



## Saltair District Residents Association (SDRA)

[www.sunnysaltair.ca](http://www.sunnysaltair.ca)

# MAY 2023

### Updates from the Annual General Meeting

Held on April 27 at the Saltair Community Centre on Oyster School Road, we had 34 attendees for the proceedings. The agenda included several presentations, the highlights being the handmade gavel and strike plate and the Community Service Award to the Evans for their extraordinary work on the Halloween and Easter celebrations. We announced the re-introduction of the SDRA High School Bursary Awards and our priority list for the next year based on the survey results.

A full report – the AGM minutes – is still under construction and will be distributed as a separate mailing. We'll get that to you, hopefully, in the next couple of weeks.



### Safety upgrades: Chemainus River bridges

(from: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023MOTI0065-000763>)

Did you know that more than 27,000 drivers that cross the bridges every day? Several projects have already been completed to make the bridges safer, and a final big project will vastly increase their longevity. Work includes seismic upgrades to the northbound Arch Bridge and southbound Truss Bridge, as well as deck and joint replacements and recoating of the Truss Bridge. The budget for all this is \$10.4 million.

A minimum of 1 lane will be open in each direction, as will the pedestrian/bicycle lane while work is done and every effort will be made to minimize impacts to heavy traffic. If you drive to/from Duncan

frequently, updates will be available on Twitter at @DriveBC and online at: <https://www.DriveBC.ca>

### SIGN UP! Neighbourhood Yard Sale – June 17

OK, I know you've got stuff squirrelled away in your garage, attic, basement – or right there in the back of your kitchen or bedroom cupboards. We all do. So – let's recycle, reuse, and clear it out! And you might just make a bit of coin!

Just make up your mind to commit and call 250-924-6924 and let us know what street you are on (no names or house numbers required) and let us look after the advertising and promotion.

We had a great success last year; would be great to meet or exceed the number of participants. Talk to your neighbours and have a street sale!



## Nature group buys sensitive Vancouver Island habitat

(May 9: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/> )

To ensure the area will not be developed, the Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC), a non-profit organization, will make the \$2-million purchase of 15 hectares of ecologically sensitive habitat along the Little Qualicum River on Vancouver Island before the end of the month. The land involved is home to at-risk wildlife, old-growth trees and diverse salmon species. The habitat, located on the traditional territory of Qualicum First Nation, is in the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone\*\*, one of BC's most vulnerable areas.

*(BTW, the Wul'aam (Echo) Park in Chemainus also contains areas of this vanishing habitat – one of the reasons the Chemainus Residents Association fought for its preservation.)*

The purchase was funded by \$1.75-million in federal grants and \$415,000 from private donors and fits into a larger aim shared by the federal government, to protect 30 per cent of its lands and waters by 2030. B.C. has also committed to the "30 by '30" target, but the [Wilderness Committee found nothing](#) in the province's 2023 budget to reach that goal.

\*\*DEFINITION: The Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) zone describes a unique set of ecosystems found only on southeast Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and the southwest coast of BC. CDF ecosystems are rare and highly endangered. See the Capital Region District (Victoria) information sheets attached at the end of the newsletter.

## Rebates for E-Bike Purchases

(From <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023MOTI0071-000804>)

"In time for GoByBike Week, the Province is offering rebates on the purchase of eligible new e-bikes for people who want to add some power to their pedal and start commuting by bike.

Beginning June 1, 2023, rebates on the purchase of an approved e-bike will be available to B.C. residents older than 19 and will be based on a person's income. Rebates will range from \$350 to a maximum of \$1,400. Unlike previous programs, there is no need to scrap a car to access the rebate. The Province is investing more than \$6 million in rebates, which will allow as many as 9,000 people to lower the cost of their e-bike purchase. The rebate program will be administered by the Scrap-It Society.

To find out which e-bike rebate you may qualify for and how to apply, visit: <http://bcebikerebates.ca/>

For information about HUB's Streetwise Cycling Online program: <https://bikehub.ca/education/streetwise/streetwise-cycling-online> Specialty Use Vehicle Incentive: <https://pluginbc.ca/suvi/>

## Gulf Island Marine Conservation Area Proposal

*This is a really great thing! How can we agitate to push government to act on this proposal? So much of this area harbours species at risk. And studies have shown that coastal ecosystems store more greenhouse gases than they emit.*

A proposed marine conservation area around Saanich Peninsula and the Gulf Islands could stop ships from using parts of the area. Originally pitched [in October 2011](#), the proposed area covers a broad area of about 1,400 square kilometres.

