

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2007 Award Recipient Profile

Winner: Salt Spring Island Alternative Gypsy Moth Control Program

Category: Group/Organization

Project: Implementation of an ecologically-friendly program to control the outbreak of gypsy moths

Nominator(s): Island Natural Growers, Gulf Islands Chapter of Canadian Organic Growers

Project Description: In the spring of 2006 the Ministry of Forests and Range applied for the aerial spraying of approximately 389 hectares of land with a pesticide (BtK) to combat an outbreak of gypsy moths on Salt Spring Island. The proposed spraying of agricultural and residential property would have annulled the organic certification of several area farms and would have killed all Lepidoptera species in the areas, including several rare species. It would also have affected Salt Spring's well-deserved reputation as a centre of organic growing.

In response, a group of community activists came together to devise an alternative gypsy moth control program to: stop the planned aerial spraying; and, to assess the gypsy moth risk on the island and implement an ecologically-sound control program in cooperation and collaboration with provincial government authorities. An information meeting was held and task groups were established for communications, research and to identify issue and concern.

The province was persuaded that the community was capable of undertaking a plan that included: searching for gypsy moth egg masses; assembling and placing over 2500 traps; facilitating and arranging permission for provincial ground spraying of a core area; and, collection and opening of all the traps for inspection by the ministry.

The alternative to aerial spraying that was ultimately organized required hundreds of volunteers and thousands of volunteer hours over many weeks. It also involved individuals, community groups, many island businesses, the local Islands Trust and Capital Regional District Director.

The Ministry of Forests has agreed to support the alternative program again in 2007.