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# letter from the chair

By Peter Arcese, PhD

It is such a pleasure to report to you the outstanding successes of The Nature Trust of British Columbia for 2016, successes that will be shared by all citizens of BC, forever. Recent acquisitions such as those on the beautiful St. Mary's River and Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor secure fabulous landscapes in the Kootenay region and continue to make clear the tremendous work done by The Nature Trust in partnership with private landowners, government and non-governmental partners, and made possible by the outstanding generosity of supporters like you.

The Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor includes a stunning mosaic of habitats that link riparian, grassland and conifer habitats to facilitate the movement of large mammals and protect a stunning diversity of species in situ. By strategically locating new acquisitions near existing conservation land, The Nature Trust is building "creek to peak" systems of reserves in the Kootenays and elsewhere to conserve seasonal migration routes and corridors for long-distance dispersal by a host of vertebrate and invertebrate species. But that gift to the citizens of BC will in fact deliver many diverse rewards and services to all of us, directly to the recreational users of these lands, and indirectly via the "ecosystem services" these lands will continue to provide via air and water purification, pollination services and aesthetic values. These forward-thinking actions of The Nature Trust make me proud to be part of this truly outstanding organization and excited for what lies ahead.

But these kinds of acquisitions are what The Nature Trust has been doing in BC since 1971, and I am delighted to report that 2016 was again a banner year.

- We celebrated our 45th anniversary.
- We reached a milestone with 70,000 hectares (175,000 acres) of land conserved in B.C.
- And we added 9 significant properties to our portfolio including a 17-year project which created the largest conservation area of rare Antelope-brush in the Okanagan, 6 properties from The Land Conservancy which added to existing Nature Trust conservation complexes, and gratefully received 2 donations on Vancouver Island.





But acquiring land is only one part of what we do. We also make significant investments in caring for the land to ensure existing values are secured and enhanced. Some of 2016's land management highlights include:

- **Communicating with neighbours and the general public**, especially where our properties have community interface. Education is a critical part of building harmonious relationships and ultimately an understanding of nature's needs.
- **Expanding our mapping capability**. GIS mapping technology is providing a range of benefits, from more clearly defining property boundaries, dramatically increasing the cost-effectiveness of property evaluations and acquisitions, and showcasing the leading-edge work accomplished by The Nature Trust in partnership with other conservation agencies and governments.
- **Conducting on-the-ground land management activities**, including monitoring water level to understand the impact of sea-level rise on the Englishman River estuary on Vancouver Island, planting native species to support threatened Lewis's Woodpeckers and Yellow-breasted Chats at our Okanagan Falls Biodiversity Ranch, and undertaking a major wetland construction project on our Big Ranch property in the East Kootenay.
- **Giving youth an opportunity**. One of our most successful land management programs is our Conservation Youth Crews. Young people from across this province have an opportunity to earn summer employment while learning about land conservation. We are very proud of these ambassadors for nature.

All of these successes have come via the financial support you and other donors have provided directly to The Nature Trust of British Columbia. You





Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor

kindly gave us donations, tucked a gift into your will or attended our events. Those undesignated dollars raised have done outstanding work by covering the cost of operations. These are the hardest funds to raise, but they unleash a huge amount of effort and passion in our staff as they discover, evaluate, conserve and restore the most significant properties and landscapes in our beautiful and remarkably diverse province.

For these reasons, I would like to encourage you again to include The Nature Trust of BC in your philanthropic plans with a gift to be used where most needed or to our endowment, which generates annual interest revenue. We hosted a number of events across BC, including our 8th Earth Wind Fire in Kelowna and our 10th annual Fall Gala in Vancouver. We were delighted to welcome The Honourable Judith Guichon, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and our Honourary Patron to our Gala. Her Honour's excellent address drew on her respect and knowledge of healthy land (page 6).

Our organization is well positioned for the future but we continue to need financial support to make the most of opportunities available now. Every dollar stays in BC. And we need more people to know about our work and share our passion to protect nature in BC. We would value your help.

