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# HAT Chat

The Newsletter of Habitat Acquisition Trust

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Spring 2002

Issue 6

## “Good Neighbours”: In Your Neighbourhood?

*When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect*  
– Aldo Leopold

HAT’s mandate area, the Capital Regional District (CRD), is large. It encompasses all of the southern Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island south of Duncan. We work cooperatively, with the other land trusts whose mandate areas overlap with ours, to conserve natural environments by preserving habitats and promoting environmental stewardship. The cost of expanding existing protected areas and greenspaces is prohibitive because there is an unusually high percentage of privately owned land, and tremendous development pressure. A viable and cost-effective alternative to protect these natural resources is the promotion of voluntary land stewardship. If



*Western Trillium is one of only a few plants protected by law. It is illegal to harm or even transplant one from the wild!*

property owners are encouraged to be "Good Neighbours" to these nearby protected areas, the integrity of the habitats will be strengthened. This is another way in which HAT works cooperatively with other conservation groups in the CRD.

Preliminary work on HAT’s “Good Neighbours: Protecting Parks and Green/Blue Spaces through Private Land Stewardship” project was completed in the fall of 2001. In consultation with parks agencies, community groups, and other stakeholders, HAT developed a prioritized list of areas in the Capital Region that would benefit from protective buffers on adjoining private land. It was intended that HAT and other agencies could use this list.

Based on this list, the Good Neighbours project will now undertake direct landowner contact programs around three local protected areas: Esquimalt Lagoon, Mt. Doug Park, and Oak Haven Park. These areas have been selected from the priority list for a number of reasons, including the fact that they represent different challenges, as well as an opportunity to evaluate the landowner contact tools and methods which will be developed for the project. These three areas were also selected because they all offer excellent opportunities for community collaboration.

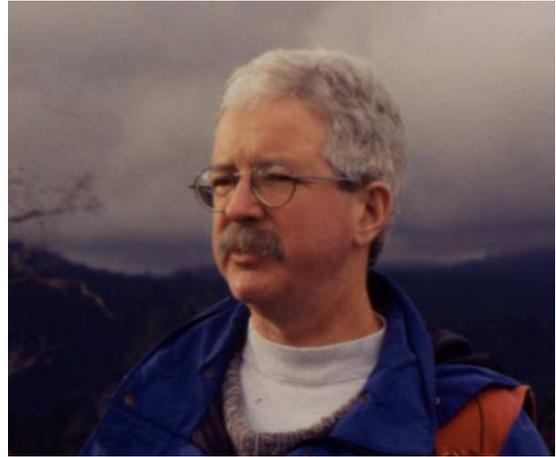
The Friends of Mount Douglas Park is a group that has been active in stewardship work in the park for many years. The Friends are working to rehabilitate Douglas Creek, a salmon stream, and to reduce stormwater runoff with a downspout disconnection program. HAT is looking forward to working with this hard working grassroots group.

*(continued on Page 3)*

## President's Message

### Looking Ahead...

Gordon Campbell and his Liberal government swept into power in May 2001. They've implemented large changes in government structure and funding, premised on fundamental philosophical differences with the previous NDP administration. What will this "New Era for British Columbia" mean for the Habitat Acquisition Trust, and for habitat conservation in the Capital Regional District (CRD) in general?



On one level, surprisingly little. Most of British Columbia - about 93% - is provincial Crown land.

And so most of B.C.'s protected areas have been created from Crown land. But there's almost no provincial Crown land in the Capital Regional District. That's why private land stewardship is so important here, and why HAT exists. It also means that the provincial government is less important as a landowner here than just about anywhere else in the province, and a change in government has less impact.

On another level, the change in government will affect that portion of HAT's funding that we receive from the provincial government. We expect less provincial government funding will be available for HAT's activities. This has already happened: last year two of our three E-team funded positions were rescinded when the entire youth-hiring program was eliminated. The funding support of InVolve BC, which enabled HAT to launch its successful Conservation Connection website, has also been lost to the voluntary sector. As of April 1, the Ministry of Advanced Education has cancelled Youth Community Action, a program that provided tuition credit for post-secondary students in exchange for volunteering for HAT or other charitable organizations. And finally, some of HAT's members are employees of the provincial government, and workforce downsizing may affect them directly.

The government's "New Era" approach is intended primarily to rejuvenate the provincial economy. The CRD is a good example of how environment and economy are intertwined. The two largest and fastest-growing employers in our region are tourism and high tech. Both rely on greenspaces for their industry: the former because it's part of the product they sell, the latter to attract and keep in-demand employees who can often choose to work anywhere in the world. To rejuvenate our regional economy, we need to protect habitat.

