



Denman Conservancy Association

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 60, Denman Island, B.C. V0R 1T0

April 2004

The Chickadee Lake Saga

The Conservancy established the Island Legacy Fund in 1997 to acquire some key properties to be part of a Protected Areas Network because they were imminently threatened by industrial logging.

Since then Chickadee Lake has been the centre of our fund-raising efforts, and for it we have made four purchase offers to the owner, all of which have been rejected.

Our first two offers were made in late 2002 and early 2003. Both offers were based on a BC certified appraisal (which included a certified timber valuation) commissioned by DCA. The property was appraised at \$585,000 and this figure constituted our first offer. Our second offer was 5% above this figure. This was reported in the Grapevine about a year ago. 4064 Investments has continued to suggest an acceptable price at somewhere around \$1.3 million, but we never received a certified appraisal from them that might validate this asking price.

It is noted that the Owner was unaware of our pending legal action at the time of those first two offers. The DCA sued 4064 Investments over an unrelated matter arising from the failure of 4064 to comply with terms of its purchase agreement regarding placing covenants on the Railway Marsh and Komas Bluff properties. With the serving of the writ to 4064, no further purchase offers were made through the spring & summer of 2003.

Some attempts at out-of-court settlement of the legal action took place late in 2003. We included purchase of Chickadee as a component of those comprehensive settlement offers. To this effect, for example, we offered \$615,000 and a willingness to issue charitable tax receipts to a higher figure in accordance with the requirements of Canada Customs and Revenue

Agency should the Owner be able to satisfy those requirements. As mentioned above, these offers were also rejected.

Funds for our original offers were from five sources: cash-on-hand (made up of donations, some Home & Garden Tour funds, Lindsay Dickson surplus, etc); individual pledges; institutional pledges; funds held on our behalf at the Seattle Foundation, Islands Trust Fund & Nature Conservancy of Canada; and a mortgage.

We tried very hard to reach an agreement for the purchase of Chickadee Lake because December 31, 2003 was a significant date in this whole 6 1/2 year odyssey. On that date Mountain Equipment Coop's \$50,000 pledge was withdrawn. In addition, at the end of March 2004 another institutional pledge of \$75,000 from Habitat Conservation Trust Fund expired. You can imagine after our years of concerted efforts to raise these funds, just how discouraging it is to have to let them go.

Most individual pledges have now technically expired though some people hung in for three years. Thank you so much for your support.

The implication of the foregoing is that since December 31, 2003, our resources available to purchase Chickadee have diminished significantly. Coupled with the wide discrepancy of perspectives on the value of this property, DCA's purchase of Chickadee Lake is not considered feasible at this time.

What now will happen to all the funds that have been raised? It's a question the Conservancy Board takes very seriously. A daylong Special Board Meeting at the beginning of April began a review of our priorities and will result in a proposal for new endeavours.

Based on a Report to the AGM by the Acquisitions Committee-- February 23, 2004



Herring Fleet photo by **Jan Florian**

Creating Moist Biotopes, Part 2, Making a Pond

I have created several ponds, because I like the wonderful diversity of plant and animal species that can be attracted or planted there. Another real plus is you do not have to water a water garden during our long, dry summers.

It is simple to build an amphibian habitat. Dig a bowl-shape depression or pick an existing one in a spot with dappled shade. The size of the bowl is dictated by the size of a piece of rubber pond liner you must acquire first.

Rubber pond liners come in 10-foot width and cost about 85 to 95 cents a square foot. One can “weld” pieces together for large ponds, but a 10 by 15 or 20 foot piece will make a good size habitat. A rubber liner works best: it does not break down in UV light, as plastic does, and it is quite resistant to puncturing, provided you prepare the bed for it by removing sharp rocks and padding it with discarded carpet. The carpet outlets are happy to let you pick it out of their garbage dumpsters.

Put two layers of carpet down and cut the overhangs the way you want the pond’s edge to form. Now drape the pond liner on it with about 8 to 10 inches of overhang. Next, fill the pond with water and let it shape itself to the walls and bottom until it begins to run over.

By tugging and pushing the carpet and liner, even out the water level to match up the shape of the final edge of the pond. You may have to back fill in some spots to keep the liner up and dig away a bit more in others. The idea is not to waste expensive pond liner. Leave the water in the pool and fold any surplus liner to create a ridge. Tamp more earth under it to form the rim.

The final touch is a “sausage” of stiff concrete poured on the rim to give it a solid edge. While the concrete is still wet, sprinkle earth of the surrounding area on it to match colour and texture to give it a natural look. You can also drape chunks of moss over it. It will establish itself and “soften” the edge even more.

Because some concrete will drop into the water and create chemical conditions harmful to aquatic animals, you should drain and refill it before you slide pots with water lilies and other plants into it. You will find many species at nurseries or you can use native plants such as water plantain and sedges.

