

# The Log

Autumn 2004

FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES NEWSLETTER

## On Patrol with the M3 in the Salish Sea

Bobbing in its berth among the sleek sailing yachts on the outermost finger of the Oak Bay Marina is a 23 foot Zodiac with the words "Marine Mammal Monitoring" emblazoned on its sides. On a sunny Friday morning in August, I showed up with a packed lunch and lots of sunscreen to volunteer for that day's patrol. Dockside I meet with Peter, the second volunteer and Marc Pakenham, Director of the Marine Mammal Monitoring Program (M3), the Luna Stewardship Program and our skipper du jour. Peter and I will act as crew while the vessel

undertakes its regular run out to observe whale watching activity in an area off Vancouver Island that includes the San Juans and the Gulf Islands known in the native tradition as the Salish Sea.

The M3 patrol does vessel counts, records infringements of whale watching guidelines and educates boaters on proper etiquette around marine mammals. The program got underway in 2001 as a joint project between the Veins of Life Watershed Society, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the US Soundwatch

Program which operates a monitoring vessel out of the Whale Museum in Friday Harbour on San Juan Island. M3 was modeled to some degree on

*continued on page 2*

## Inside ...

President's Report	4
Land and Water BC Process for Selling Crown Land	5
Introducing Morgan MacCarl	7
Ecological Reserves of Northern Vancouver Island, Part II – the northeast	8
Additions to Ecological Reserves	11
Trial Island Field Trip	11
A Reminder to Wardens	12
Ecostar	12
Wardenwear	12
Thank You...	12
Dedication of Artwork...	13
Field Trips	13
Calendar	14
Websites of Interest	16



PHOTO CREDIT: D. DEMONTREUIL

M3 Patrol Boat

# The Log

Autumn 2004

The LOG is published 3 times a year by the Friends of Ecological Reserves to promote the establishment, management and maintenance of Ecological Reserves in British Columbia. The LOG is distributed to members, volunteer wardens, affiliates, supporters, government, friends and the enquiring public.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Friends.

Articles for publication are invited. The deadline for submissions for the next issue of The LOG is November 8, 2004

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*"On Patrol..." continued from page 1*

the Soundwatch Program which has run successfully since the early 1990's. The M3 program is fairly unique in securing American agreement to run patrols across the international boundary although it seems that today we are prohibited from handing out brochures to American boats once we are out of Canadian waters... something to do with homeland security regulations. Funding for M3 comes mainly from the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, a joint federal program between DFO, Parks Canada and Environment Canada. The guidelines which appear in the "Be Whale Wise" brochure were developed in conjunction with the industry, government agencies and the stewardship community on both sides of the border.

*The whales appear,  
groups of dorsal fins  
breaking the surface,  
a big bull popping up  
to take a look around,  
babies flipping their  
tails out of the water  
seemingly for the sheer  
joy of it.*

After a tour of the boat's amenities, we are instructed in filling out paperwork, interpreting grid point references and using the equipment. Peter's favorite is a nifty pole with a clip on the end that is used to safely hand out brochures at sea. I particularly like the stabilizing binoculars. We are outfitted with floater jackets and official M3 ball caps, run through a safety check of the boat and wait to hear either on VHF radio or via pager if there is any whale activity. We agree that we look pretty good in our quasi-uniform caps and jackets – almost official!

The first page comes in before all the housekeeping is done indicating that J, K, and L pods are off the southwest corner of San Juan Island headed north. We speed through the final preparations and cast off. As we swing into the main channel outside the marina we are overtaken by two commercial whale watching vessels with two more on the horizon approaching fast. They give us cheery waves and vector off to the east.

As we zip along in their wake, Marc points out a boat off Great Chain Island (ER# 94, Oak Bay Islands) that is within the 200 m. limit. "The ecological reserves aren't marked on the charts so most boaters are unaware that they are breaking the rules", Marc says. The sign on Great Chain Island that identifies it as a reserve is half falling over, the lettering weathered and unreadable from any useful distance. "There is pressure on the reserves from tourism, especially when there are no whales to see", Marc informs us. "The operators pull in to show clients the birds, disturb hauled out seals, pull up bull kelp and cut off the float to pass around...over time it's got to have a negative effect."

Ecotourism is a multi-million dollar business for southern Vancouver Island. The Whale Watch Operators Association Northwest lists 13 companies out of Victoria alone, some running multiple vessels, each vessel making as many as five runs a day. Several more member companies operate from the American side and out of the Gulf Islands. With unaffiliated operators, pleasure craft, commercial fishing vessels and shipping added in, the commotion around a pod of orcas on a summer long weekend quickly turns into a circus.

We arrive off San Juan Island where several boats are milling about. In a few minutes the whales appear, groups of dorsal fins breaking the surface, a big bull popping up to take a look around, babies flipping their

*continued on page 3*



*Too close – boats and whales off San Juan Island*



*The happy crew: L–R The author, Marc Pakenham, Peter Ronald*

*“On Patrol...” continued from page 2*

tails out of the water seemingly for the sheer joy of it. The whales circle erratically and we have to scramble to keep out of their way. Peter and I are kept busy. I have my head down writing as Peter, with eyes glued to the binoculars reads out boat names and locations. It takes all my concentration to keep up with the flow of information and write legibly on the heaving boat but I still manage to sneak a look every so often as a large group goes by or a whale breaches in the distance. Peter and I are blown away and even Marc allows that in spite of the amount of time he spends on the water, he rarely sees it like this. We pull in briefly beside the bright blue Soundwatch boat and meet American program coordinator Kari Koski and her volunteer and work out some strategy to coordinate our activities.

Eventually the whales settle into a northerly course and we move ahead to warn boats in their path of their approach. Most of those we speak to are appreciative and cooperative, others less so. Commercial operators radio the M3 steadily about potential problems which leads me to think it

must be useful for them to have a somewhat detached third party to run interference for them. Today there are roughly 25 boats present, a reasonable number, I'm told. Reasonable or not, it seems like a lot of boats to me but on one particularly busy day this summer, the M3 patrol counted 120 boats, 82 whales plus a gillnet fishery underway.

We pass Lime Kiln Park where the crowds lining the shore are probably getting a closer look at the whales than those of us on the water. The western shore of San Juan Island has an exclusion zone for power boats along its length which means the whale watching boats line up along the edge of the zone waiting for the whales to come by, running the gauntlet between them and the shore. The whales seem intent upon their own purposes ignoring all the attention but one wonders how much the human presence interferes with their normal behavior. Pursued, observed if not outright harassed, it seems impossible that they can be entirely unaffected. Watchdog entities like the M3 and Soundwatch appear to have had a salutary effect just by their presence,

leveling the playing field and providing invaluable information to the policy makers in Ottawa and elsewhere.

