



ANNUAL REPORT  2020
THE NATURE TRUST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

“In an increasingly unique and desirable global location, protecting BC’s biodiversity and species is more critical than it has ever been.”

– John West, Board Chair 2013-2015



Together for Nature

Dr. Sarah Otto, Chair of the Board

This was a year unlike any other. It was certainly not what I was expecting as chair of The Nature Trust of BC. I had hoped to meet many of you. However, in response to COVID-19 regulations, my travel plans were cancelled and our meetings and events became virtual. Despite the challenges, I am proud to report that The Nature Trust completed a banner year of land conservation achievements.

Protecting Critical Habitat and Saving Species

For 49 years, The Nature Trust has been protecting critical habitat for vulnerable wildlife, fish and plants in BC. We do this by acquiring private land by purchase or donation and then we care for this land. With the help of people like you, we have protected over 500 properties covering 178,000 acres (72,000 hectares).

The world has changed a lot since we were founded in 1971. Development, climate change and other forms of human impact are taking their toll on our natural world and more and more species are becoming endangered. What is not fully appreciated is the linkage between the health of our natural world and our human health.



“The truth is: the natural world is changing. And we are totally dependent on that world. It provides our food, water and air. It is the most precious thing we have and we need to defend it.”

– David Attenborough

One of the most important things we can do to protect species is to protect their habitat—the places where they eat, rest and raise their young. This is why we have made a commitment at The Nature Trust of BC to accelerate our land acquisition program.

In 2020, we acquired five properties. We purchased 35 acres (14 hectares) along the Salmon River on Vancouver Island to protect and restore forests and 963 acres (390 hectares) (the second phase of a three phase project) to protect 2,600 acres of rare grasslands near Princeton. And, we received three donated properties: Breton Island – Whitridge Reserve in the Salish Sea, Cowichan River – Gibbins Road on Vancouver Island and Marsden Face – Rixen Creek in the Kootenay. Each one of these properties provides habitat for at risk species like Roosevelt Elk, Williamson’s Sapsucker and Cutthroat Trout, as well as migratory birds, and more abundant species.

The Nature Trust of BC was pleased to receive two large grants and two small grants through the Government of Canada’s Natural Heritage Conservation Program in support of four of the above projects.



Caring for the Land

Acquiring land is only part of what we do. We make significant investments in caring for the land to ensure existing conservation values are maintained or enhanced. Some of 2020's land management highlights include:

- **Giving Youth an Opportunity**

This year our land management teams spent a considerable amount of time developing protocols to meet COVID-19 regulations. Although this meant starting our field season later than other years, we were able to hire our Conservation Youth Crews and complete important work on Nature Trust lands.

- **Enhancing Estuary Resilience**

Working under the British Columbia Salmon Restoration Innovation Fund, The Nature Trust worked with our First Nation partners and many scientific and academic organizations to install monitoring equipment and collect data in 15 estuaries along the east coast of Vancouver Island, central coast and Haida Gwaii. The primary focus of this study is to determine the impact of climate change on estuaries because estuaries are essential rearing areas for Pacific salmon.

- **On the Ground Work**

Our land management teams did a variety of tasks including busting broom on Savary Island, installing fencing in the Englishman River estuary, conducting clean up at Chilliwack River property, installing signs at Princeton Grasslands Phase I and increasing wildlife tree presence on the Big Ranch property.

- **Land Management Collector App**

Technology is a way to increase our effectiveness and efficiency. We are developing an app that provides mobile web maps to our field staff for property related data collection and for tracking management issues.



Engagement

Like many non-profits, we pivoted our annual in-person gala to a virtual event and online auction. Our team quickly learned about producing broadcast quality content and how to live stream. To our delight, over 200 people joined us for this special evening and helped us raise over \$390,000.

