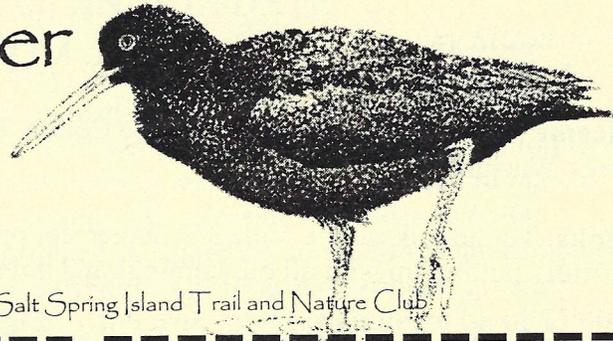


Oystercatcher



The Newsletter of the Salt Spring Island Trail and Nature Club

The Nepal Leg ..continued

by Loes Holland

After an exciting and wet rafting trip on one of Nepal's last unspoiled rivers, the Seti, we arrived at a desolate beach. Tents were set up for the night and lovely food was served. After morning breakfast on the beach, without a soul in sight, we continued rafting and saw lots of birds.

Next stop, the Tharu Safari Lodge situated on the edge of the Royal Chitwan National Park. The nearby Tharu people built their houses of timber, grass reeds and clay. Here I went birding with a guide into the jungle while others visited the village.

Hidden in the lush green jungle on gigantic stilts is the Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge where we stayed the following day. I went right away to the elephant camp where about twenty India trained elephants live. I fell in love with a five year old female named Roop. She led the trip to look for tiger carrying three of us and the mahout leading a group of seven elephants. We hobbled for two hours until we came to the river banks with tall elephant grass. All the elephants spread out and when our mahout found a spoor Roop trumpeted in alarm (or joy)? The other elephants circled around but the tiger escaped. Roop kept going, and lo, there was a glimpse of the tiger! We were the only three to see it. I could have stayed in this place forever.

I went birding two more times, once on my own and again with a guide before departing for Kathmandu. We went by jeep to the river, crossed the river in two little leaky boats, then by oxcart to the

next river and another leaky boat, finally arriving at the modest grass strip airport in Meghauly. No immigration or customs officers, no harassing taxi drivers, just a thatched roof and a bench for the aircrew. We ate our lunch in the open air.

In Kathmandu we stayed at the Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, a 119 step climb from the road! This is home to the Newars, well know for their carved wooden structures around doors and windows.

We visited Bakhtapur (or Bhadgaon) on the World Heritage Protection list, wandering the narrow streets, looking at this living museum. The Palace of 55 Windows is an example of Nepalese architecture, built by King Phupatindra Malla, whose kneeling figure in front of the Golden Gate is topped by a naga and a little bird on his head. Malla used to say "as long as this bird has not flown away I will still be in your midst". Everywhere there are lovely Newar carvings as well as beautiful Thangkas, a happy mixture of Nepalese and Tibetan art.

Calendar

May 25th Social	United Church Hall
May 26 - 29th	Spring Trip to Strathcona
June 20th	Strawberry Social Noon in Ruckle Park

TRAIL MIX

Welcome New Members: Barry & Kittie Cotton, Elizabeth White & Micheal Cooke, George Wachmann.

Thanks: To the folks at the Village Cobbler, for providing our drop-off box, and cheerfully putting up with all our comings and goings.

Special Thanks: April Steele, for lending her multi-talents to creating the Oystercatcher. April is retiring from active service with the Oystercatcher, and we'll miss her help and unfailing sense of humour.

Reminder: Remember to bring extra shoes to wear during inclement weather when travelling in someone else's vehicle.

Spring Trip to Strathcona May 26-29th

TRIP includes: 3 nights and 9 meals including packed lunches. There is NO refrigeration, but ice is free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Please arrange your own carpooling. Drive north through Campbell River. Watch for signs Highway #28 to Gold River. Strathcona Park Lodge is approximately 45 minutes along Highway #28, about 3.5 hours drive from Crofton. There are no gas stations after leaving Campbell river.

ARRIVE no earlier than 2 PM and no later than 4PM on May 26 to settle in and have happy hour before dinner at 5:30-6:00 PM. Drinks available in the bar or may be purchased with dinner. We may NOT take alcohol into the bar or dining room. Happy hour with our own wine will be in our rooms. Entertainment planned for Sat and Sunday evenings. Anyone wishing to plan for Friday is welcome to do so.

BREAKFAST served at 7:30-8:00 AM. Monday, check-out time is 11:00 AM. Short hikes and walks planned for Monday morning for those who aren't rushing home. Hugh King is in charge of hikes, Alan Robertson the walks.

Remember club policy -- 20 cents per km. plus ferry tickets divided among everyone in the car.

QUESTIONS? Call Brian or Marjie Radford - 653-9370. Any complaints? Keep them to yourself or plan on organizing the next trip. Due to cancellations, there are 3 SPACES LEFT!!!



