

# 2023 Newsletter

## *METCHOSIN FOUNDATION*



# *Territorial Acknowledgment*

The Metchosin Foundation pursues its Vision and Mission, undertaking and supporting a variety of initiatives within the territories of the Coast Salish peoples, in particular, the territories of the Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) and T'Sou-ke First Nations.

We draw inspiration from the Coast Salish principle of Na'tsa'maht (working together in unity) and recognize its applicability to our motto, 'Healthy lands and waters – the foundation for a healthy community'.

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*Photos on pg. 1 (top, lower centre), 8, 10-11  
by Bev Hall, pg 1 (lower left) by Moralea Milne,  
pg. 1 (lower right) by Mike Fisher,  
pg. 2 and 12 by Alex Harris, pg.3 by Canva.*

# President's Message

## *Hope is an Action Verb*

One of the visions of the Metchosin Foundation in 2023 as described in this newsletter is to protect biodiversity and preserve ecologically significant lands in the heart of the Bilston watershed to link hilltop headwaters to the protected seashore at Witty's Lagoon. Building on the experience garnered and connections made through other projects also described in this newsletter, the Bilston Conservation Corridor is the Metchosin Foundation's most audacious and aspirational goal to date. As the Metchosin Foundation strives toward healthy lands and waters – the foundation for a healthy community – we are enriched by the experiences from all our projects and we are emboldened by the knowledge that hope is a verb.

Piecing together all of the diverse Metchosin Foundation projects which are of varying sizes and seemingly different foci into one whole that is congruent with our purpose brings to mind the ancient Japanese art of 'kintsugi'; translation golden seam. In kintsugi, pieces of a broken ceramic pot are bound together using a lacquer made from tree sap and then the seams are overlaid with a mixture containing gold dust. The outcome is not so much something that is fixed, as in returned to its original state, but something that, via a process of mending, achieves its own calling.

As is the case for all analogies, this one is imperfect. While a kintsugi project can take many painstaking weeks to complete, the Metchosin Foundation timeline is one of many years. But, in both cases, mending is the most difficult part as it requires enough pieces to be present; this can be difficult. In the case of the pot, some ceramic shards may

have been lost over time requiring adjustments in the placement of the extant pieces and therefore the shape of the final product. In the case of the Conservation Corridor, the wishes of landowners and developers, municipal bylaws and provincial and federal regulations may all influence the number and patterns of our pieces and therefore the shape of the final product. In the case of the overall work of the Foundation, 'final product' is not even a relevant concept.

In the few months since the inspirational [video about the Conservation Corridor](#) was released over \$45,000 has been raised from individual donors, a substantive

grant has been received from the Victoria Foundation and we are actively engaging with prospective conservation funding partners. The Foundation is also grateful for the support that has been received for our other projects, making 2023 on track to be the Foundation's best fundraising year ever. What is absolutely certain, however, is that the Metchosin Foundation will need to find a lot more gold dust in order to realize its latest kintsugi dream of a biodiversity corridor for wildlife stretching from hilltop to seashore. Hope is an Action Verb.

- Valerie Jaeger



# Reconciliation and Conservation

## *Sc'ianew Mary Hill Project*



*The view to Race Rocks and the Olympic Mountains from the top of Mary Hill. Bev Hall photo.*

**T**he Metchosin Foundation has been pleased and privileged to play a catalytic role during the early years of the multi-agency *Sc'ianew Mary Hill Project*. This project explores the viability of establishing an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) on the Mary Hill site, to be managed by the Sc'ianew First Nation. The project brings together reconciliation and conservation interests and is centred upon roughly 340 acres of crown land (currently occupied by DND) that are earmarked for inclusion in Sc'ianew First Nation's modern treaty package.

Between Autumn 2018 and February 2022 the Metchosin Foundation provided critical in-kind support

to the Project steering committee including: capacity fund-raising, project coordination, accounting, and communications. Our support during this extensive 'incubation and exploration' phase of the Project helped to build and sustain momentum for what could become a unique, Sc'ianew-led IPCA initiative.

With early support efforts successfully concluded, we look forward to the Project's next steps. These include a formal Sc'ianew community land use decision in 2024, and, dependent upon the outcome of that decision, a multi-million-dollar fund-raising effort which would be led by our conservation colleagues at HAT (Habitat Acquisition Trust).

The Foundation's positive experience in contributing to a regionally (and even provincially) significant conservation outcome at Mary Hill has led us to embrace a new challenge: **The Bilston Conservation Corridor Project** [see pg. 5].