Parks Canada recently launched a new policy for marine conservation areas which includes a zoning framework with zones that would ban ships from using the area if it was needed to protect the ecosystem. One would prohibit everything but traditional uses and permitted research ships, while looser zones would allow transit of commercial shipping and tourism but not recreational fishing. [See the map on the next page.](#)

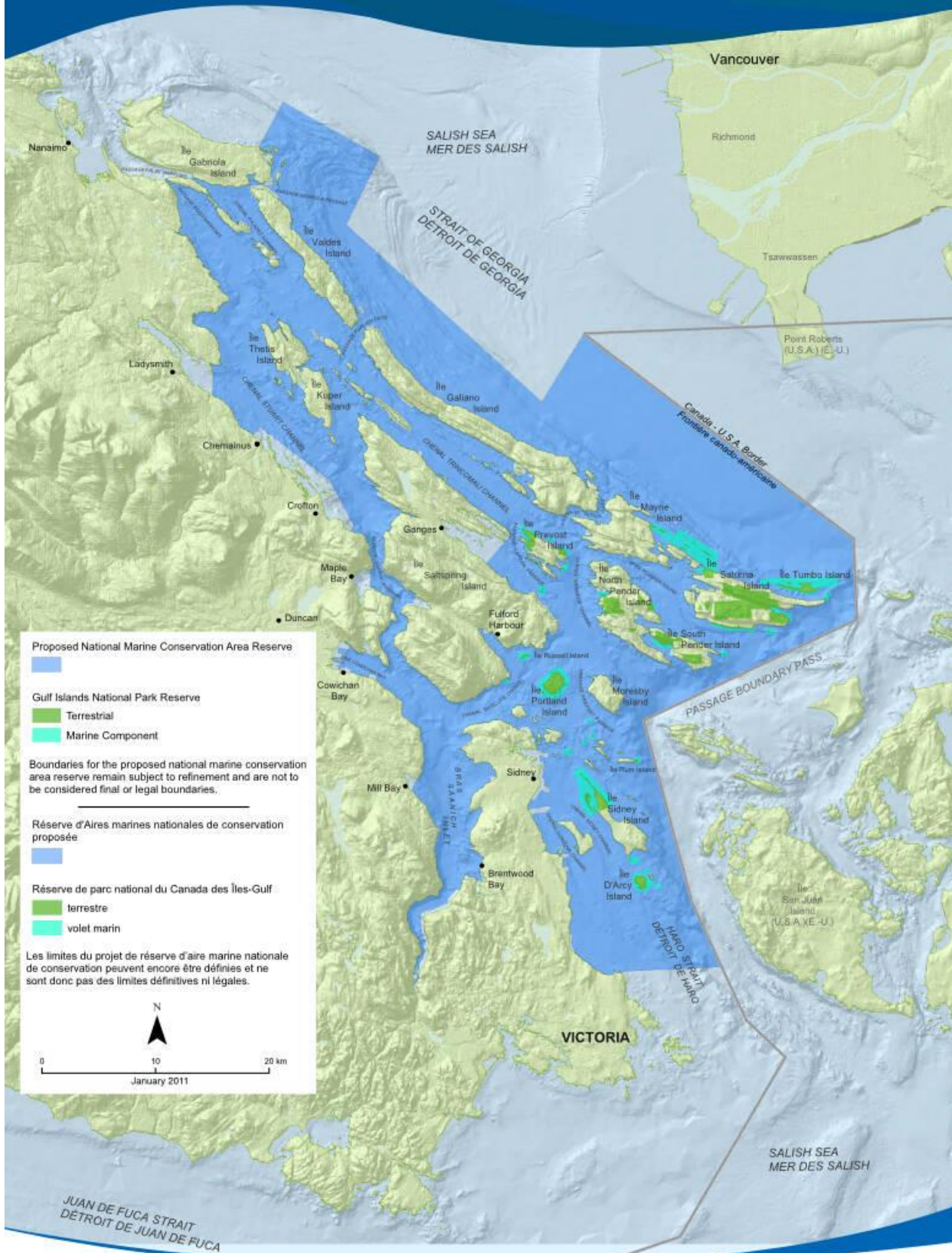
Were a national marine conservation area reserve to be established in the area, the zoning plan could include areas where shipping would and would not be allowed. This plan would need to be developed collaboratively with First Nations, Transport Canada and the marine transportation industry.

Calls for protection in the area have been coming for years, especially as the number of freighters anchoring increases. From 2011 to 2022 it jumped from 140 dry and liquid bulk vessels anchored in the Southern Gulf Islands a year to 457.

But Transport Canada has rejected any such suggestion: <https://www.goldstreamgazette.com/news/transport-canada-rejects-ban-on-freighter-anchorage-off-of-vancouver-island/>

**Southern Strait of Georgia  
National Marine Conservation Area Reserve  
Boundary Concept**

**Concept de limites de la réserve  
d'aire marine nationale de conservation  
dans la région sud du détroit de Georgia**



# Douglas-fir Ecosystem

## Information Sheet

### Environmental Protection and Stewardship

#### What is a Douglas-fir ecosystem?

A Douglas-fir ecosystem is characterized by the iconic Douglas-fir evergreen. These towering trees have deeply grooved, thick bark which protects them from forest fires and insects. Without disturbance, Douglas-fir trees can live for 750 to 1,000 years. They are a keystone species, meaning that they are essential to the complex associations between the many species of trees, shrubs, grasses, ferns, flowering plants, mosses, lichens, fungi, and animals that live in these forests. If the dense Douglas-fir canopy is removed, the entire ecosystem can become unbalanced.

