It's a dirty job but someone has to do it: an environmental contractor's perspective on restoring wetlands on an old golf course on Salt Spring Island

Presented by: Christopher Drake
BLACKBURN LAKE NATURE RESERVE
- purchased 2013
Blackburn Meadows Golf Club

- 9-hole organic

***no dogs
AS OF 2017, OVER 1.5 ACRES OF WETLAND AND UPLAND RESTORED
EXCAVATION

Photo Credit: Simon Henson
EXCAVATION

Photo credit: Simon Henson
Excavation

Photo credit: L Matthias
PLANTING AND FENCING

Wetland restoration volunteers extraordinaire!
>10,000 plants from 55 species
Photo from www.saltspringconservancy.ca

- Fences within fences – extreme deer pressure
MULCHING
INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL

- English Holly
- Scotch Broom
- Himalayan Blackberry
- Yellow-Flag Iris
- Reed-canary Grass
- and other Grasses
  - Thistle
  - Foxglove
  - Mullein
  - etc etc
Yellow-Flag Iris

Before

After
*Beavers and Bats*
- 8 bat spp – highest on island
New bat species recorded in Canada: Brazilian Free-tailed Bat (*Tadarida braziliensis*)
Northern Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora*)
Streambank restoration

USING ONLY WILLOW STAKES AND LEAF MULCH!
MAKING A LIVING AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRACTOR
FUTURE IS BRIGHT!.....BUT WHO ARE WE?

*Environmental contractors?

*Restorationists? Restorers?

*Property Stewards? Environmental Steward?

*Environmental/Biology Consultants?

*Green-necks?
How did I get here?

Graduated Secondary School – 1988
Diploma in Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Technology, Selkirk College, Castlegar BC – 1997
BSc in Environmental Biology, University of Alberta, Edmonton – 2004
MSc in Ecological Marine Management, Vrije Universiteit Bruxelles, Belgium – 2009

NOT THE STANDARD PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORY

• BUT: lots of other experiences that are helpful to being an environmental contractor:
  * construction  * treeplanting, silviculture  * Grateful Dead  
  * travelling  * volunteering  * technology and business training  * ski mountain and park work
Becoming an Environmental Contractor

FIND YOUR NICHE:
* Concentrate on relationships within your community
* Volunteer
* Stay true to your ideals
* Take courses – eg small business
* Go to conferences!
OTHER COAST ALIVE SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OF THE HIGHEST ECOLOGICAL QUALITY

**Invasive Plant Control and Restoration**  Controlling invasive species is our specialty. Coast Alive works in all weather conditions to complete **plant removal, soil remediation, and planting programs**.

**Other Environmental Stewardship Services**  **Wildlife habitat enhancement** is achieved through creating healthy landscapes that provide food, shelter, protection, and water.

**Wildfire hazard risk reduction** removes forest fire fuels while beautifying your property by opening up shaded and unproductive areas.

And **ecological research, from experiment design to data analysis**, lets property owners monitor the health of their land.

**Recreational Services - Trails, Campsites, Boardwalks, Etc**  Enjoy the beautiful features of your property in a low-impact manner. Coast Alive Services has extensive experience in **trail building and maintenance, campsite construction and campground maintenance, boardwalk construction** and more.

**Natural Landscaping and Gardening**  Completed projects include **rockwall terracing and patios, raised beds**, and pathways.

**About and Contact**
A Culture of Restoration: A Politics of Belonging

IS THE COOPERATIVE BUSINESS MODEL THE KEY? - pool resources, better security, ability to bid on larger projects – increase influence, make lasting change
THANKS, AND HAVE A GREAT CONFERENCE!
Some species-at-risk found at BLNR

- Blue Dasher
- Townsend’s Big-eared Bat
- Common Woodnymph
- Northern Pygmy-owl
- Barn Swallow
- Swamp Fingernail Clam