



Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society

MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER

What Has the Board Been Up To?

by Usha Rautenbach

One focus has been attempting to influence unintended damaging behaviour by providing the reason for prohibition of certain activities within lands for which WPS is responsible.

The St. Mary Lake Watershed Nature Reserve on Channel Ridge is privately-owned land. It was donated to the Water Preservation Society under a covenant, to be preserved in its natural state for the purpose of protecting the watershed and drinking water of St. Mary Lake. In many jurisdictions, such land would be off-limits to the public because this is a sensitive ecosystem and is easily damaged. But up on Channel Ridge, a much-used network of trails and footpaths is available to the public on WPS lands and neighbouring privately-owned lands.

At the request of the SSI Conservancy, a biologist does an annual monitoring walk along the footpaths and submits a report with recommendations to the WPS Board. One problem identified is the difficulty of a visitor knowing, when walking a trail supervised by PARC, that this has now become a WPS footpath. Users need to know this because horses and bikes are permitted on PARC trails (all outside the watershed of St. Mary Lake) but prohibited on WPS footpaths (all within this more sensitive watershed). To notify people of these numerous boundary points, WPS mounted blue metal signs on trees. These are now weathered by nature; graffiti has damaged some of them. People cannot read the signs that indicate that they are now entering watershed land. So, as recommended, we have been designing replacement signs, which will soon be ready for erection by volunteers.

(continued on next page)

SSI Water Preservation Society

Tuesday, April 9 | Lite Snacks Served

Doors Open 3:00pm | Meeting Starts **3:30pm**

SSI Conservancy Meeting Room | 265 Blackburn Rd.

**Annual
General
Meeting**

If unable to attend, nominate a board member as your proxy by filling in the form on pg. 3. Return it to a board member; to Ganges PO Box 555, SSI, V8K2W3; leave it in the WPS envelope in the Apple "mailbox"; OR send an email to ssiwps@gmail.com by APRIL 1.

Featured Speaker: Ruth Waldick

What do climate change and emerging weather extremes mean for Salt Spring?

Ruth has a PhD in evolutionary ecology, with an emphasis on climate change impacts and adaptation. She is an adjunct professor at Carleton University, supervising graduate student research and, on Salt Spring, is working with an emerging Climate Action Initiative (led by CRD and Transitions Salt Spring). Ruth lives on Salt Spring, serves as a commissioner with the Beddis Water Service and was a founding member of the SS Community Alliance.

Thank you to those of you who have **renewed your membership**. If your mailing label is **highlighted**, we have **not yet received your renewal**. If that is you, **please consider renewing**.

Members who receive their newsletter by email **will receive a note** with your renewal status.



“The Board” cont’d from page 1

The new signs inform the public about the purpose of the covenant on the St. Mary Lake Watershed Nature Reserve. Walkers are welcomed but reminded that they do so at their own risk. They are asked to remain on the designated footpaths, keep dogs on leash, remove dog waste, pack out what they pack in, and leave everything as they find it. **Prohibited:** hunting, camping, fires, smoking, all-terrain-vehicles (ATVs), horses, and bikes.

Another problem is that you can only enter the WPS system of footpaths by starting along a PARC trail; eventually this trail may cross into watershed land. People who set out on a horse or bike currently ride on regardless. The well-meaning trail users need fair warning that the trail they are considering will become a watershed footpath, on which horses and bikes are not permitted. So WPS is working with PARC to have symbols added to trail posts indicating No Horses, No Bikes before the boundary is reached. We hope to have the reason for this indicated with a WPS decal.

Perhaps you can influence others with your understanding of why WPS prohibits what we prohibit, on land we own as WPS, and for what purpose.



New Opportunity for WPS to Help Address SSI Water Issues

by Maxine Leichter

At the end of 2018, efforts to coordinate SSI water problems have taken a new and encouraging turn. What is now called the SSI Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA) was organized in 2012 to coordinate the various water agencies in addressing SSI water problems. The same group (previously called the SSI Watershed Protection Authority) didn't allow WPS to participate in discussions other than to speak briefly at the end of meetings or send written comments. WPS and other community groups thought that this did not make the most effective use of the experience and knowledge of many island volunteers who had been working on SSI's water issues, some for decades.

