



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
saltspringinfo@gmail.com

2019 FRPH Fall Newsletter

Lanes offered Ruckle Farm Contract

BC Parks has offered a 20-year contract to manage and operate Ruckle heritage farm to Mike and Marjorie Lane. Our congratulations!

The Lanes operated the farm for the Ruckle family for ~20 years prior to the passing of Helen Ruckle in 2018 June, at age 93, the last Ruckle with life-tenancy there. For more about Helen, see our previous newsletter, posted on our website.

Prior to that, Mike had worked as a farm hand there for 10 years. Since mid-2018, the Lanes have kept the farm going, providing valued continuity under permit from BC Parks.

The Ruckle Farm contract went out for bid this past June, with closing in early September. It was awarded to the best bid, not the lowest.

For such a significant, taxpayer-owned public asset, the Request for Proposals to manage and operate the farm had to be exceptionally detailed, thorough, and complex. The contract includes structures, requirements, and liabilities beyond the Ruckle family’s agreement with the Lanes.

The farm will continue as a working heritage operation, where “working” means that it can evolve and change, as all farms do, while staying true to its core, well-identified historic features and values.

Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage (FRPH) look forward to look working with the Lanes in the public-access areas and structures on the farm.

Media interest resulted in FRPH president, Brenda Guiled, speaking to a few reporters, a great opportunity to explain our mandate and, more importantly, to describe the Ruckle values and spirit that will continue to be a key part of the visitor-experience there.

The contract will be finalized 2020 January, with a 2021 January start date. Stay tuned for the next phases of the Ruckle Park working heritage farm.



Ruckle harvest by Gwen Ruckle

Salt Spring Island Foundation Grant



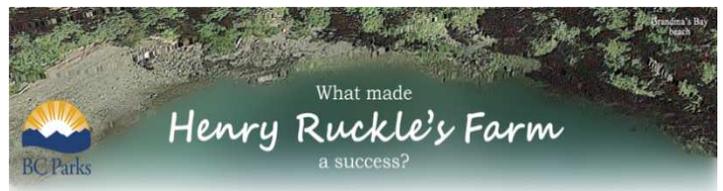
salt spring
island FOUNDATION
Connecting your giving with island needs

In June, the Salt Spring Foundation awarded Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage

a \$6,000 grant to create six new interpretive panels. Existing signage about what made the Ruckle farm such a long-time success and welcoming destination will be expanded considerably.

The content will be in keeping with the themes outlined in the “Ruckle Farm Heritage Conservation Plan”, for which FRPH received a \$10,000 grant last year to produce. See page 2.

The new panels will be mounted in the eight-panel kiosk near the barn. They will be completed by next spring. The signs they replace will continue to be displayed on site, in fitting locations.



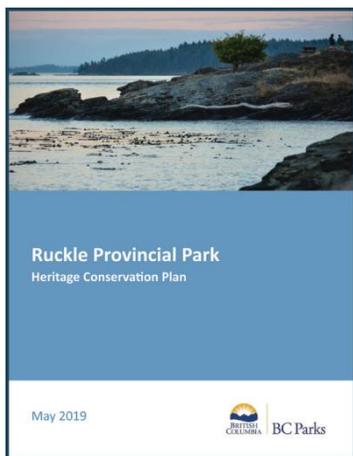
Ruckle Farm Heritage Conservation Management Plan

In 2018 June, the Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage received a \$10,000 grant from the BC Heritage Legacy Fund to create this important plan.

HERITAGE
Legacy Fund
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

We hired Heritageworks Ltd. of Victoria, BC, to do the work, and a labour of love it was. Principals Gord Macdonald and Ben Gourley put in many extra gratis hours to make sure this guide is exactly what BC Parks needs to conserve the essential elements of the farm that Salt Spring residents and visitors have come to cherish.

This past May, this vital report was completed and served to inform those bidding on the contract to manage and operate the farm the values and myriad complex details the winner must mind.



Henry Ruckle House Interior Work

BC Parks put \$11,000 last year into fixing the crumbling plaster and exposed lath throughout the main house that Henry had built in 1876, hiring Samuel Beddis and sons. They were good friends of the family and skilled carpenters who built Beaver Point School, now Little Red, in 1886. That same year, another friend and respected builder, Fred Raynes, added the Ella Anna's kitchen to the north side of house.

Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage volunteered to clear out and clean up Henry's house prior to the experts arrival, and we did the same this summer before the painters came in this fall to finish the downstairs walls — the first spiff up since the house was last lived in, in 1967.

Salt Spring's Snazzy Construction won the bid to do the work, cheers for a good job on a limited budget.



Colours of paint chosen were those adhering to the original plaster.



left: clearing clutter; middle left: bedroom before scraping & other prep'; right: after painting with Snazzy's Dalton Reid

What Next For Henry and Ella Anna's Home?

... Gordon and Lotus's home, as well, from 1930 to 1967.

The floor needs refinishing. The upstairs, with four bedrooms, needs painting. The kitchen interior could also use an inspection for needed repairs, then painting.

The goal, should it suit BC Parks plans, is to open the house as an interpretive and administrative centre. Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage can then provide volunteers to staff it and mount exhibits of historical and artistic interest, to keep the place lively with a sense of Ruckle family, farming, and community life at this hub of the farm.

