

# HAT Chat

The Newsletter of Habitat Acquisition Trust

Spring 2003

Issue 9

## The Story of a Salmon: Correction - Thousands of Salmon!

The life cycle of Pacific salmon has always been a perfect metaphor for connectivity and how even small things can have a huge impact. The death of the adult salmon is essential to the next generation of salmon developing in the gravel of the river bottom. Their decaying bodies provide nutrients that feed the entire system and eventually provide the food for the fry when they emerge from the gravel. Fifty thousand adult Chum Salmon thronged to the Goldstream River this past fall: that's a lot of decay!

The salmon run is the time of year that Goldstream receives the greatest visitation, of both wildlife and people, and this year was no exception. In addition to the 50,000 Chum Salmon, hatchery volunteers counted 800 Coho and 300 Chinook. People tend to outnumber the salmon; this year there was a two-to-one ratio. Of the 100,000 people that visited the park, 40,000 visited the nature house, including 5,000 school children. And all of this despite the elimination of all funding for environmental education and running the nature house! The number of school children was half of the previous year's numbers though: having to charge for school programs did have an impact.

Record low rainfall was a huge issue for salmon returning to our region to spawn this year. The Sooke reservoir, which contains Victoria's water supply, was expanded this fall to increase its capacity. This same reservoir also drains into the Goldstream River. As they do every year and despite this year's low reservoir level, the Capital Regional District released water over the dam to assist the returning fish. This "extra" water came at the critical time when the rains weren't, allowing some fish to continue their upstream migration.

Even after the construction of the reservoir was complete, the rains had not come. The fish still did

though! In addition to the crowding, the lack of rain meant that the dead fish were not being washed downstream into the closed-to-the-public estuary, where they could have been easily accessed by scavengers such as Bald Eagles and gulls. Fragrant you say? A very good time to have a cold!



Amid the reek was a lesson to the residents of our region. The earth's climate is undergoing changes that are affecting global weather patterns, including those around here. Less rain may mean that our newly enlarged reservoir may never be full and water shortages will become the norm. Instead of stressing out about the various stages of water restrictions we may encounter, we need to acknowledge that we live in the driest place in Canada in the summer, and think of innovative ways about how we can reduce our consumption of water.

And, to accentuate the point about the interconnectedness of the salmon life cycle, water conservation efforts by residents of the Capital Regional District will mean increased water levels available for the salmon returning to spawn in the Goldstream River after travelling thousands of kilometres.

Saving water saves salmon. It's that simple.

## President's Message

It is with mixed feelings that I received a letter of resignation from HAT's Executive Director Bruce Whittington this past autumn. I say 'mixed' because Bruce has decided to actively pursue a career as a natural history writer and lead natural history field trips. Both of these activities sound like very pleasurable ways to spend one's days



*Bruce Whittington. Photo by Bob Chappell*

so I felt a twinge of regret for not having thought of them myself!

Bruce has been an integral component of HAT since the organization was started in 1996. In fact, Bruce was a founding member: one of those select few individuals with the vision to anticipate the importance of protecting the incredible natural values of our region. Bruce has been on HAT's Board and, for the last two years, has served as HAT's Executive Director. His commitment to the excellent work that HAT does has been evident in the long hours and extra effort he put in on every project. Bruce should feel very proud of HAT's many accomplishments: he was an essential element of all that we have achieved.

Our Annual General Meeting in December was an opportunity for all of us to take off our HATs to Bruce Whittington and the years of distinguished service he dedicated to our organization. We wished him good luck with his latest endeavour and gave him a beautiful pen and pencil set with which to write his masterpieces. He was also presented with an honorary life membership to Habitat Acquisition Trust - a well-deserved honour. We are saddened to see him go but wish him a fond farewell and the best of luck in the future. And we know that his involvement with HAT will continue in a variety of ways; our supporters are an extremely loyal group of people!

HAT has hired a new Executive Director, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce him to you at this time. Mr. Boyd Pyper, a practicing lawyer with experience in the non-profit and environment sectors, was the successful candidate. I hope you will join me in welcoming Boyd into our organization.