As I conclude my two-year term as Chair, I wish to thank our volunteer Board of scientists and business leaders for their guidance and advice, and our fantastic staff led by CEO Dr. Jasper Lament for their conservation and business expertise. It is my privilege to announce Emily Griffiths-Hamilton as incoming Chair as of June 2021. She is a professional accountant with experience on a variety of non-profit Boards.

Our success at The Nature Trust of BC depends on the support of many individuals and organizations. Thank you for your monthly gifts, annual gifts and future gifts in your will. I am also grateful for in-kind gifts, from stewardship work on our properties to auction gifts for our gala. Every donation counts. One hundred per cent of every donation stays in BC.

2021 is The Nature Trust of BC's 50th anniversary. I hope you will join me by including The Nature Trust in your philanthropic plans and please tell your family and friends about this great organization. Let's celebrate by leaving a lasting legacy to nature for generations to come.



The black dots on this map are The Nature Trust of BC's conservation land complexes.

The Nature Trust of BC's mandate is:

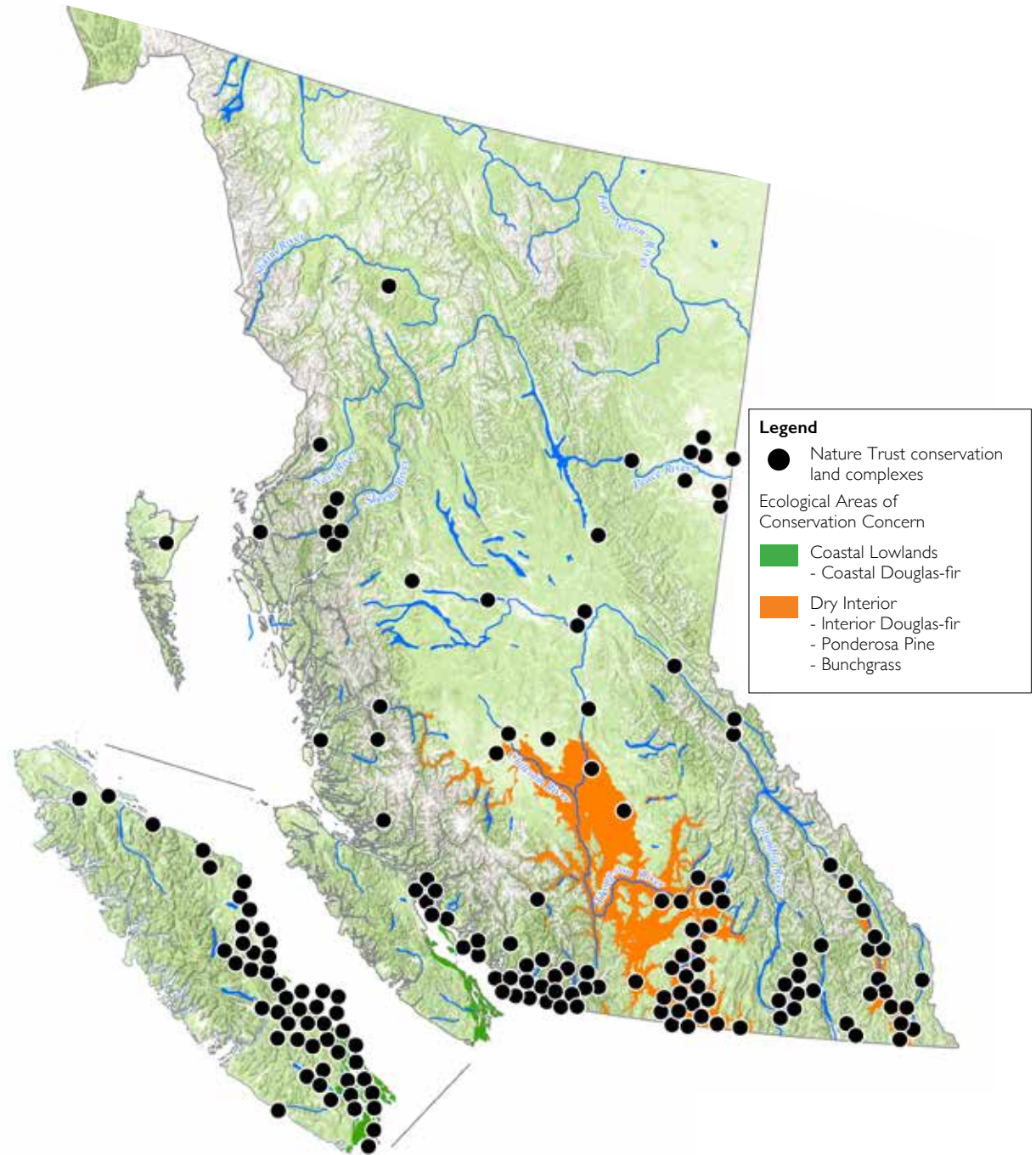
- to secure habitats of high biodiversity values and at greatest risk of being lost; and
- to manage conservation lands as part of landscapes to ensure ecosystem resilience and connectivity

