LINC Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy

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Deep and Enduring Love of Trees

by Gordon Scott

Most civilizations have an origin story that includes the veneration of forests and trees. It's no wonder. Forests give us wood to heat our caves and cook our food, build cities, boats and paper, and even in the case of the Yew tree, drugs to ease our pain and suffering. Trees absorb carbon while releasing life giving oxygen. Sadly, the unique Douglas-fir forests found on Lasqueti and surrounding islands are critically imperiled and under constant threat of even more loss. That's why the news that BC Parks Foundation's recent acquisition of two big forested parcels on Lasqueti is so important to Lasqueti and everyone in BC.

The large Pacfic Yew holding court over Camas Flats,

photo Gordon Scott

Mystic Ridge, acquired from Philippe Taillefer and Alysha Trinca-Taillefer, is a 75-acre tract of Douglas-fir forest bordering the Salish View Nature Reserve. Just a stones-throw away are 80 acres of mature second growth and old growth called Camas Flats, named by the former owner, Wayne Bright, for the spot on this land where he camped when he first arrived on Lasqueti many years ago. Camas Flats connects to the Pt. Young Conservation area along a common border, creating 336 acres of protected Douglas-fir habitat. Together, these four conservation tracts, along with Squitty Bay Provincial Park, comprise over 500 acres, one of the largest protected Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) forested areas in the Salish Sea region.

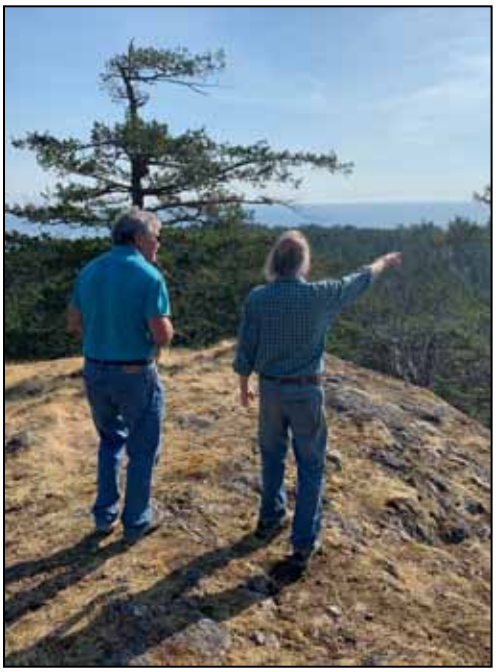
Mystic Ridge is a series of rocky knobs and narrow dells rising to notable promontories. The hillsides and little valleys are dressed in moss and forested with multi-aged stands of Douglas-fir trees. Wandering around the 75-acre conservation site one can easily get lost among the mossy bluffs and old-growth Douglas-firs. This wild and unique diversity creates multiple micro-habitats for a variety of species, though years of overgrazing has had impacts—most notably the lack of understory plants except mosses.

The venerable Douglas-fir tree is the predominant forest tree at Mystic Ridge, occurring in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and surprising locations. As one ascends the rolling hills, evidence of early logging starts to disappear and the trees get a little bigger. Second growth Douglas-fir trees and Oregon beaked-moss carpet the slopes, and in the narrow dells and hollows Douglas-fir and a few cedar stretch to reach the canopy. Presumably the same age as the trees on the hillsides, the trees in the valley bottoms are twice the size as their hillside kin.

As one winds their way up and up to the numerous sum-

mits of Mystic Ridge, the Douglas-firs start to lose their straight boles and symmetrical shape and begin to look like Ents lurching through the Shire: weathered and twiggy bearded, wise and ancient. These are not the towering columns of veteran Douglas-firs you find in Cathedral Grove, but they are still old growth. Gnarled and twisted from hundreds of years of witnessing winter storms lash the Salish Sea these are true veterans of the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem. When you see these wild looking, krummholzed trees anchored in the bedrock and withstanding the force that weather can bring down on a place like Mystic Ridge, one can begin to understand just how strong and resilient are these redoubtable Douglas-fir trees, from their roots to their crown.

