

# Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy LINC

## 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

### *Vision Statement*

Our vision is that Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy, in collaboration with other partners and the community, has created a network of protected ecosystems and cultural sites representing at least 50% of Lasqueti and its surrounding islands and waters. This network provides habitat for building climate resilience for the full diversity of species native to our part of the Salish Sea. Residents and visitors are well informed about local biodiversity and natural history and act in ways that promote stewardship and maintain and restore local ecological integrity.

### *Reaching our Vision*

We intend to support the adaptation of species and ecosystems to increasing development and the changing climate through protection of natural habitats and ecosystems. In the next five years we plan to protect 15 – 20% of Lasqueti and surrounding islands, a 100% increase from the current level of 10%. Increased education and outreach to the community about stewarding and protecting nature will help us achieve our goals. Increased organizational capacity and financial support will be needed to achieve our long-term vision.

### *Mission*

LINC conserves nature on Lasqueti Island and surrounding islands and waters through education, stewardship, restoration, and long-term protection of areas of ecological and cultural significance.

### *Strategies to Achieve Mission:*

- *Protect land through acquisitions, covenants and stewardship*
- *Support biodiversity on nature reserves (through restoration projects & management)*
- *Increase knowledge/raise awareness of island ecosystems, the marine environment & threats to ecological integrity*
- *Increase awareness of stewardship practices people can undertake on their own lands*
- *Educate islanders about ways to protect land through Covenants & Planned Giving*
- *Engage members through renewals, events, work parties, and project involvement.*
- *Maintain and build positive relationships with conservation organizations & other agencies*
- *Improve organizational capacity and raise funds to achieve goals*

# **2022-2026 Goals and Objectives**

## **1. Ecosystem Protection**

Protecting sensitive habitats through acquisition of title, conservation covenants and cooperation with landowners and provincial partners is a central function of LINC. Negotiating purchase and sale agreements, fundraising, and completing transactions are integral to the mission of the conservancy. The Directors of LINC make decisions regarding which properties and projects to undertake based on a number of factors including: ecological value, landowner willingness, cultural significance, location in the broader landscape, contiguity with other protected lands, and availability of funding potential. priority of habitats. Community survey respondents listed wetlands and forests as the most important habitats to acquire and protect. During their facilitated planning session LINC Directors expressed unanimous agreement with acquisition of critical properties as the number one priority for the organization. To fulfil its mission LINC needs to be able to prioritize conservation projects and will need expert biological and ecological advice to make effective decisions.

### **Ecosystem Protection Goal:**

**Increase area of conserved and protected land on Lasqueti-Xwe'etay  
(from 10 –20%)**

#### **Objectives**

- Identify major wetlands on Lasqueti-Xwe'etay, and develop landowner outreach program to help protect functions and processes
- Identify priority forested and shoreline lands suitable for protection through covenant or acquisition
- Acquire and protect a “north end” property
- Create a Planned Giving Program, including workshop, brochure & info for website
- Raise funds to acquire targeted conservation properties.
- Work with landowners to identify and protect species, functions and processes
- Develop a Walk-About program for new landowners
- Engage with FLNRORD and Islands Trust Conservancy to transition publicly managed lands to protected status
- Renew the decision-making rubric for conservation lands protection
- Research options for integrated marine area-terrestrial area systems conservation.

## **2. Land Stewardship**

Land stewardship is a fundamental responsibility of LINC and ensures conserved lands are protected in the long term. This includes annual monitoring of LINC's conservation covenants, which is a legal requirement, plus maintaining restoration sites on the nature reserves and elsewhere. As well, increasing public access to nature reserves through the building of low impact trail systems will facilitate community involvement in conservation. These Land Stewardship activities will build community involvement, and will continue to develop our partnerships with local and provincial governments and other conservation partners.

### **Land Stewardship Goal:**

**Manage conservation properties to enhance biodiversity, enable sustainable public access, and fulfill management plans.**

#### **Objectives**

##### Annual

- Monitor existing covenants
- Monitor, develop, and maintain trails, and signage
- Continue developing exclosures at MTNR as part of the 5- year plan and publicize results
- Monitor and maintain existing restoration sites at JONR and SVNR and potentially Young Point
- Complete "fee for service" management contracts with ITC and NT each year
- Build on relations with BC Parks and ensure partnership projects are sustainable

##### Within 5 years

- Explore local native plant nursery options
- Expand research on herbivores and their impacts

### **3. Community Outreach & Education**

Lasqueti-Xwe'etay has an aging, well-educated population, weighted significantly towards older residents (55+). If current trends continue this will likely result in a number of properties changing owners in the next 10-20 years. Communicating information to all landowners about options for land stewardship and long-term protection at this time is critical.

