



# '09 Annual Report

Habitat Acquisition Trust

## President's Message

2009 was a year of adjustment and transition for many organizations, both those for profit, and in the not for profit communities. The turmoil in the world over the past two years resulted partly from organizations that lacked ethics, and became disconnected with what their purpose truly was. In the face of global change HAT has shown consistency and resiliency, thanks due to our staff, donors, supporters and board.

Our Executive Director Adam Taylor does an excellent job providing sound leadership for the organization and our talented, capable and award winning staff. Todd Carnahan accepted a Capital Regional District Ecostar award, for the work he and Laurie Parker delivered for HAT at Knockan Hill. Improving land stewardship on private land is a core element of our mandate delivery, and of growing importance as densification continues and people spend more time in natural areas. The recognition for HAT's contribution in fostering stewards on private lands, and protecting the park ecosystems was very gratifying.

Our covenant work requires a long term perspective, and new covenants take a long time to come together. Progress was made on a number of new covenants over the year, and we anticipate some announcements on the completion of work of the past year in the next few months. It would be remiss not to congratulate Wendy Tyrell, for her key 'deliverable', a new baby girl. Someone needs to check the office water because Adam and Jacquie were also blessed with a new baby in November. Congratulations.

We recently completed a new five year strategic plan, continuing a planning and long term focus that has guided HAT since creation. This plan leverages strengths, continues to build on partnerships, and will ensure financial and organizational sustainability, as we promote sustainability and conservation in the community.

HAT has term limits for directors, requiring that no director may serve more than six years before leaving the board. While unique six years ago, this is becoming common as organizations seek to improve governance and broaden traditional communities of support. I have been proud to serve HAT for six years, including three as treasurer, and for the past two years as president. Peter Lewis, who joined the board the same time I did, has done an exemplary job defining the model for our committee structure through his work on the stewardship committee. Pete has also been our treasurer for the past two years, a role where he has contributed greatly with Adam Michael, our bookkeeper plus, to the financial situation HAT currently enjoys.

We welcome new directors joining the board. Our directors are listed in the annual report, and provide good governance, capable oversight and are also some of our most enthusiastic volunteers on committees, at events, and in the community. HAT continues to have a strong board, representing diverse backgrounds. While HAT benefits from directors participation, each director benefits individually from sharing knowledge and considering new perspectives.

In addition to our staff, board, and funders, we owe a huge thanks to our volunteers, of which there are too many to name. However, Lyndis Davis, Thora Illing and Charlie Le Ross deserve special appreciation for their continued dedication and commitment to HAT. Thank you all.



## 2009 HAT Annual General Meeting

Join HAT at the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary on Wednesday, December 16th at 7:00pm for our AGM and 2 presentations: "The Urban Forest: Backyard Trees and Big Ideas" by Judith Cullington and Jeremy Gye; and "A HAT Year in Review" by Todd Carnahan.

Refreshments provided. No cost to HAT members. \$30 for non-members.



## Board of Directors

Simon Philp – President  
Geoff Huber – Vice President  
Peter Lewis – Treasurer  
Stephanie Hazlitt – Secretary  
Andrew Harcombe  
Bruce Pendergast  
Jennifer Eliason  
Karen Yearsley  
Melissa Donaldson  
Sylvia von Schuckmann

## Staff

Adam Taylor – Executive Director  
Laurie Parker – Education & Outreach Coordinator  
Todd Carnahan – Land Care Coordinator  
Wendy Tyrrell - Acquisitions & Covenants Coordinator

## Key Contractors

Christian Engelstoft  
Jeff Skillin  
Jeremy Gye  
Judith Cullington  
Keith Erikson  
Kristiina Ovaska  
Louise Goulet  
Michael Brinsmead

## Volunteers

Charlie LeRoss  
Darin Steinkey  
Lyndis Davis  
Thora Illing

## Committees

Andy MacKinnon  
Anne Piazza  
Carmin Cadrin  
Christine Pritchard  
Glenn Harrington  
Peter Trotsky

# Treasurer's Report

In spite of the turbulent economic conditions, HAT was able to maintain its budget for all programs during the 2008-2009 fiscal year, thanks to our donors and supporters. The Chris Frye Benefit Concert was a great success, thanks to Chris Frye's tremendous musical talent and passion for the environment, donations from local businesses, and the support of all those who attended.

HAT was also fortunate to have received a 3-year Gaming Grant from the Province of B.C. Despite large cuts to gaming grants, the Province restored funding to 3 year grants, including HAT's.

Unfortunately, HAT's Endowment Funds (held by the Victoria Foundation) continue to struggle. Although they have begun to grow again during the past two quarters, they have not yet reached 2007 levels.