View from Mystic Ridge, Photo Gordon Scott



Wayne and Dave Kirk inspecting Camas Flats
Photo Gordon Scott

Just to the south of Mystic Ridge, and across the little valley of that includes Wamer Creek, Camas Flats rises up in two rumpled heights that embrace a shady valley bottom and low pass that feeds a large wetland. The northerly of the two arms includes an assertive rock bluff with gorgeous vistas of the whole northern Salish Sea and ledges where gardens of white Death Camas bloom. Looming over the shady valley bottom is the larger and deeply furrowed southerly mountain arm, mostly inaccessible to early loggers and their limited yarding equipment.

A wide variety of trees grows on the Camas Flats property, likely due to the moisture-capturing valley bottom and presence of some real soil for trees to take deep root. Douglas-fir, grand-fir, western redcedar, bigleaf maple, and red alder sprout up in their preferred habitats. There are relics from old homesteading in the area and the ubiquitous selective logging. Where flatter and lower slopes of the property occur, the natural second growth is well advanced in age, maybe over 100 years old. Like Mystic Ridge, timber harvest was limited to the lower slopes. As one meanders up to the ridge tops, you enter areas without any stumps and the remaining trees stand out. One feels like the first person to walk through this forest.

Though the predominant tree at Camas Flats is the venerable Douglas-fir, perhaps the most intriguing tree growing there is a very large Pacific yew, emerging from the moist valley bottom and towering in a vertical race for sunlight. Purported to be one of the biggest Pacific yews in British Columbia, this specimen of the Taxus family is 66 cm in diameter and about 15 meters tall.

Yew trees are culturally significant for many Northern European cultures as a source of myth and power. Ancient spring rites to honour the changing of the season from winter to spring were annually performed under the boughs of centuries-old yew trees across Britain

We live in BC's smallest and most diverse ecological zone, the Coastal Douglas fir zone (CDF zone), which is also BC's most threatened zone. Maturing forests on Lasqueti represent some of the largest tracts of contiguous natural forest remaining in the CDF zone..

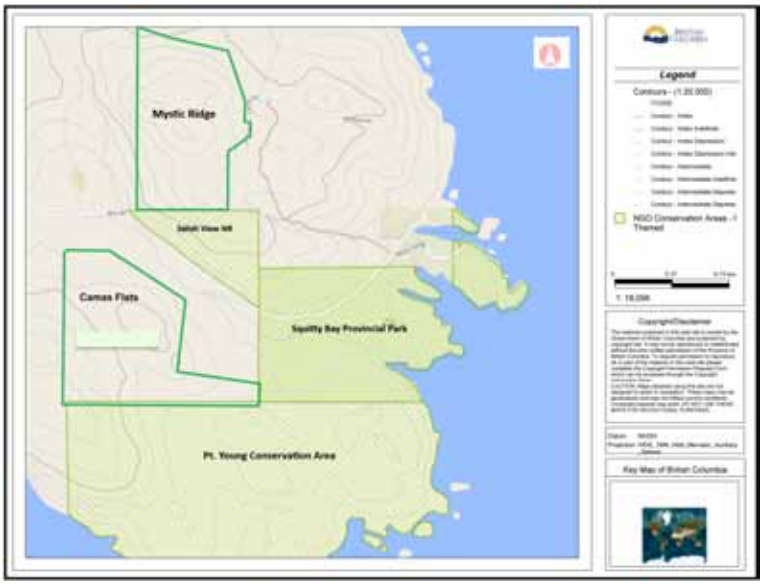
Purple Douglas-fir 'flowers' and incipient cones,

photo Gordon Scott

and northern Europe. The English long-bow, made from the venerable yew tree, had a major influence on the course of history.

The yew tree also has special significance for Lasqueti, or Xwe'etay, its First Nations name which means "yew tree". In one origin story, the yew tree gave life to the island when an ancient yew tree came down from heaven with people and supernatural deer living in its branches. Having no earth to land on, the humans were unhappy until, "supernatural rodents gnawed through the base of the tree. The First Peoples sang, "Oh let it fall and not break!" The tree fell and many deer came to live on the island." (Boas story about Lasqueti.)