Approximately 6% of the land base in BC is privately owned. This may seem like a small amount of land but there is a disproportionate number of species and ecosystems at risk in the low elevation areas such as valley bottoms and coastal lowlands. These areas are where most of the private land is located and where most people live.

This is where The Nature Trust plays a significant role by acquiring and managing private land for conservation. We work in partnership with other conservation organizations and various levels of government to put together land assemblages that will conserve functioning ecosystems and ecological processes.

The priority regions (or biogeoclimatic ecosystem classification zones) for The Nature Trust are:

- Coastal Douglas-fir - ranked exceptional/high
- Bunchgrass - ranked high
- Ponderosa Pine - ranked high
- Interior Douglas-fir - ranked high/medium





Salmon River Tidal Slough

The Nature Trust is protecting one of the most beautiful rivers in the province—one property at a time. In 2020, The Nature Trust protected a further 35 acres (14 hectares) on the western bank of the Salmon River, near Campbell River on Vancouver Island. This property will be added to the Salmon River Estuary complex and brings the total area conserved by The Nature Trust and partners to 937 acres (379 hectares) since 1978.

The new property consists of tidal sloughs and riparian areas following Hammond Creek as it winds its way to join the Salmon River estuary. This creek provides juvenile rearing habitat for Coho, Chinook and Chum salmon. Meanwhile, the complex provides vital habitat to some of BC's most iconic species, including Roosevelt Elk, Great Blue Heron, Western Screech Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, and recently Grizzly Bear.

“The Salmon River supports a rich diversity of fish and wildlife along with spectacular natural beauty. This Vancouver Island conservation treasure is both a tribute to The Nature Trust’s proud history and a wonderful gift to future generations.”

– Jasper Lament, CEO, The Nature Trust of BC



Grizzly Bear

This project was made possible thanks in part to the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada’s Nature Fund, the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, the Lightburn family, the Krogseth Foundation, the Campbell River Salmon Foundation and other supporters.



Princeton Grasslands

The Nature Trust nearly doubled the size of the Princeton Grasslands conservation complex in 2020, with the acquisition of Phase II: 963 acres (390 hectares) now called Princeton Grasslands – MapleCross Meadow Phase II. This complex protects a variety of habitats consisting predominately of rare grasslands along with forests, wetlands, ponds and riparian areas.

Grasslands support more threatened and endangered plants and animals than any other habitat type in the province. However, they have disappeared at an alarming rate due to urban development and other uses. Princeton Grasslands includes important habitat for the Williamson's Sapsucker, an endangered species with only 500 adult birds left in Canada, along with other birds like Barn Swallows, Olive-sided Flycatchers and Western Screech Owls.

This project has been made possible by the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada's Nature Fund, MapleCross, the Lightburn family, BC Conservation Foundation, the Atkinson and Hodgson families and other supporters.



Williamson's
Sapsucker



“This is a spectacular property due to its natural beauty, conservation values and size. Vast grasslands stretch to the horizon, clumps of trees dot the landscape and a creek winds through the property. Eagles soar overhead and Mule deer roam below. This is why we are working to protect this property.”

