



Annual General Meeting

1 P.M. Saturday, September 24, 2022

Mary Lake Nature Sanctuary

1. Call to Order 1:04 p.m.

Board of directors present included Andrew Stewart, Tom Watson, Jeff Sheldrake, Paleah Black, Kelly Fretwell, and Lori Roter, and staff members Cathy Armstrong, Dianna Stenberg, Lisa Cross, Karen Iwachow, Connie Pedersen, Torrey Archer, and members Peta Alexander, Jacqueline Bird, Bob McMinn, Carmel Thompson, Vicky Husband, Ray Zimmerman, Cherie Miltimore, and Richard Konwick, and guests Larry Beatty, Alistair Craighead, and Koi Neah (23 total in attendance)

Territorial acknowledgement of the Lekwungen, WSANEC, Songhees, and Esquimalt Peoples.

Gratitude to the Greater Victoria Greenbelt Society for the use of the Mary Lake Nature Sanctuary facility.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the Agenda moved by Bob McMinn. Seconded by Vicky Husband. Carried.

3. Welcome and Overview of Process

Welcome to our 25th anniversary AGM in this special place. Welcome to members and donors – the lifeblood of TLC – and some of our previous board members.

4. Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting

Motion to approve the AGM minutes of September 25, 2021. Moved by Andrew Stewart. Seconded by Tom Watson. Carried.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

6. Report from the Chair Jeff Sheldrake

The 2021/2022 fiscal year saw the organization grow by two covenants: Cortes Island and Gospel. In addition, staff continue to further the creation of conservation covenants including our history-making work on SISØENEM (Halibut Island) with the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council. We are regularly sought after as a provincial land trust to protect lands of significant ecological importance, but we must prioritize our efforts to make the most of our capacity. To guide the selection and creation of future covenants and acquisition projects, TLC has recently adopted new acquisition and covenant processes and policies. Policies and procedure documents include a landowner covenant application form, an acquisition framework, covenant cost brochure, standard operating procedure, covenant creation checklist, and covenant enforcement policy. They are available on our



website or in hard copy by request from our office. In addition to our Strategic Plan, these policies and procedures guide staff through creating and administering covenants. They also provide clarity to interested landowners and ensure that TLC is in line with the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices. Further, the organization has an Acquisition Committee made up of Board and staff to analyze potential projects quarterly by applying these frameworks to the sites and making recommendations to the Board of directors.

May 2022 marks TLC's 25th anniversary of conservation. The organization was established in 1997 by five individuals who wanted to make a difference in our efforts to protect BC's biodiversity. To mark this momentous occasion, TLC's Board of Directors and I issued a challenge to donors this spring to raise \$250,000 toward the organization's endowment fund for ongoing support of the 250 covenants and nine properties we steward and protect. Launched with a matching opportunity for the first \$40,000 of gifts, TLC's 25th Anniversary Endowment Fund held with the Victoria Foundation now has more than \$120,000 invested to support our programming. You can contribute to this by donating to TLC or directly to the Victoria Foundation. Thank you to all who have contributed to this wonderful cause.

The success of our programming over the last year was made possible by a great many partners in conservation including: External partners including local land trusts like Salt Spring Island Conservancy; Governments including the CRD and the federal government from whom we received support due to the COVID-19 pandemic; Yourselfes: our generous TLC members and donors; and Volunteers who donate hours of their lives to this important cause including our Board, administrative support, and site-specific enthusiasts. I encourage anyone interested in getting involved to reach out. Between our Passport to Nature Program, Deertrails Naturalist Program, and our many sites, we have something to engage everyone in this critical conservation work. Thank you again for coming out today, and for your participation and support.

7. Report from the Executive Director Cathy Armstrong

Happy to see faces in person today. Our personal lives and work lives have been affected by COVID. Getting back to seeing people in person is wonderful. We continue to have a safety plan in relation to COVID, however, we have been able to hold in person activities including our Passport to Nature. Passport to Nature – full of free events from bird walks, to ID-ing invasive species, and restoring land, has seen a benefit to a virtual transition. Virtual offerings have meant that anyone could look at these videos, and they can be used in perpetuity and at a far distance. We continue to deliver a blend of virtual and in-person offerings.

This year also saw the return of Deertrails Naturalist Program following a couple of years of cancellations.



