

# Your Passport to Nature



In the Passport to Nature's inaugural year, TLC will host 10 **FREE** events throughout 2018 designed to get you outdoors.

Photo Karen Iwachow

I am excited to share the news of TLC's success in the first stage of our new campaign to extend the protected Clearwater Wetland and Wildlife Corridor. On March 1<sup>st</sup> we finalized the purchase of 11.2 hectares of wetland in the Clearwater River Valley.

With \$25,000 already raised and a goal to close this purchase by December 31<sup>st</sup>, we are launching our fundraising efforts to raise a remaining \$75,000. You can read more about this project on Page 2 of this LANDmark.

The second stage of this campaign is the protection of a 4 hectare parcel to the south of the wetland between the two southern lobes of Wells Gray Park. Currently privately owned and up for sale for \$100,000, the parcel is a key wildlife corridor for large mammals including wolf, cougar, grizzly and black bear, deer, moose and other ungulates.

We are committed to utilizing the most cost effective ways to protect habitats and our Covenant Program is a perfect example of our efforts.

In this edition of the LANDmark you can read about our monitoring of the regrowth after a fire on our Sooke Hills Covenant and about the new covenant with Hollyhock Leadership Learning Centre to protect 4.1 acres of wetland and mature Douglas-fir and Western Red Cedar on Cortes Island.

the year, our Passport to Nature was designed to get you outdoors. Events include restoration activities on TLC's covenants, a tour of Abkhazi Garden, a fruit thinning workshop, an introduction to nature photography and much more! You can register for events by calling our office or online at [conservancy.bc.ca](http://conservancy.bc.ca).

We recognize the need to ensure connectivity between protected areas in order to safeguard seasonal migratory routes. As adjacent parcels are dominated by human presence, migrating species are forced into a bottleneck on this property.

This year we have made accessing our covenants and properties easier than ever before with TLC's Passport to Nature. Filled with ten free events held throughout

I look forward to catching up with you at one of our many Passport to Nature events this year. Don't forget your water bottle and hiking boots!

Cathy Armstrong  
Executive Director



The Passport to Nature was created with you in mind – those who want to explore the wild outdoors, experience new things & meet like-minded people. To make the most of your Passport, here are *five* steps to plan your next adventure & get involved in the work of TLC.



# TLC Expands Protected Clearwater Wetland Area

Land Trust launches campaign to raise \$75,000 to protect migratory wildlife corridor

By Dianna Stenberg  
TLC Communications & IT

Just in time for World Wildlife Day, TLC has announced the protection of 11.2 hectares of wetland in the Clearwater River Valley and the launch of a fundraising campaign to protect a further 4 hectares of wildlife corridor.

Since Wells Gray Provincial Park was established in 1939, the southern border of the park has been extended several times. As a result there are two southward lobes of park land, but no designated wildlife corridors connecting them. This has forced the park's large wildlife – deer, cougar, bobcat, grizzly, black bear, wolves, coyotes – to cross private land twice each year as they migrate between their winter and summer ranges. As the Clearwater River Valley becomes more developed this causes greater concern for the continued survival of the wildlife that call it home.

“The Clearwater Wetland and Wildlife Corridor project seeks to ensure permanent connectivity for large mammals migrating east and west between their winter and summer ranges in southern Wells Gray Park,” said Trevor Goward, lichenologist, naturalist and TLC Volunteer Warden.

TLC previously secured a portion of the wetland in the Valley through the combination of direct purchase and a donation made through the Ecogift Program.

“Had the wetland parcel been purchased privately it would likely be drained eventually,” said Goward. “In terms of biodiversity it’s gold.”

The parcel contains beaver dams, a bog, creeks and several springs supporting various species including moose, which depend on the wetland in the winter.

With the wetland parcel successfully acquired in March for \$17,900, TLC has launched a second phase of the project to further support the wildlife that transverse this corridor each year. Having raised \$25,000 for a refundable deposit on the wildlife corridor, TLC is looking to raise the remaining \$75,000 in order to complete by purchase by the end of 2018.

