

# land

*the magazine of the Land Trust Alliance of BC*

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One Family's  
Inspiring Story to  
Protect their Land  
Forever

The Bright Future  
of BC's Land Trusts

Restoration  
Creates Home for  
Rare Woodpecker

A Special Gift of  
Land





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Salt Spring Island Conservancy  
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## Transformation

For the past decade the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia, LTABC, has published a magazine for its members. *The Kingfisher*, the most recent format, brought significant knowledge and research to those within the land trust sector. Its past is both respected and honoured as a publication and learning tool.


LTABC will continue to communicate with our member Land Trusts – we will simply use different formats. *LAND*, as our new publication will be known, brings you news about land trusts across British Columbia.

Few people know that our 30 Land Trust members have collectively conserved more than 1 million acres of land in British Columbia. From forests to grasslands, streams to heritage properties, our members have for the past 40 years saved some of the province's most valued and treasured lands.

Members such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Nature Trust of BC are marking 50th and 40th anniversaries respectively. New Land Trusts such as Haida Gwaii and Malaspina have just begun to steward landowners.

The stories we bring you in this first edition of *LAND* are a celebration of our members, the people who have conserved land and the future of British Columbia. With the strong base of support created by readers of *The Kingfisher*, to our new advertisers and distributors and the exciting support of our member Land Trusts, we hope you enjoy *LAND*!

Paul McNair  
Executive Director

PS  Like us on facebook ([www.facebook.com/landtrustbc](http://www.facebook.com/landtrustbc)) for you chance to win a copy of *British Columbia's Magnificent Parks* reviewed on p17



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# Past, Present & Future: One family's motivation to protect their land

## *Islands Trust Fund*

Acts to conserve nature are almost always selfless. We often ask what motivates someone to protect their land, and each person's reason is unique. With the help of the Islands Trust Fund and the Pender Islands Conservancy Association, Arthur Kikuchi and his family permanently protected their property with a conservation covenant. Their reasoning? Truly inspirational.

Arthur Kikuchi moved to North Pender Island because the landscape reminded him of Japan where he spent his childhood. His father was a lifelong naturalist, specializing in the protection of wetlands and forests. His family is deeply connected to and respects the landscape. Since he was a young boy, Arthur has always wanted to carry on his father's work, protecting land.

In 2009, when Arthur received an inheritance after his parents passed away, he chose to continue his father's vision by purchasing a forested lot on the island with the intent to protect it in its natural state. With the help of local land trusts – the Islands Trust Fund and the Pender Islands Conservancy Association – he placed a conservation covenant on the property ensuring that it would be protected from development long into the future. It is now called the Kikuchi Memorial – Frog Song Forest Covenant.

"I wanted to use the money they left me to do something that would make them proud," said Arthur, "so I covenanted the property. Whenever I come here, I feel my parents' presence. They never saw the property, but it's their lives, their work that protected it. I know they'd be proud of this legacy".

Arthur's children (pictured right) don't understand the legalities and

financial aspects of the covenant, but they do understand that the trees, plants, frogs and wetland will be here forever. They explore the covenant area with the awe and wonder of children: touching moss, smelling mushrooms, feeling the slime of a slug, measuring the weight of a deer bone found among the trees. They discover and investigate, using their senses to guide them. When asked what they love most about visiting the covenant, Arthur's daughter says, "Climbing and playing in the trees. It's better than any playground!"



Photo by Paul Petrie

This special legacy created through the life work of his parents will remain permanently protected beyond Arthur's lifetime; a gift to future generations. Arthur's outlook on the present and future is inspiring.

"People can't own the land, we're only borrowing it from the future." Arthur says, as he points to his children playing among the branches of a nearby cedar. "When we die, we can't take what we own with us. Therefore, our legacies are what we leave behind. I want to leave this protected place behind for my children, their children and the next generations in my community. That's what makes me most happy about the covenant".

To learn more about protecting your private property with a conservation covenant, visit the Islands Trust Fund at [www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca). □

## Conserving Brooks Point For Future Generations

### *Pender Islands Conservancy Association*



Photo by Paul Petrie

The challenge for the Pender Islands Conservancy to raise funds to ensure the protection, in its entirety, of a precious South Pender Island property has been one of inspiration and encouragement throughout, and has come to speak of a caring community in many ways.

Referred to as Brooks Point Phase III (pictured above), this property is at the southern tip of South Pender. With its magnificent waterfront location, extending into freshwater wetlands, it offers an unusual mosaic of ecological community types, all of which are considered provincially at risk.

Brooks Point is one of the last undeveloped open headlands on the Southern Gulf Islands - a special place for Orca viewing. Through community commitment and the generosity of the family of Alan Brooks, Brooks Point was acquired approximately 10 years ago,

PICA's goal is to raise sufficient funds to show our strong community support and cover the costs of acquiring and maintaining the area. Reaching out to the community with the theme, "Conserving Brooks Point for Future Generations" has had a heartwarming response, with a huge boost in May, when an anonymous donor, now known as our "Pender Angel", offered to match all donations up to \$50,000.

Perfect to the theme, our first doubled donation came from the four children of the Kikuchi family. Kenta, Yoko, Shinta, and Kota, and their cousin Yuya pooled their own savings to donate \$100. Their savings come from the sale of their inspiring nature photo cards and delightful hand-drawn cards that contain the message "Respect For Nature" on the back of each. They continued to save their money for us and contributed another \$104 in July, also matched by our Pender Angel!

Other community encouragement has come weekly at our PICA Farmers' Market kiosk, with the wonderful generosity of donations and purchases of our Brooks Point t-shirts and cards. We extend a special thanks to London Drugs for their assistance with the printing of our cards and brochures.

