



**Please help us
protect
Blackburn Lake!**



Dear Friends:

Our community is faced with an extraordinary opportunity right now: the chance to protect about half the land around one of the island's major freshwater lakes: Blackburn Lake. *(If you have already received a similar letter, we hope you will understand that it is quite challenging to cross-check various mailing lists, while also respecting confidentiality.)*

The Salt Spring Island Conservancy has long wanted to protect this special place—because of its species' richness, its critical importance to the health of Cusheon Lake, and its natural beauty—and we want to seize this rare opportunity.

We are writing to ask you to help us purchase this 32.5 acre island treasure, preserve its natural abundance, and prevent the disruption or pollution of this absolutely vital part of the Cusheon watershed. Over 70 percent of the water arriving to Cusheon Lake flows through the two streams and lush wetlands of this property.

For many years, the community has been fortunate that the property's owners have been mindful of its natural richness and crucial wetland services. There is no guarantee that this careful stewardship would continue with a new owner.



Peregrine Falcon

Conservancy scientists have located 11 Species at Risk on or near the property, and more than another 100 other species, including more than 80 bird species. **This unique place is a cornucopia of wildlife and wildlife habitat.** Its streams and lake provide important homes for Coho salmon and cutthroat trout, with ponds offering safe places for young fish to thrive in Salt Spring's premier salmon-bearing watershed.

Aside from protecting this property as a nature reserve, this acquisition presents other exciting opportunities. Its existing building could house a nature learning centre. The land could serve as an important learning site for the many students who participate in the Conservancy's Stewards In Training Program, as well as provide an interpretive trail to help visitors understand

wetland ecosystems and the many species they harbour. The project also has potential for wetlands restoration, watershed research and more.

The Blackburn Lake property acquisition budget is about \$1 million, including the appraised value, legal costs, a land management fund, staff time and other expenses. Utilizing existing Conservancy resources, a generous gift from the landowner, grants, and initial pledges from major donors, we are more than halfway to our fundraising goal! **We really need your help now, as well as the support of the community, to complete this project and preserve one of Salt Spring's exceptional places.**



At this time, we are just seeking pledges, to be collected later this spring or summer. Ideally, we would close the deal in June, so we are hoping you will join us now and make a pledge for the project. If each of us receiving this letter were to give generously now, we could complete this campaign soon. In 2005, Conservancy donors contributed almost \$500,000 toward the \$800,000 purchase of the top of Mount Erskine, and in 2008, our community donated almost \$1 million to purchase the 20-acre Creekside Rainforest. We've done it before; we can surely do it again!

Please help us secure the healthy future of Blackburn Lake, protect its abundant species and help keep the Cusheon watershed safe and clean for salmon and trout, island visitors and the many hundreds of residents who drink its water. Together, we can make a crucial investment in the lasting natural heritage of Salt Spring. And thank you if you have already made a financial commitment to this project!

For the love of the island,

Christine Torgrimson
Executive Director

Ashley Hilliard
Board President

SSC



YES! I want to support the Blackburn Lake property acquisition

My Pledge: \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$2,500 \$5,000 \$10,000 Other

Name: _____ Phone _____

Address: _____ Postal code _____

Email _____ Please mail to: Salt Spring Island Conservancy

(We'll collect pledges later, and contributors will receive a tax receipt)

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