On a second trip early in September, we head out past Sooke. A very spread out group of orcas is heading fast for the open Pacific. We follow for awhile, noting four commercial whale watching boats who have ventured out this distance. Tours are three hours long and they are getting close to the edge of their range. With so much room, there is little to record in guideline infringements. A tour operator calls to tell us about a “distinctive odor” encountered on the way out from Victoria. Apparently that's shorthand for a humpback in the neighbourhood. Sure enough, on our way back suddenly the air is a miasma of fishy smell. We stop and scan the water for a few moments and are rewarded with a brief sighting of a huge back with a small fin breaking the surface and disappearing a few hundred metres ahead of us. It turns out to be the only glimpse we'll get, but it's enough.

The M3 is just about finished its operations for another season but in the spring, it starts all over again. The patrol requires two volunteers for every trip it makes. If you are comfortable in boats and interested in being involved, contact Marc Pakenham at [pakenham@volws.bc.ca](mailto:pakenham@volws.bc.ca) or phone 383-2086. ■

PHOTO CREDIT: C. TUCKER

PHOTO CREDIT: D. DEMONTREUIL

I hope that you all had an enjoyable summer, wherever your travels and activities took you, and that you begin this fall with a sense of renewed energy and enthusiasm. There are many issues and challenges facing us in our work as Friends of Ecological Reserves, and we need to keep our resolve and work together.

The Friends have a busy time planned for the coming months, and will be using the annual plan to guide us (this proposal was printed in the Spring 2004 issue of *The Log*). FER will be especially busy with the planned assessment of British Columbia's ecological reserves. Producing a report on the "State of Ecological Reserves" is a major and significant undertaking of our group. It has been more than 30 years since ecological reserves were established by an act of the provincial legislature. To my knowledge, there hasn't been a major evaluation of the system except for Kris Kennett's master's thesis in 1987. The aim is to produce a document that recommends clear directions for the future of the ecological reserve system in British Columbia.

Work has already begun on this initiative. This summer Morgan MacCarl, a co-op student, was hired to work with us on the report (For more details and an introduction to Morgan, see page 7 in this issue). We invite your help on this project, for example, by responding to Morgan's request for information and by offering suggestions for consideration in the report. We'll need all the assistance we can get – and look forward to your contributions.

FER will also be busy with other activities. Field trips are planned, with the trip to Race Rocks scheduled for this fall. There will be continuing liaison with Wardens, so that we are able to advance their concerns to the provincial government. More sources of funding will be explored to support research in ecoreserves. The website

will be maintained, and more time will be spent thinking about improving outreach and communication. As well, there are and will be issues that "ask" for involvement of the Board. There will be events and proposals that raise concerns about their potential impacts on ecological reserves, and these may come in the form of development proposals, suggested legislation or in other ways. In this issue, you can read about one of these concerns, the disposition of Crown Lands by Land and Water BC, and there will be others. Count on it! Again, Wardens and other members of FER can give the Board a "heads up" on emerging concerns, so that we can decide how to most effectively commit time and energy to ensure that the security of ecological reserves is adequately addressed.

Hopefully, there will also be opportunities that could potentially benefit ecoreserves. One timely example is the up-coming provincial election in May 2005. It is not too early to be thinking about how you can make the case for ecoreserves with your MLAs. Tell them about the reserves in your area; take them on a field trip; let them know how important reserves are to all of us, now and in the future. Tell them how we need more resources to adequately look after reserves, how Wardens need more support, and how we need more reserves. Don't forget to write the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection, the Minister of Forests, the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management and the Minister of Mines, and remind them that B.C.'s system of ecological reserves needs to be sustained. Keep ecoreserves on their radar screen.

As you can see, the Friends have a full agenda and it is critical that we pace ourselves to avoid overextending our limited time and resources. All too often, when we become immersed in the day-to-day flow, we can feel overwhelmed – the challenges seem too

great, the pressures seem too strong, the volume of work looms too large. It is at these times that we need to keep perspective and renew our resolve. I am reminded of a great metaphor used by Briony Penn when she spoke at the recent international conference on ecological restoration at the University of Victoria. In her own characteristic way, she used the Wizard of Oz as a metaphor for proposing how we deal with the many challenges facing restoration, locally and internationally. Briony renamed the Wizard of Oz, the Wizard of ER (Ecological Restoration), and she suggested that restorationists can find the brains, courage and heart within themselves to address the challenges of preventing and repairing environmental damage.

It seems to me that those of us who care about ecological reserves should think of our mission in the same way. There can be a Wizard of ER (Ecological Reserves), just as there is for restoration. It is just as true for restorationists as it is for ourselves, that the real Wizard is within us: we can face the challenges of maintaining a world-class system of ecological reserves by using the brains, courage and heart we find within ourselves, and by working together.

I am looking forward to the fall with optimism, and I hope that all of you share that sense of expectation with me, and that we work together to ensure that the reserve system that we treasure so highly, is there forever. ■

Visit [www.ecoreserves.bc.ca](http://www.ecoreserves.bc.ca)



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# Land and Water BC Process for Selling Crown Land

By Mike Fenger

## Introduction

This article is in response to concerns raised by Friends of Ecological Reserves members. Members want to know whether public lands with high environmental values are being leased or sold. This article reviews the current process used by Land and Water British Columbia (LWBC) when deciding to lease or sell public land, improvements to the current Land and Water BC process and how FER members can best participate in the current process. The goal is to ensure that public land with high environmental values remains in public hands as this provides the best option for sustaining environmental values over the short and long term.

## Background

Land and Water British Columbia Inc (LWBC) web site (<http://lwbc.bc.ca/>) states the Corporation's mission statement is to ***“manage the allocation of Crown land and water resources on behalf of the Government of British Columbia and its constituents. As a Crown corporation, LWBC ensures the responsible, timely and prosperous use of BC's most valuable assets”***.

To carry out this mission there are four service regions in the new Corporation's structure, some with regional sub offices (see the website for more details. <http://www.lwbc.bc.ca/07contact/regions.html>). LWBC staff is held to account for annual revenue targets and performance measures. The LWBC service plan (Goal 1) established a revenue target of \$53 million for 2003/04 through sale of crown land. LWBC outperformed this target and sold \$73.3 million worth of crown land and now uses \$73 million as a crown land revenue target that

needs to be met over the next three years. Since the formation of LWBC, land sales have increased by approximately 250%. Besides the revenue performance measures, LWBC staff are to improve sales customer's satisfaction by 25% over the next three years. Sales customer satisfaction is based on interviews with client who lease or buy crown land.

