



ISLANDS TRUST FUND

Protecting Canada's Islands in the Salish Sea

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Moore Hill Protected as a Nature Reserve

New Thetis Island Protected Area 100th Island Trust Fund Protected Place

Thetis Island, British Columbia, February 16, 2017 - A unique unspoiled waterfront forest on the east coast of Thetis Island is now permanently protected. The Islands Trust Fund, in partnership with the Cowichan Community Land Trust and the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy, has created a nature reserve to protect 21 hectares (52 acres) of Moore Hill. This conservation purchase was made possible thanks to the conservation vision of the previous land steward, the incredibly generous support of a local donor family and a grant from the federal Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk.

Moore Hill forms one of the highest peaks on Thetis Island and contains a rich mix of habitat types. The hill features sandstone cliffs and in places the cliffs have fractured into huge blocks, tumbling together to form caves that provide habitat for bats. Huge first growth Douglas-fir trees rise from the cliffs on the west side of the hill, and in small grassy openings, camas, fritillaries and other wildflowers grow amongst the Garry oaks and arbutus. The eastern slope is a second growth Douglas-fir forest, with an understory mosaic of mosses and ferns. This hill is culturally significant to the Penelakut First Nations people.

Moore Hill will be managed to ensure the ecological and archaeological features are monitored and maintained. Further surveys for species at risk will be carried out. Due to the steep cliff faces and species at risk habitat, Moore Hill will not be open to the public. The property is certified as an Ecological Gift under Environment and Climate Change Canada's Ecological Gifts Program, which means that the important ecosystems of Moore Hill will be protected forever. The protection of Moore Hill is a tremendous contribution to the recovery of rare species and ecosystems on Thetis Island. Combined with the adjacent Nature Trust of BC reserve, protection of this property creates a 24 hectare protected

area, spanning seashore to hilltop, a rare special place in the islands of the Salish Sea.

“The previous steward of this special place and the donor family have led the way in preserving natural areas on Thetis Island,” said Tony Law, Chair of the Trust Fund Board. “We are honoured to be doing our part in carrying out their shared conservation vision to ensure Moore Hill will remain natural and wild.”

The Islands Trust Fund will work with the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy, the Cowichan Community Land Trust, the Penelakut Tribe, archaeologists and species at risk biologists to develop a comprehensive management plan to guide the care of this special place.

The partners hope that the vision and generosity that created this nature reserve will inspire and build momentum for the purchase of Fairyslipper Forest on lower Burchell Hill. Over 60% of the funds have been raised to purchase and protect Thetis Island's first publicly accessible nature reserve. To find out more, please visit: www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/fairyslipper or www.thetisislandnatureconservancy.org

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