



Denman Conservancy Association

NEWSLETTER

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

November 2016

Join us at DCA's

Mushroom Fest



Friday, November 11, 7:30 pm Back Hall
Andy MacKinnon Presentation – Mycology Magic

Saturday, November 12, 10:00 am Mushroom identifying walk
1pm – 2pm Mushroom Display, Back Hall

Saturday, November 12, at 2:30 pm, Back Hall,
Christine O'Neil demonstrating use of mushrooms to dye fabric



On Friday, November 11 and Saturday November 12, the DCA will be holding our second 'not quite every year' Mushroom Fest. Friday night at 7:30 (all events in the Back Hall) will see the extremely popular Fungi expert, the renowned Andy MacKinnon, again enthraling the audience with his mushroom science and lore. Andy is co-author of the ubiquitous guide to our plants: *Plants of Coastal British Columbia* by Pojar & MacKinnon –that's Andy]

Saturday morning at 10:00 am will see Andy leading a mushroom identifying walk (location to be announced).

From 1 pm to 2 pm all fungi collected and donated will be on display, for public information, in the Back Hall.

On Saturday, November 12, at 2:30 pm, Back Hall, local artist and felting expert Christine O'Neil will be demonstrating the use of mushrooms to dye with. (It is hard to use "wild mushrooms" and "dyeing" in the same sentence without being misunderstood.) She is happy to try using mushrooms brought in on Friday or - Saturday to create wonderful dye colours. Remember that (for this use) it does not have to be edible.

Fungi in the Forest Challenge

Prepare and bring (before 7:30) on Friday night a challenge entry:

#1. Bring a correctly labelled picture and/or specimen of a predatory fungus that you found on Denman, or

#2. Bring a correctly labelled picture and/or specimen of a saprophytic fungus that you found on Denman, or

#3. Bring a correctly labelled picture and/or specimen of a parasitic fungus that you found on Denman, or

#4. Bring a correctly labelled picture and/or specimen of a symbiont that you found on Denman.

Win a prize if your name is drawn from the among the correct challenge entries:

See DCA website for helpful information
www.denman-conservancy.org

Settlement Lands Update

Newts to Nighthawks and Big Old Trees!

The Settlement Lands – one of Denman Island’s most biodiverse places, just teeming with rare wildlife species at risk!

This summer the DCA completed a legal Baseline inventory of their 53 hectare property near the centre of Denman. The land is amazing for its complexity of terrain with wetlands, slopes, rocky cliffs and plateau lands, as well as 15 rare species. It’s a wonderful wildlife oasis – a site where so many species can be protected and safe.

Driving the gravel Central Road, what one sees is the logging of the central upland plateau. But looking closely, surprisingly one will see that over sixty massive Douglas-firs still tower above the regenerating forest. One might also note that many old western redcedars, over 183 known plant species and six rare ecosystem communities also thrive within all the nooks and crannies!

The crazy quilt of secluded wetlands with their yearlong supply of clean fresh water support the Settlement Lands’ 128 known wildlife species. To both east and west of Central Road are large wetlands like Pickles Beaver Pond and Homestead Marsh, as well as tiny, seemingly insignificant links in the drainage chain. All these wetlands with their myriad of dependent living organisms were deftly crafted and are carefully maintained by the resident beavers!

The DCA is now completing a conservation covenant, as well as outlining a possible management plan with walking trails for community input in the spring. There’s also a special butterfly reserve area, managed for woodland and meadow invertebrate species, as this was the first known site of the endangered Taylor’s Checkerspot butterflies on Denman.

Yes newts abound, big trees sigh and threatened nighthawks soar high in the summer sky!

The Settlement Lands - a Treasure!

Volunteer Internship Pilot

By *Erika Bland*

In summer 2016 DCA adopted and launched a ‘Pilot Year’ of a proposed Volunteer Internship Program. Our first-ever ‘Pilot’ Volunteer Intern is Anne Fisher, a newly arrived resident of Denman Island. Anne, a professional in medical and technical writing, recently completed BCIT’s Ecological Restoration program, and is interested in developing her mapping and GIS skills through volunteer work with DCA. Anne is currently working on updating the Protected Lands map that DCA uses for information and outreach. We are happy and lucky to have her on board as our inaugural Volunteer Internship participant. Welcome, Anne!

DCA at the Christmas Faire

On December 3rd and 4th DCA will once again have a table at the Denman Island Christmas Craft Faire. Our spot this year will be in the Community Hall so please drop by for an excellent opportunity to buy or renew your membership and to meet your board members. As usual, we will have a good selection of Conservancy Tee shirts for sale and they make great Christmas gifts. See you at the Faire!

