



FALL UPDATE

Fostering harmony between nature and community.

Highlights of the Year

Walkabout Program

Our "Walkabout" program continues to engage landowners keen to learn about the ecological values of their land including strategies for restoration and management of invasive species. MICS has offered public workshops and field training to assist community members on removing invasive species effectively and methods of propagating and planting native plants. In all, MICS has completed 35 walkabouts of 32 properties representing over 130 ha of land. Of those, nineteen stewardship agreements (over 65 ha) have been signed with property owners.

Native Plant Nursery

MICS' thriving native plant nursery provides local plant stock for restoration in parks and for community members. This year, MICS has doubled the nursery capacity and currently has 2700 plants of 32 species growing, to be ready for the 2013-14 planting season. Seed collection and vegetative cuttings continue as seasonally appropriate. Seed plantings for the 2015 growing season have begun.

Shoreline Care Program

MICS completed a Mayne Island Shoreline Atlas which was the subject of an Islands Trust sponsored workshop in September. The atlas details the state of Mayne Island shorelines and near-shore waters and will assist in decisions around shoreline developments. Eelgrass mapping started on Mayne and in coordination with the Seachange Conservation Society, has expanded to other Trust islands including parts of Galiano, Valdes, Gabriola and Bowen over the last six months.

Recognition

MICS had the great honour of being awarded the 2013 Community Stewardship Award by the Islands Trust in recognition of its Shoreline Care Program's contribution to meaningful and lasting benefits to the natural environment. As well, our community-based Land Stewardship Program received the Capital Regional District's 2013 EcoStar Award in the Land Stewardship, non-profit category. The award recognised MICS' program for its innovation, creativity and long term community benefits.

Read more about our projects and activities at <http://conservancyonmayne.com>

Gala Kick-off for the CAMAS Fund

On August 3rd MICS celebrated its 10th anniversary with a GALA celebration of feasting, dancing, laughing, connecting and listening to guest speaker Briony Penn's amusing and informative talk on the diversity and interconnectedness of mice on the islands. Not only did we celebrate MICS' first 10 years, we looked to the next decade (and beyond) by introducing the CAMAS fund, our goal being to raise \$10,000.00 that night . . . and we did! With the help of our enthusiastic MC, Peter Robinson, CEO of the Suzuki Foundation, who challenged others in the audience to match his gift of \$500, we were soon halfway there. The balance was raised from the silent auction, ticket sales and the beer and wine bar.



What is the CAMAS fund? First, the acronym stands for Conservation, Acquisition, Management, And Stewardship. These are all goals in the Conservancy's work to help preserve the ecological values of both private and public land. The fund itself is a designated long-term investment initiative that can be called upon to assist with the legal and management costs connected with establishing and managing future conservation covenants, accepting bequests and, always hopeful, future land acquisitions. Stewardship, the human responsibility of caring for the environment, is the focus in all our activities. MICS is very excited about this new initiative and encourages any of you reading this to make a tax-deductible donation now or at any time to help the fund grow.

Deer Update

In August we wrote to tell you about the public process MICS was about to enter, to assess islanders' views regarding the growing deer populations on Mayne – both the native blacktail deer and the introduced fallow deer. We sponsored this process with the Mayne Island Residents and Ratepayers Association, at the request of the B.C. Fish & Wildlife Branch. F&W proposed to re-introduce hunting on Mayne Island, which was banned in 1973. We promised you an update at the end of the process, and this is it.

Our role was not to advocate, but to neutrally educate and facilitate, to help islanders come to their own conclusions about this difficult issue. This approach seemed to work – over the course of several packed public meetings, we saw participants move from raucous debate to a general consensus on a set of principles for managing deer. A newly-formed permanent Mayne Island deer committee will use those principles to negotiate a deer management plan with F&W, knowing that they have the support of a majority of islanders.

You can read more at <http://conservancyonmayne.com> about the

process, environmental impacts of deer and B.C. hunting regulations. Very briefly the main principles governing a plan include:

- Mayne Island is too small, too populated for safe hunting by people who do not know the place;
- Fallow deer need to be eliminated – the current number of special-permit resident hunters needs to be increased, and Mayne needs provincial support to prevent this species from becoming a more regional environmental threat;
- Although many islanders also support hunting the native blacktail deer, it was decided to defer this for now.

We thank all who attended meetings and who filled out our questionnaire. Although dealing with deer is contentious and potentially divisive in a small community, this ended up being a remarkably positive experience for islanders in working together to balance human concerns with environmental needs. This is a good example of our new tagline in action: "Fostering harmony between nature and community".

Watch for our full newsletter in the spring of 2014