



**ISLANDS TRUST FUND**

Protecting Canada's Islands in the Salish Sea

# News Release

200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8R 1H8  
Telephone: 250-405-5186 Fax: 250-405-5155

Toll-free via Service BC 1 800-663-7867 or in Vancouver 604-660-2421

itfmail@islandstrust.bc.ca www.IslandsTrustFund.bc.ca

2018-01-ITF

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Fairyslipper Forest Protected as Thetis Island's First Publicly Accessible Nature Reserve**

*New protected area coming to B.C.'s Thetis Island*

**Thetis Island, British Columbia, January 25, 2018** — Fairyslipper Forest on Thetis Island, B.C. is now permanently protected as a nature reserve. The new 16-hectare (40 acre) nature reserve on lower Burchell Hill is the result of a partnership between the Islands Trust Fund, the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy and the Cowichan Community Land Trust and is named after the delicate calypso 'fairyslipper' orchids that bloom on the hill each spring.

The property is Thetis Island's first publicly accessible nature reserve, offering residents and visitors opportunities for walking and hiking on nature trails through the forest. To maintain the natural features of the land, only low-impact and First Nations traditional use activities will be permitted.

"I am thrilled by the support we received on this campaign to create the first publicly accessible nature reserve on Thetis Island and sincerely thank each and every one of our supporters," said Ann Eriksson, founding board member of the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy. "This beautiful forest will be protected forever, and each gift, no matter how big or small, is a part of that conservation success story."

Over three years, Thetis Island residents and other individual supporters raised over half the purchase amount of \$560,000. Inspired by the community's passion for conservation, the campaign received generous contributions from the Sitka Foundation, (\$50,000), the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's Environmental Enhancement Fund (\$5,000), and the Gosling Foundation (\$2,500). The campaign finally reached its goal through a generous bequest of \$210,000 from an endowment fund created by Syd Watts and Barbara Dowd, who recognized the Cowichan Community Land Trust in their will.

"The protection of Fairyslipper Forest is regionally significant," said Kai Rietzel, Executive Director of the Cowichan Community Land Trust. "Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserve protects a maturing stand of Coastal Douglas-fir forest. These types of forests contain the highest diversity of plant species in British Columbia and typically have a high number of species in need of protection."

"The Islands Trust Fund is proud to have partnered with the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy and the Cowichan Community Land Trust to acquire this wonderful property," said Tony Law, Chair of the Trust Fund Board. "This purchase is a great example of a community working together to ensure the natural areas we enjoy today continue to benefit future generations."

Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserve is the 28th nature reserve to be protected by the Islands Trust Fund. Combined with conservation covenants, the organization protects over 1,250 hectares (3,088 acres) of natural area on Canada's islands in the Salish Sea. This purchase brings the total amount of land set aside for nature protection purposes on Thetis Island to 40 hectares (99 acres).

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## A CONSERVANCY FOR CANADA'S ISLANDS IN THE SALISH SEA

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*The Islands Trust Fund is the conservation land trust for Canada's islands in the Salish Sea. Since 1990, the Islands Trust Fund has protected more than 1,250 hectares. This success is thanks to the vision, support and generosity of our donors and partners. Visit us online at <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/>*

*Formed in 2012, the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy's (ThINC) goals are to conserve and steward natural ecosystems and to promote community food security for Thetis Island BC. Volunteers and summer staff further this mission through offering general education and hands-on experiences for Thetis Island residents and visitors related to preserving the ecological integrity of the island for future generations. Learn more at <http://www.thetislandnatureconservancy.org/>*

*The Cowichan Community Land Trust is a non-profit society located in Duncan, British Columbia. It is a registered charity in Canada and is entitled to hold conservation covenants in British Columbia. It was founded in 1995 by a group of concerned citizens who wished to help landowners find alternatives to the degradation of natural areas and wildlife habitat. For more information go to <http://www.cowichanlandtrust.ca/>*

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#### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

Tony Law, Chair  
Trust Fund Board  
250-335-1155 [tlaw@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:tlaw@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Jennifer Eliason, Manager  
Islands Trust Fund  
250-405-5191 [jeliason@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:jeliason@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Ann Eriksson, Board Chair  
Thetis Island Nature Conservancy  
250-246-8176 [ThINC@thetisland.net](mailto:ThINC@thetisland.net)

Kai Rietzel, Executive Director  
Cowichan Community Land Trust  
250-746-0227 [info@communitylandtrust.ca](mailto:info@communitylandtrust.ca)

Note to Editor: Media are invited to attend a board-to-board celebration event on Saturday, January 24 at the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you wish to attend, please RSVP at [coberg@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:coberg@islandstrust.bc.ca) or call 250-405-5171 by February 22.