In the meantime, this photo taken from the Mary Hill summit helps to convey why our board and members placed such high priority on providing comprehensive early support to the proposed IPCA Project. Within Coast Salish territory, there are few locations that equal Mary Hill in the intersecting realms of biodiversity, cultural significance and natural beauty.

- Morgan Yates

# Stewardship

## The Bilston Conservation Corridor

Here in Metchosin we contend with the constant pressures of development and potential loss of the healthy ecosystems that define our region. With this in mind, the Metchosin Foundation has embarked on an ambitious project to preserve a seven-kilometre long corridor of diverse natural areas in our municipality. Called the Bilston Conservation Corridor, this project is wide-ranging and complex.

The Bilston Conservation Corridor is a proposed greenbelt that will link hilltop headwaters to the protected seashore at Witty's Lagoon. It would protect biodiversity and preserve ecologically significant lands containing Coastal Douglas-fir forests, Garry Oak meadows, rocky knolls and other habitats in the heart of the Bilston watershed.

There are many reasons for preserving the Corridor including:

**Preventing habitat loss:** The corridor will prevent these forests from further fragmentation and habitat loss. Dry Coastal Douglas-fir and Garry Oak meadows are some of the rarest and most endangered ecosystems in Canada and the corridor highlights these systems.

**Wildlife refuge:** Keystone species including black bear, Roosevelt elk, wolves, and cougar will have room to roam in a corridor of connected habitats.

**Ecosystem services:** The Corridor cleans the air and adds oxygen, retains and filters water in the Bilston Creek watershed and provides cooling in a region that is becoming hotter every year.

**Climate resilience:** The Corridor acts as a sponge to prevent run-off and flooding in the wet winter months



*Nitya Chari Harris in the forest behind her home, in the hilltop headwaters of Bilston Creek.*

*Alex Harris photo.*

and provides cooling in the hot summer months.

To support outreach with local landowners and organizations, the Metchosin Foundation [created a video](#) that showcases the Bilston Conservation Corridor. Beginning in January 2023, the Foundation filmed on location throughout the Corridor lands. The video highlights many of the plants and animals that call this area home and interviews local experts who explain the Corridor's importance in different ways.

Crucially, the Bilston Conservation Corridor video also includes a [donation option](#), allowing viewers to contribute financially to this endeavor. Donor contributions will make a real difference to the Foundation's ability to complete this project. Fundraising will help create landowner covenants, stewardship agreements, land acquisition and other stewardship

options, work that is often overlooked but vital to a successful outcome.

The Metchosin Foundation is thrilled to work on such a valuable and visible project. At this early juncture in the multi-year project, we have been encouraged by input from supportive partners and by good reception from landowners and governments.

Here at the Metchosin Foundation we hope for the best outcome with the Bilston Conservation Corridor; by preserving healthy, intact ecosystems we can leave a conservation legacy for generations to come.

If your organization would be interested in hosting a presentation about this Project, if you own land in the Bilston Creek watershed or if you'd like to become involved in supporting this conservation legacy financially, please [contact the Metchosin Foundation](#). We'd love to hear from you.

- Heloise Nicholl

# Community Science

## *The Metchosin Flying Insect Biomass Study*

**M**ay through October 2023 marked the 6th field season of the Metchosin Flying Insect Biomass Study (MFIBS), a community science project headed by Dr. Neville Winchester of the University of Victoria with field study sites across various private properties in Metchosin, supported in large part by the Metchosin Foundation and its donors. The 'community' element refers to Metchosinites who make this study possible, including property owners who host tent-like structures called Malaise traps for the long-term collection of flying insects, dutifully swapping out collection bottles every two weeks, field technicians who deploy and service these traps throughout the 6-month field season, and needleworkers who repair traps damaged by the Metchosin elements (and bears).

MFIBS aims to measure trends in overall insect biomass in our

backyards (literally and figuratively). It is the largest such study in North America. A potential drop in insect numbers would be bad news for the ecosystem at large as insects are essential for a wide variety of services within the ecosystem. So much of what insects do goes unnoticed – from providing food for birds, mammals, and reptiles, to pollination essential to native plants and human agriculture, to controlling populations of pest insects, to breaking down dead organic matter.