As I conclude my term as Chair, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the entire Board for their guidance, support, humour and passion. This year we especially appreciate John West for his many years of service, and our outstanding staff under the leadership of Jasper Lament for continuing to deliver the very best outcomes for our organization and conservation. Together, the Board and staff have built on our foundation of science and business leadership to position The Nature Trust as the oldest and largest provincial land trust in BC. We hope you will join us in re-doubling our efforts in the coming years.



## nature trust properties

The Nature Trust of BC's mandate is to:

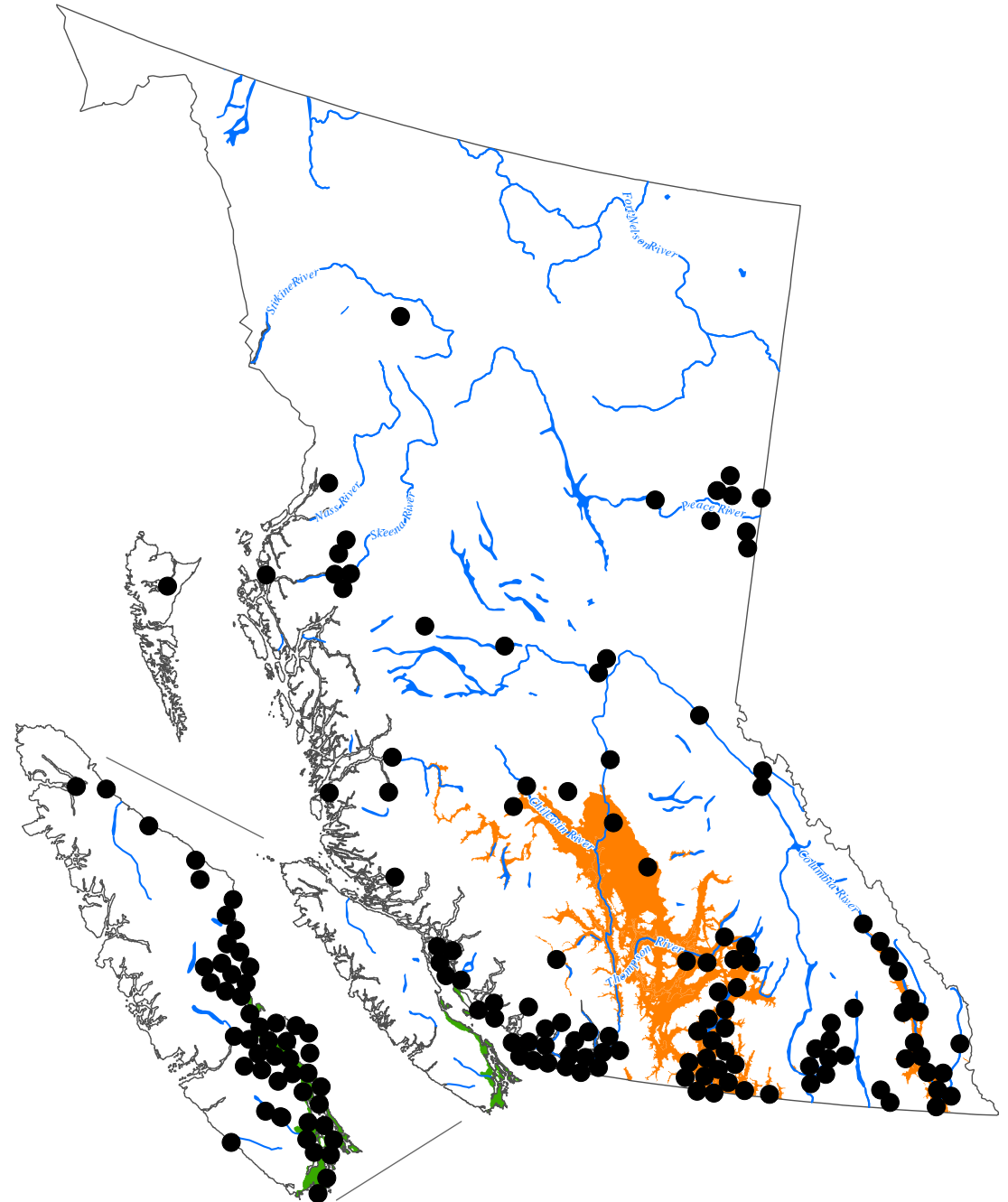
- secure habitats of high biodiversity values and at greatest risk of being lost; and
- manage conservation lands as part of landscapes to ensure ecosystem resilience and connectivity

