



Adding the Last Piece

We Need Your Help to Save Rare Antelope-brush

The Nature Trust of BC is working to acquire 34.6 hectares (85 acres) to create the largest private holding of rare Antelope-brush habitat in the South Okanagan. Fifteen years in the making, this fourth and final phase of



the Antelope-brush Conservation Area project is underway.

Located at the south end of Vaseux Lake, between Okanagan Falls and Oliver, this acquisition along with The Nature Trust's adjoining property is home to more than 20 species at risk. Most notably, this land supports more

than half of the Canadian population of the Behr's Hairstreak butterfly.

Bighorn Sheep, Pallid Bat, Desert Night Snake, Great Basin Spadefoot and Lewis's Woodpecker are among other species at risk that are known to occur on these lands.

Securement of this property ensures the protection of important wildlife habitat and connectivity with other conservation areas for many species, providing greater opportunity for species to adjust to climate change.

Good things happen with time, patience and collaboration. We are very grateful to the many individuals and organizations that have helped with this project to date. Now we are reaching out to ask for your support

to add the last piece.

The Nature Trust has divided the property into 10 equal portions; our goal is to complete 3 portions early in 2015. With the commitment of a partial Ecological Gift donation by the landowners, along with committed funds from other agencies, we need to raise \$280,000 by March 31, 2015.

Please know every dollar helps.
We would be grateful to receive your donations online at www.naturetrust.bc.ca or by calling 1-866-288-7878 or by mailing a cheque to:

The Nature Trust of British Columbia
#260 – 1000 Roosevelt Crescent
North Vancouver, BC V7P 3R4



Dr. Geoff Scudder

Okanagan Antelope-brush

By Director Emeritus G.G.E. Scudder, CM, D.Phil., F.R.C.S.

The Antelope-brush ecosystem of the South Okanagan is one of the four most endangered ecosystems in Canada. Characterized by botanists as an Antelope-brush–Needle and Thread grass plant community, it is confined to elevations under 700 metres (2,300 feet). In Canada this occurs only in the South Okanagan and is classed as provincially endangered and Red-listed, and Globally Imperilled. It now occurs on less than 3300 hectares (8,150 acres).

Since 1800, over 68% of this ecosystem has been lost because of agricultural, urban and rural development. This ecosystem—that in Canada once extended as a continuous belt from around Kaleden in the north to the United States border in the south—is now highly fragmented. In 1990 less than 9% of what remained was judged as relatively undisturbed, while the rate of habitat loss of the last few years has been over 2% a year—a rate greater than the calculated loss of the world’s tropical rain forest. Much of what is left of the Antelope-brush ecosystem is in relatively poor condition and in early seral stages, having been impacted recently by excessive domestic livestock grazing, off-road recreation vehicle use and alien plant invasion.

Conservation of the Antelope-brush habitat in the South Okanagan is vital for the conservation of biological diversity in British Columbia because 22% of all endangered and threatened vertebrate species in the province are found here. It is also the habitat for over 72 rare and potentially endangered invertebrate species in BC. One of these is the Behr’s Hairstreak butterfly, with larvae that are obligate feeders on the leaves of the Antelope-brush. This butterfly, known only from the extreme Southern Okanagan valley, is now federally listed as threatened under the Species At Risk Act. Over the years, fellow entomologists have shown that the Antelope-brush property that The Nature Trust is currently working to acquire has one of the largest populations of the Behr’s Hairstreak in the valley. This alone makes the land invaluable.

Dr. Geoff Scudder is a retired UBC professor of entomology who has studied Behr’s Hairstreak butterflies.



Behr’s Hairstreak butterfly

Not only is the Antelope-brush property one with ecological significance but it, along with adjacent land, has been owned by the same family for the last 128 years.

“My family has owned a piece of property in the South Okanagan Valley of BC since 1886. For five generations, this land has remained in its natural state, described as the antelope-brush desert ecosystem. It is now some of the last remaining wilderness in this unique region.”

—Dylan Kennedy

“As a young child, my whole perception of life and the natural world was shaped by our land in the Okanagan.”

—Graeme Kennedy

“Our family roots run deep in this valley; we consider ourselves to be of this land, therefore it is our duty to protect and care for it.”

—Geordie Kennedy





Carleton MacNaughton at Kitsumkalum North property in the Skeena Region



Rob Neil surveying Kootenay conservation lands on horseback

Our Faces in Your Community

By Robin Rivers, The Nature Trust of BC Communications Manager

Every day The Nature Trust of BC is working to conserve critical habitat for wildlife, fish and plants in British Columbia. The first step is to acquire ecologically important private land. The next and equally critical is to care for this land. This is what we call land management and it involves habitat restoration, interpretive sign installation, site inspections, and access management.

