



## NEWS RELEASE

May 5, 2023

### RDN and NALT Honour Contributions of Late Parks Advocate

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) and the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust (NALT) honoured the contributions of the late Gail Adrienne with a trail naming and commemorative plaque on Mount Benson. 'Gail's Trail' recognizes her efforts as a long-time advocate for parks in our region, including those that led to the establishment of Mount Benson Regional Park. RDN and NALT representatives were joined for the trail renaming and plaque unveiling by Gail's son Andrew Simpson.

Gail was the founding executive director of NALT and focused much of her time and energy on community involvement and environmental conservation. With the support of the NALT Board, she brought together a wide range of community members and organizations to secure lands for a park on Mount Benson. She raised awareness among diverse interests across our community, including through a series of fundraising events. Gail's leadership, combined with the collaboration and support of the RDN and the community, made Mount Benson Regional Park a reality in 2008. The park now boasts 292 hectares of forested land along the upper northeast slopes of Mount Benson and includes the headwaters of Witchcraft and Westwood lakes and the Millstone and Chase rivers.

The trail dedication is a fitting tribute to her determination and love of nature that helped secure other RDN parks, including Nanaimo River Regional Park and Moorecroft Regional Park. For more than two decades, she worked to support, promote and protect the natural values of land and water in our region.

For information on Mount Benson Regional Park and other parks in the RDN, visit [rdn.bc.ca/parks-services](https://rdn.bc.ca/parks-services). For information about NALT, visit [nalt.bc.ca](https://nalt.bc.ca).

#### Quotes

"Mount Benson Regional Park is a gem within the RDN's parks system. Gail Adrienne's vision and commitment so many years ago led us here today, where we can enjoy the trails and spectacular views of Nanaimo to the Strait of Georgia. The RDN Board remains committed to working with NALT and other organizations in our community to secure and preserve at-risk ecosystems in our region."

*Vanessa Craig, RDN Chair*

"We are pleased the legacy of Gail Adrienne has been honoured in this very special and deserving way. She inspired many in our community to see the value in preserving our forests and making them accessible for all to enjoy. We are fortunate to have spectacular parks like Mount Benson that provide recreational opportunities and protect our natural assets."

*Erin Hemmens, RDN Director, Chair, Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee*

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“Gail Adrienne devoted her working life to including community in environmental stewardship initiatives. The acquisition of the Mount Benson Regional Park, in collaboration with the RDN, was achieved with the enthusiastic support of the community. It is a very fitting sentiment that thanks to Gail’s vision, we all get to enjoy the view from Mount Benson.”

*Paul Chapman, Executive Director, NALT*

“Throughout her life, my mother was passionate about enhancing the overall well-being of her community and advocating for positive change. Along with family and friends, I am deeply grateful that NALT and the RDN have created this fitting tribute to her commitment and service.”

*Andrew Simpson*

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