The LWBC service plan states that local and regional governments are responsible for zoning and planning decisions that impact LWBC. Policies used to guide land and water allocation decisions in the past are under review. A central tenet in older policy has been an obligation for decision makers to determine “highest and best use” of land and water when taking lease and sale decisions.

The public land for sale in each region is posted on the LWBC site <http://www.lwbc.bc.ca/02land/sales/index.html>. These “surplus public lands” may go through an environmental assessment carried out by the proponent when the proposal is considered large enough and managed by the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO). However the LWBC Website states,

***“The majority of Crown land applications do not warrant an environmental assessment by the EAO. In these cases, Land and Water British Columbia Inc. undertake a comprehensive evaluation of individual land applications. The process used to evaluate applications for Crown land varies depending on the complexity of the application, but most land use proposals will go through these key steps:***

***1. Advertisement to solicit public input on the proposed use (a public meeting or open house could also be held if the nature of the***

***application warrants additional public consultation);***

***2. Land statusing to identify legal encumbrances and potential environmental issues, community concerns and conflicts;***

***3. Consultation/referral to government agencies, First Nations and other interested parties for review and comment; Aboriginal Interest Assessment to ensure that the province's fiduciary obligations to First Nations are met; and, a site visit by Land and Water British Columbia Inc. staff to verify specific issues and gather additional information”***.

## Discussion

The LWBC process allows “clients” to apply for any parcel of un-alienated crown land for either purchase or lease. Those already leasing can renew or upgrade their security through purchase of the land. Purchase price is based on land appraisal at the time a purchase offer is made. Consistent with the client service orientation, LWBC staff is required to make timely decisions.

Downsizing of government and new business models means there are fewer government staff. Referral of crown land application to other ministries such as Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (MWLAP), are being phased out. In the past MWLAP staff provided knowledge on environmental values, risk and impact on behalf of government and supplied this to LWBC staff as part of the evaluation. Currently LWBC staff use existing land use zoning information and map notations under the *Land Act* in lieu of referrals. Map notations under the *Land Act* show a record of past environmental concerns for some areas

*continued on page 6*

"Land and Water..." continued from page 5 of the province but these do not systematically reflect environmental values and so at best partly reflect sensitivities.

## Environmental stewardship is left to public involvement as the means of safeguarding sale and lease of public land with high environmental values.

To replace referrals MWLAP intends to produce "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) as technical guidance to inform other government programs on environmental values. Due to other priorities MWLAP has not produced BMPs for sensitive ecosystem such as riparian areas, grassland, Garry Oak ecosystems etc. MWLAP expects BMPs to provide technical information to LWBC staff in their evaluations and to use this guidance to either deny or amend lease or purchase applications with appropriate conservation covenants. Currently MWLAP biologists are focused on identifying and mapping areas needed to sustain endangered species and ecosystems. Identifying and mapping wildlife habitat areas (WHA) provides clear government objectives and is enabled under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*. This act applies to forest practices on public land and on private forest land (Schedule A land) included within Tree Farm License Agreements. There are environmentally sensitive areas that are not part of the Provincial Forest and to which the WHA provisions cannot be applied. To date government biologists have proposed a majority of the WHA areas outside of parks. The ability to propose WHAs is however open to any organization, industry or the public. This provides an opportunity for naturalists and non government biologists and FER to act locally and propose WHAs. This can be done by making areas

known to LWBC and regional rare and endangered species biologists in MWLAP and may help protect some sensitive areas.

### Conclusion

The LWBC service plan calls for the agency to carry out business through application of the following principles:

1. Stewardship, leadership and effective functioning of the Board.
2. Clarity of roles and responsibility
3. Openness, trust and transparency
4. Service and corporate citizenship
5. Accountability and performance
6. Value, innovation and continuous improvement.

There is clear accountability and performance within LWBC for revenue targets but no similar accountability for environmental values and environmental stewardship. The process for accounting for environmental values is under review during a period where land sales have increased 250%. Where there are no specific local or regional plans setting environmental objectives or no *Land Act* notations and no *Forest Range Practices Act* WHAs established then client-driven applications for purchase or lease of public land are assumed benign.

The current three-step process provides opportunity by the public to raise concerns in response to specific applications. LWBC places a high degree of reliance on public environmental knowledge to meet its stated environmental stewardship principle. WLAP biologists no long can provide review input to help LWBC process applications but have not completed Best Management Practices in lieu of this advice. There are expectations that members of the public will perform an environmental watch dog role and provide environmental information to LWBC on specific applications on behalf of the public at large. There are no requirements that clients fund environmental assessment as part of their application process. Environmental assessment is restricted to larger projects run by the Environmental Assessment Office.

There is an urgent need for clear and transparent public policy within LWBC in this interim period in which WLAP is no longer acting as the environmental steward. LWBC staff is aggressively pursuing revenue targets since they will be held accountable for these but are not being held accountable for environmental stewardship. Environmental stewardship is left to public involvement as the means of safeguarding sale and lease of public land with high environmental values. Sustaining environmental values over large areas requires considerable knowledge of species and ecosystems. Under the current process there is a high likelihood that areas with high environmental values are to be leased and sold and that environmental risk and environmental degradation are unaccounted for in the decision-making process. The highest and best use of public land may be sale but without explicitly addressing the question of environmental stewardship and the costs and benefits of private ownership, this issue is avoided.

This is a cursory glance at a major conservation issue which likely warrants a much more in-depth assessment that may be beyond the scope of FER. The advice to FER members is to twofold: first, be vigilant, apply your knowledge to your local area, review LWBC advertisements and apply your knowledge through written input to LWBC. Second, if you are aware of high value ecosystems on public lands make these known to LWBC and WLAP endangered species biologists. There are thousands of acres planned for sale in the next few years. Find out from LWBC where these areas are and then help ensure that the environmental values within them are adequately determined. Let's help steer sale of public land and leasing of public land away from sensitive ecosystems. ■

Prepared by Mike Fenger at the request of the Board of Friends of Ecological Reserves.

# Introducing Morgan MacCarl

By Mike Fenger

Members of the Friends of Ecological Reserves Board are pleased to introduce Morgan MacCarl in this issue of *The Log*. Morgan is going to complete a report on the state of Ecological Reserves for Friends of Ecological Reserves. Morgan is beginning her third year at the University of Victoria with majors in biology and environmental studies and comes to us thanks to a SLIP grant and the excellent University of Victoria Co-op Program. Morgan's salary is paid partially by the SLIP grant and partly by FER, thanks to support from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. Morgan will be working half-time on the *State of*

*Ecological Reserves Report* over the next two semesters and will need help from many of you to make this report reflect the knowledge and experience we collectively carry.

