

## TLC Nears Completion of Creditor Process

Since signing on in November as Executive Director I have had a busy six months with TLC! I am eager to share with you the many milestones our team has accomplished since our last LANDmark newsletter. While it has been an intense time for TLC, we have weathered the winter and are absolutely ready for a summer filled with flourishing possibility.

On October 23rd we transferred Ross Bay Villa to the Ross Bay Villa Society, the group that has painstakingly restored the house to its 1860's charm. A charitable society, the group's mission is to educate the public about Canada's social, cultural and architectural heritage, through the restoration of the house. Since then they have been awarded an Outstanding Achievement in Heritage Conservation Award from Heritage B.C. I am so pleased with the outcome for this property.

The transfer is a wonderful example of how TLC is accomplishing the goals set when we entered the CCAA (*Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act*) process; TLC will pay creditors to the greatest extent possible while ensuring the ongoing protection of properties.

Our Plan of Arrangement, and the successful completion of the CCAA process, is dependent on the completion of five further transactions. *We are so close!*

As this LANDmark goes to print, we are finalizing our agreement with the Farm Folk City Folk Society for the transfer of Lohbrunner Farm. The agreement includes the continued farming of the site by TLC's long-standing volunteers who have worked the land for years. TLC transferred the bird

sanctuary portion of the property to the Nature Conservancy of Canada last fall.

Remaining transactions to be completed include the transfer of Wildwood Ecoforest, TLC's remaining 6% undivided interest in Maltby Lake, the densities zoned on Abkhazi Garden, Lohbrunner Farm and the Historic Joy Kogawa House.

As we approach our next meeting with creditors I am grateful for their patience and for the continuous support of TLC Members and donors. I look forward to wrapping up this CCAA process in the fall. Conclusion of the process will require a formal vote by creditors after the Court has approved of our exit.

The completion of the CCAA process will allow for greater care and attention to be spent on TLC's new and existing projects.

In this LANDmark you will read more about our projects: TLC's Covenant Program, Abkhazi Garden's **#30for30more** campaign, and Bowie and Anna Keefer's newly-covenanted property on Galiano Island.

TLC's staff and volunteers have begun our 2016 covenant monitoring season. With more than 230 covenants in our portfolio (*and climbing!*) we appreciate every volunteer who is willing to join us in our efforts. With beautiful hikes through the Sooke Hills, as described by our Covenant Manager Torrey Archer on Page 2, it isn't too difficult to find willing participants!

There are numerous ways you can get involved with one of these projects: attend one of our restoration events, become a regular volunteer at Abkhazi Garden or



TLC Executive Director Cathy Armstrong (left) and Board Member Briony Penn celebrating the completed mortgages. Photo credit Dennis Robinson.



Dayd McMinn, Vice President of the Ross Bay Villa Society, accepting their award from Heritage B.C. Photo Credit Frances Sloan Sainas.

with our Covenant Program, or donate to directly support TLC's work in these areas.

I hope you enjoy this brief look into TLC's operations of late. Each milestone we achieve is directly attributed to the support of TLC Members and donors like you. Thank you!

  
Cathy Armstrong  
Executive Director

# Covenant Monitoring with Wednesday Wanderers

By Torrey Archer  
Covenant Manager

**O**n a beautiful and unseasonably warm spring day, TLC's Conservation Manager Andrew MacKinnon and I met the Wednesday Wanderers, along with CRD staff, at the Sooke Potholes parking lot for a glorious hike of TLC's Sooke Hills Covenants. Once introductions were made, all 14 people (and one very adventurous wiener dog) geared up, checked maps, filled their water bottles and headed for the hills!

We began the walk travelling along an old pipeline that used to carry water from the Sooke reservoir to Victoria. It has since been decommissioned and is an unofficial walking trail.

After travelling along the pipeline, we began our ascent upwards into the hills



*TLC Covenant Manager Torrey Archer monitoring the Sooke Hills Covenants with the Wednesday Wanderers hiking group. Photo credit Andrew MacKinnon.*



*Hikers who regularly enjoy the Sooke Hills stop at a creek for a much-needed break. Photo credit Torrey Archer.*

along the "Bears Trail", skirting the top of "Bubba Bear Hill" and towards "Momma Bear Hill". We found what shade we could and stopped for a quick snack (or "elevensies" as the Wanderers affectionately called it) before pressing onwards towards "Peden Bluff Trail".

