



environment



agriculture



heritage

Success in Squamish!

The Land Conservancy protects vital habitat along the Sea to Sky corridor

by Tamsin Baker
Lower Mainland Regional Manager

Squamish – like so many areas in the Lower Mainland – is experiencing unprecedented levels of growth and development. With the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympics, this trend will only continue, or even increase, in the years ahead, making the protection of greenspaces in the Sea to Sky corridor more important than ever. That's

why *TLC* is excited to announce the protection of over seven hectares of fish and wildlife habitat in the heart of Squamish.

Known as the Squamish Mamquam Blind Channel, the new protected area sits on an undeveloped floodplain near the Squamish Adventure and Tourism Centre, and is bisected by the Sea to Sky Highway (# 99).

Narrow, sheltered drainage channels on the site provide key rearing and overwintering habitat for young salmon; important migration and spawning areas for adult salmon; and critical refuges for all salmon during periodic flooding in the main channels of the nearby Squamish and Mamquam Rivers.

Upland areas of the property contain marsh meadows and sections are forested with Sitka spruce, red alder, Western red cedar and black cottonwood. This variety of habitat provides refuge for a wide array of wildlife species, including threatened and endangered species like the Pacific water shrew and the red-legged frog.

In addition to the site's wildlife values, its proximity to the Tourism Centre, and to the urban centre of Squamish, gives the property an exciting potential for future educational opportunities. The expansion of a nearby trail system may also increase recreational access to the property.

This important acquisition is the result of three years of work by *TLC* and the Squamish River Watershed Society (SRWS) and would not have been possible without the financial



B.C.'s salmon are one of the key wildlife species benefitting from *TLC's* recent protection of the Squamish Mamquam Blind Channel property.
Photo Cornelius Iwan

assistance of the BC Hydro Bridge Coastal Restoration Fund, the CN Cheakamus Ecosystem Recovery Fund, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, and Peter Kiewit Sons Co. (Sea to Sky Highway Improvement Project). Future management of the site will be in partnership with the District of Squamish and the SRWS. ■

TLC Launches \$3.5 million 'Forever B.C.' initiative

Strategic effort aims to keep B.C.'s special places protected amid economic downturn

There's no escaping it: every day the news is filled with stories of failing businesses, government bailout packages, and other signs of a slowing economy. The charitable sector is feeling the pinch too.

The endowment funds that many organizations depend on – either directly or as the source of foundation grants – have declined dramatically in value as stock markets have plummeted. *TLC's* own endowment funds have declined by roughly 30% in the last year.

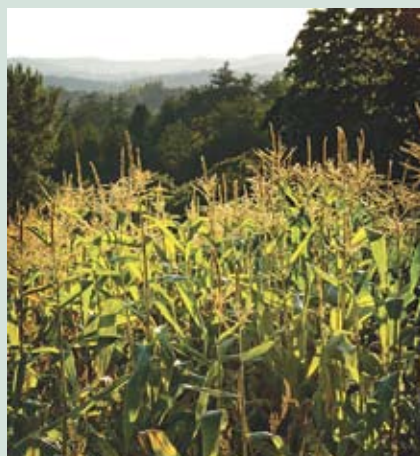
At the same time, government funding

and large donations from private donors have, in many cases, disappeared. It all adds up to a very challenging situation.

That's why *TLC* is taking a pro-active approach to ensure that we can continue to care for the properties in our charge, and fulfill our duty to work with local communities in B.C. to protect the places they care about. The focal point of this approach is a new \$3.5 million fundraising drive called the Forever B.C. initiative.

In a nutshell, this campaign represents the consolidation of *TLC's* most critical work for B.C.'s special places in 2009 into a single, focused effort. The \$3.5 million target includes land acquisition, conservation stewardship, and sustainability building, while excluding all non-essential and less time-sensitive work. It's a tactical approach that will allow *TLC* to cope during these tough economic times and continue doing the work you care about.

To find out more about the Forever B.C. initiative, or to make your gift to protect the special places you care about, visit www.conservancy.bc.ca/foreverbcc, or call 1-877-485-2422. ■



Because future generations deserve to inherit special places like B.C. Binning Residence, Sooke Potholes, Horsefly River Riparian Conservation Area, and Madrona Farm, *TLC* is launching the Forever B.C. initiative to ensure key sites can continue to receive protection during these difficult economic times.
Photo top left Heather Skydt, top right joshmcculloch.com, bottom left Cornelius Iwan, bottom right franceslitman.com

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Wildlife Feeling the Heat in the Okanagan Valley

Your support is helping to fund protection efforts on private lands

By Paula Rodriguez de la Vega, Senior Project Officer & Lucy Reiss, Okanagan Area Manager

The Okanagan and Similkameen valleys are destination hotspots for recreation and retirement living, as well as prime areas for agricultural production. But as more and more people flock to these valleys, an increasing number of wildlife species and habitat areas are being forced out.

