Conserving Rare South Okanagan Ecosystem

ood things happen for conservation $oldsymbol{J}$ with time, patience and the cooperation of interested private land owners. As part of the province-wide Union of British Columbia Municipalities Conference in Kelowna, Doug Walker announced on September 24 the successful conclusion of a major conservation transaction with the Kennedy family on land at the south end of the Vaseux Lake corridor at McIntyre Bluff. The property has been in the Kennedy family for the past 137 years. Some 15 years ago The Nature Trust of British Columbia started discussions about opportunities to protect portions of the family's holdings as part of a growing complex of conservation lands in the Vaseux Lake corridor.

The Nature Trust has secured 40 hectares (100 acres) that represent one of Canada's most endangered ecosystems with its funding partners—the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund,



Antelope-brush on the Kennedy property with McIntyre Bluff in the distance.

FortisBC and the Canadian Wildlife Service. This agreement with the Kennedy family is part of a larger conservation plan which includes future acquisition and the long term lease of property totaling 162 hectares (400 acres) with a value in excess of \$3 million. Through this first purchase

agreement, the 40-hectare (100-acre) property and the critical habitat it supports will be conserved in perpetuity.

"We are delighted to have the opportunity to conserve such an outstanding piece of land along with our esteemed partners," said Don Krogseth, Chair of Continued on next page...

A Gift for Conservation



Looking up Heid Creek on Gunboat Bay.

Through the generosity of the Beaty family, The Nature Trust of BC has acquired 6.5 hectares (16 acres) on Gunboat Bay in Pender Harbour on the Sunshine Coast. As well as being a beautiful location, the property features a mosaic of streamside deciduous woodland, old meadows and upland second growth forest. Heid Creek, a fish bearing stream, runs through the property and into the intertidal marsh and mudflats in the bay.

A tour of this ecological treasure reveals western hemlock, western red cedar, Douglas-fir, and broadleaf maple as the canopy layer with a sparse sword fern understory. Along the creek there are alder with some maple, cottonwood and cedar with dense salmonberry and rose

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The Nature Trust OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ANNOUNCEMENT PLEASE SEE PAGE 3

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Behr's Hairstreak butterfly See page 2 The Nature Trust of BC. "We hope to have the chance to secure even more of this habitat in the future."

Located just south of Vaseux Lake between Oliver and Okanagan Falls, this property features the rare Antelope-brush ecosystem. The muted tones of BC's native shrubsteppe are sharply contrasted by adjacent orchards, vineyards, other agriculture, and residences. Perhaps easily dismissed as "wasteland" by the uninformed, this remaining shrubsteppe habitat is of extremely high ecological value. And it is worth a closer look. Hosting roughly 22 percent of all British Columbia's threatened and endangered vertebrates, and hundreds of rare insect and plant species, Antelope-brush habitat ranks in Canada's top four endangered ecosystems along with Garry oak woodlands of British Columbia, tall grass prairie of Manitoba and Ontario, and the Carolinian forest of southern Ontario.

There is no shortage of fascinating life-history stories to be told about the species that inhabit Antelope-brush ecosystems. For example, the Behr's (Columbia) Hairstreak is an endangered butterfly that relies on the Antelope-brush shrubs for its survival, as its larval foodplant. This attractive insect has been the subject of ongoing research in the area. Burrowing in the sandy soils beneath the shrubs one may spy a Great Basin Pocket Mouse. This endangered rodent has a special relationship with the Antelope-brush since it caches seeds; the ones that are forgotten grow into new shrubs. At night, the



Nature Trust Board members tour Kennedy Property with Behr's Hairstreak Recovery Team members.



