



NATURE TRUST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #49 FALL 2018



Photo: Dean van't Schip

“Heart of Savary” Saved

The Nature Trust of British Columbia would like to thank the Friends of Savary, Savary Island Land Trust (SILT), and the Savary Island community. Due to their generosity, 142 hectares (350 acres) on the island have been protected forever. The area, known as the “Heart of Savary”, is one of the best examples of coastal sand dunes in Canada. It’s also the largest groundwater recharge area on the island. We are proud to have partnered with these organizations and individuals to conserve these vital lands.

Sixteen years ago The Nature Trust of BC acquired a 50% interest in this land with support from John Nichol

and Dick Whittall, the provincial government and a group including Kip Woodward, George Reifel, and the Christopher family. This project has been our most challenging property and it has taken countless hours of Board and Staff time. Now we have acquired the remaining 50% interest, which protects the land forever, with the support of over 180 donors. We wish to thank the Friends of Savary, in particular John O’Neill, Peter Armstrong, Doug Christopher, Kip Woodward and Dan McIntyre. We would also like to thank SILT, especially Executive Director Liz Webster.

Priority 
Project

If you can help support land management for Savary Island, we would be very grateful. Please call Deb Kennedy at 604.924.9771 ext. 231 (toll free 1.866.288.7878) to donate via credit card or send a cheque to our new address listed below. All Heart of Savary donations received by December 31, 2018 will be recognized on a kiosk that will be installed on the island in 2019.

We’ve moved! Suite 500 – 888 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver BC V6C 3K4

Adding Another Piece to the Puzzle in the White Lake Basin

By Judie Steeves

Yellow monkey flowers scattered along the pathway through tall grass tell a tale of the dampness hidden at root level and rustling aspen leaves whisper the invisible location of a creek meandering through this grassland.

Clumps of gray sagebrush are accents on the grassy hillsides that rise on both sides, but they're also dotted with stately red-trunked ponderosa pines—both releasing distinctive aromas evocative of the hot, dry climate that is typical of the South Okanagan's desert ecosystem.

This diversity on the 32-hectare (79-acre) Park Rill Creek property is what makes this land critical to so many, often-endangered creatures and their habitat. These range from the Half-moon Hairstreak butterfly to the Blotched Tiger Salamander, the Brewer's Sparrow to the Badger.

Park Rill Creek is an infill property located within the White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch. This biodiversity ranch is managed

by The Nature Trust of BC in partnership with the Clifton Ranch.

The White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch is one of the largest intact grasslands in the region. East of it is BC Parks' White Lake Grasslands Protected Area, which links with the Vaseux-Bighorn National Wildlife Area of the Canadian Wildlife Service and more Nature Trust holdings on the west side of Vaseux Lake.

CEO Jasper Lament notes that the Park Rill Creek property includes riparian floodplain, wetlands, ponderosa pine, rocky outcrops, sagebrush steppe, broadleaf woodlands and grassland, all of which have been protected to a large extent by the family who has been managing the land until now.

Bryn White is manager of the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program. She notes this is a hot spot for species at risk and includes three of four biogeoclimatic zones that are of concern in this province—Bunchgrass, Ponderosa pine and Interior Douglas fir—while 30 per cent of BC's listed species at risk are here.

Penticton Indian Band knowledge-keeper Richard Armstrong calls the basin "a breadbasket for us. We still dig roots and pick berries, even though we are not so much dependent on them for our food."

His people are part of the health of the land, as are caretakers such as The Nature Trust, he adds.

The Nature Trust is working to close the Park Rill Creek property. This project received \$200,000, one of the first grants from the South Okanagan Conservation Fund which is overseen by the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen and provides grants for conservation. Other supporters include BC Conservation Foundation, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, South Okanagan Naturalists' Club, and individual donors.



Park Rill Creek



Nature Trust CEO Jasper Lament, Judie Steeves and members of the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

Our Conservation Youth Crews

“Having a job in my field of studies meant that I could gain experience and learn valuable skills while living in a beautiful part of the province,” says Emily Markhom, Kootenay crew member.

Each summer The Nature Trust of BC hires students and other young people to join our Conservation Youth Crews based on Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, Okanagan and Kootenays, and supervised by regional Conservation Land Managers. The crews restore habitat, install signs, remove invasive plants, and monitor wildlife and plants on our properties. They gain skills such as how to use power tools, GIS technology, and the challenges of working outdoors. After they finish their education, many of them go on to careers in conservation and five have joined our staff.