Thus was born the island of what locals now call Xwe'etay, and the Spanish named Lasqueti. Without the benevolence of the yew tree this island we call home would not exist.



Map of newly protected BC Parks Foundation lands with Squitty Bay Park and Salish View. Map by Province of BC

UPCOMING EVENTS

Film: Snk'mip Dig Deeper

June 25th 7 pm:

Lasqueti Arts Centre

Snk'mip Dig Deeper is not your typical nature film. While celebrating life at a marsh and documenting techniques to restore wetland habitat, this documentary also delves into the social issues that arise when motorized-recreation areas are reclaimed for nature. Snk'mip Dig Deeper explores what happens when a settler-run conservation organization learns it is restoring a site that was in fact an ancient Indigenous village. With that knowledge comes the responsibility to 'dig deeper' to learn about the land's deeper history. The film explores how the Sinixt (the First People of the land, in what settlers call the southeastern part of BC) were dispossessed and declared extinct, how they are working toward resurgence, and explores settlers' responsibility to work as allies for justice and reconciliation.

Hosted by both LINC and the

Lasqueti Reconciliation Committee

The World of Birding

by Pierre Geoffray

It was a beautiful early May morning. I had landed on Lasqueti Island the previous night on an invitation from the Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy to lead a Birding by Ear walk. I arrived early to get a chance to listen to the general chorus of birds before the group showed up. When I stepped out of the car, the chorus was already in full swing. Most of the bird species I had encountered earlier this spring in Powell River and were easy to recognize, others were newcomers, just returned from their winter quarters, and their songs were both familiar and strange like the voices of old friends I had not heard in a long time. Their songs filled the air like a symphony, each thread important but difficult to single out.

By the time the other birders joined me, I had a list of 21 birds all singing together around the Judith Fisher Centre. We started picking their songs out starting with the obvious White-crowned Sparrow, a bird I hear as saying "it's meeee, the white-crowned Sparrow!"—a long ascending ´meee ´ followed by a fast-paced falling sentence, 'the White-crowned Sparrow'. A common bird with a simple to remember song. Always a favourite!

From there we took a walk through the forest where the buzzy songs of Townsend's Warblers and the simple three-part song of Hammond's Flycatchers dominated the soundscape. We eventually ended up at the edge of a pond among the ´chop chop zee´ of Song Sparrows and the ´witchy witchidy' of Common Yellowthroats. Hidden among the skunk cabbage and the water lilies a couple of Wood Ducks tried in vain to stay invisible. A near impossible thing to do seeing that nature has painted the males of this species with the brightest and most exuberant plumage.

By the end of the walk, some songs were starting to become more familiar to all. At the same time the effort of concentrating on so many new sounds was taking its toll. People were becoming confused again… Very normal.

When birding by ear, as when listening to music, my brain wants to hear the overall soundscape. Trying to untangle and recognize a specific song from a morning chorus can feel overwhelming at first—one has to isolate each thread one at a time while keeping track of the overall symphony.

Learning songs used to be very challenging. In my early years as a bird-watcher, it was the domain of highly trained specialists. I remember listening to a song in the field and trying to commit it to my memory using some made-up imitation, a word or a sentence that sounded like what I had heard. I had to hold on to this memory until after I came home and played a cassette tape in hope I would be able to recognize the song again. At the time, even if you thought you knew which species you heard, but weren't absolutely sure of, you had to find it on the tape, going forward and backwards until you heard the name of the species called at

the beginning of each recording—a very difficult task! After listening to a few recordings, I generally forgot the initial song. It took long, repeated efforts for me to be able to distinguish between a few common species. The best way was to be able to watch a singing bird long enough to be able to remember it in the field. It is still the best approach.

