

# THE NATURE TRUST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Flights of Nature





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Rufous Hummingbird



Dragonfly

This Annual Report titled *Flights of Nature* is a tribute to the magnificent wildlife in our skies and highlights the accomplishments of The Nature Trust of BC.

Living in British Columbia, we recognize that nature plays an important role in our lives. Nature is under increasing pressure from population growth, development and climate change. Conserving critical habitat is the single most important thing we can do to protect wildlife such as birds and insects like the Behr's Hairstreak butterfly on the cover. This is what The Nature Trust of BC does and why I have been privileged to serve as Chair for the past two years.

In 2014, we made solid progress on our strategic objectives in the areas of securement, land management, conservation science and business operations.

One of the pleasures of this business is helping people create conservation legacies. We made one family's wish come true by completing a project in the Kootenays that we have been working on for many years. We are also working with families in the South Okanagan and on Vancouver Island on long-term projects to add properties to existing conservation land complexes.

Our land management team continued to care for our land and engage with local communities. We recognize that owning conservation land comes with a significant responsibility and we have worked

## letter from the chair a year in review

100% BC focused and all dollars stay in BC





## vision

British Columbia's rich and diverse natural habitats are conserved for future generations

## mission

The Nature Trust of British Columbia conserves the province's biological diversity through the securement and management of ecologically significant lands for plants, wildlife and people.

diligently and effectively during the past year to meet this obligation. We were very pleased to once again give young people the opportunity to learn first-hand about land conservation by participating in our Conservation Youth Crew program. And we worked with many wonderful stewardship groups across the province to enhance the habitat on our properties.

For the past 44 years, The Nature Trust has been committed to land conservation excellence through sound science and sound business. This year, we developed an ecological assessment tool to enhance our decision making for property securement. Through the use of technology, this tool has significantly improved our ability to compare properties' ecological values and in the process has dramatically reduced the time required to compile the data.

As an organization that places a high priority on operating in a fiscally responsible manner, we require a land management endowment in order to purchase a property. We carry no debt and no mortgages and undertake yearly audits. We have an investment and finance committee which sets policies and reviews quarterly performance.

Our events in Victoria, Kelowna and Vancouver provided a great opportunity to meet many of you and speak about the work of The Nature Trust of BC, in addition to sharing many memorable moments.

The success of this organization depends on the generosity of many individuals and organizations for which we are very grateful. As an organization dedicated to BC, every dollar raised is spent here. And every dollar is important from designated gifts for projects to annual undesignated gifts for operation. We have been especially touched by those who have honoured us with a gift in their will.

As I conclude my role as Chair for The Nature Trust of BC, I would like to thank our staff for their dedication and our Board and Advisory Board for their thoughtful guidance over the past two years. Together we are ensuring British Columbia remains a place where our children will continue to experience the amazing diversity of life in our skies.

John West, Chair of the Board





*"We believe we have a social responsibility to give back to our community and are continually looking for new opportunities to do so. We are pleased to be able to support The Nature Trust as a company that believes strongly in the environment and preserving our beautiful province!"*

*—Jeremy Miller, Houston Landscapes*

Green Heron

# nature trust properties

The Nature Trust of BC's mandate is to:

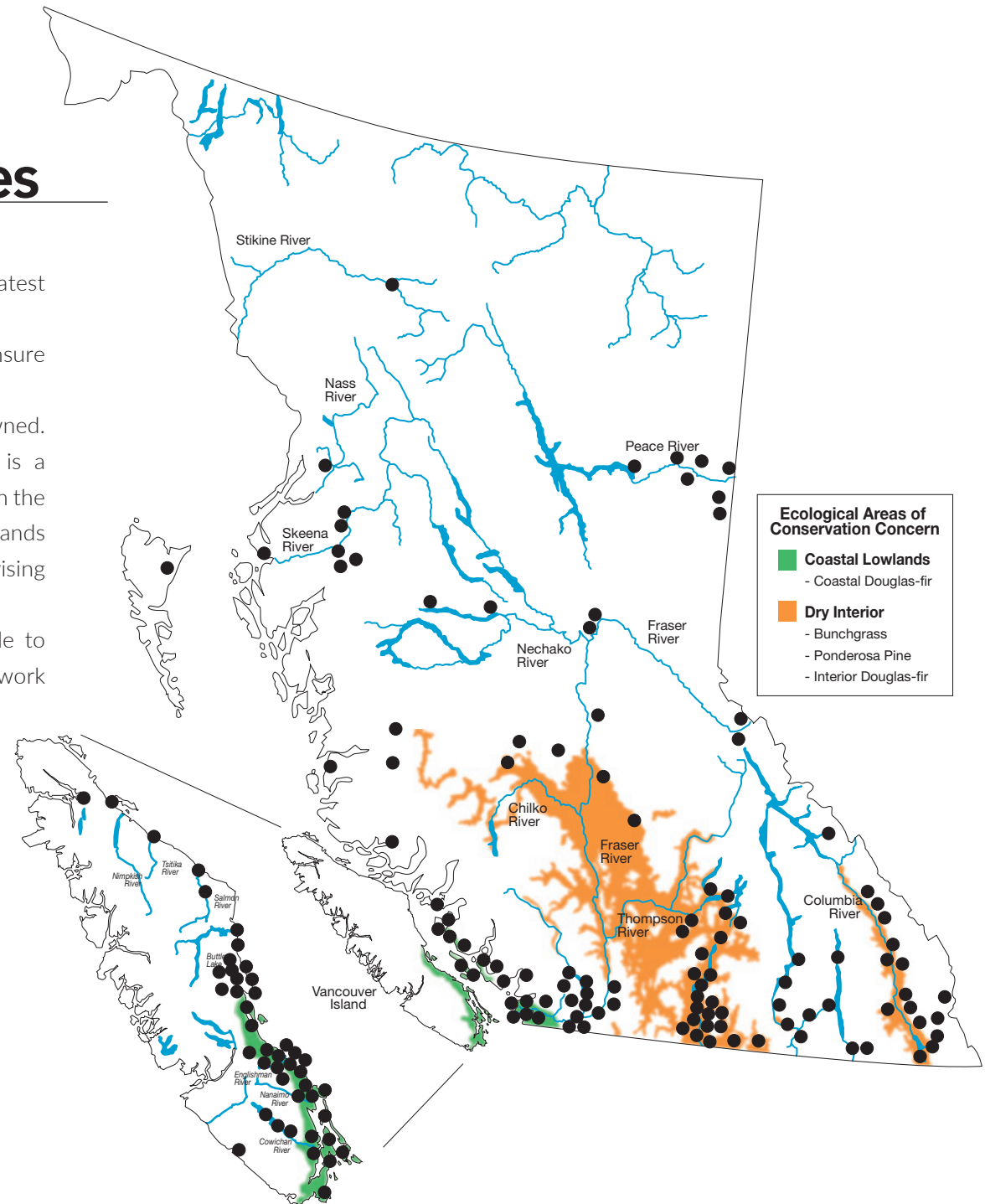
- secure habitats of high biodiversity values and at greatest risk of being lost; and
- manage conservation lands as part of landscapes to ensure ecosystem resilience and connectivity

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 where most of the private land is located. Perhaps not surprising because this is where most of the people live.

This is where The Nature Trust plays a significant role to acquire and manage 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 and where we proactively identify candidate properties to secure are:

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







*"I like The Nature Trust of BC's approach of buying up endangered spaces and maintaining them. And I like the way The Nature Trust engages young people in this process—without young people getting involved in conservation work there would indeed be no hope for the future."*

*— Karen Morcke*

*Great Horned Owllet*





Western Meadowlark



Western Bluebird

## flights of nature

By Rob Butler, PhD, Director, The Nature Trust of BC

Less than a century ago, the fate of the iconic Trumpeter Swan hung in the balance. Its numbers had plummeted dangerously low from persecution. Dominion Wildlife Officer for British Columbia J. A. Munro wrote in 1947, "...their future, whether it be a gradual increase and re-establishment, or final extinction, lies in the hands of our people." Regulations arrived just in time to restrict the losses and with the help of conservation groups including The Nature Trust of BC and our partners, key parcels of land were secured allowing the swan to recover. Today, the swan's bugling call is a familiar refrain along the south coast of British Columbia. Stories like the return of the swan underscore how good people can accomplish good things.