Launched in 2019, this educational program brings B.C.'s senior scientists together with young career naturalists. The program has been held in Clearwater where we protected wetlands and wildlife corridors adjacent to Thompson Rivers University. The genesis was Trevor Goward who lives next to this site. Thankfully this spring we could hold our second. Next year we plan to host two sessions: one in Clearwater and a second on Cortes Island. We have been oversubscribed with applications. The discussions are always impactful and meaningful. This program has been supported by a couple of different endowments, however, we are creating a short film about the program to seek further funding support.

We have also been working in partnership with Royal Roads University to create a film documentary about Abkhazi Garden and the World War II story of Peggy and Nicolas. This is scheduled to be released this fall.

Our Activity Books for Kids – illustrated by our very own Karen Iwachow – have expanded this year with and Abkhazi Garden and a new Fort Shepherd Conservancy Area themed book.

Last fiscal year the board and staff spent a day participating in an Indigenous perspectives workshop to better understand the impacts and colonization and support our relationships with local communities.

On Salt Spring Island we are partnering with the Salt Spring Island Conservancy (SSIC) to protect 15.5 acres of rainforest on Cusheon Creek next to the parcel previously protected and transferred to NCC. When this piece came up for sale TLC helped SSIC with their pledges, donations, and a federal grant application. When complete, the parcel will be owned by SSIC.

We've also been working with Sid Jorna of the Juan de Fuca Community Land Trust Society and the CRD in securing 58 acres of second growth forest at Otter Point known as Admiral's Forest. Sid came to TLC when they were folding up their Society to hold funds until that property came up for sale. Those funds have now been transferred to CRD with additional funds raised by TLC to complete the acquisition.

Staff and board also started planning for the receipt of the bequest from Joan Alston Stewart in the last fiscal year. The property titles have just now transferred. Joan Alston Stewart (nee Lohbrunner) met with Joan prior to her passing. She was meticulous and articulate, and showed us all around her property. She has now entrusted her properties to TLC to create a greenspace in the Blenkinsop valley including wetland and forest for the benefit of the birds she cared for. All of the funds donated from her estate will go to protect that property as per her wishes. Staff are working to create a stewardship plan with the tenants and community. Work continues on SISCENEM (Halibut Island) which was purchased almost 2 years ago now. Staff are developing a conservation covenant and co-management plan with WSCANEC Leadership Council. We have completed lots of garbage removal in part funded through a Provincial program to remove derelict boats and



garbage, etc. WSANEC are working to accept title by creating a new land trust. If you recall, one donation came to TLC to fund the entirety of the acquisition, and other fundraising has made stewardship and ongoing covenant monitoring possible. We receive calls about the covenant and land back all the time as the first Canadian land trust to announce this kind of project, but we won't be the last.

Staff also finalized two covenants: 16.5 acres on Cortes Island and 16 acres on the Sunshine Coast known as Gospel Rock. These projects have been made possible with the partnership of local communities including a Cortes Island private contractor who knows every corner of the island, landowners, the Town of Gibsons, the Friends of Gospel Rock, and the Sunshine Coast Conservancy. It has been a busy year; these projects take a great deal of time.

Unfortunately, we've also seen losses. Mr. Steve Vida – who protected his lands in Maple Ridge with a conservation covenant to protect the birds and wildlife he loved – passed away at 96 years of age. The area has changed dramatically as development has shot up all around him. Thankfully, his home is a place of refuge for the birds and bears. I'm grateful to have been able to visit with him just ten days before he passed.

Marion Cumming, a long time friend and TLC supporter, also passed away this year. She was a kind soul who stuck to her principles. She and her husband previously gave lands back in Nova Scotia to a local Indigenous group. Here in the Cowichan Valley they gave their property, and her last act was to donate her home in Oak Bay to the Friendship Society.

Thank you to the board and staff for supporting me through this year of transitions. I'm moving to the Lower Mainland but will remain as TLC's Executive Director. This will enable the prioritization of work in other areas of the province, and is an opportunity to reconnect and meet with donors outside the CRD. Currently, we're working on a conservation covenant in Squamish.

Questions and comments from attendees:

How much of Cortes Island is protected? 5% of the island mostly in the south.

Has there been any update about the Mt Work (TLC's Kinghorn and Barer Covenants) management plan with the CRD? Staff have submitted the response to management plan to the CRD.