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





*“We love BC. Everything we do comes back to making BC a better place. We are the only bakery in BC that sources grain entirely from BC organic grain farmers. Now, we can do our small part to help preserve endangered ecosystems with our quarterly donation to The Nature Trust.”*

Bruce Stewart, True Grain Bread

Columbia River-Habart

# 45 years of land conservation

Remarks by the Honourable Judith Guichon on the occasion of The Nature Trust of BC's 2016 Fall Gala

It is a great privilege to join you this evening for The Nature Trust of BC's 45th Anniversary Gala and to continue to serve as the honorary patron of this esteemed organization. I would like to begin by acknowledging with respect the history, wisdom and culture of the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish First Nations on whose traditional territory we are gathered this evening.

45 years of land conservation and 170,000 acres across the province. That is an amazing record, but it is only a very small portion of the story. How many species have been affected? How many students both young and old have visited sites and been educated, done research and been inspired? How much water and soil has been rejuvenated and how much carbon has been sequestered? There are so many stories buried within this 45 years of conservation that will perhaps never be told, but which will continue to benefit untold generations.

For any who have heard me speak previously you know that soils are my passion and that 2015 was declared the International Year of Soils by the United Nations. That gave me a wonderful opportunity when I visited schools throughout the province to tell children about the astonishing dirt beneath their feet and to arouse their curiosity by telling them that one spoonful of soil contained more living organisms than all the souls on earth. That usually sparked their inquisitiveness.

One of my priority programs, Stewards of the Future, is geared towards secondary school students. We encourage these young people to get out of the classroom and into their community to explore issues that concern them. It could be a hydro-electric project, a mine, a tree farm or a land fill, any development that potentially may affect the land or water. We then ask them to attend a meeting of local elected officials and ask questions and become well informed.

We bring about 75 of these young stewards to a conference. The first year it was held at Pearson College, last year at UNBC and we are investigating locations on the Sunshine Coast for this spring. My goal is to gather a diverse group of young British Columbians from as many areas of the province as possible so that



The Nature Trust of BC's first property at Grand Forks







they can consider issues of water, land, transportation, energy, jobs, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. These are the issues that, as leaders of the future, will be their concern. We have been very fortunate to gather an amazing list of presenters to address the students, including astronauts, politicians and policy makers to name a few.

Two of last year's presenters, Dr. Jon O'Riordan and Robert Sanford, authors of a small text I recommend talked a great deal about climate. Their book *The Climate Nexus: Water, Food, Energy and Biodiversity in a Changing World* is a very small book with some big ideas and guidance as we plan to better prepare our communities and make them more climate tolerant.

The news is replete with articles about weather and politicians at all levels are now concerned with carbon emission targets described in the Paris Agreement. Climate changes continue to challenge all sectors, but particularly those of us involved in agriculture. I can personally vouch for the fact that the greenest summer in my 40 odd years in our dry interior has seen invasive species flourish as never before.

So climate is changing (as I suspect it always has), markets are up and down and that is certainly not new, but through it all there is one constant here in Canada that is vital to the health of our communities and our land: stable governance. There is a quote by Dr. Charles Kellogg, a soil scientist who said in 1938, "Do civilizations fail because the soils fail to produce or does soil fail only when people living on it no longer know how to manage their civilization?" It is indeed the age old question of which comes first, the chicken or the egg. As we look around the world one thing that is certain: nothing devastates like civil unrest and war.

