

Spring 2011



# The Steward

## Sansum Point Land Acquisition



**S**eldom do we have the opportunity to preserve such a significant tract of land as the 128 acres at Sansum Point on Stoney Hill. By saving Sansum Point, we can acquire over 60 acres of low bank waterfront, help maintain the picturesque views through Sansum Narrows, provide trails with expansive vistas over the Narrows and add links in the chain of marine and forest trails through the Cowichan area. Acting now to save this magnificent property will add a key building block in a conservation network throughout our Valley.

You can find out more about the Sansum Point acquisition on our website at [www.cowichanlandtrust.ca](http://www.cowichanlandtrust.ca). If you're interested in making a tax-deductible donation to the acquisition fund, you can send or drop off a cheque to our office. Alternatively, you can donate using a credit card directly through our website!

Submitted by: Gillian Pugh, a director of the Maple Bay Community Association

[www.cowichanlandtrust.ca](http://www.cowichanlandtrust.ca)

# 12th Annual International LOW TIDE DAY in Cowichan Bay

SATURDAY MAY 7, 2011, 11:00 A.M.  
COWICHAN BAY, KIL-PAH-LAS BEACH

On **May 7, Cowichan Bay** joins communities all around the world in celebrating International Low Tide Day. The motto of the day is: **“ONE TIDE, ON ONE DAY, AROUND THE WORLD...BECAUSE WE ALL LIVE DOWNSTREAM.”** Low Tide Day 2011 is a joint effort of the Cowichan Bay Improvement Association, the Cowichan Land Trust, the Cowichan Valley Naturalist Society, and the Young Naturalists Club with assistance from the Marine Ecology Centre, the Cowichan Valley Regional District, Cowichan Tribes, the Pacific Biological Station, and many local businesses, individuals, and organizations.

Low Tide Day provides interesting, exciting, fun, earth care opportunities for adults and children of all ages.

The day begins with a beach clean up for Adults and older youth at 11:00 am at Kil-Pah-Las Beach in Cowichan Bay (beside Oceanfront Grand Hotel). Participants join together in teams to clean debris from the shores and roads of the Estuary.

Families with Younger Children can join the Cleaner-Uppers at 12:30 for Lunch and music, then everyone can participate in an afternoon of hands-on science:

- Volunteer scientists from the Pacific Biological Station, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, will conduct a beach seine to identify and display fish and other critters swimming in the shallow waters just below low tide.
- Dr. Bill Austen and his crew will lead the “quadrat study”, where squares of beach are marked and participants sift and dig their defined area in order to count and identify all the living things they find.

The data collected is used to help assess the health of the estuary.

Enjoy Great Food, Live Entertainment, Displays, Presentations, and partake in a Celebration of the shore.



For more information contact John at [estuary@naturecowichan.net](mailto:estuary@naturecowichan.net) or 250-746-6141 or Jeff at [jeffquinton@hotmail.com](mailto:jeffquinton@hotmail.com) 250-252-1400.

View a CBC film about Low Tide Day 2000 at [http://archives.cbc.ca/environment/environmental\\_protection/clips/16649/](http://archives.cbc.ca/environment/environmental_protection/clips/16649/)

## Friends of Cowichan Creeks

Over the next two years we will be working to monitor, protect, and enhance creeks throughout the Cowichan Region. To do this, we've been supporting the work of local streamkeeper groups by organizing community work parties to remove invasive plants and plant native species. This will provide a number of benefits to the stream habitat, including increasing species diversity and providing shade. We've also hosted streamkeeper and restoration courses to educate local people and show them what they can do to improve the local creeks!



Getting youth involved in streamkeeping has been one of our top priorities for this project; these are our future land stewards! With the help of students from Queen Margaret's School, we are monitoring and evaluating water quality on Bings/Holmes Creek in Duncan to determine factors that could contribute to poor stream health. We've also worked with youth from Dwight International School, Chemainus Secondary, Koksilah Elementary, Neighbourhood House, Young Naturalists Club, Multicultural Leadership Group and Wilderness International on creeks throughout the Valley. In March, we hosted a youth-focused Streamkeepers course, with the participants from the course going on to adopt Treffery Creek in Cowichan Bay.

We will be hosting several work parties in the upcoming months, so be sure to check out the "Upcoming Events" section of our homepage. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer streamkeeper, would like to be added to our streamkeeper email list or want to sign up for one of our courses, please contact Jen at **250-746-0227** or via email: [jen@cowichanlandtrust.ca](mailto:jen@cowichanlandtrust.ca).