Is there any news about the 100-acre property on the south end of the Gowlland range? It appears that once the owner believed there was significant interest the owner raised the asking price dramatically. TLC has visited the property.

TLC has embarked on innovative work on reconciliation. The organization is responding to the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to have organizations in our space initiate this work. People are



very interested in this work. The organization is working with the WSANEC to support their creation of a land trust. Staff are so important: they are supporting the work done 5 days per week and they're here on the weekend. The work we do is incredible complex. Legal underpinnings. Monitoring. Drafting of those covenants to make sure they are secure. Board members have also been very supportive; Not a working board, but they are out in the field with staff and providing their expertise to different pieces.

8. Treasurer's Report from Lori Roter

The Annual Report includes the Treasurer's Report. Our auditors Grant Thornton LLP – represented by Larry Beatty today – will review the financial statements and cover any questions. This year saw an increase in the amount we transferred to endowment funds. We continue to have restricted funds to address any potential shortfalls and have built up contingencies. Forward looking we are working on the recently announced Alston Stewart bequest. It's a substantial revenue, however, it is entirely dedicated to that project. That's why we keep fundraising for operations and other projects. I've been on the board for 8 years and do plan to step down as Treasurer this year. I'm happy to say that we have sparked the interest of a new board member to take on the Treasurer role. I will help with the transition and updating our policies.

9. Presentation of Financial Statements by Larry Beatty of Grant Thornton LLP

Larry Beatty walked through TLC's 2021/22 Audited Financial Statements. The Auditor's Report provides a clean audit opinion and states that the Financial Statements are in accordance with charitable guidelines. Page 3, the Statement of Operations, breaks revenue and expenses into general funds and restricted funds. The general fund shows a \$20,000 deficit. The restricted column – related to capital acquisition and expenses associated with those projects – shows a surplus of \$250,000.

Page 5, the balance sheet, highlights the organization's assets and liabilities. This shows a healthy balance sheet overall: \$1.3 million in cash and cash equivalents. Conservation covenants and capital assets show historically donated or purchased assets. The fund balances match the amount invested in conservation covenants, the amount internally restricted by the board, and are detailed in Note 8. The general surplus shows \$556,000 from the last few years. The Notes have a lot more details.

It has been a strong year overall with a strong balance sheet. The audit process makes sure that everything is fairly presented.

Questions from attendees:

What does the \$16 million in conservation covenants on the Consolidated Statement of Financial Position mean?



Answer: Not necessarily that covenants are worth that amount. It's the historical amount they've been valued at when they are donated or purchased. Historic value of the covenant at the time they were acquired.

Owned by someone else. Covenant restricts what could be done. Difference in value of the property before and after the covenant. If no donation tax receipt requested, then it would be only our costs e.g., legal fees.

Larry – similar perspective – value of when property was acquired.

10. Appointment of Auditor

Motion to appoint Grant Thornton as auditor for TLC's 2022/23 fiscal period. Moved by Andrew Stewart. Seconded by Peta Alexander. Carried.

11. Nomination of Sara Wickham

Motion to ratify the election of Sara Wickham to TLC's Board of Directors for a three-year term. Moved by Lori Roter. Seconded by Kelly Fretwell. Carried.

12. Election of Greg James

Motion to elect Greg James to TLC's Board of Directors for a three-year term. Moved by Lori Roter. Seconded by Tom Watson. Carried.

Mindful that Lori Roter will be stepping down as Treasurer, the Board tried to attract someone with a new perspective as well as someone with experience to the role. Jeff Sheldrake and Torrey Archer met with Greg James before his nomination. Greg has a long history in the financial world, ran a small business, worked with Indigenous communities, and has experience as a Treasurer at St Margaret's School.

The Board of Directors thank Lori Roter for her time served as Treasurer. She has kept our house in order on the Treasurer's side. The Board are sad to see her step down but recognized that one cannot continue forever. Anyone who has done the Treasurer job in any volunteer organization knows this is a special job.

13. New/Other Business

To celebrate 25 years of conservation, Torrey Archer performed a song lyrics from staff and set to the tune of the never-ending story.

The Board thanked everyone for attending our first in-person AGM in three years.

14. Adjourn 2:22 p.m.

Moved by Jeff Sheldrake.