



NATURE TRUST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
NEWSLETTER

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An Extraordinary Gift Breton Island – Whitridge Reserve

The Nature Trust will receive three extraordinary gifts just in time for the holiday season.

These properties are owned by families who love their land and want the natural values protected in perpetuity. This is why they are donating their property to The Nature Trust of BC.

Breton Island–Whitridge Reserve is a 12.6 acre island located near the east coast of Quadra Island. The island has excellent conservation values because it has no existing structures or docks and supports thriving plant and bird populations.

The property contains three sensitive ecosystems: mature coniferous forest, herbaceous rocky shoreline, and shallow marine area. All three ecosystems are in a relatively natural state. A community of the critically imperiled Roemer's Fescue – Junegrass may occur on this island.

This is a bird lover's paradise. The shallow marine area provides important habitat for sea ducks, shorebirds,

seabirds, and other waterbirds. Among the bird species using the island are the threatened Marbled Murrelet, and three species of special concern – the Ancient Murrelet, Cassin's Auklet, and Great Blue Heron. Provincially recognized species at risk that use the island include Brandt's Cormorant and Common Murre.

Other birds using this paradise include Bald Eagle, Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone, Common Loon, Common Merganser, Double-crested Cormorant, Harlequin Duck, Lesser Scaup, Pacific Loon, Pelagic Cormorant, Pigeon Guillemot, Red-necked Grebe, Rock Sandpiper, Savannah Sparrow, Surf Scoter, Surfbird, and White-winged Scoter.

By protecting the island, this acquisition will protect 1.2 km of coastal shoreline and approximately 22 acres of shallow marine area surrounding the island by ensuring that no infrastructure will extend over or through this important habitat.

Read about two more extraordinary gifts on page 2.

The Season of Giving

Extraordinary Gifts in an Extraordinary Year



Marsden Face – Rixen Creek

Ten families have come together to gift 80 acres in the West Kootenay, north of Nelson, to The Nature Trust of BC.

Walking the property you will find an intact riparian corridor along Rixen Creek surrounded by mature Western Redcedar and Western Hemlock. The property supports a diversity of wildlife habitats. Lodgepole Pine is a dominant tree species on-site. Rainbow Trout have been seen in the creek and the land is used by a variety of wildlife species including Cougar, Bobcat, American Black Bear, Mule Deer and Moose.

Caring in Perpetuity

On behalf of the 10 families donating this property, Chris and Val Speed shared their story:

We purchased this property in 1990 after it had been logged in an attempt to forever protect the Rixen Creek watershed, which supplied water at that time to 12 households. The following year we planted 20,000 seedlings to reforest the land which has returned to its former beauty.

With only six households remaining, and aging, we thought it was time to do something with the property as leaving it to our heirs would be troublesome for them. So we looked to The Nature Trust of BC for a way to solve this problem and still protect this land we love forever.

We like The Nature Trust's approach to stewardship of the properties that they own and look forward to passing our property on to them.

We feel as if we've found the right "family" to move into our "home".

As of late 2018 we have been working with them on designing a management plan, and touring the property to learn its history and many attributes.

We are all very excited about this arrangement with The Nature Trust and are glad to know that they will take care of this property in perpetuity.

Saving the Cowichan River

The Nature Trust is delighted to be receiving a donation of 36 acres of forest and riparian corridor along the Cowichan River near Duncan, on Vancouver Island. For over 30 years, The Nature Trust of BC has been focusing on the Cowichan River. With our partners we have conserved over 988 acres.

The Cowichan River is designated as a Canadian Heritage River System because of its significant abundance and variety of fish. Historically, the river supported some of the largest spawning runs of Chinook salmon in the entire Georgia Basin, along with substantial runs of Coho and Chum salmon. The river provides habitat for the blue-listed Cutthroat Trout as well as Rainbow Trout and Steelhead. Additionally, there are many smaller fish, such as Prickly Sculpin, Threespine Stickleback, and both Pacific and Western Brook Lamprey.

The Cowichan River–Gibbins Road property is in a relatively natural state consisting of primarily young with some mature coniferous forest ranging from 40 to 250 years old, as



well as 400 metres of sensitive riparian ecosystems along the Cowichan River. Black Cottonwood, Bigleaf Maple, Western Redcedar, Common Snowberry, Douglas fir, Dull Oregon Grape, and possibly Grand fir all grow on the property.

The shores around the Cowichan River abound with biodiversity and contain rare and endangered birds and other animals including the Vancouver Island Ermine, Roosevelt Elk, Peregrine Falcon, Band-tailed Pigeon, Barn Swallow, and Common Nighthawk. The Western Toad has been observed up and downstream of the property.