Other fundraisers have also brought in many donations. A bocce tournament included almost 100 participants and \$5000 in donations! A family dance also had more than 100 participants kicking up their heels! The children were a delight! Luscious home-baking fuelled the occasion!

We believe the strong commitment from our community and beyond is a key message to all. For information, email [pica@gulfislands.com](mailto:pica@gulfislands.com). □



# Looking Ahead: Larger Land Trusts See Bright Future

Tessa Humphries

*With the current economic situation and financial setbacks, LAND wanted to find out what Land Trusts thought about the future by interviewing the leaders of Land Trusts large and small in BC. In the first part, we spoke with Nature Trust CEO Doug Walker and Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC) BC Regional Vice-President Linda Hannah. They discussed their current projects, financial realities facing their organizations and what the future holds for Land Trusts.*



*Doug Walker, Nature Trust CEO and Linda Hannah, NCC's BC Regional Vice-President accept LTABC's Outstanding Land program award with Patrick Daigle for their organizations work on the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program. Read more page 10.*

***So, just to get started, what is the difference between what your organizations do?***

LH: Our focus is to conserve land with ecological significance in BC and indeed all across Canada. We have a national program that's in place and we're about to celebrate 50 years of success so we have quite a long history of conservation in Canada and indeed in British Columbia. We take what's called a business-like approach to our conservation efforts. We tend to go about our work fairly steadily and quietly in partnership with others.

DW: We're provincial based,

we operate only in British Columbia. We are looking at the conservation of ecologically sensitive habitats across British Columbia, and it's the partnerships that have been developed over that time that have allowed us to build the portfolio of lands.

***What are your thoughts on conserving private vs. provincial or government land?***

DW: British Columbia is fortunate that so much of it is under the Crown control - 94% is Crown land and 6% is private. The private pieces are in the most important, critical spots for habitats for fish and wildlife. Working with private land

owner creates the opportunity for people that are either looking for protection or conservation of their land, leaving legacies or looking at some type of a situation where they can work on covenants. Protection of the private land is the vast majority of what the Nature Trust has been working on for 40 years.

LH: BC needs a comprehensive, joint and integrated approach to land conservation so it's not public versus private or private versus public. Having said that, the role of the private sector is essential in achieving these conservation objectives. It's the low valley bottoms and those rich areas of land that are held in private lands that need

conservation attention. So we do need a hand and glove approach. One of the great lessons that's come out of the last decade or so is conservation cannot be achieved by any one agency or any one individual alone.

***What's the most important land to be saving?***

DW: All of it (laughs). The early days were done with people like Roderick Haig-Brown, Ian McTaggart-Cowan and Dr. Bert Brink. They did not have the sophistication that we have today to utilize

much better tools to both register and identify ecosystems, habitats and critical components within the province. So when you're looking at critical areas today, we're looking at certainly the Coastal Douglas Fir, the dry sort of coastal pocket deserts in the Okanagan Valley, certainly looking at the Fraser River ecosystems. It doesn't mean that other regions and ecosystems aren't important, but those are kind of the top priority.

LH: Just to build on that, I think the first thing to recognize is that any decision around land conservation needs to

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# Small Land Trusts Make a Big Impact

Tessa Humphries

*In BC, Land Trusts come in all shapes and sizes. LAND spoke with Linda Gilkeson, executive director of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy (SSIC), who shared her thoughts after 16 years in the Land Trust community and Hugh Westheuser, a director of Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT), who shared his thoughts on this voluntary organization.*



Hugh Westheuser, COLT



Linda Gilkeson, SSIC

## ***Tell about your organizations.***

HW: COLT was formed by the Central Okanagan Foundation. The foundation were a group of, for lack of a better word, old time Kelowna families who participated in this and they put money up. It was to address social concerns within the community and to raise money to

help out with these social concerns. They decided in their wisdom to form a new organization and invite interested people to help and make a reality of a group that would be a trust, following the Nature Trust of BC.

LG: The Salt Spring Island Conservancy was started in 1995, so we've been here 16 years. It was organized around a local campaign to save a very large piece of property and the group that organized kept on going. And it was actually all founding mothers that started it, so we always joke about the founding mothers. Over the years, we have gone from a small volunteer group to an organization with a small paid staff as well as a very active, large board.

## ***What is the most important land to be saving?***

HW: In the Okanagan, the most important land is anything to do with water, and that's the small creeks, the small little swamps that are left. Almost all of this has been wiped out in the lower elevation level and also included in that is the foreshore of the Okanagan Lake. It's been threatened in many ways, including development and agriculture, and that includes everything from small farming

to large vineyards. Everything needs water here and anything to do with water and, of course, the lake itself is a big attraction for people.

LG: It's funny because Salt Spring, it looks like it's in kind of a common sort of ecosystem, and in fact most of Salt Spring is in a very rare ecosystem for the province. Literally, almost anything on Salt Spring would be a high priority to save if you looked at the value and rarity of the ecosystems. Like any other conservation group you want to start with as intact a piece of property as possible or as ecologically valuable a piece as possible.

## ***What are some of the financial realities you're facing today?***

HW: The cost of buying land. For instance, I've been in conversation with landlords of a significant piece of water that has springs on it, that has a swamp. This has been hugely altered because of the fire that went through the Okanagan in 2003, but it has a creek in it. It was privately owned but they want to sell it. There's developers looking at this and competing with us to do it and whether we can do anything or not I don't know - a huge challenge!

