



# HAT Chat

The Newsletter of Habitat Acquisition Trust

Summer 2002

Issue 7

## HAT Forms a Natural Partnership

*We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men; and among those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects. - Herman Melville*

It isn't a rumour any longer. A new relationship has formed and we can gossip about it openly! Habitat Acquisition Trust and Arenaria Research and Interpretation have formed a partnership in an effort to continue to provide environmental education programs to visitors to our provincial park system in the region.

Effective March 31, 2002, the provincial government discontinued all funding to provide interpretive (natural and cultural history) programming in provincial parks. With that move, BC joined Mississippi as the only two jurisdictions in North America with no such services.

Parks programming was instituted in British Columbia's provincial parks in the early 1960's. Since that time, millions of visitors have enjoyed these activities. It is impossible to calculate the number who have become more aware of their environment as a result. As an added bonus, young people employed as park interpreters have moved on to become some of our most respected biologists and educators, some of them now on HAT's staff and board.

Since the 1980's, parks programming has been provided by contractors, who have used their entrepreneurial skills to offer value-added services in the parks. Using partnerships with corporations and non-government organizations on southern Vancouver Island, for example, Arenaria Research and Interpretation has run a \$300,000 annual program budget, with only \$169,000 of this provided by BC Parks. In 2001, Arenaria's park interpreters recorded about 300,000 visitor contacts in the parks, including 50,000 school children who attended curriculum-based programs in the parks. At Goldstream Provincial Park alone, over 150,000 visitors passed through the Nature House, and an estimated 100,000 people came to witness the salmon spawning spectacle. Information from BC Parks indicates that in 1999, parks visitors put \$533 million into the economy, and that almost one-third of this came from out-of-province visitors. The additional value of the presence of interpretive staff in the parks, in providing on-site stewardship of the natural and cultural values these parks were intended to protect, cannot be overestimated.

*(continued on Page 3)*

**You Are Invited To:**

(see page 7 for more info)

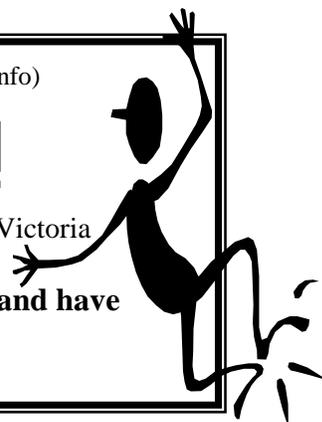
**FREE  
Admission!**

# Get Connected!

**Date:** Saturday June 8, 10-2:30 pm **Place:** Pearkes Arena, by Tillicum Mall in Victoria

**Join us for a fabulous event timed with National Environment Week!**

**Over 50 conservation and stewardship groups will answer your questions and have displays about their community projects.**



## President's Message

### What's in a Name?

You won't notice much difference, but there is a new HAT in the neighbourhood.

In 1995, HAT was founded by the Victoria Natural History Society. After consultation with (then) Revenue Canada, the new land trust was given its charitable status as a public foundation. To reflect the charitable status, and the fact that VNHS maintained some control over HAT, it was registered as VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation.

Since then, HAT and VNHS have agreed that, in order for HAT to operate effectively as a not-for-profit land trust, it was necessary for HAT to amend its bylaws to operate independently from VNHS. While we continue a close and happy relationship, VNHS and HAT are autonomous.

HAT has also learned recently that operating as a public foundation has some limitations, and after more consultation with (now) Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, we have applied for, and received, a redesignation, from public foundation to registered charity. Although it is legal to do so, we felt it would be confusing to continue to operate with Foundation in HAT's name, so a name change request was submitted to the province.

We have jumped through a few hoops, and all the paperwork is now done. HAT's legal name is now Habitat Acquisition Trust. Our change of charitable status will take effect with the start of our next fiscal year, November 1, 2002. What's the difference?

You will see no difference in HAT's goals or activities as a result of these changes. HAT will still accept donations and issue income tax receipts in the same way. In fact, HAT has joined most other land trusts in its new charitable designation. As for the name, well, HAT has "done business" as Habitat Acquisition Trust since it began its work, so things won't change much, and will hopefully be just a little less confusing.

There is one reason to make note of the change, however. If any of our supporters have named HAT in their estates or insurance policies, they should ensure that the new legal name is recorded correctly. Please call us, or have your financial advisors call us, if you require clarification.

*Andy MacKinnon, President*

### Membership Has Its Privileges

**Those of you who are members of Habitat Acquisition Trust will now receive something other than just the good feeling of knowing you're supporting something worthwhile. You are now entitled to a 10% discount in all of the bookstores/gift-shops run by Arenaria Research and Interpretation. These stores feature natural history books, field guides, trail guides, and other nature-related books and products.**

**Please call Goldstream for more information: 478-9414**

## New Partnership continued

*(continued from Page 1)*

Arenaria has recently negotiated an agreement with BC Parks to operate for the next two years, with an option to continue for an additional five years, but with no government funding.