Ground level view of Antelope-brush shrubsteppe habitat.

ecosystem becomes a hunting ground for the rare Pallid Bat, which searches the area listening for crickets and scorpions, hunting by ear rather than by echolocation like most other bats. The insect life is diverse and unique, including Canada's only native praying mantis. And waiting to catch an insect are a host of migratory songbirds including Western Meadowlark, Vesper Sparrow, and Lark Sparrow. Other denizens of this habitat include a variety of other birdlife, and reptiles including several species of snakes that are restricted to the dry interior such as Night Snake, Western Rattlesnake, Yellow-bellied Racer and Gopher Snake. Antelope-brush is also a nutritious food item on the menu of larger grazing animals such as Mule Deer and Bighorn Sheep.

Antelope-brush ecosystems have plenty to offer the botanically inclined. The sandy understory is dominated by perennial bunch grasses, and a low cover of ground-hugging plants such as prickly-pear cactus. In the spring and summer, this is punctuated by the bright colours of flowering plants including bitterroot, yellow bell, blazing star and mariposa lily. Beneath this vegetation, in undisturbed areas, is an extremely fragile crust formed of lichens and mosses that provides the shrubsteppe with nutrients and moisture.

Perhaps because it lacks the majesty of an old-growth conifer forest, this habitat has gone relatively unprotected and Antelope-brush ecosystems are now in great peril. The same desert climate of the South Okanagan that supports a diversity of unique species has likewise attracted a rapidly growing human population, and the sandy soils that support Antelope-brush is the preferred substrate for a booming wine industry. Over the last century, the landscape has been steadily, irreversibly converted to rural subdivisions, orchard and vineyards with the result that now less than 9 percent of Antelope-brush ecosystems in the South Okanagan remain relatively undisturbed.

Since 1975 The Nature Trust of British Columbia, along with many partners, has been actively securing highly threatened, valley-bottom habitat in the Okanagan. With this latest acquisition from the Kennedy family, we are one step closer to our conservation goals. In addition to being ecologically significant itself, the property connects with provincially owned protected areas including Vaseux Lake Protected Area to the east and the



Behr's Hairstreak butterfly. Photo by Bob Lincoln.

White Lake Grasslands Protected Area to the west. It is immediately south of the Bighorn Sheep-Vaseux Lake National Wildlife Area and is adjacent to the Okanagan Falls/Vaseux Lake Biodiversity Ranch. One of the remaining Columbia River sockeye salmon spawning areas within the Okanagan River watershed is located just south of the property.

We want to thank our partners for helping us to secure this South Okanagan treasure. And our fundraising efforts to secure additional donations to support the purchase of the remaining 121 hectares (300 acres) are actively underway. Contact The Nature Trust of BC if you want to help complete this internationally significant land conservation project.



West shoreline showing second growth forest. below. In the wetter areas horse tails and skunk cabbage are abundant. Coho, chum and cutthroat spawn in the creek.

The joint federal/provincial Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI) systematically identifies and maps rare and fragile ecosystems in a given area. The Sunshine Coast SEI riparian designation has been mapped on approximately one-third of this property. The riparian area of the site as recognized by the SEI, the presence and spawning habitat for anadromous salmonids and the mosaic of habitats illustrates the ecological sensitivity of this property and the significance of this ecological gift to The Nature Trust.



The Pender Harbour area is a maze of islands, coves, and reefs. The harbour penetrates over 4.8 kilometres (3 miles) inland, and its complexity of inlets provides a total of 165 kilometres (103 miles) of shoreline. Until recently, most travel was on the waterways rather than the winding roads, giving the region its name of "Venice of the North." Conserving land on the Sunshine Coast is becoming more and more of a challenge. The attractive coastline, proximity to Vancouver, recreation opportunities and temperate climate make it very desirable.