Governments come, and governments go. Some provincial administrations will be more supportive of our work, others less so. Yet the need for habitat conservation in the CRD is always with us, and with population growth, seems more urgent each year. In the end, it won't be governments that conserve ... or lose ... precious habitat in our region...

It will be us.

*Andy MacKinnon, President*

## Good Neighbours: Phase Two

*(continued from Page 1)*

At Oak Haven Park, HAT is working with Central Saanich to place a conservation covenant on the park, and there are community initiatives to remove invasive Scotch broom. It is an area that would benefit significantly from a protective buffer.

HAT is a partner in the Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative, a broad coalition of conservation groups, governments, first nations, local residents, and Royal Roads University. ELSI is getting underway with a two year program of activities to protect this federal migratory bird sanctuary, and HAT's Good Neighbour's project will be an integral component.

HAT will employ two landowner contact interns for six months in this project. These landowner contact teams will work to achieve the following objectives:

1. to educate property owners about the significance of the sensitive areas adjacent to their properties
2. to offer resource materials and support as requested, and referrals to other organizations which may assist the property
3. to encourage willing property owners to consider voluntary stewardship agreements or conservation covenants, and recognize those who wish to be recognized for their commitments with signage
4. to organize community stewardship presentations

Some of the funding for this project has already been secured thanks to these generous supporters: Mountain Equipment Co-op (\$5,000), the Blair Family Foundation (\$3000), Van City Savings (\$2,200) and the Oracle Corporation (\$1000).

If we are "in your neighbourhood" and you'd like to get involved, give us a call at the office.

## ConservationConnection.bc.ca

I only work in the office two days each week and without fail, every time I'm in the office, the phone rings and invariably the question is about something that can be answered using the Conservation Connection website. **I** use this website! **All** the time! HAT developed it to foster partnerships and communication among the conservation and stewardship organizations in the Capital Region and to provide information about these various organizations to the general public.

The website features profiles of over 90 such organizations in the CRD, and newly formed conservation organizations are welcome to join the site. Just go to the site and follow the prompts for new groups.

Current and completed projects, mandates, fundraising initiatives, contact information, and volunteer needs are highlighted for each organization, and the group itself easily updates these.

Response to this website has been very positive, not only from the conservation community, but also from volunteers, the public, and government agencies using the site. What needs to happen now is for the word to spread. If you're ever worrying about that creek in your neighbourhood and wondering if **anyone** else is, check out the website! And tell others about it!

The website address is

[www.conservationconnection.bc.ca](http://www.conservationconnection.bc.ca)

The next step for the site is an "Events" page. This will reduce the chances of organizations holding concurrent events and provide a site for the public to visit to plan their weekend activities. We have a computer savvy volunteer, Mike Elkind, helping us set up this aspect of the website. He's so savvy we've never physically met him: all our communications are via email!

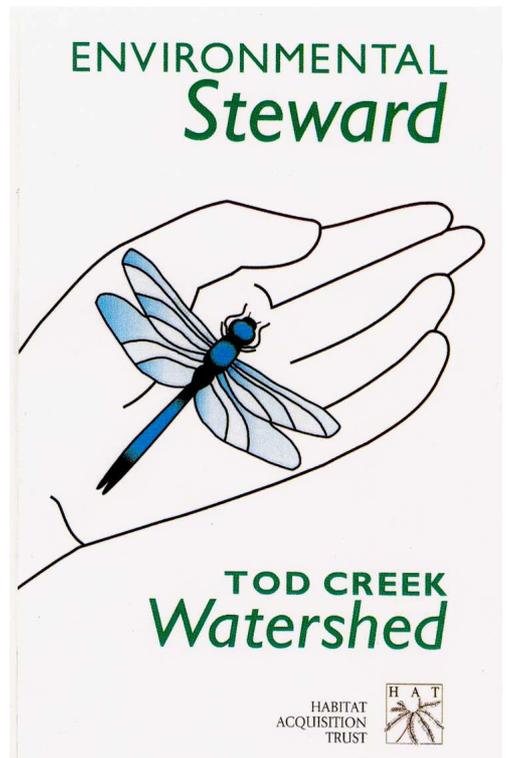
*Claudia Copley Program Coordinator*

## HAT Projects cont.

### Tod Creek Stewardship is in Good Hands

The surest sign of success in the area of environmental stewardship is when you are no longer needed! A local conservation group called the Friends of Tod Creek formed through the efforts of HAT and we will continue to work with them in the future; the residents of the Tod Creek Watershed are very committed to protecting their home place. We are currently working on two conservation covenants in the region which will require annual monitoring, and we are interested in continuing to encourage property owners to sign voluntary Stewardship Agreements. These flexible agreements allow residents to make a commitment to continue to care for the land and aquatic ecosystems in an environmentally responsible manner.

