

protecting a

West Coast Watershed

Despite our many technological advancements allowing us to safely speak to one another from across the globe, conservation still requires boots on the ground. The last few months have included visits to properties as far east as Trail and as far north as Dunster. These include properties we continue to work to protect and those at-risk properties we are analyzing as potential future projects. While these visits require additional levels of planning to protect the communities we visit and ourselves during the pandemic, getting out and onto the land has a wonderful, healing effect.

The importance of our wild outdoors has been highlighted by many during the last six months. As respite for those dealing with anxiety or a site of recreational value

for those needing to find new forms of activity, our protected spaces offer peace and tranquility for a spectrum of species, including humankind. I hope that you and your loved ones have been able to enjoy the beauty that our province has to offer during this trying time.

In this edition of the LANDmark you will read about our new office space, locally designed logo, celebrations at Abkhazi Garden, and our fall fundraising campaign to protect 27 acres of watershed on southern Vancouver Island: the Millstream Creek Watershed project. You can learn more about the property and a wonderful matching gift opportunity on Page 4 of this LANDmark. Happy reading!

*Cathy Armstrong
Executive Director*



TLC's latest project, the Millstream Creek Watershed, contains 27 acres of at-risk Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem in the District of Highlands.



Common camas is one of many native species found in the Millstream Creek Watershed. They thrive in Garry oak meadows along the west coast.

Celebrating 20 Years in the Garden that Love Built

We celebrated 20 years of community support for Abkhazi Garden on Labour

Day with a Battle of the Blades:

Lawnmower Showdown. Special guests included the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, the Honourable Janet Austin, Georgia's Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Konstantine Kavtaradze, and Her Worship, Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps.

The Battle of the Blades pitted Prince Nicolas' lawnmower, a recently volunteer-restored 1951 Atco, against the garden's present lawnmower, a 2019 Honda.

Ambassador Kavtaradze drove the Atco while Mayor Helps handled the Honda. It was a wild competition with the smoking Atco even cutting into the Honda's turf! After inspecting the mowing jobs of both lawnmowers, CHEK TV personality Tess Van Straaten declared Mayor Helps and her Honda the winner. You can watch the action on the September 7th broadcast at cheknews.ca and view details from CTV and Victoria News' coverage.

After the lawnmowers and their drivers battled it out, dedicated volunteer docent and gardener, Sue Hara gave a tour of the gardens to our dignitaries. It was the first time the Lieutenant Governor had visited the garden. The tour ended at the teahouse where Barb Gunn, The Teahouse at Abkhazi Garden restaurateur, prepared some delicious Georgian appetizers and a Royal Abkhazi High Tea for our guests. This celebratory tea was sponsored by The Teahouse at Abkhazi Garden.

Lieutenant Governor Austin remarked that she has been "very impressed with the properties TLC had acquired and what TLC has been able to do with them." She stated that she would like to support TLC in achieving our mission in the future. The Ambassador noted that the garden is a living museum that continues to be cultivated. He also presented Cathy

Armstrong, TLC's Executive Director, with a very generous cheque for \$10,000 for the Garden.

Both the Lieutenant Governor and the Ambassador expressed their appreciation for all the volunteers who have been working so hard to maintain Abkhazi Garden and to tell the incredible love story behind it. Some of our volunteers have been donating their time and energy for 20 years. I would like to give them special mention: Dick Bullard, Kathy Farquhar, Diane Knuffman, Margaret Smart, and Susan Smith.

Jacqui Paulson, our new head gardener who started this January, also appreciates the hard work of our volunteer gardeners. Their passion has led to the addition of a third morning for volunteering and it has already paid off; many people familiar with the garden have commented that the garden looks better than ever. Jacqui has made many positive changes this year including on-site plant sales, a pergola, a new design for the boulevard garden, a Georgian Garden, and much more.

For those of you who do not know me, I'm Cherie Miltimore. I began working for TLC in May as Abkhazi Garden's Site Manager. I have been amazed at the commitment of our volunteers in making the garden shine. Celebrating 20 years of TLC's protection of Abkhazi Garden this summer has given us the opportunity for significant media exposure, which I hope will bring the story of the garden that love built to a bigger audience and encourage more people to experience the gem that is Abkhazi Garden. ■

Abkhazi Garden, located at 1964 Fairfield Road in Victoria, is now open for fall hours from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. Visitors are asked to follow government health and safety guidelines.



Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps skillfully drives Abkhazi Garden's modern 2019 Honda mower in the Battle of the Blades on September 7th.



At the "wheel" of Prince Nicolas Abkhazi's recently restored 1951 Atco lawnmower was Konstantine Kavtaradze, Georgia's Ambassador to Canada.



Lieutenant Governor of B.C., Janet Austin (left), joined Cathy Armstrong and the Ambassador of Georgia for tea at The Teahouse at Abkhazi Garden.

Volunteer Steward Enables Continued Protection

By Sally Gose
Volunteer Steward

Sally Gose is a volunteer steward who monitors TLC's Barer and Kinghorn conservation covenants with and on behalf of TLC to support proper management of this beautiful area. Board and staff wish to highlight Sally's unwavering love of this land and pay tribute to one of our tireless volunteers. Please get in touch with TLC if you are interested in joining our team as a land steward!

I was nine years old when I started spending my summers in the Highlands. My parents loved exploring the landscape and our family did a lot of 'bushwhacking'! We walked over rocky outcrops and through cedar bottoms, learning how the web of the ridges and valleys connected. I moved permanently to the Highlands in 1997, and have lived here ever since.

My training is in trauma counselling; I have experience in front line work and managed the counselling and victim services program at the Women's Sexual Assault Centre. It was heavy work, and I am so grateful for the forest that provided me nourishment and sense of connection with the natural world.

I was brought up with strong conservation values and taught to be gentle with the land. I had the opportunity to attend courses in the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Victoria, which provided me with many skills and a greater understanding of ecology.

The biggest threat to TLC's conservation covenants in the Highlands is human impact: we are 'loving our parks to



Sally Gose, a volunteer with TLC's Covenant Program, keeps a close eye on our protective conservation covenants in the District of Highlands.

death'. While monitoring, I see a lot of erosion and damage to the sensitive Arbutus/Manzanita ecosystems. To those who enjoy these tranquil spaces, I kindly ask: next time you are out hiking, please be mindful to stay on existing paths and leave sensitive areas untouched. ■



Volunteer Sally Gose (left) with Biologist & Land Manager Torrey Archer, at TLC's Kinghorn Covenant.

Protecting and Restoring the Millstream Creek Watershed

By Dianna Stenberg
Deputy Executive Director

Spanning 27 acres of critically imperiled Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) ecosystem is TLC's latest project: the Millstream Creek Watershed. This lush and diverse property – located in the District of Highlands on southern Vancouver Island – is comprised of a mature forest and three different wetland types.

Typical of the CDF biogeoclimatic zone, the Millstream Creek Watershed is dominated by Douglas-fir and accompanied by western red cedar, grand fir, arbutus, Garry oak, and red alder. The understory is flourishing with species including salal, dull Oregon-grape, ocean-spray, bracken fern, sword fern, trailing blackberry, western trumpet honeysuckle, and Oregon beaked moss.

Unfortunately, the CDF is the smallest and most at-risk zone in B.C. The global range of the CDF lies almost entirely within B.C., however, of all the zones in the province, the CDF has been the most altered by human activities. Less than 1% of the CDF remains in old growth forests and species-at-risk including the Northern red-legged frog (SARA listed species of Special Concern) are found within its boundaries.

Located adjacent and to the north of the Greater Victoria Greenbelt Society's 42-acre Mary Lake Nature Sanctuary, the Millstream Creek Watershed property provides connectivity for wildlife and the local watershed. With two defined creeks and numerous ephemeral streams that flow into Mary Lake, the parcel functions as a water source for the sensitive lake system found to the south. In addition, the protection of this mature forest supports greater connectivity of wildlife corridors when one considers the established Capital Regional District parks in the area.

On a recent visit, we found tree-branch

dwelling lichen known for its sensitivity to air pollution; its presence indicates an ecologically intact environment. Tragically, with growing neighbouring communities and continuous urban sprawl, this pristine environment is at risk of development.

The Millstream Creek Watershed project offers TLC a rare opportunity to protect CDF on southern Vancouver Island; acquiring an undisturbed parcel of this size, and in this location, is not usually financially feasible. Thanks in part to a government grant, an intact future for this property is possible. TLC aims to secure the habitat by the end of 2020.

Due to a very generous matching gift opportunity, this fall we aim to raise \$75,000 to complete the acquisition. We hope you will be able to support us in achieving our goal and keeping the important Millstream Creek Watershed habitat intact. This fundraising goal is more modest than previous years; we know that members and donors are experiencing financial difficulties due to COVID-19. Any and all gifts – no matter the size – are truly appreciated.

