



Denman Conservancy Association

NEWSLETTER

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

February 2022

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

The
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of **DENMAN CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION** will be
7:30 pm on Monday, February 28, 2022
on **ZOOM**

The AGM business will include:

- ❖ Reports from: Co-chair, Treasurer & Lands Manager
- ❖ Election of Directors

*** *To request a link to the meeting email info@denmanconservancy.org ****

On the Land

Introducing the New DCA Lands Manager: Andy Blackburn! by Erika Bland

Andy is currently in training as the incoming Lands Manager and will take the reins beginning March 1, 2022. Andy grew up in the UK where he studied Physical Geography at the University of Nottingham before moving to BC 6 years ago. After working in science education in Prince Rupert, he moved to Denman in 2020. He is passionate about growing food, and spends any spare time poking at mosses and lichens and playing banjo in his shed. He truly appreciates all the time, energy, sweat and tears the residents of Denman have put into conserving valuable landscapes for the future. He greatly values the protection of ecologically sensitive areas, along with the restoration of disturbed landscapes. He is looking forward to helping continue the DCA's important work on Denman. He also really likes Buffleheads. If you'd like to wish Andy a warm welcome, you can reach him via his new DCA email address: lands.dca@gmail.com.



Andy Blackburn
DCA Land Manager

‘Raven Lands’

a.k.a Pickles Waterfall Wetland Conservation Area

DCA has now completed the transfer process to secure the ~80 acres known locally as the ‘Raven lands’ on Pickles Road. DCA is excited to begin making stewardship plans for this precious area. Once the weather is a bit nicer, we will organize a public walk at the land, so islanders can learn a bit about this lovely and very special place and how to explore it! Meanwhile, here is a map of the land showing its existing walking trail, a lovely, mossy old logging road through the regenerating forest. There are no other trails laid out on the land yet, but that will come as part of the management planning process. We are so grateful for all the support received for this project from islanders and various agencies over the past year.

Building and Strengthening Relationships with Local First Nations

by Erika Bland

Spurred on by the recent Pickles Road acquisition DCA has recently formed a committee to work in collaboration with our membership on building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Peoples in our region. This work is critical as we make decisions about lands that we hold, steward and manage for conservation. We must do a better job at ensuring local First Nations, on who's traditional territories we live and

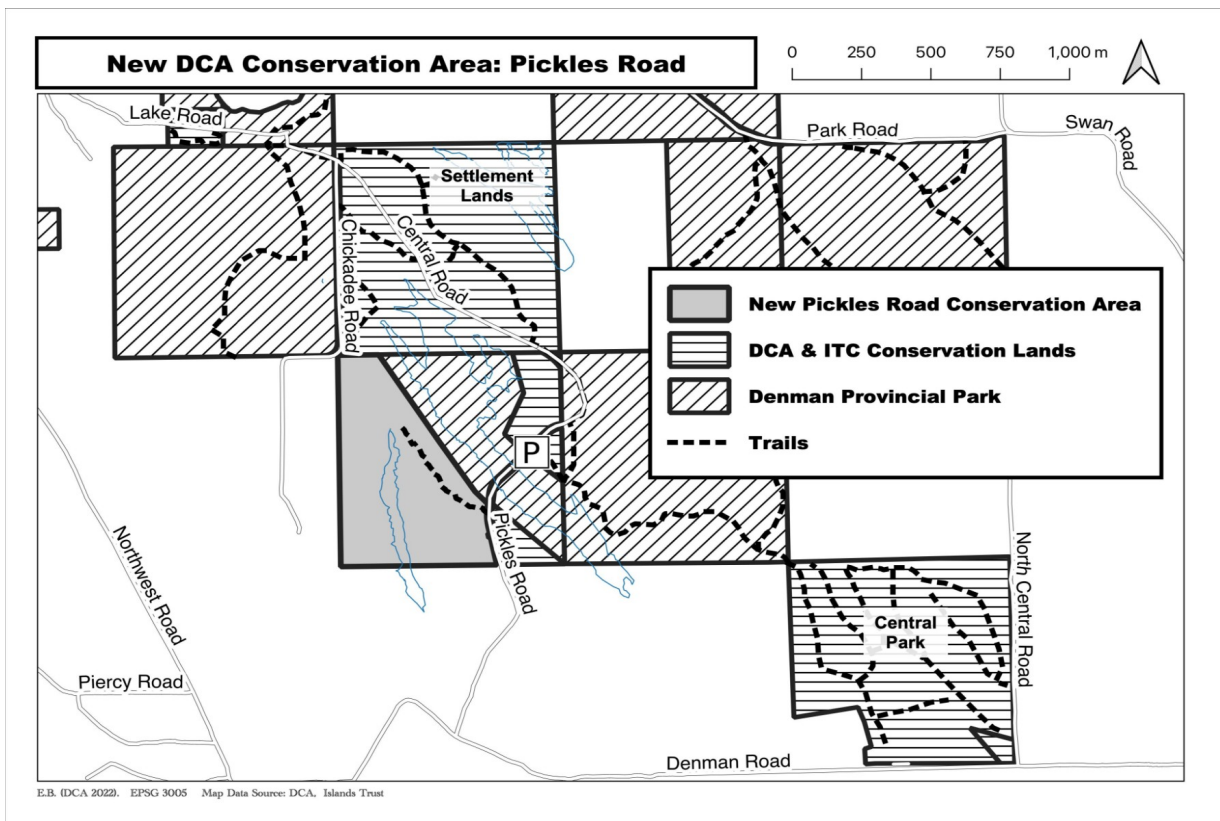
work, are invited to participate in that process, if they wish, from the outset—not just consulted at the tail end of our management planning processes.