HAT is committed to providing Tod Creek residents with information and support. We can be involved in a variety of capacities, due to the extensive experience and knowledge of our core staff and our directors. Property owners will find us to be extremely useful at meeting their requests for further information and connecting them to the conservation community in a broader sense. Many residents will have met HAT's co-op student Meagan Christie, who spent many days roaming the Tod Creek watershed, visiting watershed residents, and putting up nestboxes for birds (thanks to funding provided by the Public Conservation Assistance Fund). Funding for Meagan's position ended in December and she decided to try something a little different: a computer mapping job in the Yukon! All the hard work Meagan accomplished is on file here at the office though, so any questions or reports about birds using the nestboxes can still come to us.



*People interested in participating by signing a voluntary Stewardship Agreement can have a sign installed to promote their efforts.*

If you or someone you know in the Tod Creek watershed would be interested in learning more about the voluntary Stewardship Agreements or conservation covenants, we would be more than happy to answer your questions. When property owners make a commitment to preserve and protect their land, a sign is placed on their property to encourage others to make the same sort of commitment. These signs were designed by Frances Hunter, a resident of Tod Creek, and paid for by the Friends of the Environment Foundation. Watch for them in your neighbourhood!

### Let's Not Lose Laughlin Lake

The acquisition of land to offer it permanent protection is an integral part of what we do here at HAT. Laughlin Lake on Galiano Island is our current acquisition project and we are working hard to reach our goal before the opportunity passes us by.

At HAT's annual general meeting, held at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary Dec. 12 2001, a cheque for \$18, 000 was presented to Ken Millard towards the purchase price of \$150,000. Fifty percent of the



*A spectacular male Wood Duck, just one of the many species that would benefit from the protection of Laughlin Lake*

funding is now in place to add this region to our network of protected areas in the region but the deadline for raising the \$75,000 remaining is the end of this year!

You can show your support for this project in a number of different ways. We have incredible satellite images for sale at the HAT office (\$20) and part of the proceeds contributes to Laughlin Lake. If you're feeling adventurous you can reserve a spot on our HAT's Off! trip to the grasslands, or watch for other HAT special events coming this summer and fall. If you have someone with a birthday coming up who has also always wanted "lake front property", then a gift card featuring Laughlin Lake would be an

excellent choice. And finally, if you're feeling generous, check the box marked "Laughlin Lake" on the donation form tucked into this newsletter and send it in to us! For more information on these and other ways of contributing, please contact us at the HAT office.

## **Planned Giving: Create your Own Conservation Legacy**

*It has been said that if 5% of all Canadians left only 5% of their estates to charity, there would no longer be a need for fund-raising of any kind!*

The Capital Region is a special region of stunning beauty and rich biological diversity. HAT realizes that, while many residents love this region and want to help protect it, not everyone is able to give as much as they would like. An alternative is to consider preparing a will and making a planned gift to the charity whose efforts you support. Many people are not comfortable talking about preparing their wills: perhaps this is because seven out of ten Canadians don't even have one! Preparing a legal will ensures that your estate benefits the people and causes that are closest to **your** heart.

Here are some of the most common questions people ask about planned giving and answers to those questions. We have also enclosed a "Leave a Legacy" brochure that provides further details on planned giving.

**Do I have to be wealthy to make a planned gift?** *Absolutely not.* A planned gift of any size will help. No gift is too small.

**Do I have to be old to make a planned gift?** *Absolutely not.* Young people should also prepare their wills, and consider how they would like their estate to be distributed to their loved ones and their community.

**Can I direct how my planned gift will be used?** *Absolutely.* A gift to HAT's Endowment Fund with the Victoria Foundation ensures that your gift will keep giving through annual interest payments to HAT. The capital will be protected. Planned gifts can also be directed to HAT's project

areas such as acquisition, covenants, or education. A general gift to HAT will be used where the Board of Directors feels it is most needed.

**Do I have to tell HAT that I am making a planned gift?** *No.* Some of HAT's donors have chosen to tell HAT about their planned gifts, and this assists HAT to plan for the future. However, it is not necessary.

**Can I make a planned gift to more than one non-profit?** *Absolutely.* You may wish to give only to HAT, or to a combination of non-profits. It is your will and your choice.

**Besides a bequest in my will are there other types of planned gifts?** *Yes.* There are many types of planned gifts. For example, you can name HAT as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, or donate stocks, securities or mutual funds. Bequests can also include gifts of real estate. Some planned gifts can give you a tax benefit now. Charitable remainder trusts, gifts of residual interest, and charitable gift annuities are three examples.

**Why make a planned gift to HAT?** HAT uses all donations to benefit habitats in the Capital Region. HAT is committed to conservative fiscal policies and is cautious about placing donations at risk. HAT uses a science-based approach to conservation and has very low operating costs. HAT has strong partnerships with community groups, provincial and national land trusts, and promotes cooperation and collaboration amongst groups working in the CRD.

