



2015

The Nature Trust of British Columbia
Annual Report

2015



Board Tour 2015 of Salmon River Estuary

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letter from the chair

By Peter Arcese, PhD

It is my pleasure to report on the 2015 achievements of The Nature Trust of BC, an organization that has diligently conserved habitat for wildlife, fish and plants since 1971. As our past director Dr. Ian McTaggart Cowan said, "Our world is a fascinating place!" And living in British Columbia we are surrounded by a rich natural diversity that is amazing. BC is the most ecologically diverse province in Canada. We believe that this diversity is critical to our quality of life.

And the single most significant way to ensure this diversity continues is to ensure there is habitat for these species to thrive.

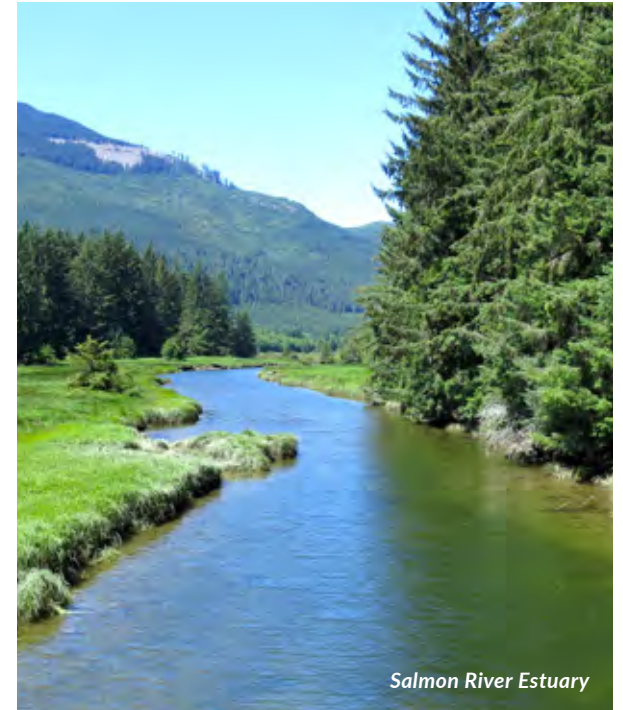
Estuaries are extraordinary areas of biological richness. Although they represent only 3% of BC's coastline, they are used by 80% of coastal wildlife species. In 2015, we purchased an additional 78 hectares (193 acres) of the beautiful Salmon River Estuary. Located north of Campbell River on Vancouver Island, this exceptional purchase complements an existing complex of land owned by The Nature Trust since 1978 and meets our objective to expand our existing property complexes to build ecological resilience and connectivity.

Grasslands are also important habitat. The Antelope-brush Needle and Thread grassland

ecosystem of the South Okanagan is one of the four most endangered ecosystems in Canada. For the past 16 years, The Nature Trust has been working to create the largest conservation area of this rare habitat in this region. In late 2015, we were delighted to raise the funds required to make this dream come true. The final 30.4 hectares (75 acres) will close in March 2016.

Our property decisions are based on a set of criteria. Scientific information is the foundation of these decisions and helping us to assess this information is a computer model, which compares the ecological values of the proposed property against our existing properties. With limited resources, we want to make the best possible investment with your conservation dollars.

Caring for the land is an equally important part of our mandate. Our land management team is the face of our organization in communities across this province. They handle the day to day issues relating to restoration, access and education. We completed a major project to create wetlands on our Big Ranch property in the Kootenay. Wetlands and surrounding habitats play an important role in improving the quality and quantity of our



Salmon River Estuary

100% BC focused and all dollars stay in BC



Antelope-brush



Bighorn sheep on Bull River property

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.

water supplies in addition to providing valuable wildlife habitat. As the population increases and communities encroach on conservation lands, our role to protect habitat values becomes more important and understandably more difficult.

Each summer our Conservation Land Managers oversee our Conservation Youth Crews. Four crews located on Vancouver Island, in the Lower Mainland, Okanagan and Kootenay provided young people with the opportunity to learn first-hand about land conservation while conducting restoration work and site monitoring on over 75 Nature Trust properties. We are proud of these young ambassadors for nature.

