

# Reprint Island Tides

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## Galiano's land for re-creating and learning

Suzanne Fournier

This year the Galiano Conservancy Association has spearheaded the successful \$4 million acquisition of 288 acres of land. Conservancy director Ken Millard notes that 'the acquisition of DL 58 'joins the Trincomali Nature Sanctuary to Bodega Ridge Provincial Park via a corridor comprising the Great Beaver Swamp, the Pebble Beach Reserve including the Cable Bay Restoration Forest, Laughlin Lake and our recently-purchased Learning Centre land on DL 57.'

In all, the mid-Galiano Conservation Network, as it is known, now comprises a protected area of more than 500 hectares. Like all lands in the Salish Sea, mid-Galiano is home to diverse bird populations, from eagles, turkey vultures and peregrine falcons to at-risk species such as the olive-sided flycatcher and the great blue heron.

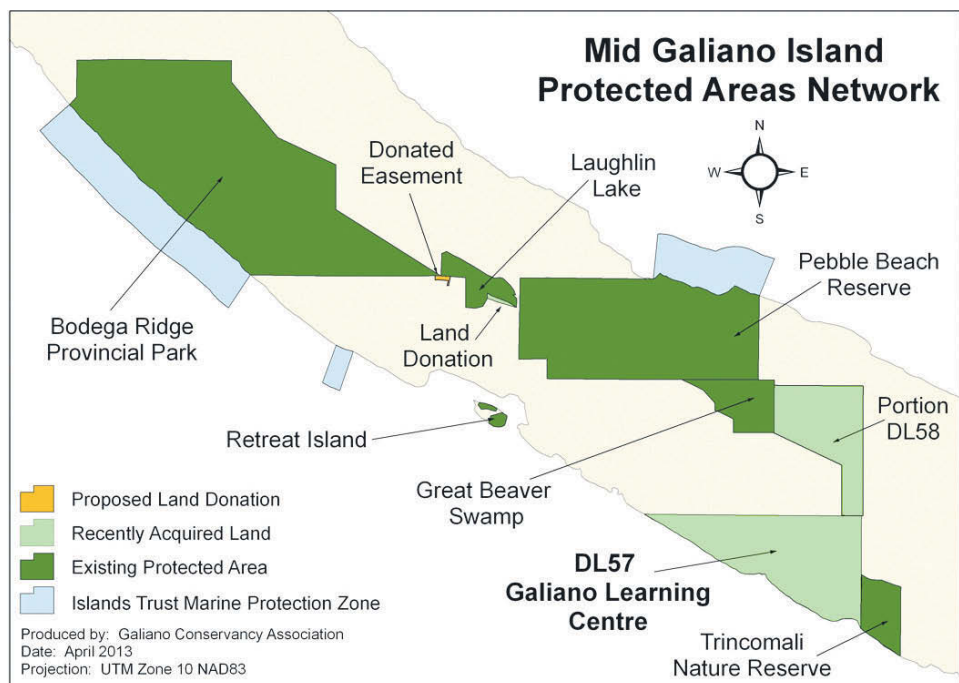
On August 31, Galiano Islanders will celebrate the preservation of the very heart of their island with a six-kilometre fundraising walk and community gathering called 'A Walkalong for Learning' (see What's On?, page 11, for details).

DL 58 was acquired in large part by donations from Galiano Conservancy (CGA) members and supporters. The Nature Conservancy of Canada then joined the partnership, matching the money raised by the GCA through the support of the federal government's Natural Areas Conservation program.

Title is now held by the Islands Trust Fund and will have a conservation covenant registered in favour of the Galiano Conservancy. 'This partnership provides a very high level of protection for our mid-island land base,' notes Ken Millard of the GCA. 'We have a management plan and we have a very

strong obligation to follow that plan. This is about protecting land on a forever basis.'

Eventually trails will be built through DL 58 to link all the mid-island forever-protected lands, from coast to coast. The



conservation partnership also 'provides good checks and balances, in that one owner is covenanted by another organization—it's a very high degree of land protection,' notes Kate Emmings, an ecosystem protection specialist for the Islands Trust Fund.

The new nature reserve on DL 58 ranges from beaver wetlands to an inland bluff with pockets of old-growth Douglas fir and Garry oak. Below lies a typically lush Galiano forest of red alder, western red cedar and big-leaf maple.

In contrast, the Galiano Conservancy's Restorative Learning Centre land on DL 57 is heavily impacted in some areas by industrial activity including logging and milling, but still has

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many hectares of agricultural land, forest and pristine waterfront. Also known as the Campbell family lands, like DL58, it is laden with cultural value and history. 'Many people who came to Galiano Island got their start on that land,' notes Millard.

Under the stewardship of the conservancy, the goal is both to heal and restore the impacted lands while enhancing their value to the community. DL 57 is being cleared of broom, assessed for agricultural values and cleaned of debris and industrial waste. "One of our goals is to have a community agricultural area, where people can grow and harvest their own food, says Millard, noting that will further enhance food security on Galiano.

### **Educational Objectives**

Funds raised by the August 31 Walkalong, whether through old-fashioned paper pledge sheets or online Facebook appeals, will go to the GCA's ongoing environmental education programs. Millard has long believed that DL 57 would be ideal for a permanent residential homebase for programs and retreats.

Since 2000, more than 7,000 people, most of them children, have participated in nature programs hosted by the GCA. 'In some cases, it changes their lives,' observes Millard of the inner-city students who attend Galiano Conservancy programs. He recalls one student marvelling that 'You guys are doing this for

everybody, forever, not just yourselves.'

'I was really surprised at how many kids from inner-city Vancouver or Victoria may live so close to natural spaces yet they never get out to them,' says Emmings, who has lived on Galiano for 17 years and herself taught nature programs. 'It's an intense experience for many urban kids and of course it's much better as a multi-day, multi-site experience.' A key goal for the program is to move from the temporary camping to a permanent facility where kids could spend several days immersed in nature.

### **The Next Step**

Although creative financing has now preserved mid-Island Galiano, more money is urgently needed to keep bringing children to nature. Aug 31's walkalong, slated to become an annual event, has a dual purpose: to mark the official celebration of a creative and powerful land protection partnership between the Galiano Conservancy Association and the Islands Trust Fund and to fundraise for educational programs.

Walkers can sign-up to canvass for pledges, turning their walk into support for the Conservancy's longstanding 'From the Forest to the Sea' environmental education programs.

To make a donation or sign-up, visit [gcawalkalong.causevox.com](http://gcawalkalong.causevox.com). 