

Be the CHANGE

Detector Dog to the Rescue

By Tamsin Baker
Lower Mainland Regional Manager

Meet Alli, a scent detection dog from the University of Washington's Conservation Canines program. Recently, Alli was on a mission to find the endangered Pacific water shrew and Oregon spotted frog in a range of locations around Harrison Hot Springs area.

There are over 260 provincially listed and 35 federally listed species-at-risk on the South Coast of B.C. This region, which includes the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, the Sunshine Coast, and the Sea-to-Sky Corridor, is considered a biodiversity hotspot. One challenge in protecting these endangered and threatened species is that they are difficult to detect.

Finding at risk species is important in order to learn more about them, including their habitat requirements. This helps to reduce the greatest threat

to their existence, habitat loss and degradation due to development.

In the case of the Pacific water shrew, there are only 25 known sites in Canada. The current recommended way of assessing shrew habitat is through a costly program of trapping, which unfortunately sometimes results in accidental death.

The South Coast Conservation Program (SCCP) decided to try out a completely different, non-invasive method of identifying the shrew and the Oregon spotted frog using a scent detection dog. Through funding provided by the Federal Government's Habitat Stewardship Program, Alli was brought in to test this method.

For over a week in March, Alli and her trainer worked with Kym Welstead of the B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations to see if the method had potential. Alli was first trained to learn the smell of



The trailing of the frog: scent detection specialist Alli and her trainer, Heath Smith, are on the trail of the Oregon spotted frog. Photo Tamsin Baker

the species and then spent the rest of the time out in the field. The field trials mostly involved using scat from shrews, but also live captured Oregon spotted frogs. One highlight was that Alli discovered an unrecorded frog that had never been previously captured.

Overall, the session showed that it is

feasible to use scent detection dogs to find these and perhaps many other species. Further testing is needed, so we hope to have Alli visit again soon.

TLC is a founding partner of the SSCP. To learn more about species-at-risk on the South Coast, visit www.sccp.ca. ■

Bill Laux and his Castle of Bats (1925-2004)

By Kathleen Sheppard
Director of Operations

On May 25, 2005, the term "bats in the belfry" took on a new meaning for TLC. On that date, TLC took possession of a 112-acre property near Fauquier, B.C. which included a hand-built "castle"



with a tower full of bats.

The property, now known as the Laux Property, was left to TLC in the estate of Bill Laux, an American draft-dodger who had lived with his wife, Adele, on the property since 1962. After buying the property on the shores of Arrow Lake, Bill and Adele

apprenticed with a batik printmaker and began to craft hundreds of individually pressed rammed-earth bricks.

Sadly, Adele died suddenly in 1967.

Her death affected Bill quite deeply; he never remarried. He continued to work on his "castle" which, when completed, was a unique six-story structure.

Prior to his death in October of 2004, Bill wanted to ensure that his property would be protected. In addition to safeguarding the mature forest and waterfront, Bill was most concerned that the maternal colony of Little brown bats that had taken up residence in the tower of the castle would be protected.

Unfortunately, in February of 2010, Bill's castle burned to the ground. Thankfully, it was winter and the bats were not present. Since then, the bats have relocated to other buildings on

the property. TLC is working with local bat biologists to build and install new bat "condos" on site to provide permanent habitat for the bat colony.

With the approaching threat of White Nose Syndrome, a disease that is decimating bat populations in eastern North America and spreading westward, Little brown bats are one of three species that were recently given the unlucky title of "endangered" by Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

Bill left a diverse legacy to British Columbia and TLC. We acknowledge his gift every spring, when 1,500 bats return to the Laux Property. ■

To the bat castle we go. Until it burned down in 2010, the Little brown bats on Laux Property lived like royalty in Bill Laux's hand-built bat "castle." Photo Kathleen Sheppard

TLC's Annual General Meeting in Victoria

Saturday, September 15, 2012
1 - 4 p.m.
UVic, Student Union Building
Michele Pujol Room

Pay parking
behind the
book store

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Chocolate Lily Cup

Golf Tournament

Saturday, August 18

Pender Island Golf and Country Club

\$150 golf and dinner per person

\$250 to sponsor a hole.

Registration: 1 p.m.

Tee Off: 2:30 p.m. (best ball, shotgun start)

Cocktails after the tournament: 6 p.m.