Already lost from the Okanagan are 73 percent of the grasslands, and 85 percent of the wetlands. Gone too are Burrowing Owls, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Sage Grouse, white-tailed jackrabbits, and pygmy short-horned lizards. Many more species are in trouble: the area has one of the highest numbers of species at risk of any region in Canada.

The problem is that most of the essential wildlife habitat lies in the valley bottoms – exactly where most of the people live. Fortunately, there are a growing number of private landowners with natural grasslands and wetlands on their properties who want to help protect the valleys’

remaining wildlife populations. With the help of your membership support, The Land Conservancy is reaching out to these landowners and working with them to make a real difference.

At a basic level, *TLC* offers expertise to help people care for their land. Landowners can access information about native plants and wildlife, learn how to deal with problems like invasive species, and get assistance with the creating and implementation of conservation plans specifically tailored to their property through *TLC*’s South Okanagan – Similkameen (SOS) Stewardship Program.

As a landowner’s familiarity with *TLC* grows, some will choose to formalize their efforts by signing a “Stewardship Agreement” with *TLC*, in the case of farmers, by becoming a *TLC* Conservation Partner. These Stewardship Agreements are not legally binding, but can be a great way for *TLC* to build stronger partnerships with landowners who want to be active in maintaining healthy wildlife habitats on their land, as well as helping to create a greater awareness of *TLC*’s conservation



Tiger Salamanders are one of the many wildlife species in the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys whose habitat is shrinking fast due to development pressures. Your support is helping to protect and enhance the key sites that remain.

Photo David Cunningham

work within communities. For those seeking a more powerful commitment, *TLC* can work with landowners to create a conservation covenant – a legally binding agreement between the landowner and *TLC* that remains in place even when ownership of the land changes – ensuring the protection of a property’s designated habitat areas for future generations.

Of course, the most secure way for landowners to protect their land in perpetuity is to donate it to *TLC*

– either directly or through the federal government’s Ecological Gifts program. *TLC* works with landowners to help them navigate through this process, and the related tax implications and benefits, to ensure that their goals for the protection of their land are met.

Wildlife and their habitat in the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys are in trouble. But your support is creating hope by allowing *TLC* to work with private landowners to make a difference. Thank you! ■



God’s Mountain Estate near Penticton is a shining example of how private landowners and *TLC* can work together to protect vital wildlife habitat. Photo Nick Westover

God’s Mountain Estate

A key Conservation Partner in the Okanagan Valley

A great example of private landowners who work with *TLC* are Sarah Allen and Richard Goodall – owners of God’s Mountain Estate. This property is southeast of Penticton with over 100 acres of natural grasslands and cliffs. Located along the shores of Skaha Lake, the Estate is a natural wildlife corridor for California bighorn sheep, a myriad of birds, and several species at risk including yellow-bellied racers (snakes) and western skinks.

Sarah and Richard operate a pesticide-free vineyard on the property, along with a variety of fruit trees, a heritage vegetable garden, and a Mediterranean-style Bed & Breakfast (www.godsmountain.com).

As part of their passion for their land, they have engaged with *TLC* as Conservation Partners – formalizing their efforts to balance their agricultural goals with their environmental values – and are currently in the process of exploring options for more permanent protection of their land.

As Sarah explains, “Here I have the opportunity to make a difference with my own land. We can protect it because it’s our private land. We chose to work with *TLC* to protect our grasslands because they’re an amazing organization that goes beyond and above the call of duty. They’ve been very supportive in helping us achieve our conservation goals.” ■

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Craigflower Farmhouse Saved from Blaze

Community Support Needed for Restoration

As appeared in the Times Colonist February 8, 2009

It was a close call on Friday, January 23, 2009 for one of B.C.'s oldest historical landmarks. At approximately 5 p.m. firefighters from three neighbouring municipalities rushed to save Craigflower Farmhouse from a fire. Luckily, no-one was in the house at the time.

Traffic on Admirals and Craigflower roads was redirected as firefighters fought to save the National Historic Site. Operated and managed by TLC The Land Conservancy of BC since 2003, the two-storey farmhouse is the third oldest house in B.C. and represents the beginnings of agricultural settlement in Victoria.