Our accomplishments are made possible by the financial support of you—our donors. You support us with donations, attendance at events as well as

gifts in your wills. Thank you for your wonderful help with our Salmon River, Antelope-brush Conservation Area and other special projects this past year. One of our biggest challenges is raising undesignated dollars to support our operation. We value the expertise and skills that make this organization effective and efficient. And we hope you do, too. I encourage you to include The Nature Trust of BC in your annual philanthropic plans with a gift to be used “where most needed” or to our endowment, which generates annual interest to support the operation.

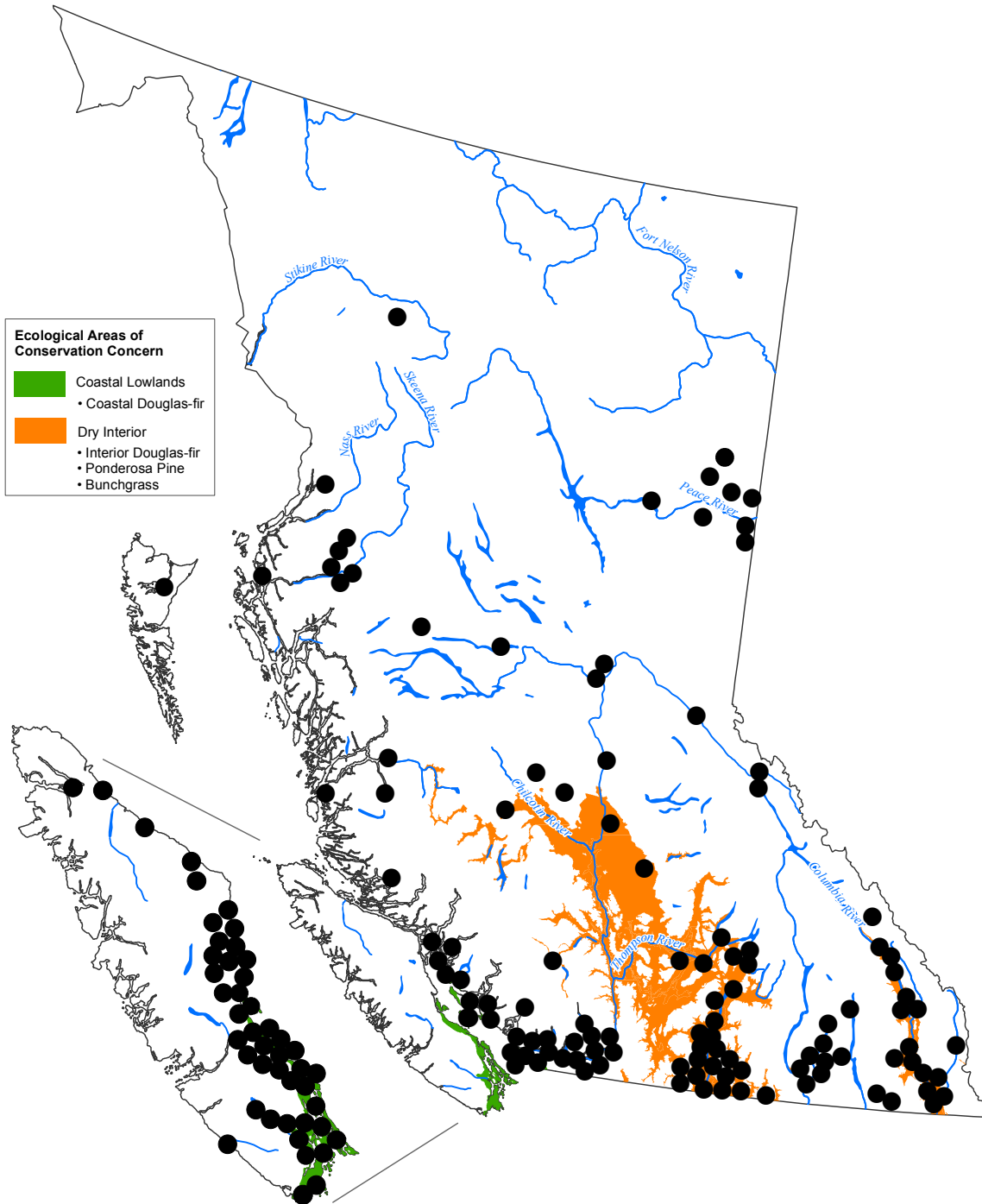
We were thrilled to present our 7th annual Earth Wind Fire event in Kelowna which celebrated nature in the Okanagan and our 9th annual Vancouver Gala which recognized the contribution to conservation of Dr. Sarah Otto.