Awards, banquet & silent auction: 6:30 p.m.

Book your team today!

Watch for the Poets Cove Chocolate Lily Cup Golf Package. Be the change you want to see in the world and help save Brooks Point! \$10,000 HOLE IN ONE prize



Register, sponsorship and information contact Kathy Arnason 250-479-8053 or karnason@conservancy.bc.ca

Photo: Jill Patterson

Community Action Hero Makes Birthday Wish for TLC

For nine-year-old Ben Davidson, inspiration comes from admiring the Skaha Bluffs every day from his home in Kaleden, B.C. This same picturesque landscape also led him to collect \$64.01 for TLC from his friends at his birthday party.



Having hiked the Bluffs several times with his family, Ben's parents spoke to him about TLC's acquisition of the Bluffs and it hit home with him. During Ben's party, his parents told the kids about the Skaha Bluffs and TLC, and showed them first-hand in the distance where their contributions

If a smile is worth a thousand words, then Ben's is worth a lifetime. Ben knows the value of protecting B.C.'s natural areas. Let's hope his gesture inspires others to become community action heroes for TLC, too. Be the change you want to see in the world by holding your own community action hero event! We'd love to hear about your plans, so give us a call at 1-877-485-2422. Photo courtesy Davidson Family

were going. Ben is excited that his donation will help to protect other natural areas around the Okanagan or in B.C. Thanks Ben! ■

Message from the Director of Operations



Last month, TLC celebrated its 15th anniversary. Having been with TLC for 11 of those 15 years, it is almost overwhelming to look back at the successes we have had and the lives we have changed. The story of Bill Laux's legacy is just one example among dozens of the way TLC has inspired people into action.

In the beginning, TLC was focused on protecting places with important habitat, of historical significance, and of scientific merit. Over time, however, we have come to the realization that, quite simply, there is much more to the places we take under our care. As illustrated by the poem on the back of your envelope, it's the stories of visionaries who are passionate about making the world a better place, and who want future generations to have similar experience with nature, heritage and agriculture that have the deepest impact. These intangible elements - not just the places - have the power to inspire communities to be the change they want to see.

That realization means we must do things differently. We must focus on the ways we change communities and the ways we work together.

By shifting our focus, we have been a part of remarkable moments etched in time. Every property TLC protects has an impact in our communities. Whether it is the boy who donates his birthday money to protect the Skaha Bluffs, the woman who buys her produce from the farm stand at Madrona Farm, or the schoolchildren who learn about salmon on the Horsefly River, our goal is to create experiences that change lives.

There is still a great deal of work

to do. There are key pieces of habitat, farms that are struggling to produce local food, and places that shaped our history that TLC must continue to protect. We need to find ways for everyone to share the experience of visiting a farm, a wetland, or an historic house. I believe that providing these experiences and sharing our love of these places can have a ripple effect across our communities.

If TLC is to protect these places and create these experiences, we must do so from a place of strength. Over the past couple of years, we have tested and developed strategies to grow our membership to at least 30,000 members. In addition to the benefits of having 30,000 people across British Columbia committed to protecting our remarkable landscapes, we believe that this level of membership will also provide us with the financial stability to move forward as a confident and mature organization.

At its heart, TLC's future comes down to each and every one of you. When you become a member, visit a property or attend an event, you are helping to create a positive future for TLC. Thank you for your support. Let's continue to make more memories together for another 15 years and beyond! ■

Kathleen Sheppard

Editor's note: At press time Bill Turner was on holidays, therefore, Kathleen Sheppard, Acting Executive Director, provided our organizational update.

Chef Survival Challenge V

Adult \$40
Child (7-12) \$15

September 23, 2012
12-4 p.m.
Gates open at 11:30 a.m.

Madrona Farm
4317 Blenkinsop Road, Victoria, B.C.

TLC would like to thank the generous contributions of the West Vancouver Community Foundation and Parks Canada towards the completion of the Binning House Heritage Conservation Plan. Copies are available by request from tbaker@conservancy.bc.ca



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Show your love for B.C.'s coastline. Support TLC's Wild Hills and Beaches Campaign to keep public access forever for everyone. Deadline August 13, 2012



Bringing Back the Bees at Tugwell

By Nichola Walkden
Deputy Executive Director

“If we take care of the bees they will take care of us. Pollination is what makes all the tasty foods in our diet a reality,” says Dana LeComte, co-owner of Tugwell Creek Honey Farm and Meadery. This spring, Dana and her husband, Bob Liptrot, joined a growing group of farmers working with TLC to improve native bee habitats on their properties.

