



Natural Legacy

Issue #26 Spring 2007

A newsletter on how The Nature Trust works to conserve BC's natural beauty



Vaseux Lake, South Okanagan

Vaseux Lake West

Thanks to the support of the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, the BC Trust for Public Lands and Nature Trust donors, a 44.5 hectare (110 acre) property on the west side of Vaseux Lake in the South Okanagan has been conserved.

The Nature Trust owns a network of properties in the immediate vicinity of Vaseux Lake. This new acquisition consists of open forest/grassland including Ponderosa pine-Bluebunch grass habitat and Antelope-brush. This property provides important

habitat for a number of threatened species, including California Bighorn Sheep, Gopher Snake, Yellow-bellied Racer, White-headed Woodpecker and Western Rattlesnake. It will help to ensure that spring and winter range remains available for ungulates in the South Okanagan and will provide habitat for an increasing population of resident bighorn sheep. The property also provides a wildlife corridor between the Vaseux Lake area and the White Lake Grasslands Protected Area.

Buttertubs Marsh

The Nanaimo Field Naturalists, the Nanaimo and Area Land Trust, City of Nanaimo and The Nature Trust are working on the acquisition of a .4 hectare (1 acre) parcel at Buttertubs. This will be accomplished with the support of the local community, North Growth Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment, Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, the Kaatza Foundation, the Nanaimo Community Foundation and the Federation of BC Naturalists Foundation.

Buttertubs Marsh, located in the centre of Nanaimo, is known to area residents as a haven for wildlife and a quiet place to stroll around the wetlands. A circular walking trail enables visitors to observe wildlife in this beautiful setting. The 18.7-hectare (46-acre) Buttertubs Marsh Conservation Area is owned by The Nature Trust of BC and managed through agreement with the Province of BC, the City of Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Field Naturalists.

Buttertubs Marsh, with a total area of approximately 40 hectares (100 acres), is the last large area of undeveloped land within a few kilometres of downtown. This wetland and floodplain wildlife habitat includes more than one kilometre of the Millstone River. Birds found in the marsh include Wood Ducks, Barred Owls, Red-winged Blackbirds, Marsh Wrens, Virginia Rails, Common Yellowthroats, and Willow Flycatchers. Several amphibian species as well as beavers, deer, muskrats, mink and river otters use the area.



Buttertubs Marsh, Vancouver Island

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From the Heart

By Andrew MacKay, Alexander Holburn Beaudin & Lang LLP

When you give to charity on an annual basis, you receive the charity's immediate gratitude and recognition, the spiritual satisfaction that you are doing something positive to help the people and world around us, and an income tax receipt. When you make a charitable gift from your estate, you know you will not live to see the bequest paid and put to good use, nor the thank you card or recognition plaque, but you hope that some part of you will live on for the rest of

“Planning a charitable gift can bring the family together”

us to enjoy for years to come. Making your most substantial gifts to charity through your will is popular because you know that you will not need your worldly goods any more, and the donation receipt will coincide with the increased burden of the deferred income taxes triggered by death on RRSP's, RRIF's, recreational property and investment portfolios. For couples, the donation can be timed in the will to coincide with the death of the surviving spouse so that the surviving spouse has all assets available for his or her support, and the donation tax credit becomes available when the majority of the taxes are due, after the death of the surviving spouse.



Francis Point, Sunshine Coast



Gravel Reach, Fraser River. (Photo: Chris Armstrong)

If you wish to be known by what you give rather than what you get in this life, then philanthropy is already part of your daily life. However, if you are not in a position during your lifetime to make a substantial donation, because you are afraid of outliving your wealth, then making a gift to charity in your will is a very unselfish way to give back to the people and the world around you some part of the life you enjoyed.

A charitable gift in your will can give recognition to your family by creating a perpetual endowment bearing your family's name, or you could commemorate a special person or place in your life with a gift in their name to a conservation based charity such as The Nature Trust of British Columbia. The charity is happy to recognize its donor's contribution and generosity in a way that is meaningful to the donor's family and friends. Planning a charitable gift can bring the family together in the selection of the appropriate cause, which reflects the family's values and aspirations. With a gift to The Nature Trust of British Columbia, that reflection may include a view of the mighty Fraser River or tranquil coastal wetlands where you and your loved ones once spent a sunny day.