LG: Well it's just simply having

enough money to operate and know where you might be able to acquire it. Some of the grant proposals that we wrote for the large property we bought last year, required a good level of technical knowledge. We have the staff to do that, but if you didn't, you'd find it difficult to get into that level of quality of work that's needed to be able to even access some of those levels of funding. The Island is a limited geographical area, there's actually quite a lot of volunteer operations and charities operating on the Island. We're playing in a donor pool that isn't that large. We have to think of some creating ways around that.

## ***What does the future look like for your organization?***

HW: Our future, in my view, looks very good. We need to renew ourselves every so often and we really need money. So we've got our sites turned in a separate direction right now other than acquiring land with the longterm intention of acquiring land but with the short term trying to find ways to raise money to do this.

LG: It's good. We're financially stable at the moment. We have a good annual appeal program and are building up a major donor program. Everything's free and clear, we have no debts. And we have a higher profile in the community.

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# Larger Land Trust Con't

*from page 6*

LH con't: be made in a very conscious and deliberate manner. So that science-based approach comes to assist in making these decisions about where the most ecologically significant lands are located. Certainly the Coastal Douglas Fir and the Interior Ponderosa Pine environments, those are the ones that are a spotlight right now for our efforts. Having said that, a lot of attention has to be paid towards migration corridors for wildlife and animals.

## ***What advice do you have for smaller trusts?***

LH: Take an approach that's for the longterm. So it requires a mind set that is also thinking longterm and perpetuity. It means having a good business plan in place, focusing on your priorities, thinking about the longterm needs for stewardship. Get really good people involved, those who understand the complexities and the demands that land conservation calls for. Make sure the organization doesn't bite off more than it can chew. Strive for quality rather than quantity.

DW: Bigger is not always better. It's important to keep focused on your core mandate and to develop the strengths around the people that have common

interests. If you're at a stage where you're able to have staff, that's a great opportunity for encouragement to involve and engage with other groups to learn from people. If it's a volunteer organization, make sure you have the good, qualified board members who have the different strengths and capacities. Financial stability is critical for any group, large or small. Be aware not to extend your capacity beyond your ability to cover those costs.

## ***On the subject of costs, what are the financial realities land trusts are facing today?***

DW: The operating costs to maintain or continue forward are just becoming more and more difficult. The importance of having sustainable funding

for operations and management is both critical and vital to the future health of any organization. Once you get a property and you're looking after it or managing it there's always some cost involved, so you have to build it in to your endowment program or somehow know how you're going to manage it going forward. The financial health and success of the larger organizations is predominantly because of either large endowments or large capacity to raise money, and it takes an army of people to make all that happen. You can't simply just stop, because we've put the message out that we're there to look at these lands in perpetuity, conserving it is our job.

LH: He summed it up. I think that's one of the toughest realities that land trusts large and small will face for the near term. Everyone does need to get their organizations wrapped

around that reality because without a sustained funding source the good work that's been accomplished and the work that does need to be done is going to be compromised.

## ***And finally, what are your predictions for land trusts for the future?***

DW: I think the future is brighter for conservation because of the amount of awareness the youth of today have about our environment. There's a tremendous growth in the belief they can make a difference, whether it's putting salmon fry back in the river, planting a tree or just stewarding their own property in their backyard. Nothing endears a child or family more than just walking out in a beautiful, park-like setting, putting their feet in the stream and watching the fish go by. Obviously there are financial challenges, but in general you're looking at this extreme sort of a change within the mindset of a lot of the population.

LH: There's tremendous opportunity in BC. I think that there's a growing recognition and understanding, not only is conservation essential to BC, it enhances our quality of life. Land trusts involve interests and people from organizations in the fullest of spectrums and by bringing them all together, under a common goal, we do strengthen our civic society. ▢



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For full interview transcripts or to listen to the audio versions, please visit [www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca](http://www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca)



# Why did the Toad Cross the Road?

Fraser Valley Conservancy

A wise frog once said, “It isn’t easy being green.” Well thanks to the Fraser Valley Conservancy (FVC) and the City of Chilliwack with support from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (FEF), life has gotten easier for BC’s Western Toads.

“Two local roads bisect the Western Toad population from their breeding wetland in Ryder Lake, making it a dangerous trek for the hundreds of thousands of toadlets looking to make their natural migratory journey each summer,” said Lisa Fox, Fraser Valley Conservancy. “Working with local officials and residents and with support from TD FEF, we’re able to temporarily close the roads, allowing for the natural migration of hundreds of thousands of toadlets across the roads, thus ensuring the species can contribute to the natural web of life.”

This year, the FVC is testing a structure that may be a permanent placement under the road that will allow toads to pass under the road.

“The Ryder Lake Amphibian Protection Program is a great example of a community working together to address and manage key local conservation issues,” said Aurora



Photo CNW Group/TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

Bonin, Regional Manager for TD FEF. “Supporting local efforts to protect and maintain local wildlife is a priority for TD FEF, and we applaud the Fraser Valley Conservancy and the City of Chilliwack, as well as the dozens of staff and volunteers who - year after year - continue to foster a culture of conservation in the community.”

Western Toads are very effective at eating algae and insects and in turn become tasty morsels for birds, snakes, and small mammals. “They are the building blocks of the local ecosystem, our work helps to ensure as many of them survive as possible, increasing the health of the local ecosystem,” adds Fox.

In 2009 the City of Chilliwack granted a temporary road closure that allowed countless numbers to cross un-hindered

***Tens of thousands of western toadlets must cross two roadways in Chilliwack, BC to complete their annual journey from wetlands to terrestrial forest.***

to vehicles. This year the City of Chilliwack has again granted FVC an additional road closure. FVC feels this project is directly linked to their goal of promoting land stewards and an ethic of conservation in the community.