Home and Garden Tour Update

The date is set! The 2017 Home and Garden Tour will be held on June 10th and 11th which we hope will be the perfect weekend for visiting blooming flower and vegetable gardens in all their glory. Our new coordinator Emily Guinane will be working with Katarina Meglic who returns for her second term as the tour's media coordinator. Emily has been busy visiting with homeowners and she has already confirmed five properties, but has received an equal number of "maybes" so she's still looking for more!

What makes the Denman tour so special is the uniqueness of each property and the creativity and passion the residents pour into them. We can only imagine how much work it is for homeowners to create these special places and open their properties to hundreds of people but their effort is so appreciated by the Conservancy and by everyone on Denman. Not only is the tour the largest fundraiser the Conservancy holds but it's a weekend of excitement for the whole island. If you are thinking about opening your home and garden for the tour, or volunteering in any way please contact Emily at 250-539-8339 or at emily.guinane@live.se.

Notes from the Land (Manager)

By Erika Bland

What a drizzly and stormy few weeks we've had! Nice for the beavers, I guess. I hope these power outages have inspired many a 'galoshes and Sou-wester' nature walk.

Just before those storms started, I'm happy to report, we were able to make some serious headway in the ongoing effort to remove some nice little English Holly plants (read: Humungous Holly Trees!) from Morrison Marsh and Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserves. Many thanks to the volunteer crews who helped out with these, rather grueling, work bees.

We won this battle on Holly using a technique recommended by a new part-time Denman resident, Rick Laing. Rick has experience with Salt Spring Island Conservancy and has also spent 70+ hours on his Denman property removing this spiky and insidious—though admittedly beautiful—species. With the help of a few buff, chainsaw-armed fellows, and a tireless crew of 'grounders', we cut down something like 30 big Holly trees, stripped all their branches, and piled them into tight mounds weighed down by their bucked-up trunks.

When one observes carefully the ecological composition in the places where we worked (along the southern edges of Morrison Marsh and by the roadside along Mallard Way) it is abundantly clear that this effort is needed—in some areas, small Holly shoots are forming dense mats along the forest floor and almost totally outcompeting native vegetation such as Oregon Grape (*Mahonia nervosa*), whose ecological niche Holly effectively seizes.

While I can't declare that we've won the war—yet—we sure did make a big dent in these invasive populations. Plus, we had the always-satisfying opportunity to don our "I can do anything!" suits of coveralls and hardhats. Phew.

That's that for the 2016 Volunteer Work Bee Series. I know you will miss my email pestering, but it's ok—I will be back at it in the spring!

In planning for 2017, I'd really like to hear from the community and DCA members about how best to include volunteers in our on-land activities. Your feedback would be greatly appreciated about ways you would like to get involved, what skills you have that you'd like to keep honed in a helpful volunteer-y way, or just your preferred times of the week for attending Work Bees. You can email me at erikaaction@gmail.com. Also feel free to give input on your preferred cookie flavours.

25th Anniversary Picnic

The DCA celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a picnic in August at Mike and Selinda White's lovely home on Lacon Road. There was a considerable crowd on hand despite the heavy rain that started off the festivities. Selinda provided a remarkable array of edibles, there was a toast using BC Champagne and a lovely speech by Patty Willis who pointed out that the DCA has generated something like 6000 pages of meeting minutes in 25 years. This is a truly remarkable amount of work even for someone of Susan-Marie Yoshihara's abilities. The DCA has accomplished remarkable things in its first 25 years, thanks to the work* of its directors, volunteers, and contributors. Lastly, to the surprise of the organizers, there were seven correct entries in the Magical Mystery Quest Contest, which involved walking all the DCA lands to find the clues to allow entrants to decipher a mystery quote. The quote, by noted American author and environmentalist Wendell Berry, was:

"What does this earth require of us if we want to continue to live on it?"

* This work was not selfless. The benefits personally and the answer to Wendell's question are obvious every time any of us walk Central Park, Railway Grade Marsh, or any of the other properties of which DCA is the owner or steward. 25 years and a roster of remarkable people have got us where we are and it is definitely worth celebrating.

New Societies Act

There is a portion of the population (normally a subset of the legal community) who find the prospect of changes to the laws governing non-profit organizations stimulating and exciting. No such persons sit on the Board of the DCA at the present time however, so DCA members who are keen on this sort of minutiae will have to look elsewhere. The Internet is home to a myriad of arguably bizarre interests so we suggest starting with why they changed the name from the Society Act to the Societies Act and you can proceed down the Google rabbit hole from there. It will suffice for our purposes to state that the DCA Bylaws seem to be in good shape and not in need of wholesale changes, and that the transition to the new Societies Act will be seamless even if it involves an inordinate amount of typing.