Making a Difference in Conservation

Jim and Mary Borrowman of Stubbs Island Whale Watching have been gracious hosts for a number of tours from Telegraph Cove on northern Vancouver Island to support the work of The Nature Trust (see Thanksgiving Tour on page 5).

The Borrowmans had an essential role in the formation of the Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve where killer whales go to feed on salmon and rub on smooth pebble beaches. The Nature Trust acquired a key property

at the mouth of the Tsitika River in the middle of the reserve. This facilitated the expansion of the ecological reserve from a marine reserve to include adjacent land that has now been expanded to over 500 hectares (1,235 acres). The Borrowmans aid in the identification of killer whales, the creation of educational programs and an interpretive centre, the sponsorship of research and the development of policy to formalize wildlife viewing guidelines.



Jim and Mary Borrowman. (Photo: Peter Jucker)

Data Collection Team

From mid-April to mid-September, a new data collection team will be traveling to Vancouver Island, the East Kootenay and the South Okanagan to collect baseline ecological information on 25 to 30 Nature Trust properties. In subsequent years additional properties in these and other regions of BC will be reviewed.

The focus of the ecological data collection will be on the vegetation that occurs at specific points in each property. Plant species along with their physical characteristics will be measured. Other data will include sightings of fish and wildlife species, along with any indication that a species has been present on the property (e.g. nests, burrows, wildlife tree use). Geological landforms, permanent

natural features, and disturbances, such as fire, trails, roads, and buildings will also be recorded spatially.

This team is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Environment and The Nature Trust. The team will provide rigorous training and field experience for four candidates recruited under the BC Conservation Corps program under the supervision of The Nature Trust's Ecosystem Specialist and regional Conservation Land Managers. Team members will be encouraged to apply for potential employment opportunities with the BC Ministry of Environment, Canadian Wildlife Service or Fisheries and Oceans Canada after the season is completed.



Data collection at Rock Creek, South Okanagan

Vancouver Island Marmots Are Making a Comeback!

By Robert Huber

The Marmot Recovery Foundation has come a long way towards reaching its goal of restoring Canada's most endangered mammal, the Vancouver Island Marmot, back to sustainable levels in the wild. We have had significant successes the past three years in our captive breeding program and in our reintroduction efforts. We have effectively tripled the population of Vancouver Island Marmots from just over 70 when the Foundation was begun in 1998 to over 210 today.

Since 2004, 130 Vancouver Island Marmot pups were born in captivity while 27 pups were born in the wild. This higher than expected number of births has enabled us to accelerate our release effort; in 2006 we released 29 marmots back into their natural habitat from captivity. To date, we have released 57 marmots, with plans to release another 35 to 40 in 2007.

If we are to maintain this momentum, the challenge is to maintain our robust captive breeding program, manage reintroduction and limit the number of predations of Vancouver Island Marmots by predators.

We are grateful for the financial and other support we have received from a



Vancouver Island Marmot. (Photo: Oli Gardner) number of sources including The Nature Trust of BC, the Provincial Government, TimberWest Forestry Co., Weyerhaeuser and Island Timberlands, and from the public. We are also grateful to Mount Washington Alpine Resort for its donation of land on which the Tony Barrett Mount Washington Marmot Recovery Centre is built.

Without these contributions, the Vancouver Island Marmot would have almost certainly disappeared from the face of the earth, and we would all be the poorer for it. We ask that you continue to support this worthy effort until we return the marmot to sustainable levels in the wild once again.

Kudos for Corporate Support!

Thank you to Talisman Energy Inc. for generously donating \$15,000 a year for the next three years to The Nature Trust. This funding will help to support our Peace River Conservation Youth Crew. Talisman is an oil and gas company headquartered in Calgary that strongly supports activities in communities where it operates. Talisman joins BC Hydro and title sponsor HSBC Bank Canada in supporting this crew.



HSBC Bank Canada is providing \$2,000 in 2007 for showcasing Nature Trust conservation lands as part of the Science in Action Program designed to encourage school students to be more active while learning about the environment. This funding will cover the cost of educational field trips and hiring a naturalist to conduct tours.



