and uncomfortable with the presence of people. Chances are you will never see the wolves. But if you are patient, and lucky, and the lure of salmon is too great, maybe you will catch a glimpse of these dark, wet, and hungry predators as they make their own splashes in the water, hunting for the rich and nutritious salmon.

One of the few people fortunate enough to have seen these “rainwolves” emerge from the trees to

hunt salmon is Chris Darimont, a Conservation Biologist and a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California (Santa Cruz). Much of Chris’ research has focused on ecological and niche variation, particularly among predators – such as the unique behavioural adaptations of the wolves of the Great Bear Rainforest. His research has helped us understand how wolves and salmon interact with other wildlife, and even plants, to help shape B.C.’s coastal forests into some of the richest, most productive forests on the planet. Dr Darimont’s work, combined with his passion and spectacular photography, has led him to be featured in the National Geographic documentary *Last Stand of the Great Bear*, and to co-author the award-winning book *The Last Wild Wolves; Ghosts of the Great Bear Rainforest*. His research has been recognized as well – in 2009 *Discover* magazine cited a paper Chris was the lead author of as

number 30 on their list of the top 100 science stories. Our understanding of the role of apex predators, particularly wolves and

bears, in coastal forests has expanded greatly in the past decade as Chris and other conservation biologists use technology, and a great deal of patience, to reveal the hidden lives of these charismatic creatures.

The link between the Great Bear and our home in the southern Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands is not tenuous. The Great Bear is our immediate northern neighbour, and the same wildlife we are struggling to conserve may need the refuge of the Great Bear as our climate and land-use continues to change. The wilderness of the Great Bear also provides insight into the natural forces that shaped our own landscape. For all the differences between the oak meadows and dry Douglas-fir forests of Victoria, and the wet Hemlock and Red cedar of the Great Bear, this striking similarity remains: both were forged by the relationship between bears, wolves, salmon, and people.

Chris Darimont will be our keynote speaker at HAT’s Gala Dinner this March. You’ll find more information about this “Green Tie” event inside. We would be pleased to have you join us.

-Adam Taylor, Executive Director

2011

# Gala Dinner

Keynote: **Dr Chris**

**Darimont.** Dr Darimont may be best known for his studies of wolves in the Great Bear Rainforest, but it was his research on the impact of human harvest on the evolution of fishes that *Discover* magazine called one of the top 100 stories of 2009.

Hosted by: **Erick Thompson, /A\**  
Vancouver Island

Music: **Rob Cheramy** One of the west coast's best Jazz guitarists.

## Bilston and North Latoria Watershed Goal: No more fish kills

**H**AT's award-winning landowner stewardship program visits the Western Communities this year. Residents in the catchments draining to Witty's Lagoon and Albert Head can take advantage of HAT's land care services and free family events from May to October. Our local conservation partners will co-host several workshops with HAT on stream restoration, native plant gardening, bird-watching, and dog training shows at local venues this summer. HAT will also create local awareness about the conservation efforts of local groups such as the Bilston Watershed Habitat Enhancement Association, CRD Parks, and the Metchosin Foundation.

Residents can invite a HAT biologist for free and confidential land care visits to learn more about their land's natural features. Controlling invasive plants, assessing forest health, improving

pond water quality, identifying native species, and dealing with deer are some of the topics addressed through our visits. We

