



NEWSLETTER

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

February 2023

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Denman Conservancy Association will be held in the back hall of the Denman Island Community Hall, 1196 Northwest Road, on Monday, 27 February, 2023 at 7:30 PM. The AGM business will include:

- Reports from Co-Chair, Land Manger and Treasurer
- Election of Directors
- Ukulele Review

Refreshments, delicious treats and scintillating conversation following the meeting.

Birdathon 2023

After a Covid-related absence, the DCA Birdathon is back! Before long migratory birds will return from the tropics and our forests, wetlands and shorelines will be bursting with birdsong.

The rules are simple: do the Birdathon on your own or form a group. Then ask your friends to sponsor you and get outside to enjoy identifying as many bird species as you can. The Birdathon starts at 4 pm on Friday, May 26th and goes until 4 pm the next day. If you think it is a bizarre concept to look for birds for 24 hours, don't worry. Some die-hards will scour the island for birds while others will simply enjoy keeping tabs on who comes to their birdfeeders. Spend as much or as little time as you are inclined.

You don't need to be an expert join us in the Birdathon. Even beginning birders know more species than they may think: crows, robins, chickadees, herons, mallards . . . they all are a part of the fabric of life on Denman Island. For those who want to learn more, we'll offer bird-identification sessions in

advance of the big event. In the coming weeks we will announce times and locations of workshops and other Birdathon events.

Did I mention prizes? Categories will include the youngest birder, the oldest birder and the most unusual bird (no budgies or pink flamingos please). We hope that people will limit their use of fossil-fuels during the Birdathon by walking, cycling, paddling, ridesharing, etc. We will offer special prizes in that category. As always, the biggest prize is the knowledge that all the money we raise will go towards the important conservation work done by the Denman Conservancy.



On the Land

I spotted the first nettles popping up out of the humus this week; a sign of brighter, soup and pesto-filled times. Although, with another cold snap in the forecast for this coming week, it's still a little early to get too excited about doing my taxes yet.



December snowstorms brought a good excuse to hibernate for a few days, but also a number of trees down across well-used trails which required some clean-up work over the past few weeks. Thanks to those diligent trail users who continue to give the heads-up and help with trail maintenance throughout the year. The freeze-thaw cycles have been hard on some of our trail surfaces, and as we scuttle cautiously towards spring, we will be assessing some of the more worn spots for possible repairs.

And whilst we're on the trails trail, plans continue to take shape for Raven Woods & Wetlands and the connection of the existing skid-road trail from Pickles Road to the rest of the Central Denman Conservation Complex through the Settlement Lands. We are crossing our fingers for grant funding and to be able to begin work on this soon!

We have also been busy working on a restoration project in Valens Brook Nature Reserve. The impacts of deer browsing on plant communities is well documented and, combined with the increasing impacts of climate change and associated biodiversity loss, is manifesting in very low survival rates for young trees, shrubs, and herb layer plants within areas of the nature reserve. Recent studies have also

been showing the indirect negative impact that deer browsing has on pollinator species, such as bumblebees, that rely on an abundance of flowering plants for foraging.

With funding support from ITC, we have installed two small, fenced restoration areas within the old skid-road area of Valens Brook with the objective of improving the survival rate of replanted native tree species, whilst being able to document the impact of reduced deer browse on shrub and herb-layer species also. We hope to have some interesting observations to share with you in due course!

If you are interested in learning more about our projects, or the studies mentioned above, please drop me an email. Happy trails!

Andy B.
lands.dca@gmail.com

Batty Notes

Preparing for our bats return to this summer's work of bug-catching on Denman! As the better weather approaches it will be time to clean out, repair or move those bat boxes if needed.

Also, this summer we'll organize a few evenings of bat counting across Denman and Hornby. If you'd like to join the bat counters for an evening or two this summer, please let our community bat group know at dhbatproject@gmail.com. Also please contact us if you'd like to be added to the batty email list for the project's 3-4 updates each year.

