

Imagine . . .

a legacy for our children
that will preserve the magic and
uniqueness of this Island...



A special publication by the Savary Island Land Trust Society – Summer 2001

Savary ISLAND

PROPOSED ECOLOGICAL RESERVE BULLETIN

Savary Needs protected Land

Islanders have long enjoyed Savary for its magical qualities and rare treasures. Savary's unique geology supports an equally rare ecology. Old growth forests, lush shrubs and ferny groves, steep windswept cliffs covered with arbutus and yew trees dropping to white sandy beaches speak of Savary. Natural meadows and unique dune ecology grace the Island. Savary is an important example of coastal biodiversity.

Known as the Hawaii of Canada, Savary may become a victim of its tropical island-like appeal. Intensive subdivision in 1910 carved up most of the Island. For sleepy Savary, change was slow and timelessness was preserved. Today 1,700 small lots are being developed and now the last large tract of land on the Island, District Lot 1375, is threatened with subdivision. Apart from seven parcels of land held by the SILT, Savary has no protected areas.

The history of subdivision on Savary combined with the lack of protected watershed and natural areas make the acquisition of a large tract of land a worthy legacy.

Savary has long been known as a rare and special place... just how rare is only beginning to be revealed

Much of the District Lot 1375 is of major scientific importance. Most islanders know this 329 acre parcel as the "Trillium property". Located at the center of the island; it runs from seashore to seashore, encompassing nearly one-third of the island. Half of the property is a rare coastal dune ecosystem, supporting endangered plant communities and uncommon plant species. The dune portion and the south shore of the property are geologically and botanically unique to British Columbia. Only a few minutes' walk from rolling sand dunes blanketed with Salal and dominated by Douglas Fir and Shore Pine, a grove of towering old growth Cedars can be found.

Two Bellingham residents, Roger Sahlin and David Syre, own the land, and are planning to sell it. Finding the financial resources to preserve this parcel is looking increasingly promising.

Savary Needs... continued next page



Ancient, gnarled Douglas Fir on DL 1375 known by many as the Spirit Tree

Subdivision Update

DL 1375 subdivision needs more work by developer

Howard Hunter, the Approving Officer dealing with the application to subdivide District Lot 1375 (the Trillium Lands), has firmly whacked the ball back into the developers' court. He has tentatively approved a subdivision of the land into 10 acre parcels, subject to the satisfaction of numerous stringent conditions designed to address the ecological, environmental, archaeological, geotechnical, and health issues that concerned Islanders have alerted him to. The preliminary layout approval contains 20 conditions that must be satisfied by mid-December, 2001 unless time is extended.

Significant requirements include:

- Updated groundwater impact assessment by a qualified hydrologist to confirm that the proposed subdivision will not adversely effect the quality or quantity of water available to all islanders.
- Completion of community water system, including securing of all necessary approvals, to service all new lots.
- All lots containing environmentally and ecologically sensitive lands must be covered by legal, protective covenants designed to minimize disturbance and loss of

vegetation, restrict development, including road construction, and preserve the natural heritage of the property. Any "no building" or "conservation" covenants are to be held by the ministries responsible for transportation and the environment, and by the Powell River Regional District.

- All eagle and heron nesting locations will be identified and protected from adverse development.
- Public access to Duck Bay via the existing road from the east is to be maintained, extending for 70 metres and including all the area between the high watermark and the existing road. Access to the south shore via the "Hanging Tree Trail" off of Vancouver Blvd., and to the waterfront on the north side via two existing trails, will be maintained and improved. Trails are to follow the natural slope of the land and must be constructed and approved prior to final subdivision approval.
- A new road running east-west through the subdivision, constructed to government standards, and closures of existing roads, must be completed.
- Setback restrictions – based on geotechnical analysis and secured by covenants – are required. This will restrict development significantly away from shorelines and the tops of slopes.

Ecological reserves are permanent sanctuaries established to:

- preserve representative examples of plant and animal communities;
- protect rare and endangered plants and animals in their natural habitat;
- preserve unique or rare zoological, botanical or geological phenomena;
- serve as benchmarks for long-term scientific research and educational use; and
- serve as examples of habitats recovering from modifications caused by human activity.

Ecological reserves contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. Appropriate research, preservation of ecological benchmarks, and educational functions are the primary uses of ecological reserves.

