NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Come to the Islands…

Explore more of British Columbia's balmy Gulf Islands online. Browse the Saltspring Market, learn about Coast Salish masks and Garry oak ecosystems and catch a ride on a B.C. ferry at: **www.canadiangeographic.ca/so06**

PROTECTING OUR NATIVES

Only about five percent of Garry oak ecosystems remain in their natural state, landing 91 of the approximately 350 species it supports on the province's list of species at risk, writes *Canadian Geographic* contributor Kathryn Carlson. "Most people think of this area as lush and full of greenery and for the most part, that's true," says Tim Ennis, director of land stewardship for the B.C. region at the Nature Conservancy of Canada. "But the east sides of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands can also be very dry because of the rainshadow climate caused by the mountains." Join Carlson as she explores this unique Mediterranean-like climate, an ideal growing environment for more plant species than any other terrestrial ecosystem in coastal B.C. and one of Canada's most at-risk natural habitats. Also, read a list of Canada's ecosystem hotspots.

MEANING BEHIND THE MASKS

"Our people relay things verbally," says Herb Rice, a member of the Coast Salish First Nations. "In order that the stories were not lost, people were acknowledged as witnesses to these stories, which were presented in a very dramatic and theatrical way." *CG* writer Kate Wallace speaks with Rice, a contemporary master carver based in Cowichan Bay, British Columbia, who uses both traditional and modern forms and designs in his masks, providing a continuum between land and man, past and present, and the physical and spiritual realms that are at the heart of Rice's culture. Also, find out how repatriation is closely related to ancestral land claims.

SALT OF THE EARTH

It is 8:00 a.m. on British Columbia's Saltspring Island and the Saturday market is coming alive. Busy vendors are unloading pick-ups and vans as they set up their booths. Gradually, the smell of fresh-baked bread and organic coffee mingles with the scent of the sea where it fronts on Centennial Park. "People can start a market anywhere, but if it grows organically and has as rich and long a history as ours, people can feel it," says market coordinator Matthew Coleman. Resident Roger Brunt takes us along as he gives us a taste of the creativity that blossoms in Saltspring's grassroots Saturday market. Also, see colourful photography by John Cameron and learn how the market has changed.

PLACE OF REFUGE

From Athabascans to ex-slaves, hippies to cultural misfits, follow a timeline of the islands' history of sanctuary. Also, discover a new refuge: Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

HOW TO NEGOTIATE B.C.'S FERRIES

Get the how-to on hopping on B.C.'s ferries, an intricate and ingrained system in coastal B.C. life and mentality. Also, find out why the enforcement of the federal government's bilge dumping law might be a waste of time.

PLUS

Win a prize in the Gulf Islands quiz, check out this month's cool collection of multimedia, get facts, books and resources on the Islands, and take a look at the Gulf Islands poster map.

For more information, contact: Tobi McIntyre, Online Editor
(613) 745-4629; mcintyre@canadiangeographic.ca
www.canadiangeographic.ca
39 McArthur Avenue Ottawa Ontario K1L 1A7 Tel: (613) 745-4629 Fax: (613) 744-0947