## Streamkeeper Feature

Dear Jen,

*I took the Streamkeepers course to encourage my grandchildren in activities with me such as being a streamkeeper and supporting our Mother Earth.*



*I was surprised by the heart felt experience I gained through this course, got much more than I imagined and was blessed out of my borrowed Wellingtons. I believe to be in Nature with your loved ones is always wonderful, but to be with the grandchildren you adore is even more so. I am recalling the words of Chief Seattle that "we are not receiving the earth from our ancestors but borrowing it from our grandchildren," which I take to mean that the protection and caring of nature is a sacred trust. We carry out that trust by sharing our love of the earth and all that dwell therein with our grand children in the hope that they will carry this on for their own.*

*With appreciation and gratitude,*

**Dianne Schwestak**  
Crofton

## Streamkeepers Course

May 28 & 29 • 9am-4pm



Learn the skills required to evaluate, measure and monitor potential fish-bearing streams

Course includes practical in-class training and field work on Oliver Creek in Lake Cowichan

**Registration Required**

\$60/person (includes lunch)  
\$20 manual (optional)

**Cowichan Land Trust**

#6-55 Station St., Duncan BC

(250) 746-0227 • [info@cowichanlandtrust.ca](mailto:info@cowichanlandtrust.ca)

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:  
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Environment  
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## Cowichan Estuary Interpretive Nature Centre

**Imagine** an interactive and interpretive nature centre that creates opportunities for children and adults to learn about the amazing Cowichan Estuary, its watershed, natural and cultural history, marine life, and human impacts. An energetic group of local citizens led by Committee Chair Jane Kiltrei have had this



vision and the Cowichan Land Trust has agreed to help them. Together we will create a place of learning and recreation for the whole family, for local people and for visitors, next to Hecate Park in Cowichan Bay.

**The Cowichan Estuary** is an important place where tidal salt water and fresh water from streams, rivers and creeks come together. It provides a home for fish, birds, and other animals that depend on a healthy estuary for their survival. The Cowichan Land Trust has a strong connection with the estuary including eelgrass restoration projects and the annual celebration of Low Tide Day.

**Our Cowichan Estuary is unique and it is threatened!** At the Centre people will learn why our estuary is special, the pressures on it, and how each of us can be part of the solution to make it a healthy place for marine and estuary life.

**The Cowichan Estuary Interpretive Nature Centre** will provide a place where interactive hands-on, on-site, in the field, on-the-water, and in the classroom education opportunities will exist for people of all ages. The committee may be able to obtain \$315,000 in grants to complete the first phase of the Centre, but we will need to raise at least \$35,000 locally. For more information or to volunteer for the committee, visit [www.cowichanestuary.wordpress.com](http://www.cowichanestuary.wordpress.com) or email [estuary@naturecowichan.net](mailto:estuary@naturecowichan.net)

### Donations:

Make a donation online at [www.cowichanestuary.wordpress.com/donate](http://www.cowichanestuary.wordpress.com/donate); [www.cowichanlandtrust.ca/help](http://www.cowichanlandtrust.ca/help) or by cheque to the **Cowichan Land Trust, 6 – 55 Station Street, Duncan, BC V9L 1M2.**

Please indicate that your donation is for the Cowichan Estuary Interpretive Nature Centre.



Just this morning I listened to a radio program in which a number of brain and human health research authorities spoke about their 'scientific' findings that experiencing nature, the non-urban environment, its calm, its beauty and even its smells were not just good for people... but very good. It contributes to one's being happier, healthy, calmer more focused and more able to learn! Then I phoned John Scull to work out arrangements for our going to meet with someone who values the piece of nature that has been his home and wants to discuss the CLT's help in making sure it remains nature and is not eaten up by development as the world unfolds. Does this make our organization 'conservative' and 'a head of the curve' at the same time?

**Message  
from the  
President  
Jim Ayers**

When you look through this newsletter you will get a sense of the variety of our conservation and environmental education projects. Their success is measured in a number of ways but the one that stands out for me at the moment is that all this community work has helped to contribute to our profile has a creditable and local, environmental organization. Thus quite aside from our big project of working with The Land Conservancy out of Victoria to preserve the Sansum Narrows site we have, just recently, had four land owners approach us about establishing conservation covenants on their property or donating land to be preserved in perpetuity.