Fortunately for us, technology has made learning bird songs a lot easier. The advent of computers and cell phones has put a powerful tool in our hands. There is now a free App called Merlin that augments the old field guides. It carries pictures of the birds in your region and has many recordings of their songs and calls, all at the tip of your phone. No more lugging heavy books or recorders in the field. On top of this, Merlin has developed a bird song identification tool that is becoming more accurate all the time. You can now record songs with your phone and Merlin will tell you what bird you are hearing. For those interested to use it as a personal educational tool, it makes it easier than ever to learn bird songs and become truly fluent with their language. For others Merlin is a recreational gadget, one of many that make us think we have now become a specialist of everything, especially when it is coupled with the eBird App that allows you to record the lists of birds you encounter in the field and share your sightings with the birding community world-wide. These two technologies have significantly expanded the experience of bird watching in just a decade.

Wood Duck, Photo Pierre Geoffray

Here are a few tips I have found useful to help learn bird songs.

I usually try to group birds according to the likeness of their songs. There are the *´trillers*'—birds whose main song consists of a single trill. The Spotted Towhee, Orange-crowned Warbler, Chipping Sparrow and the Dark-eyed Junco all fall in this category and are common in our area.

Another important group to know are the *´chiruppers*' whose rolling, rising-falling songs are some of the most musical we have. American Robin, Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak are typical members of this group.

Black-headed Grosbeak, Photo Pierre Geoffray

I also identify the *´high pitchers´*, birds whose songs are so thin they can be difficult to hear, especially if you are ageing, like both Kinglets or the Cedar Waxwing. Other groups include the 'warblers' (not all of them actual warblers!), the ´eeries' like the Hermit or Swainson's Thrush whose ethereal flutelike songs are charming our summer mornings and evenings.

I have created many other groups in order to memorize and recognize bird songs. The main purpose of grouping birds is to be able to compare similar-sounding species using simple handles to differentiate them. (This bird sounds like a Purple Finch, but its song includes an ascending ´zriii' note at intervals, making it a House Finch instead.) If I know one bird song in the group very well and am aware of those handles, I can readily separate it from its sound-alike.

My goal is be to be able to recognize five common birds in any area where I bird. Those will be the reference from which I will expand my local knowledge of birds.

Let's focus on some of our local ***chirrupers***:

One of America's most easily recognized bird, the beautiful orange-breasted American Robin is the typical exemplification of the « chirruper» group. It is often seen hopping on the ground, pulling fat earth worms. It can be quite numerous during the peak of its migration in April. During the breeding season (which is especially long for this thrush who can have up to three successful broods in one year) the steady rising/falling syllables of its songs, with their clear whistled notes, are often described as ´cheerily, cheer-up' repeated

regularly. It is one of the most frequently heard songs in most of North America, especially obvious during the summer mornings and evenings.

Another *chirruper* that is a regular member of our bird space is the sleek Western Tanager. Arriving around mid-May from its central and South American winter quarters, the colourful male tanager, if seen well, is an impossible bird to forget with its orange head that contrasts with the bright yellow plumage of its body and jet black wings. It favours the dryer parts of our forests and is not very shy, making it fairly easy to observe, especially if one can recognize its loud song. The males sing a loud, raspy version of a robin's song but, having spent the winter in Spanish speaking countries, they roll their r's conspicuously, 'chuRRy, chuRRy, chuRRy'! Compare this with the more common song of the robin around you to learn to hear the difference and be able to spot them foraging among the trees.

The third in this group is my personal favourite. The Black-headed Grosbeak is a late migrant and a true harbinger of summer. The first birds usually show up at the end of May. A very colourful bird, the male is quite striking with orange body, yellow belly and black head and upperparts specked with white. The female is more subdued and has a broad light coloured highbrow. A very attractive bird by plumage alone, the Grosbeak really stands out for its melodious and long-winded song that can be heard from afar in both suburban and forested areas. The song of the male consists of series of ´chirrupings' interspersed with a musical ascending whistle ´ fuuuit'. Once you have picked up this characteristic whistle, it becomes very easy to identify a Grosbeak and have a better chance at seeing this elegant and classy bird. Both male and female also give a contact call note, a clear "spik" that, once learnt, is heard often.

To finish, let's look at two of our local trillers. Birds in this category can be difficult to distinguish because of the monotonous nature of their songs. We will need a good handle.

