

Love Working Outdoors in the Lower Mainland

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Vancouver, BC— Throughout the summer while other young people were relaxing, The Nature Trust of BC Lower Mainland Conservation Youth Crew was hard at work. “I love working outdoors and working with my hands. I am also studying conservation and I love to be able to have a job where I can help out the environment,” says crew member Brittany Bonapace.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia hires young people each summer to tackle a wide variety of conservation activities on properties across the province and learn valuable skills for future employment. Training includes First Aid and Bear Aware as well as the safe handling of power tools. “I learned about the importance of protecting areas that hold high ecological significance and how The Nature Trust of BC manages the properties by acquiring lands and restoring habitats on the properties,” explains crew member Terita Deare.

The crews perform on-the-ground work as well as attending workshops from specialists in the field on topics such as bird counts, and forest and wetland ecology. “My favourite activity was conducting eBird surveys on the properties because I am an avid birder, so I was able to see birds that I haven’t seen before ever, which is pretty exciting,” says Terita. Brittany added, “Coming into this job I did not have any birding skills. Throughout the summer I have improved my bird identification through sight and sound.”

“The most difficult thing that I had to do was to see how terribly people treat our environment such as dumping garbage and damaging plants,” says Brittany. “The most difficult thing was not being able to return to the properties to see the progress made because of time constraints,” says Terita.

The crews also contribute to the local community in a variety of ways. “We participated with the Delta Naturalists on two birding trips at Boundary Bay and Surrey Bend Regional Park. We were able to contribute our knowledge, while at the same time learn more about birds found there,” explains Terita. Brittany added, “At Boundary Bay, we hosted a cleanup event. At the end of the day we had a giant pile of garbage with items ranging from industrial piping to fishing traps.”

When asked about future plans, Brittany indicated she will be attending her final year at the University of British Columbia. Terita will return to school at BCIT for the Ecological Restoration program.

In 2017, Conservation Youth Crews are operating on Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, South Okanagan, and East Kootenay. The Nature Trust is pleased to have the support of BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Canada Summer Jobs (Service Canada), Caritate Foundation, Great-West Life, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and The Tony Cartledge Fund to help fund the crews.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is dedicated to protecting BC’s natural diversity of plants and animals through the acquisition and management of critical habitats. Since 1971 The Nature Trust along with our partners has invested more than \$95 million to secure over 71,000 hectares (175,000 acres) across the province.