*Andy MacKinnon, President*

\*\*\*\*\* **Esquimalt Lagoon Good Neighbours Open House** \*\*\*\*\*

**Sat. February 8, 2003**

**10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

All activities are free of charge and include kids activities, nest box building, native plant propagation and poster board displays.

Sponsored by **Habitat Acquisition Trust** and **Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative**

Pacific Centre Family Services Association at 3221 Heatherbell Rd. (off Lagoon Rd. near Metchosin Rd.)

For more information, please contact HAT at 995-2428 or by e-mail: [hatmail@hat.bc.ca](mailto:hatmail@hat.bc.ca)

## ... Knowing the Value of Something...

One of the surest ways to recognize the value of something is through the commitment of others to it. The Goldstream Visitor Centre obviously resonates for the people living in our region, as evidenced by the dedication of the people helping to maintain the facility.

Despite the loss of all funding in April 2002, the doors of the centre have not closed, due in large part to a group of stalwart souls who were not willing to see that happen. Every day of every week the centre is staffed by volunteers happily greeting visitors, welcoming school groups, answering the phone, organizing displays and keeping the place tidy.

The people doing these tasks are extremely reliable; they even make sure that their shift is covered if they are unable to be there! Having this kind of commitment is essential to operating the centre and we are extremely grateful for their dedication. The hours that some people have contributed equate to a part time job, which gives an indication how important their efforts are to them. We try to get together every month for a social event, which usually turns out to be a dessert potluck. The camaraderie that has developed within this group is definitely one aspect that keeps people coming back.

In our last newsletter we told you about the success of our "Ice Cream Sunday" event, which was held in the summer. Since then committed individuals have emerged from all over the island to help achieve our goals of keeping this facility open for environmental education. The "Group of Eight and Friends," artists **Mark Hobson, Gretchen Markle, Peggy Frank, Donald Gunn, Linda Haylock, Peggy Sowden, Anne Stewart, Alison Watt** and **Craig Benson**, organized and planned, staffed, and donated the proceeds from a successful exhibit held in September at the centre. This was the Group's seventh benefit show (for a variety of causes) since forming in 1984. They are all close friends united by a love of natural history. Many within the group are trained as professional biologists, but they also maintain a passion for painting.

On the heels of this event, **Casey Tweddell** almost single-handedly organized an extremely successful 5 km family fun run in October: *The Goldstream Salmon Run*. This run was a big hit with all the participants and is destined to be held annually with *The New VI* Television station agreeing to be a sponsor. Casey's organization included landing corporate sponsors, choosing the route through the campground, and making sure everything went smoothly on race day.

Congratulations on a tremendously successful inaugural run (pun intended!)! Together these two fall fundraising events raised \$4,500 towards the efforts to keep the Visitor Centre open and school programs active.



*You're never too young to help out Goldstream Park! Five-month-old Malia Copley was an enthusiastic participant in the first ever Goldstream Salmon Run. Photo by Aaron Maxwell.*

*continued on page 4*

## ...Knowing the Value of Something...*continued*

Another volunteer, **Carleigh Moulson** created an excellent “How You Can Help Goldstream” brochure for us as part of a university course she was completing. It will be a huge help with recruiting more community support, volunteers, and sponsors.

The biennial “Nature of Island Artists” exhibit, featuring more than 100 artists, is planned for this September. To get involved with this or any other activities at Goldstream, phone or email us at the HAT office and we will gladly include you.



## HAT Projects

### Feedback Welcome

The goal of Habitat Acquisition Trust’s “Urban Forest Stewardship” project is to encourage the retention of natural ecosystems and to reconnect humans with nature’s processes, even in highly built-up metropolitan centres. An integral component of this project is a discussion paper that looks at how communities can maintain and enhance forests in an urban setting, and a draft is now available for comments on our website ([www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca)). The Urban Forest Stewardship project can be found under the “Current Initiatives” sidebar.