We offer our sincere appreciation to the Beaty family for having the foresight to donate this land in order that it will be conserved.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia ANNOUNCEMENT

BC Trust for Public Lands

he Nature Trust of BC applauds the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management and the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection for the recent announcement of \$8 million to create a public lands trust that will support biodiversity conservation in BC. The money will be used to improve conservation planning, and more efficient acquisition and management of private lands that have unique ecological values. A BC Conservation Lands Forum, a provincial partnership of government and conservation organizations, will also be created to coordinate priority setting, identify shared opportunities, and arrange partnerships to accomplish



Nature Trust Chair Don Krogseth discusses announcement with Minister Abbott.

their goals. The four organizations spearheading the forum are The Nature Trust of BC, Ducks Unlimited Canada, The Land Conservancy of BC and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Managing the Land

As well as purchasing threatened land to protect it, The Nature Trust of British Columbia undertakes land management with summer crews, stewardship partnerships with other organizations, local governments and volunteer help.





Carl MacNaughton receiving a cheque for The Nature Trust youth crews from Minister Barisoff.

Jim Hope, the BC Conservation Land Manager, oversees the province while land managers in the East Kootenay, South Okanagan and on Vancouver Island provide day to day coverage. In this newsletter, we are profiling Carl MacNaughton who has been the South Okanagan Conservation Land Manager for the past six years. His family has lived in the area for four generations.

Carl finds his role rewarding but challenging. "There is never enough time to do all the things that I'd like to do. On a typical day, I do half field work-coordinating field activitiesand half office work-meetings. administration and communication. I've grown as a land manager, taking on more administrative responsibility and management decisions. My biggest rewards are knowing we're making a difference in conservation, partnerships with a wide variety of great folks from all aspects of society and working with youth. Youth crews have become a critical component of our program, performing many of the manual tasks that might not get done otherwise. The most surprising thing that has happened on the job was stepping on a rattlesnake but the snake was probably more scared than I was." Favourite place: Vaseux Lake area Favourite activity: watching Turkey Vultures riding the updrafts and circling the valley

Favourite wish: a clone

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S message



I am constantly inspired by you, our leaders in conservation. Your dedication and commitment to conserving what makes this province so remarkable are the foundation for our

progress at The Nature Trust. During the past six months contributions from corporations such as FortisBC, grants from organizations such as the Real Estate Foundation and donations from individuals have helped us to conserve critical habitat throughout BC.

With our partners, we secured a crucial piece of South Okanagan property from the Kennedy family. This property features one of Canada's most endangered ecosystems and further strengthens our conservation efforts in that area.

Our 2004 summer crews successfully operated in Nanaimo, Cranbrook, Invermere and the South Okanagan. Through the leadership of our land managers, this program is gaining provincial and national recognition. Young people are given an opportunity to learn basic employment and safety skills while gaining first hand experience as conservationists.

Gifts of ecologically significant land are one way donors can help us conserve BC's natural assets. Recently, the Beaty family kindly donated land in the Pender Harbour area on the Sunshine Coast. Our thanks to the Beaty family for their generosity.

Key fundraising campaigns continue for the Englishman River, the Hoodoos and our land management activities.

Progress on the Englishman River was celebrated in late September. Representatives from government, foundations, corporations and individual supporters joined us in extending our appreciation to all our recent donors, including the BC Ministry of Transportation for its \$125,000 contribution towards this extraordinary habitat restoration project.

We are pleased to report that \$1.8 million has been raised to date. We need another \$250,000 to complete this project and continue important land management.

With your help, we have raised over \$1.7 million to secure the Hoodoos project in the East Kootenay, an amazing 4050-hectare (10,000-acre) property with special conservation values. We would like to thank the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund for its recent contribution of \$200,000. Our fundraising continues in order to meet the outstanding financial commitment of \$2.1 million.

Our stewardship ensures that the lands we hold are not only conserved, but managed for conservation purposes. Each year our land management activities cost more than \$800,000. It is critical

Coordinator. Our accomplishments have been communicated by press releases to targeted media and articles in publications such as one highlighting the Englishman River in Sportfishing magazine. Our people have participated in events such as Wings Over the Rockies, Meadowlark Festival, and the Union of BC Municipalities Conference, among others to build awareness of our conservation work. And our website is being redesigned in order to make it more accessible and to showcase the beauty and diversity of our properties as well as making it easier to donate.