Now under the leadership of our new CRD Director, Gary Holman, and our new Islands Trustee Laura Patrick, SSIWPA is considering changes to how it operates, some of which would give community groups a greater role in providing input to SSIWPA decisions. For starters, at the December SSIWPA meeting, representatives of WPS and the Cusheon Lake Stewardship Committee were invited to sit at the main table and participate in the discussion. This was a wonderful breath of fresh air. We very much applaud and appreciate the opportunity to provide more effective representation for WPS members. We look forward to additional changes that will increase SSIWPA's effectiveness.

Volunteers Invited

WPS still needs help! If any of these opportunities interest you, contact us at ssiwps@gmail.com or 250-537-1577.

- Observe and record information on a stream or wetland near you and learn about our SSI water resources as part of the SSI FreshWater Catalogue Project
- Help with data management for the FreshWater Catalogue Project
- Write articles for this newsletter
- Serve on the WPS Board of Directors, Science Committee, Trail Sign Committee, or Grants Committee



Protecting the St. Mary Lake Watershed Reserve

by Maxine Leichter

Each year, a biologist walks all of the WPS footpaths and makes recommendations on how to protect this natural area. Several years ago, the biologist recommended that we install a bridge where the footpath crosses a seasonal stream. This was done, but it appeared that people were walking around the bridge and possibly taking bicycles and horses around the bridge. This was destroying the plants growing there, as well as causing erosion and siltation, thus affecting water quality.

Remediation was difficult because the area is far from the road and down a steep hill. Materials would have to be carried a long way in. In January, we hired Chris Drake of Coast Alive Recreational and Ecological Services to find a solution. He added steps to each side of the bridge to make it easier to use and cedar fencing at each side. Two volunteers brought salal and ferns and planted them around the bridge.



It's a beautiful spot this time of year because the stream is flowing. There is also a nice wetland to the side of the bridge. We encourage you to take a look and keep us updated on the condition of the installations. The entry point to the trail that leads to the bridge is between Canvassback Place and Point 32 on the CRD Channel Ridge Trails map.

But there is still a lot to do. We hope to continue having regular work parties during the winter and more often this summer when the newly planted Garry oak trees will need to be watered.

If you can help by participating in a work party, please call 537-1577 or email ssiwps@gmail.com

Proxy Voting Form

If you are unable to attend the AGM, please be sure to fill in this Proxy Voting Form:

Proxy for the Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society Annual General Meeting.

I/We (print name/s) _____, member(s) in good standing of the Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society do hereby appoint (print name of a current Society Board Member who will attend) _____ to represent me/us, and to vote on my/our behalf at the meeting.

I authorize this proxy to be valid for ___ 1 year, ___ 2 years, ___ 3 years

Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

*If you will not be able to attend this year's AGM, please nominate a Board member as your proxy by filling in, signing, and returning this form **no later than April 1st** to our PO Box 555 Ganges, SSI, BC, V8K 2W3, or to the WPS envelop in the Apple Photo mailbox.*

Board members who will be attending:

Maxine Leichter, Usha Rautenbach, Jean Wilkinson, Judy McLennan, John Millson, Ian Peace, Chris Drake



MEMBERSHIP

\$15 for individuals or \$30 for a family/couple.

Additional donations are very gratefully received and help to keep WPS active, effective, and working hard to protect our island waters. Tax Receipts are issued.

Current Members: Mail membership fee to:
Ganges PO Box 555
SSI, BC V8K 2W3

New members: Request an application form to fill out and return.

When you become a member, you become part of a supportive group of people who collectively care for and about Salt Spring's freshwater and groundwater sources.

We'll keep you updated on local water-related programs, projects and events.

OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Maxine Leichter
Treasurer	Judy McLennan
Secretary	Usha Rautenbach
Directors-at-Large	Chris Drake
	Ian Peace
	Jean Wilkinson
	John Millson

CONTACT US

E-mail: ssiwps@gmail.com
Online: ssiwatpreservationsociety.ca

COUNTRY GROCER TAPES

Please put your tapes in box #73

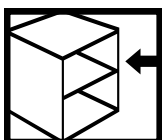
THRIFTY FOODS

Request a Smile Card to donate when making purchases



SSI Water Preservation Society

Box 555, Ganges PO
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2W3
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