The *State of Ecological Reserves Report* will guide activities on how best to protect and maintain the integrity of ecological reserves. The report will help decisions on budgets, scheduling, communications and activities such as: restoration, new inventory, research, support for wardens, new wardens etc. The report will consolidate existing information in a database that will include ecological features of reserves, existing inventory, completed research, threats to reserves and assessment of the integrity of reserves. Some of this data will be collected by questionnaire and



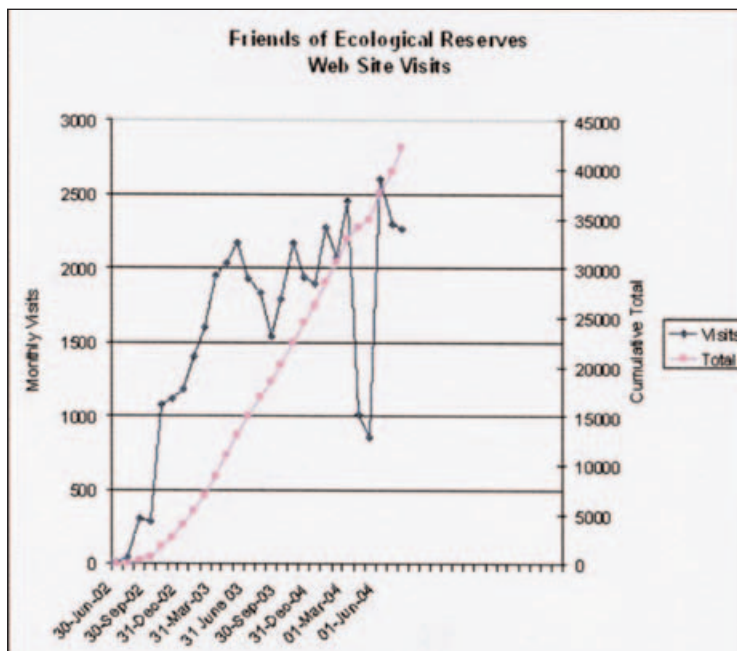
Morgan MacCarl, co-op student compiling *State of Ecological Reserves Report*

interviews with wardens, researchers, government staff and other organizations. The report will list activities that could be undertaken in individual reserves that would improve their integrity. A section of the report will address criteria for setting the priorities for maintaining integrity of the system and how to set priorities for activities between reserves. A section of the report will look at the adequacy of the existing reserves and where adding to the current system is warranted.

Peggy Frank, Saila Hull and Mike Fenger will provide direct guidance and support to Morgan. The first task will be to develop a detailed outline and work plan that will be brought to the Board for approval. We intend that Morgan get first hand experience by visiting a reasonable number of Ecological Reserves and meeting wardens, in the field when possible. This is a very exciting opportunity for us all. Please warmly welcome Morgan MacCarl.

And now some words from Morgan... *Hi. I am very excited to be working with the Friends of Ecological Reserves, and welcome this opportunity to contribute to maintaining the system of special ecosystems these reserves protect. I look forward to working with everyone to make this project succeed in any way that I can. We can do it. ■*

[www.ecoreserves.bc.ca](http://www.ecoreserves.bc.ca)



Field notes wanted! If you have interesting information to share or just have something on your mind about BC's ecological reserves click on field notes. We have installed a new message board that allows you to post notes and add comments to those others have made. Wardens – a quick way to update people on the status of rare and endangered species in your ER.

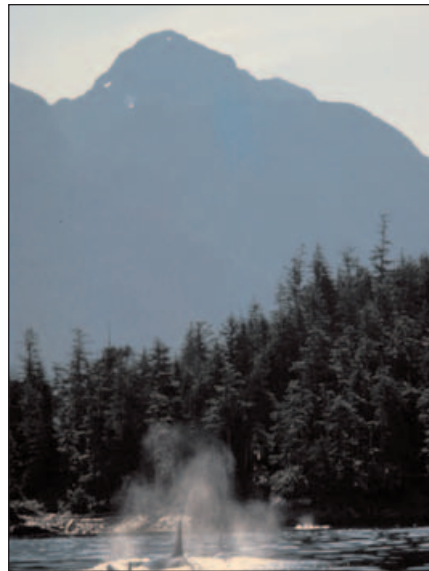
# Ecological Reserves of Northern Vancouver Island

## PART II – the northeast



### ER 111 – Robson Bight

- Located on the Johnstone Strait coastline, 10 km SE of Telegraph Cove, Vancouver Island
- 1,753 ha
- The area of Robson Bight ER is divided between a larger marine portion and a forested upland portion. Significant migratory activity by waterfowl, salmon and whales converges in Johnstone Strait. Strong tidal currents result in high oxygen levels and lower water temperatures which support rich bottom fauna in the 400 m plus depths of the Strait. Seventy percent of the Fraser River salmon runs traverse the Strait attracting a year-round community of 13 pods of orcas (*Orcinus Orca*). Whales visit Robson Bight most frequently from June to October when the salmon are running but spend less time while in the Bight on traveling and feeding and more in resting,



Robson Bight

playing, rubbing on beaches and rocks and perhaps sexual activity. The intensity of use and range of activities by killer whales provides outstanding opportunities for research. The upland portion is forested with a diversity of species and tree/understory communities too numerous to cover in detail. The reserve includes the Tsitika River estuary, the only undisturbed estuary on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Five species of Pacific salmon along with steelhead and cutthroat trout, dolly varden char, and eulachons pass through the estuary to spawn in the Tsitika River grounds.

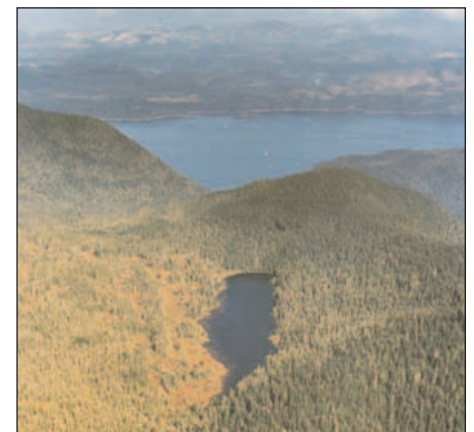
- Warden: Jim Borrowman  
Warden's report: *Speaking from his boat, Jim Borrowman told The Log that commercial fishing in the Bight continues to put pressure on whale activities with as many as 150 boats at a time carrying out a fishery right on top of the whales. Ecorreserve status protects only the land portion since the marine section comes under federal jurisdiction with regard to the fishery. A marine protected area combined with a quota system is seen as one possible solution to meeting the needs of commercial and native fisheries and providing a true whale refuge. "If there was a quota perhaps the fishermen could still make a living but not have to fish in the reserve boundaries. We're not trying to put them out of business," Jim insists.*

Jim is active with Straitwatch, the monitoring arm of the Johnstone Strait Killer Whale Interpretive Centre Society, educating boaters on marine mammal viewing guidelines. Jim also had kudos for the park wardens who spotted a forest fire in the Bight this summer and put it out before it did much damage

- Potential threats: pressure in the reserve from commercial fishing and just outside the reserve from commercial and private whale-watching and general boat traffic.