Daniel Ruckle House and Grounds

Young Daniel (1884-1972) built his house in 1906-7, as did his brother Alfred, both to provide homes for their soon-to-be brides.

A few decades ago, FRPH volunteer Frances Havelaar helped Daniel's daughter Ella Anna, known as Nan, keep the surrounding flower beds in good shape. Her wish to help restore these impressive beds led to some days of weeding this spring with a new friend and FRPH member, Josephine/Josi Fletcher, met at Ruckle Farm Day in May.

Not long before, Josi got permission from BC Parks, as a FRPH volunteer, to make a painting of Daniel's house, more recently known as Helen's house, shown below. In dancing brush strokes, she's caught a sense of its long years as a lively family place

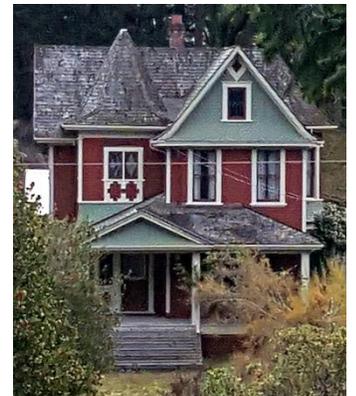
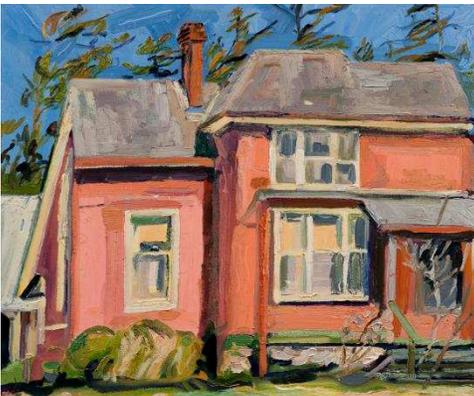
Josi and Fran spent numerous days together weeding, while Frances shared memories of things like Nan saying that every Easter, Daniel would buy paperwhites for the love of his life, Mary Patterson, known as Polly, for her to plant by the house.

*beneath the
weeds lie
lovely rock-
walled beds
and flowering
treasures;
Frances &
Josi*



This weeding will fall to the new operator and manager of the farm, which includes the Daniel, Alfred, and Norman houses.

BC Parks had Daniel's house painted this fall, matched to the unfaded dark brick-red colour found under the eaves. It's similar in colour to Alfred's house, below right (photos taken same day, same lighting).



“Mapped and Catalogued Heritage Plants at Helen/Daniel and Alfred Houses”



Gwen Ruckle, mid 1930s, likely in her mom's flower garden

In August, BC Parks published this survey of trees, shrubs, and flowers around the Daniel and Alfred Ruckle houses by three Goldstream Student Ranger Crew members: Eva Gribbon, Lisa Small, Hannah Nygren and Ben Mulchinock.

Other gardening work is possible for FRPH volunteers in the yard by Henry Ruckle's house, which remains accessible to the public, to walk around and look inside.

Lotus kept beautiful flower beds around her home, and it would be great to recreate them. Frances, Josi, and other FRPH member volunteers may continue this important work — with BC Parks blessing, of course, and the necessary sign-up forms in place.

Ruckle Farm Day, 2019 May 05

Friends of Ruckle Park Heritage had a table at this year's Ruckle Farm Day, a much-loved island tradition that Marjorie and Mike Lane have organized every spring for years. Our table sat next to the Salt Spring Historical Society's great display of Ruckle family and farm photographs, shown here.

visiting Ruckle kin, Dale Oakes, with her mom's sister, Aunt Lotus (1911-2010); photo by Harry Burton



Mike and Marjorie Lane, long-time Ruckle Farm managers and hosts of Ruckle Farm Days

Harry made a video of Lotus, among many dozens of "Salt Spring Character", a font of memories and in great, sharp wit for her 92 years: <http://characters.saltspringarchives.com/lotus-ruckle/>

Barn Repairs

The storm of 2018 December 20 hit the B.C. coast hard, especially Salt Spring Island. At one point, BC Hydro had 900 of its crew on island restoring power, midst too many fallen trees to count..



photo, left: Christian Tatonetti; right: Heritageworks



The Ruckle barn nearest the Henry house tore off in the tempest. On January 01, FRPH e-mailed Heritageworks about it (they had prepared the "Ruckle Provincial Park Heritage Conservation Plan", with detailed studies of all heritage buildings), the first they'd heard of the damage. Gord Macdonald rushed over the next day, on his own time and dime, to look it over, ensure minimal stability, and cover the hole with tarps.

In January and this spring, Heritageworks returned, hired by BC Parks, to further stabilize and protect the structure, shown above.

This October, BC Parks put out an Invitation to Quote for a contract to complete the structural repairs. The roof will be in a future contract.

The roof repairs have added significantly to BC Parks' Ruckle Park costs. Salt Spring is lucky that Parks has made a high priority of this one of 1000 provincial parks and reserves.



Ruckle barn, right, with tarped roof; the kiosk, middle left, will display the new interpretive panels; Henry's house beyond; far left, former Japanese workers' housing, converted to a pig pen in 1930

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 [saltspringinfo\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:saltspringinfo[at]gmail.com) or call Brenda at 250-653-4722.