“We would like to implement a long-term strategy, which includes changing community behavior and minimal road closures over the next few years,” says Lisa Fox, but FVC needs your help.

“We know people like to view the migration, but as the area is very environmentally sensitive we encourage those interested to stay tuned to our web videos, and collect Toonies for the Toads”. □

*For more information, please visit [www.fraservalleyconservancy.ca](http://www.fraservalleyconservancy.ca).*

## Small Land Trusts

Con’t from page 7

***What is your most important or biggest success to date?***

HW: There’s a number that I think are significant. A local family have donated some land to us. There’s a water course right in the middle of it and we expect some more to be donated this year. The other one that I think has been quite successful is holding land and holding covenants on land adjacent to Mission Creek, the biggest river that flows into Okanagan Lake.

LG: Well the most exciting one, the most recent one was the new Nature Reserve that we dedicated on April 30th this year. It was two corner sections in the SW corner of the Island, that belonged to a family within the estate of a man that died who had always wanted to see it as parkland. He bought it when it was forestry land that had been logged in the early 80s and let it come back.

There is Garry Oak on it, lots of lakes and little wetlands all over it, streams and it’s naturally regenerating, and quite beautifully. So that particular piece was about 18 months of work. We’re very proud of that piece of property, it’s the biggest piece of property that we’ve bought since the Conservancy started. □

# Award-winning Project Benefits Rare Woodpecker

*Rocky Mountain Ecosystem Restoration Program*



*Looking across Columbia Lake to the Purcell Mountains and the Dutch-Findlay project site on the upper benchlands. (S Bond photo)*

The Land Trust Alliance awarded its inaugural outstanding land program prize to an ecosystem restoration project that is preserving and enhancing habitat for a rare BC woodpecker.

The Lewis's woodpecker is an endangered species that in Canada is found only in BC. The province's coastal populations are gone, most likely due to habitat loss, and the bird now inhabits only a handful of valleys in the Southern Interior. Current populations are estimated at fewer than 1,000 birds and those numbers are declining every year.

Standing dead or decaying trees – known as wildlife trees – are a critical habitat requirement for this migratory species, which often returns to the same nest cavity in the same wildlife tree every spring. The Lewis's woodpecker also requires an open forest landscape with shrubby undergrowth where it feeds on insects and berries.

The good news for this diminishing species is the award-winning

Dutch-Findlay project in the Upper Columbia Valley of southeastern BC where a partnership of conservation landowners and others is creating wildlife trees and restoring foraging conditions on land that hosts a significant population of Lewis's woodpeckers. The 45 square-kilometre project site on the west side of Columbia Lake encompasses Crown land, two conservation properties and a working cattle ranch.

Restoration was launched in 2009 by the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program, landowners the Nature Conservancy of Canada, The Nature Trust of British Columbia and Thunderhill Ranch, and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Ministry of Environment and Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program.

"This is an outstanding example of how conservation groups, government and private landowners can find common ground and work together in the preservation of our province," Land Trust Alliance executive director Paul McNair said,

"and their combined efforts have restored hundreds of hectares of open forest and grassland, created close to 100 nesting trees, and provided more than \$900,000 in funding to date."

Restoration treatments such as thinning to remove forest ingrowth and prescribed burning to rejuvenate understory vegetation will not only sustain the Lewis's woodpecker, they will benefit other wildlife species, domestic livestock, people and property.

Over time the Dutch-Findlay project will produce better grassland habitat for the endangered American badger, improve rangeland grazing for cattle, elk, white-tail and mule deer, and reduce the risk of a repeat wildfire like the one that forced evacuation of nearby Canal Flats in 1985.

The project is one of many similar undertakings by the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program's partnership of 24 government, industry and public agencies working to restore the

grasslands and open forests of the East Kootenay and Upper Columbia Valley.

Restoration is taking place on Crown land, provincial and national parks, private conservation properties and First Nations reserves. For more information, visit [www.trench-er.com](http://www.trench-er.com). □



*A Lewis's woodpecker at its nest cavity. It is the only species that catches insects on the wing; other species bore into trees for bugs. (M Nyhof photo)*



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# Conservation Options: How you can Leave a Legacy for the Future

*edited by Paul McNair*

**Editor's note:** *The following is taken from LTABC's new publication Protecting YOUR Land.*

Land trusts and conservancies work with people who are interested in leaving a conservation legacy for the future. You may want to conserve a stream, promote ecologically sensitive agriculture or save a heritage property. Together, the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia LTABC and our member land trusts can help you achieve your plans for your land.

## Caring For Your Property

There is a wide array of stewardship or conservation options that can help you care for and protect the special features of your property. Land trusts can help you review the many options available ranging from short-term voluntary actions to long-term legal agreements that will last beyond your lifetime.

Strategies for protecting your land through include:

- selling or donating the land to an organization with a conservation mandate



**One of B.C.'s many unique ecosystems. What are your conservation options?**

- reserving a "life estate" when you give or sell the land
- selling or donating the land and then lease it (or a portion) back for a certain period
- subdividing the ecologically significant portion of the land, transferring it to a land trust
- protecting areas or features with a conservation covenant.

## Transferring Your Property

One of the most permanent ways to

protect your land into the future is by arranging to transfer the property to a land trust now or at a later date.

Most land trusts are registered charities, and can offer a tax receipt for gifts of property. The land will need to be independently appraised to determine fair-market value.

If there is no urgency to transfer the property, you could plan to donate the land through your will.

To ensure that your objectives for the land are fully realized, the details for such a donation (known as a bequest) are best worked out well in advance through discussions with the receiving organization and your own lawyer.