Acquiring land is only the first step. We need to care for these properties. This is why The Nature Trust is fundraising for a land management endowment for Breton Island–Whitridge Reserve, Marsden Face–Rixen Creek and Cowichan River–Gibbins Road.

Giving land to conservation is an amazing act. But each of these gifts needs to be cared for in perpetuity. Our land management team surveys each property, creates customized management plans, puts those plans into action, and reports on the health of the properties.

Part of the fundraising goal for each property acquired by The Nature Trust of BC is allocated to the ongoing expenses of land management and restoration.

In many ways land management is the key to conservation success. But it is also time and labour intensive. After the acquisition of a property, our land managers often have to organize and perform restoration work including removing buildings, structures, and trash. Waterways need to be restored, invasive plants need to be removed, habitats need to be protected and plans need to be implemented to support the vulnerable species that make these properties valuable for conservation.

Each property must be periodically assessed to ensure that the land, and the species that live there are growing and thriving.

If you value what we do, please consider making a special year end gift to support the land management endowment of these three properties.



A Galaxy of Gratitude

We are in the final stages of closing two of our 2020 priority projects: the Salmon River Estuary–Tidal Slough, and the Princeton Grasslands–Phase II.

The 35 acre Salmon River Estuary–Tidal Slough will be added to the Salmon River Estuary Complex on Vancouver Island, providing vital habitat for Pacific Salmon, migratory birds, and iconic wildlife.

The 963 acre Princeton Grasslands Phase II is the second acquisition of our three-phase grassland project in the Similkameen Valley, providing critical habitat to many vulnerable bird species and winter range for Mule Deer.

Thank you to everyone who has made this possible. We will have a full report on these projects in Spring 2021.



Conservation Crews

Even in this unusual summer season, The Nature Trust's Conservation Youth Crews got to work caring for critical conservation lands in BC. Following careful COVID protocols, including having smaller crews and size-limited community events, young people donned their safety gear and led the charge to manage habitat for vulnerable species.

Youth Crews based in the Lower Mainland, the Okanagan and the Kootenays were supervised by regional Conservation Land Managers. They restored habitat, installed signs, removed invasive plants, and monitored wildlife and plants on Nature Trust properties. They gained skills such as how to use power tools, and GIS technology, and they faced the challenges of working outdoors. Here is what they had to say about their summer experiences:



Amanda Wik—My favourite activity has been surveying the plant species that exist on each property. I have learned so much about the plant biodiversity from these surveys. Now whenever I go outside, I can identify the plants around me, which has made me much more aware of the unique features of each ecosystem.



Savanah Shirley—Being able to make a positive impact on the environment was a huge part of why I got into environmental science in the first place, so I wanted to ensure that I stuck to these values while looking for a summer co-op position.



Ethan Ingham—My favourite activity on the crew this year has been setting up trail cameras. We have installed three cameras so far, one near the location of a bear den, another at a badger crossing, and the last one is on a major game trail. I think it is super cool to see the wildlife that call our properties home. It gives you a real view of why the work that we do is important.

Logan Robertson—While working in this position, I have had a chance to learn a lot more about who NTBC is, how they acquire property, and what they do to manage these properties for wildlife. I have had opportunities to visit and work on properties throughout the East and West Kootenays and witnessed a massive variety in the type of landscapes the Nature Trust manages.



Duncan MacNaughton—Some of my highlights include doing bat counts, participating in snake research, and helping in Burrowing Owl conservation efforts. I've had the opportunity to learn from experts in many different fields during my time with The Nature Trust, and have been able to discover new things that I'm passionate about.

