



Galiano  
Conservancy  
ASSOCIATION

## JULY 2025 NEWSLETTER

### Summer is a season for connection at the GCA!

From the forest to the classroom, summertime is a season for creativity, connection, and community at the Galiano Conservancy.

As the warm days unfold, so do the stories—of children bringing language to life through puppetry on Penelakut Island, of university students restoring ecosystems hand-in-hand with local mentors, and of forest trails preparing to hum with music once more at our yearly Musical Walkalong.



*Photo: Caleigh Alder playing for Walkalong participants*

Dive into this month's updates and visit our website to find out more!



### SUPPORT

We need the help of supporters like you to continue to preserve



### VISIT

Discover Galiano's extraordinary places and trails! Come visit



### LEARN

Explore the Galiano Conservancy's wide selection of immersive,

and restore coastal ecosystems where learning and a love of nature can flourish—thank you for your generosity!

[DONATE, BECOME A MEMBER, OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP](#) →

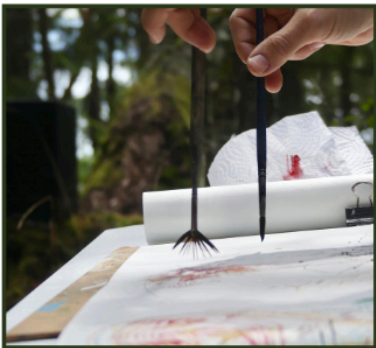
the Millard Learning Centre (MLC) and take a hike through the diverse habitats in the Mid-Island Protected Areas Network!

[MORE ABOUT THE MLC & TRAIL NETWORK](#) →

hands-on, environmental learning programs for people of all ages, to deepen your connection to nature!

[MORE ABOUT GCA's EDUCATION PROGRAMS](#) →

A MUSICAL JOURNEY IN THE FOREST  
JOIN US FOR THE 2025 MUSICAL  
WALKALONG!



Step into a world where nature sets the stage and music and art fill the air.

The 13th annual Musical Walkalong returns **Sunday, August 24th from 1:30–5:00 PM** at the Galiano Conservancy's Millard Learning Centre —and you won't want to miss it!

Experience the scenic forest trails of the MLC, as they come alive with art and sound in the early part of the afternoon. The trail performances will be followed by a joyful afternoon of live music, local food and drink, and a soul-stirring dance and song performance by the Coastal Blood Singers at the Celebration Main Stage, next to the MLC classroom.

With kid-friendly activities, a scavenger hunt, and a warm, inclusive vibe, this event is your ticket to a one-of-a-kind celebration of community, creativity, and the natural world.

We encourage you to **pre-purchase your Walkalong tickets**, to streamline the registration process and avoid having to wait when arriving on site! 🌿

[More Information and Ticket Sales for 2025 Walkalong](#)

2025 AGM WRAP-UP

# A CELEBRATION OF GROWTH AND TRANSITION



*Image: Ribes sanguineum by Walter Siegmund (Creative Commons)*

The Galiano Conservancy Association's 2025 Annual General Meeting brought together community members, staff, and board members for an afternoon of reflection, updates, and renewal.

Highlights included inspiring program updates from GCA staff—ranging from puppet-making with Penelakut youth to innovative forest restoration techniques on Quadra Hill—and a look at water conservation programs and expanding Galiano's land stewardship efforts. The GCA's Indigenous-led Q'úyél q'úwen – Restoring the Balance initiative was also spotlighted, emphasizing deeper collaborative ecological healing through Indigenous forest, deer, and understory stewardship.

This year also marked a significant board transition, with heartfelt thanks extended to retiring board members Sheila Anderson, Pearl Roberts, and Suzanne Fournier for their many years of service. New board members Tahirih Rockafella, Blake Danis, and Mike Keefer were warmly welcomed, joining continuing directors Risa Smith, Nancy Wilkin, Laurene Stefanyk, George Maddison, Julie Gardner, Sid Fels, Holly Schofield, and Emily Gonzales. We are also pleased to announce our new Executive Committee for 2025-2026: Nancy Wilkin, Chair; Risa Smith, Vice Chair; Sid Fels, Treasurer; Emily Gonzales, Secretary.