THE NATURE TRUST

upcoming events

Brant Wildlife Festival 2007

For 16 years the Mid Island Wildlife Watch Society (MIWWS) has spearheaded the Brant Wildlife Festival in Parksville/Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island. The spring festival celebrates nature, particularly the return of the Black Brant as they rest on beaches mid-way between their wintering areas in Mexico and their nesting grounds in Alaska.

In recent years, MIWWS has been challenged to secure the financial and human resources necessary to operate the festival. In June 2006, MIWWS members dissolved the society and transferred the assets to The Nature Trust. A study has been commissioned by The Nature Trust and partners to assemble information necessary to create and maintain a successful festival. This year's festival will include eco tours and events as well as carving competitions.

For more information, visit www.brantfestival.bc.ca. To register, contact Robin Rivers 1-866-288-7878 ext. 226 or 604-924-9771 (in the Vancouver area) or e-mail rivers@naturetrust.bc.ca



Brant with bands. (Photo: Mike Yip)

The 17th Brant Festival Wildlife Woodcarving Competition and 10th Canadian Fish Carving Championship

Dates: March 31 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
April 1 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Parksville Community Centre

More than \$7000 in prize money and awards
For more information, visit www.thebrant.ca

Herring Spawn Tour

Date: Saturday, March 10
Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Description: Visit estuaries and learn about the amazing spawning cycle of the herring and the natural activity that surrounds it.
Guides: Birding expert Guy Monty and The Nature Trust's Tim Clermont
Cost: \$80 (including lunch)

Wildlife Photography Tour with Tony Markle

Date: Saturday, March 17
Time: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Description: Learn how to capture amazing wildlife images from an outstanding photographer.
Cost: \$80 (including lunch)

Seeking a Balance II Tour

Date: Saturday, March 31
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Description: Learn about the natural wonders of the Englishman River and Craig Creek. Be amazed by the diversity of wildlife and discuss the challenges of maintaining these conservation areas.
Guides: Birding expert Guy Monty and The Nature Trust's Tim Clermont
Cost: \$80 (including lunch)

Banding Birds Around the World with Rich Mooney

Date: Saturday, March 31
Time: 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Description: With fantastic photos and stories of his adventures, Rich Mooney will share his love of birds.
Cost: \$40 (including refreshments)

Big Day Birding

Date: Sunday, April 1
Time: 5 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Post-count gathering begins at 3:30 p.m.
Description: Register your team to count birds and join in this friendly competition for interesting prizes.
Cost: \$25 (including refreshments)

Learn to Bird with Guy Monty

Date: April 16-30
Time: 4 sessions each 2 to 3 hours long
Cost: \$50 for children, \$100 for adults

THE NATURE TRUST

upcoming events



35th Anniversary Celebrations

As a donor and conservation partner of The Nature Trust, we would like to invite you to our 35th Anniversary Regional Celebrations. These will be held:

March 31 in Parksville on Vancouver Island
May 1 in Fairmont in the East Kootenay
May 17 in Osoyoos in the South Okanagan
June in Williams Lake in the Central Interior

We would like to acknowledge corporate and individual donors for sponsoring these events. If you would like to attend, please call Janice Dixon at 1-866-288-7878 ext. 221 or 604-924-9771 (in the Vancouver area) or e-mail info@naturetrust.bc.ca

Festivals

The Nature Trust regional land managers will be leading tours at the Meadowlark Festival and Wings Over the Rockies Festival in May. Visit our website for more details.



Volunteer Day

Join us for the Boundary Bay Clean Up in Delta on June 9. Help remove debris from this ecologically sensitive area which supports many types of waterfowl and shorebirds during spring and fall migration. Spend a few hours to make a difference to the environment.

Visit our website for more details closer to the date.

Gala Dinner

A Gala fundraising dinner will be held in honour of Patrick Oswald Sr. for his dedication to making a difference in the lives of British Columbians at the Four Seasons Hotel in Vancouver on September 27. World-renowned singers Leon and Eric Bibb will perform.