Conservation of important lands for birds such as the Trumpeter Swan benefits us in ways that we have only recently begun to comprehend. There is growing evidence that residing in green places is also good for our health and well-being. The presence of green areas also improves childhood development. Birding is becoming big business around the world. So the actions of The Nature Trust to preserve the diversity of living things in British Columbia has added value in improving the lives of the people and providing opportunities for everyone who chooses to make this province their home.

Our province is especially rich in birds. Each species has a unique



set of conditions required to find food and build nests. Some prefer seashores while other species need deserts, forests or alpine habitats. BC has a plethora of bird habitats and as a consequence over 300 species of birds choose to nest here. We are also on the Pacific Flyway, a migratory highway flown by millions of birds moving house each year between winter quarters in Central and South America and breeding grounds in Canada and Alaska. Over the years, The Nature Trust of British Columbia and its partners have secured

- key staging estuaries on the coast for shorebirds,
- marshes in the interior for migratory waterfowl,
- coastal and interior forests for migrant songbirds,
- and riparian habitats for at-risk bird species.

Of high importance to us is the preservation of habitats in the Okanagan for species such as the endangered Yellow-breasted Chat and Sage Thrasher. We also protect forests for rare sapsuckers, woodpeckers, flycatchers and nighthawks. So although The Nature Trust is the custodian of land, our aim is to protect the native birds and other creatures that depend on these places in British Columbia. Our decision on which places to secure is carefully chosen based on a suite of criteria established by our team of scientists but ultimately, it depends on whether we can afford to make the purchase.



Bald Eagle



# 2014 projects



## Antelope-brush Phase 3

- 12.32 hectares (30 acres)
- Located adjacent to The Nature Trust Antelope-brush Conservation Area between Okanagan Falls and Oliver in the Okanagan

This property and the adjacent area are home to more than 20 species at risk.

Partners include the landowner, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Habitat Stewardship Program, Grayross Foundation, Sitka Foundation and many groups and individuals.



## Northey Lake Phase 2

- 52.9 hectares (131 acres)
- Located in the Black Creek watershed on Vancouver Island

This property includes wetland, mixed forest and a tributary to Black Creek which is a wild coho indicator stream.

The landowner donated this property through the Federal Ecological Gifts Program.



## Wigwam Flats Lot 3

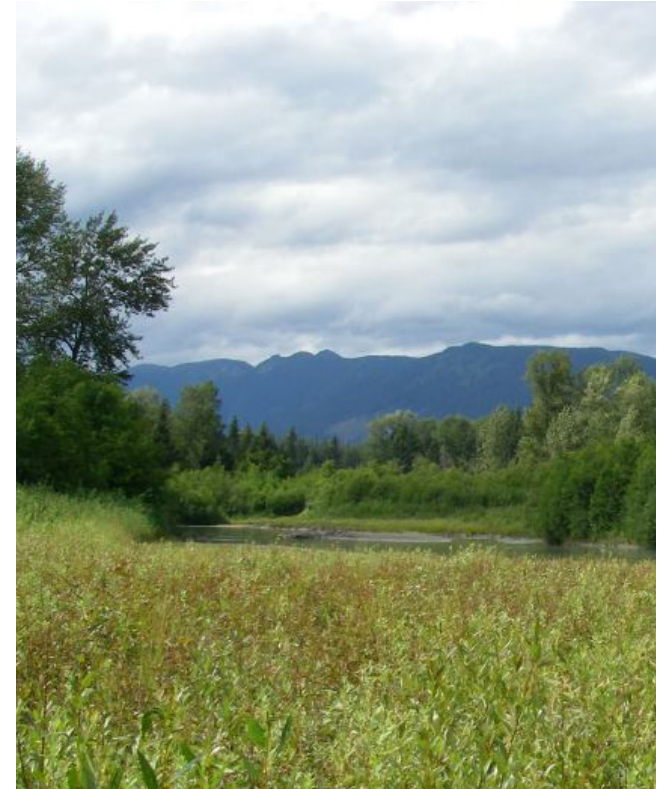
- 2 hectares (5 acres)
- Located near Elko in the East Kootenay adjacent to other properties owned by The Nature Trust

This property is critical habitat for elk and bighorn sheep.

