



News Release

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PROTECTION OF MILLION DOLLAR WATERFRONT PROPERTY IN SIGHT FOR LOCAL ISLAND GROUP

A Pender Island group is less than \$100,000 away from their fundraising goal to protect a spectacular waterfront property, and a recent boost from partners puts them in the home stretch. The Pender Islands Conservancy Association (PICA) is working feverishly to support the Capital Regional District's purchase of Brooks Point on South Pender Island, a wildflower-filled headland jutting into Boundary Pass. Since raising many of the initial dollars within the small island community, the local land conservancy is now asking people from across BC to help complete the project.

This fall, two regional land trusts stepped up to answer PICA's call for help. The Islands Trust Fund raised \$10,000 for Brooks Point from generous donors throughout the Gulf Islands. Habitat Acquisition Trust, based in Victoria, recently committed an additional \$10,000, and has put the call out to their donors to match a further \$5,000.

"The contributions from these regional conservation partners give our campaign the momentum we need to complete the community and conservation partner funding requirement for this important project," said Monica Petrie, the fundraising co-chair for PICA. "PICA and the small Pender community are fortunate to have such supportive conservation partners."

Two Capital Regional District parks currently protect disconnected portions of the Brooks Point/Gowlland Point headland. Efforts to join the park and create a continuous wildlife and trail corridor began in 2010, when the Capital Regional District borrowed \$1.65 million to purchase the waterfront property separating the two parks. The CRD committed to adding the property to the park if the community and conservation partners could raise \$300,000 to contribute towards the loan. So far, the local community has raised nearly \$200,000. With the Islands Trust Fund and Habitat Acquisition Trust's contributions, only \$85,000 remains to be raised.

"With such high property values, acquiring land for conservation on B.C.'s south coast is no easy task," said Jennifer Eliason, manager of the Islands Trust Fund. "By supporting PICA's efforts to complete the protection of the point, we hope we can share the work and help communicate the importance of this place to an even broader network of individuals who want to see Garry oak ecosystems protected for future generations."

A number of conservation experts and organizations prioritize ecosystem protection along B.C.'s south coast because the region contains such a high diversity of species, many found nowhere else in Canada. Brooks Point is no exception. Its meadows of chocolate lilies and camas make it a popular destination for visitors in the spring. The point is the last undeveloped headland on South Pender, offering a special vantage for viewing resident Orca pods that swim close to the island's shoreline. Endangered Sharp-tailed snakes live among the mature Garry oaks standing on the property.

"Aside from its stunning beauty, the diversity of species found here, especially those that are at-risk, make Brooks Point an important piece of our region's natural landscape," said Adam Taylor, Executive Director of Habitat Acquisition Trust. "We are so close to securing this property as parkland, forever. I hope the generosity of British Columbians' will make quick work of this funding gap."

People interested in donating to save Brooks Point can do so online at <http://brookspoint.org/> or at <http://hat.bc.ca/>. Visitors to Pender Island can also lend their support by attending the 5th Annual Island Mosaic Festival on October 20th at Poets Cove Resort, an event featuring local musicians and artists who will contribute a portion of proceeds in support of the Save Brooks Point campaign.

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