The omnipresent Spotted Towhee is found in every habitat across much of the province. It readily inhabits your backyards as well as more remote locations, forested or not. It is a colourful sparrow that will come to your feeders in the winter. Early in the spring, the male starts singing to claim a territory and attract a female. It has many different vocalisations—the main song being a loud dry rattle constant in tempo and pitch, usually not very long. It also utters a catlike 'maouw', easily recognizable. It is useful to be able to compare the even-pitched song of the towhee to the dry trill of the Orange-crowned Warbler. Both are trillers, and they often share the same habitat. While the towhee's song does not change in tone and intensity, the Orange-crowned Warbler's rich song drops sharply at the end as if the bird were suddenly losing steam. Try to listen to the difference when they are both present. Pay attention to the end of the song. Even pitch for the Towhee, dropping in pitch and intensity for the Warbler.

Western Tanager, Photo Pierre Geoffray

If you are still reading this, there is a chance you will try to listen to the birds around you with a different focus this summer. Birds are everywhere. Their songs are a big part of our world even when we don't pay attention. Studies have demonstrated that they have a calming effect on people and they bring joy. Good Birding to you all!

Spotted Towhee, Photo Pierre Geoffray

Pierre Geoffray is the Powell River (Quathet) Regional District eBird reviewer (which includes Lasqueti.) He has 40 years experience birding, and hopes to come next year for another birding day!

The ongoing saga of Lasqueti's Three-spined Stickleback

by Peter Sorensen

In 1988, Professor Don McPhail and a small team of colleagues from UBC visited Lasqueti to determine if Pete's Lake might contain Three-spined Stickleback fish (see Sidebar) similar to ones in Enos Lake near Parksville. What McPhail had discovered there had never been described before. His team had found that all the sticklebacks in Enos Lake were either long and slender or short and stout, with nothing in between, suggesting they might be two new species. Now he wondered whether other small lakes nearby might have similar "stickleback species-pairs."

As soon as he pulled his fish traps in Pete's Lake, McPhail's suspicions were confirmed. Pete's Lake contained only one species of fish, the Three-spined Stickleback. And all the fish caught were also one of two distinct types: either a slender-bodied form with long gills or a deep-bodied form with short gills (see photo below). However, while the Pete's Lake "species-pair" was superficially similar to that in Enos Lake, it differed in several ways. McPhail tentatively concluded that each lake had two new species of fish previously unknown to science. This discovery brought Lasqueti to the attention of scientists across the world, including my ichthyology class in Rhode Island.

So began a saga of scientific inquiry that continues to this day. The discovery of the Pete's Lake "stickleback-pair" triggered a global search for more species-pairs. Thousands of Northern Hemisphere lakes have now been examined, but only five other examples of "stickleback-pairs" have been found. For reasons that are still not clear, all are from our part of the Salish Sea—from four small lakes on Texada and from another on Nelson Island, just east of Texada. Each of these pairs differs from the others, suggesting that each had independent origins. Genetic studies have since lent strong support to this possibility. It is thought that all seven examples represent distinct speciation events and the evolution of 7 pairs of new species.

Drawing of breeding Three-spined Sticklebacks by Henrich Harder. Taken from https://www.flickr.com/photos/biodivlibrary/6102595905 and placed in the public domain by https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=42986585

Photograph of specimens of Pete's Lake Three-spined Sticklebacks collected by Don McPhail and presently in the Beatty Biodiversity Museum at UBC. The fish can be placed into two separate types with no intermediates, suggesting these are two different (and new) species. (Photo by the author)

That these tiny lakes in the Salish Sea might contain any freshwater fish is in itself remarkable. Until 10,000 years ago, the entire region was covered with thick glacial ice that would have killed everything, so the stickleback species pairs had seemingly evolved since then. While speciation events have been reported on other isolated islands, with "Darwin's finches" on the Galapagos archipelago being the most famous, all of these occurred over the course of hundreds of thousands to millions of years. Further, each of these local lakes is also isolated from other sources of fresh water. How could a fish even have gotten here? Clearly something rather special has occurred.