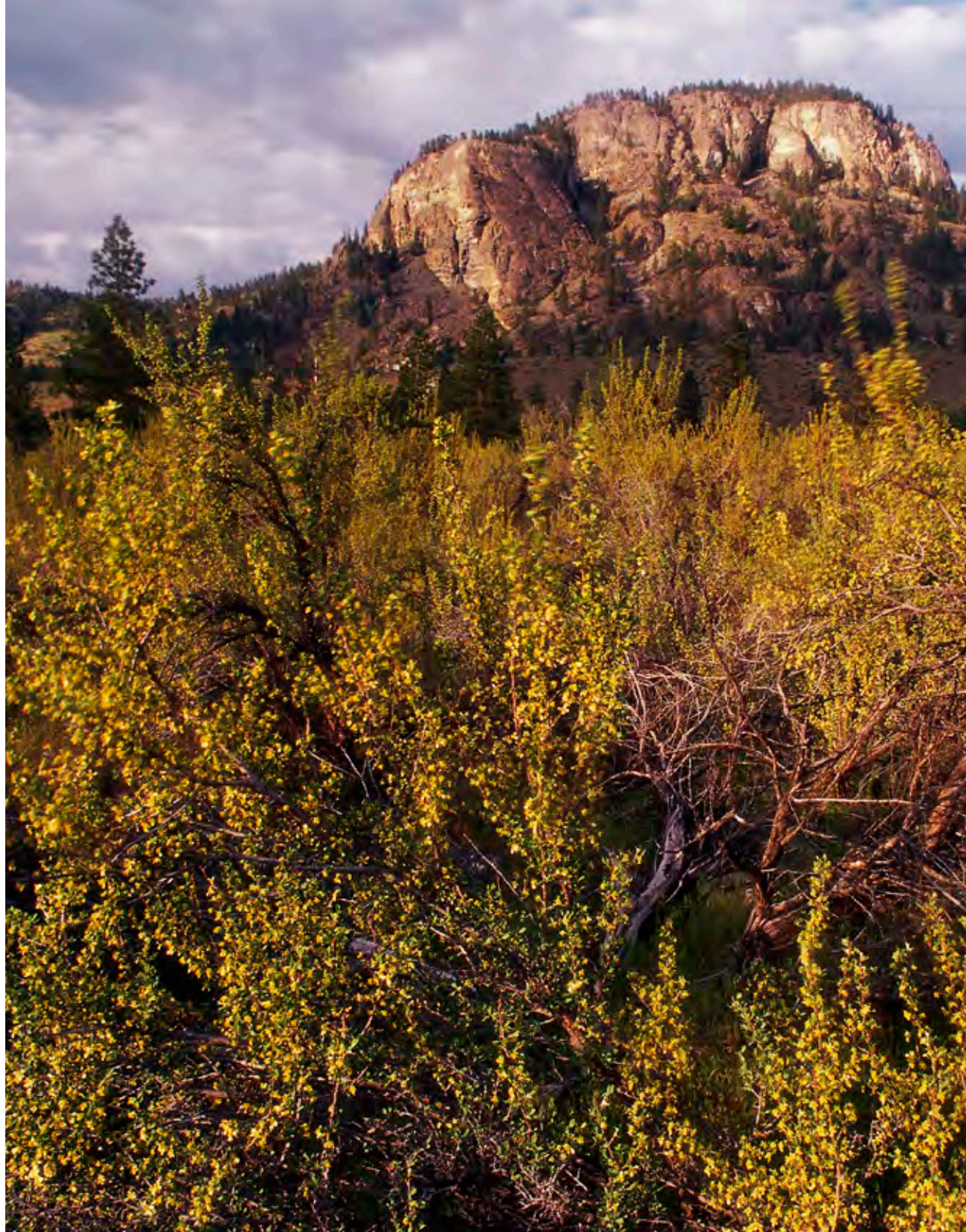
2017 is fast approaching and will be a wonderful occasion to celebrate our sesquicentennial from coast to coast to coast. It will be an opportunity to recognize what we have become as a nation that strives to promote diversity, inclusivity and continual growth in fairness. As one who believes that the health of our lands is vital to the health of our communities, I thank all of you for your commitment of time, energy and resources to conservation. As an organization which does so much to promote good land stewardship and natural diversity you go a long way to helping to maintain stability in communities in our province and our nation.