This discussion paper is meant to provide a brief historical overview of urban trees within our region, including how they are perceived, the values we have historically attributed to them and the impacts and regulatory regimes we have subjected them to. It also identifies some of the most pressing issues associated with trees in urban centres. This includes new provincial and federal legislation and guidelines, as well as an exploration of some of the linkages that exist between urban forest conservation and other contemporary environmental initiatives within our urban communities, including new models of storm-water management, low impact development, sustainable communities, watershed-based local area planning, integrated watershed management, stream restoration, and restoration of Garry oak ecosystems. It articulates the need for a more holistic, regionally integrated and natural systems-based approach to urban forest stewardship and provides a draft strategic framework, including a brief review of some programs and tools, for the stewardship and protection of urban trees. The emphasis is to stimulate informed dialogue and suggest some directions for change, rather than to advocate for particular solutions.

## HAT Projects continued

### Rain – Again!

The completion of the Tod Creek fishway (funded by the Pacific Salmon Foundation) was completed in September by Coastal Enterprise and Resource Centre (CERCA) but the rains never arrived to fill the creek. Kevin Jancowski of CERCA and Tom Rutherford from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have been monitoring the flow levels with their fingers crossed, but salmon runs throughout our region have been adversely affected by the lack of rain. The fishway will be in place for next year's returning fish, so the return of salmon to the upper reaches of the watershed remains likely.

On a more optimistic note, and as a further component of this project, local school children will have an opportunity to learn more about salmon and their lifecycle requirements. Five lucky teachers won a free environmental education program at a November "Salmon Lover's Dinner" event. A naturalist will assist them in the spring with the release of the salmon they have been raising in the classroom. These programs will be run by Arenaria Research and Interpretation, the same company that has provided educational programming about salmon at Goldstream Provincial Park for more than a decade.

### "Good Neighbours" Update

*The Good Neighbours project team has begun visiting landowners who live adjacent to three protected areas in the Capital Region, encouraging them to be good stewards of their land. Pauline Brest van Kempen has a degree in Environmental Biology, and a post-graduate certificate in Ecosystem Restoration, as well as experience with outreach and environmental education through her recent work with the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre. Jennifer Eliason has a degree in Geography and Environmental Studies, and has recently developed and coordinated a landowner contact-based program for a Nanaimo-based organization encouraging landowners to provide wildlife habitat on their property. This project is funded by: EcoAction, The Victoria Foundation, VanCity Saving*

*Credit Union, Oracle Corporation, The Provincial Capital Commission, and Mountain Equipment Co-op.*

After collecting hundreds of informative brochures and handouts, and creating networks with agencies in each of the areas, we mailed out over two hundred introductory letters to residents in the first area, Oak Haven Park in Central Saanich. A flurry of follow-up phone calls resulted in 18 home visits in November and December. Each landowner we visited received a comprehensive package of information on Garry oak ecosystems, native plant gardening, composting, and other topics related to private-land stewardship. Fourteen landowners expressed interest in the project but were too busy to meet with us, so we dropped off information packages for them.

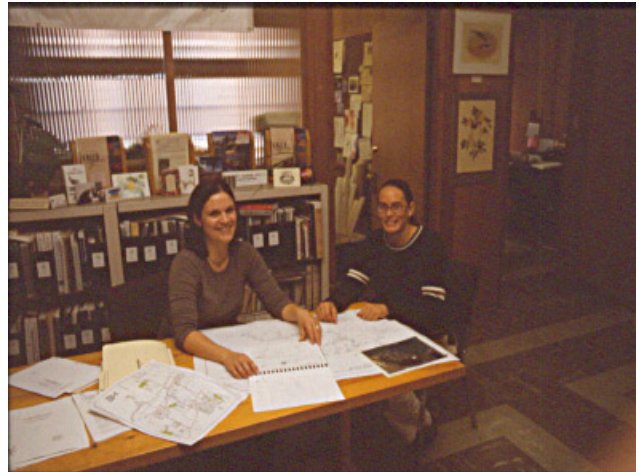
The landowners we've met with have been pleased to receive this information, and seem to really enjoy the visit. Most of the home visits include a walk around the property, which allows us to help our participants with native and/or invasive plant identification and to take note of habitat features they may have in their yard. Through casual conversation, we find out if the landowner and their family use the nearby park and if they are aware of the sensitive ecosystems in the area. We chat with the landowners about wildlife in their area, native plant and wildlife gardening and composting, and discuss any concerns they may have regarding water conservation and garden pest control.