Please join other TLC members and donors in helping to protect this at-risk ecosystem by donating today. Gifts can be made online at www.conservancy.bc.ca, by telephone at 1-877-485-2422, or by mail to our new mailing address. Donations are eligible for 2020 charitable tax receipts. With your support, we look forward to reaching our goal and protecting this vital watershed. ■



*Get in touch with Dianna,
TLC's Deputy Executive
Director, to support the
Millstream Creek
Watershed campaign at
(250) 479-8053 or
dstenberg@conservancy.bc.ca.*

★ Matching Gift Opportunity ★
A donor has pledged to match gifts 4:1 to help protect this habitat! Donate this fall to have your gift matched - up to a total of \$75,000 - to help raise the final \$375,000.

The Millstream Creek Watershed property is found within the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem (CDF). Despite its abundance of species including western red cedar, Garry oak, and arbutus, the CDF is the smallest and most at-risk biogeoclimatic zone in the province.

Passport to Nature: A Season Unlike Any Other

By Dianna Stenberg
Deputy Executive Director

Thanks in part to a grant from the Gosling Foundation, this year we published our third annual Passport to Nature: designed to get you outside, learning about species, and meeting like-minded conservationists. This year's program featured eight events hosted by expert naturalist volunteers including Juliet Pendray, Kevin Trim, Sid Jorna, and our Abkhazi Garden volunteer docents.

Our first event, a Bird Walk at Ayum Creek Regional Park Reserve, was held in the cool spring air on March 15th. Participants joined local bird expert Ian Cruickshank for an early morning walk through the forest and the adjoining estuary. Ian is a talented birder; he has done bird and biology fieldwork across western Canada with Bird Studies Canada, Rocky Point Bird Observatory, and Parks Canada. His ability to identify species by ear is next to a magic trick! Together, the group spotted 36 species including a bald eagle diving for a bufflehead. We are so grateful that Ian – and the eager-to-learn participants – joined us for this wonderful event.

Little did we know, our first Passport to Nature event would be our last in 2020. COVID-19 hit Canada's shores in February and by March 16th the federal government was recommending physical distancing and working from home for all who could. Wanting to do our part to

slow the spread of the virus, TLC staff began working from home whenever possible. While property visits and necessary monitoring could still take place with careful safety measures, gatherings were cancelled, including our Passport to Nature.

Thankfully, with the help of some tech-savvy individuals, we were able to offer a few virtual experiences for those looking to participate. An Abkhazi Garden tour was filmed starring volunteers Sue Hara and Marg Palmer, and two watercolour tutorials including a bird identification introduction were created for those missing out this year.

While meeting with groups has been very limited, this time has allowed us the opportunity to write grants, assess new projects, draft studies and management plans, and connect with members, donors, and partners via telephone and video conferencing. As donors share their current struggles with us, we have become even more grateful for the support they offer and the lovely messages they include about the importance of greenspace and the work that we continue to do in protecting B.C.'s sensitive habitats.

Our staff and Board look forward to a time when events are once again safe for



What would turn out to be our first and final Passport to Nature event in 2020, the early morning Bird walk was enjoyed by participants who observed 36 unique species.



Naturalist Ian Cruickshank, who has been guiding birding walks for the last ten years, shared natural history with participants at Ayum Creek in March.

all to attend. Though the experience of living through the COVID-19 pandemic has changed us all, I hope that it will leave us with some positive side-effects: thoughtfulness, kindness, and a renewed awareness for what is truly important. ■



Ayum Creek Regional Park Reserve, located in Sooke, is protected by a TLC conservation covenant.

They Fell in Love with B.C.

By Lisa Cross
Donor Relations Manager & Grants Coordinator

The reasons behind legacy gifts are as individual as the people making them but they all have a common thread - a love of the natural world and a desire to protect wild spaces and vital habitat in perpetuity. TLC was recently honoured to be the recipient of a generous legacy gift from Gerhard and Nora Huland. Gerhard and Nora believed in the importance of conserving natural habitats as well as preserving B.C.'s historical and cultural heritage.

The Huland's road to B.C. was a winding one; Gerhard was born nearly 8,000

kms away, in Dusseldorf, Germany. He immigrated to Canada in his youth, settling in Saskatchewan. It was in this prairie province that he eventually crossed paths with Nora, who was born and raised on a farm in the north.