In order to bring back the bees, Dana and Bob have planted two of the pollinator seed mixes, designed for and supplied to TLC by Integrity Sales*. The bee buffer mix contains pollen and nectar-rich perennials that will bloom throughout the growing season, and the cover crop mix, supplemented with flowering plants, is used to amend soil and reduce erosion in off-rotation areas. Dana and Bob have taken note of the best habitats for wood-nesting and ground-nesting bees, and created a demonstration area and self-guided tour, complete with signs that show how and where native bees live on their property.

The connection between food, farmers, and bees is important. As bee populations decline and colony collapse threatens honey bees globally,



Bee proactive: Tugwell Creek Honey Farm and Meadery owners Dana LaComte and Bob Liptrot keep their bees happy and productive by maintaining their habitat.
Photo courtesy Tugwell Creek

farmers are learning more about the importance of using B.C.'s 450 species of native bees for pollination. Through the Pollinator Enhancement Project, TLC is working with farmers to demonstrate good bee stewardship by understanding the impacts of pesticides and herbicides, identifying and protecting the habitats of native bees, and growing a variety of pollen and nectar sources in proximity to nest habitat throughout the growing season.

“What is good for native bees is good for honey bees,” says Bob. “Although

TLC's Sunflower Project – A Growing Movement to Learn More about Bees

Calling all bee lovers! We want people to grow sunflowers in their gardens and help us learn more about the bees who visit them. Gardeners can request our packages of 'lemon queen' sunflowers which is especially attractive to bees.

1. Plant your sunflowers in a place where you can easily watch for visiting bees.
2. When your sunflower has bloomed, begin visiting the flower regularly. Watch for the bees that visit your sunflower and write them down.
3. Enter your observations at beeTLC.ca

We just ask that you grow them in a part of your garden that is easy to visit, so that you can observe and record your bee sightings, and then enter them in our Sunflower Project Database.

This information will be incorporated into a database used by over 100,000 people globally, providing information about when and where bees are active.

For more information, please visit beeTLC.ca. To get your sunflower package, email Nichola at nwalkden@conservancy.bc.ca.

the problems facing both groups are dire, there is hope. Understanding and providing habitats that support these vital creatures makes sense, and the more people who understand and take part, the better are chances that these populations will recover.”

Visit the farm and meadery to meet the bee colony (behind glass) and tour the native bee habitats at 8750 West Coast Rd, Sooke. For more info, visit tugwellcreekfarm.com. ■

** In collaboration with TLC, Dwight Pennelle of Integrity Sales devoted his time, experience, and expertise to develop pollinator seed mixes that can be used to enhance bee habitat with early, middle, and late cover crops, and also a perennial pollinator buffer seed mix which is great for property edges. For more information, contact Integrity Sales & Distributors in Saanichton at 250-544-2072.*



Dig This at Ross Bay Villa

A volunteer examines a piece of glass found during archeological excavations at Ross Bay Villa in Victoria. TLC is working in conjunction with the Victoria chapter of the Archaeological Society of B.C. on this project, which seeks to uncover clues about life at the Villa in the late 1800s. ■ *Photo courtesy toadhollowphotography.com*

Craigflower Re-opens for All to See

By Angie Pass, Project Officer,
Craigflower and Ross Bay Villa

The Craigflower National Historic Site will be open again for public visits this summer. After a devastating fire in 2009 that caused significant damage to Craigflower Farmhouse and required the site to be closed for restoration work, TLC employees, volunteers, and many professionals in the heritage field have worked tirelessly to restore the 1850s farmhouse to its original glory. The restoration work is now at a stage where we can welcome visitors to tour the Farmhouse and the Craigflower Schoolhouse (the oldest schoolhouse in Western Canada).

The site will be open for regular tours beginning on Saturday, June 30 and will be open Thursday to Sunday, from 11 to 4 p.m., until September 30. We will also have a grand re-opening celebration on B.C. Day, August 6 at 1 p.m.

