



Denman Conservancy Association

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 60, Denman Island, B.C. V0R 1T0

February 2025

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Denman Conservancy Association will be held in the back hall of the Denman Island Community Hall, 1196 Northwest Road, on the 24th of February, 2025 at 7:30 PM. The AGM business will include:

- Ukulele Review
- Reports from the Co-Chair, Land Manger and Treasurer
- Election of Directors

Please consider joining our board!

Refreshments, delicious treats and interesting discussions following the meeting. Bring your friends and sign them up with DCA.

2025 Membership Drive and Christmas Craft Fair

This year the postal strike cramped our style. Normally DCA sends out a letter near the end of November, encouraging everyone to renew their memberships. We had our envelopes stuffed and addressed but with no mail delivery, we had to ad lib. Fortunately, we had already booked a spot at the Christmas Craft Fair, so we took our boxes of envelopes there. And thankfully, in the middle of all that shopping, many of you dropped by the DCA table to either become new members, or to renew your membership. In those two days, 78 people paid for memberships.

Many thanks to all 78 of you, and extra thanks to those of you who included much appreciated donations in support of DCA. Our members are the backbone of DCA, and your fees and donations fund the work we do to conserve lands on Denman Island. Board members always enjoy the Craft Fair. Like the

Summer Market, the Fair provides a great opportunity to chat with old friends and to meet new ones. It was a little too busy to have any in depth discussions about conservation, but we did sell lots of our ever popular, Jane Fawkes designed tee shirts. I'm sure they made great Christmas gifts, but if you're still thinking about buying one for a gift, or even for yourself, they are always available at the Denman Craft Shop.

When the mail strike was over, we finally mailed out our membership letters. But if you accidentally let your membership lapse and didn't receive one or are new to Denman Island and would like to join DCA, the membership application is available on our website (denmanconservancy.org). As always, we welcome new members and thank you for your support.

DCA has a New Conservation Property!

As of January 17th, 2025, DCA was the grateful recipient of a property from Victoria Foe via Canada's Ecological Gifts program. This program *"provides a way for Canadians with ecologically sensitive land to protect nature and leave a legacy for future generations"*.

The property transfer has been in the works since 2019. The land has a diverse mix of trees and understory plants that make it a valuable addition to our ever-growing list of Denman's protected properties. DCA has pledged to hold the property for conservation purposes in perpetuity.

There will eventually be walking trails and signage on the property to facilitate public access. More information to follow as we firm up the details.

We wish to thank Victoria for her incredible generosity in allowing DCA to steward the land into the future.

On the Land

The Fall and Winter thus far have pelted us with what at times has felt like a continuous stream (river?) of storms and rain, including the infamous bomb cyclone too, of course. And whilst our aquifers might be feeling a little more refreshed, many of our trails have taken a bit of a beating. Particularly areas within previously logged forest that are now recovering and are of an age where the forest stand begins to self-thin, such as Central Park, Raven Woods, and the Railway Grade Marsh area. Aged-out alders and outcompeted firs are succumbing to the high winds in these areas and keeping us busy with trail clean-up work. Thanks to those intrepid trail users that give me the head's-up on the latest obstacles and help to keep the trails passable.

The high water levels and rainfall have also turned some of our beloved trails into ephemeral creeks, and so we have also been busy working on drainage and trail improvements in some of the worst hit areas. Whilst we will do what we can to improve these spots, with the amount of water around at the

moment, I think we'll all be getting our money's worth out of those old pairs of gumboots for a little while yet.

Speaking of wet, if you've ventured out along the Raven Woods & Wetlands trails recently, you may have noticed our newly installed interpretive sign at the wetland viewpoint beautifully highlighting the importance of wetlands and the biodiversity they support. Funding through DenmanWorks! allowed us to hire local artist Leya Tess to design and illustrate the project, and Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) funding supported the materials and installation costs. We hope you enjoy the view whilst you relax on Kilian's fantastically comfortable bench!

This time of year, is a busy time for invasive species removal efforts; those tenacious perennial dark-greens English holly and Daphne are easier to spot while the annual growth has died back, and the soft ground makes for easier pulling of roots. We have several contractors (and dedicated volunteers!) out and about across Denman's protected areas working on manual removal of holly, daphne, ivy and broom, so give them a wave!

At the end of the month, I will be attending a symposium hosted by Cumberland Community Forest Society, bringing organizations together to discuss how we build resilience to wildfire, changing ecological conditions and protecting watersheds within changing forest landscapes. I look forward to sharing any outcomes in due course.

Happy New Year!

Andy B.