We are incredibly honoured to receive a gift in a will and inspired to work in memory of these very special donors. Every gift is important and leaves a legacy to nature.

The Nature Trust is a story about incredible people doing incredible work. I would like to express my gratitude to our directors for their guidance during the past year. I would especially like to acknowledge retired directors Doug Christopher and Ross Beaty for their service. Thanks to the staff under the leadership of Dr. Jasper Lament for delivering on our mandate. In closing, I would like to pay tribute to Ralph Shaw who was one of our founders and an avid outdoorsman. Here's to tight lines, Ralph—we will miss you, and will strive to build upon your conservation legacy.

“Endeavour Silver Corp. is pleased to continue our support of The Nature Trust of BC with a 3-year pledge. This non-profit organization has a proven track record of land conservation success. We value their work to protect our natural surroundings in British Columbia today and for future generations.”

— Brad Cooke, CEO



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

securement criteria

By Leanna Warman, Ecosystem Specialist

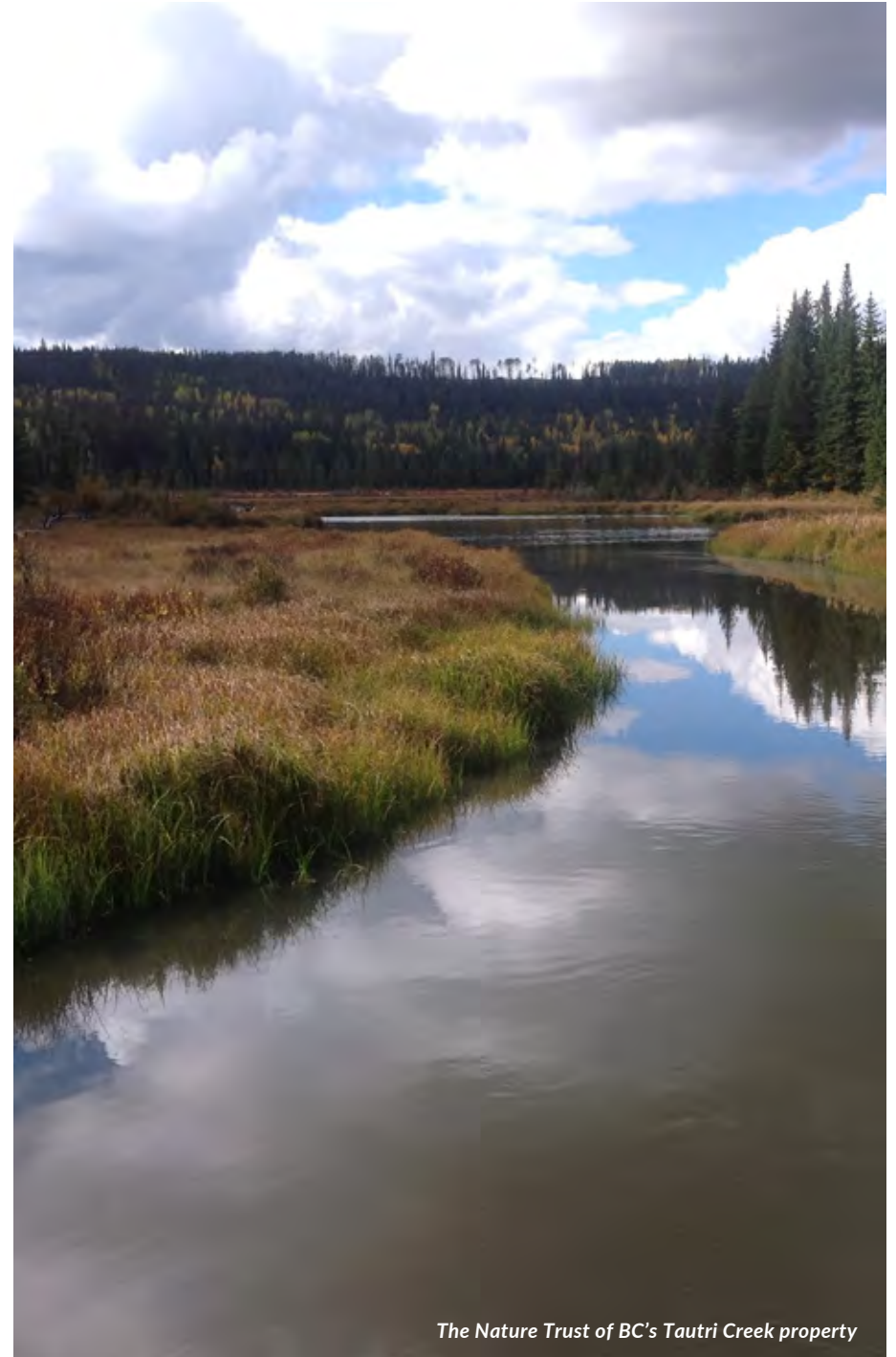
The Nature Trust of BC carefully reviews all potential conservation property acquisitions. Whether a property is presented for consideration by a seller or a donor, or being pursued by The Nature Trust, it will undergo an assessment to determine if it meets our conservation goals ultimately to conserve BC's biological diversity. We use our own custom computer model, the Relative Ecological Assessment tool. This tool generates a property's relative ecological value that is used to compare with values for our current portfolio of conservation properties.