Most ecological reserves are open to the public for non-destructive, observational uses (eg. hiking, photography, wildlife viewing). All consumptive resource uses such as timber harvesting, mining, hunting, trapping, grazing, camping, lighting fires, road- and trail-building, removal of materials, plants and animals, and the operation of motorized vehicles, are prohibited.

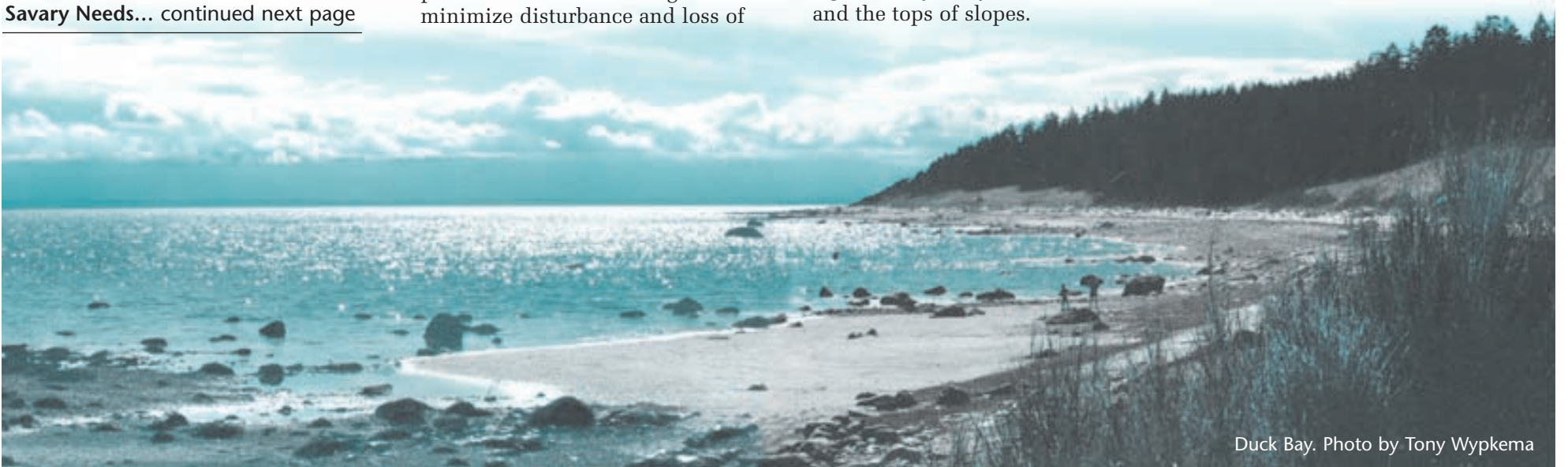
BC Parks is responsible for the management and protection of ecological reserves. Plans are developed to provide the protection and management to ensure long-term maintenance of the ecological values.

From the BC Ecological Reserve website

These and numerous other conditions must be met, all at the cost of the developer, before any final approval of the subdivision will be granted. Failure to satisfy any one of the requirements should result in the current application being refused.

Copies of the decision are available through the Powell River Regional District office on Marine Ave. (604) 483-3212 regdist@prcn.org

By Richard Scwhartz, Victoria Advisory Planning Commission



Duck Bay. Photo by Tony Wypkema



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SILT Q&A

What is a Land Trust?

Land trusts are non-profit charitable organizations that serve to protect natural and cultural heritage. Land trusts operate to protect areas critical to the health and survival of threatened animals, plants and ecosystems. In the last ten years 40 land trusts have been established in B.C.

What is the Savary Island Land Trust?

The Savary Island Land Trust (SILT) was established to preserve and protect natural areas and biological diversity on Savary Island for present and future generations. SILT was incorporated as a society in October, 1997 and received registered charity status with Revenue Canada in June, 1998. Today SILT has 140 voting members.

What are the goals of the Savary Island Land Trust?

- To acquire land on Savary Island, in order to preserve it for future generations.
- To promote the establishment of wilderness and other natural habitat preserves.
- To encourage, sponsor, teach and support research concerning the environment of Savary Island.
- To raise money, acquire funds and other assistance, to achieve the foregoing purposes.

How much property has been protected to date by SILT?

Since the first acquisition in 1999, the Trust has received and preserved six donations of land on Savary. Four lots are at Indian Point and one lot is in the middle of the island, a ten-acre parcel was recently donated on the west side of the Island. At press time the donation of another lot, this time in the Green's Point area, was underway. These gifts will bring the society's holdings to six lots and one ten-acre parcel for a total market value over \$500,000.