In 2018 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, Chris Cornborough, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, Great-West Life, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and The Tony Cartledge Fund to help fund the crews.

Jim Walker Conservation Youth Crew Award

In honour of the late Jim Walker, who was a director of The Nature Trust of BC for 10 years and was well known for his expertise in wildlife management and land-use management, an award was established. This award recognizes and celebrates an exceptional individual from our Conservation Youth Crew program, which helps to develop the next generation of conservation leaders in BC.

Congratulations to Ethan Ingham on the Kootenay crew who received the inaugural award in 2018.



Ethan Ingham with Nature Trust Kootenay Conservation Land Coordinator Joe Strong

🌱 UPDATE

Columbia River Wetlands – Edgewater

We are working to conserve a key property for wildlife in the Kootenays. The Columbia River Wetlands-Edgewater property near Radium Hot Springs covers 171.5 hectares (423 acres) and features outstanding habitat for Grizzly Bears and American Badgers. It also provides winter range for Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer and Moose. The funding is in place and this property will close in 2019.

One of The Nature Trust's goals is to add new properties to existing ones to create larger complexes. The Columbia River Wetlands-Edgewater property will be added to Nature Trust conservation lands that are part of the Columbia National Wildlife Area. An additional benefit to conservation is that the property is adjacent to the Columbia Wetlands Wildlife Management Area which has significant migratory bird habitat for over 200 species.



If you would like to help us acquire new conservation lands across the province, you can donate via credit card by calling our office at (604.924.9771 in the Vancouver area or toll free 1.866.288.7878), online at www.naturetrust.bc.ca or by mailing a cheque payable to The Nature Trust of BC to: Suite 500 - 888 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver BC V6C 3K4

 SPECIAL EVENT

2018 Fall Gala

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



Singers Dorothea Hayley and Melanie Adams with pianist Annabelle Paetsch



Volunteers Alexa Salter and Colin Kehoe



MC Steve Housser



Nature Trust staff

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Photographer

Matt Kennedy



Nature Trust CEO Jasper Lament at the Silent Auction

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Presenting Sponsor Wheaton Precious Metals table



Sponsor Kirsten Martin and Mark Salmon



Nature Trust Chair Ron Anderson and CEO Jasper Lament flank 2018 Conservation Champion Award winners John O'Neill and Liz Webster



The Nature Trust of BC's Antelope Brush property in the South Okanagan was in part donated through the Ecological Gifts Program. (Photo: Environment and Climate Change Canada)

Preserving our Natural Heritage with the Ecological Gifts Program

By Elizabeth Jordan and David Cunnington,
Ecological Gifts Program, Environment and Climate Change Canada

The Nature Trust of BC's Antelope-brush property in the South Okanagan was in part donated through the Ecological Gifts Program.

British Columbians know how fortunate they are to live in a place of extraordinary natural beauty and biodiversity. They also know the importance of being good environmental stewards. For many private landowners, stewardship of the land is a long

standing family tradition. Five generations of the Kennedy family have been protecting the natural heritage of their Antelope Brush property in the South Okanagan since Peter McIntyre settled there in 1886. When Margaret and Jim Little had the opportunity to acquire property near Whispering Pine Lake, where Jim had grown up, they named it Little-Levin Lake after Jim's parents and grandparents who had been homesteaders in the area. When these families wanted to guarantee that their lands would be protected into the future, they worked with The Nature Trust of BC and the Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program to make that happen.

Preserving our natural heritage is often a group effort, with many participants working together: individual or corporate landowners, land trusts, provincial and municipal governments. The Government of Canada partners in these efforts to protect properties with ecologically sensitive features that currently, or may in future, make a significant contribution to conserving biodiversity and our environmental heritage through the Ecological Gifts Program. The Nature Trust of BC manages 55, or nearly one third, of the 180 completed ecological gifts donated throughout British Columbia.

If you would like to learn more about how you can make a gift to The Nature Trust of BC through the Ecological Gifts Program, please see our website naturetrust.bc.ca or call our office at 604.924.9771.



The Little-Levin Lake property in the Peace River District was donated to The Nature Trust of BC through the Ecological Gifts Program.



The Nature Trust's Scout Island property in Williams Lake

Conversations on Conservation: Rod Hoffmeister

This is the first in a series of interviews.