**Where can I get more information?** Your lawyer, accountant, or financial advisor can help you structure planned gifts to suit your needs and maximize your tax benefits. A new BC planned giving guide called "Green Legacies" will soon be available to these professionals: call us at the HAT office (250) 995-2428 for more information.

The lands HAT protects today require protection forever. The covenants held by HAT require monitoring forever. Land prices are increasing. Pressures on local ecosystems are growing. Big commitments and big challenges? Yes, but planned gifts from people like you can help HAT to protect this region for future generations, human and non-human. Create your own conservation legacy by making a planned gift.

*Clare Rumball, HAT Director*

## **What a Difference a Donation Makes**

Donations to HAT are appreciated in all of the many forms they take. Since the last issue of HAT Chat featured a plea for a Pentium quality computer and a colour printer, donations of exactly those items arrived at our doorstep! Ask and you shall receive! Marcus Bell kindly donated the computer and Susan Wangness the colour printer. Many thanks!

Thanks also to Peter Heron, a HAT director, for his gift of Volumes 1 and 2 of *The Birds of British Columbia*, an indispensable addition to HAT's Bob Ogilvie Bioregional Library.

Since asking appears to be a highly successful endeavour...we are still in need of a "micro" refrigerator. Our new office is equipped with a sink and a microwave, but a fridge (bar-sized or even apartment-sized) would make a big difference for the staff and board. If you have one you can part with, please let us know. We would be pleased to issue a tax receipt for the market value of any equipment donation.

## HAT Fundraising

### HAT's Off Again!

**Southern Alberta and Saskatchewan  
May 25 - June 8, 2002**

Join Bruce Whittington and Marilyn Lambert under magnificent prairie skies to explore the grasslands and rolling hills of southern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan. Longspurs and pipits will be singing, and the prairie wildflowers will be in full bloom. Our travels will take us to the world famous Royal Tyrrell Museum, Dinosaur Provincial Park, Cypress Hills Provincial Park, and Grasslands National Park.



*"Wild Rose Country" here we come!*

For more information, please call Marilyn at 477-5922. All profits from this tour will support the work of VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust.

### Gifts in Perpetuity

The surest way to provide long-term funding, so HAT can continue to work on projects that you consider worthwhile, is to contribute to our interest-earning endowment fund, held by the Victoria Foundation. Our ultimate goal of a million dollars gets a bit closer each time supporters become sustaining members. HAT welcomes our newest sustaining members, Lola and Alan Mehlenbacher. Thank you!

### A Fish Raffle?!

HAT is delighted by the continued generosity of Loucas Raptis, a sustaining member of HAT. Loucas is well known for his skill as a natural history illustrator and he has again offered a set of the "Freshwater Fishes of Vancouver Island" to HAT to raffle off as a fundraiser. The raffle will run from March 1 to June 30, 2002 and tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The series consists of 30 beautiful limited edition prints done in the tradition of 19<sup>th</sup> century hand-coloured lithographs. The project began in 2000 and will be completed in 2005. Only 200 sets of the series will be produced and these are available only through subscription.

Loucas will be promoting our raffle on his web site; go to [www.islandnet.com/~benrap](http://www.islandnet.com/~benrap), and click on the Freshwater Fish icon.

Tickets will be available at the HAT office during regular business hours, as well as at presentations sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society. Loucas himself will be selling tickets at the annual general meeting of the British Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers being held April 6 in the lower mainland. We would love it if our other supporters (you!) would be willing to take a booklet of 10 tickets to sell. Any one of HAT's nine directors will have a booklet of tickets in their pocket at all times so don't hesitate to give them your money!

*The most important concept of wildlife management today is that natural habitat - the conditions and circumstances of a creature's living space - is far more important to its survival than anything else.*

Roderick Haig-Brown -

The Living Land (1961)



## Habitat Acquisition Trust

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*If you don't 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 HAT Supporters!

The following organizations have provided generous support to HAT :

Arenaria Research and Interpretation  
Art & Soul Frame and Gallery  
Bagel Street Cafe  
Barraclough Foundation  
BC Environmental Youth Team  
BC Gaming Commission  
Blair Family Foundation  
Blue Crab Bar and Grill  
Burton Charitable Foundation  
The Butchart Gardens  
Cairo Coffee Merchants  
Capers Community Markets  
Capital Regional District Parks  
Coast Capital Savings Credit Union  
Environment Canada  
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EJLB Foundation  
Fresh Piks Organics  
Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative  
Hill House Chocolates  
Human Resources Development Canada  
InVOLve BC  
Judith Cullington and Associates  
Kaatza Foundation  
Karen Hurley and Associates  
Mountain Equipment Co-op

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West Coast Environmental Law  
Youth Community Action Program