Many scientists think that the explanation may lie in a unique combination of the ecology of Lasqueti and Pete's Lake, the biology of the Three-spined Stickleback, and local conditions during the last few thousand years. Pete's Lake, like Texada's lakes, is low lying and drains to the sea, albeit by a small seasonal creek. It has been hypothesized that when these lakes were created through flooding by the sea thousands of years ago at the time the glacial ice melted, a few extremely robust fish—including sticklebacks—may have somehow entered and became trapped. Once there, these fish, like finches on the Galapagos, probably had a chance to thrive and adapt to deeper open water (limnetic) areas and shallow shorelines. In the former, Three-spined Sticklebacks would have done best if they developed slender-body forms and fine gills to capture small plankton found in deeper water. In shallow water, they might have done best with deeper bodies and stubby gills to eat benthic insects and detritus in the bottom mud. During this time the populations would have needed to remain isolated from each other when breeding in way(s) that are not known.

A Threepined-Stickleback found in Trematon Creek in 2021 by Valeria deRege.

Also remarkable is that the genome of this fish could accommodate these changes so rapidly—and did so seven times in seven locations in similar but not identical ways. Ongoing experiments in ponds at UBC mimic these conditions while analyses of changes in the DNA and morphology of their Three-spined Sticklebacks are revealing ways this might have happened. Lasqueti's sticklebacks have shed new light on Charles Darwin's "Mystery of mysteries," the processes by which new species are created on our planet.

Notably, the stickleback saga is not over. As mysteriously as the Pete's Lake stickleback-pair appeared, so too it disappeared. In 1994 a UBC team returned to Pete's Lake to collect more data but failed to find any sticklebacks. Instead, they found Brown Bullhead, *Ameiurus nebulosus*. If, how, and why, Brown Bullheads may have caused the extinction of sticklebacks in Pete's Lake is unknown. It could be related to a tendency of these catfish to eat fish eggs or to their digging in the lake bottom and increasing water turbidity. Brown Bullheads are not native to BC and were presumably introduced as food. In any case, their introduction and the disappearance of sticklebacks here also made the world scientific press. It represents one of the best-known examples of how damaging an invasive species can be. On Lasqueti, it has seemingly led to the extinction of the only novel (endemic) species known to inhabit our small island.

What can we take from this saga? First, Lasqueti is one of only a few islands on the planet known to be the site of a speciation event. Second, Lasqueti's tiny lakes seemingly represent special yet fragile and poorly understood freshwater ecosystems that warrant further study, care, and protection. Third, other species-pairs, or even other unique species of fish, wildlife, aquatic insects, and plants, likely await discovery in our lakes. Of the half-dozen small lakes on Lasqueti (other than Pete's Lake 30 years ago), only Lake Trematon has been examined and while unusual sticklebacks were noted there the sampling was inconclusive. With LINC's support, the author plans to investigate further.

Acknowledgements. Dr. Rick Taylor, current faculty member at UBC and a member of the original research team that visited Lasqueti in the 1980s, kindly reviewed an early draft of this article and offered helpful suggestions. The final draft received helpful feedback from Norm Stacey and Gail Sorensen.

Suggested reading: Hatfield, T. (2001). Status of the stickleback species pair, Gasterosteus spp., in Hadley Lake, Lasqueti Island, British Columbia. Canadian Field-Naturalist 115.4.

The Three-spined Stickleback, *Gasterosteus aculeatus*, is perhaps one of the most successful and adaptive vertebrates to have ever lived. It is a member of the order Perciformes ("Perch") and a relative of the eelpouts and sculpins, the latter now found in fresh water. The Three-spined Stickleback is known for its small size (3-5 cm), physiological resilience, three dorsal spines, and remarkably flexible life history. Fossil records suggest this fish evolved in shallow seas in California about 10 million years ago and spread from there, adapting to local conditions. It is now also found across the entire Northern Hemisphere.

Although typically marine fish, some populations of Three-spined Stickleback have also evolved the ability to thrive in fresh water, with some populations migrating between the two, like salmon. The species is known to have flexible feeding habits, using both their gills and mouth pieces to acquire tiny food items. Three-spined Sticklebacks become brightly colored and build elaborate nests while performing elaborate zig-zag behaviours attract females in late spring, which Niko Tinbergen documented as an example of how genetics can control behaviour, leading him to fame and the Nobel Prize.