They were a hardworking couple, with Gerhard (known as "Gary" to his Canadian friends) working as both a

busy grain farmer and a draftsman with the federal government while Nora had a long career as a civil servant with the Saskatchewan provincial government.

When the couple was looking to retire, Gerhard and Nora chose B.C., where they fell in love with the beauty and majesty of their newly adopted province. As they enjoyed more than 25 years of retirement on Vancouver Island, surrounded by B.C.'s rugged beauty, it became important to them to do all they could to ensure the protection of wild spaces in the province they had come to love.

After reading about TLC's conservation work and mission statement, they knew they wanted to be part of its continued success going forward. By choosing to make a legacy gift to TLC, their dream of protecting natural habitats, and special properties like TLC's Abkhazi Garden, will live on in perpetuity.

At TLC, our donors are our partners

"they enjoyed more than 25 years of retirement on Vancouver Island, surrounded by B.C.'s rugged beauty"



Nora and Gary fell in love with the beauty and majesty of British Columbia and wished to see its natural habitats protected in perpetuity.

in conservation, and we are deeply honoured and grateful to move forward, working to protect land and vital habitat across this beautiful province, in Gerhard and Nora's memory. ■



Get in touch with Lisa Cross, TLC's Donor Relations Manager & Grants Coordinator, at (250) 479-8044 or membership@conservancy.bc.ca.

Honour someone you love this season with a TLC Tribute Gift

A tribute gift in honour of an important person in your life is a very special way to share your love of B.C.'s wild spaces. A tribute card will be mailed to the honouree and you will receive a charitable tax receipt for your gift.



Visit www.conservancy.bc.ca or call 1-877-485-2422 to make your gift today!



Giving Tuesday

Together We Give

Join the movement dedicated to giving back.

This year, your #GivingTuesday gift can help protect 27 acres in the District of Highlands with TLC's new Millstream Creek Watershed campaign or support a favourite TLC project or property close to your heart.

Learn more about the campaign on Page 4 of this LANDmark or by visiting www.conservancy.bc.ca.

TLC Gets New Look and Location

As school and fall programming gears up throughout the province, we are witnessing slight increases in COVID-19 cases. At TLC, staff and I have been working remotely over the last few months to do our part to slow the virus spread. While we have been able to continue our efforts in protecting biodiversity during this time, we have really missed being together.

Thankfully, last month we were able to move into a new office space that allows us to safely physically distance. Built in 1910, the converted heritage building was once the Cordova Bay Store.

Please update your address book with our new office location and mailing address:

**TLC The Land Conservancy of B.C.
5150 Cordova Bay Road
Victoria, BC V8Y 2K6**

Please note that any mail sent to our old mailing address will be forwarded to our new mailing address. Our current phone number, fax line, and email addresses remain the same.

In addition to our move, our logo has also undergone a recent revamp. We've added trees and landscape features to reflect our work around the province, but kept our friendly harlequin, now in flight. If you have any questions or comments about our change please reach out to us at 250-479-8053, toll free at 1-877-485-2422, or membership@conservancy.bc.ca. We would love to hear what you think!



TLC's
2020
AGM

This year's Annual General Meeting will be different ...

The impacts of COVID-19 are felt around the province. While we look forward to a time when our in-person programming and events can safely occur, we are committed to doing all in our power to keep you and your loved ones healthy. To that end, this year **TLC's 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held online**. I hope that you will be able to **join us from the comfort of your own home on Saturday, October 17 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** as members of our Board of Directors and staff report on TLC's initiatives from the last fiscal year.

Please RSVP to membership@conservancy.bc.ca or 1-877-485-2422. Attendees will be able to attend via computer or phone. Access details will be sent to those who RSVP in early October. For those unable to attend, TLC's Annual Report and Financial Statements are available on our website or in hard copy by request.

Questions about the AGM or your membership? Contact membership@conservancy.bc.ca or call 1-877-485-2422.

TLC Board of Directors

Mel Lehan ■ Lori Roter ■ Fran Sloan Sainas ■ Marika Smith
Andrew Stewart ■ Tom Watson ■ Sara Wickham

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

**Moira Anderson, Andrew Collins, Ed Conroy, Colleen Coppin,
Brent Gurd, Philip Manders, Ruth Morton, and Derek Wilkinson**

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