We have four conservation land management staff based on Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, the Okanagan and the Kootenay. They are the faces of our organization in communities across BC. Together they have dedicated over 75 years of conservation service. Their responsibilities include developing land management plans, implementing stewardship and ecosystem restoration initiatives, fostering partnerships with other conservation organizations and involvement with a host of outreach activities. In addition, they oversee the summer Conservation Youth Crews.

In this issue, we would like to introduce two of our Conservation Land Managers: Carleton MacNaughton and Rob Neil.

Carleton MacNaughton is based in the Vancouver office and is the Interior & Coastal Mainland Conservation Land Manager. He oversees The Nature Trust of BC's holdings in the Lower Mainland, Cariboo, Omineca, Skeena, and Peace River regions of the province.

Originally from the southern Okanagan valley, Carleton is

an enthusiast of the great outdoors. "My grandparents were farmers, ranchers, orchardists and naturalists. I grew up in a rural area hiking, camping and learning about local plants and wildlife."

He has a Master of Science in Environment & Management from Royal Roads University in Victoria, where he also completed his Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, and an Environmental Technology Diploma from Camosun College. Carleton joined The Nature Trust of BC in 1998.

Together they have dedicated over 75 years of conservation service.

Rob Neil began his employment as The Nature Trust of BC's Kootenay Conservation Land Manager in 2003 and is based in Cranbrook. He is responsible for conservation holdings in the West and East Kootenays, including the largest property, the Hoodoos.

Rob is a Registered Professional Biologist with over 40 years of strategic and operational experience in fish, wildlife, forest and range habitat management.

Rob is an avid backcountry horseman and enjoys travelling into wild places of which the Kootenay region abounds. "I feel privileged to live and work in the Kootenays. Fortunately, I have had the unique opportunity to travel extensively throughout the world and have experienced and enjoyed some amazing vistas and wild adventures, but when I return home to the Kootenays I realize that this is also one of the special places on earth. My heart is here!"



The Nature Trust's McGillivray Slough property in the Lower Mainland

Recent Changes to BC's Estate Laws

By Andrew MacKay, Alexander, Holburn, Beaudin + Lang LLP

March 31, 2014 marked a major transition to new rules for the distribution of estate property in British Columbia. BC now has a comprehensive single statute—the *Wills, Estates and Succession Act* and new Court rules governing the process for proving the validity of a Will through probate and resolving estate disputes. The Act:

- clarifies who benefits if a person dies without a Will;
- gives Courts discretion to ensure a deceased person's last wishes are respected;
- clarifies inheritance of Nisga'a and Treaty First Nation lands;
- lowers the minimum age to make a Will from 19 to 16 years old; and
- consolidates many prior statutes that dealt with various estate planning matters, making it easier to find the applicable Rule. Some of the old rules that were rarely used were discarded.

The Act will be of interest to British Columbians although in many instances, no change will be needed to a pre-existing valid Will, designation of beneficiary or jointly owned property. It generally applies only to the estates of people who

died on or after March 31, 2014. For the probate rules, the new rules apply to any probate application made after March 31, 2014, regardless of when the death occurred.

The Act gives the Court a new discretion to give effect to a deceased person's wishes, even if a document was not validly made under the formalities governing the making of Wills. It also permits the Court

The new rules provide more procedural clarity and include more user friendly probate forms which should simplify and speed up the process.

to rectify mistakes, typographical errors and repair provisions in a Will. Prior to this the Court had very little power to rectify a mistake in a Will and no power to dispense with formalities.

A Will is no longer revoked by a subsequent marriage. Prior to March 31, 2014, some people who had married did not realize that the marriage automatically revoked a prior Will and this led to some unfortunate situations.

Under the new Act:

- debts secured against land or personal property are the responsibility of the recipient of the property under a Will.
- a beneficiary generally must survive the deceased for five days to receive the gift.

There is no longer a presumption that the younger survives the older. If joint owners die within five days of each other, the jointly owned property will be divided equally between the estates of the two joint owners. Prior to the Act, if joint owners died together, the younger was deemed to have survived the older, resulting in the younger owner's family receiving everything and the family of the older with nothing.

The law regarding variation of Wills continues with only minor changes. A spouse or child of the deceased Will maker has the right to apply to Court if the Will fails to make adequate provision.

The new probate rules provide more procedural clarity and include more user friendly probate forms which should simplify and speed up the estate probate process where the Will distribution is fairly simple and there is no dispute.



Leaving a Legacy for Nature

By Steve Housser, The Nature Trust of BC Leadership Giving

When making a Will, family is often top of the list of beneficiaries. But then we need to consider what other worthy causes we would like to support. I am writing to urge you to consider the cause of conservation when you are planning how to allocate your estate.

