



BC MARINE TRAILS

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Sam Cutcliffe

Communications & Stewardship Coordinator

BC Marine Trails

(902) 213-3039

scutcliffe@bcmarinetrails.org

Nanose Bay, British Columbia — From April 11th to 14th of this year, a group of 24 BC Marine Trails (BCMT) volunteers worked tirelessly to clear invasive species from Gerald Island, in Nanose Bay — part of the BC Parks system. The project, which began in 2017, takes place semi-annually (in the spring and fall). Volunteers paddle to Gerald Island from various launch points in Nanose Bay, where tools are provided by BCMT for safe removal of target species.

Gerald Island is a BC Parks day-use site. Find out more [here](#).

The main species of concern for the project is English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) – originally introduced to a homestead on the island in the mid-twentieth century. After the homestead was abandoned and burned down, Ivy was able to spread across the island, suffocating the native coastal bluff ecosystem. This climbing vine overshadows and outcompetes native vegetation, spreads rapidly, and creates monoculture landscapes, which overtime diminish habitat diversity and ecosystem function. This species is capable of making trees more vulnerable to windfall and disease for example, by blocking sunlight from reaching leaves, adding excess weight to branches, and embedding itself into bark.

Over the four days, 670 volunteer hours were put towards the cause, removing and burning dozens and dozens of piles of English Ivy and invasive blackberry. Progress has been significant

since the project's inception in 2017, when Ivy extended nearly to the high tide line, towering several feet in the air. Now, our volunteers have worked their way 75 meters deep into the woods. Many trails are now passable, with interesting discoveries including a stone road, and chicken wire wrapped in Ivy — suggesting animals once lived alongside the homesteaders. The return of many native species where Ivy once grew — like Coastal Wood Fern and Camas Lilies — only further solidifies the importance of the work, and that one day we may free Gerald from the Ivy's grasp.

The project could not be completed without the help of BC Parks and our dedicated team of BCMT volunteers. Special thanks to the Trans Canada Trail for contributing to funding the event.

The next BCMT Gerald Island invasive species pull will take place in September, 2024.

Find photos of the spring 2024 event [here](#). All photos attributed to Sam Cutcliffe.