### ER 122 – Tsitika Mountain

- Located south of Port McNeill on northeastern Vancouver Island in the Tsitika drainage.
- 554 ha
- Preserves a boggy lake with associated fen vegetation dominated by Sitka sedge, beaked sedge and cottongrass. Many small ponds with yellow waterlilies and buckbean have formed on the open terraces due to high snowpack. Ridges of scrub forest alternate with strips of fen and alpine and subalpine species occur at unusually low elevations. The higher terrain is rocky with pink and white mountain heather and blue-leaved huckleberry prevailing. Mammals present include black-tailed deer, cougar and wolf.



Tsitika Mountain looking toward Robson Bight

- Potential threats: Vulnerable to adjacent logging; increased access may introduce undesired recreational impacts on ecological reserve values

*continued on page 9*



“Ecological Reserves...” continued from page 8

■ Wardens: David and Claire Oppenheim

David reports: The main feature of the Tsitika Mountain Ecological Reserve is a small lake and bog/fen, perched on the side of the lower Tsitika River valley. The wetland sits on a sloping plateau at about 600m. elevation, between a low eastern ridge, and a higher, subalpine western ridge. The Reserve protects the water sources surrounding the wetland, and includes mature forest lands.

We have been particularly interested in the many terraced bog pools with their organic matter ‘dams’ reaching a meter in height. The pools contain different plant communities, such as buckbean, yellow pond lily and sedges, depending on the depth and constancy of the water. The surrounding fen is dominated by sedges and mosses with crowberry in the drier areas, though there are a variety of other wetland plants as well.

In July 1997, we did a plant inventory in the wetland. We were motivated by Richard Hebda’s ideas about climate change and its effects on montane wetlands (see Hebda in *Biodiversity in British Columbia*). We thought that the Reserve might be a useful place for studying this, but only if some base data were available. As part of that study, we are continuing to measure the water table. This has been hampered to some extent by repeated removal of some of the PVC pipes, and finally the bending of one, presumably by a curious bear.

We have also been interested to find nesting red-throated loons, mew gulls and goldeneyes at the lake. The other birds

and mammals that we have observed are typical for this location.

Over the years there have been few problems at the Reserve – and indeed there seem to have been very few visitors. This is most lucky, since the wetland for which the Reserve was created would not stand much trampling. The Reserve has tree farms to the west and south, but to date, the nearest cutblocks have been between 1 and 2 km. from reserve boundaries.

Our only complaint is that in hiking to the Reserve, the mountainside gets a bit steeper and a bit taller each year.

### ER 123 – Mt. Derby

- Located south of Port McNeill on northeastern Vancouver Island (faces ER# 122 across the Tsitika drainage).
- 557 ha
- This reserve takes in the northwest to southwest-facing slopes of Mount Derby and includes several small streams in steep ravines that flow eventually into the Tsitika River below. Seven altitude related forest communities have been documented ranging from amabilis fir-western hemlock – western redcedar at the lower elevation, through fir-hemlock-yellow cedar at the mid-elevations to hemlock krummholz, “parkland” and open alpine heath of pink and white mountain heathers at the higher elevations. Black-tailed deer, cougar, wolf, goldeneye and mew gull have been reported in the reserve.
- Warden: no warden on record

- Potential threats: vulnerable to adjacent logging and fire.



Tsitika River

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH

### ER 124 – Tsitika River

- Located in the Tsitika drainage south of Port McNeill on northeastern Vancouver Island
- 110 ha
- This reserve protects a flat to gently sloping wet flood plain adjacent to the Tsitika River. The thin peat deposits support a variety of bog and fen communities bordered by forest communities: Labrador tea – Sphagnum moss, shore pine – western redcedar – Labrador tea, sweet gale and deer-grass – cotton-grass. The transitional zone to the upland forest include swamp forests and semi-alluvial communities: western redcedar – skunk cabbage, red alder – salmonberry – skunk cabbage and red alder – western hemlock-Sitka spruce – salmonberry – ladyfern. Beaver activity has resulted in unusual species combinations in several zones. The blue-listed Roosevelt elk use the wetland area in spring and early summer. Black-tailed deer are common and beaver, wolf and black bear have been noted. The reserve is a flyway for the red-listed marbled murrelet and provides foraging habitat for a red-listed subspecies of northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis laingi*)
- Potential threats: adjacent logging, Vulnerable to adjacent logging, access, occasional recreation use, hunting



