

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2005 Award Winner Profile

Winner: Katherine Dunster, Bowen Island

Category: Individual

Project: Conservation work and promotion of the 'slow islands' movement

Nominators: Judi Stevenson, Salt Spring Island;

Jan Kirby, Pender Island;

Susie Washington Smyth, Priscilla Ewbank, GSX Marine Coalition, Saturna Island;

Thetis Residents and Ratepayers Association;

Pender Islands Trust Protection Society;

Chris Bowers, Gabriola Island

Alan Shatwell, Bowen Island

Melinda Auerbach, Lasqueti Island

Ken Millard, Galiano Island

Project Description:

Katherine Dunster is a tireless crusader for the ecological and community health and well being of the islands in the Islands Trust Area. She has been active for many years in a variety of projects. She was instrumental in the Salish Sea Community Mapping Project, sat on the Islands Trust Fund Board and contributed hundreds of hours of field work expertise to help establish the ecological significance of properties under consideration by the Trust Fund Board for protection. She has also been involved in inventorying Crown Lands on Bowen Island and reconstituted the Bowen Island Farmers Institute.

She worked on developing a management plan and partnership agreement for the McFadden Creek Heronry property on Salt Spring Island and contributed time and expertise to the work of the Citizens for Responsible Land Use in their efforts to preserve and protect the unique area known as Walker Hook. She also acted as an expert witness for the GSX Marine Coalition at the gas pipeline undersea crossing hearings.

Kathy is an active member of the Land Trust Alliance of BC, as well as serving on its Board of Directors. More recently, in August, 2004, Kathy launched the 'slow islands' movement to revitalize the rural way of living on the islands. In her 'slow islands' papers and presentations, Kathy has challenged islanders to think more deeply about what it means to be rural and how the goals of the world-wide 'slow food' movement to honour and preserve ways of preparing and sharing food are similar to some of the goals we have for our islands – to grow things carefully, preserve local traditions, live in harmony with the land and its limits, value handmade things, and slow down to listen, look and learn. These ideas have great potential to inspire and direct us in managing our islands' growth and to protect the rural settings and natural ecology of the Gulf Islands.

Kathy's personal goal is truly to preserve and protect her beloved islands and she has given unstintingly of her time and valuable expertise to do all that she can to conserve the ecological values and natural beauty of the islands in the Salish Sea.