



Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage is a registered BC Society and an official BC Parks volunteer group, included in their federal charity status. FRPH volunteers coordinate with BC Parks and BC Heritage Branch, to assist them in looking after Ruckle farm's heritage and improving visitors' experience.

[www.friendsruckleparkheritage.ca](http://www.friendsruckleparkheritage.ca)  
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## 2022 FRPH Spring Newsletter

### Henry Ruckle's Farm is 150 years old this summer

**Displaced families, Old World and New** The industrial revolution and famine drove Henry Ruckle's German-heritage family from Ireland to Ontario when he was a boy, in the 1840s. Technology was making many people redundant on farms, no longer needed by landlords who could get richer still by using miraculous new machines to do the work of many poor tenant-farmers. In sweat shops, in quickly growing cities, other new machines needed human attendants to work 12-hour days, six days a week.

For those keen to keep farming, land in the New World could be bought for the price of hard work and a dollar or so an acre. Most, however, couldn't afford ship's passage to freedom. The U.K. solved this in 1834, when an amendment to the Poor Laws allowed churches to pay their fares, generously funded by overlords happy to clear their land of unwanted, lowly families who had worked the land for generations.

The Ruckles of Limerick hung on through the first years of the great Irish Potato Blight & Famine (1845-1852), then they escaped to Ontario, to purchase their own holding, which they quadrupled in a few years.

The original Indigenous owners had signed treaties and been removed to reserves, as great waves of British and European farmers made patchwork fields of Upper & Lower Canada, then the Canadian prairies.

The carving up of Salt Spring Island started in 1859, except no treaties ceding it had been signed.

In July 1872, Henry Ruckle landed at Beaver Point, likely brought by First-Nation paddlers in a dugout canoe, to scout for his first pre-emption claim, which he made in August. He didn't know that his new home on Salt Spring had been known as *TESNOEN* since time before memory. The population of its first inhabitants had fallen by more than 90 per cent, from smallpox and other ravages, limiting their ability to occupy and work their unceded territories.

Henry's farm thrived, built on tireless work, savvy expansions, and generous community building. By 1974, the family had sold it for a fraction of its value to the provincial government, to become one of B.C.'s most beloved parks and the only one with a working heritage farm.



*Henry Ruckle, 1870s*



**Mike and Marjorie Lane** have been the Ruckle family's long-time farm operators, working for the 200-acre farm from 1990 to 2018, then on behalf of BC Parks since.

They're keen to take the lead in celebrating the farm's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which is entirely fitting. FRPH will pitch in, with potential activities noted in this newsletter. Check out their website, a great introduction to the farm and their offerings:

<https://rucklefarmsaltspringisland.com/>

## Heritage is ...

*the full range of our inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture.*

*Heritage is, or should be, the subject of active public reflection, debate, and discussion.*

UMassAmherst Center for Heritage & Society

The word 'heritage' in "Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage" covers all of the human activities that have shaped the park's land and shores. The society's aim is to enhance visitors' experience of the range and depth of this inheritance. We operate in the public areas of the park, with access to the 1880s Henry Ruckle house and nearby barn.

We hope to raise the profile of First-Nation contributions, none of which are evident at Beaver Point/TESNOEN. Vestiges remain, in Indigenous memory and written records. Evidence points to the arable acres being a huge camas farm, with clam gardens in the bays. Archaeological finds make clear that the point was a significant crossroads and trading hub.



*left: a few of many Indigenous artifacts found and catalogued by Gwen Ruckle*



*Camassia quamash*

BC Parks, through its Minister of Environment & Climate Change Strategy, is now mandated to "Lead work with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation to reflect Indigenous peoples' history and cultures in provincial parks." Funding is available for approved projects.

## Three goals ... inputs needed



*Gwen Ruckle's intriguing painting, perhaps showing Henry's first small wood-frame house, left, in its original location, where a stone foundation remains; the building had likely been moved in the 1880s to become the kitchen, with its chimney visible in the painting, behind of the larger home to the right*

**To find out more about volunteer possibilities, see page 4 for contact information.**

1. **Our 2022 summer goal** is to help showcase Ruckle Heritage Farm, which has been vital to Salt Spring agricultural production for 150 years. FRPH could give tours of Henry Ruckle 1880s house, if we have enough **volunteers to help arrange the furnishings and artworks, plus take shifts hosting.**

The 64-page booklet, *Meet the Ruckles: A Family, a Farm, and a Spirit of Sharing* provides the basic information hosts will need.