Before undertaking any management planning for the new Pickles Rd conservation area this committee will reach out to local First Nations with news of this newly protected area.

Relationship building is the first step to any collaborative efforts between DCA and local First Nations with respect to how we approach the management of DCA lands. We hope that there will be some mutual interest in building a relationship.

In a previous conversation with K’ómoks First Nation Chief and Council, I heard from them that one possible way to cooperate could also be around place naming; consultation on place names is one way to ensure that we as settler land stewards acknowledge the important ties that Indigenous peoples have to the places we collectively hold dear. Thus, we hope the name for the new Pickles Road conservation area will be determined with input from local First Nations. At the same time, we may also ask for input on the renaming of the adjacent ‘Settlement Lands’ property.

Building any relationship of trust and mutual affinity is a process that takes time, but we hope we will learn a lot as we go and that it will be a positive experience for all of us. If DCA members are keen to get involved with this effort, please don’t hesitate to reach out!



2021 – Year in Review

Despite COVID constraints, DCA made good progress in fulfilling the goals of its 5-year *Strategic Plan 2020-25*.

Among the highlights:

- ◆ Acquired 80-acre Raven Lands
- ◆ Acquired 28-acre Danes Creek South parcel
- ◆ Reviewed Management Plans for Lindsay Dickson (LD), Inner Island (IINR) & Valens Brook (VB) Nature Reserves
- ◆ Completed DRAFT Railway Grade Marsh Management Plan; sent to BC Parks & 13 First Nations for review
- ◆ Designated Volunteer Stewards for LD, IINR, VB & Settlement Lands (SL)
- ◆ Met requirements for monitoring lands, covenants & management plans
- ◆ Maintained existing trails & consulted with Parks & Island committees to establish new trails
- ◆ Initiated water quality monitoring on SL
- ◆ Consulted with Regional Implementation Group for Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly & BC Parks regarding hydrological alterations in Park Butterfly Reserve
- ◆ Participated at Summer Market for community outreach & conservation education
- ◆ Facilitated "Workshop 'n Lop" – 10 educational work bees on DCA lands
- ◆ Collaborated with DICES to support an annual Spring Break Nature Camp
- ◆ Involved 15 youth in native seed collection
- ◆ facilitated production of a DCA "Importance of Beavers" video by local youth for Isfeld High School's virtual Eco Fair
- ◆ Partnered with birders for Bird-a-Thon 2021
- ◆ Established DCA committee working on Indigenous Sovereignty and Reconciliation to inform DCA's work
- ◆ Created a brochure on bequest options to support DCA conservation – available at Summer Market & from Comox Valley solicitors
- ◆ Conducted the on-going bat program, collaborating with Conservancy Hornby Island
- ◆ Hosted the ever-popular used Book Sale (this time, indoors with COVID protocols)
- ◆ Undertook intense and wide-reaching fundraising efforts to support DCA's work

2022 Home and Garden Tour

Our Tour coordinators have been doing a great job preparing for the Home and Garden Tour in these uncertain times. Of course, everything is still dependent on that nasty little coronavirus but we're all remaining hopeful that the Tour will go ahead as planned on June 11 and 12.