I encourage you to read the Review Engagement at the AGM, or download it from HAT's website in mid-December.



# The Year in Review

## Covenants and Acquisitions

Conservation Covenants are a tool used to protect private and public lands. HAT currently holds 22 conservation covenants that provide permanent legal protection for over 1650 hectares (4000 acres) of land. As a commitment to our conservation covenants, HAT implements an annual covenant monitoring program to ensure that the conservation values on each of its properties are maintained. We are pleased to report that in 2009, all of our covenants continue to be managed for habitat value.

It has been a busy year working on new covenants as well. Discussions continue on 3 new covenants that will permanently protect red-listed habitats including rocky outcrop and western hemlock habitat. We hope to have announcements about these covenants soon!

HAT owns and manages the Matson Conservation Area as a demonstration site for best management practices in urban natural areas. Swallows Landing is now almost fully occupied by new residents, and several of them have already adopted the Conservation Area as their own: the condo owners and many others from the adjacent neighbourhood contributed over 100 hours of invasive plant removal in 2009. Staff led several events this year removing yet more of the English ivy and other invasive species in the Conservation Area.

## Stewardship

In addition to permanently protecting habitat through acquisition and covenants, HAT works with the community to build a culture of conservation and develop land care practices that support our natural ecosystems. In the Capital region, the small area of parks and protected areas, combined with a growing population and high property values, makes engaging the entire community in conservation particularly important.



5th Juan de Fuca Cubs at Millstream - photo T. Carnahan

HAT works with current land owners through our Good Neighbours and Species-at-Risk programs, and helps develop future stewards in the Green Spots program.

## Good Neighbours

In the southern Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands, our natural areas are increasingly isolated, and fragmented. For these parks and protected places to continue to support rich levels of biodiversity, private property owners must play a role in stewarding the ecosystems. HAT's Good Neighbours program helps landowners learn how to manage their property in ways that will support natural areas in their neighbourhood.

HAT was honoured to receive the 2009 Ecostar Award for Land Stewardship for the Knockan Hill Good Neighbours project.

In 2009, the Good Neighbours program has focused on the Millstream Watershed. The watershed stretches from the Highlands down to Esquimalt Harbour, and provides important habitat for many species, including a small Coho salmon run. However, large scale developments and a rapidly growing population are placing increasing pressure on this important natural system. HAT has met with over 40 property owners, and signed up more than 20 new Habitat Stewards who have agreed to manage their land in an environmentally-friendly way. These new stewards will help protect and restore habitat on over 200 hectares of private land!



### Sharp-tailed Snake and Western Painted Turtle Species at Risk Stewardship Program

HAT also works with private property owners to protect habitat for endangered species. Over the past 6 years, HAT staff and contractors have met with hundreds of private and public landowners to identify new populations and establish protection for endangered Sharp-tailed Snakes and Western Painted Turtles.

HAT partnered with the provincial Recovery Teams to coordinate and review conservation strategies. Landowners received information packages, site visits, and management plans to ensure persistence of turtle and snake populations on private lands. In 2008-2009, HAT identified 2 new Sharp-tailed Snake populations, signed up 10 new Habitat Stewards, and worked with municipalities to install signs where Western Painted Turtles cross roads and risk being hit by cars. HAT also provided management recommendations to individuals and companies that will help protect many hectares of Western Painted Turtle habitat.



### Green Spots

Playing, exploring, and learning in nature should be a regular part of every childhood, and is a start to a lifelong love of nature. HAT is working with Victoria-area schools to create opportunities for natural learning and play by installing native plant gardens on school grounds and providing teachers with support for teaching lessons outdoors.

In November, HAT helped students plant the largest ever Green Spots Native Plant Garden at the new KELSEY Elementary school, and 3 more gardens are being planted this November at other elementary and middle schools.

### Conservation Connection

The Capital region is home to over 100 different conservation groups, and keeping all these groups connected and informed can be a challenge. HAT works to bring the conservation community together with the Conservation Connection website and Forum.

The 9th Annual Conservation Connection Forum was hosted by Royal Roads University in September, and brought nearly 100 people from over 30 different conservation groups together. Presenters such as Kim Klein and Rick Searle helped participants develop skills, and round-table workshops facilitated discussion on topical issues.

