



NATURE TRUST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA NEWSLETTER

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Help Us Save Critical Okanagan Land

Help us acquire a key property in the White Lake Basin in the South Okanagan. The 32.2 hectare (80 acre) parcel features sagebrush steppe, grassland, broadleaf woodlands, wetlands, and rocky outcrops as well as Park Rill Creek which runs through the property.

“The White Lake Basin is one of the gems in The Nature Trust of BC’s conservation land portfolio,” said Nick Burdock, Okanagan Conservation Land Coordinator. “The Park Rill Creek property is one of the finest examples of mixed riparian habitat along the Park Rill corridor. You really get the sense that this piece of land has been cared

for in a way that protected its conservation values.”

It provides habitat for the endangered Half-moon Hairstreak butterfly and other rare species such as Brewer’s Sparrow, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Painted Turtle and Blotched Tiger Salamander. The property would be added to The Nature Trust of British Columbia’s White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch complex.

As we launch this project, we are seeking to fundraise \$1.15 million which includes acquisition, legal, start up and land management costs. Call us to donate at 604.924.9771 (or toll free 1.866.288.7878) or visit www.naturetrust.bc.ca.

Priority 
Project

Please consider an annual gift to The Nature Trust of BC so together we can conserve land for future generations. You can donate in many ways including publicly listed securities such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds. Call us to donate at 604.924.9771 (or toll free 1.866.288.7878) or visit www.naturetrust.bc.ca.

Englishman River Estuary Restoration

The five-year restoration of the Englishman River Estuary to improve habitat for fish and wildlife started this summer in Parksville on Vancouver Island.

The Englishman River estuary and adjacent habitats support over 250 bird species, 23 mammals, plus several amphibians, reptiles, all species of Pacific salmon, and forage fish such as herring and Pacific sand lance. For over 25 years, The Nature Trust of BC and our partners have worked to secure land along the river.

Since the 1930s, the Englishman estuary has been impacted by dikes, roads, residential development, industrial uses, and ditching. The first step of this 5-year restoration project was to remove an old abandoned roadway on the west side of the estuary that was originally constructed in the 1960s for log booming operations. Other activities include enhancing tidal channels, increasing habitat complexity for fish and wildlife, and removing invasive plants. Funding for this project is provided by Canada's National Wetland Conservation Fund and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation.



Work begins to remove an old roadway

This project is coordinated by the Vancouver Island Conservation Land Management Program on behalf of The Nature Trust of BC, and involves several partners including Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, BC Conservation Foundation, Mid-Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society, the Arrowsmith Naturalists, and Guardians of Mid-Island Estuaries Society.



Skaha Lake Eastside

Skaha Lake Success

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is pleased to announce the purchase of the Skaha Lake Eastside property near Penticton with the generous support of many partners and donors.

“So glad there’s been success with the Skaha Lake property,” said Judie Steeves, West Kelowna freelance writer. “As a kid, I used to go hike up on those bluffs and sit and contemplate the future as I looked out over Skaha Lake. I love that area. Saw my first rattler in the wild there, too.”

This property which spans 35.4 hectares (87.5 acres) features critical habitat for Bighorn Sheep and other wildlife on the eastside of Skaha Lake. It is adjacent to our existing Skaha Lake Property complex which is included in the McTaggart-Cowan/Nsk’niw’t Wildlife Management Area.

This land has a variety of habitat ideal for Bighorn Sheep. The open grassland dotted with ponderosa pines and Douglas-fir provides grazing area and the rocky steep bluffs provide protection from predators.

The Skaha Lake parcel is located in two of the most endangered biogeoclimatic zones: Bunchgrass and Ponderosa Pine. In addition to Bighorn Sheep, this property supports other species at risk such as the White-throated Swift and Western Rattlesnake and potentially the endangered American Badger.

This property is an infill piece, surrounded by our conservation lands to the north and east with the Eastside Road to the west and the south adjacent to a housing development.

This project was made possible with the generous support of the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, BC Conservation Foundation, Sitka Foundation, Gosling Foundation, Wild Sheep Society of BC, Environment and Climate Change Canada and individual donors.