Rod Hoffmeister, Honourary Colonel of The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, sat down with The Nature Trust of BC for a conversation about the legacy of his father Bert Hoffmeister who was appointed by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1971 to lead The Nature Trust. Rod shared some behind-the-scenes stories about his dad and offered his own perspective on the continuing importance of conservation and his support for The Nature Trust of BC.

Do you think your father would be surprised that The Nature Trust of BC is still going strong after 47 years?

He wouldn't be surprised. No. He set it up to survive. He was tapped by Prime Minister Trudeau to lead it and then he tapped a great team. If my dad asked you to be part of the team, it would have been a challenge to turn him down. He was also successful in building partnerships with parks and other nature conservancies.

Bert Hoffmeister was one of the most decorated Canadian soldiers of the Second World War, a retired forestry executive and a conservationist. Yet, you've said that it was this last role that you believe he would like to be most remembered.
Dad loved the outdoors—hiking, boating, horseback riding. He skied until he was 80. He was unstoppable. Becoming the first chair of The Nature Trust of BC gave him the opportunity to be part of the whole province. He loved getting out into the country. One of the members of the board of directors had a float plane and another director had a helicopter. They would do scouting trips for properties to conserve.

There was very little money after the initial funding. They made the money stretch. They put a lot of it into Scout Island at Williams Lake, which was the first big acquisition. Another early acquisition was an important piece of land on the Adams River.

You are also a committed conservationist. Did your dad's love of nature influence you?

Dad had a deal with MacMillan Bloedel that he wouldn't work on

Saturday mornings. He said, "Saturday mornings are for Rod." So on Saturday mornings, even if I might have wanted to do something else, Dad hauled me out of bed. No negotiation! And we'd be off to ski or to hike to the peak of Seymour Mountain rain or shine.

What do you think your dad would think of The Nature Trust of BC today?

He'd be proud of it and the amazing portfolio of properties they've acquired and preserved.

What do you think the challenges to conservation are today?

Property values have gone up so significantly. Due to rising land costs, it is imperative to prioritize land acquisitions to get the best bang for the buck.

A key challenge is not just acquisition but stewardship. It's glamorous to buy property but it's not so glamorous to cut brush and mend fences.

Giving is also tougher today. Bequests are important. I have planned a bequest to The Nature Trust in my own estate planning. This is something others can do too.



Rod Hoffmeister at The Nature Trust's Scout Island property

Celebrating Birds & Conservation

The Nature Trust was pleased to host a reception on the opening day of the International Ornithological Congress in Vancouver in August. We were delighted that the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, MP for Delta was able to join us and share her perspective on the importance of birds and conserving habitat as well as the Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy for the Province of BC. Other attendees included Congress organizer Dr. Bob Elner and Vancouver International Bird Week organizer Dr. Rob Butler, past director of The Nature Trust of BC.

As our CEO Jasper Lament shared during his comments, “BC has the highest number of bird species of any province or territory in Canada. Many birds breed here. Others migrate here, stopping off to rest and feed before continuing on their journeys. Still others spend the winter here, enjoying our mild climate. Many bird habitats are under threat from development, population growth and climate change. We have a responsibility to BC, Canada and the world to protect these lands. Conservation is complicated, but the single most important way to protect birds and other wildlife is to protect their habitat.”



Ron Anderson, Chair of The Nature Trust, with Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility



Winning Photo

Congratulations to Claude Robidoux of Penticton for winning the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club photo contest with this image entitled Contenders. Claude, who has been passionate about photography for 25 years, explains how he came to take the photo:

“The winter of 2014 had been very cold and by the end of February part of Skaha Lake had frozen over. I found these bald eagles fighting over a carcass on the lake halfway between Penticton and Okanagan Falls.”

STAFF UPDATE

New Staff

The Nature Trust of BC is pleased to welcome Joe Strong to the new position of Kootenay Conservation Land Coordinator.

Joe has a passion for wildlife and fisheries, and has spent time working with both the Ontario and British Columbia provincial governments, in their fish and wildlife branches. He has worked in the Kootenay region for over 10 years, and has a true appreciation for the conservation values and opportunities in the area. Joe previously worked for The Nature Trust from 2009-2014, on a seasonal basis as a Conservation Youth Crew member and Field Operations Coordinator. He brings a strong fisheries/aquatic habitat background to the position and is happy to return to the organization.



NATURE TRUST
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New Address:

Suite 500 - 888 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver BC V6C 3K4
Tel: 604.924.9771 1.866.288.7878
info@naturetrust.bc.ca www.naturetrust.bc.ca
Charitable Organization Number 10808 9863 RR0001

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