A life estate involves giving your property to an organization, while retaining the right to use the property for your life or a predetermined term of years.

Even if your land does not have natural or cultural heritage value, you could still support conservation work by donating property explicitly for the land trust to sell, in order to provide funds to acquire more ecologically significant lands.

## Conservation Covenant

Conservation covenants are a voluntary tool which allow a landowner to preserve natural and cultural features of the land in perpetuity, while still retaining ownership and use.

A conservation covenant is a legal agreement made between a current landowner and a designated land trust

...continued page 19



## Beautiful British Columbia

British Columbia has an abundance of natural diversity. However, BC's top scientists have identified that more than 42% of identified species are listed as of provincial conservation concern. The variety and richness of our landscapes, ecosystems and species produce a wide range of ecological "goods

and services" such as clean air and water, drought and flood control, natural pesticides, productive soils, regulation of local climate and many other benefits. Private landowners have an increasingly important role to play in protecting BC's biodiversity.

**Eagle Creek in Powell River (Photo Malaspina Land Conservancy Society)**



# It Starts with the Owner: Giving the Gift of Land

## *Salt Spring Island Conservancy*

The creation of a nature reserve, like any complex conservation project, is the result of the work, skill and contribution of many people and organizations, something we value at the Salt Spring Island Conservancy. However, it all starts with one person.

For us that person was Alvin Indridson, responsible for creating the newest and biggest project in our history. A businessman by day, Alvin acquired the land in the 1980s and grew to appreciate its natural beauty. Over the years, after observing the increasing development on the island, he began to nurture the hope that his

land might be preserved.

Alvin passed away in 2009, but his hope lived on when his heirs decided to keep the land a parkland, initiating our newest project. The generosity of Alvin's family and their desire to follow his wishes were evident, as they also donated a portion of the value of the land under the Canada Ecological Gifts Program.

The creation of the newest 320-acre nature reserve on Salt Spring was a milestone for the Salt Spring Island Conservancy. It is the largest area we have ever acquired, and the project

size, at \$2.6 million, is also a record for us. The land is an ecological treasure with a lake, streams and many small wetlands. About half of the land is in the rarest Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem in the province. Also, the property adjoins a 5000-acre greenbelt of protected land in the Southwest region of the island.

After the donation, the conservancy was also able to proceed with this project because our biologists already had extensive knowledge of the wildlife and ecology of Salt Spring Island, from the work they have done over the years under the well received

Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program.

With an early commitment of funding from BC Nature (from a bequest), the financial support from Alvin's family and our ecological data we were in a position to apply for funding from the Nature Conservancy of Canada Natural Areas Conservation Program. We received a major grant of \$777,450 from that program. With the year running out, we appealed to the public, whose support was immediate and gratifying. A crucial gift of \$235,300 from Shaw Communications provided the final push to complete the deal. It takes everyone's effort to finish, but it all starts with the owner. ▢

*Dedicated to Alvin Indridson and his family.*

***The Salt Spring Island Conservancy celebrates the new Nature Reserve on Salt Spring made possible by the late Alvin Indridson and his family.***



## Landowners take "Stewardship Pledge" on Mayne *Mayne Island Conservancy Society*

For many landowners, their land is their love. For Mayne Islanders Jessica and Toby, this was the case.

"I am very protective of the forest that surrounds us," write Jessica and Toby, "When we built our home we worked very hard to preserve our environment. We have a perch tree overlooking the bay where eagles land to pursue their fishing. We have two ravens who live beside our home filling the air with their calls and the sounds of their wings through the trees."

So when the two heard about a new initiative run by the Mayne Island Conservancy Society (MICS), they decided to try it out. The Mayne Island Community Stewardship Program is a small volunteer run land owner contact program where landowners are invited to take a "Stewardship Pledge." Landowners are offered "walkabouts" to learn about their land, with volunteers taking the lead, ensuring respect for the knowledge of the landowner.

"What was important to us was to gain a greater understanding about indigenous and invasive species and to get advice on ways to protect our ecosystem," write Jessica and Toby, "It was wonderful. We learned that our practices of respecting deadfall was providing soil-building mulch and providing a foundation for new growth. MICS was able to identify many indigenous plants and various types of moss."

The new program allows MICS to reach a broader audience with the hope that both wild and human relationships within the community will form. Partnerships with other land trusts and conservation groups made the program a reality, with funding from Vancity enviroFund and the Mayne Island Parks and Recreation Commission.

If you're up for the Stewardship Pledge, find out more information online at [www.conservancyon-mayne.com](http://www.conservancyon-mayne.com) or by phoning 250-539-5168. ▢

***Landowners take the "Stewardship Pledge" and learn about native and invasive plant species on their property with help from MICS.***



# Land Donation: A Special Gift to Nature

*Nature Trust of BC*

Murray LaBrash is a true pioneer. He's lived his life connected to the forest as a logger, forester and sawmill operator throughout BC. Now he dedicates his time to conservation.

Having previously donated 31.9 hectares of land to the Nature Trust of BC, Murray LaBrash and Debra Sharp recently donated another 59.6 hectares. This land, along with 89 hectares protected on the adjacent property, totals 180.5 hectares or 446 acres conserved on Ingram Mountain in the Kettle Valley near Rock Creek. None of this would have transpired if it weren't for Murray.

Diagnosed with a serious medical condition a few years ago, Murray has been fighting for his life ever since.

Given the fact that his health has declined, he could have easily sold his properties to pay for medical bills and a new truck. But Murray, a passionate and invigorating presence, decided to fight hard to save these critical habitats for future generations. He has seen the trees for the birds and not for dollars.