## new properties

### **Antelope-brush Conservation Area**

- 34.6 hectares (85 acres)  
near Oliver in the Okanagan
- Features rare Antelope-brush habitat which is home to more than 20 species at risk
- Final piece of a 17-year project to complete the largest Antelope-brush area in the South Okanagan outside First Nations land
- Partners include the landowner through the Federal Ecological Gifts Program, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Grayross Foundation, Sitka Foundation, Burrowing Owl Estate Winery, Stephen Partington, the Government of Canada through Environment and Climate Change Canada, and many groups and individual donors





## Arrowsmith Woodland

- Donation of 19.4 hectares (48 acres) near Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island
- Features some old growth forest, habitat for Roosevelt elk, cougars, bears and red-legged frogs
- The landowner donated this property through the Federal Ecological Gifts Program

## Sandersons Royd

- Donation of 25.7 hectares (63.4 acres) near Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island
- Features second growth Douglas-fir and Shawnigan Creek runs through property
- The landowners donated this property through the Federal Ecological Gifts Program



For a number of years, The Nature Trust of BC worked with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Land Trust Alliance of BC to ensure conservation properties owned by an organization experiencing financial difficulties would continue to be protected.

In 2016 The Nature Trust acquired six of these ecologically significant properties with the help of the Grayross Foundation, the Sitka Foundation, Peter Pearce, and many individual donors.



### **Nanaimo River**

- 2 properties totalling 56 hectares (138 acres)
- Features old growth Douglas-fir along the river and complements our other properties on the river and estuary



### **Peachcliff Conservation Area**

- 17.2 hectares (43 acres) on the southeast side of Skaha Lake near Okanagan Falls
- Features a variety of habitats that support rare species and Bighorn Sheep



## South Winchelsea Island

- 10.4 hectare (25 acre) island off Vancouver Island in the Ballenas-Winchelsea archipelago
- Features Garry oak-Arbutus ecosystem and rare plants



## Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor

- 380 hectares (940 acres) in the East Kootenay near Kimberley
- Features grasslands, river frontage and forested areas which provide a corridor for mule deer and elk



## Squitty Bay

- Partial interest in land on Lasqueti Island
- Features uncommon plants and foreshore habitat



## monitoring vancouver island estuaries

By Karen Barry, Restoration & Inventory Biologist

The Vancouver Island Conservation Land Management Program\* initiated a long term monitoring program to assess the health of estuaries and salt marshes on the east coast of Vancouver Island with support from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and other partners such as The Nature Trust of BC. The goal of this monitoring program is to ensure that conservation lands provide high quality, accessible habitat for fish and wildlife, and to identify conservation concerns resulting from threats such as sea level rise, invasive species, or other human-induced changes. By implementing a standardized monitoring program, we can ensure investments made towards protection of sensitive estuaries are secured for the long-term.

To determine the resiliency of coastal estuaries to sea level rise, we installed Surface Elevation Table (SET) platforms in several estuaries over the summer, including Quatse River, Cluxewe River, Salmon River, Englishman River, Nanaimo River and Cowichan River. These devices allow us to see how salt marshes and estuaries are changing over time, by measuring changes in elevation of the substrate. The SET consists of an aluminum platform that is permanently installed in the estuary and anchored to prevent any movement. To take measurements, a specialized reader arm is brought out to the estuary, mounted to the platform and several rods are lowered from the arm onto the surface. Because the location and orientation of the device is fixed during sampling, we can record highly precise elevation measurements. Annual fine-scale readings are compared over time to see how much deposition or erosion is occurring.