Partners include Columbia Basin Trust, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, and many fish and game clubs.



# 2014 projects



## Kitsumkalum Lake North

- 72 hectares (178 acres)
- Located north of Terrace

This property was acquired by The Nature Trust of BC through a grant provided by BC Hydro, as part of their commitment to conserve wetlands during construction of the 344 km long Northwest Transmission Line between Terrace and Bob Quinn Lake.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia and BC Hydro would like to acknowledge all of the participants in the Northwest Transmission Line - Wetland Compensation Plan process, including: Gitanyow, Gitksan, Kitselas, Kitsumkalum, Lax Kw'alaams, Metlakatla, Nisga'a Nation, Skii km Lax Ha and Tahltan.







Chilliwack Field Naturalists and friends at Camp Slough



Cairn at Camp Slough

## land management

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 step 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.

### Camp Slough Project

The Camp Slough property was donated by Mikhail Kournosoff to The Nature Trust in 1994. The 9-hectare (22-acre) parcel of land in the Fraser Valley is located at the confluence of the Hope and Camp rivers. Mikhail said it was a paradise for birds.

The Chilliwack Field Naturalists are active stewards at Camp Slough. The property is home to many species including a wide variety of birds that nest on the ground and in wildlife trees. It is not uncommon to see Belted Kingfisher, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Hairy Woodpecker and Bald Eagle. With a love for these species and many others, this stewardship club has tackled a host of restoration projects over many years.



“Camp Slough Wildlife Area, or Camp River as it is locally known, has been a focal point for our club for the past 20 years. Under the able guidance of Denis Knopp and Lee Larkin, Camp River has changed from an overgrown blackberry thicket to a vibrant, wildlife area. It is home to a wide diversity of native plants, mammals, birds, insects and amphibians. Many of our members meet there monthly to remove invasive weeds, clean bird boxes or whatever maintenance is needed followed by camaraderie and strategy-setting at the local Tim Hortons,” said Janne Perrin, past president of the Chilliwack Field Naturalists.

One of the most recent projects was the repair of the perimeter fence in 2014. The fence was in poor condition; enabling trespass dumping, removal of wildlife trees and entry of domestic animals. Collectively these threats were resulting in a loss of habitat and increased wildlife disturbance, especially for the local bird population.

Over 1200 metres of fencing was surveyed and replaced. Neighbouring property owners were contacted and informed of the conservation values of Camp Slough and the importance of the property for conservation. Trespass dumping has decreased and this will result in reduced invasive species, habitat alteration and wildlife disturbance, particularly for the birds.

Evaluation of this project will include annual inspection of the fence and photographic monitoring to assess the growth of native plants. The Nature Trust of BC is grateful for the financial support of Environment Canada and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation for this project as well as Tree Island Steel for the wire fencing. In addition, we appreciate the incredible work of stewards like the Chilliwack Field Naturalists.



*Belted Kingfisher*

# conservation youth crews

In 2014, a variety of important land management activities were conducted in all regions of the province by Conservation Land Management staff. These activities ranged from habitat monitoring and restoration, to sign installation, to facility maintenance and safety inspections. In several regions, Conservation Youth Crews were employed to assist with land management activities, as follows:

- 3-person crew based in Nanaimo on Vancouver Island worked on 15 conservation properties
- 2-person crew based in Vancouver worked on 17 conservation properties
- 3-person crew based in Penticton worked on 22 conservation properties
- 4-person crew based in Cranbrook worked on 16 conservation properties
- 2-person crew based in Dawson Creek worked on 7 conservation properties



## vancouver island

*"I learned about the role that conservation areas play in the protection of wildlife. In an urbanized region, these designated wildlife areas act as an oasis for wildlife, making the management of these areas extremely important."*

—Trevor Smith, Vancouver Island Crew



## lower mainland

*"I had always considered the crew to be a dream job and a stepping-stone into a career in environmental management."*

—Jocelyn Wood, Lower Mainland Crew





## okanagan

*"I believe that in maintaining Nature Trust conservation properties through the removal of invasive plant species, aiding in the restoration of the native plants and animals, we contributed immensely by ensuring that future generations will be able to enjoy the beauty of this incredible valley."*