SPECIAL EVENT

2017 Fall Gala

Thank you to all our sponsors, guests and donors who helped raise funds at the Gala for our land conservation projects.

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Gala guests with MC Tess van Straaten from CHEK TV

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Hockey hero and conservationist Willie Mitchell



Nature Trust Chair Ron Anderson presenting Conservation Champion Award to Dr. Peter Pearse





Photo monitoring in the Okanagan



Wildlife monitoring at Buttermtubs Marsh on Vancouver Island



Fence repair in the Kootenays

Conservation Youth Crews

The Nature Trust of BC hired young people in four regions this summer: Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, Okanagan and Kootenays. These crew members learned about land conservation while undertaking projects on over 75 Nature Trust properties including restoring habitat, installing signs, removing invasive plants, and monitoring wildlife and plants.

The Nature Trust was pleased to have the support of BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Canada Summer Jobs (Service Canada), Caritate Foundation, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, Great-West Life, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and The Tony Cartledge Fund to help fund the crews.

"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."

Brittany Bonapace, Lower Mainland Crew

"The Nature Trust of BC is an organization that looks out for everyone and everything from small habitats of rodents and badgers to ungulates, bears and humans."

Kaylin Salanski, Kootenay Crew

"My favourite activity was checking the Tree Swallow nest boxes on the Cowichan River Estuary."

Hilary Blackman, Vancouver Island Crew



Conservation Youth Crew member installing sign

A Tribute to Jim Walker

In June our friend and past director of The Nature Trust of BC Jim Walker died.

Jim was known for his expertise in wildlife management and land-use management. He held several senior positions with the provincial government, including Assistant Deputy Minister in charge of Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, and Director of Wildlife. Jim was a leader in helping to develop a number of provincial initiatives, such as the Forest Practices Code, the Muskwa Kechika Management Area, the Clayoquot Land Use Plan and the Grizzly Bear Strategy. Jim was a strong advocate for nature during his career and throughout his retirement.

Jim was a volunteer director of The Nature Trust of British Columbia from 2002 to 2012.

He wrote in the 2009 Annual Report: “For many years, The Nature Trust has acquired biologically rich and diverse lands to conserve BC’s biodiversity for generations to come. However, as public appreciation of nature continues to erode, it is imperative we and our conservation partners refocus our direction and make it a priority to educate the urban majority about our lands

and the values they represent. It is not enough to acquire land alone. Urban dwellers who lack early exposure, intimacy and connection with nature will continue to see the environment as a ‘hostile’ entity that requires domestication. Without public understanding, support and proactive conservation efforts, our land will remain unknown and its lush biodiversity will with time inevitably diminish.”

Jim worked tirelessly on the Biodiversity Committee of The Nature Trust Board and on the Biodiversity BC Steering Committee that developed and produced a number of publications including the significant, science-based assessment of the province’s natural environment called *Taking Nature’s Pulse: the Status of Biodiversity in BC*. *Taking Nature’s Pulse* was the result of an unprecedented collective effort by more than 50 scientists—both provincial and international, representing some of the best ecological thinking in BC—who contributed to its development and validated the importance of this province’s natural biological diversity.

A dedicated conservationist and ambassador for The Nature Trust of BC, Jim Walker will be sadly missed.



The Nature Trust will be naming an award in Jim Walker’s honour. Starting in 2018, the Jim Walker Award will recognize and celebrate an exceptional individual from our Conservation Youth Crew program, which helps to develop the next generation of conservation leaders in BC. Donate to the Jim Walker Award by calling 604.924.9771 (or toll free 1.866.288.7878) or visit www.naturetrust.bc.ca.

Nature Lover

Stephen Partington is passionate about conserving nature and an enthusiastic supporter of The Nature Trust. We asked him to share a bit about his interesting life.

What first made you interested in nature?

My mother told me once that I was born with a question in my mouth—so I suppose that translated directly into a curiosity about my immediate surroundings such as dirt, bugs, plants, rocks, water, food and, as Gerald Durrell aptly put it, my family and other animals.