An avid birder, Murray is not so much leaving a legacy but protecting nature for its intrinsic beauty, for wildlife and for biodiversity. He buys only fair trade organic bananas to reduce any negative impacts on migratory birds that visit and nest on Ingram Mountain.

With this donation of land, The Nature Trust has agreed to grant a life

estate to Murray. He will spend his days living like Henry David Thoreau in his modest cabin as The Nature Trust of BC recognizes his strong connection to this piece of paradise. Murray's time will be filled wandering the hills looking for the elusive white-headed woodpecker, a species once known to breed in the area. For Murray, the bird exemplifies the need for conservation.

"With development increasing on critical habitats, it is imperative that we conserve now as much of this land as possible for the future. This can be easily accomplished by the gifting of these types of properties to The Nature Trust of BC. They are an incredible organization composed of great people who are totally dedicated to



*Murray LaBrash at Rock Creek property (Photo Terry-Lou Kleger)*

the conservation of BC's special places."

The Nature Trust of BC is a non-profit land conservation organization, celebrating 40 years of land conservation in 2011. Since 1971, the Nature Trust has acquired 61,000 hectares across the province with the help of generous partners and donors like Murray and Debra. For more information on how you can help, visit [www.naturetrust.bc.ca](http://www.naturetrust.bc.ca) or call 1-866-288-7878. ▢

## Celebrating 40 Years of Land Conservation



Photo by Chris Armstrong



Three photos by Andrew Klaver

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# Member Profile: The Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

**Editor's note:** *The Land Trust Alliance of BC is comprised of over 100 Land Trust and stewardship organizations across BC. In each issue of LAND, we will highlight a member, their successes, issues and current projects.*

**The Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society (GOMPS)** was founded in 1992 to preserve and restore the Garry oak ecosystem that is so characteristic of the Victoria area, up Vancouver Island as far as Courtenay and a few sites beyond. Not only is the Garry oak ecosystem unique to this area, but it also contains over 100 species that are officially at risk.

The most obvious component of the ecosystem is the Garry oak trees. It is, unfortunately perhaps, the ecosystem "flagship" species that has thus garnered the most attention by the public and the politicians during the GOMPS' years. Although the Garry oaks have this prominence, the remaining few trees are still coming down faster than they are being replaced, making a situation that is not sustainable.

Enter the Garry Oak Growers Group (GOGG), a "task force" drawn from members of the GOMPS to remedy this situation by producing more young Garry Oaks, of local genetic origin, at a cost and size that the average landowner will find both attractive and affordable.

Commercial tree nurseries cannot provide this now due to a combination of cost factors and the current setback of a major supplier from an attack of Sudden Oak Death. GOMPS has, therefore, invited the Municipalities and Regional Districts to join them in a project to accomplish our purpose.

Members and volunteer supporters of GOMPS will grow Garry oak trees to fill the gap in supply that has developed in response to the campaign to plant more of these iconic local trees.

Thanks to the collaboration of the City of Victoria and generous legacies from two local estates, we will grow trees from local acorns to a sufficient size to be sure of survival of most of the planted specimens. In return, GOMPS will supply free trees to Victoria. The majority will be available for sale to the public and other municipalities. We plan to begin by transplanting some small trees from the 2008 acorn crop to the nursery as a way to gain momentum and train staff and volunteers.

Depending on the 2011 acorn crop, we will engage our volunteers and the public at large to collect and clean acorns this fall so that we can plan the start of the next nursery crop. Planting the acorns and tending the seedlings will require many hands for short periods, so we are inviting interested volunteers to contact us at michael.fd.croteau@gmail.com. □

## British Columbia's **MAGNIFICENT PARKS**

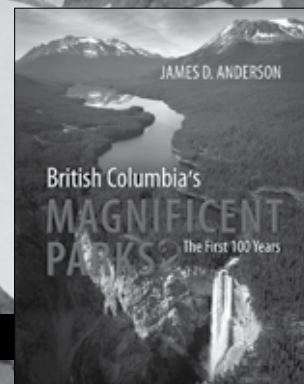
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***Camus and Chocolate Lilies - two rare flowers found in Garry Oak Meadows. This issue's feature member is the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society (P Petrie photo).***

# A Foreign Perspective on Local Land Trusts

Cassie Holcomb

What are Land Trusts like half a world away? This summer, LTABC found out when we were joined by volunteer Jofre Rodrigo from Catalonia, Spain. Jofre, who has a Masters in Ecological Economics, has worked extensively with Standards & Practices – guidelines Land Trusts follow to ensure proper methods from surveying land to fundraising - through XCT, the Catalan Land Stewardship Network.

XCT is a similar organization to LTABC; both are umbrella organizations with a mandate to aid the Land Trust and stewardship communities through communication, education, and Standards & Practices. Both have a similar membership size and make-up and also have similar strategic plans put in place by their respective board of directors.

Jofre brought his experience from XCT and used it to advance the LTABC Standards

& Practices program. He spent much time visiting different member organizations, teaching them how to use the online tool.

“The importance of having Standards & Practices is to show accountability to the government, funders and public that things are being done properly” says Jofre. Through his visits, he was able to see the different sizes and scope that make up BC’s Land Trust community and found it to be “a culture of concerned and affective people. I was impressed at the good image Land Trusts have and the support given to them by the community”.

In BC, Land Trusts have been around for over 40 years. The Land Trust movement in Spain is relatively new. In fact, no legal framework is in place for covenants – here, a commonly used legal document that protects land in perpetuity - so, Land Stewardship Agreements

are used. “Land Stewardship agreements are voluntary” says Jofre “but there is work to get covenants in place that are legally tied to a deed.”