Mount Derby

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH

continued on page 10

■ Warden: Dr. Jennifer Balke

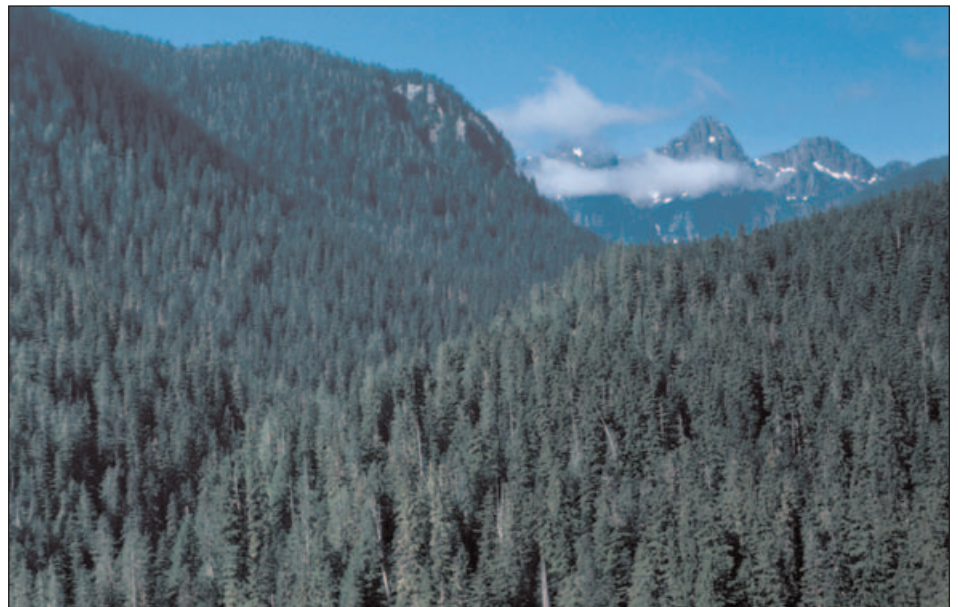
## ER 125 – Mt. Elliott

- Located in the Tsitika drainage, south of Port McNeill on northeastern Vancouver Island
- 324 ha
- This ecoreserve protects a steep-walled hanging valley with a subalpine lake. The steep side walls support a variety of closed subalpine forests and “subalpine parklands” on gentle slopes with poor drainage or high snowpack. The most abundant closed forest community is the mountain hemlock (western hemlock, yellow cedar) – amabilis fir – oval-leaved blueberry. Parkland areas consist of dwarf mountain hemlock – blue-leafed huckleberry – pink and white mount heather, alpine heath of heather, and black alpine sedge (*Carex nigricans*) where snow cover persists. Sitka alder grows in some steep avalanche tracks. Because of its self-contained drainage system, the reserve is considered to be a good candidate for hydrology and water quality baseline studies.
- Warden: no warden on record
- Potential threats: Vulnerable to adjacent logging



Mount Elliott

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH



Claud Elliott Creek

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH

## ER 126 – Claud Elliott Creek

- Located in the Tsitika drainage, south of Port McNeill on northeastern Vancouver Island
- 231 ha
- This reserve protects some of the most wide-spread montane forest communities on northeastern Vancouver Island. Dominant trees include western hemlock, amabilis fir, western redcedar and some Douglas-fir. Plants in the understory, when the density of tree canopies permit, include oval leaved and Alaskan blueberry, trailing raspberry, false azalea, queen’s cup and moss. This area is a critical deer winter range. Wolf, cougar and Roosevelt elk have been reported under pre-logging conditions. Although

it is small, this reserve protects an important undisturbed example of its type since most other similar forests have been subjected to logging activity and are no longer in their natural state. Together with the nearby park, the reserve is home to a red-listed subspecies of northern goshawk.

- Wardens: Heather and Rolf Kellerhals

Wardens’ report: *Perhaps because of its relative remoteness there have been few changes within the actual Reserve which was originally created for deer wintering range. What has changed drastically is the*

*area surrounding the Reserve and Fickle Lake which lies at its base. Not many years ago the Claud Elliot Ecological Reserve was part of a small, but perfect mountain “pocket wilderness”. The Reserve is now surrounded on all sides by clearcut logging. The original vision to see a new and more benign style of logging within the Tsitika valley seems to have been abandoned. Over the last few years Weyerhaeuser has been constructing a logging road on the very steep slope, directly across from the Reserve and above Claud Elliot Creek and Fickle Lake – part of the new Park area. There have been constant*

*continued on page 11*

“Ecological Reserves...” continued from page 10 slides onto and below the road area after periods of heavy rain, the most major one being last spring. Various fishery and terrain stability experts have visited the site of this road and have not been happy with the result, in view of the fact that one of the ten best fish streams on Vancouver Island lies directly beneath the road. One comment was, “this slope will continue to unravel over the foreseeable future and will inevitably increase the amount of sediment that gets into Claud Elliot Creek.” Let alone the gigantic boulders that have also blocked the road!

Logging affects the viewshed from the Park and Reserve area and the roads have an impact on the wildlife. An elk herd uses the area extensively and there have been numerous bear due to the several salmonid species that spawn in the lake and creek system. Simply because the Reserve lies within such a contained valley it is inevitably impacted by what takes place next door. Is it possible as logging continues unabated that these small, scattered patches of deer wintering range within the Tsitika valley will become wolf “feedlots”? In any case it is a “crying shame” to see what has taken place around this reserve, both from a wildlife, aesthetic, and human perspective.

## ER 140 – Misty Lake

- Located 12 km Northwest of Port McNeill
- 73 ha (recently increased in size from 55 ha)
- This reserve, established in 1996 preserves a small lake supporting the endemic Giant Black Stickleback, a red-listed species. It is one of only three places in the province where both stream and lake species of stickleback are found and may be a distinct species from those found on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Sticklebacks provide ideal subjects for research on natural selection since separate populations even in areas of close proximity are quite distinct from each other. The lake also supports the blue-listed cut-throat trout, and Dolly Varden.
- Potential threats: hydrocarbon and pesticide contamination from the close proximity of the highway and a rest stop within the reserve, illegal recreational use, adjacent logging and its effect on hydrology and water quality, introduced species of fish and plants potentially eliminating the giant black stickleback.
- Warden: no warden on record ■

## Additions to Ecological Reserves

In May of this year, the provincial government added just over 150,000 hectares to parks and protected areas systems. A new 17 ha reserve was created adjacent to Francis Point Provincial Park north of Sechelt. The new reserve includes shoreline, intact old-growth forest, in addition to coastal rocky knolls and wetlands with associated endangered plant species.

Four other ecological reserves increased in size:

- ER # 117 Haley Lake on southern Vancouver Island was expanded by 773 ha to 888 ha.
- ER #140 Misty Lake near Port McNeill was extended by 19 ha for a total of 73 ha.
- ER #37 Mount Maxwell on Saltspring increased in size by 326 ha to a total of 390 ha.
- ER #16 Mount Tuam also on Saltspring added 88 ha for a total of 362 ha. ■

## Trial Island Field Trip

By Lynne Milnes

About 15 people came out for the sunny Trial Island Field trip including Ecological Reserves Unit founder and former Executive Director Dr. Bristol Foster, his teacher Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan and colleagues naturalist George Sirk and marine biologist Dr. Phil Lambert. Adolf and Oluna Ceska led the keen group from one botanical rarity to another always emphasizing the need to stay on paths to minimize disturbance of this fragile Garry oak ecosystem. For anyone wanting to visit Trial Island, wait for the announcement in the spring newsletter next year. ■



Field trippers to Trial Island. L-R: George Sirk, Ian McTaggart-Cowan, Bristol Foster, Rear: Phil Lambert

PHOTO CREDIT: MARILYN LAMBERT

## A REMINDER TO WARDENS

By Eva Durance

Wardens are encouraged to work with their local and regional Ministry to organize a (usually) one-day meeting of wardens with staff responsible for ERs. This does not need to be an onerous job: a simple get-together with participants bringing their own lunches and staff providing snacks and coffee is usually sufficient.

