



The Nature Trust of BC 45 Years of Conservation Excellence

The Nature Trust of BC's Salmon River property

By Rod Silver, Past Director

The Nature Trust of BC is an organization that has focused on nature in British Columbia for 45 years. And you might ask why? Perhaps environmental lawyer Calvin Sandborn said it best:

"The British Columbia lifestyle—and indeed our cultural identity—has always been closely linked to the land. Sighting salmon, deer, eagles, heron and osprey—or even an occasional bear or whale—may be the stuff of movies in most parts of North America, but it is a common occurrence for those of us who live in this province. The natural places close to our communities have helped to make British Columbia one of the best places on Earth to live. Easy access to nearby natural places allows us to make outdoor recreation an integral part of our lifestyle. Close to our homes, there have been untouched areas where we can refresh the mind, body and spirit."

Our strong bond with nature was the reason that the federal government commemorated British Columbia's entry into Confederation by establishing The Nature Trust of BC and providing a \$4.5 million endowment. The new trust, an independent organization guided by hand-picked leaders in the conservation and business communities, quickly became the province's most prominent land trust.

Forty-five years later The Nature Trust of BC is a trusted

conservation partner with a stellar record of protecting key natural areas. It's a land trust that took Mark Twain's "buy land, they aren't making it anymore" philosophy to heart. Land ownership is key to the success of The Nature Trust.

Funded by donations from individuals, foundations, corporations and governments, and by income generated from the Trust's capital, The Nature Trust not only acquires private lands of ecological significance but also cares for and manages this land to help maintain biodiversity values and ensure the safety of the public using the land. Places such as the Englishman River on Vancouver Island, Boundary Bay in the Lower Mainland, Adams River in the Interior and the Hoodoos in the Kootenay all speak to The Nature Trust of BC conservation excellence...



Please support The Nature Trust of BC

with a gift today and help us continue to conserve our spectacular natural surroundings for our children and grandchildren.

Visit www.naturetrust.bc.ca

or call 604-924-9771 (toll free 1-866-288-7878)

45 Years of Conservation Excellence

What makes The Nature Trust of BC special?

Here are nine good reasons:

- Effective and efficient provincial organization;
- Strong financial foundation;
- Low overhead;
- Small, dedicated and highly qualified staff with a regional presence;
- Rigorous science-based evaluation process to select the best strategic lands for purchase;
- Negotiation advantages that only an independent and creative non-government non-profit can offer;
- Directors are renowned leaders in the science and business communities;
- Unique partnership with the Province of BC;
- And recognized as a trusted partner in the conservation, business, recreation and government communities.



Columbia River Valley

What are The Nature Trust's accomplishments?

The Nature Trust along with its partners has invested more than \$80 million to secure over 480 properties covering 70,000 hectares (170,000 acres) across the province. And as past Director Dr. Bert Brink said, *"Nature Trust acquisitions shine like diamonds and like diamonds are forever."*

Partnering with BCIT

By Jocelyn Wood, The Nature Trust of BC
Lower Mainland Field Operations Technician

In September 2015 The Nature Trust of British Columbia (TNTBC) partnered with students from the British Columbia Institute for Technology (BCIT) to inventory and assess conservation properties while applying their education in the field. Two second-year student teams from the Fish, Wildlife and Recreation diploma program in the Renewable Resources department are carrying out year-long projects on TNTBC's Squamish Estuary property.

The property is adjacent to the Skwelwil'em Squamish Estuary Wildlife Management Area, Squamish Nation Site A and part of the larger Squamish River Important Bird Area. Although no research has been done on the property itself, the area is known as prime salmon rearing habitat and is home to various blue-listed animal and plant species such as Henderson's checkermallow. The BCIT teams will be looking at the various habitat types, inventorying vegetation and assessing the quality of habitat for wildlife, in particular small mammals. They will also be looking at the role the property plays in providing habitat for wintering and resident bird species by conducting day and night surveys throughout the school year.

The students have already learned so much from the project. The two teams worked together to prepare and plan in the early months so when they began their field work, data collection went as smoothly as possible. While designing their surveys the students have been collaborating with various agencies and organizations to tap into the network of expertise ensuring their work is relevant and useful for TNTBC.

Conducting surveys throughout the winter months has meant dealing with weather challenges such as rain, high water levels and cold temperatures. Every day in the field can be different and the students have become quite adaptable and quick to innovate solutions to changes as they arise. Even though field work can be



BCIT students on The Nature Trust of BC's Squamish Estuary property

challenging, BCIT student team member Jocelyn Herbert believes that being out in the field on the beautiful Squamish Estuary is her favourite part of the project.