But why use Land Stewardship agreements if they hold no legal weight? “In both countries, the Land Trust Movement is able to get results in a short period of time while involving and empowering people. Land stewardship agreements are a good first foot in the door. They are also used as a lobbying tool to push for a proper law leading to binding agreements on deeds” explains Jofre.

For more information on Land Trusts in Catalonia, or the Land Stewardship Network in Catalonia, visit XCT’s website at <http://www.custodiaterritori.org/ca/english.html>. □

**LTABC volunteer Jofre Rodrigo at the premiere of *The Queen of the Sun* - see review page 17 (photo T Humphries).**

## At a glance

	XCT	LTABC
Founded	2003	1997
Members	163	100
Major Member Types:	City Councils	Land Trusts
	Companies	Associate Orgs
	Associate Orgs	
Main Funding	Gov’t	Grants
XCT signs 90 to 100 Land Stewardship Agreements/year		



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## Review: British Columbia's Magnificent Parks: The First 100 Years *Cassie Holcomb*

It's hard to believe BC's park system was only created 100 years ago. From the first park, Strathcona, to the almost 1000 parks scattered across our province today, Jim Anderson's stunning and informative book, *British Columbia's Magnificent Parks: The First 100 Years*, looks at the ups and downs of creating a network of parks and reserves often during a time when the province was a rugged outback and largely inaccessible.

As the first professional with specialized training in park planning hired by BC Parks, Jim has been involved in almost every aspect of parks management. He has watched first hand as our park system grew dramatically. His book outlines not only the history

and accomplishments of the provincial parks system as managed by the parks agency and staff, but it also explains the importance of protecting these sensitive ecological sites – the goal of all Land Trusts. Jim addresses the important role Land Trusts play in our park system and even mentions LTABC and our involvement and contributions.

British Columbia is renowned for having one of the extensive park systems in Canada – an achievement beautifully and eloquently detailed in this book....and an achievement all British Columbians can be proud of! □

*British Columbia's Magnificent Parks can be found in most book stores. For more information, visit [www.harbourpublishing.com](http://www.harbourpublishing.com).*

## Review: Queen of the Sun - What are the Bees Telling Us? *Tessa Humphries*

**Editor's note:** *In July, the Land Trust Alliance of BC was pleased to present the Victoria premiere of this film.*

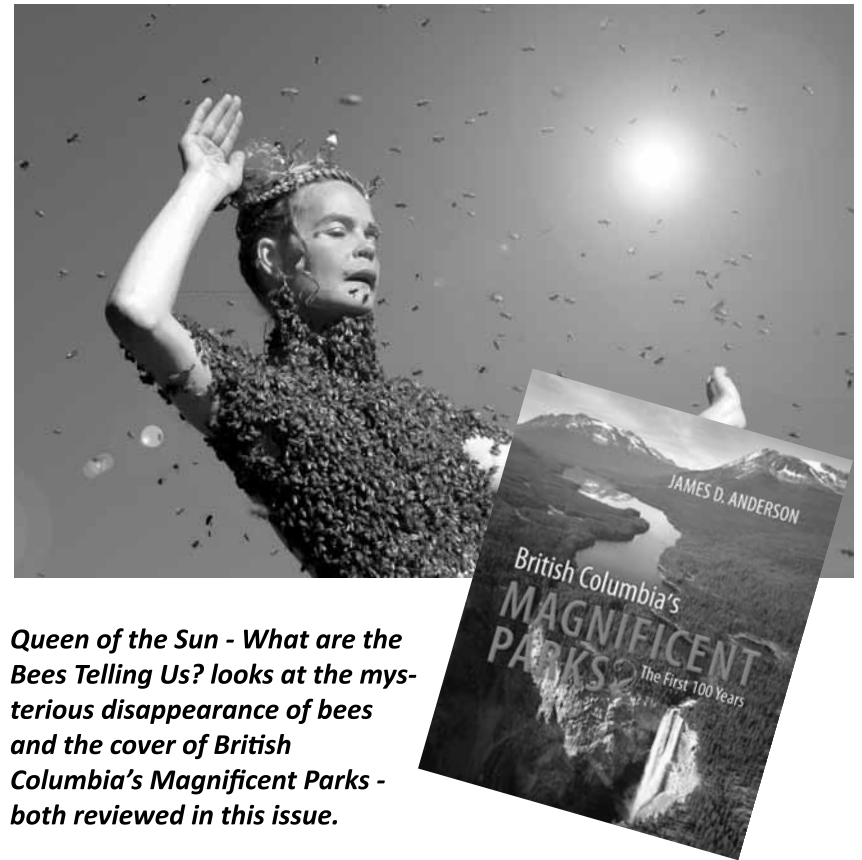
Bees tell us to quit buzzing around the bush - there's a global crisis. Opening with a swarm of honey bees, the elusive creatures are the stars of Taggart Siegel's (*The Real Dirt on Farmer John*) latest documentary, which outlines a global phenomenon called "Colony Collapse Disorder", or the massive disappearance of bees with no real explanation.

The film invites us to dive into the beehive and follow beekeepers around the world. From America to Europe, all are noticing one thing: the incredible loss of honey bees. With scientists to explain the catastrophic effect a global honey bee collapse will have on humans, the message becomes clear very early on: humans, plants, animals - we all need bees. They pollinate 30% of the food we eat, and are a crucial part of our global ecosystem.

Unveiling 10,000 years of beekeeping, the film also looks at the deep bond between humans and bees. This relationship appears to have been lost due to highly mechanized tactics and commercial beekeeping. The film also presents the modern way of growing crops. Known as monocropping, it entails growing a single crop on vast amounts of land creating problems for bees.