It's often only when something large scale goes out of whack that we realise something is wrong in the insect kingdom. It will be some time until the collections from the 2023 field season are analyzed, but this season no traps were destroyed by the Metchosin winds or bears as in previous years, which made our field technicians' jobs keeping traps in service easier.

This insect study to date has seen an increase in biomass here in Metchosin. It's too early to tell whether this is significant or part of a trend, but in the very least we are not currently seeing a precipitous drop, and this is good news. Maybe we are doing something right here in Metchosin? Only more study will tell.

It is difficult to find sustained funding and volunteer efforts for a long-term project like this, on a subject that is currently so underappreciated. So much depends on the generous efforts of community scientist volunteers and private donors.

On that point, the time has come for one or more new volunteers to put their hands up for our field technician role. Bill and Linda Cave have so graciously carried this responsibility since MFIBS' inception, and they are ready to pass the torch to someone new. Responsibilities involve managing our inventory of Malaise traps and collection bottles, setting up traps on-site, responding to damage events and performing repairs, and keeping records that are so valuable for the accurate analysis of the collections.

If you, and/or anyone you know, might be interested in volunteering or donating to this community science project, or helping in other ways, please [contact the Metchosin Foundation](#).

- Mike Fischer

*A bumblebee on camas flower. Bev Hall photo.*



# Youth Leadership Training

## *The Sc'ianew Marine Education Pilot Project*

**T**his past spring and early summer the Metchosin Foundation worked closely with the Sc'ianew First Nation in supporting a leadership event for Sc'ianew youth. The three day event took place July 4-6. As one of the key organizers said afterwards, 'the children and youth highly valued this project. All youth who participated were engaged, empowered, and left with smiles on their faces.' Other collaborative partners included Habitat Acquisition Trust (H.A.T.), the T'Sou-ke Nation Marine Team, Right to Play, and the Spirit Bay community.

The Sc'ianew Marine Education Pilot Project engaged young people of the Nation in activities rooted in land stewardship, ocean resources and conservation, marine technology, and creativity. It was experiential learning in action.

Day 1 was grounded in a nature walk & talk on the Mary Hill site in the heart of Sc'ianew First Nation's traditional territory. The walk was facilitated by H.A.T. volunteers and Chief Russ Chipps, who explored the significance of this site for the Nation and the current work being done with land reclamation, reconciliation, and relationship-building.

Day 2 turned to engaging with the ocean. Fishing has long been a centre-point to Sc'ianew ways of being, and that day's events reinforced the inherent connection of water to food sovereignty and identity. Young people, under the supervision of elders and marine experts, fished, laughed, learned, and shared stories of being on the water with their families.

Day 3 married the concepts of environmentalism and the Sc'ianew as 'Salmon people' by using cutting-edge technology to explore the underwater world with the aim of better understanding and protecting it. Young people learned to maneuver underwater drones and were introduced to new ways of engaging the ocean. A community gathering and feast capped the day, along with creative activities supported by Spirit Bay artists.

The Metchosin Foundation is delighted to have been able to contribute to this Sc'ianew vision of empowering their youth to thrive as the natural stewards and leaders of their lands and waters.

- Michel Desjardins

*Beecher Bay. Michel Desjardins photo.*



# Scholarships

## Environmental Stewardship



**T**he Metchosin Foundation believes that by supporting students in our community we are helping the next generation develop into environmental stewards who will care about the wellbeing of people and ecosystems where

they live. Since 2017, the Metchosin Foundation has offered three \$1,000 scholarships annually to graduating grade 12 students who live in Metchosin or Beecher Bay. These are in the following areas:

- Academic Achievement
- Environmental Stewardship
- Community Citizenship

A fourth scholarship for \$1,000, the Moralea Milne – Beecher Bay (Sc'ianew) Community Scholarship, is available to a member of the Beecher Bay (Sc'ianew) community. Recipients of this scholarship are typically embarking on post-secondary education (or other educational programs) or have demonstrated leadership in their community.

We are pleased to announce the winners for 2023:

Academic Achievement Scholarship  
• **Nikolas Krusekopf**

Environmental Stewardship Scholarship  
• **Colin Sparks**

Community Citizenship Scholarship  
• **Olivia Sjerven**

Moralea Milne Beecher Bay (Sc'ianew) Community Scholarship  
• **pending**

We would like to thank all the students who applied and wish all members of the high school class of 2023, the best of luck with their future endeavors. We would also like to recognize and thank the generous donors in our community who make these scholarships possible.