Firefighters were first alerted to the emergency by an alarm system

installed in the farmhouse. The fire began in the closet under the staircase and burned through the closet door and out into the lower floor hallway, up the staircase and into the upstairs hallway. The fire was likely caused by an electric heater. While there is significant damage, the fire was contained in that area thanks to the quick action of local firefighters.

“We want to thank View Royal, Esquimalt, and Colwood fire departments for being well prepared to deal with a fire at Craigflower. Everyone knew how important the site was and they treated it with respect,” says Ian Fawcett, TLC's Deputy Executive Director. TLC is uncertain as to the total cost of the damages, but it is estimated

to be around \$200,000. While the provincial government covers its own insurance needs, it is unknown to what extent the restoration costs will be covered. Fawcett is hopeful that the site will still be open to the public for tours in May, but it is too early to tell. No matter what, this incident will impact Craigflower's and TLC's operations.

“It will certainly take some effort, but it does appear that most things can be cleaned and restored. The hundreds of artifacts in the house have all suffered smoke damage and will have to be assessed and cleaned by conservators. We also have a group of highly skilled volunteers ready to spring into action,” says Fawcett. “Unfortunately, the staircase is

probably the most significant original feature in the house and it was the most heavily damaged.”

Every May to September, TLC opens the doors of Craigflower Farmhouse to tell the story of pioneer life in the 1850s by implementing special activities and events, and working with local schools to develop educational programs. The latest addition to the farm site is a community garden. With the Friends of Craigflower and other volunteers, TLC is working to breathe life and energy back into this community asset. Please help restore Craigflower and other special places in B.C. at www.conservancy.bc.ca. ■



Photo above: Craigflower Farmhouse – near the intersection of Craigflower and Admirals roads – is a National Historic Site that dates back to Victoria's earliest days. Inset: Fire damaged staircase inside the Farmhouse caused by the January 23, 2009 blaze.



A Vital Link to Victoria's Past

After settling Australia and New Zealand in the 1830s and 1840s, Britain turned its attention to expanding its empire on the west coast of North America. A deal was struck with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) to support the colonization efforts, and entice gentry, workers, and their families to Vancouver Island. And so it was that Scotsman Kenneth McKenzie, along with his family and workers, set sail from Britain in 1852 to a new life on the other side of the world.



Craigflower Farm was one of four original Hudson's Bay Company farms established on Vancouver Island in the 1850s. Image A-1441 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Arriving at Fort Victoria after a five month voyage, they quickly set to work clearing land and creating a farm on a large property purchased by the HBC from the chiefs of the Kosapsom people. Within just two years, McKenzie and his workers had created a community of 21 houses, a saw mill, a flour mill, a blacksmith's shop, a brick kiln, a slaughterhouse, and a general store. A schoolhouse was also added in 1855 for the 26 children living on the farm.

Of the four original farms set up by the HBC in the Victoria area, Craigflower was the most successful, and McKenzie continued to oversee the site until 1866. Though in later years the farm became unprofitable, and the schoolhouse was closed in 1911, its initial creation helped shape Victoria as we know it today.

Craigflower was declared a National Historic Site in 1967. The Farmhouse and Schoolhouse continue to be preserved by TLC as vital links to the history of our community. ■

Winter Storms Hit Abkhazi Garden

Over \$40,000 in damage to heritage site

By Heather Skydt
Manager, Communications

When most people were sipping hot cocoa and spending time with family

on December 23, the staff at Abkhazi Garden were saving a historical landmark from water damage. For the first time in 60 years, the water pipes in the ceiling of the Abkhazi house froze and burst – even though preventative measures had been taken by TLC staff.

After the site closed on the 20th, no one was able to get into work for two days because of snow and poor road conditions. It's unknown exactly how long the water was flowing, but the burst pipe resulted in extensive damage to the site's hardwood floors.

Water pipes in the house are located

in the ceiling because the Abkhazi's preferred not to blast when they built their home. The house is built right on the rock, and has no basement. For this reason, the wood flooring was glued directly onto a cement foundation and – unable to dry after the flood – had to be lifted on January 5.

One small silver lining is that, during the lifting of the floor, the house's original red hearth tile was uncovered and can now be restored. But TLC has had to cancel Abkhazi Garden's popular Antique Side Show – held every January for the last six years – as

well as several other Garden events. The site's restaurant – originally slated to re-open on February 1 – will now likely be closed until April.