The meeting concluded with a compelling talk by Dr. Lori Daniels of UBC on Coexisting with Wildfire, offering powerful insights into how communities like Galiano can build resilience in a changing climate.

We would like to thank everyone who was able to attend, for taking the time to make their voice heard at the 2025 AGM, whether in person or remotely. Your ongoing support and involvement mean the world to us!

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS  
UVIC SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
RETURNS TO GCA FOR THE 13TH YEAR!



Students in the UVic School of Environmental Studies and Restoration of Natural Systems program wrapped up their 13th annual Field School at the Millard Learning Centre. Over nine days, students engaged with the land, learned from an inspiring lineup of local guest speakers—including Risa Smith, Tom Mommsen, Suzanne Fournier, Lorne Silvey, Terre Satterfield, Kate Emmings, Keith Erickson, Loren Wilkinson, and Emily Gonzales—and explored themes of restoration through both academic seminar and hands-on activities.

The students chose six GCA priority projects and presented their initial findings at a public event that was well attended by community and GCA board members. Final results will be delivered in the form of reports later in the summer and published on the GCA's Knowledge Hub. These are expected to support directly the Conservancy's ongoing programs.

Led by UVic professor Eric Higgs, with mentorship from Adam Huggins and support from UVic teaching assistants Sylvie Hawkes and Alia Johnson, the field school offered a learning environment shaped by collaboration and community. Special thanks go to Lúthien Teel for providing nourishing meals throughout the course.

# HANDS-ON LEARNING WITH LOCAL YOUTH: PUPPETS ON PENELAKUT THE HUL'Q'UMI'NUM VIDEO LANGUAGE PROJECT



*Penelakut Puppeteers, Top row, from left to right: Sky, Stanley, Lucas, Jeremiah, Leonard, Erika, Bernie, Mel; Bottom row, from left to right: Cayla, Sarah, Ria*



This spring, the Galiano Conservancy Association had the joy and honour of collaborating with students and staff at Penelakut Island Elementary School on a vibrant, student-led Hul'q'umi'num language video project.

Through the art of puppetry, students brought their own characters to life while deepening their connection to their ancestral language, culture, and creative expression.

With support from community mentors and educators, what began with a traveling puppet theater blossomed into a full-scale performance—complete with handmade puppets, original skits, and a school-wide show that left everyone smiling. 🤗🎭

[Read About the Hul'q'umi'num Language Video Project](#)

CALLING OUT INTREPID, SEA-LOVING VOLUNTEERS!  
**KELP MAPPING - YEAR 9!**



*GCA Conservation Coordinator Sofia Silverman mapping kelp beds around Galiano in 2024*

If you've spent time walking the shores or paddling the coastline of Galiano, you've likely noticed kelp washed up on beaches or floating in the ocean. Q'am', or bull kelp, is a classic sight around the Salish Sea, with its whip-like stipe, flowing blades, and bulb-shaped float. Multiple kelp forests surround Galiano Island, providing critical habitat and feeding grounds that support a wide range of marine life like sea stars, rockfish, otters, herring, and much more.

These ecosystems hold immense value, and have the ability to trap and store carbon, up to 10 times more than land forests, which is becoming increasingly important in the face of climate change. Kelp forests have been declining throughout the Salish Sea due to a range of pressures, such as pollution and climate change. This has a ripple effect across marine ecosystems, impacting many forms of ocean life, from algae to orcas.

The Galiano Conservancy Association (GCA) has been mapping kelp forests surrounding the island since 2016 to get an understanding of the changes within these ecosystems. This data is collected throughout August from five kelp beds bordering the island. At low tide, when the kelp beds are most visible, GCA staff and volunteers kayak around the border of the kelp forests with a GPS to map out their size. This data is compared with past years to detect changes within the kelp beds.

Interested in helping out? You can bring your own kayak or borrow one of ours (please note that some prior sea kayaking experience is required). Email Sofia Silverman at [oceans@galianoconservancy.ca](mailto:oceans@galianoconservancy.ca) to sign up and be part of protecting these crucial coastal ecosystems.



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See What We're Up To:



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