“We have raised more than one third of the total cost of this phase of the Clearwater Wetland and Wildlife Corridor and are looking forward to completing the acquisition by the end of 2018,” said Cathy Armstrong, TLC Executive Director. “I invite the public to join TLC Members and donors in protecting this habitat at risk to significant development pressure.”

TLC is working with the Wells Gray Wilderness Society (WGWS), including Trevor Goward, whose mandate is to promote the study of the natural values of Wells Gray Provincial Park and adjacent lands. WGWS also supports the educational objectives of the Wells Gray Education & Research Station operated by Thompson Rivers University (TRU). Acquiring the wildlife corridor parcel



Wetlands provide critical habitat for a wide range of wildlife. They also act as giant sponges to reduce floods and ease droughts. Photos Jason Hollinger

would provide additional research and education opportunities for TRU.

With significant pressure in the region for additional recreational accommodation, failing to purchase and protect the wildlife corridor would leave both the site vulnerable to development and the wildlife at risk without a safe passage for crossing.

As Trevor Goward succinctly put it, “wildlife will simply find their way blocked.” ■

**Donors interested in supporting the acquisition can make tax-deductible contributions to the Clearwater Wetland and Wildlife Corridor project by calling TLC at 1-877-485-2422 or visiting TLC's website at [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca). Funds raised towards the Acquisition Fund will be held until the successful completion of an acquisition.**



# New Covenant Protects Cortes Island Wildlife Corridor

TLC and Hollyhock Leadership Learning Centre (Hollyhock) are pleased to announce the protection of 4.1 acres of wetland and mature Douglas-fir and Western Red Cedar grove.

This ecologically significant area is part of a network of properties on southern Cortes Island including Siskin Lane, Siskin Forest Park, South Chains, Treedom Ventures and Hank's Beach Forest Conservation Park, all of which are protected by conservation covenants. This connected wildlife corridor safeguards habitat for Columbia black-tailed deer, cougar and the coastal wolf.

Located on the traditional territories of the Klahoose, Tla'amin and Homalco Nations, Hollyhock's 48-acre campus is the site of the educational institute's leadership programming to advance social change and cultural transformation.

“We acknowledge that the land is our greatest facilitator here,” said Peter Wrinch,

Hollyhock CEO. “And now with the protective covenants on our land, a process started and secured by former CEO Dana Bass Solomon, we will honour the legacy and work of all those who came before us, and all those who will come after.”

In 2018, Hollyhock will offer nature and land-based learning programs including forest bathing, sea scrubbing and nature/sea adventures. There is also an all-new ‘Sustainable Futures’ category that includes courses in urban homesteading, permaculture, Indigenous leadership essentials and climate activism.

“None of us are far from the impact of global warming, but each step we take in the name of conservation helps to preserve the health of ecosystems and the families of countless species that call our province home,” said Cathy Armstrong, TLC Executive Director. “Permanent wildlife corridors, like the protected habitat crossing at Hollyhock, further encourage the survival



The campus of Hollyhock Leadership Learning Centre is now permanently protected by a covenant held with TLC. Photo Hollyhock Archive

and resilience of species.”

A covenant is a legal agreement between a landowner and a monitoring organization like TLC. Covenants are placed on property title and stay with the property indefinitely. TLC's Covenant Program now sustainably protects more than 12,750 acres throughout the province. ■



TLC's Clearwater Wetland and Wildlife Corridor protects valuable habitat for species including these little brown mushrooms and the deer that nibble on them. Photo Jason Hollinger

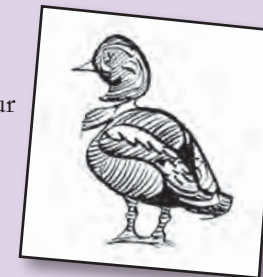
**Join our team! Abkhazi Garden has volunteer opportunities for anyone looking to get involved:**

- Welcome guests to the Garden
- Garden with our top-notch crew
- Guide tours as a docent

**Contact TLC for more details at (250) 479-8053**

## Make Your Mark!

The harlequin duck has been the symbol of the organization since TLC was founded. Our original logo was created by Board Member Briony Penn.



