



## Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team

### Annual Highlights 2004 – 2005

#### Strategic Planning

- GOERT undertook an evaluation of fundraising techniques and initiated a fundraising campaign for Garry oak recovery work
- GOERT undertook a review of Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team organization, and implemented recommendations for a more effective delivery model

#### Outreach and Education (GOERT Secretariat only)

- Work undertaken was primarily: 1) to increase protection of priority sites; 2) to increase species at risk awareness; 3) to promote best management practices for land stewardship; and 4) to engage local governments and other specific target audiences in the protection of Garry oak ecosystems
- Overall, there were more than 30,000 outreach contacts stemming from the distribution of extension materials, field workshops, presentations, public and other meetings, a landowner contact program, via the GOERT display and website, electronic and print media, and other communication tools
- Improved GOERT website (>361,000 hits in 2004-2005)
- Prepared and distributed extension materials, delivered public education and information to target audiences. For example, 101 species at risk stewardship manuals and 682 packages of new species accounts for the manuals were distributed
- Consulted with First Nations and provided them with information to assist their Garry oak ecosystem restoration efforts (Cowichan, Tsartlip, Songhees)
- Worked with local governments to help develop/update bylaws to protect Garry oak trees and ecosystems: 2 more municipalities are strengthening protection through bylaw revisions
- Best stewardship practices were promoted more than 6,400 times: 109 stewardship manuals on invasive species and >1,100 copies of the *Decision Support Tool for Invasive Species in Garry Oak and Associated Ecosystems* were distributed
- Note: The above does not include the people contacted by volunteers and researchers, supporting NGOs, nor the reports and publications prepared by independent researchers

#### Site Securement

- GOERT identified, described and developed support for the protection of 14 critical Garry oak/species at risk habitats
- GOERT worked with NGOs, governments, developers and landowners to encourage protection and acquisition of priority Garry oak sites – Matson Lands and associated covenant (Esquimalt) secured by Nature Conservancy of Canada as a donation from Mandalay Development Ltd.
- GOERT continued work towards securement of 9 other priority sites, at various stages

#### Site Restoration and Management

- GOERT restored key areas by removing invasive species and/or re-introducing native species in the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve, Mt. Tzuhalem and Mt. Maxwell Ecological Reserves, Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area, Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary and at the Nanaimo/Cassidy Airport
- At least 11 species of invasive plants were removed. Seeds from 22 native plant species

were collected and propagated – thousands of native plants are being grown

- Approximately 15,300 native grass plugs and 600 native wildflower bulbs were planted in the Cowichan and Somenos protected areas. A four species native plant seed mixture was broadcast over an additional hectare at the Cowichan site
- Exclosures were created and monitored at Mt. Maxwell Ecological Reserve and within the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve to allow native plants to recover and to study impacts of herbivores
- GOERT managed/improved access to reduce recreational impacts. For example, trail building and directional signs were used at Christmas Hill to protect fragile areas
- GOERT partners undertook habitat restoration projects in Highrock Cairn, Glencoe Cove-Kwatsech, Helliwell, Sidney Spit, Galiano Bluffs, Uplands, Piper's Lagoon, Knockan Hill and Mill Hill parks; DND (Department of National Defence) Lands at CFB Esquimalt, Rocky Point, Mary Hill and Macaulay Point; Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, Government House, Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site and the National Gulf Islands National Park Reserve (more than 20 tonnes of invasive shrubs removed in this park alone)
- GOERT encouraged and worked with several school groups and academic institutions to restore Garry oak ecosystems (Campus View, Rogers, Royal Oak, and Vanier schools; Camosun College, University of Victoria, Trinity Western University)
- Management planning was initiated for Uplands, Mt. Tolmie and Beacon Hill Parks, at Rocky Point and at Christmas Hill
- With GOERT/HSP funding, landowner contact with neighbours of protected sites, and 12 stewardship agreements were implemented by the Nanaimo Area Land Trust at the Nanaimo Airport
- GOERT funded field monitoring and the installation of nesting boxes at several locations to encourage the return of western bluebirds. In spring, 9 western bluebirds were seen at the new nesting boxes at Rocky Point

### **Surveys and Monitoring**

- Surveys of plants at risk were completed in the Cowichan, Somenos and Christmas Hill protected areas and in the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve
- Management plan, GIS map and report on species at risk in progress for Christmas Hill
- Continued inventory/mapping of key Garry oak areas and associated vegetation communities. For example, vegetation inventory and monitoring occurred at the Cowichan and Somenos protected areas and within the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve
- Photo-point monitoring continued at the Mt. Tzuhalem Ecological Reserve, Cowichan and Somenos protected areas (at 14 locations established in previous years), Mill Hill Regional Park and others

### **Research and Development** (in collaboration with GOERT partners)

- Continued historical mapping of Garry oak distribution
- Continued the development of multi-species recovery strategies for Garry oak woodland, vernal pool and maritime meadow ecosystems, and for rigid apple moss
- Initiated development of a streaked horned lark and coastal vesper sparrow recovery strategy, and continued to develop a recovery strategy for the sharp-tailed snake
- Developed new species accounts for invasive species and species at risk stewardship manuals
- Held a Garry oak ecosystems research colloquium
- GOERT partners completed/continued/initiated research on: beetle diversity; rare butterfly ecology/diversity in relation to climate change, habitat loss/fragmentation and exotic shrub invasion; demography, propagation, genetic diversity of endangered plants; invasive shrub/herb ecology/control; fire history; indigenous ecological management; effects of mammalian herbivores and exotic plants on plant diversity; sharp-tailed snake, coastal vesper sparrow; and restoration strategies

## Some GOERT Products for 2004-2005

- Draft Recovery Strategies produced for Garry oak woodlands (Douglas & Smith), vernal pools (Miller), and maritime meadows (Maslovat & Fairbarns)
- Vegetation monitoring report for Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve (Douglas/Smith)
- Vegetation monitoring report for Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area (Maslovat)
- Survey of species at risk for Somenos (Roemer and Fairbarns)
- Coastal Vesper Sparrow Management Report, Nanaimo Airport (Beauchesne)
- Landowner stewardship information package about coastal vesper sparrow, Nanaimo Airport (Nanaimo Area Land Trust - NALT)
- 12 stewardship agreements for protection of coastal vesper sparrow (NALT)
- Draft GIS map of species at risk for Christmas Hill (Roemer)
- Draft Christmas Hill Management Plan (Beckwith)
- Four species accounts for species at risk stewardship manuals (Costanzo/WLAP and others)
- Five new draft annotated bibliographies and species accounts for the invasive species manual (Gorman, McCoy & Craig)
- Maps of current and historic distribution of Garry oak ecosystems for Nanaimo/Parksville and Cowichan/Salt Spring areas (Ted Lea/WLAP and contractors)
- Proceedings of Garry Oak Research Symposium, 23 presenting, 70 attending (Meagher)
- Briefing packages for 7 priority Garry oak ecosystems sites to protect (GOERT Outreach staff)
- Evaluation report for stewardship manuals (GOERT Outreach staff )
- PowerPoint presentations for target audience presentations (GOERT Outreach staff)
- GOERT standing display exhibited at 26 venues (GOERT Outreach staff)
- Reprinted GOERT brochures, 2534 distributed (GOERT Outreach staff)
- 9 newspaper articles, 7 television and radio interviews (GOERT Outreach staff and NALT)
- 361,000 website hits
- >100 representatives from 30 local government contacted regarding Garry oak ecosystems (GOERT Outreach staff)



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