Contributors to this Newsletter: Jenny Balke, Erika Bland, Stirling Fraser, DD Fuchs, John Millen

Walkabout with Bats

Bats have literally been part of the Conservancy's world since the Conservancy leased one of the rooms in Denman's Old School building. Every summer a colony of up to 1000 female bats occupies the school's attic. These bats give birth and rear young above our heads.

Since taking on the bat colony's stewardship we've gradually learned more about them. This spring we got back results of DNA sampling from feces that identified 4 species using the attic (Little brown, Yuma, Long-eared and Big brown). During the winter, these bats hibernate in caves and other suitable habitats, although some migrate to a bit warmer climates. A few bats are around Denman in winter, but most return in early summer.

Prior to their arrival this summer we experimented with a bat camera in the Old School attic. Unfortunately it turned itself off in the scheduled power outage. As we didn't wish to disturb the birthing bats to turn it on, we'll hopefully have better luck next year!

Also this summer, the Salt Spring Island Conservancy generously loaned us their brand new state of the art bat-call recorder, an Anabat Walkabout. From the calls that were recorded at the Old School and on all of our lands, we'll be able to identify the habitats being used by different species.

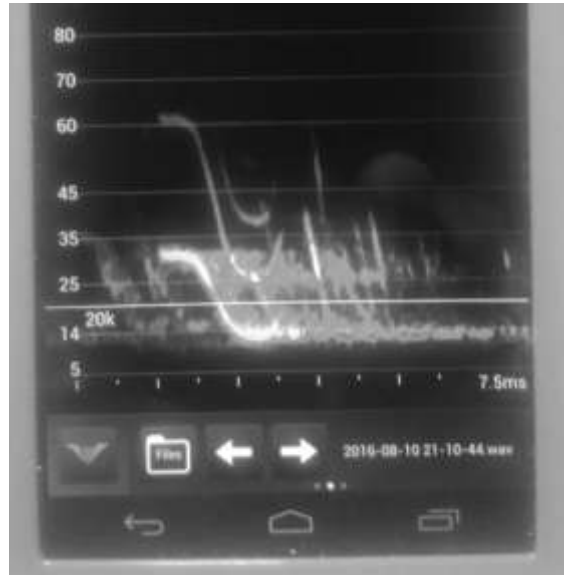
Gaining knowledge about Denman's bats and enhancing their habitats is increasingly urgent. These animals are such major insectivores and their survival is in serious danger! The White Nose fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, that affects bats in their winter hibernacula, reached Washington State this spring. As the disease spreads, death losses of 85-100% of Big and Little brown bats - 2 of Denman's 10 species - can be expected. As a result of this fungus, the Little brown bat, once Canada's most common bat, is now on Canada's Endangered species list. Hopefully Denman can help to provide healthy, low stress habitat opportunities for those bats that do survive.

Also Important:

- Avoid entering or disturbing bat hibernacula (or bat roosts) – this stresses bats, and humans may spread the disease
- Report sick or dead bats

Salmon Drama

Denman's salmon streams, Beadnell Creek and Valens Brook are once more experiencing the miracle of the returning salmon. Spawners were seen fighting their way up stream from pool to pool during the week of Oct 24th!



Record of bat calls on Anabat Walkabout. Sounds above 20k are not audible to humans.

Newts on Roads Need our Help!



Endless rainy days and nights – it's the time of year when our rough skinned salamanders or newts wander about and get squished on our roads! Their little raised bodies can be seen on the road. They freeze as cars approach – their legs are not much adapted to running! A lift across the road means more insects will be eaten in our forests and gardens!

Book Sale Success

DCA held their annual book sale at the Blackberry Faire in September and thanks to everyone who donated books and everyone who purchased books by donation, it was a great success. We also thank the Hornby Island Community Fund, which collects book donations throughout the year and distributes the proceeds to Hornby non-profit organizations. For the past three years, they have donated their unsold books to the Conservancy for the Blackberry Faire book sale. Altogether donations of books and cash contributed \$1488.10 toward maintaining conservation lands on Denman Island. Thank you to everyone! And in case you're wondering, at the end of our sale, all the left-over books are donated to the Rotary Club book sale in Courtenay.

Mushroom Festival Challenge!
See Page 1 & DCA website!
www.denman-conservancy.org