We're very pleased that JoAnne and Naomi have found 11 homeowners who have already committed to the tour and an additional 21 people who have volunteered to help. While Naomi and JoAnne have been hard at work here on Denman, Katarina has been ably coordinating our media campaign from Barcelona (poor Katarina!)

If you would like to help in any way, please contact Naomi (naomielliott0@gmail.com) or JoAnne (joanneshepherd3210@gmail.com).

AGM by ZOOM (Again)

Please join us: 7:30 pm Monday 28 February

If you haven't received a link, send a request to info@denmanconservancy.org

Get your **questions** answered about Conservancy activities, properties or policies

or maybe just: "Who are these Guys?"

Join the Board?

DCA is seeking new Board members to help guide the organization.

We have interesting tasks ahead with planning for our new lands, caring for existing substantial Conservation Reserves and readying for the challenges ahead.

If you are interested in this work please contact DD Fuchs or Susan-Marie Yoshihara.



Beaver: one of our favourite Denman Isl. wild residents

Donation of Danes Creek Wetland to DCA

DCA would like to thank Henning Nielsen and Bente Pilgaard, of PanDesign Inc., for their generous Ecological Gift of 28 acres of the Danes Creek Wetland Covenant Area. In 2010, these owners, in cooperation with DCA, placed a conservation covenant on 45 acres of this large privately-owned wetland complex. Now, a significant portion of the covenanted-land has been gifted to DCA ownership. In addition, DCA has placed the necessary capital, from the DCA acquisition fund, in trust with the Vancouver Foundation, towards the long-term stewardship of this wetland property.

Conservation ownership means not only that the complete protection, but also all possible day to day research and monitoring activities, are directly overseen by DCA. Also, the former owners are relieved of their covenant and property oversight on those acres. The Danes Creek wetland area was first noted by the international ecologist Dr. Chris Pielou as a significant Western redcedar, skunk cabbage swamp. At that time a remarkable overstory tree-canopy spread above, while among the trees-roots were curious pockets of wetland plants, particularly skunk cabbage.



Shallow wet areas with Sedges & Skunk Cabbage

This site surrounded the headwater basin of Danes Creek. Here, the lower western edge of the impressive Quadra sand formation of Denman's Komos bluffs, meets and overlies the impermeable rocky sandstone-conglomerate formation of Denman's central ridge. Running water over the shallow Danes Creek sands is still a year-round feature.

Logging removed the impressive trees in the late 1990's, but the wetland remained and its significance was apparent. Over the subsequent two decades, the site has evolved from open water pools to complex ponds, marshes and drainage channels. Beaver have been busy organizing water flow patterns. Now, young-tree and residual forest patches surround open sphagnum bog areas. Birds, amphibians, dragonflies and small mammals abound in the diverse terrestrial and aquatic habitats. While many young Sitka spruce trees grow on the wetland edges, a significant and unusual forest of large Western white pines adjoins this wetland property on the upland sands.

With the changing climate, the area's future ecological development is unknown, but if our Western redcedar trees do survive into the future, this wetland may well be one of their sanctuaries. Biologists will observe this sensitive area carefully over the coming years.



Growing Sphagnum moss surrounding skunk cabbage

Webmaster Wanted

DCA is looking for a new webmaster for denman-conservancy.org The web site, running on Wordpress, is still functional but it has not been refurbished since 2012. Offers to Update the web site, and/or expressions of interest in routine maintenance work may be sent to: info@denmanconservancy.org

Contributors to this Newsletter: Jenny Balke, Andy Blackburn, Erika Bland, DD Fuchs, John Millen, Patti Willis, Susan-Marie Yoshihara.