Our Land Trust is really working and all our hard working staff, our volunteers and our contributing members should take pride in this success. Thank you to everyone for helping to make this happen

## Quamichan Stewards are Moving Forward with Quamichan Management Plan

As many of you may know the Cowichan Land Trust Office has been the home of the Quamichan Watershed Stewardship Society's EcoAction funded project called 'Implementing the Quamichan Watershed Management Plan'.

To kick this project off, the Quamichan Stewards co-hosted the BC Lake Stewardship Society's 2010 Community Forum in June 2010. The forum was a huge success and drew in over 400 people!



After hiring a project coordinator the next task was to create a public access strategy for the Quamichan watershed. This involved identifying public access points and including watershed residents and other stakeholders in the process of deciding if and how lake access should be improved through a survey and a community meeting. The Quamichan Watershed Access Strategy report has now been compiled and will soon be available on our website. The next step is to propose to North Cowichan Council that we host some work parties at two or three of the access sites and improve them enough to allow people to take their kayak or canoe down to the lake and launch them.

Another main goal of the management plan is to reduce non-source nutrients reaching the lake. This project has set out to do this by working with watershed residents and the District of North Cowichan to convert neighborhoods from septic to sewer where possible. This is happening in the Moose Road neighborhood which is the only feasible area at this time. A septic system education brochure is being created to inform watershed residents with septic how to maintain and care for their systems.

The Quamichan Stewards have been working with the Garry Oak Preserve and a wetland specialist named Tom Biebighauser to create a wetland on the Preserve near a creek that has been filling with sediment and jumping its banks. This wetland will help to reduce the sediment and filter out nutrients before the creek reaches Quamichan Lake. As well it will provide habitat for amphibians, insects and native plants. Tom will be visiting in May to examine the feasibility of the location and identify other possible locations for wetlands restoration in the watershed.



On April 30th we hosted our first fishing derby at Art Mann Park. The event was a huge success and we hope to make it an annual event. See the Quamichan Lake Fishing Derby article for more information.



## Seven year old lands the largest fish at Quamichan Lake Fishing Derby

The lure of catching some fish and the shining sun brought fishers and their families out to Art Mann Park on Saturday where the Quamichan Stewards hosted their first fishing Derby on Quamichan Lake.

After spending the morning with their rods, boats and lawn chairs participants brought their fish back to the park for the final weigh-in. Seven year old Carson Batty brought in the largest fish, a nice sized 1.45 lb cutthroat trout and took home first prize in the child's category. The next largest fish was a 1.4 lb trout brought in by Marion Roys. Frazer Willmott, also seven, caught a 1.35 lb trout and won second prize in the child's category. Jeremy Thomassen took home second prize in the adult's category with his 1.35 lb trout. The Grand Prize was to go to the person who caught the most invasive species, but unfortunately no invasive species were caught.



On the shore derby spectators and participants took part in activities including the Freshwater Fisheries Society's Learn to Fish program, kayak tours with Wilderness Kayaking Co., relaxing on the dock provided by Vancouver Island Roll-A-Dock,

kid's activities with the Cowichan Land Trust and eating up delicious burgers barbequed by the Rotary Club of Duncan's 'Burger Boys'.

Overall it was a great day that brought out over 150 people, fifty-one of whom entered the derby. Once the accounting is complete, all profits from the derby will be donated to the Sansum Point land acquisition.

We would like to send a huge thank you to our sponsors for helping us make this event such a success; Bucky's Sport Shop, Monti's Boat Sales, Volume One Books, Lifetimer Boats, Thrifty Foods, Wilderness Kayaking Co., Vancouver Island Roll-A-Dock, Rotary Club of Duncan, Cowichan Land Trust, Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, Wholesale Sports Outdoor Outfitters. This project was undertaken with the financial support of Environment Canada.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the CLT is an important contribution to our continued presence in the Cowichan Valley and makes it possible for us to continue our work to conserve our natural heritage.

Thank you to all our members, volunteers and Directors for your support. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Cowichan Land Trust or making a donation, please contact the office at (250) 746-0227 or visit our website at: [www.cowichanlandtrust.ca](http://www.cowichanlandtrust.ca).

We would like to thank our Spring Newsletter contributors, Jim Ayers, Gill Pugh, Jen Morgen, Kai Rietzel, and John Scull,

And a special thanks to Amber Hiscock, graphic designer.

## The Cowichan Land Trust thanks our current funders!

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