Red-legged frogs and tree frogs will show up on their own, in time. Newts probably need to be imported as larvae. Amphibians can be “planted” in new ponds if they

do not exist in the area. To introduce amphibians to a breeding pond one must start with eggs or tadpoles and larvae, NOT adult animals. Adults must stay at their home pond to which their productive pattern is keyed. Emerging froglets and newtlets will make their home in the vicinity of the pond in which they were raised and return to it to breed. This is nature’s way to improve the chances for the species to survive.

Technically one is not supposed to capture and transplant wildlife in BC. There are, however, situations where a small water hole is about to dry up early in the summer. It may have newt larvae, which will not mature in time to breathe with lungs rather than gills and would be lost. I don’t think it is a crime to rescue them. [Transferring animals within Denman Island should not cause problems but we advise against bringing them from off-island wild locations. Ed.]

You will be astounded how many creatures are attracted by water.

Peter Karsten

The Mysterious 12%

I have often wondered why so many governments have as their environmental goal to protect 12% of the land in its natural state in order to preserve a sample of the natural diversity of living things. They usually say that the Bruntland Report (e.g. The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled “Our Common Future”) suggested the 12%, although I can’t find any mention of it in my copy. Few people, I believe, know how devastating it would be if only 12% were protected. (*Our Common Future P 166: ‘the total expanse of protected areas needs to be at least tripled if it is to constitute a representative sample of earth’s ecosystems.’ In the previous paragraph the report quoted existing percentages of protected areas such as Russia 2.5%, North America 8.1%. Ed*)

Professor E.O. Wilson of Harvard has studied the effects of land area on biodiversity. From studies and experiments in many parts of the world he has derived a correlation linking area with the number of species of flora and fauna present. Put simply, as a rule of thumb: “a tenfold decrease in area cuts the number of species in half.” (see “The Diversity of Life,” by E.O. Wilson, p. 220 et seq)

So by protecting only 12% of the province, we are unknowingly accepting the fact that approximately 48% of the existing flora and fauna will eventually become extinct! If more people knew this, we would be aiming at protecting something like 50% of the province and the country.

Patrick Fawkes

DCA Web Site: www.denmanis.bc.ca/conserve

HOME & GARDEN TOUR 2004 JUNE 19th and 20th, 9:30am-5:00pm daily

The 2004 HOME & GARDEN TOUR ticket has been filled for Conservancy's biggest annual fundraiser. Eleven generous property owners will open their homes and gardens for public viewing on June 19th and 20th. And more than 100 volunteers make this huge undertaking possible.

Islanders and visitors alike will have a chance to visit the amazing rose collections found in the exquisite gardens of Sudasi & Swann **Gardner**, Joan & Roger **Vinnedge**, and Sandy & Des **Kennedy**. After a hiatus of some years, Danni **Crenna**/Bentley **Le Baron**, Dennis **Forsyth**/Marilyn **Jensen**, Jean **Cockburn**/Jack **Mounce**, and Effie & Harold **Gluesteen** have kindly agreed to be on the Tour once again. With expanded perennial beds, fanciful ponds, new house additions and artful gates, these already stellar properties have become fabulous.

With the support of loving friends and volunteers, Ruth and Daniel **Terry**'s garden has been turned into a celebration of Ruth's life - with her love of nature, brilliant sense of garden design, and generosity to Denman's community. Ruth passed away March 19th, but she will be with us in spirit on Tour Days, amongst the beauty she created in her intimate, vigorous garden nestled against their home at Snakehaven.

New to the tour this year are 3 amazing properties. Concha & Tom **Dennis**, over a 30-year period, have created a wonderful, healthy oasis of gardens surrounded by farm fields at the Lake Farm. Joan & David **Scruton** will be opening their beautiful custom-built home, furniture workshop, and refurbished barn - with a full collection of farm animals, vegetable and fruit beds and a 100' rose-clematis curved pergola. Ella **Day**'s home with its curving lines sits atop a high waterfront bluff. Weave through the forest past stunning flower gardens, gentle pavilions for healing the body and soul, organic vegetable plots, a Japanese stone garden, and water features.

In the coming months, the coordinators (Rochelle Allison and Leslie Dunsmore), will once again arrange Art in the Garden. Denman artists will be selected to show samples of their large garden art on site. Village events for the weekend will include a Garden Club Plant Sale (with a percentage of the proceeds to Conservancy), the DIACS-sponsored Garden Art Show in the Sr. Gallery, and an opening of the heritage Denman Anglican Church.

Tickets go on sale at the Denman Craft Shop as of May 15th. A \$3 ticket gains you entry to individual sites to see the creativity of fellow islanders. A \$15 ticket gives you access to all the homes and gardens.

MORE INFO: Website: www.denmanis.bc.ca
Phone: Roxanna 335-2576



Dinner time

photo **Jan Florian**

UPDATE: Our legal action against 4064 Investments Ltd.

Attempts to settle the case are reported in the Chickadee Saga above. We were also recently approached by 4064 to voluntarily lift the Certificates of Pending Litigation (CPLs) registered against some portions of the southerly end of the Komias Bluff that are the subject of an imminent sale. As we were threatened with court action, we chose to write to 4064 that we are willing, under specified conditions, to lift those CPLs. As we go to press our letter has gone unacknowledged and the CPLs remain on the parcels.