TEXADA LANDS UPDATE

by Elizabeth White

By the end of the first week in May, the Salt Spring community had raised an astonishing \$648,000 towards the acquisition of the Texada lands. The fundraising has now shifted into its second campaign- The Salt Spring Million Dollar World Challenge, in which visitors and summer residents will be asked to match islanders' May Day Campaign contributions. We estimate that close to 1,000 individuals and businesses have contributed in some way to the May Day campaign, through donations, pledges, in-kind contributions of time and services, gifts etc., including of course The Trail and Nature Club with its generous donation of \$5,000.

The overall campaign target is in the region of \$3 million. Given that funds raised by the community are usually matched or doubled by government agencies, \$3 million should result in a total of about \$7-\$9 million for acquisition.

One way to expand our acquisitions is to find conservation buyers. If we can find enough conservation buyers, we could theoretically protect all the Texada lands, and secure our community forests and farm trusts. Another possibility is the purchase of the Burgoyne Bay area for a National Park by the Federal government. Federal intervention may be the only way to prevent development in Burgoyne Bay, since these lands are so expensive, and some development is already permitted under the Official Community Plan. The community would need to lobby hard and effectively to get the Federal government involved in any purchase. The meeting at Fulford Hall May 9 is the first opportunity to express opinions on this topic.

Although a considerable amount of work has been done identifying sensitive ecosystems on the Texada lands, there is not as yet an inventory of existing and potential trails. These need to be identified and mapped. Texada has stated that it is willing to place conservation covenants (and presumably easements for trails) on its land if compensated, and this may be the most affordable way to protect some of the trails.

Fall Trip to Naramata September 11 -14th

We've scheduled another trip to the Sunny Okanagan. Last time was 1996! Our destination is Naramata, on the shores of Okanagan Lake. Naramata is about 16km. N.E. of Penticton amidst several orchards and wineries.

By car, our journey should take up to six hours from Tsawassen via Hiway 3 or the Coquihalla. Please arrange your own carpooling.

Our accommodation will be in small motel-like units that are well-equipped. All meals are included, beginning with dinner at 5:30 p.m. on Monday and ending with a bag lunch Thursday Sept 14th.

Total cost will be APPROXIMATELY \$200.00 per person. To reserve your space, leave a cheque in the Cobblers' Box made out to the Trail and Nature Club for \$75.00 per person. You may post-date this to May 15, 2000. The balance will be due July 15th and you will be contacted about the exact amount before July 15th. Details, directions, events etc. will be forwarded over the summer.

If you have questions, call Fred or Nancy Powell at 537-4739 up to May 15th and from June 20th onward. From May 15th to June 20th, please call Ian or Mary Fraser at 537-9849. If you have to cancel your reservation, \$25.00 of your deposit will be non-refundable after July 15th.

Email Directory

In the future, the club may want to distribute information by email. To prepare for this, Lynn Thompson is compiling a directory of members' email addresses. Some people have already provided their email addresses. However, if you have not, please email Lynn at lthompson@saltspring.com.

General Information

The Salt Spring trail and Nature Club features Tuesday outings September through June at three levels of ability. The monthly schedule of outings and events is published the final Wednesday of the month in the *Driftwood*. The fourth Thursday of each month the Club meets at 7:30 PM in the lower hall of the Ganges United Church. The Club is affiliated with the Federation of BC Naturalists.

Ramblers enjoy walking without pressure to keep up speed. Members of any level fitness are welcome. Ramblers have frequent "time-outs" for taking pictures, examining flowers, plants, stones, fossils, and hugging trees. Rambles start at 10 AM and usually end around 1:30PM

Walkers move at a relaxed pace taking time to smell the roses. Walkers usually try to avoid long steep climbs and will stop to catch the breath along the way. Walks are generally less than 8km and end around 2PM.

Hikers like long, adventurous and occasionally quite strenuous hikes, and like to gain a bit of altitude. Hikers need good strong boots and a good but not excessive level of fitness. They may smell the roses, but do it rather quickly. Hikes usually start at 10AM and finish between 2:30 and 3:30 PM.

Membership: Annual dues are \$17.00 per person. New members must sign a waiver. Send waiver form and membership dues to Membership Secretary, Box 203, Salt Spring Island BC V8K 2V9

Current Executive

President:	Linda Quiring	537-5116
Vice Pres:	Bill Harrington	537-1116
Past Pres:	Fred Howell	537-1131
Treasurer	Rollie McCallum	537-0052
Secretary	April Steel	537-4207
Walkers	Alan Robertson	537-9459
Ramblers	Beth Ranney	537-4493
Hikers	Fred Powell	537-4789
FBCN	Brian Radford	653-9370
(alternate)	Nancy Braithwaite	537-9385

VOLUNTEERS

Membership	Lynn Thompson	537-4814
Trail Co-ordinator		
	Ian Fraser	537-9849
Archivist	Joanne Cartwright	537-2439
Photogaphy	Chris Pattinson	537-9547

OYSTERCATCHER

Oystercatcher is published three times annually. Comments, articles or ideas are welcome but space is limited. Mail them to Box 203, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2V9 or call Linda Quiring ~~537-5116~~ email soapworks@saltspring.com

Design 4th Line Design