We got a little turned around at one point (the trail networks can appear like the Tokyo subway system at times!) but got back on the right foot and had lunch to celebrate. Along the trail there were stunning wildflowers of all sorts, reveling in the early spring sunshine. Death camas (*Toxicoscordion venenosum*), sea blush (*Plectritis congesta*), common monkey flower (*Mimulus guttatus*), blue-eyed mary (*Omphalodes verna*), Western fairy slipper orchid (*Calypso bulbosa* var. *occidentalis*), few-flowered shootingstar (*Dodecatheon pulchellum*), fernleaf biscuitroot (*Lomatium dissectum*) and many more species festooned the hillsides. With the heat and flowers, it felt more like a late-July afternoon than early spring!

At the top of the climb was a beautiful view of the Sooke Basin and Whiffin Spit with the rolling Sooke Hills all around us. We were treated to a clear view that day and were very grateful for it, even if it meant little shade!

After a rest, our group leader decided that too much time had been spent on the mistaken trail, so we took an alternate route downwards to save time. This trail is named "Larry" after the late Larry Talarico who dreamed of seeing the Sooke Hills protected but tragically passed away in July 2005 while hiking.

The "Larry" trail is very steep and all of us hikers were grateful for the dry conditions. It would have been a dangerous descent across the rock face otherwise! Thankfully, all was well and even the groups' oldest member Charlie, at 81, was sure-footed as

a mountain-goat and got down safely.

Near the base of the hills we took a small detour to a beautiful creek and waterfall. The cool shade and water were welcome. After all, we had just hiked for about seven hours, travelling approximately 10 km in distance and 580 metres in elevation!

All in all it was a wonderful way to get to know the Sooke Hills Covenants a little better from a fabulous group of dedicated hikers. We are very grateful for the Wednesday Wanderers' knowledge and inclusion. The better we know our covenants, the better we can protect them.

If you would like to know more about the Sooke Hills Covenants, please contact me at [covenants@conservancy.bc.ca](mailto:covenants@conservancy.bc.ca) or call our office at (250) 479-8053. I would gladly share the trails I know and our GPS tracks! To those interested in this route, please note that portions cross private land and are not maintained. Be sure to do your research before attempting!

TLC's Sooke Hills Covenants protect more than 2300 hectares of forested hills, beautiful lakes, and important creeks. Covenanted in 2004, these lands are monitored annually by TLC's team. If you would like to take part get in touch today! You can also help TLC protect important ecosystems across B.C. by donating to support the monitoring and enforcement of our covenants at [conservancy.bc.ca](http://conservancy.bc.ca). ■

*The Wednesday Wanderers have been "wandering" the Sooke Hills for the past 15 years: creating, naming and mapping the extensive trail network found within. The group was formed by John Hasell, a well-respected outdoor adventurer known for starting the Canadian Outward Bound School in Keremeos, B.C. Unfortunately, John passed away a few years ago, but the Wednesday Wanderers continue to wander these spectacular hills.*

# Abkhazi Garden Fundraising Flourishes

By Dianna Stenberg  
Communications & IT Manager

May Sarton once wrote, “*Gardening is an instrument of grace.*” At Abkhazi Garden, our incredible volunteers are extraordinarily generous with their grace. The Garden is almost entirely maintained by the hard-working group. With help from TLC’s part-time Landscape Horticulturist Jo, they tend to the Garden every week, rain or shine, to keep the site captivating for its’ many visitors to enjoy. Our volunteers have laboured within Abkhazi Garden since TLC became involved in protecting the site. Each is a wonderful example of a community-minded philanthropist.

Inspired by their passion, this spring we launched our **#30for30more** campaign to raise \$30,000 for infrastructure upgrades at Abkhazi Garden.

Last season TLC replaced the front section of fence along Fairfield Road; this year volunteers and staff hope to raise funds to replace the remainder of the old fence, install railings along stairs and complete necessary tree pruning. With TLC Member and donor support, we will begin the next phase of upgrades this fall.

We have made a significant start towards our goal of raising \$30,000. To date we have received more than \$15,000 in donations towards the project. In addition, one of Abkhazi Garden’s neighbours has stepped forward to cover half of the cost of the fence along his property line. TLC Members and the public can contribute to the project by donating by mail, phone, online or when visiting Abkhazi Garden.