2. **Our second summer goal** is to create a simple survey of Ruckle Park visitors, to get feedback about what heritage aspects they enjoy most and what else might enhance their experience and appreciation of Beaver Point/TESNOEN history and things to do and see..

**A volunteer with experience creating surveys and would be most appreciated.**

3. **One of our 2024 goals, when Ruckle Provincial Park's turn 50 years old**, is to invite hereditary First-Nation stewards to take the lead in renewing their presence in public areas of the park.

We have the good fortune to work with Craig Meding, BC Parks Indigenous Relations Advisor.



## Gwen Ruckle's farm tours

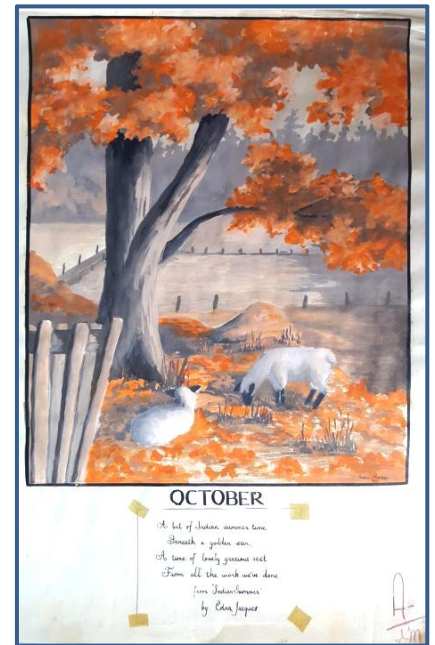
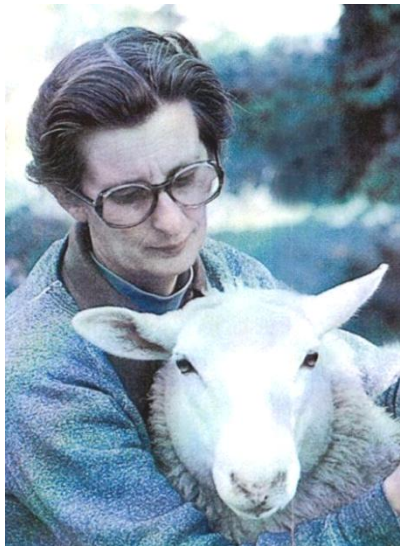
Fourth-generation Gwen Ruckle (1931-2006) was born in her great-grandparents' home, the oldest of the four Ruckle farmhouses.

Gwen loved the farm, her sheep, Beaver Point, and Salt Spring so much that she seldom left the island. She shared her love and knowledge by giving free public tours and slideshows on summer evenings, using the barn as her base.

Her slides, plus a few tapes of her tours, are being digitized to show and play this coming summer. Video interviews of Gwen and her mom, Lotus, will also be shared.

Stay tuned for dates, which will be advertised in local media and online.

*Gwen's life-long dedication to drawing and painting created a large, treasured collection that documents many decades of Ruckle farm and Salt Spring life.*