The restoration process has included many steps: meticulously cleaning and documenting each object in the house; hand-cleaning wallpapers, ceilings, floors and woodwork; rebuilding and refinishing fire-damaged woodwork using traditional techniques; restoring damaged plaster work using traditional lime plastering techniques; as well as repainting and

repapering areas where soot damage was too extensive to clean.

While not entirely completed, the restoration process is wrapping up. This summer, the focus will be on replacing artifacts to their original rooms and bringing the interpretive displays - including some fun and interactive activities for children and adults - back to life. Come see this site and experience what life was like for Victoria's earliest settlers.

As we re-open this site, we are also working to determine how to make it more financially sustainable over the longer term. This may mean some changes in how we present the site to the public and what kinds of facilities we provide to supplement the operations. There will be community consultation this summer and fall. We invite anyone with ideas for the future of the site or questions about our tours to call 250-386-1606. ■



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The Personality Behind Accent Inns

By Amanda Hansen
Member Care Coordinator

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “accent” as “a distinguishing mark, character, or tone” - this is definitely the case for TLC’s business partner Accent Inns. In an industry full of multinational chains that prioritize the bottom line, B.C.-based Accent Inns’ commitment to community and the environment distinguishes it from all the rest. As an avid cyclist and nature enthusiast born and raised in Victoria, President and CEO Mandy Farmer is a big part of Accent Inns’ responsible vision.

Since childhood, Mandy has felt a deep connection with nature that traces its roots to walks with her grandmother in Uplands Park. For Mandy, nature allowed her to let her imagination soar. “The park was my Serengeti and the forest became a spaceship,” says Mandy. “My grandmother and I would bake imaginary cookies on the rocks. There were no limits to my imagination.”

Mandy and her husband, Geoffrey,

have continued that tradition with their children. By modelling respect for nature, Mandy hopes that her children will grow up to be environmentally responsible. In addition to hiking Mount Doug every weekend, the family begins each day out in the backyard, just listening. “We’re trying to be present in nature. We smell the smells and hear the sounds.”

Victorians, in general, are taking positive steps towards sustainable practices, according to Mandy. “Lately, I’ve been seeing a lot of bicycles around Victoria. Soon people will leave the car at home,” she says. Mandy credits the increased profile cycling has received lately, with such events as the Tour de Victoria garnering a lot of positive response. “I know 10 friends who have just started cycling,” says Mandy. “I would like to see more commuting.”

This environmentally conscious vision is apparent in Accent Inns’ community involvement with organizations including TLC. In addition to providing TLC members



Bike-to-work life: President and CEO of Accent Inns, Mandy Farmer, is passionate about her family, her business, and the environment. Photo courtesy Accent Inns

with a generous discount at all five locations, Accent Inns also donates \$5 to TLC, for every room booked by a member. It’s this kind of commitment to community and local organizations such as TLC that puts Accent Inns and Mandy Farmer in a league of their own. ■

Teaming up for Holiday Fun

By Amanda Hansen
Member Care Coordinator

September marks the end of the summer, but it doesn’t have to mark the end of your holiday fun. In partnership with the National Trust for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, TLC is offering an exciting Conservation Holiday at Wildwood Eco-forest that will give you a chance to perform honest, hard work with an international group of like-minded individuals.

Wildwood Eco-forest near Ladysmith on Vancouver Island is the home of late eco-forester Merv Wilkinson. The forest is now a recognized model of eco-forestry that has been used as a learning site for students and visitors. Not only does this week-long camping and building adventure offer the chance to help with the construction



Looking for adventure? New friends? A chance to make a difference? If you are tired of the same-old resort or camping trip, TLC’s Conservation Holidays are the way to go. Photo Nicole Haddad

of a work/picnic structure from start to finish, it also offers the opportunity to be immersed in a piece of Merv’s legacy and to meet other conservation enthusiasts.

TLC is also offering a host of other Conservation Holidays. Join TLC in

July to rebuild a shed at Wildwood Eco-forest. In September, take part in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup on South Winchelsea Island. For more information about these and other adventures, get in touch! Give us a call at 1-888-738-0533. ■

Celebrate Canada Day with TLC

This July 1st visit one of our historic sites for Canada’s birthday!

Ross Bay Villa and Craigflower Farmhouse & Schoolhouse in Victoria and B.C. Binning House in West Vancouver will be open. Bring a friend and come learn about these valuable pieces of our history. More info at conservancy.bc.ca

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