—Mariah Chapman, Okanagan Crew



## kootenay

*"My favourite activity was thinning the dense growth of fir and spruce on the Columbia Lake East conservation property in an effort to increase Bighorn Sheep habitat for a herd that resides in the area."*

—Cody Fernandes, Kootenay Crew



## peace

*"My favourite project was working on marshes because I saw many different species, especially birds."*

—Alisia Currie, Peace Crew

## Sponsors

HSBC Bank Canada was the title sponsor of the crew program for the ninth year. Other sponsors include BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Canada Summer Jobs (Service Canada), Colin and Lois Pritchard Foundation, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Great-West Life, Shell Canada, and The Tony Cartledge Fund.



# community events

In 2014, The Nature Trust of British Columbia hosted a wide range of events across the province from guided hikes and fundraisers to guest speakers and community days.



*Toast to Natural Wonders in Victoria*



*Birding at Boundary Bay*



*Boundary Bay Clean Up*



*Brant Wildlife Festival*





Brant Wildlife Festival



Vancouver Gala



Earth Wind Fire in Kelowna



Meadowlark Festival in Okanagan



Vancouver Gala





Mountain Bluebird

## financial highlights

In 2014 we secured \$2,245,000 in conservation land holdings and spent a further \$1,017,000 on conservation land management. This would not have been possible without the generous financial support of our donors and partners who contributed \$4,058,000 to The Nature Trust of British Columbia during the year.

We were also able to increase our net assets by \$4,533,000, while contributing \$566,000 to our endowment fund and \$353,000 to our land management fund.

### Summarized Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2014 and 2013	2014	2013
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and receivables	599,000	882,000
Investments	20,226,000	17,640,000
Capital assets	568,000	583,000
Properties	82,398,000	80,153,000
	<b>103,791,000</b>	<b>99,258,000</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Current	34,000	57,000
Deferred revenue	1,686,000	1,429,000
Net Assets	102,071,000	97,772,000
	<b>103,791,000</b>	<b>99,258,000</b>
<b>INCREASE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>4,533,000</b>	<b>4,166,000</b>

*This statement has been derived from the complete audited financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013.*



*"I have come to know and respect the excellent work done by The Nature Trust of British Columbia in obtaining and conserving land that would otherwise be lost to development."*

— Ed Raaflaub



Red Admiral Butterfly



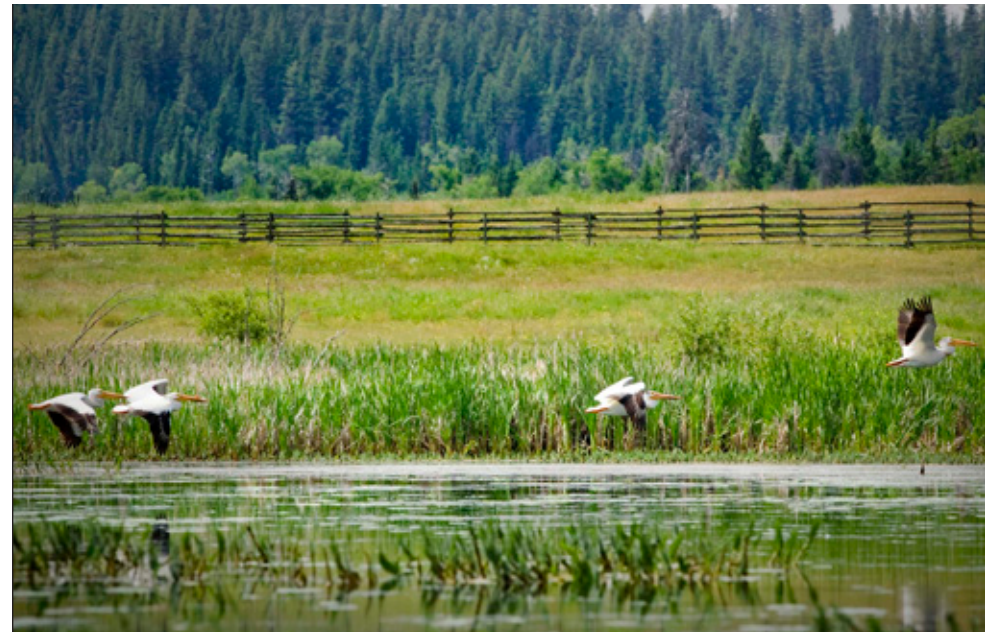
At the heart of The Nature Trust of BC is you, our donor. Your gifts help us to conserve our natural surroundings, but they also share a message of support that joins generous hearts together and unites a passion for humanity and nature today and in the future.