What happens to these properties if SILT ceases to exist?

The SILT constitution states that in such an event, the properties must be transferred to another charitable organization with similar goals. This is a condition of being issued charitable status.

Does SILT ever resell the land it acquires?

Under the requirement of a special resolution, the SILT constitution does permit the resale of land. However, land held will not be sold except under extraordinary circumstances and conditions. So for all intents and purposes, once acquired, land is not resold.

What does SILT do with the land it acquires?

A management plan must be developed for each parcel of land and ratified by the general membership.

Does SILT carry liability insurance on its properties?

Yes, a liability policy is in force, paid for each year by donations to the SILT.

How do land donations to SILT help reduce density on Savary?

The overall density of parcels on the Island is reduced as property is transferred from developable to preserved status.

If all or a portion of DL 1375 is acquired, will SILT hold the title?

Likely not, since the size and ecological importance of the site is such that title should be held by a senior conservation agency.

What are the tax benefits to donors?

A tax receipt, which can be used to offset income tax the donor owes, is provided. In the case of donations of ecologically sensitive land, the donor may use the entire tax receipt in one year. Donating property or shares that trade on the stock exchange provide the donor with the best return on their donation.



Ocean glimpsed through salal and fir covered dunes from the Dune Ridge Trail

Government researchers have documented Savary's environmentally sensitive areas

Scientific evidence, which supports the preservation of this parcel, is mounting. In April, 2000, a multi-agency field reconnaissance trip including researchers from the Ministry of Environment's Conservation Data Center, Environment Canada and BC Parks was made to Savary. The Conservation Data Center and Environment Canada research on the Island was part of the Sunshine Coast Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory. BC Parks researched the suitability of DL 1375 as a protected area. In total, six government scientists accompanied by Dr. Kathy Dunster, a dune expert, participated in the mapping and documentation of environmentally sensitive areas on Savary, including DL 1375. Excerpts from their reports follow:

“DL 1375 contains rare ecosystems and vegetation that merit some form of protection...this ecosystem on Savary Island has considerable values not replicated elsewhere... The uniqueness of the site automatically justifies classifying the area as rare and potentially threatened given potential future development.”

Brian Bawtinheimer
 Senior Park Planner in his Report on
 Natural and Recreational Values
 District Lot 1375 Savary Island

“As part of a geological study dating the age of the dune landforms on Savary, I have become more and more aware of their rarity in BC....The Savary dunes represent a uniquely undisturbed geomorphological feature that has not been identified anywhere else on the Pacific coast of Canada. Uncommon geomorphological features are a basis for preservation in themselves....It would be a shame to lose these.”

Geologist Dave Tupper

UNCOMMON PLANTS



Harvest Brodiaea

Seashore Lupine

“This site [DL 1375] has received the highest Biodiversity Significance rating, as well as the highest Protection Urgency rating. It is only one of six sites so designated of the 103 ranked sites on the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Conservation Partnership (GBEP) Master site list.”

Jan Kirkby, Conservation Ecologist, British Columbia Conservation Data Centre, letter, December 2000

“DL 1375 supports one of the largest fields of ancient sand dunes on the south coast. The only other comparable dune field that I am aware of is located northwest of Comox on Vancouver Island and is no longer in a natural state. The Savary Island dunes are of considerable scientific interest because, with appropriate study, they may provide a record of wind patterns dating back thousands of years. Preliminary study... suggests that the winds that produced the dunes were different from those in this area today.”

Dr. John Clague, Department of Earth Sciences, SFU, letter, May 2000

“The property provides one of the best examples of the geography of coastal dune ecosystems in Canada. Along with the dunes is a unique, complete, and therefore very rare plant successional sequence... Because there are so few dune ecosystems in coastal British Columbia, the plant associations found on them are generally considered to be rare, or red-listed ...Fragility of dune ecosystems is well documented...as are the environmental disasters that occur when dunes are altered by construction and development, vegetation removal, trampling and excessive recreational usage... Because of its ecological sensitivity to disturbance, the property should be preserved...”

Dr. Kathy Dunster, Botanist, Geographer and Dune Specialist



Alligator Lizard

RARE PLANT COMMUNITY



Gumweed

Red Fescue

Northern Wormwood

Savary has one of the best examples of the geography of dune ecosystems in Canada, according to Registered Professional Biologist, Kathy Dunster. Dunster, a dune specialist who holds a Ph.D in geography, visited Savary in March, 2000 to study the dunes.