Saskatoon

Saskatoon *Amelanchier alnifolia* is a common shrub through much of western North America. It can be found from California and the western interior states, through the prairie provinces and much of BC into Alaska. It is known by a variety of other names and is often called Serviceberry in the US. Saskatoon occurs in a wide range of habitats across its range and is often found in drier, open forests and parklands; it doesn't like wetter soils with poor drainage. On Lasqueti it is not among our most common berries, but is frequent in open forests and knolls across the island. It is in the rose family (the same as apples) and has beautiful white flowers that open early in the spring, producing dark purple berries by mid-summer. The English name for the fruit "Saskatoon" was derived from its Cree name and the city of Saskatoon is named after the plant, which grew in abundance in that area during the early colonial period.

Saskatoon berries have been considered the most important fruit for Indigenous People in the Interior of British Columbia and the Prairie Provinces and they were used by virtually all Indigenous groups of central and western Canada. Botanists recognize four varieties of this species in Canada, but some Indigenous Peoples distinguish up to eight different types, with each variety being named based on characteristics such as the sweetness and size of the berries, the timing of flowering and ripening of fruit, the height of the plant, and the habitat in which it is found.

Large quantities of Saskatoon berries were harvested and dried for winter use, and they were eaten fresh, dried, and smoked in many different ways. They were often mixed as a sweetener or flavour enhancer with a wide variety of other foods, both plant and animal, and they were a key ingredient in Pemmican. Saskatoons were also an important component of many traditional medicines and contemporary research has demonstrated high levels of polyphenols and other compounds with anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. The hard, straight-grained wood of Saskatoon made it an important part of Indigenous technology. It was used to make a variety of tools such as arrow shafts, digging sticks, spears, and seed beaters.

Where Saskatoon is abundant, it can be an important food for wildlife, which eat the foliage, buds, and berries. Saskatoon is fire tolerant and, even when the above ground portions are killed by fire, it re-sprouts vigorously from below ground after a fire. It can be an important member of the post-burn plant community, contributing to ecological resilience after a fire. It is part of a suite of species that Indigenous Peoples managed with prescribed fires and produces abundant berries in that context. Saskatoon is grown commercially in the prairie provinces and horticulturally in other parts of the world.

Land Stewardship

by James Schwartz

Spurge Purge

On a rare sunny spring morning in March, thirteen Lasquetians came out to the same South end property we've been going to for over ten years to continue the battle against the spread of a highly invasive plant in BC. Daphne laureola, often known locally as spurge laurel, is listed as poisonous by the Canadian Poisonous Plants Information System and as a toxic plant by Work Safe BC. Native to North Africa and much of Europe, this plant was introduced to Canada in the early 1900's as a hardy garden ornamental.

Outside its native range this daphne can become a dangerously invasive weed. It grows quickly in sun or shade and has found itself well-suited to our temperate island forest understory where it rapidly out competes and smothers native vegetation by both re-seeding itself and by root suckering, thus forming large dense monocultures. Although eaten by birds, its shiny black berries are highly poisonous to humans. *Daphne laureola* is designated as a Management species by the BC Provincial Priority Invasive Species List. Care and protective measures are recommended in the removal of this potentially dangerous plant as it is toxic to touch, inhale, and ingest. Cutting the stems results in a noxious gas that can cause nausea and even induce coma. Touching them without gloves can result in an itchy rash.

LINC gives hearty thanks to the brave eco warriors: Wendy Schneible, Izzy and Gordon, Doane, Jodi, Barb Brookes, Darcy Dobell, Hilary, Faren, Shoshanna, Trudy and Richard and myself, James, who volunteered our time to help prevent areas of our valuable forests being over run. We worked in two areas that had not been addressed much in past years. We felt that we really made progress over the brief three hours we were there.

Small collective acts of action can help make a change towards the more sustainable future we seek. As well as enhancing your personal fitness level, joining together with fellow islanders in this kind of communal activity promotes a positive feeling of shared community. LINC welcomes your participation and rewards your time with locally-prepared, nourishing and delicious lunches.