The total damages to the Abkhazi house are estimated at over \$40,000. While insurance will cover much of the direct repair costs, the lost revenue from the restaurant closure, ruined merchandise, and the now-cancelled fundraising events will impact the Garden's activities in the year ahead.

Help support Abkhazi Garden by making your donation today at www.conservancy.bc.ca/donate. ■

Update: Valhalla Mile

Community Action Heroes helping to close the distance

by Kathryn Martell
Kootenay Regional Manager

The Land Conservancy and the Valhalla Foundation have raised approximately \$215,000 (at time of printing) of the \$250,000 needed from public donations to secure the purchase of the Valhalla Mile – a spectacular 155-acre Grizzly and black bear habitat in the heart of Valhalla Provincial Park, near Slocan.

Much of this success can be attributed to TLC supporters like Dr. Frances Jang and Dr. Nick Carr. In February the couple hosted a fundraising dinner party in their Vancouver home. Attended by Robert Bateman, and renowned bear biologist Wayne McCrory, the event raised more than \$20,000 in just one evening!

At TLC, we like to call people who organize fundraisers like this

“Community Action Heroes”, because they can make such a difference for TLC campaigns like the Valhalla Mile. From bake sales and bottle drives, to dinners and dances, Community Action Heroes save special places. And thanks to Dr. Jang and Dr. Carr, TLC is a lot closer to being able to protect the Valhalla Mile forever, for everyone.

Can you become a Community Action Hero by hosting a fundraising dinner with your friends? Give us a shout at 1-877-485-2422. ■



This mile-long section of coast on Slocan Lake may soon be protected by TLC thanks to the fundraising efforts of TLC volunteers. Photo Valhalla Foundation

Update: Madrona Farm

\$500,000 more needed for July deadline

By Cassie Holcomb
Member Care Coordinator

Christmas came early to Madrona Farm this year. Thanks to TLC Members and the local community, the first fundraising target of \$250,000 was reached on December 5th – an important milestone towards protecting this important agricultural property at the foot of Victoria's Mount Douglas Park.

Now the work has turned to raising the next \$500,000 of the \$1.7 million purchase price by the end of July 2009.

The business community has rallied

to help meet this new goal. Currently, public service announcements in support of Madrona Farm are running on two Victoria radio stations: 100.3 The Q, and 91.3 The Zone. To hear these, please visit www.conservancy.bc.ca/donatetomadrona.

Also, Victoria restaurants that are supplied with Madrona's fresh organic veggies are getting involved by hosting “Madrona Evenings”. Sales from these nights will be donated directly to the campaign to ensure local produce will always be available to local eateries.

You too can help while having a fun-filled night with friends and tasty food. Why not host a dinner party and ask your guests to bring along a donation instead of a dish or wine? For more information on hosting your own “Madrona Evening” please call us at 1-877-485-2422.

Donations to Madrona Farm can be made at www.conservancy.bc.ca/donatetomadrona ■

Accent Inns Join with The Land Conservancy to Save B.C.'s Special Places

By Heather Skydt
Manager, Communications

TLC Members can sleep easy with Accent Inns while exploring B.C. this year: five dollars of their nightly room rate will go to TLC for the protection of this province's special places.

As part of a new business partnership, Accent Inns – through their InnAid Program – will also be offering TLC Members special discount rates to stay at any of their five hotels. With locations in Victoria, Richmond, Burnaby, Kelowna, and Kamloops, Accent Inns provide the perfect jumping off points for Members wishing to visit TLC sites like Penticton's Skaha Bluffs, B.C. Binning Residence in North Vancouver, and Craigflower Farmhouse in Victoria.

“Every business needs to think about how they can help build a sustainable future, and Accent Inns



are doing their part,” says TLC's Executive Director, Bill Turner. “This partnership not only helps our Members during these economic times, but contributes to our goal to save special places in B.C.”

“Building business and building community go hand in hand, so we are pleased to support the conservation efforts of TLC,” says Mandy Farmer, CEO of Accent Inns. “Last year, our InnAid program at Accent Inns supported more than 230 charitable, non-profit, and community organizations.”

Find out about other businesses who are helping to save B.C.'s special places by offering benefits to TLC Members at www.conservancy.bc.ca/advantage.



Victoria's Madrona Farm produced 105 different vegetable crops for the Victoria market in 2008. Protecting the stre is critical to ensuring the future of local agricultural production on Vancouver Island. Photo Paula Hesje

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Printing

Nanaimo Daily News on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

Cover banner photos left to right: Barry Booth, www.keenshots.com, Heather Skydt.

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