



ISLANDS TRUST FUND

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Help Needed to Create Thetis Island's First Community Nature Reserve *Fundraising campaign launched to protect Lower Burchell Hill*

Thetis Island, British Columbia, September 9, 2014 — A joint fundraising campaign is underway to create the first community nature reserve on Thetis Island. The campaign, involving the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy, the Cowichan Land Trust and the Islands Trust Fund, aims to raise \$560K to acquire the property known as Lower Burchell Hill, conserving its forests for the appreciation and enjoyment of the Thetis Island community and for the ecological services contributed to both the island and the region.

"The 16-hectare Lower Burchell Hill property has regionally important Douglas-fir forest, including provincially red-listed plant communities and sensitive ecosystems," said Kate Emmings, Island's Trust Fund Ecosystem Protection Specialist. "The protection of this property is an important step towards land conservation on Thetis Island and within the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone, which has only 9% protected area despite being recognized as globally rare."

The property also has significant watershed value and offers recreational opportunities through its section of a popular trail to the summit of Burchell Hill. Once the Trust Fund Board acquires the property as a nature reserve, two local land trusts will jointly hold a conservation covenant to ensure its permanent protection. The terms of the covenant will allow only low impact recreational, scientific and educational activities on the land.

Peter Luckham, Thetis Island Local Trustee and Trust Fund Board member says, "I have always hoped there would be an active conservancy organization on Thetis Island and a significant property like Burchell Hill for them to protect. I am so excited about the prospect of acquiring this special place and encourage everyone to pledge whatever they can."

At this stage in the campaign, the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy is seeking pledges toward the purchase price. The three organizations involved will also be pursuing grants and donations from government, foundations and corporations. Those interested in assisting the campaign are encouraged to contact the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy about organizing or participating in a fundraising initiative. To make a pledge today, please visit www.thetislandnatureconservancy.org or email ThINC@thetisland.net.

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**THETIS ISLAND
NATURE CONSERVANCY**

www.thetislandnatureconservancy.org



www.cowichanlandtrust.ca

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