– Julian Zelazny, Director of Conservation Land Securement,
The Nature Trust of BC



Cowichan River – Gibbins Road

The Nature Trust was delighted to receive a donation of 36 acres (14.6 hectares) of forest and riparian corridor along the Cowichan River near Duncan, on Vancouver Island. For over 30 years, The Nature Trust of BC has worked with our partners to conserve 285 acres (116 hectares) on the Cowichan River.

Historically, the Cowichan River supported some of the largest spawning runs of Chinook salmon in the Georgia Basin, along with substantial runs of Coho and Chum salmon. The river also provides habitat for the Blue-listed Cutthroat Trout as well as Rainbow Trout and Steelhead. The Cowichan River – Gibbins Road property conserves sensitive riparian ecosystems along this river.

“Recognized as one of Canada’s 40 Heritage Rivers, the Cowichan River watershed has a rich natural and cultural history. By protecting additional land along the river, The Nature Trust of BC is not only helping to protect fish and wildlife habitat but is also contributing to the long-term vision of a healthy and resilient watershed for future generations.”

– Tom Reid, West Coast Conservation Land Manager,
The Nature Trust of BC



Peregrine Falcon

This property was donated to The Nature Trust of British Columbia under the Government of Canada’s Ecological Gifts Program. This program provides enhanced tax incentives for individuals or corporations who donate ecologically significant land. Thank you to the Kaatza Foundation for their generous donation to this project.

Marsden Face – Rixen Creek

Thirty years ago ten neighbours saw the land logged around Rixen Creek near their homes. They decided to take action to protect this watershed by purchasing the land together, planting 20,000 seedlings, and restoring what was once a wild space. With only six families left in the area, and growing older, they decided to donate the 80 acres (32 hectares) to The Nature Trust of BC, and conserve the forest forever.

The property supports a diversity of habitats including mature forest, meadows and an intact riparian corridor along Rixen Creek. This corridor is used by a variety of wildlife including Cougar, Bobcat, Black Bear, Mule Deer, and Moose. This property is also less than two kilometers away from The Nature Trust's 242-acre (98-hectare) Marsden Face property complex on the north side of Kootenay Lake. This conservation complex was created in 1994 to protect important wildlife habitat in the Kootenay.

This project was made possible by the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada's Nature Fund. This property was donated to The Nature Trust of British Columbia under the Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. This program provides enhanced tax incentives for individuals or corporations who donate ecologically significant land.



Cougar

“We like The Nature Trust’s approach to stewardship of the properties that they own and look forward to passing our property on to them. We feel as if we’ve found the right ‘family’ to move into our ‘home’.”

– Chris and Val Speed



Breton Island – Whitridge Reserve

Breton Island – Whitridge Reserve is a 12.6 acre (5 hectare) island located near the east coast of Quadra Island. The island has excellent conservation values because it has no existing structures or docks and supports thriving plant and bird populations. The property was donated to The Nature Trust of BC by four brothers of the Whitridge family who wanted the island to remain a wild space.

The property contains three sensitive ecosystems in a relatively natural state: mature coniferous forest, herbaceous rocky shoreline, and shallow marine area. By protecting the island, this acquisition will ensure the 1.2 km of coastal shoreline and approximately 22 acres (8.9 hectares) of shallow marine area surrounding the island will not be disturbed by infrastructure that could extend over or through it. The shallow marine area provides important habitat for sea ducks, shorebirds, seabirds, and other waterbirds, including four species listed under Canada's Species at Risk Act.

“I have fond memories of our whole family going there in those early days, staying in the Heriot Bay Inn and renting kayaks or a small outboard for the short trip to explore Breton during the day. I think all of us at one time or another have found it to be a magical and peaceful place to go for restoration and reflection.”