There are six criteria used to evaluate potential acquisitions that are based on a series of spatial datasets that have been mapped for the entire province of BC. This assessment provides a common set of values to evaluate potential acquisitions across the province.

The ecological criteria include:

- biogeoclimatic zone conservation values,
- representativeness of ecosystems found on the potential acquisition in other protected areas,
- ecosystem condition,
- species richness,
- presence of rare and threatened species,
- and viability or connectivity with other protected areas.

There are other considerations in the assessment process as well, such as the cost of the property, the community's interest in conservation of the property, available funding and the costs related to managing the property into the future, such as fencing to protect ecological values, buildings and invasive weeds. A report outlining this information is presented to the Board for review. All property acquisitions require prior Board approval.



The Nature Trust of BC's Tautri Creek property



Sarah Otto



Bald Eagle at Englishman River Estuary

protecting BC's wild places

By Dr. Sarah Otto, PhD, Recipient of 2015 TNTBC Conservation Champion Award

It is alarming to read that, since the turn of the millennium, “the largest losses of intact forest occurred in Canada with losses covering over 100,000 km²”. The numbers include losses from all sources (fires, pine beetles, deforestation etc.), but each of these events has been impacted by humans and anthropogenic climate change. Equally alarming is the fact that, although nearly 700 species in Canada have been scientifically evaluated to be at risk, only 500 have been accepted under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Of that number, only 22 species receive the full protection afforded by law under SARA.

Even that protection is limited to areas with federal jurisdiction. We need to do a much better job at supporting and protecting our species, especially in British Columbia, which is home to some of Canada’s most diverse wildlife and plant populations.

As an evolutionary biology professor and Director of the Biodiversity Research Centre at University of British Columbia, I have an understanding of the “tree of life”—of how different evolutionary

forces and circumstances have led to a diversity of biological features in the natural world. I understand from a scientific perspective the unique evolutionary history that each species represents, and the importance of this biodiversity to our ecosystems and environments.

Yet more than this scientific perspective, what inspires me most is the same awe that many of us feel when we go out into nature, especially here in British Columbia. Awed when I see a pink salmon jump or bald eagles nesting. Awed when I hike out into nature and witness the serenity of places like Twin Lakes, an area that The Nature Trust of British Columbia, an organization I work closely with, has preserved and protected. Our eyes are captivated by the uniqueness and extraordinary diversity of nature.