By the age of three I had my first garden. Before leaving England at the age of five, I had walked with my family on moors, grit stone tors, beaches, woodlands and gardens. By the time I entered kindergarten in Toronto I was catching Smooth Greensnakes in the abandoned brickworks behind the house, and pulling samples out of Grenadier Pond for microscopic examination. I became enrolled in the Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Club at that same age.

Why do you think conservation is important?

How can it not be important? There are so many important reasons for conservation to be important: bio-ecological diversity, ecosystem health, aesthetics, psycho-spiritual well-being, socio-political stability and sustainability, eco-justice, cultural inspiration, human self-preservation.

What makes The Nature Trust your land trust of choice?

There is no choice. Early on I realized that if you want to conserve something you need to buy it. The Nature Trust buys land. BC has the greatest biodiversity among all the Canadian provinces and territories. The Nature Trust is focused exclusively on land within BC. It is fiscally responsible and run entirely without debt. The Nature Trust works within the establishment with support from a diverse community of naturalists, First Nations, business people, hunters, fishers, farmers, ranchers, loggers, recreationalists, governments, academics, educators, the general public and tourists.

I donated to The Nature Trust's Antelope-brush Conservation Area property in honour of key mentors in my life: Bert Brink who was a Director of The Nature Trust, Kevin Bell, Jude & Al Grass, Jeremy McCall, Bill Merilees, Anne Murray, Daphne Solecki, Dick Stace-Smith and Katharine Steig.



Stephen Partington helped to secure the Antelope-brush Conservation Area



Gail Kenner and Stephen Partington at Nature Trust Gala

SPECIAL EVENT

Earth Wind Fire 2017

Thank you for supporting our land conservation work with a wonderful evening filled with spectacular food, wine and music.



Volunteer Tom Kennedy with Event Honourary Chair Renee Wasylyk and friends



Nature Trust CEO Jasper Lament with winning chef Rod Butters and team



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MCs Andy and TJ



Farewell to Rob Neil

After 14 years as the Kootenay Conservation Land Manager, Rob Neil has retired and is looking forward to travelling far and near. Rob was a wonderful ambassador for The Nature Trust in Cranbrook and the surrounding area. He was a habitat conservation biologist with 28 years of operational experience in fish, wildlife, wildlife habitat, forestry and range management. He undertook ecosystem restoration on the Big Ranch, Hoodoos and Bummers Flats and worked with The Nature Trust team to secure many properties. All of us at The Nature Trust would like to wish Rob all the best during this next exciting phase of his life.



New Kootenay Conservation Land Manager

The Nature Trust is delighted to welcome Chris Bosman as our new Kootenay Conservation Land Manager. Originally from southern Ontario, Chris was attracted to the Kootenays in 2003 for its slower pace of life, outdoor recreation opportunities and its beauty and wildness. He has worked in the environmental non-profit sector as well as for provincial, local and First Nations governments. Chris previously worked for The Nature Trust as a Conservation Youth Crew member and supervisor on a seasonal basis from 2005 until 2009. He brings a multi-disciplinary approach to conservation and is thrilled to be back working with The Nature Trust.

New Directors

The Nature Trust is pleased to welcome four new Directors to the Board.

Trisha Beaty, a family physician, is currently teaching in the Department of Medicine at UBC. She has worked in public health clinics, travel medicine clinics, and general medical practice. Trisha is a director of the Sitka Foundation and has enjoyed being involved with projects promoting biodiversity, conservation and climate change issues over the past 10 years.

Bill Bennett is a retired Member of the Legislative Assembly and Cabinet Minister. He lives in Cranbrook amongst some of The Nature Trust's many Kootenay land holdings. As a young man, he owned and operated fly-in wilderness lodges. Bill is a life-long hunter and angler who cherishes wild places.

Andrea MacLeod is a biologist working in the field of environmental assessment and project permitting. She is currently the manager of environmental programs at the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority where she works to reduce environmental effects from Port development on Burrard Inlet and the Fraser River. Andrea is a lifelong birder and is passionate about conserving habitat to protect wildlife.

Justin Roach is the Director of Business Development for Fulcrum Asset Management. He has a 30-year history in capital markets starting at Dominion Securities in Toronto and culminating at Merrill Lynch in Vancouver. Justin spent 15 years as a mentor to the UBC Portfolio Management Foundation.



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