



Denman Conservancy Association

NEWSLETTER

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

May 2017

Home and Garden Tour

The Denman Island Home and Garden Tour is now but a month away. On June 10-11 some of the most expressive and resourceful powers of our island will throw open their gates to invite guests from near and far in to the creative and lush landscapes they have co-created with their surroundings. On this year's Tour, you will see homes that follow the shape of the landscape, gardens that are manicured to bring out the most elegant aspects of nature and native gardens that just require the gentlest touch.

The 13 spectacular homes and gardens on this year's tour display the full range of partnerships between gardener, builder and nature.

The Home and Garden Tour is a great opportunity to invite your friends and family over to experience the hidden treasures of our island.

Tour goers will be directed to only use Pickles Rd. and Central Rd. as one way roads heading northward from Denman Road. If you live in the area or are passing through, please be aware that there will be more than the usual amount of traffic and that it will be going from Denman Rd. towards Lake Rd.

If you want to volunteer please contact Tour coordinator Emily Guinane at denmanisland.hgt@gmail.com or 1 250 539 8339.

To thank all volunteers and Tour hosts for their hard work an appreciation party will be held after the Tour on Sunday. We look forward to celebrating with you there!

The Home and Garden Tour is an important fundraiser for the Denman Conservancy Association. Tickets are \$20 and are now for sale at **Abraxas** and the **General Store** as well as at denmanconservancy.org.

Denman Bats

This year Conservancies on both Denman and Hornby are collaborating in the BC BATS Province-wide Community Bat Conservation Program. So stay tuned for up-coming details – more bat information also can be found on the DCA web-site and by Googling “BC Bats”!

Thanks for the great interest in the DCA's bat house-building project. All the necessary materials and other information for the keen house builders will be forthcoming in early June, see below. We will also have some of these bat maternal colony houses for sale, so let us know ASAP (335-2151 or 335-2868) if you'd rather buy one than make one: Wall Mount boxes are \$55 and Stand-alone Rocket Boxes are \$65.

Denman's Old School Bats are now returning! Four species raise their babies in the attic of the Old School building and our new bat cameras are now spying on them:

Basic Bats – an introduction to Denman bats will be held **Tuesday May 30th at 7:30** in the DCA room of the Old School. We'll also be able to view (& hear) the activities of the bat colony above us by remote camera, to 'detect' them with the bat-detector and to see bats emerge to hunt if the evening is dry and mild. Genetic studies on bat guano in previous years determined that there are at least four species of bats roosting in the Old School attic. Come and meet some of them! Interest in Denman's bat house-building project has been great! Builders will be able to pick up all the necessary **house-building materials Saturday June 3rd** at the Old School during the Saturday market, or if necessary they can arrange a separate pick up.



THREE CHEERS FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Notes from the Land (Manager)

I've been walking around the lands A LOT lately. (I must have gone to the moon and back a few times by now.) With all those flowers blooming, it's easy to lose track of time out in the field (oh, by the way, it's already the middle of May!!!). I have to remind myself that one only needs so many photos of a chocolate lily or a blooming skunk cabbage. In all this walking, I've noticed that others, too, have been out there, 'Making the Trails by Walking'. If you are a walker/runner/ biker/ equestrian and you are interested in joining DCA's new Trails Stewardship Group, please get in touch with me at 250-702-7773 or erikaaction@gmail.com, or check out the blog post (April 21) on the DCA website for more info. 'Work Bees' are in full swing now, and with the priceless help of a few dedicated volunteers, we've been clearing trails (walking isn't always quite enough) and cutting Broom and Holly. There are still more work bees to do before the summer sets in, so please let me know if you'd like to help out. Details of work bees will also be posted on our website and Facebook page. Annual monitoring of DCA covenants is well underway. This year, I've been inviting Denman Island naturalists to come along during some of my monitoring visits, to help with recording observations of flora and fauna. Both the site visits and the subsequent reports are greatly enriched by the accompaniment of these knowledgeable volunteers. We've also been busy planning our summer grant work on the Settlement Lands. Earlier this year, DCA was awarded a substantial grant from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) to do property management work on the property—

perfect timing, as we have just about finalized the Management Plan and Conservation Covenant. Jenny Balke's extensive baseline survey of the property, as well as input from the community and DCA members, have been invaluable for shaping the covenant terms and stewardship goals for the property. (see update on Page 4)

The 3-year HCTF grant will support a number of ongoing projects, including work in the Butterfly Reserve, opening up public trails, building an information kiosk, starting a wetland monitoring program, and working to control invasive species. Now in its second year, DCA's fledgling Volunteer Internship Program will be focused largely on these Settlement Lands projects.