#### Where are Douglas-fir forests?

Douglas-fir forests flourish in the unique climate of southeastern Vancouver Island, where surrounding mountains intercept much of the rain and create a "rainshadow". Douglas-fir forests typically lie between the drier Garry oak woodland and wetter Western red cedar forest.

Once prevalent throughout the capital region, much of the original Douglas-fir forests have been lost. One of the best places to see a remnant old-growth Douglas-fir forest is on the grounds of Royal Roads University in Colwood. Some Douglas-fir trees at this site are over 800 years old. Thetis Lake Regional Park, Goldstream Provincial Park, Gowlland Tod Provincial Park and East Sooke Regional Park are also home to older second growth Douglas-fir forests.

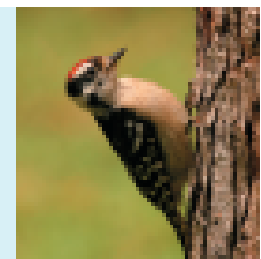


#### Importance of Douglas-fir forests.

Douglas-fir forests are home to a broad diversity of plants, animals, and fungi. Beyond their important role in sustaining biodiversity, they provide many essential environmental services, such as:

- Mitigating climate change;
- Improving air quality;
- Absorbing and filtering stormwater runoff;
- Binding and regenerating soil to prevent erosion;
- Providing natural areas for research, recreation, and spiritual activities.

Douglas-fir forests have the highest average bird counts of any forest type in North America.



#### Douglas-fir forests support biodiversity.

In addition to Douglas-fir trees, you can find:

- Shrubs like salal, Oregon grape, vanilla leaf, and ferns.
- Mosses like Oregon beaked and electrified cat's tail.
- Large mammals such as black-tailed deer, black bear and cougar.
- Small mammals such as red squirrels, who nest in tree cavities and harvest Douglas-fir cones, and bats, who roost under Douglas-fir bark.
- Birds, including woodpeckers, wrens, Steller's jay, raven, brown creeper, and varied thrush — all of which eat conifer seeds or wood-boring insects. Owls, swallows and chickadees which nest in tree cavities, and bald eagles who rely on trees to support their nests.
- Amphibians, including the western toad, Pacific tree frog, western red-backed and northwestern salamanders.
- Hundreds to thousands of species of insects that can be found in the forest canopy down to the soil.

## Threats to Douglas-fir forests.

Douglas-fir forests on Southern Vancouver Island are imperiled ecosystems. Today, very few older Douglas-fir forest ecosystems remain in the capital region, and those that do are highly fragmented. They exist as isolated islands among a landscape altered by human development.

It is predicted that climate change will have a significant impact on Douglas-fir ecosystems due to increased summer temperatures and drought.

### Human Impacts

Since Douglas-fir forests occur in regions favoured by people, they were some of the first forests logged and cleared for urban and agricultural development.

Humans also altered natural forest succession by suppressing forest fires. Historically, low-intensity forest fires occurred in Douglas-fir forests every 100-300 years. The thick bark of mature Douglas-fir trees protected them from fires while the fires controlled the growth of young, competing trees. Periodic fires would also reduce build-up of woody-debris on the forest floor, preventing higher intensity, more destructive fires. As people, unfamiliar with the natural processes of Douglas-fir forests, settled in the area, they began to suppress forest fires, changing the ecosystem.

### Invasive Species

Invasive species represent a major threat to Douglas-fir forests. Plants and animals that have been accidentally or intentionally introduced from distant areas can upset the natural balance of the ecosystem. Invasive plants like English ivy, Scotch broom and Himalayan blackberry spread quickly and flourish in disturbed areas. Introduced species often out compete native species for food, growing sites and habitat.



Invasive English ivy



Invasive scotch broom



## We all have a role to play in protecting the environment.

There are simple ways that you can help Douglas-fir forests.

1. Learn about Douglas-fir ecosystems and how to recognize them.
2. When visiting Douglas-fir forests:
  - Stay on designated paths or trails
  - Be mindful of fragile understory plants
  - Do not damage tree bark or branches
  - Keep pets under control
  - Pack out any waste
3. Take Action.
  - If you live next to a Douglas-fir forest, maintain a buffer between the forest and manicured areas
  - Remove invasive species from your yard
  - Garden with native plants to support local biodiversity
  - Volunteer with groups that pull invasive species in parks and natural areas

Visit [crd.bc.ca/biodiversity](http://crd.bc.ca/biodiversity) for more resources.