

Strait of Georgia **Island Tides**

Uniting Islands Around The Salish Sea — Big and Small

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\$2 at Selected Retailers

Hands up for Galiano restorative learning centre ~ Emily Menzies

On 10/10/10, fifty members of the Galiano Conservancy Association joined the international climate action movement working and investing in a better future for youth. A resounding 'Yes!' vote at the

refundable deposit due by the end of December to purchase the land needed for the Centre. The conservancy is also committed to raising the remaining capital needed to complete the purchase by mid-February—\$2 million. It is



Extraordinary General Meeting held last Sunday has launched the organization's latest and boldest initiative: to purchase land to create a permanent 'Restorative Learning Centre' that will benefit people throughout the region, especially youth in need from our urban centres.

Staff, board members, volunteers and program recipients gave presentations and testimonials regarding the Conservancy's success in protecting land, restoring ecosystems and providing experiential education to over 25,000 youth and adults since it was founded in 1989. Here at last is the opportunity to build on this work and take it to the next level, realizing the long held dream of many supporters to provide multi-day outdoor education opportunities at a facility which models sustainability in all respects. It was a proud moment, as attendees envisioned the many ways Islanders would now have a place from which to share the experience of being immersed in vibrant beauty and peace. Residents and visitors alike will be able to restore the land while restoring themselves!

This decision was not taken lightly, as it commits the Galiano Conservancy to first raise a \$100,000 non-

looking for donors whose contributions will be matched by the Natural Areas Conservation Program administered by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. These funds will help us acquire and protect over 290 acres of diverse ecosystems, connecting existing protected areas in a green corridor spanning Galiano Island coast to coast.

The protection and restoration of these areas will help reduce carbon emissions as native vegetation is planted building healthy soils and ensure protection from wildfires. The value of the whole of this project is much greater than the sum of its parts however; by connecting currently separated protected areas Galiano's many diverse and increasingly rare species will have the ability to adapt to climate change through moving between elevations, ecotypes and micro-climates. Moreover, it will provide a critical learning resource for restoring the resiliency of our ecological, social and economic communities with practical demonstrations of solutions that work.

The Centre's ongoing overhead and operating costs will be covered through a social enterprise model developed through a bursary for SFU's Community Economic

Development program. We would also like to acknowledge the YMCA's Youth Environmental Internship Program, which allowed the hiring of staff to assist with this project.

The Galiano Restorative Learning Centre will benefit local and regional youth, residents and visitors, teachers and learners—as well as all living beings who depend on a stable climate. Within ten days of this Extraordinary Meeting, community members contributed over \$60,000 towards the initial deposit!

Would you or someone you know like to support this community project as well? Please contact Ken Millard for more information: conservancy@galianoconservancy.ca, 250-539-2424 to help create a legacy of hope for the future, today. 🍃
