



C. Englestoft

Habitat Acquisition Trust. Your regional land trust since 1996.



Western Painted Turtle hatchling spotted by HAT biologist Kristiina Ovaska at Beaver Lake



Habitat Acquisition Trust **Spring Chat '14**

Have you seen Western Painted Turtle hatchlings emerge this spring?

You may be pleasantly surprised to see an endangered **Western Painted Turtle** hatchling emerging from a nest after spending the winter underground at Elk/Beaver Lake. HAT biologist Kristiina Ovaska found several hatchlings and got up close and personal with one at Beaver Lake (pictured above) where nesting habitat is currently undergoing

restoration, monitoring and protection. The spring months of **April, May and June** are the critical stage of their lifecycle. The hatchlings have survived underground for up to 9 months and now they must reach the water and avoid predators such as bullfrogs, raccoons, and herons. During the summer months of **July and August**, adult female Western Painted Turtles (pictured left) will



Woody Thomson

leave the wetland to lay her eggs in a sandy bank. She may travel 300 metres from the nearest water to complete her critical mission, often crossing roads and backyards. Securing any garbage, especially in parks, is an important **stewardship practice** for many species including baby turtles as it deters predators. Pets, vehicles, and curious children with buckets are her mortal enemies, so keeping an eye open for turtles while outdoors is key for their survival.

Report all turtle sightings to HAT for our conservation research **250-995-2428** or **hatmail@hat.bc.ca**

Painted Turtle Quick Facts

- Females lay eggs in warm sandy slopes
- Turtles are not lost, just on the move
- Avoid touching or moving turtles
- Report all turtle sightings to HAT

Have you met the Stacks?

The Stacks are very committed to protecting land, including the estate that has been in the family for generations. The **Garry Oak** woodland on their property has always been a special place for the Stack family. Mrs. Stack recalls happy childhood memories of playing in the woods, climbing the trees, building forts among the snowberry bushes and counting the fawn lilies that bloom each spring.



They are ensuring the land remains a natural place by including HAT in their will as a recipient of the estate, who will in turn protect the natural area of the property with a **conservation covenant**.

Mr. & Mrs. Stack are also community-minded folks, and have provided thorough fare access through their property for children to get to the elementary school across the road. They envision the future of their woodland as a **Saanich park** for others to enjoy, and possibly a public garden area open to the neighbourhood as well.

Their primary goal is to **preserve** the Garry Oak woodland so that it will continue to provide **habitat** for birds, insects, and other animals that live or visit there. Their bequest also allows HAT to **protect more ecologically valuable land** in the future. For more information about bequests or covenants on your property contact our Covenants and Acquisitions Coordinator Wendy: wendy@hat.bc.ca.



Todd's Seasonal Tips

Easily convert lawns

Easily convert lawns to garden beds by covering grass with 3 layers of cardboard under 10 cm (4 in) of mulch (leaf mould, wood chip, bark bits, etc.). Raid the cardboard bin of a local appliance/bicycle retailer and cover up your weed patches too (pictured below).



Plant through the cardboard for hardy new plants and less weeds. Never use unbiodegradable black plastic cloth as a weed barrier under mulch.

Let it rot for wildlife

Allow logs to rot in place and hold summer moisture for salamanders, and build a brush pile for squirrels. Rock piles, patches of long grass, and leaf litter **create diversity**. Dead and dying trees are extremely valuable elements for many species including lizards but are usually missing from urban areas.



Pine cone **mulch** discourages digging cats, wood chips protect soil from compaction, and conifer needles make excellent pathway mulch. Fallen leaves and twigs are what fungi convert to soil; let **nutrients return to the plants** that made them. Avoid peat moss (mined from bogs). For more of Todd's Tips consult HAT's **Gardening with Native Plants Guide** available on the HAT website or request a hard copy from the HAT office (250 995-2428).



Habitat Steward Profile

Audrey Barnes

Audrey Barnes lives near Tod Flats in her rural home surrounded by fir forest. For seven years now she has enjoyed nature at her door step - the more she learns about her new home, the more she wants to protect the rare plants and animals in her neighbourhood. That's why Audrey became a HAT **Habitat Steward**.

"A biologist from HAT came to the property and showed me all kinds of plants I'd never noticed, including some that I might prevent from spreading into the woods."