### Chris Frye and the Analog Ghosts Benefit Concert

Many thanks to Chris Frye and the Analog Ghosts, who hosted a fabulous benefit concert for HAT in June! The full house at the Ambrosia Event Centre enjoyed the concert immensely. Many thanks to Chris, Anne Schaefer, Joey Smith, and Brooke Maxwell for the music, and to all the local businesses and individuals who donated items for the silent auction.



photo B Pedrick

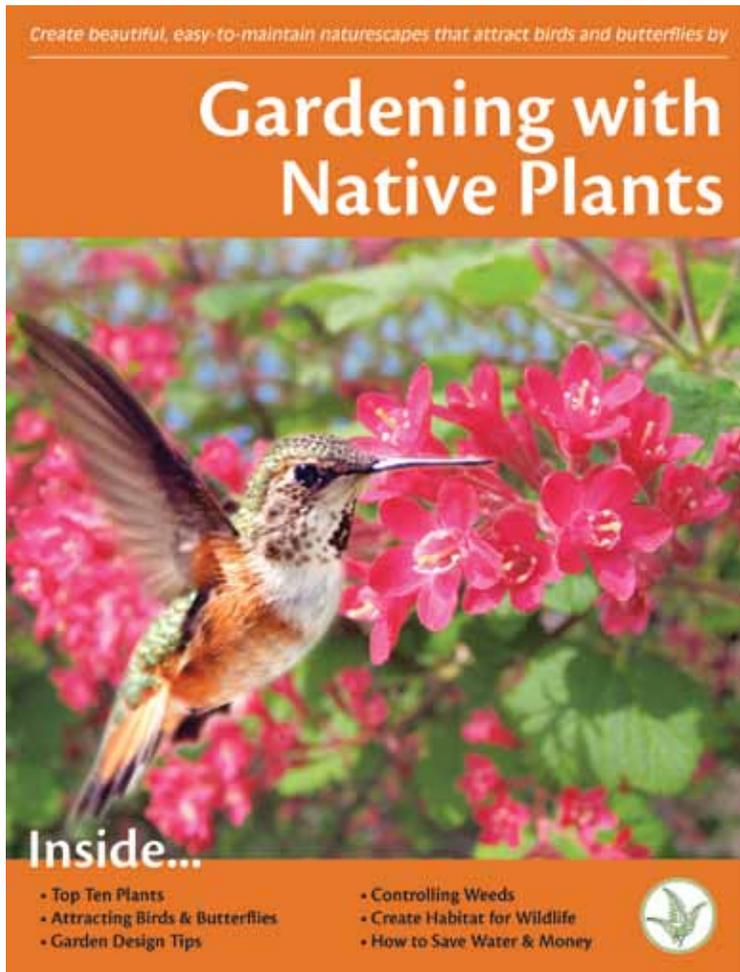
**Thank you to everyone who has supported HAT over the year!**

Alula Biological Consulting  
Barraclough Foundation  
BC Direct Access Gaming  
Chris Frye and the Analog Ghosts  
CRD Parks  
District of Central Saanich  
District of Esquimalt  
District of Saanich  
Evergreen/Walmart  
Government of Canada - EcoAction  
Government of Canada - Habitat Stewardship Program  
Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation  
Imperial Oil  
Belmont Junior Achievers  
Mrs Davis  
MacLissac and MacLissac  
Mountain Equipment Coop  
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council - PromoScience  
Outdoor Club of Victoria  
Provincial Employees Community Service Fund  
Royal Roads University  
TD Friends of the Environment  
TELUS  
Town of View Royal  
Vancity  
Victoria 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, American Express, and direct deposit. Also, **Provincial employees** can donate using a direct payroll reduction through the Provincial Employees Community Services Fund.



### Gardening with Native Plants Brochure

The Gardening with Native Plants Brochure is a perfect introduction to naturoscaping and native plant gardening. Intended for beginners, the 8-page full colour brochure highlights some the easiest and most attractive native plants to grow in our region. Common gardening difficulties are addressed too, such as deer-resistant plants, and plants for difficult locations. The brochure is available through HAT's office, or online at [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca).

### Goldstream Chums

HAT continues to raise funds for interpretative programs at Goldstream Provincial Park's visitor centre. Our Goldstream Chums program involves local businesses in the sponsorship of salmon run programs for schoolchildren. These sponsors have made these important educational programs available to schools free of charge again in 2009.

### Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative

The term "urban forest" refers to all of the treed landscapes that may be found within a community, including urban centres. Old-growth remnants, backyard fruit trees, urban parks and trail systems, Garry oak meadows, and treed boulevards are all examples of urban forests. Healthy urban forests provide increased economic and recreational opportunities, public well being, biodiversity, and a suite of "green" infrastructure benefits. The Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative is continuing to support local urban forest planning and public awareness of the role of trees in urban, suburban, and rural environments.

Template & Layout: *Darin Steinkey and Jordan Clarke*



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