Natural habitat is disappearing at an alarming rate. As development pressures increase, we must increase efforts to protect our environment.

For nearly five decades The Nature Trust of British Columbia has been working successfully to preserve and protect important ecosystems across “Beautiful BC”. We are blessed by a rich and diverse collection of special properties. But as more wildlife habitat is threatened, we need to protect more land in its natural state.

By making a bequest in your Will to The Nature Trust of BC, you can help preserve critical habitat for plants, fish and wildlife so that future generations can enjoy the peace and beauty of nature undisturbed as well as the many benefits nature provides such as fresh water and clean air. There’s also a direct and significant tax benefit for your estate. As a registered charity, The Nature Trust of BC will issue a tax receipt for the full value of any bequest you make.

We recognize people who leave a bequest to The Nature Trust of BC as “Visionaries”. It signifies that you have a vision for the future that includes protecting and preserving natural habitat. What greater gift could there be for the plants and animals that will thrive in lands you help to save? And think of the possibilities you will create for generations to come to enjoy spectacular wilderness free from the threats of development.

Please become a Visionary and support the conservation efforts of The Nature Trust of BC.

The Nature Trust of BC is based in BC and all our funding stays in BC. Our volunteer Board of top business leaders and world-class scientists reflects our commitment to sound science and prudent business practices. The Nature Trust of BC has no debt and no mortgages.

A bequest to The Nature Trust of BC is a gift to nature for the future and forever.

To find out more about how you can become a Visionary or to receive a free bequest brochure, call our toll free number 1-866-288-7878 or e-mail shousser@naturetrust.bc.ca.

Bequests are a personal matter. We encourage you to visit a lawyer or notary before finalizing your Will.



Call To Nature

The sky, the earth,
And all between.
The sights, the sounds,
And scents not seen,
They clear the mind,
They soothe the soul,
They heal the spirit,
And make you whole.
God’s precious gift
Is always free,
And all I ask—
Come walk with me.

Janet Wright
1940-2012

A gift in a Will is a gift that keeps on giving. Janet Wright’s love of nature will live on through the work of The Nature Trust of BC.



Earth Wind Fire 2015

Join us on Saturday, June 20 at the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort in Kelowna for outstanding food served up by dazzling chefs, local wine and other beverages, and a fantastic selection of live and silent auction items. The night will kick off with a sparkling reception and jazz singer Anna Jacyszyn. Then you can enjoy chef and wine stations and later bid on a variety of items. Finally you can get on the dance floor. This fundraiser benefits the land conservation work of The Nature Trust of BC in the Okanagan.

Tickets are \$175 per person and reserved tables for 8 are \$1,400. Sponsor tables are also available: Earth table \$10,000; Wind table \$5,000; Fire table \$2,500. Tables of 10 are available upon request. For more information on how you can be a sponsor or to purchase tickets, e-mail jdrew@naturetrust.bc.ca or call toll free 1-866-288-7878.



Brant Wildlife Festival

The Nature Trust of BC is delighted to be coordinating the 25th Brant Wildlife Festival in March and April on Vancouver Island. Join us on March 7 to celebrate this special anniversary at the Quality Resort Bayside in Parksville. You can enjoy dinner, a silent auction and a nature photo display by the Oceanside Photographers. Tickets are \$30 per person and available from the Bayside or by calling 1-866-288-7878 or e-mailing rivers@naturetrust.bc.ca

The festival celebrates nature on mid-Vancouver Island, especially Brant geese as they stop to rest and feed during their migration to their northern nesting grounds. There are plenty of activities for all ages and interests including wildlife viewing, guest speakers and spring break activities.

The Nature Trust is coordinating the festival with help from the Arrowsmith Naturalists, BC Hydro, Beach Club Resort, City of Parksville, Lohn Foundation, VIU Deep Bay Marine Field Station, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, and other groups and volunteers.

www.brantfestival.bc.ca



Save the Date for Our Fall Gala!

Our Fall Gala will be held on Tuesday, October 6 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver with excellent food, presentations on our conservation projects and great auctions. Please contact Deb Kennedy to discuss sponsorship opportunities at 604-969-3249 or e-mail debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca



Kootenay Conservation Youth Crew installing fences using Tree Island wire



Okanagan Conservation Land Coordinator Nick Burdock receiving donation from Anette Engel

Tree Island's Generosity

Since 2006 Tree Island has been generously donating wire that is used in fencing on some of our conservation properties across the province. The fencing helps to keep livestock and vehicles from damaging fragile habitat. We greatly appreciate Tree Island providing this in-kind support year after year. Tree Island Steel is one of North America's largest producers of premium steel wire and wire products.

