

The CVLT Newsletter

Fall 2003
Number 8

What's New at The Comox Valley Land Trust
"Creating a Local Legacy of Lands and Resources"



WHAT'S NEW

We have developed an exciting "Land Protection Program" which may include the following initiatives in the coming year, if sufficient funds are raised.....

- **HABITAT AND GREENSPACE PROTECTION** - • **Covenants** - maintaining and monitoring existing public and private covenanted properties; working with interested landowners to place conservation covenants on their properties. • **Greenways projects** - signage and benches for the One Spot Trail; an extension of the Valleyview Greenway near Hurford Hill Nature Park. • **Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan** - Hurford Hill Nature Park. • **Land Protection Strategy** - a cooperative review of the Valley's remaining greenspaces to identify focus areas and produce a long-term protection action plan.

- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION** - • **Establishing the "Friends of Hurford Hill Nature Park"** - working with the community to create a neighbourhood stewardship group for this beautiful 26.5 acre public park. • **School District 71 outdoor education curriculum** - working with SD 71 to create and implement a pilot outdoor education project to provide opportunities for children to experience local protected greenspaces. • **Real estate sector** - provide local realtors with resource information on shoreline living; review the presentation of conservation covenants on Disclosure Forms.

- **FRIEND-RAISING** - *Odete Pinho* is working on a survey and analysis of community support with the goal of generating sustainable core funding from within our own community. Her final report will offer step-by-step strategies and time-specific goals for developing this membership, donor and fundraising program. *Susanne Bradfield* is working on funding applications to help partially cover the cost of our Land Protection Program described above.

We still need your help to achieve our goals! Please consider making a donation, or becoming a monthly donor for as little as \$10 a month! Donations over \$20 are tax deductible.



UPDATE

This summer has been a "moving" time at the Comox Valley Land Trust. **We moved our office twice** over the summer and have finally settled into a small, but beautiful office space at suite #221 in the Mansfield Centre, 2270 Cliffe Avenue (the McSwiggins building). *Despite the challenges, CVLT has maintained its activities throughout the summer and fall.....*

• **SITE VISITS** • On an annual basis we conduct site visits to the covenant lands we hold to monitor the state of those lands and ensure that the covenant terms are being adhered to. The monitoring season is now complete, with visits made to **Hurford Hill Nature Park and Fran Johnson's property**. This is a good time to reflect on the importance of ongoing Stewardship, or "Land Parenthood." The human/nature interface is dynamic, and especially at Hurford Hill Park stewardship requires educating the surrounding neighbors about how to care for our remaining pockets of green.

• **PRESENT COVENANTS** • CVLT continues to partner with landowners who are striving to create their own legacy by protecting some very special and ecologically valuable places. Two covenants in **The Millard Piercy Watershed** are progressing, and we are continuing to work with the Sandwick Waterworks Improvement District to place a conservation covenant on the 32-acre **Sandwick Forest**.

• **PROPOSED COVENANTS** • We have formally offered to hold covenants on **Lerwick Forest** and the **Millard Estuary**, once the City of Courtenay's purchase of these lands is finalized. Lerwick Forest, a 20 acre parcel adjacent to Lerwick Road, is forested with mature second growth trees that provide soothing quiet, shade, fresh air and habitat. Millard Estuary is a 33.6 acre parcel at the mouth of Millard Creek, considered by biologists to be both sensitive and rare.

• **ONE SPOT RAIL TRAIL** • We continue to partner with the Regional District on the development of this trail. The Regional District began construction on the trail (which will be approximately 5.5 km in length from Cessford Rd to the Tsolum River) this fall and will reconvene in the spring of next year. CVLT will contribute compatible trail signage and a trail maintenance guide to this project, in an effort to encourage greenways stewardship. We are hopeful that our continuing involvement in this project will benefit all stakeholders.

• **CUMBERLAND COMMUNITY FOREST SOCIETY** • We continue to support the CCFS in their efforts to purchase a 253 hectare forest adjacent to the Village of Cumberland. The CCFS have raised an incredible \$65,000 so far and are proceeding with their intent to purchase. Management of the Cumberland Forest is likely to be of high concern due to the number of rare and threatened species that it contains.

• *Cont'd on page 2*



Bulletin Board

CUMBERLAND COMMUNITY FOREST SOCIETY FALL EVENTS

- ✓ NOV. 14 – Trivia Night, Cumberland Cultural Centre, 7 pm. \$10 advance tickets / \$12 at the door
- ✓ NOV 15 - DEC. 15 – Art Show and Sale, Tarbells Cafe, 2705 Dunsmuir
- ✓ FRIDAY FILM NIGHTS – Miners Cafe, 2699 Dunsmuir. Call Andrew for dates, times, and film titles
- ✓ Cumberland Community Forest Art Card Series featuring local artists now on sale at stores around the Valley for your Christmas list. There's also time to purchase the award winning Rhythm and Green CD



For more info on any of these events, call Andrew at 897-9781



Follow The Money

• submitted by
Pam Munroe, Treasurer



MONEY AND THE LAND TRUST

The core financial issue for the Land Trust is securing money that will fund our ongoing operations. Most organizations, without a sugar daddy in the background, must spend hours of volunteer time preparing grant applications and making their projects look "pretty" to public or private foundations and governments at all levels.

However, most of these organizations will not fund the basic operating costs of non-profits like the Land Trust (this includes rent, phone, fax, printers, photocopiers, etc.). They want to fund sexy things that will get their names on plaques and in the paper. And in order to attract these funds we usually need to come up with a

program that will suit the needs of the funder and not necessarily the real needs of the Land Trust.

