



Denman Conservancy Association

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 60, Denman Island, B.C. V0R 1T0

February 2016

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS
the
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of **DENMAN CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION**
will take place

7:30 pm on Monday, February 29, 2016

in the Back Hall

The AGM business will include:

- ❖ The Directors' Report, Treasurer's Report, Committee Reports
 - ❖ A Special Resolution to approve an amendment to the Bylaws to afford greater protection to conservation covenants held by DCA
 - ❖ Election of Directors
- (see Page 4 for further details)

Protecting our Trees

Denman Conservancy is very concerned to see trees being cut along Pickles Road in the new Provincial Park land and also in Inner Island Nature Reserve. These trees were not windfalls. The value of Parks and Reserves depends on having large trees on that land. Both standing and fallen trees are of value to wildlife and should not be removed. Please report any cutting violations to Provincial authorities at 1-844-676-8477.



Central Park

As a result of its Management Plan review the Central Park management committee decided to reroute a short section of the Graveyard Marsh path. That work is now underway. It will result in an easier grade as the path climbs from the level of the marsh to rejoin the Alder Trail. The new junction of the path with the Alder Trail will be about 50 meters closer to the northern entrance to the Cemetery.

A new memorial bench has been provided by Louise Bell, built and installed by Peter Karsten on the east bank of the Swale overlooking the boardwalk crossing. It is a peaceful spot. The lovely view has been enhanced this past week by the presence of Trumpeter swans feeding on the swale. The trails throughout the Park are all in good condition for spring walks.

Settlement Lands

The Denman Conservancy Association (DCA) Settlement Lands are located in the northern portion of Denman Island approximately mid-way between the east and west shores and consist of two parcels, for a total of just over 63 hectares. It is accessed from either Pickles Road or Lake Road, onto Central Road, which approximately bisects the property

In the spring of 2015 the DCA board members agreed to propose an Islands Trust Fund (ITF) covenant over the Settlement Lands. The benefits of such a covenant would provide for perpetual protection of the lands and for a sharing of its stewardship – management, monitoring and maintenance.

DCA held an Open House last September to review and discuss this proposal with the Denman Island public and a site visit was held with ITF representatives. The written proposal was submitted to ITF near the end of October and in November the ITF advised they were interested to participate in a covenant on the DCA Settlement Lands. We are now waiting for ITF's approval of our proposed cost sharing arrangement.

Many Denman Islanders are by now familiar with the efforts of our local community, alongside other agencies such as BC Parks and the BC Ministry of Environment, to maintain habitat and populations of the endangered Taylor's Checkerspot butterfly, which is endemic to Denman Island within Canada. As part of these efforts, ongoing since 2005, a Butterfly Reserve area of 3.12 ha was established on the Settlement Lands in 2014. This area includes two small wetlands where Taylor's Checkerspot breeding was observed in the spring of 2007, -08 and -09.

Since early 2015, two grants have been provided by the Habitat Stewardship Program, via the BC Ministry of Environment, to carry out vegetation control to help foster the growth of food and nectaring plants for the Checkerspot larvae and breeding adults. In early 2015, small trees and Scotch broom were cut down in the Butterfly Reserve area. Between September 2015 and January 2016 DCA hired local Denman Islanders to remove more small trees, Bracken fern and Scotch Broom, and clear trails in and around the Reserve. New signage has been installed which marks the corner boundaries of the Reserve, and alerts trail users to the sensitivity of the habitat and species within the area.



Calypso orchid whose hardy leaves emerge in autumn and last through winter even under snow.

Photo by John Millen

Membership Application Form

DENMAN CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION

Membership is \$10 per person per calendar year. Many members combine their membership and annual donation in a lump sum. A charitable tax receipt will be issued for all donations of \$10 or more. To ensure you receive our notices about meetings, programs etc., **please provide your email address.**

I wish to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ e-mail _____

Mailing Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

The Denman Conservancy Association has charitable tax status.

Please make cheques payable to:

Denman Conservancy Association,

Mail to: PO Box 60, Denman Island, BC, V0R 1T0

On the Land

Notes from the Land Manager: Erika Bland

First off, a huge ★Thank You ★ to the stalwart neighbours of DCA properties who contribute immensely to their ongoing maintenance. Volunteers are seemingly always at the ready to help clear trails or maintain kiosks by posting photos or making new photocopied maps. More than once I have come across a sign someplace that has come off its hook, and then next time I come back, screwdriver in pocket, I find it already fixed. You know who you are—thank you!

Keep your eye out when you're walking this spring for the lovely Calypso (or fairy slipper) Orchid (see image opposite page). Calypso will start to bloom in another six weeks or so. (Yes, six weeks. Yes, I'm ready for spring.)

Or there's the tall rein orchid (*Pipera elongata*), a species of special concern in BC first identified here in one of our covenant areas last year.



Pipera elongata

Photo by
Andrew Fyson

I learned about *Pipera elongata* during one of many awe-inspiring walks last spring and summer with Andrew, former Land Manager, as an orientation to my new role with DCA. Andrew is an astute microbiologist and avid photographer. I have learned that when he points to the ground, saying something eagerly in Latin, the only apt reaction is to freeze and then pray you haven't just trampled the entire community of whatever has got his attention.