On behalf of The Nature Trust team, I would like to thank you, the volunteers, donors, partners, youth crews and



Fundraising for Englishman River: \$250,000.



Fundraising for land management: \$800,000 yearly.

that we acquire the necessary funds in order to carry out land management plans, fence repairs, noxious weed removal, control vehicle access, scientific study and habitat enhancement.

We have continued to raise the profile of The Nature Trust with the hiring of Robin Rivers as Communications



Fundraising for Hoodoos project: \$2.1 million.

many others for making our accomplishments possible in 2004. With your continued support, we can ensure that we can help to keep BC beautiful now and for future generations.

Yours in conservation, Doug Walker, Executive Director

THE NATURE TRUST staff news



Heather Kerr

After almost two years of devoted service at The Nature Trust, Heather Kerr has left to pursue her dream of becoming a writer beginning with classes at Capilano College.

Introducing Our Fundraising and Development Team

Patrick Oswald, Leadership Giving

Born in England, Patrick Oswald came to Canada to study at McGill University. He moved to Vancouver in 1960 and helped amalgamate 15 deaf groups into the Western Institute for the Deaf. In 1973 he joined the United Way and became the first Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving. There he encouraged his leadership donors to perpetuate their annual gifts and he took the endowment from under \$1 million to over \$25 million. He would like to have this example flourish within The Nature Trust. He was drawn to The Nature Trust due to his interest in birding. He lives in Vancouver with his wife Hilary, who like Patrick also helped start a new United Way Agency, Pacific Riding for the Disabled. Patrick enjoys the company of his 9 grandchildren whenever he can.



Fundraising & Development Team, left to right: Robin Rivers, Patrick Oswald, Deb Kennedy.

Deb Kennedy, Development and Communications

Thrilled to be a part of the Development and Fundraising team, Deb Kennedy brings over 20 years of business experience to The Nature Trust. A diversified background in marketing, administration fundraising, she has enjoyed contributing to the successful operation of a national household paper company and Vancouver newspaper, along with volunteering for various organizations and non profits. "What a wonderful opportunity to work with such a dedicated team, who are ensuring our province remains one of the most spectacular places in the world," says Deb. Married with two teenagers and a wee dachshund named Charlie, she and her husband Tom are long time residents of the North Shore.

Robin Rivers, Communications Coordinator

Having worked in non-fiction book publishing in Toronto and Vancouver for 18 years, Robin Rivers wanted a more meaningful position where her communication skills could make a difference and she found that at The Nature Trust. She has been the Communications Coordinator since May 2004 and has enjoyed the opportunity to visit Nature Trust properties in the Okanagan and Lower Mainland, meet the land managers as well as a number of corporate and individual donors. "I have been so impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of the Board, staff members, volunteers and donors," says Robin. "I am delighted to be part of a team that is helping to conserve BC." She lives in North Vancouver with her six-year-old daughter Heather and her husband Regan.

The 20th Annual Commodores' Cup Junior Race

The 20th Commodores' Cup Junior Race was held in September. Over 360 people attended the award ceremony including 150 participants aged 8 to 16 and their proud parents. This is the largest Youth Training Regatta in Canada and is sponsored by The Nature Trust of BC since sailing is such an eco friendly sport. The 55 prize winners were thrilled to be photographed flanked by two silver medal winners: Olympian Ross Macdonald and Pan American Games Winner Keamia Rasa. In the photo, left to right: RVYC Commodore Bob Matthews; Ross Macdonald wearing Olympic silver; Morgan Walter, top Sea Cadet; Commander Kelly Larkin (the Navy has always sent a senior officer to help present the prizes); Keamia Rasa wearing Pan American Silver; and Past Commodore Patrick Oswald who was asked by the Admiral of the Maritime Forces Pacific to start the Youth Training Regatta in 1985.