Dunster confirmed that approximately half of DL 1375 is covered by a series of northwest oriented coastal sand dunes, ranging from five to 15 m thick. Dynamic and windswept, this fragile ecosystem is home to a variety of rare plant communities.

Savary Needs Protected Land – continued from page 1

and the apparent willingness of the owners to explore possibilities other than subdivision improves the chance of success. SILT believes that this nationally unique ecosystem can be preserved.

We need your help because:

We have reached a critical point in the project to protect this unique parcel of land. The owners may explore avenues other than development and have indicated an interest in doing so. Several funding opportunities exist to help acquire the land and establish an ecological reserve. Your help will improve our

funding opportunities and strengthen the prospect of these agencies coming through with a commitment to save this land.

We are asking for your understanding and support to help us save this last tract of Savary wilderness. Our goal is to raise \$1 million to present to government and conservation agencies. This will prove to them how much we care about creating a legacy for our children that will preserve the magic and uniqueness of this Island.

By Liz Webster, SILT Vice-President

Funding Update

New government funds for biodiversity in B.C. may come to Savary.

Federal and provincial officials recently announced an agreement worth \$20 million to acquire land and protect biodiversity in BC in the Powell River and Saltspring areas.

The federal minister of environment, David Anderson, indicated on April 1, 2001, that the Powell River area should receive some of the money, although Saltspring Island is expected to receive the majority.

In an article in the *Powell River Peak*, Anderson said he couldn't name any particular parcels because he would be "treading on the toes of the province," but he did say the last undeveloped tract of land on Savary Island was a possibility. "I'm not here to say that's the most important piece of acquisition and that has to happen. I'm simply here to say I fully expect Savary to be considered along with some other shore properties in the eastern Gulf, island or mainland." On June 27, 2001, the BC cabinet confirmed British Columbia's commitment to work with the federal government towards creating a national park in the Gulf Islands. The B.C. government approved \$25 million for the Gulf Islands project. Of that, \$5 million is to be used to acquire lands for a new national park, and \$20 million is earmarked for provincial Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy acquisitions on islands outside the national park.



A tree in the DL 1375 old growth cedar grove

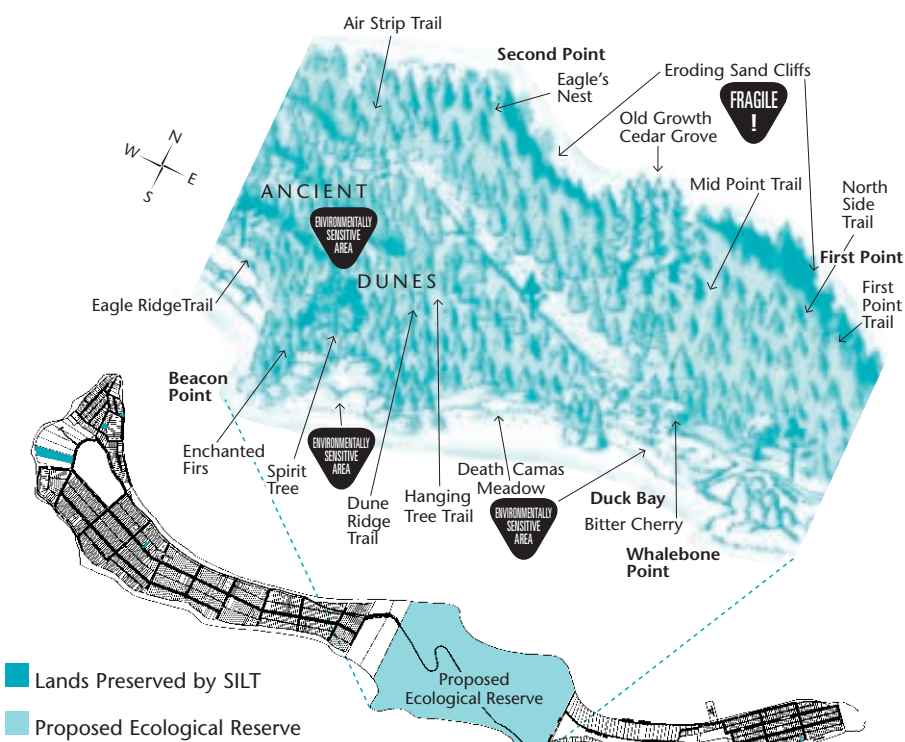
Conservation agencies support protecting Savary

The Federal Georgia Basin Ecosystem Conservation Partnership Program, rated the Savary dune ecosystem as having the highest biodiversity and protection urgency values. This federal program will match funds raised by donations to support the acquisition of threatened lands with high biodiversity values in the Georgia Basin.