Giving is Sweet

Thanks to Maple Leaf Spirits in the Okanagan for asking patrons during the summer to donate to The Nature Trust of BC in lieu of tasting fees. Maple Leaf Spirits is recognized for producing award winning Artisan Spirits from 100% BC fruit and grapes. If you would like to help support our conservation work, call 1-866-288-7878 or e-mail debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca

Cherry Creek Champion

Len Hunt is an amazing volunteer who has dedicated countless hours over many years to The Nature Trust of BC's Cherry Creek property. Cherry Creek is located on the Kootenay River in the southeast corner of BC. It is a valuable waterfowl staging and nesting area. It also provides habitat for elk, white-tailed deer and a variety of other bird and mammal species.

Len began working on Cherry Creek in 1986 when the land was purchased by The Nature Trust. At first Len worked primarily with Carmen Purdy, Director Emeritus. Together they implemented a variety of projects that helped to restore the conservation values of the property.

Most recently Len assisted with a severe invasive weed problem that threatened to degrade forage for wildlife. Len generously spent many weeks cultivating and re-seeding the infested field to provide healthy habitat for wildlife, especially elk.

As Rob Neil, Kootenay Conservation Land Manager, says, "We salute you, Len. Thank you for your continued commitment, interest and admiration of this property."



Len in action on his trusty tractor

Celebrating Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan

Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan became a Director of The Nature Trust of BC in 1977 and was Director Emeritus when he died at the age of 99 in 2010. A graduate of the University of BC and the University of California at Berkeley, he was a pioneer of conservation.

As a Professor of Zoology at UBC, he established the first vertebrate zoology program in the country to study the biological basis of wildlife conservation. He inspired generations of academics, supervising the research of more than 100 graduate students.

He was a strong voice in convincing the Canadian government to hire professional wildlife biologists. As a public educator, he pioneered the use of television, bringing environmental science into the homes of Canadians through programs such as *Fur and Feathers*, *The Living Sea* and the award-winning *Web of Life* inspiring young people to become involved in conservation advocacy, teaching and research.

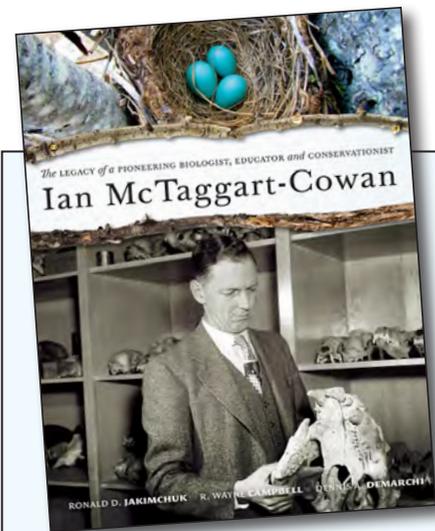
Ian was at the forefront of many environmental initiatives. He served on the National Research Council of Canada, the Environmental Council of Canada, the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and the Board of Governors of the Arctic Institute of North America.

In recognition of his accomplishments Ian received many awards including the Order of Canada and the Order of BC.

Several scholarships are named in his honour at BC universities, including the Dr. Ian and Joyce McTaggart-Cowan Scholarship in environmental sciences at the University of Victoria which The Nature Trust of BC sponsors. This year's recipient is Frances Stewart. Her PhD research focuses on assessing mammalian biodiversity in areas of high human footprint.

For those who would like to learn more about the extraordinary life of Ian McTaggart-Cowan and his legacy, there is a new book by Harbour Publishing entitled *Ian McTaggart-Cowan: The Legacy of a Pioneering Biologist, Educator and Conservationist*, edited by Wayne Campbell, Dennis A. Demarchi and Ronald D. Jakimchuk. With over 300 photographs, testimonials from those he mentored along with explanations of his major works and the theses of his students, this book is an invaluable resource. It is available at bookstores or online.

In recognition of Ian McTaggart-Cowan's legacy, a Wildlife Management Area was named in his honour in the Okanagan. If you would like to support conservation land management on The Nature Trust Skaha Lake property—which is part of the Wildlife Management Area—please consider a donation online at www.naturetrust.bc.ca or by calling toll free 1-866-288-7878.



You're invited to a book launch that will be held on March 7 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Beaty Biodiversity Museum on the UBC campus.



The Nature Trust
of British Columbia

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Winner of the 2015 Dr. Ian and Joyce McTaggart-Cowan Scholarship



Frances Stewart explains her research, "As human habitation and agriculture continue to expand into areas of prime habitat for biodiversity indicator species such as mesocarnivores (for example: fisher, marten, wolves, coyotes, fox), we not only change the landscape but also consider re-introducing species that may have left because of the change. This generates interesting questions, such as: How will human changes to the landscape influence the biodiversity and functioning of that ecosystem? Why are some re-introductions to altered landscapes successful, and others are not?"