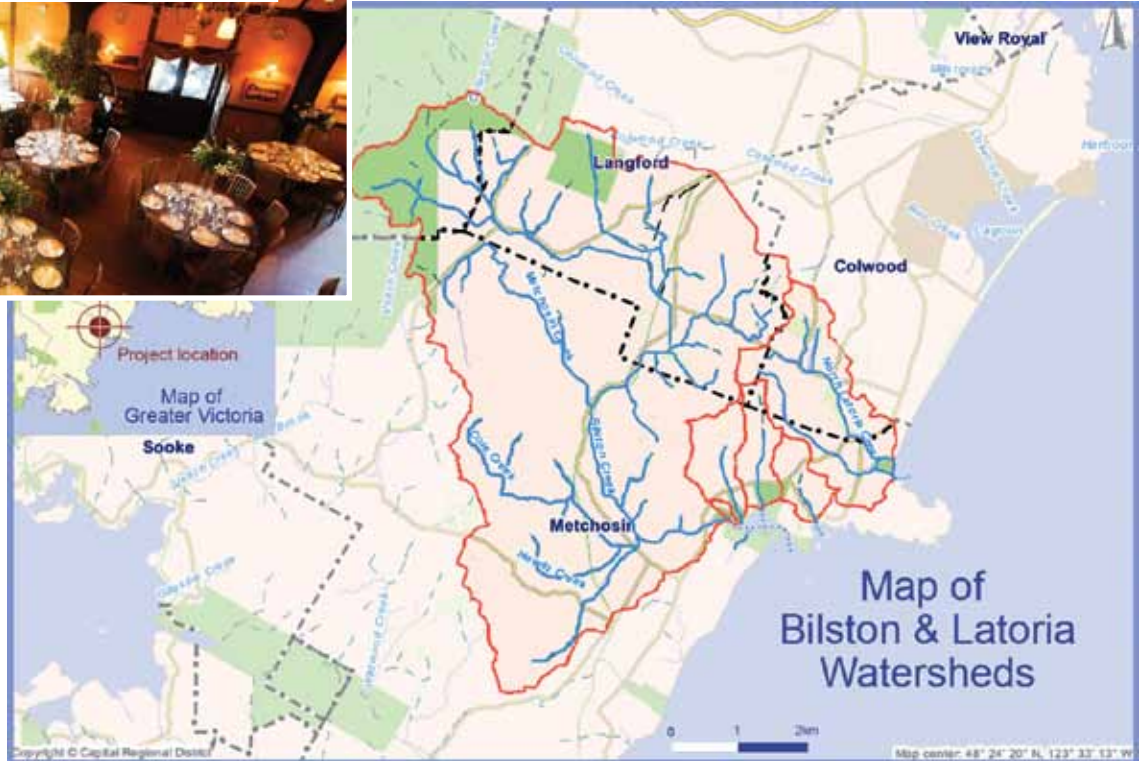
focus on the interests of the landowner and try to identify potential issues before they become a headache. Over forty landowners in Central Saanich benefitted from our free land care visit prescriptions in 2010, joining hundreds of residents who have become Habitat Stewards since 2002.

The clean waters of Bilston Creek in Metchosin harbor cutthroat trout, supporting salt marsh, eelgrass beds, and the living beaches of Witty's Lagoon Regional Park downstream. Recent fish kills in neighbouring North Latoria Creek have raised alarm bells about increasing threats from upstream.

Multiple tiny pollution sources like car oil leaks, lawn fertilizer runoff, and failing septic systems can harm our sensitive freshwater systems. On the other hand, thousands of individual landowners making informed land use decisions can reverse the threats our infrastructure has imposed on the natural systems that support us. HAT is showing the way to a more sustainable future by helping residents to maintain natural values that provide a high quality of life.

Contact HAT to schedule your land care visit, or check our website for the schedule of free family events this summer.

—Todd Carnahan



**T**ickets: \$65/plate

Call : 250.995.2428  
or email [hatmail@hat.bc.ca](mailto:hatmail@hat.bc.ca)  
to reserve your ticket today.

**S**eating is limited.

## Save Mary Lake Campaign deadline extended!

The Mary Lake Campaign has been running full force since October 2011. On January 27th, many of you participated in a very successful Mary Lake Webathon that raised over \$10,000 and attracted 1.2 million hits to their website! The original deadline to raise 1 million dollars was February 1st. The great news is that they were able to successfully raise enough donations and public support to receive an extension to the end of February! The challenge now is to encourage more folks to pass the word around and join us in the race to save Mary Lake! The Mary Lake Conservancy is working hard to brainstorm and explore creative business options, including a potential co-housing project and a First Nations education initiative. What can you do?

Give the gift that keeps on giving . . . leave a legacy for our children by donating to Save Mary Lake! We've all heard this before – but think about the benefits that future generations will gain with such a minimal investment from OUR GENERATION – today! Join the Mary Lake Conservancy, HAT and thousands of other committed individuals in helping to secure this beautiful, ecologically significant piece of land from development.