– Dave Whitridge



Common Murre

The Nature Trust of BC wishes to thank the Whitridge family for their generous gift. This project was made possible in part, by the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada's Nature Fund.



Conservation Youth Crews

Following COVID-19 health and safety protocols and enduring a shortened field season, our 2020 Conservation Youth Crews took on some big tasks in four regions of the province.

Each summer for the last 21 years The Nature Trust has hired college and university students for our crews. We train them in First Aid, Bear Aware, ecological principles and monitoring techniques, and safe use of equipment so they can help tackle a wide variety of conservation and management projects on Nature Trust properties on Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, the Okanagan and the Kootenay.

They gain skills such as how to use power tools, GIS technology, and the challenges of working outdoors. After they finish their education, many of them go on to careers in conservation and some have joined our staff.

The Nature Trust is grateful to Wheaton Precious Metals for title sponsorship this year. The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Canada Summer Jobs (Service Canada), Crew Energy, Chris Comborough, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Westminster Foundation, and The Tony Cartledge Fund also helped fund the 2020 crews.



The Jim Walker Conservation Crew Award

The 2019 Jim Walker Conservation Crew Award was presented to Amanda Wik and Savannah Shirley. The award recognizes and celebrates exceptional individuals from our Conservation Youth Crews and helps to develop the next generation of conservation leaders in BC.



Amanda's Story

It was mid-June of 2020 and the sun was shining especially bright after two months inside during a COVID-19 reality. This was my first day working on the Lower Mainland Conservation Youth Crew and the beginning of a summer of meaningful work, impactful new connections and happiness during an otherwise strange time.

Beginning a job in the field during a pandemic certainly had its challenges. The season started a month later than planned. Each day we entered the work truck with faces hidden by masks, and every task we had to consider social distancing and sanitizing the tools we regularly used.

But the reality of COVID-19 could not diminish how amazing it was for me to work on The Nature Trust of BC's Conservation Youth Crew. As an Environmental Scientist in-training with a passion for nature and conservation, working for an environmental non-profit like The Nature Trust of BC was my dream job. I was doing work that aligned with my values of conservation, for an organization whose mission I truly believed in. All while spending a glorious summer outside exploring the natural beauty of my home.

The work we did on a daily basis genuinely had an impact on the health of the ecosystems that The Nature Trust is protecting. We set up nesting boxes for the bountiful species of birds that thrive in these protected areas, added new plantings and removed invasive species so native plants could flourish. We also monitored the health of the ecosystem cycles on the properties. Even when we had more "unpleasant" tasks like removing an entire tree full of garbage, I knew what we were doing was important to the endurance of nature.

Working on the Conservation Youth Crews is a wonderful learning experience for students and budding conservationists, and I am happy to pass on the torch to the next group this summer. Meanwhile, I know that first day in June was only the beginning of my career conserving nature.



Enhancing Estuary Resilience

An estuary is where a river meets the ocean, acting as a transitional zone between freshwater and saltwater habitats. Estuaries and coastal wetlands comprise only 3% of BC's coastline but support more than 80% of BC's coastal fish and wildlife including critical habitat for Pacific salmon. As important as estuaries are to BC's coastal ecology, they are expected to be significantly impacted by climate change from sea-level rise, ocean acidification, changes in temperature and salinity, and more.

In response to the challenges estuaries will face with climate change, The Nature Trust of BC began a five-year project in 2019 to improve estuary habitat and enhance the long-term sustainability and health of wild BC Pacific salmon fish stocks. This project is possible thanks to funding from the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund and the help of our many partners, including coastal First Nations communities, environmental organizations and academic institutions that are integral to our success.

In the first phase of this project, estuary resilience to climate change will be assessed using the Marsh Resiliency to Sea-Level rise (MARS) tool for 15 sites on Vancouver Island, the central coast and Haida Gwaii. In the following years, The Nature Trust will deliver transformational projects that restore core natural estuarine processes in candidate sites. This process is designed to allow for informed decisions when it comes to management, conservation, restoration, and enhancement in estuaries impacted by climate change, while creating a future of resilient coastal ecosystems.