Englishman River Celebration

The Pacific Shores Resort and Spa kindly sponsored a celebration for the Englishman River at the end of September. The Nature Trust acknowledged recent donors including the BC Ministry of Transportation for its \$125,000 contribution as well as the generous contributions from EnCana Corporation, the Pacific Salmon Foundation and TD Friends of the Environment. Shell Environmental Fund and BMO Financial Group were recognized for supporting the Brant Geese project in the Englishman Estuary area.

After an informative session on the history of the river and future plans given by Nature Trust Director Jim Walker, Wetlands Manager Tim Clermont reminded everyone that there is still \$250,000 that needs to be raised to complete the project. Afterwards, guests adjourned to the patio for a lovely salmon barbecue and dessert buffet. We were honoured to have donors

as well as corporate and government representatives attending including Judith Reid, MLA for Parksville, and Paul Kariya of the Pacific Salmon Foundation.

Thank you to Andy Pearson of Pacific Shores



Resort and Spa and all his staff for making this event possible.



Joe Stanhope of the Regional District of Nanaimo with Doug Walker, Nature Trust Executive Director, and Les Bogdan of Ducks Unlimited Canada.



Patrick Oswald of The Nature Trust hands out door prizes with the help of Parksville MLA Judith Reid.



BMO Financial Group representatives, Doug Forbes-King, Barb Dahlstedt and Lesley Lechelt, enjoy lunch with reporter Brenda Gough.

Youth Crews at Work



Peace River crew clearing beaver dam.



Vancouver Island crew leads interpretive tour for children at Salmon River Estuary.



Peace River crew repairing fence.



South Okanagan crew taking a break from conducting vegetation monitoring.



East Kootenay crew safety meeting at Cherry Creek.



Broom bashing: a young volunteer cutting broom at the Salmon River Estuary.

Columbia Wetlands Receive International Recognition

Although most people are familiar with the importance of conserving ecosystems on land, many have not considered how vital freshwater ecosystems are. While lakes and wetlands are critical to the survival of animals, birds and plants, they are also favourite spots for people to live and enjoy recreational opportunities. Land and water use in recreational development and corporate social responsibility and water ecosystems were the themes of this year's Living Lakes Conference held in Invermere from September 26 to October 2.

Living Lakes is an international network and partnership whose mission is to enhance the protection, restoration and rehabilitation of lakes, wetlands and other freshwater bodies of the world. The Nature Trust participated in the conference as one of the many sponsors and provided commentary about conservation lands in the Columbia Valley during one of the pre-conference tours. More than 200 delegates from 27 countries attended with presentations from over 90 international, national and regional presenters.

All of this occurred with the Columbia Wetlands, designated as Canada's Living Lake, as the backdrop. The Columbia Wetlands in the Rocky Mountains are one of the longest intact wetlands in North America and home to thousands of species of animals, birds and plants, some of which are now endangered. The Nature Trust acquired 812 hectares (2005 acres) of land within the Columbia



Nature Trust Habitat Ecologist Marian Adair (in back with green hat) aboard a voyageur canoe on the Columbia River. Photo by Ian Cobb/Valley Echo.

Wetlands between 1979 and 1982. Of that total, 575 hectares (1420 acres) are leased to Environment Canada and managed as part of the National Wildlife Area and 237 hectares (585 acres) are leased to the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection and managed as part of the Columbia Wetlands Wildlife Management Area.

On September 29 Jennifer Moore as the Minister of Environment's representative announced that Canada will soon have a new Ramsar site—the Columbia Wetlands. The Convention on Wetlands signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971 is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem.

When we tug at a single thing in nature, we find it attached to the rest of the world.

-John Muir

2004-2005 Bert Hoffmeister Scholarship



Kelly Jewell is the 2004-2005 recipient of the Bert Hoffmeister Scholarship which is awarded annually to a graduate student in the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia. She is a native of Woodinville, Washington, and did her undergraduate degree at Middlebury College in Vermont. Her postgraduate work at the University of British Columbia will focus on the effects of parasitism on island populations of Song Sparrows (Melospiza melodia). In

question is the brood parasite (a bird that lays its eggs only in the nests of other birds), the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*), which invaded coastal British Columbia in the 1950s. Previous work on 6-hectare (15-acre) Mandarte Island in the Gulf of Georgia has shown that the presence of cowbirds increases the sparrows' rate of nest failure. Kelly will study how the cowbirds are affecting the dynamics of island and mainland Song Sparrow populations linked by dispersal.