Island Trails

The Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy contracts to co-manage the properties owned by the Island Trust Conservancy (ITC) and BC Parks Foundation (BCPF). In the past LINC has sent out surveys to determine islander's wishes when it comes to the shared management of these properties. Both full and part time residents indicated a strong desire for hiking trails.

Brief News About Habitat and Species

Formalized trails are more acceptable to conservation organizations as property owners because they channel inevitably occurring human pathways into defined and concentrated areas which help to leave the greater area in a natural state. LINC attempts to find a balance in creating trails, making them as interesting and diverse as possible by taking in unusual land formations and scenic views, protecting sensitive wildlife areas. Once formed, these trails need yearly maintenance.

Many years ago, after LINC helped acquire Salish View, we made a recreational trail from Main Road up to the high summit of the Salish View Nature Reserve.

This year a group of volunteers gathered on a fine sunny day in early April at the parking area at Squitty Bay Provincial Park. Carrying rakes, saws, weeding implements and, of course, lunches by one of LINC's amazing local caterers, they made their way along the trail—clearing and defining it for hikers, stopping to remove invasive weeds from the fenced plant exclosure en route. Up through the small valley of old growth trees we cleaned owl boxes with hopes for new residency, and then we rested on the high open bluffs which look southeast over the widest section of the Salish Sea to the high rise towers of Vancouver and the white peaks of distant Mount Baker in Washington state.

Outside area next to exclosure at Salish View, revealing a lack of understory.

Photo Gordon Scott

What great rewards this morning for Betsy, Wendy and Bruce, Kathleen, Willy, Peter D., Duane, Gordon and James as we experience our island's natural environment at its best while generating comraderie and clearing the way for future hikers to have a safe and enjoyable time at Salish View.

- ***Bird populations*** in North America have declined by nearly 3 billion since 1970. That's down by 40% - one in four birds… gone.

Pesticides and habitat loss are to blame. Please don't spray, conserve habitat and plant native species where possible.

"By eBirding, you help to build one of the largest and most comprehensive datasets on bird populations ever created. These collective efforts reveal eye-opening insights, such as how some North American bird species are declining most severely in areas where they were traditionally most abundant." Ebird

- ***Forests:*** Old growth – new report – worth more standing! Summary report in the Fall 2025 Newtletter.

- *Salmon:* "As many of you have read, or hopefully experienced, this year's salmon abundance and catches showed improvement over the last few years." … When people began asking me what the salmon returns this past season were like, my immediate response was, "in general, good." But I have begun reflecting, 'good' compared to what? Good compared to the last few seasons? Maybe. But compared to when I began in the business, it was a poor year.

On the South Coast, the Salish Sea appears to be very productive for coho and chinook populations. Improved conditions during salmon outmigration can have significant benefits for a salmon population's overall survival rates. And the removal of the 40 fish farms off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island are likely tied to the substantial increase in salmon returns seen in the Mainland Inlets. By Greg Taylor – Watershed Watch Society

For the full report go to: https://watershedwatch.ca/stories/greg-taylor-2024-salmon-fishery-recap-part-one/

This summer marks the 30th anniversary of the creation of Jedediah Provincial Park, one of the first BC parks initiated by a group of locals - Lasquetians.

Seen In Passing

Chocolate Lily from exclosure at Mt. Trematon.
Photo Simmah Peterson

An incredible blossom year for our native arbutus trees. Photo Izzy Harrington

Pierre Geoffray on our bird walk in May.
Photo Izzy Harrington

New Beaver Lodge by trail at Osland Reserve.
Photo Gordon Scott

Parasitic Ground Cone associated with Salal.
Photo Doane Grinell

Cryptoporus volvatus, veiled polypore or cryptic globe fungus. Photo James Schwartz

Death Camas found at Salish View, Squitty Bay and Finnerties.
Photo Izzy Harrington

LINC Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy

Help conserve and steward nature on Lasqueti
Share your wildlife stories & photos,
and join in on our events.

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