We share this Earth with an estimated five to 30 million species. This biological world feeds us and clothes us. It inspires us and heals us. It is the source of our medicines.

This wondrous biodiversity, though, is in crisis.

Our children are born into a world with much fewer natural resources than the world into which we were born—two-thirds of predatory large fish such as tuna have disappeared relative to a hundred years ago, and globally, one-fifth of all plants, invertebrates, and vertebrates are at risk of extinction. The threat to biodiversity around the world underscores the importance of doing our absolute best to protect it at home, on Canadian soil.

In 2010, Canada was a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity, pledging that by 2020, we would legally protect 10 per cent of marine areas and 17 per cent of our land base. Yet currently, less than one per cent of Canadian oceans and lakes are protected, and only 10 per cent of Canadian land is protected. Furthermore, much of the land that is protected is not actually where the biodiversity hotspots are and where species are most endangered.

We must come together because time is short—we must act quickly and collectively to protect our planet and the lands and waters around us, and the

biological diversity they hold. We must protect that unique evolutionary treasure that each species is.

Over the past few years, I have supported the work of The Nature Trust of British Columbia. As BC's oldest and largest provincial land trust, The Nature Trust and its partners have invested more than \$80 million to secure over 70,000 hectares (173,000 acres) of land through purchase, donation, covenant and lease. They care diligently for this land in order to protect the natural diversity of wildlife and plants, and their critical habitats. Supporting The Nature Trust is one of the best ways we can act to preserve lands that we know are most endangered within BC. It is a way for us to protect our global biodiversity on an impactful, local scale.

And we must act. While it's important to educate our children, schools, and university students, we cannot just tell and teach—we must do. We must be role models and leaders, to demonstrate how important it is to act now in a way to preserve our wild spaces and natural landscapes for future generations.

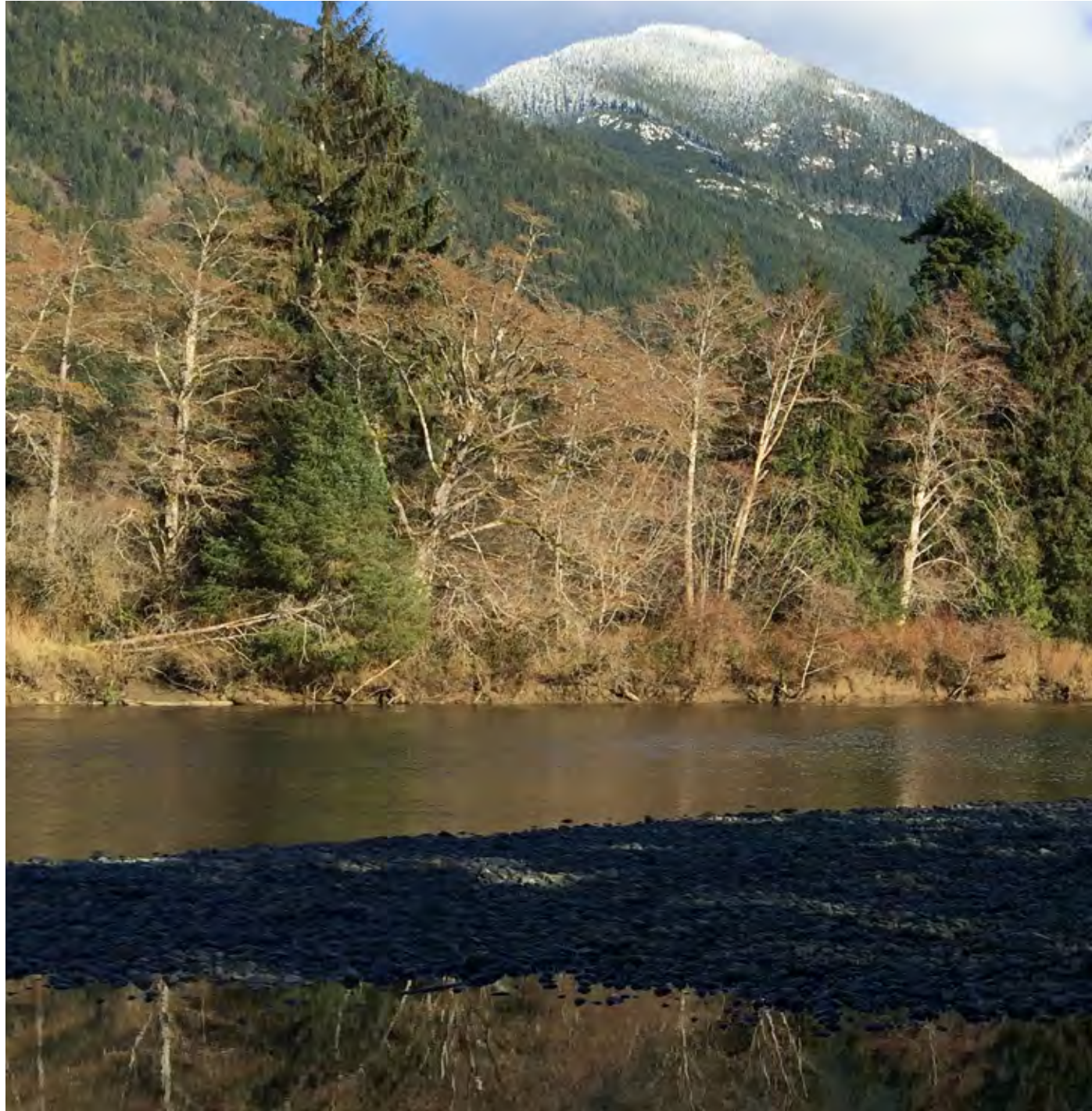
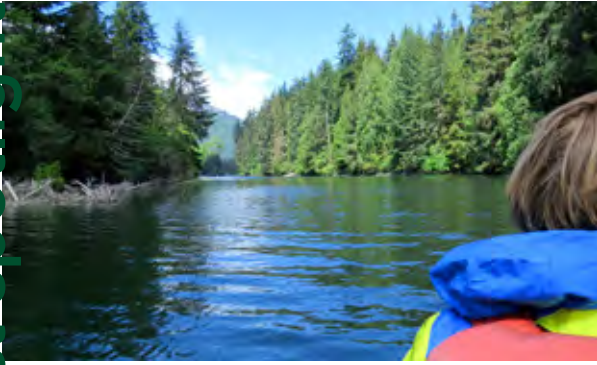