Badger Culverts in Columbia River Edgewater

Out of a hole in the dirt obscured by grass pokes a black furry snout, followed by the rectangular black and white striped head of an American Badger (*Taxidea taxus jeffersonii*).

Rare in BC and on both the Red-List and SARA Schedule I, sightings of these carnivorous mammals are a rare and joyous experience. The Nature Trust of BC was delighted to acquire the Columbia River Wetlands – Edgewater property in July 2019, where multiple badger sightings have occurred. The American Badger Habitat Capability Model (Kinley et al. 2013) identifies that 41% of this property has very high capability to support the American Badger, making this acquisition a chance to save land for badgers. Connected to a larger conservation complex of grasslands, forests and wetlands, the property also acts as a wildlife corridor in the Columbia Valley, helping to secure important habitat linkages for critters like badgers.

With the unexpected help of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), Columbia River Wetlands – Edgewater has become an even safer home for these badgers. The property is bisected by Highway 95, creating a disconnect between the two sides and endangering animals migrating across. According to the American Badger Recovery Strategy (Messick 1987), road mortality on highways is the single leading cause of death for badgers in BC. Recently, MOTI found a solution to prevent badgers from being harmed in such a way on the Columbia River Wetlands – Edgewater property.

“This is a great example of MOTI recognizing an opportunity to help provide safe passage to American Badgers on our newly acquired conservation property. With the danger from road mortality, it’s great that the Province is taking a leadership role in initiatives like this, which can help conserve BC’s badger populations.”

– Chris Bosman, Kootenay Conservation Land Manager,
The Nature Trust of BC

MOTI was undertaking a road resurfacing project on the highway through Columbia River Wetlands – Edgewater. Duane Wells, the Regional Manager of Environmental Services, Engineering Section, contacted The Nature Trust after seeing a news release on saving land for badgers. Showing incredible proactive thinking, they offered to install two dry culverts as part of the Highway 95 project, linking both sides of the property. The Nature Trust and MOTI staff worked to identify the locations and two 800 mm culverts were installed, located at ground level to give badgers a safe alternative to crossing over the highway.



Yellow Flag Iris: Attractive but Invasive

Yellow Flag Iris is a popular choice for ponds and water gardens. However, this water-loving plant can cause serious damage to natural waterways and ecosystems. It creates monocultures and dense root systems that interrupt natural water systems and outcompete native wetland species reducing habitat for birds, fish and other wildlife.

In fall of 2020, The Nature Trust of BC with funding support from the South Okanagan Conservation Fund hosted a technology transfer workshop to demonstrate Yellow Flag Iris control techniques at Vaseux Lake.

Agrologist Dr. Catherine Tarasoff led the workshop. Her research has focused on Yellow Flag Iris and her findings show that the plant is stress tolerant and will not stop growing under stress. However, Yellow Flag releases a toxic gas when growing. Therefore, if a patch is cut and covered with a benthic or aquatic barrier then left for 4-12 months, the plant will eradicate itself. Once the barriers are removed the native plants will begin to thrive and recolonize.



Virtual Gala 2020

When we decided to host a virtual event this year instead of our traditional gala, we were entering uncharted territory.

There were a lot of changes with the 2020 gala, but what didn't change was the support of our wonderful community. Conservation takes a community and we feel so lucky that ours has stood by us through this difficult year.

Thank you for joining us for our virtual fall gala, Together for Nature. We celebrated the accomplishments of The Nature Trust of BC, and raised funds to keep nature in our future.

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In 2020 we secured \$4,606,000 in property holdings and spent a further \$1,717,000 on land management. This would not have been possible without the generous financial support of our donors and partners who contributed \$7,362,000 to The Nature Trust of British Columbia during the year.

We were also able to increase our net assets by \$7,973,000, while contributing \$930,000 to our land management fund.