The Squamish Estuary is an interesting study area where the students can look at the influence of the urban and protected areas adjacent to the TNTBC property. Jocelyn thinks despite being located next to downtown Squamish, the property feels remote among the large Sitka spruce trees and marshy grasslands. Run-ins with prickly vegetation and tumbles while jumping over flooded channels seem to be the cause of the majority of field work bloopers. It is all part of the learning process.

These BCIT students have applied their educational skills, volunteered their time and shared their budding expertise with TNTBC. TNTBC is thrilled to have students on board, learning about conservation land management and how they can play a first-hand role in conservation while developing their careers.



Ralph Shaw at his fly tying bench



Enjoying a day fly fishing

The Quintessential Conservationist Ralph Shaw

On January 7, 2016 legendary fly fisherman, writer and founder of The Nature Trust of British Columbia, Ralph Shaw passed away.

Ralph was a retired teacher and school principal, who was recognized for inspiring an appreciation for the natural world throughout his long life. In 1984, he received the Order of Canada for his conservation efforts, specifically for establishing the McQueen Nature Centre outside Kamloops. He lived in Courtenay where he wrote a column on the importance of nature and the need to protect it for the *Comox Valley Record* newspaper for over 25 years.

Here is an excerpt from one of these pieces.

"I slowly mooched my way along the western edge of lake in a course I use when prospecting for fish. I was rewarded by three or four light takes on both flies, but nothing really taking hold. It was about this time that I noticed a large swan swimming in the lake and headed into the bay at the north end of the lake. I followed the swan and soon realized I was being watched by one of the eagles who lay claim to first rights to many of the fish we catch in Spider Lake. I no longer considered myself to be the only presence on the lake. It is times like this that watching wildlife can take over from the business at hand—fishing. I poured a cup of hot tea, had a sandwich and let the boat drift in the presence of these two majestic wild creatures. ...A day spent in the presence of wild creatures is both spiritually uplifting and soul enriching."

Ralph was one of the original founders of The Nature Trust of BC. He worked with the Minister of Environment Jack Davis, Member of Parliament Len Marchand and research scientist Dr. Alastair McLean to come up with a plan to form a trust for the funds from Ottawa to British Columbia to celebrate the centennial in 1971.

Since that time, The Nature Trust has secured over 480 properties across the province with the guidance of a board of directors of renowned scientists and business leaders.

Most recently Ralph supported our acquisition of the last piece of the Salmon River estuary. He wrote about this outstanding river and encouraged people to follow his lead and donate. A dedicated conservationist, educator, author and ambassador for The Nature Trust of BC, Ralph Shaw was a Conservation Champion and will be sadly missed.

We are honoured that his family asked people in lieu of flowers to make a donation in his memory to The Nature Trust of BC. You can donate online at www.naturetrust.bc.ca or call us toll free at 1-866-288-7878 to donate with Visa, Mastercard, or American Express or mail a cheque payable to The Nature Trust of BC at #260 – 1000 Roosevelt Crescent, North Vancouver, BC V7P 3R4



Ralph Shaw's famous Tom Thumb flies

upcoming events



Join us on Saturday, June 18 at the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort in Kelowna for an amazing night featuring food served by sizzling chefs, outstanding local wine and beer, and a fantastic selection of live and silent auction items.

We will start with a sparkling reception and jazz singer Anna Jacyszyn. Then you can enjoy chef and wine stations and later bid on a variety of items. Finally, you can get on the dance floor with live music! This fundraiser benefits the land conservation work of The Nature Trust of BC in the Okanagan.

Tickets are \$175 per person and reserved tables for 8 are \$1,400. Sponsor tables are also available: Earth table \$10,000; Wind table \$5,000; Fire table \$2,500. Tables of 10 are available upon request. For more information on how you can be a sponsor or to purchase tickets, e-mail jdrew@naturetrust.bc.ca or call toll free 1-866-288-7878.

Brant Wildlife Festival



The Nature Trust of BC is delighted to be coordinating the Brant Wildlife Festival on mid-Vancouver Island from March 19 to April 17. The festival celebrates nature, especially Brant geese as they stop to rest and feed during their migration to their northern nesting grounds. There are activities for all ages and including wildlife viewing, bioblitz, guest speakers and spring break nature camp for kids.