The tireless support of DCA's ongoing work by volunteers keeps me continually inspired and energized. I am so lucky! Thank you for making this work such a pleasure. *Erika Bland*

UPCOMING DCA WORK BEES:

Central Park Clean-up: Thursday, May 25, 10:00 a.m. Please meet at main entrance.

Settlement Lands Broom Bee: Friday, Saturday & Sunday, May 26-28, 10:00 a.m. each day. Please meet at the corner of Chickadee and Central Rds.

Railway Grade Marsh Trail Clearing: Tuesday, May 30, 1:00 p.m. Please meet at north entrance, near the corner of Danes and Northwest Rds.

Settlement Lands Projects: Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday, June 1-4, 1:00 p.m. each day. Please meet at parking area half way along Central Road.

Contact Erika for more info: 250-702- 7773
erikaaction@gmail.com

Membership Application Form

DENMAN CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION

Membership is \$10 per person per calendar year. Many members combine their membership and annual donation in a lump sum. A charitable tax receipt will be issued for all donations of \$10 or more.

To ensure you receive our notices about meetings, programs etc., **please provide your email address.**

I wish to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ e-mail _____

Mailing Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

The Denman Conservancy Association has charitable tax status.

Please make cheques payable to:

Denman Conservancy Association,

Mail to: PO Box 60, Denman Island, BC, V0R 1T0

Checkerspot Time

It's that time again! Keep a look out in sunny meadows for those charismatic little orange and black, endangered Taylor's Checkerspot (TC) Butterflies. There are some great resources for learning about the habitat characteristics of Checkerspots available online: <http://www.goert.ca/activities/taylors-checkerspot/>) Adult TCs can fly anytime from late April to mid-June. The height of the flight season on Denman has typically been around the long weekend in May, but with the wet, cool spring, perhaps this year we will see them slightly later.

In March, 255 larvae were released into the Butterfly Reserve in Denman Island Provincial Park with the help of local volunteers, under the direction of Jennifer Heron of BC Ministry of Environment, and the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team. These larvae were reared at the Vancouver Zoo, using methods developed by the Oregon and Woodland Park Zoos, and then refined by Peter Karsten and a host of local volunteers to fit our local Denman context. In 2016, after expertly raising over 1200 larvae, Peter passed the captive rearing baton to the capable hands of Andrea Guelens, and her colleagues at the Vancouver Zoo.

During our period of monitoring following the release, I observed that the larvae seemed to be growing a little more slowly than last year. I suspect this is because of all those rainy days—we tend to see larvae crawling around and eating most when the sun is shining. This makes me wonder if some of the larvae might go into a second diapause this year: Checkerspots are one of few non-migratory butterfly species that are able to extend their life cycle into a second year of the pre-pupae larval stage. As far as we know, this happens if they have not gained sufficient mass to pupate following their first-year diapause period (a period in which larvae hibernate after the eggs hatch in June). If this all sounds a bit sophisticated for a caterpillar, that's because it is! We still have a lot to learn about this cheery little butterfly.

DCA has also designated a Butterfly Reserve for Checkerspots (and other pollinators) in the Settlement Lands. Though there are no plans to release captive-reared larvae there, we conduct annual monitoring of their wetland habitats there, and beginning this summer, will begin installation of a demonstration pollinator garden featuring native host species.

Be sure to stop by the Settlement Lands Butterfly Reserve (on Central Road) during the **Home and Garden Tour** to learn more.

... and On Line

In late April *The Joy of Walking* was published on the DCA web site. This guide to walking trails and the protected lands they traverse on Denman Island was prepared by Peter Karsten for the Parks Committee of DIRA. It includes information from DCA about Winter Wren Wood and Central Park trails. The booklet has proved very popular and has been downloaded 200 times.

...and more about Bats:

Jenny Balke has, for many years, looked after the bat colony that roosts in the attic of the Old School. This spring Jenny has installed a pair of security cameras to get some assessment of the numbers present. Jenny bought a remaindered security camera set (meeting budgetary constraints) which turned out to have software for Microsoft XP operating system. Luckily my 13 year old Laptop is still running on XP and was finally persuaded to record some video. The video is on YouTube and can also be accessed from the DCA website.



