

# Reprint **Island Tides**

Visit [www.islandtides.com](http://www.islandtides.com) for more interesting articles on other BC, national & international topics

Reprint from Volume 20 Number 8

May 1, 2008

## **Community farm on Salt Spring becoming EcoReality**

EcoReality Sustainable Land Use and Education Cooperative on Salt Spring Island has agreed to purchase 37 acres of the former 100-acre Hughes Farm in Fulford Valley, 63 acres of which is to become community farmland.

The group hopes to collaborate with the Farmers' Institute in working the 63-acre community farmland site. 'We can complement the community farm-site with farmworker amenities, in an inclusive, community-minded manner, reuniting the entire 100 acre site for active, community-based agricultural use,' said EcoReality Communication Steward Jan Steinman.

Together with others in the greater Salt Spring community, members of EcoReality are in their fourth year of working toward this goal. 'This co-operative farm venture is the type of project many of us have been working towards for some time, and I hope the broader Salt Spring community will support it,' said Elizabeth White, of the Earth Festival Society.

This acquisition of the 37 acres split from the Hughes Farm is great news for the Salt Spring community,' said Dan Jason, of Salt Spring Seeds, who was instrumental in the 63-acre farmland donation. 'EcoReality has an expansive and extensive vision of what can happen on the reconnected 100 acres. This purchase adds immensely to the already exciting possibilities inherent in the land donation.'

Salt Spring's recently produced Area Farm Plan is an ongoing inspiration for EcoReality, which will implement many of the points of the plan. 'EcoReality's plans fit in well with the recommendations of the Area Farm Plan,' according to Anne Macey, project administrator for its steering committee.

Involving the greater Fulford Valley, community is a goal of EcoReality. 'This purchase and farm plan has the potential to keep one of the most beautiful, well-managed farms in the Gulf Islands intact and operating as a large, contiguous, organic farm unit,' said Gavin Johnston, a neighbour who will be working

together with EcoReality on managing his adjoining 83-acre parcel, 'That is why I am involved.'

Through co-operative ownership, affordable equity is another major goal of EcoReality. 'The average farmer can't afford farmland any longer,' according to Carol Wagner, EcoReality Finance Steward, 'The co-op allows people who couldn't normally afford it to get back on the land.'

Many of the ideas for the site have been influenced by the draft Official Community Plan. 'This land fills the expressed needs of the Salt Spring Island public for a human-scale community-within-a-community that will champion sustainable agriculture within the context of natural resource stewardship,' said EcoReality Ecology Steward, Shannon Cowan.

Learning and education will play a pivotal role at the new site. 'We seek to attract a group of people into an evolving learning process about community-based holistic living,' said Cowan.

EcoReality members include a UBC professor of agroecology and two certified Permaculture instructors. 'We plan to run many programs and workshops on the site to spread knowledge of organic farming and community living,' said EcoReality Program Steward, James Cowan.

Planned courses include a Permaculture Design Certificate course, fermentation and preserving, scything, lawns-to-food, local biofuel production, alternative energy systems, and natural building, as well as farming and gardening topics.

EcoReality has world-class friends in the sustainability movement whom they plan to bring to Salt Spring as instructors and workshop leaders. 'We have a broad range of talent that we hope to share with the greater community,' said Steinman.

EcoReality Co-op can be reached via their website: [www.EcoReality.org](http://www.EcoReality.org), or 250-537-2024. ✉

© Island Tides Publishing Ltd. This article may be reproduced with this attribution, in its entirety, with notification to Island Tides Publishing Ltd.

'This article was published (August 21, 2008) in 'Island Tides'. 'Island Tides' is an independent, regional newspaper distributing 17,500 print copies in throughout the Gulf Islands and the Canadian Strait of Georgia from Tsawwassen to Campbell River, BC.'

Island Tides, Box 55, Pender Island, BC, Canada.

Phone: 250-629-3660.

Fax: 250-629-3838.

Email: [islandtides@islandtides.com](mailto:islandtides@islandtides.com).

Website: <http://www.islandtides.com>