



Denman Conservancy Association

CENTRAL PARK

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

June 2006



photo by John Millen

A Key Property

In the middle of Denman Island, on Denman Road just opposite the Old School Centre, is a 147 acre block of land that Denman Conservancy Association (DCA) members have decided to buy. This land hosts two long wetlands and is a central link in the proposed Protected Area Network. While it was logged in about 2000, there remain trees beside the wetlands, and the great number of young trees on the property show that in general there is excellent regeneration on this agricultural class land. The forest will eventually mature as the Coastal Douglas-fir type, increasingly rare in our region.



Community Uses

The Central Park land has a number of excellent walking trails that Conservancy plans to make available for public use. Note that the Central Park block extends along Denman Road to North Central Road, where it is just across the road from the Denman Cemetery. The group that was seeking land to expand the old cemetery has been advised that Conservancy is open to an approach from them to meet that need.

Fundraising Plan

The DCA has agreed to purchase the land on September 29, 2006 for \$496,000, which is less than the appraised value. Half of that amount is available from DCA accumulated funds and we need to raise the remainder over the next five years. The outstanding amount will be carried by the vendor at no interest for five years.

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Conservation Significance and Role on Denman

By Jenny Balke

This property fulfills two major conservation roles: the immediate protection of valuable wetland habitat, and the protection of a future moist Coastal Douglas-fir forest. Characteristics of the re-growing forest suggest that if allowed to reach old growth, one of the forest types may be among the rare and threatened forest communities in BC. The potential forest types or site series are CDFmm site series 05 "Western red cedar, Douglas-Fir - Kindbergia", to CDFmm site series 06 "Western red cedar, Grand fir - Foamflower", the first of which (05) is RED LISTED in climax condition. Thus, in addition to contributing a relatively large area of forest habitat, the type of habitat may become valuable on a provincial scale. The wetlands themselves are a fairly common "type" in the Georgia Depression, but wetlands in general are relatively rare in the southeast coastal lowlands of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The wetlands on this property are relatively undamaged and thus represent a valuable example of a well-developed wetland community, which may harbour other uncommon species.

(extract from: Ecological Overview Old School Property – "Central Park Nature Reserve" March 2006)

About the Property

Area is 147 Acres or 60 Hectares

Zoning is Agriculture A(1)

It is in the Agricultural Land Reserve

Minimum lot size 64 Hectares, therefore only one residence is permitted. The land was partly logged using horses in 1998 and then logged extensively in 2000.

The Name

Central Park, New York City is well known, but did you know that it has an area of 843 Acres? And that Manhattan Island is almost the same size as Denman Island, even having a similar shape? Of course we do not have any ambition to duplicate the 250 acres of lawn that New Yorkers so love to have in their park. See the back page for our own Central Park Vision.



We Need Your Help

To complete this purchase Denman Conservancy needs to raise a substantial amount of money. Due to all those great Home & Garden Tours (can you believe this year is our 16th?) and the past generosity of our donors we have the resources to make the down-payment of half the purchase price. But we anticipate that the greater part of the remainder must come from Denman Islanders.

We will be launching a campaign to seek funds from Institutions and Foundations but this needs a longer lead-time and is expected to contribute more in future years.

DCA believes that this purchase is fully in accordance with the objectives of this community as expressed in our Official Community Plan. Your support will ensure that Central Park can be secured and dedicated to conservation and recreation for the community and all who love Denman Island.

John Millen
Chairperson, DCA Board

About Denman Conservancy

The Denman Conservancy Association (DCA) is a volunteer organization formed to preserve, protect and enhance the quality of the natural and human environment of Denman Island.

Supported by approximately 200 members, we are dedicated to increasing public awareness of the need for a strong ethic of land stewardship through public education, research and community participation. We are working to save forests and other natural habitats. These lands will be set aside in perpetuity as sanctuaries.

Our history goes back to 1991 when, with great support from the community, we were successful in buying the 2 parcel 9-hectare **Pickles Road Woods**, which was transferred to the Islands Trust Fund (ITF) for preservation. Adjacent to an existing 23-hectare nature reserve surrounding a large beaver pond, these parcels make up the **Inner Island Nature Reserve**.