The landowners we visit receive information on the significance of the park adjacent to their properties and learn how they can lessen the impact of their activities on these sensitive areas. They are encouraged to sign a Voluntary Stewardship Agreement, which states they will continue to be an environmental steward of their property and lists the things they are doing to help buffer the nearby-protected area. So far, almost all of the landowners we have visited have agreed to sign a Voluntary Stewardship Agreement, and many have welcomed a Tod Creek Watershed "Environmental Steward" sign displayed on their property. - See next page

A New Year, a new area! We have sent out over 350 introductory letters to neighbours of Esquimalt Lagoon. This mailout also included a letter and brochures from the Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative (ELSI), with whom we are working closely with on this area. We are looking forward to visiting landowners around Esquimalt Lagoon, and are really excited about the upcoming Open House we are hosting with ELSI on Saturday, February 8 (see advertisement on page 2).

Our third area, Mount Douglas Park, is a biggie! We will be contacting approximately 600 residents of the Mount Doug area in the next 3 months, and are looking forward to working with the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society on this one.

We are really pleased with the response to the Good Neighbours Project so far, and hope to see the project continue. - *Jennifer and Pauline*



*Jennifer (left) and Pauline (right). Their smiling faces also appeared on The New VI Television Station on January 8<sup>th</sup> to promote the Good Neighbours project.*

## HAT Fundraising

### Musical Wrap – Up

With only a slight hesitation, we tried something new this year for our Musical HAT's nights: a different venue. Our president is a resident of Metchosin and we have worked and are working on several conservation covenants in this community, so having a Musical HAT's night at the community hall was a natural fit, and, as it turns out, a roaring success. The hall filled and everyone had a terrific time.

We have traditionally held these coffeehouse nights at the Prospect Lake Community Hall, the use of which has always been donated by the Prospect Lake Community Association. This year was no exception and we ended up having a full house. It is extremely gratifying to see a sea of supporters, including many familiar faces.

Eric Lofroth, one of HAT's tireless directors, was in charge of organizing the musical line up for both nights and he did an amazing job. The audiences were thoroughly entertained by amateur and professional musicians, all volunteering their time for HAT. Volunteers also came forward to fill every other need; supplying refreshments, providing raffle prizes, setting up, decorating tables, selling goodies and raffle tickets, and cleaning up.

In the end, the good-time-that-was-had-by-all generated almost \$5,000 for HAT.

### Charge It!

After many months of changing banking arrangements, we are again prepared to accept monthly donations by credit card. This donation method provides donors with an opportunity to give small amounts regularly, and provides HAT with the opportunity to anticipate income from month-to-month, allowing for more reliable planning. To those donors who have been waiting for the situation to be resolved, thank you for your patience!

## “Thank you”s...

**Lynn Marie**, the *Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre* coordinator, came into the HAT office to volunteer for our *Good Neighbours Project* and we started chatting about how non-profit organizations meet their needs through the generosity of supporters. I mentioned how we ask for items in our newsletter and that was how we ended up with a fridge, computer equipment, etc. but that we were still waiting on our vacuum cleaner request from the last issue. “I have a vacuum cleaner you can have” she exclaimed, and now we do. Thanks Lynn!

Another request from our last newsletter that was fulfilled twice over was our appeal for CorelDraw. **Bob Chappell** had ver 3 and **Louise Beinbauer** kindly gave us ver 5! More thanks!

If you’ve noticed our newsletter has a slightly different look to it then you have noticed the handiwork of **Gayle Moore**, another HAT volunteer. Gayle has also been taking care of updates to our website. She is prompt, capable, and reliable: I love that combination! Thank you Gayle!

*Claudia Copley*

## ...and “Pleases”

We are currently working with Windows 98, 62 megabytes of RAM, and 32-bit memory. If you just treated yourself to a new computer system, don’t know what to do with your old system, and are interested in a tax receipt, please contact us at the HAT office.

