



linking people to nature on Lasqueti
and surrounding islands

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Membership \$5.00 annually

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Unexpected guest at Squitty Bay Day

A group of us were sitting near the road at the Squitty Bay Day celebration when an unusual creature crawled out of the rocks and came toward us. The children were entranced and followed the little fellow as he made his way across the grass and disappeared into another pile of rocks. This was a Northwestern Alligator Lizard. Alligator Lizards are usually very secretive. They are more likely to run away and hide, but this one seemed calm and happy to be observed.

If they are caught, a lizard may release a smelly mix of feces and musk, bite, or even drop its tail. The dropped tail acts as a decoy, distracting the potential predator. The lizard then regenerates a new tail.

Alligator Lizards spend the winter hibernating in underground dens. When they emerge from the dens in spring, the mating chase begins. Male lizards don't have any kind of display. Instead, he chases a likely female, bites her head in his large jaws, and mates with her - sometimes for many hours! After mating, the young develop inside their mother's body. Come mid-August to mid-September, the pregnant females give birth to between 4 and 6 live young.

During the summer, most Alligator Lizards can be found basking in sunny areas or soaking up heat under warm rocks. Their main predators are snakes, shrikes, Red-tailed Hawks and house cats.

written by Sheila Ray

Northwestern Alligator Lizards munch on large insects such as beetles, caterpillars, and grasshoppers, as well as spiders, snails, scorpions, and millipedes. Obviously prey that bite and sting do not deter them!

Alligator Lizards commonly are associated with Douglas-fir and Hemlock forests. They use rocky outcrops, talus slopes and grassy openings scattered with debris such as logs and rocks for hibernating and basking - they cannot do without them. Luckily for them, these openings often are created through disturbances such as logging thus they are one of the more resilient reptile species in B.C.!



Alligator Lizard at Squitty Bay Day, photo Chris Whiting

This species is at the northern limit of its range, and likely is limited from living further north by the cold winters. Peripheral populations such as these are considered extremely important, however, as often they carry different genes than their more central relatives. This contributes to the diversity of the species.

Provincially, the species is yellow-listed, meaning it appears to be secure and not at risk of extinction. *information from www.bcreptiles.ca

Over 100 people came to Squitty Bay Day this year. Thank you to everyone who helped with this event: False Bay Provisions for their food donations, Bonnie, Dar and Wayne for the breakfast, Mikeke Miramba for the music, and Dana, Ken, Wayne and Miguel for their donations of time for the tours. Many thanks to our new members and donors who gave us their support on August 22, 2015.



Update on Mt. Trematon, by Gordon Scott

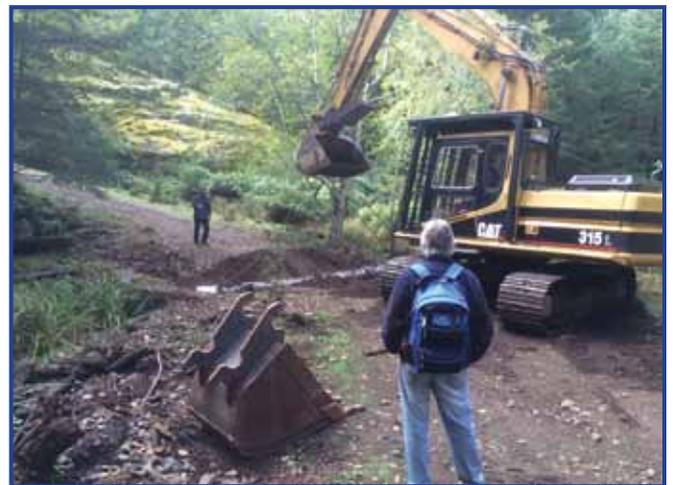
In late May of this year some neighbours to the west of Mt. Trematon Nature Reserve re-opened about 2,000 feet of abandoned road on the Nature Reserve property, without permission of the landowner, the Islands Trust Fund (ITF). The work damaged roadside drainage ditches, native vegetation, planted trees and Trematon Creek. A road was built across Trematon Creek and a culvert was incorrectly installed with the real potential to cause a dam-break flood during winter storm and threaten downstream properties. Soon after the work had begun Donald Gordon discovered the activity and notified LINC and ITF.

In 2005 Donald's father Alasdair Gordon bought the Mt. Trematon property because he loved to hike the mountain, and he wanted it to be open for islanders to enjoy. The Gordon family donated the Mt. Trematon property to the ITF to be protected as a nature reserve. Their intent was for the land to be conserved in a natural state, in perpetuity. ITF is the legal property owner and LINC and the Nanaimo and Area Land Trust (NALT) hold a conservation covenant on the land. By holding a conservation covenant LINC and NALT have a legal interest in the property and as a result are legally required to insure that the natural features, native vegetation, and ecological integrity of the Mt. Trematon Nature Reserve are protected from damage.

Over the years LINC, with many local volunteers, has helped plant and protect trees on previously logged areas, and more recently, we helped to build a trail for people to safely walk to the summit. LINC and NALT annually conduct a monitoring inspection of the property to insure there are no violations of the conservation covenant.

Mt. Trematon view (above) restoration work (below) photos G. Scott

On September 25th a crew of nine LINC volunteers along with Island Trust staff and contractors spent the day restoring road drainage systems, blocking vehicle access, removing the improperly installed culvert and restoring Trematon Creek to its natural course. The Island Trust Fund paid for a local excavator and operator along with a Registered Professional Biologist who supervised the stream restoration.



LINC would like to thank the Island Trust Fund for the diligence and attention they focused on this work, and to the contractors and volunteers who helped restore the Mt. Trematon Nature Reserve.

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