For ticket information, visit our website, call Robin Rivers at 1-866-288-7878 ext. 226 or 604-924-9771 (in the Vancouver area).



Thanksgiving Tour

Stubbs Island Whale Watching is hosting a special Nature Trust tour October 6 to 8. Bring your family to celebrate at Telegraph Cove on northern Vancouver Island and learn all about marine mammals and birds.

See www.stubbs-island.com for more details closer to the date.



I want to acknowledge five amazing individuals who have made exceptional contributions to The Nature Trust and to conserving BC's natural beauty.

In honour of The Nature Trust's 35th anniversary a Conservation Champion Award has been established to acknowledge the voluntary contribution of individuals to the conservation of biodiversity in BC and specifically to the work of The Nature Trust. The first recipients are Kathy Stewart in the Fraser Valley and Winnie Bennie, Fred McMechan and Anna Roberts in Williams Lake.

Kathy Stewart is a naturalist and environmentalist who lives on the Harrison River. She has been involved with the Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival for several years and inspired others to participate. She has a passion for observing and photographing wildlife, especially birds, which has taken her to Nature Trust lands. To date Kathy has observed, identified and photographed 142 species.

Winnie Bennie was involved in many aspects of running the Scout Island Nature Centre and Nature House after the Williams Lake Naturalists took on



The Nature Trust's Deb Kennedy (on left) presents award to Kathy Stewart



The Nature Trust's Doug Walker (on left) presents trees to Dr. Bert Brink while Robert Falls of Econeutral looks on the job in 1976. She was on the inaugural Scout Island Nature Centre Committee and has been a tireless worker since then. She helped coordinate Sunday volunteers and organized plant sales. Winnie was always willing to get her hands dirty in any project.

Fred McMechan has been involved with the management and development of the Scout Island Nature Centre since 1976. He deals with Williams Lake City staff and council relating to the use of facilities within the Nature Centre property and assists with School District contacts and summer staff. Fred spends countless volunteer hours making sure the Nature Centre is operated to a high professional standard.

Anna Roberts has been involved with the Scout Island Nature Centre since its beginnings in 1976. She has developed first class displays in the Nature House and interpretation signs around the property. She put her talents into many grant applications for staff and also staff training over 30 years. Anna was instrumental in re-vegetating parts of the Nature Centre property.

Congratulations to these volunteers for their many years of service. They truly are Conservation Champions.

Dr. Vernon (Bert) Brink celebrated his 94th birthday in November with the presentation of three Douglas-fir seedlings. These seedlings represent 94 trees that will be planted by Econeutral in Dr. Brink's honour on conservation lands owned by The Nature Trust in

the Fraser Valley. Econeutral provides community-based climate mitigation and ecosystem restoration products, services, and solutions to the carbon offset and footprint neutral marketplaces.

Dr. Brink has dedicated his life to combining a love of science with a deep respect for the natural world. He studied Agronomy at UBC and earned a PhD in Botany and Biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin. He joined the Department of Agronomy at UBC as an instructor in 1939, becoming a full professor in 1951. Dr. Brink played a major role in the founding of the Federation of BC Naturalists. In 1973, he became a Director of The Nature Trust and is now a Director Emeritus.

I am honoured to have such dedicated people connected with The Nature Trust. Their commitment and support continue to encourage us as we strive to conserve BC's natural beauty.



Frances Vyse, Director of The Nature Trust (on left), presents awards to Winnie Bennie and Fred McMechan

Chilliwack Field Naturalist Revive Camp Slough

The Chilliwack Field Naturalists have been involved in ongoing habitat restoration on The Nature Trust Camp Slough property (Camp River Wildlife Area) in the Fraser Valley for 11 years. In the past six months, the naturalists have removed blackberries, cleaned up garbage, planted native trees and shrubs, and created two ponds.

Lee Larkin, Program Director for the Chilliwack Field Naturalists, reported:

We are delighted with the site. The conifer grove planted as a block from the blackberries on the slough is starting to take shape and their height is surpassing the blackberries. In other areas, where we planted a willow grove, the willows have overtaken the blackberries and the first native ferns are beginning to establish under the trees instead of blackberries and thistles. Over 600 plants were planted by 15 volunteers this fall. When we toured the site we



found two coyote dens along the bank of the slough, a heron, a large flock of bush tits and two barn owls.

