

# Wedding raises \$10,000 for Galiano Island's Great Beaver Swamp

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**O**n July 28, Galiano residents, Kate Emmings and Keith Erickson were married. The wedding was an all-day affair, spanning two Islands: Pender Island, the home of Kate's parents, Peter & Tessa Emmings, and Galiano Island at the home of the bride and groom. The ceremony was beautiful, with forest and ocean backdrops and perfect weather.

But this wedding was not just a regular run of the mill nuptial, Kate and Keith decided to turn their special day into a fundraiser for the Great Beaver Swamp on Galiano Island. 'Our community and Galiano Island's natural beauty have been a big part of our lives together,' says Kate, 'We wanted to find a way for our wedding to reflect these connections.'

'While reading *Green Legacies: A Donor's Guide for BC*, Kate stumbled upon a story about an island couple who asked that donations be made to the Nature Trust in lieu of wedding gifts,' says Keith, conservation co-ordinator with the Galiano Conservancy Association. 'We've never had a lot of cash to give to land acquisitions, but we thought that this could be our way of giving back to the community and the land where we live.'

The couple asked guests to consider a donation to the acquisition of the Great Beaver Swamp on Galiano Island as a wedding gift. To encourage donors to be generous, Victoria-based Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) agreed to match donations with its Acquisition Fund. The combined effort raised \$10,000 towards the acquisition of the wetland property.

The Great Beaver Swamp is a 17.5 hectare (44 acre) wetland property on Galiano Island. It is the headwaters of Beaver Creek, the bulk of which is protected in the Pebble Beach Reserve. Its acquisition completes the protection of most of the Beaver Creek watershed. Of the property, the BC Conservation Data Centre has stated, 'the site has value as one of the largest of only 19 wetlands mapped on Galiano. Wetlands are under-represented in the Gulf Islands. The Great Beaver Swamp acquisition is an excellent example of landscape and watershed-level

conservation planning that ensures protection of not just an individual wetland or stream, but the entire wetland complex, stream and riparian areas.'

The Galiano Conservancy Association has successfully purchased the land and is now working to raise funds to retire the debt on the property. All funds raised will go towards the property purchase price. 'To us, our wedding was about more than a commitment to each other,' says Kate, 'We were thrilled to raise funds for the Great Beaver Swamp in recognition of the role of Galiano Island in our lives.'

The Galiano Conservancy Association continues to raise funds for the Great Beaver Swamp on Galiano Island. To learn more about this important conservation effort, or to donate, visit the Galiano Conservancy Association website at [www.galianoconservancy.ca](http://www.galianoconservancy.ca). Information about Habitat Acquisition Trust and its conservation efforts can be found at [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca).



A beautiful couple: Kate Emmings and Keith Erickson celebrating at their Island wedding.