Summarized Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2020 and 2019	2020	2019
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Cash and receivables	2,163,000	2,124,000
Investments	38,631,000	32,378,000
Capital assets	112,000	123,000
Properties	110,742,000	106,136,000
	151,648,000	140,761,000
LIABILITIES		
Current	102,000	114,000
Deferred revenue	8,306,000	5,380,000
Net Assets	143,240,000	135,267,000
	151,648,000	140,761,000
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	7,973,000	8,790,000

This statement has been derived from the complete audited financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019.



Cliff Jackman: A Dear Friend

by Deb Kennedy

In January, we lost a champion of land conservation in BC and I lost a dear friend. Cliff Jackman and I enjoyed many wonderful visits by phone or at his home over the past 17 years. He was someone who reminded me why I love working at The Nature Trust of BC.

Sitting in his living room, surrounded by his collection of taxidermy birds, Cliff told great, funny stories. A favourite subject was his dog Brant, the last of his black labs. Getting a puppy at his age may have not been the best decision, Cliff would say, but he could never disguise how much he cherished his four legged buddy. Brant brought him the kind of companionship that only a faithful canine can, and a whole lot of exuberance which sometimes had unexpected consequences for his guests. Once, when Nature Trust CEO Jasper Lament visited Cliff he had to leave in his stocking feet – the appeal of Jasper’s new rubber boots having been too much for Brant who chewed up one boot and hid the other.

Having spent most of his working years as a land surveyor, Cliff was passionate about his land. He knew every inch of his 50 acre property from the secondary growth forest and the ponds that he built for the ducks to the vegetable garden and fruit trees he tended with such care. He took incredible pride in sharing his harvest and what he didn’t give away, he stored for the lean winter months.

Cliff lived simply and made some astute investments. As he would tell me, “I am not a rich man but I have done well and I want to do good where I can.” He cared deeply about his community and nature and supported more than 30 charities, including The Nature Trust of BC. Cliff supported Nature Trust acquisitions like the Salmon River on Vancouver Island to protect all five species of Pacific salmon and the Wigwam Flats in the Elk Valley to provide habitat for iconic Bighorn sheep.

Cliff put significant thought into writing his will, and the distribution of his assets. He wanted his legacy to embody his life’s priorities and he worked with his lawyer to include the land, his community and the natural world around him. The Nature Trust of BC is honoured to be a beneficiary in Cliff’s will and to continue our land conservation work in his memory.

And I will carry on helping our donors to keep nature in our future, as Cliff would want me to do.



Estates

J. Nancy Braithwaite
 Fritz Durst
 Daphne Green
 Marjorie Mealing Greene
 Doris Hilda Hunter
 Cliff Jackman
 John Keats
 Michael LeGeyt
 John Charles Lyons
 George & Patricia Mealing
 Frederick Wallingford Whitridge

In Memory

Michael Allen	Dave Farris	George Lea	Fred (Ferdinand) Rosenberg
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Patrick Dalton	Bradie Dylan Jones	Jack Pate	Waldo Yule
Philip Dunsmore	David Ivan Kreller	Lesley Pratt	
James Heighton Dwyer	Fern Lachance	Stephen Lee Raskewicz	



Each year, The Nature Trust recognizes the individuals, businesses, foundations, community groups, First Nations, and governments who donate time and funds and make our work possible. Donors who are members of both the Arbutus and Douglas Fir Circles are recognized in the Douglas Fir list.

Arbutus Circle

The Arbutus Circle recognizes donors who supported us through monthly donations in 2020.

Rick & Libby Avis

Peter & Shirley Ballin

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Douglas Fir Circle Individuals

Donors who give regularly offer us the encouragement and financial support to continue our leadership in conserving critical habitat in BC. The Douglas Fir Circle recognizes donors who have supported us for 10 years or more and made a donation in 2020.

Cathryn Abbott & Scott Gilmore	Louis & Edith Davidson	Catharine Herb-Kelly	Lorna Mays	Doris Schuh
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