Installing Data Logger at Nanaimo River estuary



Installing Surface Elevation Table platform at Nanaimo River estuary



Salmon River estuary



Englishman River estuary

When measurements indicate a positive change in elevation, it means that sediment is being deposited, the plants are healthy and stabilizing the sediments, and the underlying marsh soils are getting thicker (accreting). This is a natural process in healthy salt marshes which increases the resiliency of estuaries to rising sea levels. In contrast, negative readings indicate decreasing elevation which means that the marsh surface is sinking (subsiding) or eroding. When the rate of sediment deposition (or accretion) does not match or exceed the rate of subsidence or sea level rise, the salt marsh can eventually “drown” meaning that it becomes sub-tidal. This can result in significant habitat changes for fish and wildlife; for example, vegetated salt marshes can become unvegetated mud flats.

Results from our SET measurements will provide important information about local ecosystem change that can help inform management. Specifically, we will gain a better understanding of whether our estuaries are resilient over the long term, what habitats may be most vulnerable to sea level rise, and what potential restoration actions may be warranted to maintain or improve fish and wildlife habitat.

*\* The Vancouver Island Conservation Land Management Program (VICLMP) is a strategic partnership program with Environment Canada-Canadian Wildlife Service, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Ducks Unlimited Canada, The Nature Trust of British Columbia, and funding from Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation. VICLMP's work focuses on managing over 100 conservation areas on Vancouver Island and the central and north coasts.*



## land management

In 2016, a variety of important land management activities were conducted throughout the province by Conservation Land Management staff. These activities ranged from habitat monitoring and restoration to sign installation, facility maintenance and safety inspections. In four regions, Conservation Youth Crews were employed to assist with land management activities, as follows:

### Vancouver Island

- 4-person Conservation Youth Crew based in Nanaimo
- Worked on 19 conservation properties, removing invasive plants, maintaining public use facilities, and conducting restoration projects for species at risk.

### Lower Mainland

- 3-person Conservation Youth Crew based in Vancouver
- Worked on 17 conservation properties, conducting restoration projects, removing rubbish, removing invasive plants, monitoring for species at risk, and bird inventories.

### Kootenay

- 4-person Conservation Youth Crew based in Cranbrook
- Worked on 16 conservation properties, restoring wildlife habitat, installing fencing, removing invasive plants, monitoring for species at risk, and restoration projects.

### Okanagan

- 3-person Conservation Youth Crew based in Penticton
- Worked on 24 conservation properties, maintaining fencing, removing invasive plants, and conducting habitat restoration projects.



Okanagan Conservation Youth Crew conducting rattlesnake research

## Sponsors

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



## community events



Earth Wind Fire 2016 in Kelowna



Brant Wildlife Festival



Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival



Fall Gala



## financial highlights

In 2016 we secured \$1 1,070,000 in property holdings and spent a further \$1,308,000 on land management. This would not have been possible without the generous financial support of our donors and partners who contributed \$13,277,000 to The Nature Trust of British Columbia during the year.

We were also able to increase our net assets by \$1 1,297,000, while contributing \$131,000 to our endowment fund and \$555,000 to our land management fund.