Andrew has been instrumental in initiating- and indeed still participates actively in - numerous ecological

research and restoration activities on Denman. Through his work he has contributed greatly to our collective scientific understanding of species like the Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly, as well as to our knowledge and best practices for the conservation of diverse habitats for these species'. In the Settlement Lands, DCA is pursuing habitat stewardship activities for the Checkerspot through our Butterfly Reserve work, which has been directed largely by Andrew.

Indeed, scientific monitoring over time is crucial for a long-term understanding of the structure and function of our diverse ecosystems.... And it's something that's best to do, I reckon, in some kind of fun way, with one's neighbours. So, in 2016 I plan to coordinate (some new, some existing) neighbourhood management groups for DCA lands. Neighbourhood groups will take on specific projects, driven both by ongoing maintenance needs such as trail work, and other recreational and scientific interests. This year, for example, I expect to need some help with caging about 60 small trees to protect them from deer browsing, continuing work on an interesting forest regeneration project in a section of the Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve. I am interested in 'citizen-science' or repeat-photography projects where we observe and monitor, over time, things like forest regeneration, changes in stream flows, or the lifecycle of interesting species through the seasons. Think about if we all picked a favourite place to keep an eye on for a while, and then shared those observations with one another. In so doing, we create a unique collective understanding of our land, of our home place.

There's a phrase I've always tried to keep in the back of my mind since I was a kid: *Don't just do something. Stand there.* As a way of relating to nature and the world around us, I think this phrase is particularly instructive: We don't always need to *DO* something. Oftentimes the best we can do is *just stand there*, and pay attention to all these incredible things around us. Draw it, measure it, photograph it, listen to it, write stories about it. Having more attentive eyes on the land will help to expand Denman's place-based ecological knowledge and natural history. And it will be fun!

Please get in touch if you are interested in joining a neighbourhood group. If you encounter a trail, sign or anything else needing attention within DCA lands, please give me a call and let me know. In March I will also be updating the DCA volunteer list for Work Bees, so please drop me a line if you'd like to sign up to come and help out, occasionally. ✉

erikaaction@gmail.com

☎250-702-7773

**AGM Business
Monday 29 February 2016
7.30 pm Back Hall**

Membership

A current membership is required in order to vote on DCA society matters. Volunteers will be available before the meeting commences to accept a minimum \$10 donation from those who wish to renew their membership.

Conservancy activities

As well as the report from Directors an illustrated talk about recent activities and the state of lands owned or managed by DCA will be presented.

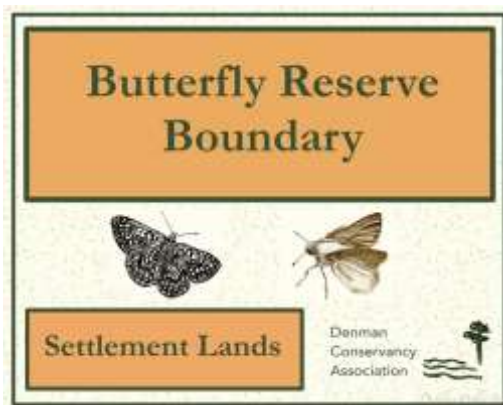
Bylaw Amendments

The Membership will be asked to consider amendments to the DCA bylaws, the purpose of which is to enshrine clauses to afford greater protection to conservation covenants held by DCA.

These amendments are proposed to define the circumstances where the Board may alter covenants and where the members may authorise discharge of covenants. Provisions are also proposed regarding Ecological Gifts.

Some additional housekeeping amendments are also proposed to correct spelling, to clarify Life Member requirements and to allow Directors to give notice by electronic means.

The proposed amendments and the existing bylaws may be viewed on the DCA website at www.denman-conservancy.org/about/bylaw-amendments/ or go to the Conservancy web site and click on the AGM Notice.



A Butterfly Reserve has been established on the Settlement Lands where habitat for the endangered Checkerspot butterfly is being maintained – see more information on Page 2.

**UPDATE on Denman's Infestation
of Invasive Marine Grass**

Dense-flowered cord-grass *Spartina densiflora*

February 2015 saw the **removal of the last large plant** of Denman's internationally-significant invasive marine grass *Spartina densiflora*. Once again, many thanks to all the digging crew and the valiant operator of the tiny backhoe for their dedicated efforts.



Continuing this winter 2015-2016, the Denman sites were re-checked. All the little regenerating bunch-grass seedlings were removed and composted. In sites where these seedlings have been removed for two seasons, the number regenerating has declined rapidly. Thus the successful removal without herbicides looks feasible, although it may take a number of years.

This summer the

**Dig It Denman
Non-herbicide *Spartina* Removal Project**

will begin.

Kits will be given to volunteers interested in monitoring sections of Denman's beaches. Sign up and training will be advertised closer to the start-up date. Please stay tuned!

Contributors to this Newsletter: Jenny Balke, Erika Bland, Andrew Fyson, Jackie Hipwell, John Millen, Patti Willis.