Saving Mary Lake is not just about protecting one piece of property in the Highlands. It is about connecting a contiguous undeveloped corridor for wildlife and their habitat to flourish – right in the middle of the Capital Regional District! It's about allowing this pristine land with threatened ecosystems – Dry Coastal Douglas-fir, wetlands and rocky outcrops – to remain, mature and continue

to provide much needed habitat to plants and animals, including rare species. It's about living in an urban community, and the need for our children and their children to have places to play in the outdoors, explore nature in its functioning beauty, and wonder at the interwoven connection between the soil, the plants, the insects and the animals – including us - the humans.

Mary Lake is a vital connection to an already existing natural green space corridor linking Gowlland Tod Provincial Park to Thetis Lake Regional Park. Imagine what it will be like 100 years from now to be able to hike from the Galloping Goose through Mill Hill Regional Park – MARY LAKE PARK – Lone Tree Hill Regional Park - Gowlland Tod Provincial Park and end in Mt. Work Regional Park! What a gift to leave for future generations!

Each weekend, Bob McMinn – the champion behind this campaign – leads tours of the pristine Mary Lake property. We encourage you to take advantage of experiencing this special gem – organize a tour with your co-workers or child's school. You can phone Bob at 250-478-5858 to attend a tour. Go to [www.savemarylake.com](http://www.savemarylake.com) to learn more about the Mary Lake Campaign, and to find out how your donation can help to protect this special place forever. Don't forget to check out the "Power of Many" Video Contest submissions; there are some creative and beautifully documented videos! You can also donate to Save Mary Lake on the HAT website – [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca). Pass the word along, the Power of Many begins with one – YOU!

-Wendy Tyrrell



Land Trust Alliance  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Land Trust Alliance of BC's Annual Conservation and Stewardship Seminar Series – April 1 to 3rd, at the Harbour Towers Hotel, Victoria, BC.

Join BC's land trusts, naturalists, stewardship, conservation and land use organizations and agencies in this three day Conservation and Stewardship conference. This event is open to all and includes:

- Site visits to Madrona Farm, Island View Beach and other beautiful Victoria areas
- Full and half day workshops on: Innovative Conservation Financing, Building Sustainable Board and Governance Structures
- Renowned Plenary Speakers: Story Clark and Richard Hebda
- Plus 15+ Seminars on conserving, sustaining and stewarding BC's natural and cultural diversity

An Early Bird rate is available for those who register by March 1. For program registration and further info on site visits and workshops, visit [www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca](http://www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca) or contact us at [info@landtrustalliance.bc.ca](mailto:info@landtrustalliance.bc.ca) or 250-477-4766.

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#### GREEN SPOTS

- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council

#### SPECIES AT RISK STEWARDSHIP

- Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program
- Capital Regional District
- Vancouver Foundation

#### PRIVATE DONATIONS

Donations from individuals are very important to HAT's sustainability. We truly appreciate the support of our members and donors; it is this support that enables us to keep HAT operating day-to-day. To make it easier for donors, HAT has established a **monthly giving program** and accepts monthly giving through VISA, Mastercard, AMEX, and direct deposit.

Vancity

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## "MARY LAKE"

-by Dvora Levin

Some say she is a Highland queen,  
a jewel in the crown of Douglas fir.  
Some, a silvery breast suckling a  
fern leaf moon.

Her wrinkled skin evaporates,  
forms mist, clouds, falls down  
as rain – replenished, stilled

she mirrors the endless sky,  
her circle of green subjects  
bowing down.

When we are there, we know  
we are water and  
a few stardust particles.

When we are there, we know  
trees breathe us in and  
we breathe in trees.

We do not ask to save  
these trees, this lake, this land.

We ask this place to save us,  
to replenish our sacred humility.

Dvora Levin

*Dvora Levin is a sharp wit with an insatiable curiosity and lightness of spirit. She describes herself as a rewired (rather than retired) social worker who is passionate about poetry. She was selected as one of the Times Colonist "Winter Poets" and has published two books of poetry.*



HATChat is published four times a year by Habitat Acquisition Trust. Design/layout assistance donated by Aldridge St Editing (Darin Steinkey and Jordan Clarke)



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HAT's office is located at 827 Broughton Street. The HAT newsletter is printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper.

*Habitat Acquisition Trust is incorporated under the Society Act of BC and is a Registered Charity BN 88962 6545 RR0001*