These annual meetings were a commitment of the government people at The Gathering last September and are an important means for wardens in a region to keep in contact with each other and to keep up to date with what is happening in the Ministry that affects ERs. If it seems appropriate, some basic training might be included such as how to use GPS units to pinpoint rare plants or how to set up a vegetation plot.

Eva Durance  
Penticton area Warden



## Ecostar for Barbara Westerman

The Friends of Ecological Reserves would like to acknowledge the heroic efforts of Barbara Westerman on behalf of Mara Meadows Ecological Reserve for which she is the volunteer warden. She undertook a frustrating and thankless task with not a whole lot of reward at the end of it. Thanks for hanging in there Barbara Westerman!



## Wardenwear

By Peggy Frank

Finally, a way to invite questions when you are patrolling the Ecological Reserves. These smart looking outfits will identify you immediately as a person of authority, someone to be looked up to and obeyed. We suggest you order a full set of 'from the waist up' clothing.

'T'-shirts come in sizes medium to large to even larger, and one brilliant colour – grey. Please be sure to mark size and colour on your order form. Vests come in several sizes, small, medium, large, extra large and extra extra large. We have plenty of the extra extra large so think about what you would like to wear outside your snow parka this winter. The colour choices for vests are blue or blue or blue. Again be clear on size and colour when ordering. Ball caps match the blue vests and are remarkably versatile with one size fitting all heads. We also have a limited number (200) of BC Parks volunteer badges that you can sew onto your favourite jacket or hat.



Well perhaps people won't salute you in your snappy new duds, but these outfits will set you apart from the Gore-Tex set. And more importantly they will identify you as someone working as a volunteer for Ecological Reserves. That is as long as people know that the responsibility for managing Ecological Reserves falls, administratively, under what used to be called BC Parks. So the clothing not only identifies you as a volunteer but also serves as an icebreaker for conversation. And from a practical perspective, if the cap read "Volunteer – Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection", the writing would encircle the cap.

Seriously, the vests are beautiful and full of pockets. Please send a note stating your size and the items (T-shirts, vests, hats and labels) that you would like as well as how many sets you need. And enclose a stamped self-addressed cardboard box for shipping. OK, just kidding. Give us your address and we will arrange shipping. Write to pegfrank@telus.net or call Peggy at 250 519-0040.

Clear identification of volunteer wardens was one of the requests made at the provincial warden meeting in September a year ago. We would like to thank Lynne Kennedy and Nancy Chave for arranging to have these items delivered to my house. Please make use of these field clothes which are filling my basement as I write this. ■

## Thank You to the Generous Donors of 2004

The Friends of Ecological Reserves relies on the generous support of members and friends to carry out the work of the society. We do not have an office or ongoing paid staff. Donations are used to support scientific research and ongoing projects within Ecological Reserves. The Friends would like to say a big "Thank You" to the donors of 2004 for their support. Individuals can make donations or bequests to our address. Tax receipts are issued for donations of \$20 or more. (charitable # 11891 4597RR).

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# Dedication of Artwork for Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve Lake Cowichan, Vancouver Island

On Sunday, May 24, 2004, friends and supporters of the Honeymoon Bay Ecological Reserve joined together to celebrate and dedicate a new sign for the reserve. This occasion had special significance to the Honeymoon Bay community and the family of Vincent Allan. Vincent Allan (1922–1977) was a Honeymoon Bay resident who worked for Western Forest Industries as a painter and sign artist. When Western Forest Products donated the reserve in 1983 Vince was asked to paint a sign identifying common flowers in the reserve. He had great pleasure doing this work and enjoyed going to the reserve to do his sketches. The sign was posted at the entrance

to the reserve and enjoyed by many visitors over the next 20 years. Over the years, vandalism and weather took its toll, and the sign gradually deteriorated. In 2003 the sign was given to Joe Allan, Vincent's son and local CVRD director, for his safe keeping. The sign was much missed by the local community and naturalists so plans were made for a new one. The local Community Economic Development Committee funded the costs of the new sign and refurbishing the old one.

Shelley Ogden and Al Grass, Honeymoon Bay residents painted and installed a new sign in 2004. The old sign was then hung inside the Honeymoon Bay Community Centre.

Shelley, the artist of the new sign, took her inspiration from the original one, and it is this new sign that was dedicated in May. The day began in the community hall with a lunch and a dedication ceremony of the original sign, attended by the local MLA Graham Bruce, the Allan family and many well-wishers. Afterwards, we went out to the reserve and unveiled the new painting housed in a tastefully designed kiosk.

The community of Honeymoon Bay has taken a strong interest in this ecological reserve, and it is this sense of community pride and stewardship that provides the best possible guarantee to the long-term security of these and other ecological reserves. ■

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## Field Trips

### Race Rocks Field Trip October 3, 2004

Join the Friends for a visit to Race Rocks Marine Protected Area, the southernmost fragment of Canada on the Pacific coast. Scoured by the tides and swept by waves off the Pacific, this scatter of islands is home to rich intertidal and subtidal communities. Those who take part can expect to see northern sea lion, seals, a variety of pelagic and other seabird species, and if we're very lucky, some passing orcas, dall's or harbour porpoises or as last year's group did, an elephant seal. Chris Blondeau, waterfront co-ordinator at Pearson College will be leading the trip.

#### Sunday, October 3, 2004 • Race Rocks Marine Protected Area

Meet on the docks at Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific at 9:45 a.m. for the crossing to Race Rocks at 10 a.m. Wear waterproof clothing and bring your camera and/or sketchbook. You can bring your own lunch or join the group for lunch at a local restaurant after the tour.

FEE: FER Member – \$10, Non-members – \$30, Seniors/Student – \$25  
(includes a 1-year membership to FER)

Trip limited to 15 people: to avoid disappointment, call and reserve a place

TO REGISTER or FOR MORE INFORMATION  
call Mary Rannie at 250 478-8926

### Okanagan Field Trip April 22–24, 2005

South Okanagan ER wardens Eva Durance and Laurie Rockwell will lead a group of Friends on a weekend trip to three ERs in their area April 22–24, 2005. MWLAP staff are also expected to accompany the group to provide their perspective on management concerns and proposed solutions.

The group will be limited to eight people. For further information or to sign up, contact Peggy Frank at 250-519-0040 or [pegfrank@telus.net](mailto:pegfrank@telus.net).

**Return of the Salmon**

Many communities in British Columbia are holding festivals during the month of October to celebrate the return of the salmon to our rivers for spawning. Go to <http://www3.telus.net/driftwood/festival.htm> for a complete listing or check with the regional, provincial and national parks listings in your area.