The Nature Trust of BC's Adams River property



The Nature Trust of BC's Twin Lakes property

2015 project spotlight





Salmon River Estuary

- 78 hectares (193 acres)
- Located at Sayward on Vancouver Island
- Adjacent to 124 hectares (306 acres) already secured by The Nature Trust and our partners
- This property is critical habitat for numerous species of fish and wildlife, including Great Blue Heron, Roosevelt Elk, and all five species of Pacific salmon
- Partners include the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, fish and wildlife clubs, and individual donors





chilcotin marsh project

In 1987, The Nature Trust of British Columbia acquired 602 hectares (1,485 acres) of land at Chilcotin Lake and Chilcotin Marsh, approximately 130 kilometers west of Williams Lake with funding support from Wildlife Habitat Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

This beautiful conservation complex is a renowned waterfowl staging area in the Chilcotin Plateau, hosting 5,000 to 6,000 ducks and hundreds of Canada Geese during the fall migration, in addition to a wide variety of other wildlife species.

Perimeter fencing, installed in stages over the past 30 years to prevent domestic livestock from impacting the conservation area, had deteriorated to the point where it was no longer effective. Over the past two years, the Chilcotin Marsh Enhancement

Project has been replacing the degraded perimeter fences around the marsh component of this conservation complex. In 2014/15, this project replaced over 6 kilometers of fencing, which will improve habitat for a wide range of waterfowl, migratory birds, and other wildlife species.

This project has been an ongoing initiative of The Nature Trust and the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, with the generous and much appreciated financial assistance of a number of conservation partners, including the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and the National Wetlands Conservation Fund. Ducks Unlimited Canada continues to assist with the management of this property.