The Honourable
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Lieutenant Governor of BC
Honourary Patron

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Chairman of the Board & Chief Executive Officer

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JIM WALKER

ROBIN WILSON

C.C. (KIP) WOODWARD

Directors Emeritus VERNON C. (BERT) BRINK, OC, OBC, PHD IAN McTAGGART-COWAN, OC, OBC, PHD

> DOUG WALKER Executive Director PATRICK OSWALD Leadership Giving

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The Nature Trust tracks only information to perform its business as a non-profit organization, with a focus on accuracy and respect for the individual's privacy. You can be assured that we do not sell, trade or share any personal information with any other organization or business. For more information, please contact our privacy officer Don Lane.

How You Can Help The Nature Trust

hen you make a gift to The Nature Trust you leave a lasting legacy for all of us forever. Our success depends on the support of many individuals and organizations like you who care about keeping BC beautiful. Please consider giving a gift that will truly make a difference: financial donations, bequests, life estates, ecological

gifts and conservation covenants are some of the ways that you can help The Nature Trust of BC to conserve our natural assets.

If you would like to discuss any of these options or receive a copy of our recently published Planned Giving brochure, please contact Patrick Oswald at 604-924-9771 or 1-866-288-7878.

THE NATURE TRUST



"As a recent immigrant English doctor in the early 1960s, I worked on a BC missionary boat calling at the floating logging camps and villages. The pristine inlets and vital estuaries with their unique marine, coastal and bird wildlife had an indelible effect, and since then I have tried to support any efforts to protect critical habitats from human interference. We must contain this pressure from increasing human encroachment so as to ensure that all ecological systems

have a chance to survive into the future. Already we have lost many species. Due to The Nature Trust's leadership role in protecting this type of critical habitat, I became a loyal supporter and have bequeathed my real estate so that the good work of this organization may continue forever."

-Dr. Joyce Davies

* * * * * *

TELUS donated money as part of their Charitable Giving Campaign. TELUS Team Members, which includes employees, former employees and retirees, have a long and proud history of community involvement. TELUS is proud of its Team Members and is pleased to support efforts to make a difference in the community. As a result of last year's Charitable Giving Campaign, TELUS is distributing nearly \$5.7 million to 2000 Canadian charities in 2004. This represents the total amount pledged by TELUS Team Members as well as the matching amount from TELUS.

New Funding Support

BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries South	h Okanagan Post Wildfire Weed Control
BC Ministry of Forests Youth Crews in	South Okanagan and Vancouver Island
BC Ministry of Transportation	Englishman River, East Kootenay
BMO Financial Group	Brant Geese Project
Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program $\ldots \ldots$	East Kootenay Youth Crews
Columbia Basin Trust	East Kootenay Youth Crews
EJLB Foundation	
FortisBC Ker	nnedy Property and Habitat Restoration
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund Land Managemen	t, Hoodoos Property, Kennedy Property
Habitat Stewardship Program/Environment Canada Weed Contr	ol, Riparian Fencing, Kennedy Property
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	Summer Crews in East Kootenay,
	South Okanagan and Vancouver Island
Lohn Foundation	lan McTaggart-Cowan Scholarship
Nature Conservancy of Canada	East Kootenay Youth Crews
Pacific Salmon Foundation	Englishman River
Shell Environmental Fund	Brant Geese Signage
TD Friends of the Environment	Englishman River
The Real Estate Foundation	Digital Mapping
Weyerhaeuser's Jobs for Youth Program $\ldots\ldots$. Summer Crews in	South Okanagan and Vancouver Island