LINC needs to engage effectively across the spectrum of ages present within the community. At the other end of the age spectrum, working with the local school system is critical to introduce young people to the world of conservation through outdoor experiences on our nature reserves.

Population growth on Lasqueti-Xwe'etay will mean more home sites and land clearing. Stewardship of all land is essential in-order to maintain functioning ecosystems and where needed to restore degraded habitats. LINC's stewardship strategies include educating landowners about native and invasive plants, herbivore fencing, protecting wetlands, trees, understory and key ecosystem systems and processes. A community stewardship program involving private lands will help maintain biodiversity.

Education and outreach will occur through LINC sponsored hikes, workshops, speakers and work parties, which are popular according to our Community Survey. Respondents found the LINC Newsletter especially interesting and useful, with apx. 90% of respondents adding a positive comment. Increased education and support will build through a new informative website and new Outreach programs.

#### **Community Outreach & Education Goal:**

**Increase community knowledge, involvement and financial support, raising awareness of island ecosystems, biological trends, and conservation threats and opportunities.**

#### Objectives

##### Annual:

- Publish 3 newsletters per year, with increase in size and diversity of editors/articles
- Hold 3 public events each year (e.g. mushroom walk, restoration field trips, Squitty Bay Day homestead tour, covenant workshop)
- Sponsor 3 guided hikes plus the AGM hike
- Launch new website and maintain regular updates to it and to our Facebook site
- Engage with False Bay School and in future years, the wider community on an annual "BioBlitz"

##### Within 5 years:

- Produce 3 short videos associated with our activities for website or social media
- Create a Planned Giving Program, including conservation covenant workshop, conservation options brochure & associated info for website
- Create a Homeowner Stewardship Program including: education on natural features, invasive plants, significance of maintaining trees and native plants, and ecosystem processes
- Offer a Walk about program with realtors and new landowners, educating about above options
- Hold a "State of the Island Ecology" series of workshops

## **4. Organizational Capacity**

LINC has a number of constraints in accomplishing its mission. LINC's directors and participating members are volunteers, the overall Lasqueti Island community is small, and we have limited financial resources. Growing our organizational capacity is a key goal in order to achieve our overall mission and vision. Our profile in the community, while positive, is also low key. Membership, financial support and engagement have the potential to grow. Balancing our work with other island organizations for the attention and support of community members is an additional challenge.

Land trusts like LINC take on significant financial and legal responsibilities as land conservation organizations. These include maintaining charitable status, monitoring conservation properties, keeping financial records using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and working toward the Canadian Land Trust Standards & Practices. In order to perform these legal tasks, we need to build our capacity, while nurturing a healthy, vibrant and trusted community organization. LINC needs to maintain professional relationships with its partners, funders, local governments and First Nations. As LINC grows, the amount and complexity of our work will grow and the organization will need to increase funding for administrative and professional support. This will enable directors to focus on planning its education, conservation and stewardship programs.

### **Organizational Capacity Goal:**

**Increase organizational capacity so that administrative and legal requirements are met while allowing directors to focus on the core conservation objectives.**

#### Objectives

##### Annual

- Publish Annual Report each year that summarizes the past year's accomplishments and financial condition.
- Engage members in interactive Annual General Meeting each year
- Maintain partnerships with BC Parks, Islands Trust Conservancy, NALT, BC Parks Foundation and other conservation organizations
- Grow General and Acquisition Funds – \$10 – 15K each year

##### Within 5 years

- Increase Board membership from 7 to 9 in first year, up to 11 by year 5
- Establish a LINC Office
- Continue to develop long-term funding options for contracts for administrative and professional support
- Increase membership in LINC from 175 to 225 paid-up members
- Develop relationships with First Nations
- Make Squitty Bay Day an annual Fundraiser with engaging events & displays
- Develop marketing and outreach products to raise awareness and financial support