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"We live in a spectacular part of the world. Working to keep this place special is The Nature Trust of BC. They are protecting our natural surroundings by acquiring and managing habitat for plants, fish and wildlife. I hope you will join me in supporting this very worthwhile cause."

—Larry Tataryn, a c & d insurance services ltd.



conservation youth crews

The Nature Trust of BC has regional Conservation Land Managers across the province. This team identifies what needs to be done and coordinates field work with the assistance of Conservation Youth Crews. In 2015, the crews worked on 76 conservation properties.



Vancouver Island

- 4-person crew based in Nanaimo
- Worked on 17 conservation properties: removing invasive plants, maintaining public use facilities, and restoring habitat



Lower Mainland

- 2-person crew based in Vancouver
- Worked on 20 conservation properties: removing rubbish, removing invasive plants, monitoring for species at risk, and conducting bird inventories





Okanagan

- 3-person crew based in Penticton
- Worked on 22 conservation properties: maintaining fencing, removing invasive plants, and monitoring habitat restoration



Kootenay

- 4-person crew based in Cranbrook
- Worked on 17 conservation properties: restoring wildlife habitat, installing fencing, removing invasive plants, monitoring for species at risk, and restoring riparian areas by planting native vegetation



“Our crew contributes all over the Kootenays, mainly in one special way: maintaining the properties so that many more generations of animals and plants will continue to thrive in our backyard.”

– Kaitlyn Gagne, Kootenay

“This job goes beyond maintaining the aesthetic values of nature; it is keeping nature safe for nature’s sake and not just for human use.”

– Alex Thomson, Okanagan

“I want to be a part of a positive change in society as well as to pass on environmental knowledge to those around me.”

– Sammy Penner, Lower Mainland

“I am interested in continuing work in the applied field of conservation and the crew position gave me an excellent kick-start for my long-term career goals.”

– Jake Mentz, Vancouver Island

Sponsors

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



Arrowsmith Naturalists planting at Englishman River Estuary



Brant Wildlife Festival

In 2015, 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.



Barnet Rifle Club donation



Earth Wind Fire 2015 in Kelowna



Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival



Haig-Brown Festival



Quirks & Quarks event in Victoria



Brant Wildlife Festival



Parksville-Qualicum Fish & Game Association donation



Seymour Salmonid Society



financial highlights

In 2015 we secured \$509,000 in property holdings and spent a further \$1,195,000 on land management. This would not have been possible without the generous financial support of our donors and partners who contributed \$2,268,000 to The Nature Trust of British Columbia during the year.

We were also able to increase our net assets by \$3,673,000, while contributing \$289,000 to our endowment fund and \$126,000 to our land management fund.

Summarized Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2015 and 2014	2015	2014
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Cash and receivables	2,653,000	599,000
Investments	21,348,000	20,226,000
Capital assets	557,000	568,000
Properties	82,906,000	82,398,000
	107,464,000	103,791,000
LIABILITIES		
Current	57,000	34,000
Deferred revenue	3,981,000	1,686,000
Net Assets	103,426,000	102,071,000
	107,464,000	103,791,000
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	3,673,000	4,533,000

This statement has been derived from the complete audited financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014.

"I am very glad that I am in a position to further the aims of The Nature Trust and in particular those for the antelope-brush habitat and other areas of the South Okanagan which are especially dear to my heart. My admiration is boundless for the enthusiasm and dedication of The Nature Trust staff which has contributed so much to the preservation of BC's biodiversity."

— Eve Szabo



douglas fir circle

Donors who give regularly to The Nature Trust of BC give us the encouragement and financial support to continue our leadership in conserving British Columbia's extraordinary natural habitat.

We are pleased to honour these donors in our Douglas Fir Circle program. Like the rings of a tree The Nature Trust of BC grows year by year with their steadfast support.

Starting this year, we will acknowledge these kind donors who have supported our conservation efforts for ten years or more and made a donation in 2015—the year being reported.

If you have not already supported The Nature Trust of BC for ten years or more, we hope you will work toward joining this incredibly important group of decade-plus donors by committing to be a loyal donor each and every year.

Please note that while every effort is made to ensure that the information listed is accurate, errors or omissions may occur. If your name is not listed as you would prefer it to be, please contact Janice Dixon at jdixon@naturetrust.bc.ca or 604-924-9771.