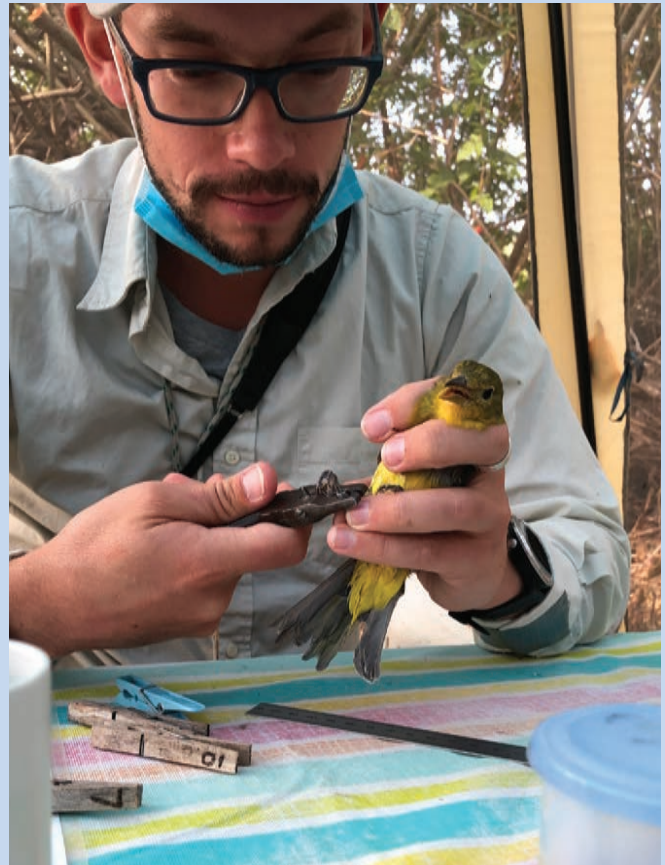
In 2020, The Nature Trust was pleased to have the support of our title sponsor Wheaton Precious Metals, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Canada Summer Jobs (Service Canada), Caritate Foundation, Chris Cornborough, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and The Tony Cartledge Fund to help fund the crews.



Yellow-breasted Chat



View over Vaseux Lake



Bander-in-Charge, Matthias Bieber

A Choice Sunrise with the Yellow-breasted Chat

Field Notes from Conservation Youth Crew Member Alex Thomson

As a Conservation Youth Crew member with The Nature Trust of BC, I had the opportunity to join the Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory and their scientists for a day of bird banding.

The Yellow-breasted Chat fits the definition of a migratory bird – “a bird that travels from one place to another at regular times often over long distances.” While migratory birds are protected by the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, many species, including the Yellow-breasted Chat, remain at risk.

The Yellow-breasted Chat is a riparian shrub specialist, living mainly in dense rose bushes like the kind naturally found in the Okanagan. Unfortunately, due to human activity, agriculture, and development, about 87% of their prime habitat has been reduced. This has led to the Southern Mountain population in BC to be designated as an Endangered Species under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

On a Friday in September, I worked with the Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory banding station with the Bander-in-charge, Matthias Bieber and banding assistant, Anna Skurikhina, both excellent teachers with extensive bird

knowledge. Every day from August 1 to October 15 this dedicated birding team checks 14 mist nests (sheer netting used to catch birds) every twenty minutes from sunrise until noon.

That day we caught, banded, and released some amazing species. Most exciting for me was the Yellow-breasted Chat, but we also found a Pine Siskin, Common Yellowthroat, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Song Sparrow among others. We stumbled upon a Pacific Tree Frog that was hiding out near the banding tent as well as a pesky Short-tailed Weasel and two White-tailed Deer. The banders say they have also seen an American Black Bear, an American Beaver, a moose, and several species of snakes near Vaseux Lake.

While the Nature Trust's first priority is acquiring land to protect critical habitat for wildlife species, we actively restore habitats. By planting riparian shrub species, such as Wild Rose we are restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat for species at risk such as the beloved Yellow-breasted Chat.

The Nature Trust of BC has conserved 1195 acres of habitat around Vaseux Lake.

Together for Nature Virtual Gala

Entering Uncharted Territory

2020 has been a year like no other. This year has strengthened our commitment to protect the natural spaces of BC and the benefits that nature provides. Benefits like fresh water and clean air, and outdoor places to refresh and renew our spirits.

There is no question this has been a challenging time. When we decided to host a virtual event this year instead of our traditional gala, we were like many non-profits—entering uncharted territory!

What didn't change was the support of our wonderful community. Conservation takes a community

and we feel so lucky that our community has stood by us through this challenge.

Thank you for joining us for our virtual fall gala *Together for Nature*—we celebrated the accomplishments of The Nature Trust of BC, and raised funds to keep nature in our future!

We are so grateful that you share our passion for nature and value the work of The Nature Trust. We look forward to coming together next year for our 50th anniversary.



CEO Jasper Lament hosting



Music by Karla Sax

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Conversations on Conservation: Trisha & Carolynn Beaty

In 2007, the Beaty family created the Sitka Foundation, a Canadian family foundation dedicated to supporting organizations committed to protecting the environment. Its granting program has helped more than 200 organizations in Canada which are tackling issues impacting nature across the country with a focus on the Pacific Northwest.

Trisha Beaty, medical doctor, clinical instructor in the Faculty of Medicine at UBC, naturalist and member of the Board of Directors at The Nature Trust of British Columbia, and her daughter Carolynn Beaty, Director of Grants at the Sitka Foundation and an elementary school teacher, sat down with The Nature Trust of BC to share their unique perspectives on conservation.