Those interested in donating the gift of time to support Abkhazi Garden can do so by contacting TLC at (250) 479-8053 or [membership@conservancy.bc.ca](mailto:membership@conservancy.bc.ca). We are always looking for volunteers to join the greeters or the dedicated gardeners. ■

*Throughout the summer Abkhazi Garden is hosting the Haute Couture exhibit featuring four steel dress sculptures inspired by ball gowns owned by the late Peggy Abkhazi and hand-crafted by local artist Bev Petow. Be sure to watch out for them during your next visit!*

*Abkhazi Garden is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily throughout the spring and summer seasons. Admission is by donation.*



*Above: Abkhazi Garden volunteers strike a pose in front of their completed greenhouse. Photo credit Dennis Robinson. Below: A portion of the Abkhazi Garden fence completed with support from neighbours. Photo credit Andrew MacKinnon.*



## Share Your Selfie

You can help TLC spread the word about our **#30for30more** campaign by sharing a selfie on your favourite social media platform.

Take a photo with your favourite plant at Abkhazi Garden and include the hashtag **#30for30more** when you post it to your account. Be sure to make it public so that we can see it too!

Not able to make it to the Garden? Share your favourite plant in your backyard or community with us - we would love to see what you have growing!

Follow TLC on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for the latest updates!



*Left: TLC Member James capturing a majestic giant in the Del Norte Coast Redwood State Park, California. Below: Dianna’s #30for30more selfie with a Red Hot Poker that reminds her of her grandmother’s garden; like Peggy Abkhazi, she spent her life cultivating a welcoming haven for the community to enjoy.*



# Partnering on TLC's Newest Covenant

**W**e are thrilled to share the news that TLC has just protected its latest property! TLC has signed a new covenant protecting Bowie and Anna Keefer's sustainable forestry site on Galiano Island.

This covenant will ensure that the site is managed in accordance with sustainable forest practices and prohibits subdivision of the land into lots less than 20 hectares. Furthermore it operates within the Galiano Island Official Community Plan and the Galiano Island Forest Association guidelines. This covenant is a possible model for others looking to covenant their forestry properties on Galiano.

The Keefers have also generously donated \$5,000 to support TLC. These funds have been added to TLC's endowment fund with the Victoria Foundation for ongoing covenant monitoring. This funding is incredibly significant; with annual monitoring costs like equipment, travel and staffing, it is vital TLC has revenue to support continued monitoring and enforcement.

TLC co-holds the Keefer's covenant with Islands Trust and Galiano Conservancy Association. While co-holders are a covenant requirement, they also offer an opportunity for us to work with other land trusts and like-minded non-profits. This covenant brings together two non-profit land trusts and an elected council of representatives from the Islands Trust Area.

Covenants enable land owners to legally

protect their land without needing to sell it. They drastically reduce the cost of protection for non-profit land trusts, and increase the number of potential properties we are able to protect. Additionally, covenants offer the potential to protect ecologically sensitive parcels for their unique attributes when they are privately owned.

Conservation covenants are tailored to each parcel we are trying to protect. On the Keefer's acreage we are regulating sustainable logging practices, but on other properties we protect specific species and habitats at risk.

TLC is working on three new covenant agreements and we look forward to sharing those details with you upon successful completion.

TLC's 2016 Annual General Meeting will be held on October 22nd at UVic. At our AGM we will hold a vote for the Board's proposed Bylaw changes which were mailed to TLC Members last fall for feedback. We hope you can attend, but for those unable you can assign a proxy to vote in your place. Additional copies of the proposed Bylaw changes are available from TLC's office at (250) 479-8053 or online at [conservancy.bc.ca](http://conservancy.bc.ca).

The proposed Bylaw amendments reflect the changes our organization has undergone in the past few years; we understand that in order to protect important habitats we must operate in a sustainable manner with tools like conservation covenants and with a financially responsible, long-term vision.



*Above: Board of Directors Co-Chairs Frances Pugh and Tom Watson. Photo credit Cathy Armstrong. Below: Bowie and Anna Keefer's covenanted forest on Galiano Island will remain a sustainable forestry site protected by TLC's conservation covenant. Photo credit Bowie Keefer.*



On behalf of the Board, we wish to thank you for your support of the essential work TLC does in protecting British Columbia's important places for all to experience and enjoy.

Frances + Tom

Frances Pugh & Tom Watson  
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors

## Board of Directors

Jennifer Bagelman ■ Mel Lehan  
Fred Newhouse ■ Briony Penn ■ Frances Pugh  
Lori Roter ■ Fran Sloan Sainas ■ Tom Watson

## TLC is honoured to be the recipient of donations in memory of:

Dawn Bailey, Bud Dionne, Eileen Edgar and Chaim Micner.