



ISLANDS TRUST FUND

News Release

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LEADING THE WAY TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF VALENS BROOK, DENMAN ISLAND

VICTORIA — Dr. Kal Holsti and Marilyn Wan's generous donation of land to the Islands Trust Fund has become Denman Island's newest nature reserve. The new Valens Brook Nature Reserve protects a portion of its namesake waterway – a salmon-bearing creek that runs through a lush, maturing forest of cedars, firs, ferns and sedges.

Kal and Marilyn protected their property out of concern for the future of Valens Brook. Since Kal purchased the property in 1969 the once rural wilderness surrounding the property has changed significantly through subdivision, development and increasing pressures on groundwater.

"The area surrounding Valens Brook is visually impressive and offers complete solitude when we visit," said Kal. "With subdivision crowding, habitat destruction, septic leaks and other water contamination, we're worried the pressures of suburbanization threatens the integrity of the waterway and surrounding forest and habitat. The best way to protect the area is to donate it to a land trust like the Islands Trust Fund who can manage it in a manner to protect, in perpetuity, its unique characteristics."

Valens Brook is shared by many landowners, travelling through a number of narrow properties before emptying into Baynes Sound on the southwest side of Denman Island. Although this donation protects only a portion of the watershed, Marilyn and Kal hope their act of conservation is the first of many.

"Our neighbour introduced the dream of creating a green belt surrounding Valens Brook from its origins to the sea, protecting the waterway by means of covenants and, we hope, more donations to the Islands Trust Fund," said Kal. "Our first priority was to protect the habitat on our land and create a place that others can enjoy. And if we can serve as a model to others, so much the better for all Denman Islanders and visitors."

Marilyn and Kal protected the land using Section 99, a little-known tool in BC's *Land Title Act* which allowed them to subdivide and retain a portion of their property for their own personal use without the usual subdivision approval process. The couple certified their donation through Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program, reducing the capital gains tax normally payable after owning a property for more than 30 years.

Tony Law, Chair of the Trust Fund Board said "the scarcity of publicly owned land on the islands means that private landowners hold the key to protecting the beauty and vitality of our island environments. This gift of land, involving a Section 99 subdivision and the Ecological Gifts program, demonstrates how using available tools can support the commitment of private landowners to ecosystem protection. Kal and Marilyn deserve the applause of the Denman community for their dedication to protecting Valens Brook. We look forward to working with other landowners who might be inspired by this initiative."

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/>.

"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

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