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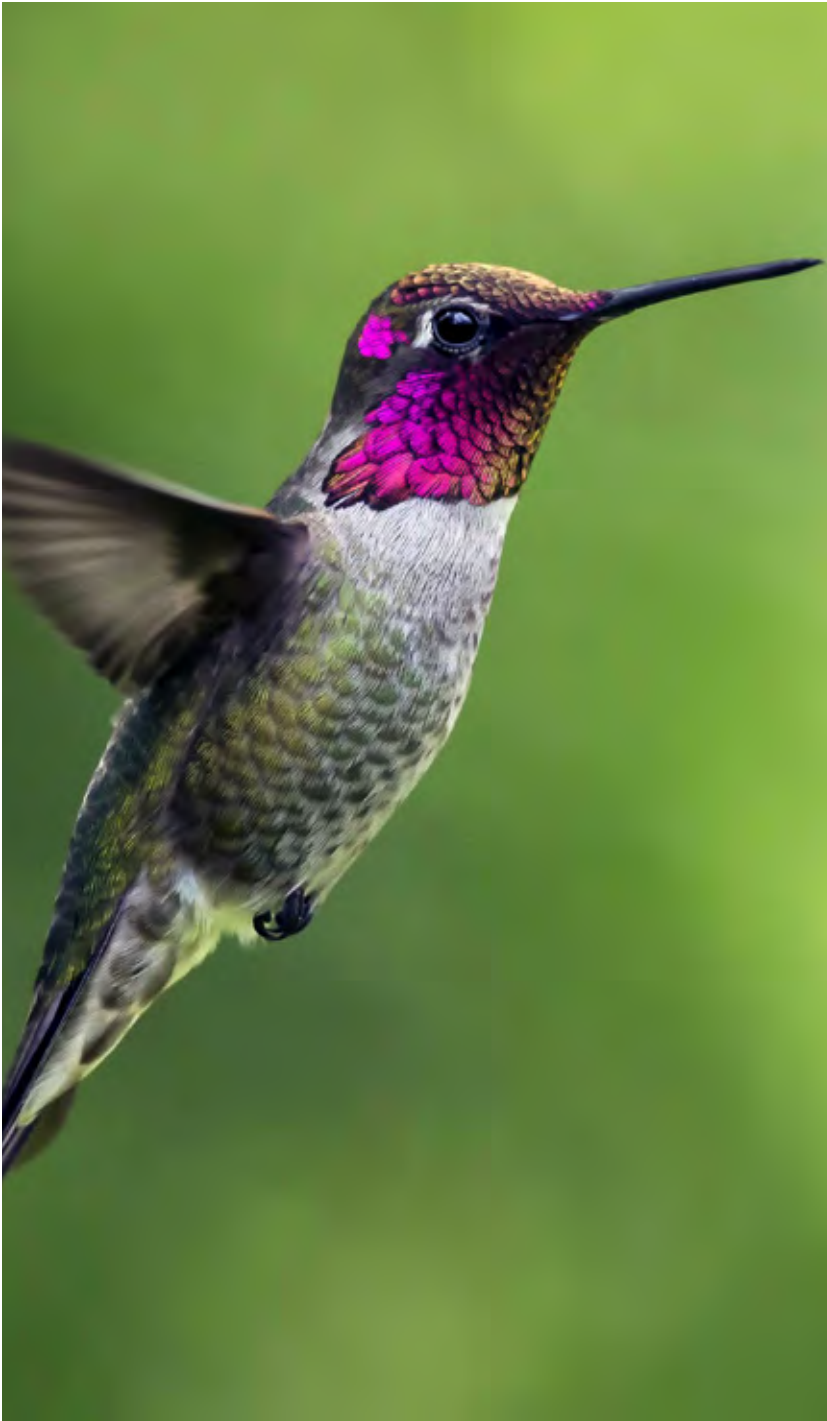
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conservation groups

Ducks Unlimited Canada
The Kootenay Wildlife
Heritage Fund Society



estates and in memory donations

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 2015.

estates

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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 2015.

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