HAT recognizes the overwhelming significance of these interpretive programs in educating and enlightening both residents and visitors to the region. We feel that these outstanding programs offer educational opportunities which must not be lost, and that a partnership between the corporate and non-profit sectors is a bold, creative and effective solution which will provide interpretive services in our community in the long term. HAT will greatly expand its capacity to offer stewardship information to the community and Arenaria will be able to continue its commitment in its field of expertise.



Arenaria Research and Interpretation has provided interpretive services in provincial parks on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands since 1988. Programming has since been expanded from four months of the year to twelve in some parks. The biennial volunteer-run Goldstream Art Show supports programming at Goldstream, and the work of Habitat Acquisition Trust. Arenaria has also used corporate support to undertake creative interpretive projects, including a video camera placed in a Bald Eagle nest. Its education programs are in high demand and always over-subscribed.

BC Parks reports that 90% of British Columbians have used provincial parks services in the past, and that 60% use them annually. We believe that this is a rare opportunity for a community partnership that will enable these services, which are valued so highly, to be offered in perpetuity.

## HAT Fundraising

### Contribution of a Lifetime

HAT's endowment fund with the Victoria Foundation continues to accrue. A warm "welcome" and "thank-you" to Leah Ramsay and Dave Fraser for joining the ever growing list of sustaining members.

### Laughlin Lake

Since the last issue of HAT Chat, both Habitat Acquisition Trust and the Galiano Conservancy Association have raised more money towards the purchase of this property. A very generous donation of stocks has boosted HAT's contribution significantly but there is still a way to go to complete this acquisition. Conservationists recognize the incredible importance of riparian areas, and Laughlin Lake is no exception. It is the largest body of freshwater on an otherwise

extremely dry Gulf Island. Wildlife teems in the area and, with your contribution to this project, will continue to thrive in perpetuity.

### A Fishy Situation

Enough with the fish puns already! The HAT raffle, featuring the exceptional artwork of Loucas Raptis, continues until June 30, 2002. Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5 for a series of 30 beautiful limited edition prints done in the tradition of 19<sup>th</sup> century hand-coloured lithographs. To preview your winnings (but only if you buy a ticket!) go to [www.islandnet.com/~benrap](http://www.islandnet.com/~benrap), and click on the Freshwater Fish icon. You can buy tickets online at this link or we'll have them at the HAT office and we will also be selling them at the "Connecting for Conservation" in June. **Help selling tickets is always appreciated!**

## HAT People

HAT has many people to thank for going above and beyond the call of duty for us. Volunteers are the lifeblood of small organizations such as ours and they deserve to be recognized for their hard work.

In the office we have two people who come in regularly. Lyndis Davis is a tireless volunteer, doing everything from dealing with donations and memberships to assembling information binders for HAT directors. Laura Christie was still breezing in even after her tuition credit program ended so we offered her a short-term contract. Volunteering comes with many rewards! Laura assists with handling donations and she is responsible for ensuring our covenant information is registered with the provincial "Protected Lands Registry" ([www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca/registry](http://www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca/registry)). She is currently hard at work organizing the "Conservation Connection" event on June 8.

Speaking of computers, we've been getting some help on that front as well. As mentioned in a previous



*Laura Christie volunteering her help to install nestboxes at Viaduct Flats as part of HAT's Tod Creek Watershed Project.*

newsletter, Mike Elkink created the events page of our “Conservation Connection” website ([www.conservationconnection.bc.ca](http://www.conservationconnection.bc.ca)). My most recent contact with Mike (via email of course!) was about adding a page for employment opportunities. Look for it in the fall. Luke Vivier has been working on the HAT website ([www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca)) and teaching staff how to edit it ourselves.

Outside the office, we have been receiving assistance with the sale of raffle tickets from several people, including the artist himself, Loucas Raptis ([www.islandnet.com/~benrap](http://www.islandnet.com/~benrap)). Another volunteer who likes to stay involved with the conservation movement is Jennifer Bailey. She readily took several booklets of raffle tickets from us and sold them to her colleagues at work.

Clare Rumball, who continues to be involved with the non-profit sector in her position with the provincial government and who has been an employee at HAT, was elected to the HAT Board of Directors at our annual general meeting in December. Having Clare on the board provides continuity for many of our day-to-day activities. Additionally, we benefit from Clare’s past wealth of experience in the non-profit sector as well as her current work experience.

Thanks again to the commitment of our dedicated volunteer board members; through them HAT has become a respected presence in our community and can complete our important work. They include, in alphabetical order, Marc Bell, Don Eastman, Andrew Harcombe, Peter Heron, Marilyn Lambert, Eric Lofroth, Andy MacKinnon, Michael Mascall, and Clare Rumball.

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

A small fridge is now happily ensconced in the HAT office, thanks to Marga James, and Volume 3 of *The Birds of British Columbia* has joined Volumes 1, 2 and 4 in the HAT library, courtesy of HAT director Peter Heron. Paul de Niverville has donated a printer to the office. Thank you to everyone!