The DCA Facebook page has remained popular. The superb photos of birds generously provided by Dennis Forsyth continue to attract many views.

John Millen

Frogs and Friends

In April we had a talk on amphibians called "Frogs and Friends". Twenty people attended a lecture by Jenny Balke and Peter Karsten on Denman's various amphibians, and assembled a newt habitat for their gardens to take home. The newt/salamander house is designed to safely house these creatures – free to come and go – and allow a non-disturbing count of any inhabitants.

Jenny and Peter were, as always, extremely interesting and reminded us all of how important and useful these little creatures are.

Settlement Lands Update

The Settlement Lands are becoming more and more “settled.” After a year of working on drafts and two public information meetings later, the Settlement Lands will soon become an official government-registered conservation area. On April 20th, the DCA Board approved the Conservation Covenant, the Baseline Report (which documents the current state of the lands) and the Management Plan for the lands. The Islands Trust Fund, the Covenant Holder, is also expected to approve the documents later this month.

DCA has received a generous 3-year grant from the Province’s Habitat Conservation Trust Fund which will support next steps on the Settlement Lands including: establishing a Butterfly Garden of indigenous plants (also attractive to bees), monitoring water quality and quantity, fencing, trail building/maintenance, and invasive species management. DCA is advertising for a Volunteer Intern (or Interns) to assist with this work.

Dogs not permitted on Settlement Lands Trails

DCA is establishing new walking trails on the Settlement Lands. We have been asked why dogs will not be allowed on these new Settlement Lands trails. The Lands are at the heart of an extensive ‘Protected Areas Network’ which provides critical wildlife corridors between this property, Denman Island Provincial Park, Inner Island Nature Reserve, Winter Wren Wood, and Central Park. The Lands are home to a healthy beaver population, and beaver activity there is crucial for the larger Pickles Marsh and the Swale wetland systems.

We are fortunate on Denman to have such extensive intact wetland ecosystems, but beaver and their habitats are increasingly threatened by residential development and agricultural land uses. As development continues across Denman Island, fewer and fewer refuge areas are available for beaver, and we feel it is very important to preserve intact habitat spaces where they are known to be healthy and thriving.

We realize that dogs are wonderful company when enjoying Denman’s many nature trails and that most dog owners are respectful of wildlife, and keep their dogs on-leash where requested. However, we anticipate that the ongoing presence of even leashed dogs within the sensitive habitats of the Settlement Lands could have a lasting negative impact on the beaver populations in the area. Ultimately, we feel it is prudent in this case to prioritize the protection of the beaver over opening trails to dogs.

AGM Report

Denman Conservancy AGM was held Monday 29 February 2017 in the Back Hall. Around 20 dedicated members attended. Directors elected for 2017 (and officers confirmed at the subsequent Board meeting) were:

- Jenny Balke
- Doug Bell
- Anne Fisher
- Stirling Fraser
- DD Fuchs
- Jackie Hipwell - - - - - Co-Chair
- John Millen
- Ron Shepherd - - - - - Treasurer
- Patti Willis - - - - - Co-Chair
- Susan-Marie Yoshihara- Secretary

Board Member Annie Corddrey

The Board would like to acknowledge the contribution of Annie Corddrey who stepped down from the Board earlier this year. As many of you know, she has been diagnosed with leukemia and is undergoing intensive treatment in Vancouver. First elected to the Board in 2007, she has been a loyal member of the DCA Board, always willing to take on a variety of tasks. When none of us steps up to the plate, she will, with a bit of a sigh, volunteer. She takes on challenges about which she knows little, like our foray into Facebook, but she is always willing to learn for the sake of DCA. And, Annie, unlike many of us, actually reads the minutes and other DCA documents, and comes up with cogent and perceptive questions and comments. She can often be soft-spoken, but she has a steely and incisive mind. For these reasons and 100 others, we miss her and need her back on the Board ASAP. We all wish her a speedy and full recovery.

Home and Garden Tour

June 10 & 11, 9:30 am – 5 pm

Tickets \$20 at:

The General Store
Abraxas

Newsletter Contributors: Jenny Balke, Erika Bland, Stirling Fraser, Emily Guinane, John Millen, Patti Willis.