

June 16th (Saturday) Getting Around Salt Spring (GASS) Fair. Activities all day.

June 16th (Saturday) Transportation Forum, 7pm at Meaden Hall (The Legion).

June 17th (Sunday) Salt Spring Eco-Home Tour, 10am - 4pm. Visit 10 Eco-homes.

After the overwhelming success of the 2nd Eco-Home Tour and Sustainable Home Building Forum in 2006, the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, the Salt Spring Earth Festival Society, and I-SEA (Institute for Sustainability, Education and Action) are organizing the third Eco-Home Tour for Sunday, June 17th, preceded by a Getting Around Salt Spring Fair and Transportation Forum on Saturday, June 16th. Last year, 650 attended the Eco-home tour, and 250 attended the Sustainable Building Forum.

On Saturday, June 16, the first annual Getting around Salt Spring (GASS) Fair will be held in and around Ganges beginning at 10am. The fair is being organized by the Community Energy Strategy Task Force to raise local awareness of issues around energy conservation and efficient transportation alternatives. Plans for the day include workshops on bicycle tune-ups and maintenance. We'll be handing out information and tips for energy-efficient travel. A selection of lung-friendly, silent electric bikes and scooters will be available to test-ride. A free-for all demonstration of decorated, altered, and just-plain-weird bicycles will be part of an organized 'critical mass' ride through Ganges. On Saturday evening, the Transportation Forum will feature keynote speaker Todd Litman, founder and executive director of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute will talk about experiences that other communities have had in designing pedestrian and bicycle oriented communities and districts. To participate, please call Christine Atkinson at 537- 4400 or e-mail atkinsonchristine@hotmail.com.

On Sunday, June 17th, residents and visitors to Salt Spring can enjoy a day of guided tours to 10 unique ecological and sustainable homes. This year's tour will focus on what each person can do to reduce their energy use, and help turn the tide of climate change. As in previous years, participants are encouraged to adopt at least one idea from the tour. Homes focus on the actions the landowners have taken to reduce energy and resource use through such features as solar power, hemp straw bale walls, insulation, masonry heating, Energy Star appliances, water-catchment and grey water systems. Salt Spring has a reputation as a unique place where innovative individuals live among nature, but our reputation is growing as a community that is leading the way by embracing increased energy efficiency. Many homeowners that are concerned about sustainability have put their ideas into action by building homes that reflect their values. These passionate homeowners share their homes and their visions for a sustainable future with the public by guiding tour participants through their homes.

The homeowners, who in most cases built their own homes, will explain the many cutting edge features incorporated into the home designs. On the tour is an a masonry heater with built-in bake oven and plumbing for hot water, the island's first legally permitted cob dwelling which has walls made from sand, clay and straw, and insulation made from recycled blue jeans; a water catchment system; and a hemp straw bale home. Straw bale walls are highly insulative (up to R40) and sound proof. The homes are packed with ideas to reduce energy and water usage, and associated operating costs.

Tickets will be available May 17th at Salt Spring Books, the Salt Spring Island Conservancy office in the Upper Ganges Centre building, and Conservancy website: www.saltspringconservancy.ca. Tickets are \$25 each, or a carpooling group can buy 4 tickets for \$90. Discounts will also be available at the Conservancy office to drivers of hybrid, biodiesel and Smart cars, as well as cyclists. Carpooling and cycling are highly encouraged and the homes on the tour this year were selected for ease of access. You can also meet at Gulf Island Secondary School to park your car and form carpools at 9:00am. All proceeds go to support the Conservancy programs to educate schoolchildren, the public, and landowners about land stewardship and conservation. Volunteers are still needed and receive a ticket.

For more information, please call Karen Hudson at the Salt Spring Island Conservancy office at: 250-538-0318, by email: ssiconservancy@saltspring.com, or contact the Salt Spring Community Energy Strategy: Marion Pape 537-4567 or Elizabeth White 537-2616. <http://www.saltspringenergystrategy.org> has a wealth of information including a look at previous homes on the tour.