The Board is looking for a refreshing take on our logo. We are calling all artists to submit their new spin, keeping within TLC's mission. Send your entry to [admin@conservancy.bc.ca](mailto:admin@conservancy.bc.ca) by June 1st. Good luck!



# Fire Ecology in the Sooke Hills

Many people are aware of the important role that fire plays in the healthy functioning of an ecosystem. Disturbance is necessary to give room for species that may not have had opportunities previously. Tree species like the lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*) actually require fire for their seeds to germinate due to the resin coating their cones. Another well known fire-maintained species is our beloved Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*), whose meadows exist due to the indigenous practice of burning to remove Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) that would crowd out the young oaks.

Fire ecology is an increasingly popular topic and even has an entire scientific journal dedicated to the subject. TLC jumped at the chance to study effects on an ecosystem firsthand after a fire broke out last July in a section of the Sooke Hills, co-covenanted by TLC and Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT). Thankfully, the blaze only consumed about 1 hectare and TLC and HAT were able to visit the site one month after the fire to collect data.

We began by establishing two 30 metre long transects at the burn site. Transects are paths along which data are recorded; in this instance, species type and abundance. We ran one transect in the forest and another along the open rocky hillside to capture both shaded and unshaded portions of the burn site. Data were collected at the 10, 20 and 30 metre marks and included the number of trees still standing, the number of stems and the species type of new growth. We returned to these exact spots and recorded data on March 10<sup>th</sup> to investigate the changes that occurred. Long-term, the data will be used to determine which species grow most vigorously after a fire, as well as recording the successional changes as the

forest regrows from scorched earth.

The first visit yielded surprising results – many species had already begun growing back, despite the drought conditions and charred landscape! Shore pine (*Pinus contorta*), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*), trailing blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) and oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) were all observed in the shaded portion of the burn site, but sadly no species had regrown in the more open area. Interestingly, the most recent visit yielded different results – no oceanspray or trailing blackberry were observed at all. This is likely due to deer browsing, as the young shoots of plants are too tasty for deer to pass up. The open burn area was beautifully decorated with greenery on its slope, a welcome site after so much burned ground. Unfortunately, many of the species that have colonized the area are not native, with seeds likely transported by wind and animals, including humans and their shoes! Either way, the soil is being covered which is incredibly important as this protects against erosion from wind and rain.

A delightful surprise was encountered when studying the forest floor of the burn site – thousands of mushrooms! There appeared to be at least two different species of the *Peziza* genus, as well as the charcoal-loving elf cup (*Geopyxis carbonaria*), appropriately named for its love of fruiting after forest fires. This fungus is one of the most common pioneer species found on burned ground and is also associated with lodgepole pine. Studies suggest that its below-ground association with lodgepole pine roots protects it from physical damage in the event of a fire, and the extensive mushroom production after a fire may reflect a successful fungal escape from a dying host where the fungus can no longer maintain its symbiotic association.



Above: The UVic Parks Club joined TLC in collecting data this spring. Below: Data collection found native species, characteristic of the ecosystem, including Fungi of the *Peziza* genus and juniper haircap (*Polytrichum juniperinum*).

Photo Torrey Archer

What will we find next? TLC plans to visit the burn site for further data collection at the end of the summer to determine the extent of plant die-off from the usual summer drought conditions. For more information on our revegetation study in the Sooke Hills, be sure to watch TLC's website for updates. ■



Torrey Archer is TLC's Biologist & Land Manager. To get involved with the Covenant Program connect with Torrey at (250) 479-8053 or [covenants@conservancy.bc.ca](mailto:covenants@conservancy.bc.ca).

## Board of Directors

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

Jecka Meertens, Dr. Robert Townley Ogilvie & Sheilagh Stuart Ogilvie

To remember your loved one with a special gift call 1-877-485-2422