**Lyndis Davis**, our tireless office volunteer, has also suggested that if anyone has more stationary supplies then they could ever use, we would welcome their supplies here for the frequent “thank you”s we send out to supporters.

## Welcome to HAT’s Newest Lifetime Members

Many thanks to **Rhonda Korol** and **Eric Lofroth** for demonstrating a long-term commitment to HAT’s important work by taking out a sustaining membership. Both have been involved with HAT for many years as donors, members and volunteers. Eric, as our Vice President, is always kept very busy with HAT-related activities and he can be counted on in every situation. It was Eric who made our Musical HAT’s nights the roaring successes they were: he organized the entire musical line up for **both** nights! And while we’re patting people on the back, we shouldn’t neglect to congratulate Rhonda on her successful election campaign. Residents of Central Saanich can rest-assured that someone conservation-minded speaks for them on council.

Lifetime memberships are \$1,000 and go directly into our endowment fund, held by The Victoria Foundation. For investment purposes, the funds are pooled with other funds held by The Foundation to increase the likelihood of a greater rate of return. In last year’s turbulent and disappointing market, the Victoria Foundation managed to produce a very respectable rate of return.

HAT’s five-year plan calls for the Endowment Fund to grow to \$100,000 by October 1, 2004. HAT asks donors to consider the fund when writing their wills or considering special gifts. Creating a lasting conservation legacy requires building a financial legacy. HAT is very pleased to be partnering with the Victoria Foundation to ensure that habitats protected now will be protected forever.

## Psst...Want To Buy a Raffle Ticket?

I want to win one prize so badly that I don’t want to even tell people about it to increase my odds! But because that would make me a bad person and defeat the purpose of the fundraiser, I guess I’ll confess all. The draw date is the end of February so there is still time for you to get in on these five terrific prizes:

- a beautiful Simpson print featuring Brooks Point (a successful HAT acquisition project),
- a Baby Seal Head bronze cast valued at \$1200 and donated by carver Craig Benson,
- a Sibley “Guide to Birds” plus a laminated satellite photo of our region,
- a “Children’s Gift Basket of Goodies”

Did I say five ...oh yeah... here is also a hand stitched quilt, “Keta Kwilt” made and donated by one of the most loyal Goldstream volunteers, Jill McLean. Can you guess which one I deserve to win? The draw date **is** my birthday! Tickets are only \$2 each or 3 for \$5\$ and can be purchased from HAT staff, directors, or at the Goldstream Visitor Centre. **Help selling raffle tickets is always appreciated!** -*Claudia Copley*



## Habitat Acquisition Trust

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HAT's office is located in Suite 316, 620 View Street

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

*If you do not wish to receive this newsletter contact us and you will be removed from the mailing list.*

*HAT does not release its mailing list to any other organizations.*

## Thank you to our HAT Supporters!

### The following people/organizations have provided generous support to HAT:

Arenaria Research & Interpretation  
Art & Soul Frame and Gallery  
Bagel Street Café  
Barraclough Foundation  
BC Environmental Youth Team  
Blair Family Foundation  
Brentwood Bay Nurseries  
British Columbia Gaming Commission  
The Burton Charitable Foundation  
The Butchart Gardens  
Cairo Coffee Merchants  
Canadian North Outfitters  
Capital Regional District  
'Chosin Pottery Inc.  
Coast Capital Savings Credit Union  
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Fresh Piks Organics  
Frontrunners Footwear (Victoria)  
Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative  
Hill House Chocolates  
Hills Native Art  
Hillyer, Atkins  
Human Resources Development Canada  
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Provincial Capital Commission  
Provincial Employees Community Services Fund  
PSC Natural Foods  
Public Conservation Assistance Fund  
Real Estate Foundation of BC  
RLC Enterprises  
Shady Creek Ice Cream Company  
Andrew Stewart, Barrister and Solicitor  
Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary  
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation  
The New VI Television Station  
Thrifty Foods  
University of Victoria Co-op  
VanCity Savings Credit Union  
Victoria Folk Music Society  
The Victoria Foundation  
Victoria Natural History Society  
Water Pure and Simple  
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Woodland Native Plant Nursery