### Summarized Statements of Financial Position

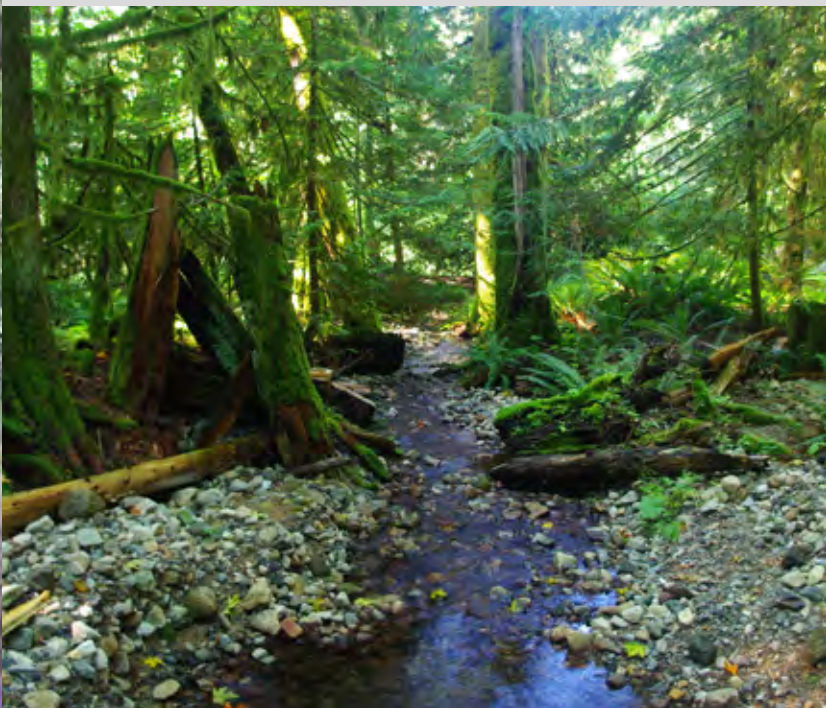
December 31, 2016 and 2015	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and receivables	3,781,000	2,653,000
Investments	20,451,000	21,348,000
Capital assets	553,000	557,000
Properties	93,976,000	82,906,000
	<b>1 18,761,000</b>	<b>107,464,000</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Current	64,000	57,000
Deferred revenue	2,473,000	3,981,000
Net Assets	1 16,224,000	103,426,000
	<b>1 18,761,000</b>	<b>107,464,000</b>
<b>INCREASE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1 1,297,000</b>	<b>3,673,000</b>

*This statement has been derived from the complete audited financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2016 and 2015.*





"As we help other species we help ourselves and our children and their children and so on—forever." - Ross Beaty



## the need is clear

By Deb Kennedy, Development & Communications Manager

For the past 14 years, I've had the joy of working with you to create a lasting legacy to nature. Building relationships is the best part of this job and, of course, what we do together is extremely important.

We live in the most amazing place on earth. From the shores of the east coast of Vancouver Island to the banks of the Fraser River and from the grasslands of the Okanagan to the wildlife migration corridors of the Kootenays, each region is of critical conservation importance and holds a special spot in our hearts.

Together, we are saving habitat for British Columbia's amazing diversity of species such as the iconic Douglas-fir trees, majestic Bighorn Sheep, colourful Lewis's Woodpecker, delicate Behr's Hairstreak butterfly and our storied west coast salmon. As our past Board member Ross Beaty wrote: "As we help other species we help ourselves and our children and their children and so on—forever." There is something very inspiring when you think our work will have benefits forever.

This biological diversity is what makes British Columbia unique in Canada and the world. However, population growth, development pressures and climate change are threatening the survival of many species. And the biggest threat is the loss of habitat.

While the need is simple, the conservation process is complex.

The Nature Trust of BC is an organization that meets this challenge every day. I am proud to work with a highly dedicated group of people who bring their professional expertise, wealth of experience, and a true love for what they do—acquiring land for conservation and caring for it. But we can't do this alone.

We value your commitment to nature and going forward we hope you will continue to put your trust in us with a gift of support. Please consider a gift today by cheque, credit card or shares. We are always very honoured to receive a future gift in a will.

I would be delighted to share more about this wonderful organization and how you can help. Feel free to give me a call at 604-969-3249 or email me at [debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca](mailto:debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca).



## 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.

We would like to acknowledge these kind donors who have supported our conservation efforts for 10 years or more and made a donation in 2016—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](mailto:jdixon@naturetrust.bc.ca) or call 604-924-9771, extension 221 (toll free 1-866-288-7878).



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Our achievements are shared with many individuals who care about conservation as much as we do. We want to thank individual donors in 2016.

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Nicholas Burdock: Okanagan Conservation Land Coordinator  
Laurie Desrosiers: Finance Manager  
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Jayne Drew: Events & Communications Coordinator  
Deborah Kennedy: Development & Communications Manager  
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