Join us on March 19 to kick off the festival at the Beach Club Resort in Parksville with a buffet dinner, youth nature photo display and live music. Tickets are \$40 and available by calling 1-866-288-7878 or e-mailing rrivers@naturetrust.bc.ca. Visit the website for details: brantfestival.bc.ca

A Voyage of Discovery



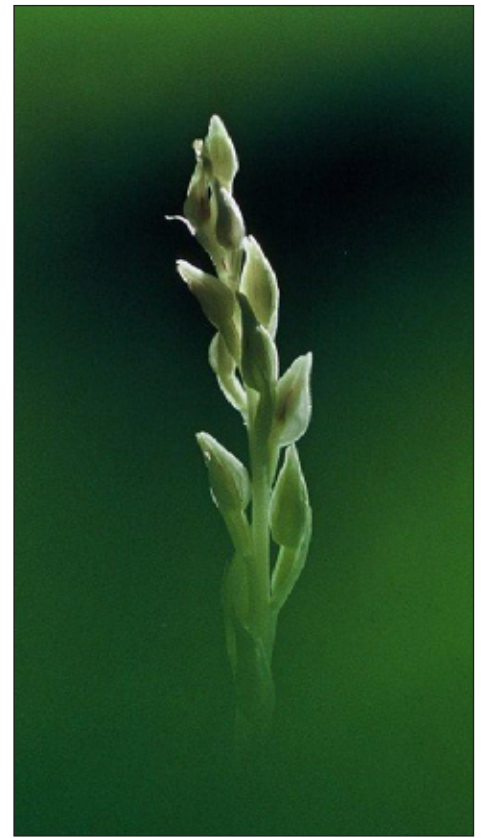
Find out all about the Franklin Expedition in the Arctic from Captain Bill Noon of the Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* on April 14 in Victoria. Then enjoy a delicious meal complete with dessert and wine. \$90 per person. To reserve a spot or find out more, e-mail rrivers@naturetrust.bc.ca or call 1-866-288-7878.



Ute's lady tresses orchid by Curtis Bjork



Fairy slipper orchid by Ian Gardiner



Phantom orchid by Graham Osborne

The Magical Mystery of Orchids

By Jocelyn Wood, The Nature Trust of BC Lower Mainland Field Operations Technician

It is easy to overlook the magical and unique interactions of native herb species going on underfoot when distracted by the showy flowers in garden beds and the cacophony of migrating bird song in the spring. One such family of underrated herbs that can be found around the globe wherever there is soil is the orchid. The orchid family is one of the largest families of flowering plants with over 25,000 types and new wild species being discovered every year. The Ute's lady tresses orchid was recently discovered in the Okanagan close to The Nature Trust's Vaseux Lake conservation complex and is the only recorded incidence of the orchid in Canada.

Orchids are known for their bilaterally symmetrical flowers that, like our faces, if vertically divided, the two halves are mirror images of each other. Orchids can be highly specialized, attracting one particular insect for pollination or relying on a symbiotic relationship with a particular fungus for food.

The phantom orchid is one such highly

specialized orchid that can be found in British Columbia. It gets its name from its ghostly white appearance and elusive nature. Rather than producing green leaves and stem with chlorophyll through photosynthesizing processes, the phantom orchid has formed a unique relationship between a soil fungus dependent on the health of the

The orchid family is one of the largest families of flowering plants with over 25,000 types.

mature forests in which it grows. This dependency makes the phantom orchid incredibly rare. It has three known locations in BC including The Nature Trust of British Columbia's conservation property: Katherine Tye Ecological Reserve in the Fraser Valley. However, the phantom orchid remains unpredictable and difficult to observe since it can remain dormant for up to 17 years.

While searching out rare orchids may seem challenging, British Columbia has 40 taxa of wild orchids some of which can be commonly found along trails, in forests, next to rivers or in wetlands all over the province. One of the most beautiful orchids found in coniferous forests is the fairy slipper. This orchid produces a single flower in the spring that attracts pollinators through deception. Rather than producing nectar, the fairy slipper's flower emits an enticing vanilla fragrance to draw in bees to its pouch whereby disappointed bees unintentionally collect and distribute the orchid's pollen.

Each orchid species has a story to share about how it survives and what conditions it needs to sustain itself. As highly adapted species sensitive to changing or disturbed conditions they are challenging to study. Many of the mysteries behind the habits of orchids remain unsolved by botanist detectives, but the discovery of their simple beauty hidden in a bog or forest understory is always a reward for even the most novice naturalist.

Committed to Conservation - A Future Gift

By Steve Housser, The Nature Trust of BC Leadership Giving for Vancouver Island

At The Nature Trust of BC, we call donors who indicate they are leaving a future gift for our land conservation work, “Visionaries”. I was honoured to have the chance to meet with two such visionaries recently and to learn about their commitment to conservation. I hope by sharing their story, it might encourage others to consider a bequest to The Nature Trust and leave a legacy for nature.