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Central Swale, Central Park

Beavers and Bats Update

Denman beavers have enjoyed all this lovely water! They've shored-up dams and are starting to mark their spring territories with big scent mounds. They've raised Pickles and Railway Grade marshes an inch or so.... that's a lot of water staying around. And they've been behaving at both problem culvert sites. At the new Chickadee culvert the beavers actually helped this summer building a small dam, which solved our request for a low weir to retain the Lake water. But it has now washed away. While the beavers (and other critters) use the culverts they haven't plugged them this winter.....perhaps we shouldn't have said anything!



Beaver Cam

Our few bats that stay around Denman in winter have been active. Bats were found sleeping in wood piles and seen flying at night seeking the numerous insects also enjoying the mild winter. Meanwhile, the Bat project folks recently left Denman and visited the old "North Oyster School" near Ladysmith, now called the North Oyster Community Centre. Much like our Old School it was 'put out to pasture' when their new school was built. But they actually moved their big building across the street to leave the former school yard for the new school. And their old school's attic is also home to almost 2000 bats. In addition, bat boxes adorn the outside walls, and they have an active public bat-program.



Birdathon 2025

The next Birdathon is on! Starting at 4PM on May 23 until 4PM on the 24th, entrants will be trying to identify as many avian species as possible to raise money for the DCA. Each entrant will get sponsors to donate a certain \$ amount for each species recorded in the 24 hour period. A gathering will follow on the 25th, where prizes will be awarded for youngest (and oldest) birder, most birds seen fossil fuel free and other fun categories! Get your hiking shoes on, put your bird book in your day pack and come on out!



Snow Bunting seen on Denman Christmas Bird Count

2024 – DCA YEAR IN REVIEW

When Patti Willis sent me this, I was surprised. We deal with each issue and project as it comes up as a board with our subcommittees. But, when you put them all down in a list, it looks pretty impressive!

- 12 Monthly Board Meetings, 1 Annual General Meeting & numerous committee mtgs
- 1 Special Membership Meeting to approve \$50,000 donation to the Nature Trust of BC for acquisition of 38.7-hectare property east of Central Park at North Central Road; the funds bequeathed to DCA by Nina Dobbyn; acquisition is now a “done deal” – bringing Denman’s protected lands to 25%
- Raven Woods and Wetlands - completed Baseline Report; information kiosk, bench, interpretive sign, forest stand assessment & restoration options, & Management Plan in-progress.
- Railway Grade Marsh: Maintenance of trail, danger tree removal, new kiosk signage about sensitivities of flora & fauna
- Winter Wren Wood – Restoration project; replanting of native plant species in restoration area.
- Morrison Marsh – Species at Risk Funding for invasive English Holly & Daphne removal
- Completed DCA privacy policy; Board of Directors Manual in-process; Redesigned DCA website; Board Retreat to discuss allocation of DCA funds
- Comox Valley Community Foundation \$3K funding for educational speaker series, including *Hope Through Action* event.
- Promoted & hosted author tour for Sheila Harrington’s *Voices for the Islands* about Trust Area conservancies
- DCA represented at Salish Sea Regional Conservation Forum on Galiano Island
- Participated in ‘Wildfire, Watersheds, and Landscape Change’ workshop hosted by Climate Adaptation Research Lab & Raincoast Conservation Foundation
- DCA represented at CVRD ‘Climate Action Strategy’ engagement session
- Board members attended Board Governance Workshop
- Submission to LTC: concerns about water not being protected in Bylaws 228 and 229
- DCA booth on theme of dogs vs. wildlife at Isfeld High School Annual Eco Fair
- Home & Garden Tour raised \$23,273; Annual Book Sale \$5197
- Saturday Market Table: Invasive species highlighted; Booth @ Christmas Faire
- Applied to Local Trust Committee to rezone 4 DCA properties to “Conservation” & Donate 4 residential densities to Density Bank for affordable housing
- Renewed Land Manager’s contract; Completed DCA Strategic Plan 2025-2030
- Hosted 10 BCIT students & 2 instructors – toured DCA lands, focusing on restoration
- Bat project: received genetic results indicating presence of endangered Little Brown Bats
- Beaver Project: Community information presentation; on-site cameras; 9 new beaver dams in Railway Grade Marsh!
- Updated display map of Denman’s protected areas
- Conservation Covenant Area annual monitoring with reports issued to 10 landholders
- Annual membership fundraising letter sent; 4 Quarterly newsletters
- Speaker series: *Hope Through Action* - indigenous archeology & site protection; conservation lands restoration
- Holly removal by hand in Fillongley Park (ongoing vegetation control w/o herbicides)
- Near completion of a Conservation Covenant on a mid-island private property
- Point Rd vineyard development: DCA met with neighbours; contacted Agricultural Land Commission re: Protection of DCA lands/covenant areas in proximity to development
- Alerted community to damage to Komas Bluffs by cave digging
- Committed to **“30 by 30”** – 30% of Denman protected by 2030



Two busy beavers caught at night on the Beaver Cam