DCA has registered CPLs on all the titles of parcels of 4064 lands that were identified by Hancock's sales contract to have covenants placed on them. The rights of Hancock to enforce that contract have been assigned to DCA. Our suit seeks to have covenants placed on the Railway Grade Marsh and Komias Bluffs as well as damages to compensate for the logging in the Railway Grade Marsh area that the covenants would have prevented.

We are continuing the action

DCA Directors for 2004

Concha Dennis - - treasurer	John Millen - - co-chair
Patrick Fawkes	Laura Pope
Carol Freeman	J Thornton
Bentley LeBaron	Patti Willis
Denise MacKean	Dorrie Woodward
Roxanna Mandryk-chair	Susan-Marie Yoshihara

Nature Walks and Talks

Saturday, April 10 Mike Morrell, marine biologist and enthusiastic clam digger, will give a short talk on “Denman Island Clams” followed by a clam field-trip in the Fillongley/Cable Beach area. Because we need a low tide for this expedition, we will meet at **2:00 pm** at the Old School.

Saturday, April 17 at 10:00 am, Sheelagh Salas will lead a search for “Medicinal Plants” in the area around the Old School. There will be a great opportunity to get a taste for the ages old tradition of collecting and using medicinal plants. Sheelagh teaches an on-going one-year herbalist program on Denman.

Saturday, May 8 there will be an extended trip “Botanizing and Birding on Tree Island,” led by Dorrie Woodward and Patrick Fawkes. Dorrie was a founding member of the Friends of Tree Island and is familiar with the island’s flora. Patrick knows the birds in the area from the monthly Coastal Waterbird Survey he carries out for Bird Studies Canada. The tides will be exceptionally low on May 8, so we will have plenty of time to explore. *Watch the Grapevine for the time and place to meet.*

Jenny Balke and Patrick Fawkes will present “Denman Island Birds and Birdsongs” later in May. (*Watch the Grapevine for this date*). Jenny, a professional biologist and birdsong recorder has given short courses on D.I. birds several times, using her own recordings and photographs. Patrick is an enthusiastic birder and neophyte recorder.

Saturday, June 5, John Tayless, marine biologist, will lead the ever-popular “Minus Tide Beach Walk”. Those who came to John’s “Herring, Plankton and Sea Lions” talk in March have first hand experience of his extensive knowledge and enthusiasm about anything to do with marine life.

The series ends with Hamish Kimmins’ exploration entitled “Ecological Detective--Discover the Ecology of Your Own Property” when he will lead us round his property giving clues to help us discover the ecological relationships of plants and animals on our own properties. Hamish is a professor of Forest Ecology at U.B.C. This outing will be in June, after the house and Garden Tour. *The date and time will be given in the Grapevine.*

We are lucky on Denman to have experts on many of the diverse aspects of natural history to lead our Nature Walks and Talks. For newcomers this is a great way to get to know the island’s flora and fauna. And we particularly

encourage families and young people to come along—the earlier we learn to appreciate nature and our part in it the more likely we are to help preserve species and habitat, both locally and globally.

Patrick Fawkes

Anne de Cosson ‘Mother’ of the Conservancy

Every community has its unsung heroes. You know these folks. They are people who, while raising their families, going to work, in the course of everyday life just go out and save the world. Here on Denman Island, my particular heroes are those who do the hard work required to protect the forests and nature of this special place.

Anne de Cosson is one of our unsung heroines. She is one of the main instigators of the Denman Conservancy Association and the impetus behind the formation of this organization. We think of her as the Mother of the Conservancy.

Anne and her husband, Larry Berg, raised their sons, (who are now three grown up men but at that time were lively little boys), and created their organic apple orchard, all the while trying to save the Lindsay-Dickson lands next-door to them. Many people tried to find a way to save that magnificent forest, but it was a small group consisting of Des Kennedy, Dave Fraser, Phyllis Fabbri, Glen Snook, and Anne (of course with the dedicated support of others who came on board later--George Ferry and Juan Barker particularly come to mind), who got together and made it happen. The initial board of directors spent nearly every Friday night that first year huddled around Anne and Larry’s kitchen table and got the Conservancy up and running.

Anne has worked tirelessly for the Conservancy. Many times she has served as the board co-chair or secretary, taking responsibility for moving the organization forward. From the very first House and Garden tour Anne has been involved in some major part of the event. In those early days there was quite a bit more work to do because the DCA organized both the kitchen and the dessert table on top of everything else. Anne has been a volunteer co-organizer of the tour on several occasions. As well her home, the East Cider Orchard, has been featured on the Tour at least twice.

In 2001 one of our long struggles ended and the Lindsay-Dickson forest was saved. Anne is a member of DCA’s Lindsay-Dickson Management Committee.

Our “mother” is stepping down from the board, but of course, not from the Conservancy. The DCA became the effective organization it is today thanks to the diligent efforts of people like Anne de Cosson. Thank you so much, Anne.

Susan-Marie Yoshihara

Produced for DCA by the Communications Committee:
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