The Chilliwack Field Naturalists are starting a “coffee cutters” work party that will take place the first Saturday of each month. We will meet at 9 a.m., work for 1.5 hours, maintaining the area

Chilliwack Field Naturalists prepare to plant around the cairn, picking up garbage and cutting blackberries. Afterwards, we will bird watch, look at the progress of the ponds and have a coffee.

Volunteers are welcome. Contact Lee or Denis by calling 604-858-5141 or by e-mailing bcwild@uniserve.com for more information.

The Nature Trust Rain Garden Fund

In our Fall 2006 newsletter, we introduced you to The Nature Trust Rain Garden Fund. Beginning in 2007 with income from an initial donation of \$100,000, the Fund will provide small grants for the installation of demonstration rain gardens in watersheds where The Nature Trust is actively involved in conservation efforts.

During this start-up phase, application for grants will be by *invitation* to selected Greater Vancouver streamkeeper groups. The Nature Trust, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, and the Pacific Streamkeepers Federation will work with local streamkeepers to choose a project or projects that combine high visibility and environmental benefits with ease and economy of coordination, installation and maintenance.

As we gain experience with rain gardens, applications will be opened to streamkeeper groups throughout British Columbia, and eventually to non-profit volunteer groups located in any watershed where The Nature Trust owns conservation properties or manages covenants.



Street runoff flows through an opening in the curb to a landscaped infiltration zone. What Exactly Is a Rain Garden?

A rain garden is any landscaping that receives rainwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as roofs, parking lots, driveways and streets. The garden filters out pollutants and slows down the runoff, allowing rainwater to soak into the ground and seep slowly into nearby streams, lakes or bays. Besides improving water quality, a rain garden can provide natural beauty and cooling shade, food and shelter for birds and other animals, and groundwater replenishment to supply thirsty trees and streams during dry spells.

A rain garden may be as simple as a few plants and rocks or as elaborate as a mini-ecosystem with a wide variety of native plant species. The possibilities are limited only by our imaginations and the need to prevent flooding of roads and structures.

Watch for updates and inspiration as our first projects are selected and installed in the autumn of this year!



Rain garden with plants and rocks



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THE NATURE TRUST *award winners*

I am deeply honoured and very grateful to be the 2006 recipient of the Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan Scholarship at the University of Victoria.

I began work on my PhD in January 2006 in collaboration with the Nisga'a of northern BC and under the supervision of Dr. Nancy Turner. The main goal of my research is to produce a complete ethnobotany of the Nisga'a First Nation in collaboration with Nisga'a elders and other knowledgeable Nisga'a practitioners. In the process of this research I will endeavour to identify areas where natural and human disturbances have destroyed habitat where important plants had traditionally been found. It is hoped that identification of such species will assist the Nisga'a in planning both cultural and ecological restoration.

I have read with admiration about the distinguished career of Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan and hope that my work will ultimately contribute in some way to his vision for the conservation of BC's natural resources.

Carla Burton, MSc



South Okanagan Land Manager Carl MacNaughton receiving South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program 2006 Recognition Award.

Are you part of a club or group that would be interested in learning more about The Nature Trust of British Columbia? We have visited secondary schools at the request of environmental clubs, met with Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, presented to business groups, and visited nature centres and naturalist groups. Call Deb Kennedy at 604-924-9771 ext. 231 for more details.

THE NATURE TRUST *donors*



Mario Rocca presenting Nature Trust Director Carmen Purdy with a cheque for \$6000 from the East Kootenay Wildlife Association for the Bull River property.



Caitlin Hill (standing, far right) with students from Pinetree Secondary School *I am a student at Pinetree Secondary School in Coquitlam. Recently while on summer vacation, I witnessed shoreline property on Okanagan Lake that I'd always thought beautiful and secret, torn up and turned into a housing development. This has inspired me and as a result I am interested in getting a group of students from my school involved in raising money to save BC land. Our goal is to raise \$1000 for the Heart of the Fraser through raffles, bake sales and other events.*

Caitlin Hill