International Bat Conference in Victoria this April for bat enthusiasts!

The Western Bat Working Group hosts their Biennial bat Conference in Victoria, BC this April 19-21, 2023.

The Western Bat Working Group "consists of agencies, organizations and individuals passionate about bat research, management and conservation from fifteen western states; the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan; the Northwest and Yukon territories and northern Mexico."



It's time to use what we already know.....Equinox magazine noted almost 30 years ago (Sept-Oct 1995) that with a **“beaver pond you've got life”** and **“no artificial structure is as good as a beaver dam in stopping erosion, raising the water table and reviving overgrazed land”**! Living with beavers, our land lives, we live!

Jenny B.



<http://wbwg.org/2023-biennial-meeting/>

The season's **White Nose Disease monitoring** continues until May 31st as the disease gets closer to BC. Please call/email if you find **any Dead Bats**.

Watch a cute 8 min **puppet-bat video from the UK: 'Where did the bats go'** that shows both bat-issues and solutions. Of our own 15 bat species in BC, only 5 are known to have sustainable numbers, nine are already on rare lists and we can help!

<https://vimeo.com/778536169?fbclid=IwAR27N83leDiayMirm7SPc1GGneYtIVLO03GrtvCYNjE2tGEL08dno d49goM>

Beaver Business

Denman Beavers & Water Our Water Engineers have been called **Dam Resourceful!**

Save the Dates!

Please join us in the Denman Activity Centre on April 13th at 7 pm for "A Celebration of Birds." It will be an evening of music, video and photographs including Denis Forsyth's stunning slides of Denman Island birds and the bird-brained music of the Denman Ukulele chorus.

Also, of interest to some and presented by the Denman Island Museum and Archives, a Denman Island Geology and Groundwater talk on February 28, at the Activity Centre Lounge 2:00 – 3:00 PM



2022 – DCA Year in Review

Despite COVID's lingering constraints, DCA made good progress in fulfilling the goals of its *5-year Strategic Plan 2020-25*. Among the many highlights:

- Created the Raven Woods & Wetland Management Committee
 - Held an Information Open House for the Railway Grade Marsh Management Plan with outreach to First Nations; Plan now approved by Ministry of Environment (BC Parks)
 - Met requirements for monitoring lands' covenants & management plans, including working with Islands Trust Conservancy
 - Maintained existing trails; dealt with "danger trees"
 - Participated at Summer Market for community outreach & conservation education
 - Collaborated with DICES to support the annual Spring Break Nature Camp
 - Set up a DCA booth at Isfeld Highschool's Eco Fair; featured new map "Protected Areas of Denman Island" (1295 ha are protected - 25% of DI).
 - Hosted 2 students from UVic's community engagement learning program with projects on bats and wetland restoration
- Hosted the used Book Sale fundraiser in the DCA Room at the Old School
 - Held the biannual Home & Garden Tour netting \$26K towards conservation
 - Endorsed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty
 - Completed survey of Chickadee Lake by bullfrog specialist - no bullfrogs found, monitoring will continue
 - Initiated Winter Wren Wood parking area restoration and decommission
 - Created Wetlands Display at the DI Museum
 - Held a ½ day Board retreat to review priorities & structure
 - Initiated a website reno
 - Sponsored on-going bat program, including repairs of Old School & "Batty Updates Presentation"
 - Contracted a Water Science Outreach Coordinator
 - Renewed membership in BC Land Trust Alliance
 - Initiated island-wide beaver stewardship and habitat project
 - Inception of Valens Brook enclosure
 - Ongoing dialogues with landowners who wish to have environmental covenants placed on their properties
 - Discussions with landowners who wish to donate their properties to DCA

Things Without Titles

By the time you read this, we will have passed the midpoint between Winter and Spring! The days are getting longer and, slightly, warmer. Hopefully, the snow has run its course. Buds are getting red and our forests are poised to explode with even more life once again!