I want to express my gratitude to our annual donors for your consistent commitment. You are the cornerstone of our annual campaign to raise operating dollars. I want to thank our major gift donors for sharing our BIG dreams. You make new milestones possible. And I am touched by donors who have “tucked” a gift in your Will. As our Visionaries, you honour us with your legacy gift to nature.

I feel very fortunate to help wonderful people with their philanthropic plans. A few years ago I had the privilege of meeting a lady who wanted to know more about The Nature Trust as she prepared her Will. It was a special moment that has become more meaningful with the passing of time. Working with her brothers and sisters, we recently installed a memorial in her name, where her family and friends can come to a place of peace and remembrance.

Every gift is important in helping The Nature Trust of BC deliver its promise to conserve habitat for the benefit, use and enjoyment of British Columbians. Every gift inspires us to “spread our wings and fly”.

— Deb Kennedy, Development & Communications



Leaving a gift in your Will to The Nature Trust of British Columbia is a special way to leave a legacy to nature and reflect your dedication to land conservation. The Nature Trust was very honoured to receive estates and donations in memory from kind donors in 2014.

## estates

Erika Lockwood   Charles Evered Poole   Janet Wright

## in memory

Mogens and Inger Bech-Hansen	Gordon Knight
Dr. Bert Brink	Rita Lumsteg
Ron Brown	Rozina McLachlan
Al Chapman	Hume McLennan
Gordon Christopher	Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan
James Heighton Dwyer	Don Saltarelli
Patricia (Paddy) Gardner	Alison Speer
Tom Gossett Jr.	Joan and John Veronski
John Graham	Bert White
David Graham	Ken Williams
Jean Hudson	Daisy
John W. Husted	Julie



# individual donors

Our achievements are shared with many individuals who care about conservation as much as we do.  
We want to thank individual donors in 2014.

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### The Nature Trust of British Columbia Team

Marian Adair: Habitat Ecologist  
Nicholas Burdock: Okanagan Conservation Land Coordinator  
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Janice Dixon: Database Manager  
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Steve Houser: Leadership Giving  
Deborah Kennedy: Development & Communications Manager  
Jasper Lament: Chief Executive Officer  
Carleton MacNaughton: Interior & Coastal Mainland  
Conservation Land Manager  
Danielle Morrison: GIS Specialist  
Rob Neil: Kootenay Conservation Land Manager  
Sunipa Rassameeuthai: Finance & Office Assistant  
Robin Rivers: Communications Manager  
Leanna Warman: Ecosystem Specialist

### Partnership Program Staff

Tim Clermont: Crown Land Securement Coordinator  
Tom Reid: Vancouver Island Conservation Land Manager

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### Head Office

The Nature Trust of British Columbia  
#260—1000 Roosevelt Crescent  
North Vancouver, BC V7P 3R4  
Phone: 604-924-9771  
Toll free: 1-866-288-7878  
Fax: 604-924-9772  
E-mail: [info@naturetrust.bc.ca](mailto:info@naturetrust.bc.ca)  
Website: [www.naturetrust.bc.ca](http://www.naturetrust.bc.ca)  
Charitable corporation #10808 9863 RR0001

### Regional Offices

Kootenay  
The Nature Trust of British Columbia  
205 Industrial Road G  
Cranbrook, BC V1C 7G5  
Telephone: 250-489-8549  
Fax: 250-489-8506

Okanagan  
The Nature Trust of British Columbia  
102 Industrial Place  
Penticton, BC V2A 7C8  
Telephone: 250-490-8218

Vancouver Island  
The Nature Trust of British Columbia  
2080A Labieux Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6J9  
Telephone: 250-751-3218  
Fax: 250-751-3103





#260—1000 Roosevelt Crescent, North Vancouver, BC V7P 3R4

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