- Jacqueline Clare

## Behind the Scenes

### Responding with a 'Yes'

**W**hile most of the Foundation's projects are multi-year and ongoing, and therefore included in our annual budget, every year we get requests from individuals or organizations looking for funding for new or time sensitive projects related to healthy lands and waters in Metchosin.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, we have been able to fund the following projects on short notice:

- **Research:** In collaboration with UVic, research on the relationship between mycorrhizal fungi and Garry Oak meadows.
- **Support:** In association with UVic, support for Tzeporah Berman's

speaking engagement at Bilston Farm.

- **Native plant purchases:** Now gracing the yard of the Old Metchosin School House
- **Butterfly way gardens:** Acting on the David Suzuki Foundation's initiative to plant pollinator gardens, the Foundation supported the purchase of native plants for butterfly way gardens in schools.

A gift to [the Metchosin Foundation General Fund](#) will enable us to continue to say 'Yes' to new needs and opportunities.

*Dr. Shannon Berch with the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society and Rachel Witt conduct research in Sea Bluff Farm's Garry Oak meadow. Carol Voyt photo.*



# Environmental Legacies

## *Moralea's Meadow*

**O**n July 28, 2018, Moralea Milne, long-time Metchosin District Councillor and ardent advocate for the environment, passed away suddenly, to the profound sadness of all who knew her. Shortly after her memorial service at the Metchosin Municipal Grounds, which was attended by hundreds and officiated by Sc'ianew First Nation community leaders, an apt idea to honour her legacy germinated among some of her dearest friends: For a woman whose greatest passions included service to her community and the natural environment, the Garry oak meadow on the Municipal Grounds would be carefully restored, re-planted with native species and maintained in Moralea's memory.

The Metchosin Foundation has been honoured to support this worthy project since its inception. For the past two Spring seasons, this small Garry oak meadow has produced a glorious display of spring flowers. Seeds and plants bought with a grant from Pollinator Partnership Canada and those donated by Satinflower Nurseries have brought the promise of blossoms and happy bees for years to come.

The Metchosin Foundation remains committed to a sustaining role for Moralea's Meadow and we continue to be thankful for the diligent and faithful volunteers who provide the gift of their labour and all those who contribute funds to support this restoration and enhancement project.

As winter approaches, volunteers are cleaning up Moralea's Meadow; the invasive grasses are being removed or cut and preparations for new plantings have started.

In the almost five years since the restoration work began, much has been accomplished. Much also remains to be done. A beautiful 'Welcome' sign and the sign honouring Moralea's memory are both now installed and the walking path is finished.

Ongoing removal of invasive grasses is now part of annual maintenance plans. To document the progress of restoration and the beauty of native species that now call the Meadow home, a website is being planned which will be accessed by a link from the Metchosin Foundation's website.

You are welcome to participate at any time in the Meadow Project's weekly work parties, or to just visit the meadow and enjoy the changing seasons. You may even be inspired to plant native species in your own yard!

- Bev Hall

*Moralea's Meadow. Bev Hall photo.*



# Who We Are

## *Our Board of Directors*

The board of the Metchosin Foundation is comprised of residents of Metchosin who take part in regular governance, oversight, projects and volunteering in support of the Foundation's vision and mission. Our 2023-2024 directors are:

[Valerie Jaeger: President](#)

[Morgan Yates: Vice-President](#)

[Michel Desjardins: Treasurer](#)

[Bev Hall: Secretary](#)

[Jacqueline Clare: Director](#)

[Mike Fischer: Director](#)

[Chris Pratt: Director](#)

[Joan Rosenberg: Director](#)

[Carol Carman: Director](#)

[Heloise Nicholl: Director](#)

# Contact and Support

To contact us, please email:  
[contact@metchosinfoundation.ca](mailto:contact@metchosinfoundation.ca)

If you would like to support any of our initiatives, you may make a directed donation. Even small sums make a positive difference to our community. Every cent of each donation goes to support the intended project. Specify the initiative you'd like to support via comment, memo or email.

Donations made to the Metchosin Foundation General Fund will be gratefully received and directed to the area(s) of greatest current need. Donations are tax deductible.

Metchosin Foundation  
Registered Charity Number:  
81576 1556 RR0001

For more information about giving, please [view our donation page](#).



## *Vision*

Healthy lands and waters – the foundation  
for a healthy community.

## *Mission*

The Metchosin Foundation undertakes and  
supports initiatives to improve environmental  
protection, stewardship, and education.