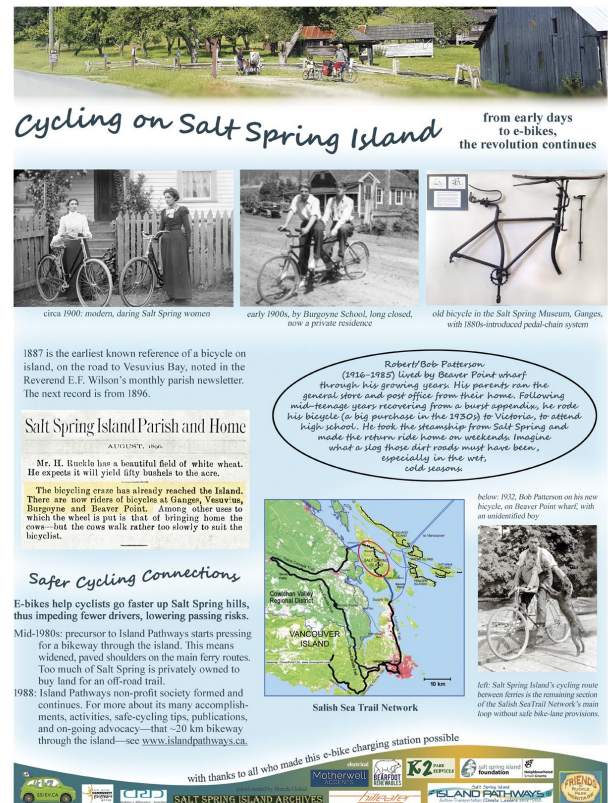
## Ruckle e-bike station and "Cycling on Salt Spring Island" poster

Three years ago, Island Pathways and FRPH kicked off the e-bike station idea with BC Parks. It took Ron Watts—career photographer and e-energy advocate—to get it done this past September. It's by the parking lot just up from the barn. There are two bike racks and four 120-volt plug-ins.

Ron gathered additional partners and shepherded it to conclusion. Big thanks to Ron, SSI Foundation Neighbourhood Small Grants, SSI EV Group, K2 Services, HillEater E-Bikes, Bearfoot Renewables and Motherwell Accents electrical contractors, CRD, Salt Spring Community Energy, Salt Spring Historical Society & Archives. Tom Vergelan printed the signs at a discount for nonprofits.

K2 Parks Services is paying the Hydro bills. A sub-meter was installed to monitor electricity use, which should be modest for e-bikes. If plug-in cars use the outlets, a pay system may have to be added. Let's hope not.

**This is the first e-bike charging station in a B.C. provincial park, so extra cheers for that!**



Check out the new interpretive sign, which has lots of tidbits about the history of cycling on Salt Spring and at Beaver Point, plus a map of the Salish Sea Trail Network, with just the Salt Spring section remaining to be completed.

*left: Ron Watts and the finished installation.*



Hearty thanks to Margaret O'Hara, retiring after three years as treasurer. Her astuteness and clarity in every aspect of her contributions is a marvel and most appreciated. Anyone interested in succeeding her, please contact us.

### Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage Society Financial Report January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021

Island Savings Bank Account			
Opening Balance January 1, 2021			\$ 939.95
Income	+	-	
Grants	\$4650.00		
Donations	347.73		
<i>Meet the Ruckles</i> booklet sales	<u>50.00</u>		
Interest			
Income Total		\$ 5047.73	
Expenses			
* Grant work		\$4746.84	
** Administration		<u>207.12</u>	
Expenses Total		\$ 4953.96	
Balance as of December 31, 2021			\$ 1033.72

\* Grant work expenses include payments for Henry Ruckle farmhouse restoration work, house supplies, and landscaping.

\*\* Administrative expenses were for bank cheques, Heritage BC & BC Society fees, postage, and advertising.

Park Enhancement Fund (PEF) account with BC Parks			
Opening Balance January 1, 2021			\$ 635.00
Income	\$ 0		
Expenses		\$ 0	
Balance as of December 31, 2021			\$635.00

We take PayPal and major credit cards  
for memberships and donations!

[www.friendsruckleparkheritage.ca](http://www.friendsruckleparkheritage.ca)



**To pay by e-transfer:** saltspringinfo@gmail.com, attention FRPH Society. Funds go into our Island Savings bank account.

**To pay by cheque or cash:** mail to Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage, 127 Heidi Place, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 1W5. **If paying by cheque and no tax receipt is required,** please make your cheque payable to FRIENDS OF RUCKLE PARK HERITAGE.

**To receive a tax receipt for donations or memberships of \$25+,** please pay by cheque made out to B.C. MINISTER OF FINANCE, noting on it "FOR PARK ENHANCEMENT FUND #2929315"

**Become a member of Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage for \$20 per year or \$50 for three years. Members receive newsletters and other updates.**

**To volunteer with FRPH, membership is required.**

**Contact us via our website form or call Brenda at 250-653-4722.**