



Galiano Conservancy Association
R.R.#1 2540 Sturdies Bay Road
Galiano Island, B.C. V0N 1P0
Tel/fax: 250-539-2424
Email: conservancy@galianoconservancy.ca
www.galianoconservancy.ca
Charitable tax # 886092998RR0001

NEWS RELEASE
August 30, 2013

**GALIANO CONSERVANCY HOLDS AUG. 31 “WALKALONG FOR LEARNING” TO
RAISE FUNDS FOR LEARNING CENTRE PROGRAMS**

The Galiano Conservancy Association is holding a six-kilometre “Walkalong for Learning” this Saturday, August 31 from 1 to 4 pm, as part of an enthusiastic grassroots fundraising campaign to provide nature programs to underserved youth. The Conservancy is also working to establish a permanent Learning Centre to host these youth for enhanced multi-day programs. Donations and pledges per kilometre, raised by children, adults and seniors, began to trickle in weeks ago, and are close to reaching or surpassing the \$15,000 goal. The six-km trek will start at Laughlin Lake, follow the Restoration Interpretive Trail to Cable Bay, then south to Pebble Beach and back up the trail, returning by GCA bus back to DL 57, the home of the future Learning Centre.

A celebration following the Walkalong, from 4 to 7 pm on DL 57 at 10825 Porlier Pass Drive, will mark the public recognition of a partnership between the GCA, the Islands Trust Fund and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which has secured the protection of 288 acres of land on DL 57 and recently DL 58 as part of the Mid-Galiano Conservation Network. The two district lots together represent a successful \$4 million acquisition. In all, the Mid-Galiano Conservation Network now comprises a continuous protected area of more than 500 hectares or 1,200 acres.

“Galiano lies in the Coastal Douglas-fir Zone, designated an ecosystem at-risk, and we have now secured a protected corridor from Trincomali Channel at sea-level, through wetlands and forest to the highest ridge-tops on Galiano and back down to the Strait of Georgia,” notes Ken Millard of the GCA. “This comprises the full spectrum of ecosystems within the Coastal Douglas-fir Zone.” The Learning Centre to be built on DL 57 will extend the GCA’s environmental education day-programs – accessed by 7,000 people, many of them inner-city children and youth, since 2000—to include an intensive multi-day immersion in nature.

The Islands Trust Fund, through its Regional Conservation Plan, aims to see the creation of a network of protected areas across the islands that conserve the biodiversity of the region, while also working to weave human interaction with the landscape in a sustainable way.

“We were thrilled the Galiano Conservancy Association took the lead in protecting the Learning Centre Land (DL 57) and were pleased to financially support the acquisition with an Opportunity

Fund grant,” said Kate Emmings of the Islands Trust Fund, which also is contributing to Saturday’s community celebration at DL 57. Emmings noted the Centre's land is adjacent to DL 58, also now protected. "This acquisition provides wonderful connectivity essential to the survival of many species," said Emmings. The permanent Learning Centre “will foster improved relationships between children, adults and the land, through its educational programs," she said.

The Galiano Conservancy was able to secure the properties through generous donations from its members and supporters, aided by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which provided matching funds with the support of the Government of Canada through the Natural Areas Conservation Program funds. The Galiano project was a "perfect fit" for those NCC funds, "which aim to protect Canada’s most iconic and threatened habitats, such as the Coastal Douglas-fir forests found on Galiano and the other Gulf Islands,” says Tim Ennis, West Coast Program Manager for the Nature Conservancy of Canada. “We are thrilled to have partnered with the Galiano Conservancy to secure DL 58.”

The Galiano Conservancy plans to make the Walkalong an annual event that celebrates conservation and community, with donors on- and off-island, all committed to creating multi-day nature programs at a Learning Centre in the heart of Galiano Island.

For more information, please visit galianoconservancy.ca/walkalong

CONTACT

Ken Millard, Coordinator
Galiano Conservancy Association
250-539-2424