We then embarked on the preservation of the **Lindsay-Dickson Forest**, a 54-hectare parcel of woodland and natural foreshore. Saving this prime example of the Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone, one of the last remaining examples on the Gulf Islands, took ten years of intense fund raising and lobbying governments, finally culminating in June 2001 when the ITF acquired the property. It is now managed by DCA as the **Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve**.

In 1997 when one-third of the island became severely threatened by industrial-scale logging, we realized many special places were about to be destroyed. We attempted to purchase some of them. The 32 hectare **Chickadee Lake** parcel became our priority. A series of offers based on appraised value were made in 2002 and 2003 but all were rejected as below the owner's \$1.3 million asking price. In March 2004, two large institutional pledges dedicated to the **Chickadee Lake** project expired, making a purchase by DCA unlikely.

In August of 2000, thanks to tremendous community support, DCA was able to purchase the 2.5 hectare parcel now called **Winter Wren Wood**. Abutting the Chickadee Lake parcel and linking vacant Crown Lands, **Winter Wren Wood** helps to build a protective ring around Chickadee Lake. A conservation covenant held by the ITF has been placed on the land. DCA looks after its management. **Winter Wren Wood** features a nature trail used by the public, including local primary school students, for pleasure as well as for educational purposes. You are invited to stroll there, too!

In 2006 the 125 acre **Morrison Marsh** property, adjacent to Boyle Point Park, was donated to Islands Trust Fund with the promise of a conservation covenant to be held by DCA. This significant donation was the culmination of four years of work by DCA with a cooperative landowner who wished to see the land preserved.

This year also we expect to see the implementation of our Agreement to settle the legal case with 4064 Investments Ltd. The case arose from the contract by which 4064 acquired its Denman lands. The former owner, a subsidiary of the John Hancock companies, required 4064 to place covenants to protect the natural values of the **Komas Bluffs** and the **Railway Grade Marsh Complex**.

Our Agreement stipulates the placement of conservation covenants on the two areas and the transfer to DCA of title to two parcels of land totaling 156 acres. The land is adjacent to **Inner Island Nature Reserve**, along Central Road. See map on page 4.

The DCA also organizes and supports activities such as nature workshops, land stewardship, stream and salmon enhancement, mapping projects, placement of conservation covenants, and other outreach activities.

Denman Conservancy Association is a registered society with charitable tax status.



Brian Boxall Bequest

In late May the Conservancy received a cheque from the estate of Brian Boxall in the amount of \$84,350.48.

We very much appreciate the forethought and generosity of Brian in providing for a part of his estate to come to us.

The Board has not yet determined how to use the bequest, but the funds will certainly assist us in our efforts to conserve the natural values on Denman Island.

The earliest we know of Brian's working life was of his serving in Germany with the Canadian military in the late 1960's. After leaving the Forces, he worked as a Senior Air Transport manager in Saudi Arabia.

In the mid '70's he took up residence in Sri Lanka where he lived until the mid 1990's. From there he moved back to Canada, retiring to Royston where he lived until his death at age 69 on Christmas day, 2003.

Brian had no children -his closest relative being his wife, Gisella- from whom he had been estranged for some 30 years. Brian's travels abroad provided a first-hand experience of the uncontrolled, large-scale deforestation taking place in several places elsewhere in the world. Recognizing the growing commercial pressures on forests here in British Columbia, he was pleased to be able to contribute through his will, in some small measure, to the conservation of environmentally sensitive forest lands on Denman Island on which he had had the pleasure of gazing for a number of years from his home in Royston.

The PAN

The concept of a Protected Area Network (PAN) for Denman Island has been with us since early days of the DCA. In 1998 Silva Ecosystem Consultants, as part of a wider study of Denman Island, prepared a map showing how known sensitive and ecologically significant areas could be linked to form a network.

This PAN map has been a guide to the DCA Board in setting priorities among the properties considered for acquisition.