What spurred the creation of the Sitka Foundation?

Trisha: Intellectual, financial, and emotional tracks all played a role in the formation of Sitka. Early on in our relationship, my husband Ross and I developed a strong emotional connection with nature in the Pacific Northwest. We wish to give away a sizeable proportion of our wealth and intellectually, I wish to seek solutions to these important weighty issues of population growth, climate change, and environmental degradation. These three pillars have been the impetus for the creation of Sitka.

From your perspective, what are the conservation hot spots that need our attention?

Trisha: The conservation hot spot is the interface between climate change and pure land conservation. Conservation within impending climate change is one of my big concerns. It requires understanding what climate change is doing to our coastline, our communities and our land mass.

How do you support land conservation within the larger issue of climate change?

Trisha: We can enact change by supporting the change makers—the people who are catalysts for change in their communities: the people who know the most and have their finger on the pulse of an issue. Sitka supports them through multiple layers. We look at species at risk from climate change and how we can support their viability. We look at ecosystems or connected terrestrial areas and corridors which allow species to head where they need to during climate change. We also look at social change through education and communication to try to motivate society to adopt a lower carbon producing community or society and to be less consumptive.

Carolynn: It's also working with people who have deep connections and long histories with the land and ecosystems and, therefore, understand what the threats are and how



Trisha & Carolynn Beaty

climate is changing. The Nature Trust is a good example. It has strong connections to conservation. At Sitka I believe groups like The Nature Trust are change makers—community catalysts who have the ability to read their natural spaces well and to understand what is happening. We also trust Indigenous leadership—people whose world view is inextricably connected to the environment.

What do you think has contributed to the Nature Trust's record of success?

Trisha: The Nature Trust has a wonderful staff, a strong land management team, and a diverse board with an organized framework. This is key to its success. It also has a very clear mandate about what it's doing.

Carolynn: From a funder's point of view, the richness of The Nature Trust's projects is incredible and I'm proud we have supported the organization for many years and in so many different ways.

There's a recipe for success in everything that The Nature Trust does. The significant land that is sourced through people who passionately care about the land. The science they bring to their acquisitions. And the strategic way of acquiring land over many years. Savary Island is a great example of this recipe for success and what a great acquisition it is.

I also love the Conservation Youth Crews, and the ability of The Nature Trust to support jobs in beautiful places that connect with people who care about and for the properties.

Trisha: I also think we're fortunate because The Nature Trust has been so fiscally responsible making choices about land securement on a scientific basis. It's a wonderful combination. May it continue to grow.



New Staff



Welcome to Jes Hovanes, Communications Manager. Jes' background is in communications, journalism and writing. Most recently she held the position of Communications Manager with the Canadian HIV Trials Network and the Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences communicating research findings to a broader audience. Jes has a Master of Arts from Simon Fraser University and a Journalism Certificate from Langara College.

Jes grew up in northwestern BC and learned to love the outdoors. She spent summers fishing on the Skeena River, foraging in the forests and hiking in the mountains. "Being in nature is one of the great solaces of life," she says.

New Board Member



Rob Doyle is the Chief Financial Officer of Pan American Silver Corp, a position that he has held for the past 16 years. Since qualifying as a chartered accountant and CFA in Cape Town, South Africa, Rob's significant international finance experience includes various corporate finance roles based in New York and London.

Rob served as the Vice-Chair of Covenant House Vancouver's Capital Executive Campaign, which successfully raised over \$53 million to fund an expansion of the downtown facilities and services provided to homeless youth.

As an outdoor enthusiast with a spirit of adventure, Rob has a passion for nature conservation and the protection of biodiversity.

Donating Shares

A gift of publicly listed securities (including stocks, bonds and mutual funds) makes an excellent gift to The Nature Trust. Donations of such securities receive the charitable donations tax credit and are 100% exempt from capital gains. If you are a U.S. taxpayer, you can donate U.S. securities through The American Friends of Canadian Conservation and make them eligible for a NAWCA match—doubling the value of your donation.

Visit www.naturetrust.bc.ca/our-givings or call Deb Kennedy at 604.969.3269 for more information.

Have you heard?

The Nature Trust of BC is celebrating its **50th anniversary** in 2021. Join us throughout the year to salute our past, recognize our present and embrace the future. Our story is a BC story—a story about people committed to the value of conservation and a story of lands and landscapes and plants, fish and wildlife. Next year, please walk the land with us and help us raise funds to leave a lasting legacy to nature.

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