**Activists' Rejuvenation Retreat**

October 16–19, 2004

Hollyhock Retreat Centre, Cortes Island, BC

Here's a chance for all you pooped out crusaders to recharge your batteries at Hollyhock's tranquil Cortes Island location after a season in the trenches.

Cost: \$125 plus room and board. Hollyhock is offering 25% off regular rooms and 15% off dorm rooms and tent sites.

Scholarships are available – contact [darcy@hollyhockleadership.org](mailto:darcy@hollyhockleadership.org) to apply  
Website: <http://www.hollyhockleadership.org>



**6th Canadian Urban Forest Conference**

October 19–23, 2004

Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre, Kelowna BC

Theme: Fires, Storms and Pests – Crises in Our Urban Forests

Contact: Tree Canada Foundation  
Tel: 613 567-5545 • Fax: 613 567-5270  
E-mail: [tcf@treecanada.ca](mailto:tcf@treecanada.ca)  
<http://www.tcf-fca.ca/cufc6/index.htm>



**North America Lake Management Society  
2004 Conference**

November 3 – 5, 2004

Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria, BC

Theme: Lakes – habitat for fish, habitat for people  
Contact: Rick Nordin, BC Lake Stewardship Society  
Tel: 250-472-5021 • E-mail: [nordin@uvic.ca](mailto:nordin@uvic.ca)  
<http://www.nalms.org/index.html>



**True North Wild and Free Tour 2004**

November 10, 2004,

Doors open 6:30 p.m., show at 7:30 p.m.

Ridge Theatre, Vancouver, BC

Multi-media event featuring Colin James, James Raffan, and Laurel Archer

Presented by CPAWS BC • Tickets \$15 advance, \$20 at the door, \$18 for members  
Tickets available at MEC, Ridge Theatre or  
Tel: 604 685-7445

Contact: Karen Blinkhorn at [kblinkhorn@cpawsbc.org](mailto:kblinkhorn@cpawsbc.org)  
<http://www.cpaws.org/boreal/english/wild/index.html>



**American Cetacean Society 9th Annual  
Conference**

November 12–14, 2004

RMS Queen Mary, Long Beach CA

Conference aims to provide hands-on practical ideas for teachers and naturalists in relation to teaching about and interpreting whales, dolphins and porpoises

<http://www.acsonline.org/conference/ConferenceWorkshop.html>



**Implications of Climate Change in BC's  
Southern Interior Forests**

April 25–28, 2005

Revelstoke, B.C.

This workshop is directed at forestry professionals and technicians, biologists, ecologists, protected area managers, and other managers and planners with an interest in how climate change may affect forest ecosystems and forestry.

Contact: Columbia Mountains Institute of Applied Ecology  
Box 2568, Revelstoke, V0E 2S0  
Email: [office@cmiae.org](mailto:office@cmiae.org)  
Website: <http://www.cmiae.org>  
Tel: 250 837-9311 • Fax: 250-837-9311



# FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES MEMBERSHIP FORM

Box 8477 Stn Central Victoria BC V8W 3S1

Renewal for 2004                       New membership

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Category**

INDIVIDUAL: \$ 20       STUDENT/SENIOR: \$ 15       FAMILY: \$ 25       INSTITUTION: \$ 25

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Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I/we enclose Payment for:

\_\_\_ year(s) membership                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ copy(ies) Constitution & Bylaws @\$1 each    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:**                                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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(Charitable BIN#118914597RR)

**I am interested in volunteering for:**

Assisting with Field Trip organization  
 Contributing articles/photos to *The LOG*  
 Fund-Raising                       telephoning                       Other

**Please apply my donation to:**

Land acquisition projects  
 Scholarships for post-graduate research  
 where most needed

## ORDER FORM FOR PLACEMATS AND FENWICK LANSDOWNE PRINT

Lansdowne "Meadowlark" Numbered Limited Edition Print (200) – \$50.00 each

Placemats – \$5.00 each

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DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Shipping, Handling and Postage for Placemat Orders	\$4.00	
<b>Total Enclosed (Cheque or Money Order)</b>		<b>\$</b>

# Websites of Interest

## The Orca Network

This is a very attractive website on the orcas of the so-called Salish Sea, the area between southern Vancouver Island and the mainland. It includes whale sightings lists, events calendar, news and links to other whale oriented sites. The natural history section has lovely photos and a thorough explanation of orca behaviour, diet, social life, dialects, and the differences between transient, offshore and resident populations. [www.orcanetwork.org/](http://www.orcanetwork.org/)

## Watching the Watchers in the Salish Sea and Robson Bight

Interested in volunteering for the Marine Mammal Monitoring Program (see notice and article on Pg. 1)? Although the website is somewhat out of date, you can still check out the mission statement and get details on their activities. There are photographs of M3 patrol crews at work, links to their partners in the program and to the Luna stewardship program. [www.salishsea.ca](http://www.salishsea.ca)

Further north, monitoring is overseen by Straitwatch, a program of the Johnstone Strait Killer Whale Interpretive Centre Society in conjunction with DFO and the Habitat Stewardship Program. There are links to guidelines, a page on The Bones Project at the Whale Interpretive

Centre at Telegraph Cove and volunteer and employment opportunities. [www.killerwhalecentre.org](http://www.killerwhalecentre.org)

Soundwatch, the American cousin to the M3 and Straitwatch, is run out of The Whale Museum in Friday Harbour on San Juan Island. At the museum website, you'll find a printable version of the "Be Whale Wise Guidelines for Watching Marine Wildlife" and the "Boater Guidelines for the Pacific Northwest or Salish Sea" as well as information on museum hours, admissions and exhibits. [www.whalemuseum.org/](http://www.whalemuseum.org/)

## Adopt a Killer Whale


This website has a charming flash page but be warned, it might upset the dog. There is a wealth of information on orca genealogy, terminology, distribution, identification and conservation concerns. You can listen to echolocation clicks, samples of calls and whistles for residents, transients and offshores and look at delightful children's drawings of orcas. And for that difficult person on your gift list, there are various "adoption" packages. [www.killerwhale.org](http://www.killerwhale.org)

## Orcagirl

Photographer, filmmaker and web designer Chantelle Tucker has put this website together featuring her extensive portfolio of photographs on and off the water. Dedicated to raising

awareness of problems created by human/whale interactions, the site is updated regularly with whale sightings, news about environmental and other hazards to whales and links to various stewardship organizations. Check out the gorgeous shot of an orca off San Juan Island with a surreal Mount Baker floating in the background. [www.orcagirl.com](http://www.orcagirl.com)


# The Log



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