Donations to HAT are appreciated in all of the many forms they take. If you have something 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 Projects (continued)**

### **Good Neighbours Gets a Boost**

HAT’s “Good Neighbours: Protecting Parks and Green/Blue Spaces through Private Land Stewardship” project received a welcome boost from Environment Canada’s EcoAction Fund: we now have enough money to hire two people for six months to do landowner contact around the three protected areas we decided on, based on our prioritized list. There is still a lot of preliminary work to be done however, not the least of which is dove-tailing our efforts with those of the local community groups in each of the areas. It’s exciting to be able to coordinate with the “on-the-ground” groups that have been working away with dedication and determination; no one knows their region like they do!

Speaking of exciting: the idea of creating neighbourhoods with shared concerns and awareness really appealed to me so my husband and I undertook a little neighbourly contact ourselves! Darren is a handy fellow so we delivered an invitation to all of our neighbours, requesting they join us for a

family-oriented event involving birdhouse construction. We provided the cut, pre-drilled materials for the birdhouses at the cost of the materials (\$2 - \$3) and asked them to pre-order so we would know how many to make. The RSVPs began arriving the next day and in the end almost 50 people joined us for an evening of desserts and hammering! It was a terrific way to actually meet some of our neighbours and will hopefully lead to other similar events.

If you're wondering why this is in the article about "Good Neighbours", let me explain. We called the event a "Good Neighbours" event and it involved providing habitat for native birds: exactly the sort of thing we envisioned as happening through our project at HAT. It was fun, easy, and could make a significant difference in our neighbourhood. We hope the idea will spread and neighbourhoods throughout the Capital Region will undertake similar events. If you are interested then please don't hesitate to call me at the HAT office (995-2428). If you already own a recent edition of the Naturescape™ British Columbia kit then accurate dimensions of the nesting boxes are in the provincial booklet. Otherwise I can easily provide them to you!

*Claudia Copley*

## **Urban Tree Stewardship Project**

When people think of the activities of land trusts they often envision huge tracts of pristine habitat being set aside for large mammals to roam freely. And this does happen! But the reality that HAT faces in the Capital Regional District is that there aren't many large tracts left and we are, in conjunction with other organizations, trying to set aside those that are left (the Sooke Hills for



*A juvenile Cooper's Hawk*

example). That doesn't mean we should give up on our urban environment; there are still many wild things that occur only in our region and depend on the areas, though small, that are remaining. When you look at the world from the perspective of a ladybug, habitat requirements are much smaller but no less important. And this is why HAT has embarked on an initiative that proposes a new model which takes a natural-systems approach to environmental and urban forest planning.

The intensification of land development on southern Vancouver Island has resulted in a significant loss of trees and the ecosystem features and functions they support. Of particular concern in this respect are the loss of riparian vegetation, Garry oak ecosystems and upland Douglas-fir forest. Urban areas like Victoria stand to benefit most from initiatives to preserve and enhance the limited remaining urban forest habitats.

HAT, in partnership with Jeremy Gye and Judith Cullington and through funding from the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, will develop a strategic framework to assist Victoria and other municipal governments to respond to pending legislation and to take an integrated approach to a broad array of environmental and social initiatives. We hope also to provoke discussion amongst diverse stakeholder

groups that will raise the collective level of awareness and understanding of urban forest stewardship, and encourage new best management practices for urban forest management.

A pertinent example of the importance of large trees in an urban setting is the ongoing work by Andy Stewart on Cooper's Hawks in our region. Andy has discovered that Victoria has the highest density of nesting Cooper's Hawks in North America, and the nest sites are, for the most part, in larger trees that are in small patches of habitat. The area surrounding the patch can be heavily urbanized but even a remnant of forest can provide a breeding pair with the habitat structure they require.

## Connecting for Conservation in the Capital Region II!

As you can see on the front page, HAT is following up on the number one suggestion from last April's forum of regional conservation organizations held at the Crystal Garden: "**hold a similar event every year!**". This year's event will be open for the public to enjoy and will feature information and displays from many different conservation-minded groups. It was so great last year we had to do it again! The event will be **June 8, 2002, from 10:00 to 2:30 at Pearkes Arena** (in the trade show area) 3100 Tillicum (behind SilverCity Theatre). Admission is **free**.

*A watershed model draws interest at last year's "Conservation Connection" event*



There are more than 100 conservation organizations in the Capital Region: Do you ever wonder what they are all doing? Find out who is protecting ecosystems in your neighbourhood! Come and learn about all the great organizations and people working to protect habitats and wildlife in our region. We are inviting organizations, big and small, to set up displays, lay out brochures, pin up maps, and to meet with the public to share all the great work being done. More than 40 organizations came out last year and this year we expect even more!

### Special Announcement at Noon

There will be a noon announcement to launch the new "Green Legacies Guide" for British Columbia; a guide to "green" planned giving developed as part of the Stewardship Series of publications. This guide will be made available to financial planners and lawyers so they can inform their clients about the range of choices possible when considering gifting ecologically sensitive lands and the latest tax incentives for doing so.



## Habitat Acquisition Trust

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## Thank you to HAT Supporters!

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

Arenaria Research and Interpretation  
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BC Environmental Youth Team  
BC Gaming Commission  
Blair Family Foundation  
Blue Crab Bar and Grill  
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Water Pure and Simple  
Richard Wey, BC Land Surveyor  
West Coast Environmental Law  
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