Dr. Lynne Brookes and Dr. Derrick Grimmer are a “Visionary” couple. Derrick is a physicist engaged in alternative energy. Lynne is a conservationist and gardener extraordinaire with a PhD in environmental education. She has put in thousands of hours of volunteer work as president of the Arrowsmith Naturalists Club in Parksville, as a volunteer for the North Island Wildlife Association and as an instructor at Vancouver Island University Elder College.

Lynne’s love of conservation started early, “In my childhood I had the freedom to roam fields, catch snakes and lizards, or take a tortoise or pet rabbit for walks in the fields, and to care for living things.



*Derrick Grimmer and Lynne Brookes
enjoying the great outdoors*

My mom went back to university when I was young to study botany and dad was a Scout leader so we were always out hiking and camping, surrounded by nature.” Lynne says leaving a legacy for conservation was an easy decision, “You hate to see anything of great value destroyed or damaged. The environment is often destroyed by ignorance and unbridled extraction. But just as you can destroy, you can protect.”

Derrick and Lynne live in Errington on Vancouver Island. Their 10-acre property is living testimony to conservation – 90% of it left in a natural state, the rest

containing their energy efficient solar paneled house and shop, and wildlife friendly gardens galore featuring native plants and rain gardens; all tended with loving care and open to share as a living laboratory.

Lynne and Derrick are so committed to conservation while alive, they want their love of nature to carry on after they are gone. They believe their bequest to The Nature Trust of BC will help ensure habitat protection for future generations, “To have healthy humans you have to have a healthy environment. It is essential that natural places be preserved and protected for the benefit of all life.”

A big thank you to Lynne and Derrick for sharing their love for nature and leaving a legacy for conservation. You are true “Visionaries”.

If any readers would like to consider a bequest to The Nature Trust of BC, please feel free to contact: Deb Kennedy, toll free: 1-866-288-7878 debkennedy@naturetrust.bc.ca, or on Vancouver Island, Steve Housser: 250-732-2322 shousser@naturetrust.bc.ca

Leaving a Charity: the Gift of Life Insurance

By Vanessa DeDominicis, Pushor Mitchell LLP • 250-869-1140 • dedominicis@pushormitchell.com

Not only does life insurance enable you to benefit a charity after your death, but you can also receive substantial tax savings, depending on how you structure your gift of life insurance. You can either set it up so that you own the life insurance policy yourself with the charity as your named beneficiary thereunder, or you can set it up so that the charity owns the policy on your life, and is the beneficiary thereunder as well. If you are doing it in the latter way, provided the charity has a charitable registration number, the premiums you pay for the life insurance policy each year qualify as a tax-deductible donation on your annual income tax return—giving you the benefit of instant tax savings.

Some people prefer to own the life

insurance policy on their own life themselves and name the charity as the beneficiary. You could also name the “Estate” as the beneficiary and then deal with the life insurance through your Will (but this will incur probate taxes of approximately 1.4% and delay the gift giving until probate has been granted). The benefit of this arrangement is that it allows you to easily change the charity that will receive the benefit, if your affiliation changes during your lifetime.



However, if you own the life insurance policy and name the charity as the beneficiary, in terms of tax consequences, you aren’t entitled to a charitable donation tax credit for the life insurance premiums you pay. That being said, upon your death the charity will issue a tax receipt for the life insurance proceeds it receives. The charitable tax credit may help reduce the income tax payable by your estate (for example if your estate owes capital gains tax/taxes on your RRSPs etc.), so there is still some benefit to structuring your life insurance gift this way.

Either way, life insurance is a great way to give a potentially sizable gift to a charity without it costing you a fortune—other than the monthly premiums.

Encouraging Others

By Steve Housser, The Nature Trust of BC Leadership Giving for Vancouver Island

It was a pleasure for me to recently meet Dr. John Fitch, former Chair of the Greek and Roman Studies department at the University of Victoria.

Now Professor Emeritus, John spends a great deal of time, when he is not translating Latin texts, observing and writing about wildflowers. This hobby harkens back to his childhood. As a lad growing up in the Docklands district of London, there weren't many flowers at all, "But holidays in the countryside provided a revelation of a different world, which has stuck with me all my life."

Wildflowers of the Coast is a collection of John's poems. Many of them express his love for nature and why conservation is so necessary.