A self described nature lover, Audrey Barnes applies what she learned from her HAT landcare visit to stewardship efforts both at home and at Prospect Lake with the **Friends of Tod Creek Watershed**. Removing a patch of Himalayan Blackberry from Whitehead Park to reveal a section of Tod Creek was a highlight of her volunteer efforts last year.



Audrey received advice on the best ways to eliminate other exotic species like Teasel, Broom and English Hawthorn from her property. HAT found ways to **save her money** and **create habitat**. By leaving dead tree trunks standing in her woods instead of cutting them down with costly removal, she could enhance nesting bird habitat and pay less for tree maintenance in natural areas of her large lot.

"Creating a useful area for children to play and admire the previously overgrown Tod Creek was very satisfying. Caring for natural spaces is a great way to connect with the community and leave an enduring conservation legacy for future generations."

If you would like to learn more about your land and how to care for its natural features through a **free** and **confidential** landcare visit, call Todd Carnahan (250 995-2428) or email todd@hat.bc.ca.

Photo Below: Beautiful view from Brooks Point Regional Park.



How much chocolate can you enjoy?

On May 14th HAT hosted a celebratory trip to **Brooks Point Regional Park**, recently protected thanks to donations from Islands Trust Fund, CRD, HAT supporters, and the unwavering efforts of the Pender Island Conservancy Association (PICA).

"We're done" said PICA's Paul Petrie. **"We can't believe it. We're still doing cartwheels."**

As Paul (pointing below) explained, Brooks Point is one of the last undeveloped headlands in the Southern Gulf Islands. The meadows of unusually abundant **chocolate lilies** at Brooks and Gowlland Points make it a popular destination for visitors in the spring.



The park also offers a special vantage for viewing resident Orca pods (photo to left) and the woodland provides habitat for the endangered Sharp-tailed Snakes that have been found here.



HAT

2014



HAT Spring Chat

New Local Business Partners

- Red Barn Market
- Keating Coffee
- My Chosen Cafe
- Evedar's Bistro & Coffee

Thank You Recent Supporters!

- Beatrice Stevens Memorial Foundation
- Victoria Natural History Society
- Trina Kuhn & Investor's Group
- Anne & Jim Ginns EcoFund
- Sheila Davies

Welcome! New Members

- Carla Cacovic
- Vicky Husband
- Carol Milo
- Murray Rutherford

Volunteers Extraordinaire

- Alf Birch
- Sophie Park
- Dominique Saheed

Have you seen new faces at HAT?

Paige HAT is excited to welcome Paige Erickson-McGee as the new Community & Development Coordinator. Paige is already familiar with HAT having interned here for the past two summers. In addition to her time with us, Paige brings a UVic BSc in Geography and nonprofit experience with World Fisheries Trust and the Wilderness Committee.



Caroline Joining us this summer as the Outreach Intern from Dalhousie University is Caroline Merner bringing with her smiling enthusiasm and experience volunteering for BC Parks and CRD Youth in Parks. Caroline will be working with Todd on the Good Neighbours program meeting with landowners in the Tod Watershed.



Jenna Working for HAT as Covenants Assistant, Jenna Falk is helping to conduct monitoring, reporting and mapping of HAT covenants. Jenna brings her UVic MA in Environmental Studies and research experience with the UVic Mountain Legacy Project. Jenna also volunteers full time with the Galiano Conservancy Association.



Alf Here at HAT we feel very fortunate to have Alf Birch as a regular volunteer in the office. Bringing a wealth of knowledge around policy work and management, Alf is providing extensive guidance on strategic planning and the organization of a HAT Volunteers Program. Welcome to HAT and thank you for your expertise, Alf!



HAT Quick Quiz! Name that plant

Can you name this plant? These are fairly small **parasitic plants** that attach on the roots of other plants. They are named for their distinctive pinecone-like shape, though they sit upright on the ground and can reach heights of 12cm (5"). They are found in various colours, from the light yellow to orange, brown, red or purple.

Their leaves are scale-like, and small flowers grow out from between them. The root bases are spherical, and were eaten by the Kwakwaka'wakw and Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations. What is your best guess? (*Flip for answer*).



Boschniakia hookeri
Vancouver ground cone, or poque.