Both federal and provincial Governments have indicated that Savary's unique and threatened status will make it a very likely candidate for support.

Executive Director of The Nature Trust, David Lester, told SILT that: "The Nature Trust endorses the conservation of the critical forested dune complex on Savary and will provide whatever assistance it can to promote its conservation".

Detail of proposed Ecological Reserve



This map shows the over 1,700 lots on Savary, lands protected and lands proposed for protection.

Savary paintings to be auctioned

With the generous support of the Griffin family, three of Helen Griffin's original paintings have been donated to SILT and will be auctioned at Savary this summer during the August 11 annual fundraiser. The late Helen Griffin loved Savary, and the island was the subject of hundreds of her works. Preview the paintings at Wynn and Robin Woodward's from 6 to 8 pm Saturday, August 4.

H. Keith MacDougall, president, Savary Island Property Owners Association

Get your illustrated Savary Maps

Thank you to all islanders who participated in the Mapping Project and contributed their stories, knowledge and bits of lore to the map. The map records natural and cultural history features, and island ecology. Artists, Kathy Kebarle (Indian Point) and Tony Wypkema devoted themselves to the laborious creation of this beautiful and informative map. The illustrations in this newsletter were adapted from the map.

Laminated Placemat 11 by 17" - \$10
Poster 18 by 24" \$20.00
Set of 4 placemats and 1 poster \$50.

Fundraising Q&A

Why should we contribute money to acquire DL 1375?

Before governments or their agencies involve themselves with efforts to acquire any land for preservation they need assurance that the direct beneficiaries of this preserved land are committed to such an undertaking.

The clearest indication of commitment to a cause is to donate money to it. Without private financial involvement, governments and their agencies are unlikely to participate.

What happens if we don't raise enough money?

There is no prescribed amount that must be contributed by private donation. The deed of doing so will establish our determination and reflect favourably upon our resolve to save the land.

What happens if the acquisition of DL1375 never takes place?

Any funds donated to SILT for the specific purpose of acquiring DL1375 will be held in a segregated trust account and will not be used for any other purpose. The funds will be returned if we are unable to acquire the property.

Thank You

A generous donor gave SILT a beautiful ten-acre piece of forested land on the west side of the Island this June. This, the largest donation to SILT, to date, is a milestone for the organization. The board of trustees would like to express its gratitude to the dedicated and thoughtful anonymous donor for his or her leadership and legacy.

Also, a newly donated lot by Green's Point near the high point on the Island, will become the Helen R. McDonald and Jay Douglas Hannay Nature Reserve.

These contributions bring the society's holdings to six lots and one ten-acre parcel for a total land value of over \$500,000.

Events

Saturday July 7, 1pm

Information Meeting - Powell River Regional District, Official Community Plan. Fire hall

Monday, Aug. 6, 10 am

SILT AGM - Fire hall, Savary Island

Saturday Aug. 11

SILT Auction - part of the annual SITC Savary Island event. Come and have fun at this popular event and help raise money for SILT. At the Mackenzie's beside the tennis courts.

Saturday Aug. 18, 1pm

Public Hearing - Powell River Regional District Official Community Plan. Savary Fire hall.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF Savary

We are asking you to support our effort to acquire DL 1375 as an Ecological Reserve. Our goal is to preserve the unique and fragile dunes and forests from development so Savary Islanders may enjoy them for all time.

PLEASE FILL OUT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name _____ Email _____
Address _____ City _____ Prov. _____
Postal Code _____ Tel. _____ Fax _____
Savary Address _____ Tel. _____

DONATIONS

Yes, I would like to help the Savary Island Land Trust acquire DL1375 to create a nature preserve. I am enclosing a cheque for my tax deductible donation of:
 \$5,000 \$2,500 \$1,000
 \$500 \$100 Other _____

Please make cheque out to:
SILT: Savary Ecological Reserve Fund

MEMBERSHIP

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Savary Island Land Trust Society.
1 year regular \$25
 Family \$40

Please make cheque out to:
SILT: Savary Island Land Trust Society

SEND YOUR FORM AND PAYMENT TO:

SILT: Savary Island Land Trust Society, Box 141, Lund, B.C. V0N 2G0



Committed to the preservation
of natural areas and biological
diversity on Savary Island for
present and future generations.

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