Here is an excerpt:

*Wild Strawberries! Bergman's title
was vivid for a city boy:
it evoked a pristine world
where nature's gifts could exist
untrampled, unpoisoned, unbulldozed.*

Like many people who live in British Columbia, being outdoors has been an important part of John's life. An acute observer of the details and miracles of our natural surroundings, he has found content for his poetic expression but also developed a deep appreciation for what nature brings into our lives. "Being in wild spaces has always been a special experience for me, akin to being in the presence of great music or great art. Given the rapidly growing population in

south western BC, it seems important to protect such places."

John explained he decided to make a bequest to The Nature Trust of BC because of its longevity, financial stability and reputation for excellent work in land conservation. As to publicity, he did not seek it but agreed to share his story, "...since so much of human behavior is based on imitation, it may encourage someone else to leave a legacy."

Thank you, Dr. Fitch!



Wild strawberries by Bonnie Moro



Dr. John Fitch

Big Ranch Wetland Project

The Nature Trust's Big Ranch Conservation Area near Sparwood in the East Kootenay features a diverse range of plant communities from old growth black cottonwood-spruce forests to open grasslands. This diversity of habitats contributes to utilization by many wildlife species ranging from raptors to the red-listed badger. Rocky Mountain elk are the most abundant ungulates using the property and estimates of their number vary between 200-700 animals. The bordering Elk River is a regionally significant fish-bearing river that contains populations of Westslope cutthroat trout, rainbow trout and the blue-listed bull trout.

In October 2015 four new wetlands were created on the Big Ranch. Wetlands are very productive ecosystems that are capable of supporting a wide spectrum of plants, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals. Financial assistance for the project was provided by the Habitat

Conservation Trust Foundation and the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program. It is anticipated that by creating this wetland complex the ecological richness and diversity of the Big Ranch will be enhanced.

Wetland restoration projects such as this are generally implemented in

the winter months when the ground is driest to enable equipment access and minimize potential damage to adjacent habitat values. The first photo shows the heavy work done to create the wetlands. The second photo shows the wetlands filled with water within 24 hours of construction.



Creating the wetlands in the winter



The wetlands filled with water

Research on The Nature Trust's White Lake Basin Ranch

By Stephanie Winton, Master of Science student

Assessing the impacts of road mortality on amphibian and reptile populations in the South Okanagan is the focus of my MSc research at Thompson Rivers University.

My study site is located within The Nature Trust of BC's White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch. Reptiles and amphibians are a prominent portion of the at-risk wildlife within the White Lake Basin. This community consists of four amphibian species, seven snake species and one turtle species, all of which are susceptible to being killed on the road. The tiger salamander is of particular interest, being considered "endangered/threatened" in B.C. Given the conservation status of the Biodiversity Ranch, the roads that transect the area are the major human-caused disturbance faced by the wildlife in the Basin.

Over the past summer I conducted road and habitat surveys, mark-recapture population studies, and tracked animals through radio-telemetry. The population of western rattlesnakes was closely examined, with the goal of quantifying

impacts due to roadkill and any other potential threats in the area. Salamander reproduction was carefully monitored in White Lake and neighbouring water bodies. Given similar habitat relationships among species, it is expected that the work on salamanders and rattlesnakes will also provide insight on many other species in the area. For example, through recording the locations and timing of roadkill of all wildlife species, we will be able to identify "hot spots" where high amounts of roadkill are occurring, as well as specific environmental conditions associated with roadkill. Radio-tracking the animals will also reveal key habitats such as travel corridors and sites producing young-of-the-year.

This work greatly adds to the body of knowledge about these animals in the White Lake Basin and facilitates identification of critical habitat for threatened species. It also represents the first solid, focused study on roadkill for tiger salamanders and rattlesnakes in the province.



Weighing a Pacific treefrog



Stephanie measuring snake

| new board member



The Nature Trust of BC is delighted to welcome a new Board member: Dr. Sarah (Sally) Otto. Sarah is a professor in the Department of Zoology and Director of the Biodiversity Research Centre in the Beaty Biodiversity Centre at the University of British Columbia.

Sarah helped establish the Canadian

Society of Ecology and Evolution and the Liber Ero Postdoctoral Fellowship program in conservation biology. She has also served as Vice President of the Society for the Study of Evolution, the American Society of Naturalists, and the European Society of Evolutionary Biology, Council member for the Society for the Study of Evolution and the American Genetic Association, and member of several editorial boards.

A highly acclaimed scientist, Sarah received the coveted MacArthur Fellowship in 2011—popularly known as the Genius Award. Other awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a McDowell Award for Excellence in Research (UBC), a Steacie Fellowship (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Canada), the Steacie Prize (National Research Council, Canada), and the Sewall Wright Award (American Society of Naturalists).

The Nature Trust of British Columbia

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