The bee crisis is presented as a global wake-up call, illuminating a growing movement of beekeepers, community activists and scientists who are committed to renewing a culture in balance with nature.

It's a must-see for both the young and the old, those interested in the future of our planet or those who don't know much about bees. A dramatic, heart-warming learning experience, the film is filled with both laughter and concern, for the bee is such a small creature with such a big impact. □



**Queen of the Sun - What are the Bees Telling Us? looks at the mysterious disappearance of bees and the cover of British Columbia's Magnificent Parks - both reviewed in this issue.**

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**Aveda Award Winner!**

# Awarding Land Trust Excellence: LTABC Celebrates the Best of BC



**Lisa Fox, Suzie MacMillan and Steve Clegg celebrate Fraser Valley Conservancy’s win for Outstanding Program (non-land)**

This year marked the inaugural presentation of the Provincial Land Trust Awards. Given out during LTABC’s annual seminar series in April, the awards celebrated the outstanding contributions in 6 categories to Land Trusts across British Columbia:  
Outstanding Programs (non-land), Outstanding Land Program/Campaign, Outstanding Volunteer, Outstanding Staff, Outstanding Donor and Friend of Land Trust Award.

Paul McNair, executive director says, “The Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia believes the strength of Land Trusts in our province lies in the work volunteers, donors, staff, and others do to protect and conserve British Columbia.” He added that, “the new awards program was designed to showcase the exemplary achievements Land Trusts – large and small – in BC, “ saying that, “In one community, a volunteer may contribute hun-

dreds of hours to establishing a land trust while in another a donor may financially make acquiring a property possible.”  
  
This year’s winners were notable - a full list of can be found below. The honourees have truly contributed to the success of land trusts and played a huge part in preserving the one million acres they now protected. They exemplify why British Columbia leads the way in the Land Trust movement. □

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## Land Trust Award Recipients for 2011

Outstanding Programs (non-land)	Ashley Peters & Suzie MacMillan, Fraser Valley Conservancy
Outstanding Land Program / Campaign	Rocky Mountain Trench Restoration Program
Outstanding Volunteer	Ross Bay Villa Volunteers, Land Conservancy of BC
Outstanding Staff	Gail Adrienne, Nanaimo & Area Land Trust
Friend of Land Trust Award	Environment Canada
Outstanding Donor	Vancouver Foundation





## For the Love of Restoration: Introducing TLC's Ross Bay Villa Volunteers *submitted by TLC*

**Editor's Note: TLC's Ross Bay Villa Volunteers were the recipients of this years LTABC's Outstanding Volunteer Award**

Like super-sleuths, TLC's Ross Bay Villa volunteers unravel the mysteries hidden beneath the walls of the 1860's colonial cottage and original home of Francis Roscoe, former MP for Victoria. A visitor can enter the dining room of the Ross Bay Villa and see the detective work, first hand. A small portion of the wall displays the different layers of wall paper that have existed in the household. Nicely peeled, the wall reveals the colours and patterns that once filled the dining room at different points in history. The volunteers knew that showcasing the different wall papers would tell many stories of the house; perhaps, causing visitors to visualize the way the house looked throughout a lengthy span of time.

The Ross Bay Villa volunteers exude passion for the craft of restoration. With careful research and investigation, the volunteers continue to recondition the Villa back to its enchanting 1860's appearance. To

date the dining room and drawing room are fully restored. For the last 10 years, the Ross Bay Villa, with about 10-20 volunteers arriving each Saturday to get their hands dirty. Ross Bay Villa volunteers are individuals who are truly using their lives—lending their intelligence and creativity voluntarily, without concern of compensation. The excitement of restoring the house is the satisfaction earned by the group.

Pam Madoff, Victoria's City Councillor, raved about the group's professionalism, calling their work "meticulous" and well deserving of the nomination. Visitors can witness the first class restorations of Ross Bay Villa each Saturday at 2pm for \$5. Visitors get to appreciate the stunning Ross Bay Villa gardens—and the two completed rooms inside the house: the drawing room and the dining room. The tour gives visitors a taste of the volunteer crew's devotion to unravelling history—what kind of stories do the wall papers tell you? ▢

*For more information on Ross Bay Villa or The Land Conservancy, please visit [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca).*



**Ross Bay Villa Volunteers pose with other Land Trust Award winners from Vancouver Foundation and Environment Canada**

## Conservation Options Con't

*from page 12*

.. organization and/or a government agency. It is registered on the title to the land, and it will remain in effect after the land is sold or transferred, binding future owners of the land to the terms of the covenant. This agreement will ensure that features of the land that you want protected will persist in perpetuity.

The land trust or conservation organization that will hold the covenant can help you design the terms, including reserved rights and restrictions.

### Financing your property's conservation

There are financial implications to consider. You will need independent legal and financial advice to review the covenant and evaluate the tax consequences. You may also need a survey, and you will likely need to hire an appraiser. Finally, you may wish to consider how the

organization holding the covenant will pay for the long-term monitoring of the land. This can be part of your legacy - leaving extra financial funds, called a stewardship endowment, to provide for the costs of maintaining the covenant in the future. ▢

*The complete publication Protecting YOUR Land - Conservation Options: How you can leave a legacy for the future is available through the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia or your local land trust. Please call 250-477-4766, email [info@landtrustalliance.bc.ca](mailto:info@landtrustalliance.bc.ca) or visit [www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca](http://www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca) to receive your free copy.*

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Magnificent Parks* reviewed on page 17.