



ISLANDS TRUST FUND

News Release

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LASQUETI ISLANDER BEQUEATHS LAND TO THE ISLANDS TRUST FUND

VICTORIA — Storyteller, historian and boat builder John Osland passed away at his Lasqueti Island homestead on March 10, 2010 at the age of 91, leaving his 64-hectare property to the Islands Trust Fund to be protected as a nature reserve.

Born in Woonsocket, South Dakota in 1918, John served aboard US Coast Guard ships during the Second World War before coming to Lasqueti for the summer of 1948. That summer, he was hooked. He found a piece of land near the base of Mount Trematon with ancient trees and green pastures that would support a quiet, simple life.

John lived lightly on the land, leaving only his bicycle tracks along his grassy driveway. Despite the heavy logging on the island in his early years on Lasqueti, John's big trees remained.

"John got immense pleasure walking among his big firs," said Donald Gordon, a friend of John's. "It was always a treat to walk his land with him."

"John wanted his land to be a place where nature could be left mostly undisturbed except for visits and walks," said Gordon. "He hoped that those people seeking the delights of nature would enjoy it, and care for it with as much love as he did."

The new John Osland Nature Reserve will protect a mature forest with several endangered and threatened plant communities. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of John's neighbors Mike Mundy and Cindy Craven and several other volunteers, John's cabin and belongings were carefully removed from the new nature reserve this fall. The ditches originally dug to keep the low-lying fields dry have been filled; islanders expect the fields to return to a seasonal wetland state by the spring. To the unknowing eye, the only hint of a past life on the land is the line of crocuses leading to where John's doorstep once stood. But for those who knew him, his legacy remains in the trees and the land that will always be protected even now that he's gone.

"It's wonderful to know that because of Johnny's gift, this piece of land will be a refuge and a place to experience the peace that he so enjoyed, no matter what the future will hold for us," said Susan Morrison, Trust Fund Board member and a Lasqueti Island local trustee. "I hope others will consider similar donations that will provide future generations with the same opportunity."

John's final wish of leaving a natural legacy was made possible with the assistance of Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. Donating an ecological gift, such as land or a conservation covenant, to a qualified recipient can result in significant tax benefits to individuals or their estates.

The Islands Trust Fund and Lasqueti community hope to celebrate John's life and legacy in the spring of 2012 with a dedication of the nature reserve. To stay informed of the celebration and future management plan consultations for the property, register as an Islands Trust Fund subscriber to receive updates at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/>.

"A Conservancy for Canada's Islands in the Salish Sea"

Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis

The Islands Trust Fund is a regional conservancy, preserving landscapes of Canada's islands in the Salish Sea. To learn more about how the Islands Trust Fund works with island landowners to conserve land, please contact the Islands Trust Fund at 250-405-5186 (Victoria) or toll free through Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867 (or 604-660-2421 in Vancouver), or visit them online at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/>.

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