So we must rely on our members and supporters to give us those funds that will allow us to maintain our tiny office and minimum administrative costs.

Monthly donations give us security in knowing that every month we have those funds in hand.

PLEASE.... consider a monthly donation (minimum \$10) to support the work of conserving greenspace in the Comox Valley. If you become a monthly donor you also are automatically a member.

See the donation form included with this newsletter.

Since November 2002 CVLT has partnered with the Crown Land Coalition to stop Lannan Forest's sale to Crown Isle. In May 2003

Courtenay Council voted to approve the annexation of this property and the Coalition reacted quickly. Using the petition process under the Local Government Act and with the help of a 100 volunteers, almost 3,000 signatures were collected of Courtenay residents opposing the annexation. With this level of opposition, Courtenay councillors voted not to forward the annexation request to government. This was stopped, however there is no assurance that the forest will not be sold for development. The Regional District is meeting with Land and Water BC to look at "disposition options." A pledge campaign has been set up to gather public support to assist RDCS to acquire the forest from the province.

• Phone Bob Campbell, 339-2805 or Terry Fright, 339-7714 for more information.

LANNAN FOREST UPDATE



□ What's New (cont'd)

• **OUR STAFF MEMBERS** • Susanne Bradfield, Odete Pinho and Lynda Fyfe, are each involved in specific aspects of running and maintaining our organization. Their work includes researching and writing funding proposals, researching long term funding options, administering our office, drafting legal covenant agreements, collecting biological and physical "baseline inventory" information, conducting our annual monitoring, and ongoing communication and outreach.

In short, **CVLT CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN OUR RELATIONSHIPS** with landowners, local governments, and other stewardship organizations in the Valley and beyond.



Laughing Oyster

BOOKSHOP

334-2511



286 Fifth Street
Courtenay, B.C.

Your Adventure Starts Here!



Outfitters & Tours

368 Fifth Street • Courtenay
338-8999

Volunteers & Donors

SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED CVLT

Brian Allaert
Don Chamberlain
Glen Christensen
Tim Clermont
Peter Crawford
Ed Dahl
Grace Doherty
Joan Erickson
The Habitat
Conservation
Trust Fund

Sheila Harrington
Lauren Hay
Chris Hilliar
Shirley Jorgensen
Tracy Kobus
Rona-Rae Leonard
Tim McGrady
Linda McLean
Sarah McLoughlin
Patti Matthews
Jack Minard

Eileen Palmer
Maaike Penn
The Real Estate
Foundation
Lucy Reiss
Angela Smailes
Peggy Zimmerman
Kel Kelly, Jim Hunter,
Erik Taynen and
Steve Ellis and
Stevie Smith

And, as always, we thank all our donors and, especially, our monthly donors!

Special Thank You
to the Regional District of
Comox-Strathcona
for their recent grant-in-aid
to the CVLT

Diana Caldwell and her partner, Eric, spent the last year teaching English at a university in China. They gained wonderful insights as they enjoyed both the teaching and cultural experience. One especially, struck Diana with the differences between our Canadian reliance on and assumption of volunteerism compared to China. She shares that story with us below. (WELCOME BACK, DIANA!)

Teaching English last year in Chengdu, a city of 11.5 million in Sichuan, China, gave me a new perspective on the importance of volunteers in Canadian society. The foreign teachers had to participate in a weekly lecture series, and my topic on one occasion was "Volunteerism – the lifeblood of a Nation". At the end of the hour, during which the audience appeared to be listening with rapt attention, instead of the usual barrage of questions, there was dead silence. Afterwards, several students came up and mentioned that only the Communist Party could initiate projects or organizations in China. Furthermore, if one wanted to volunteer to do something, one had to apply to the government first. (One student told me that she had applied to be an environmental volunteer and three months later was turned down as unsuitable.) Someone also explained that so much action of a "voluntary" nature had been required by the government after the revolution in 1949, that Chinese people had lost the spirit of an act done freely for the benefit of their society. Later, I did in fact meet three environmentalists, volunteers with Chengdu's FuLan Rivers Project, one of a small handful of Chinese NGO's. Fortunately in getting to know the students, it was evident that many are aware of the problems facing China and the planet. I wish these young people well, and I hope that they will have the opportunity and spirit to put their ideas into action for a better world.

THE COMOX VALLEY LAND TRUST is dedicated to protecting the Comox Valley's rich heritage of land rich heritage of land and resources through voluntary conservation.

OUR MISSION is to "create a local legacy of lands and resources". We work with landowners, stewardship groups, the community, and all levels of government to promote the long-term protection of wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas, recreational green space, scenic places, heritage sites and working lands (agricultural and forest lands).

OUR GOALS are to:

- ◆ identify land with significant values to the community;
- ◆ promote the development of several greenways networks (habitat corridors and recreational greenways), linking natural areas for the benefit of wildlife and providing opportunities for people to reconnect with the natural environment;
- ◆ promote public and private land stewardship as the Valley develops;
- ◆ help landowners identify and implement land conservation options that meet their needs, and to;
- ◆ manage lands held in trust for the benefit of the community.



www.communitythings.com/cvlt

Watch for CVLT's new, updated website coming soon!
{Special thanks to Maaike Penn & Joka Belyk}

**TOTEM
STATIONERY
& art supplies**

232 Fifth Street
Courtenay

334-3814





One Yard At A Time... "Going Underground"

• submitted by Judy Walker

Someone wrote that we are really a very odd species - we spend huge sums of money and energy trying to eliminate water from our environments - and it's the only one absolute requirement of all lifeforms. We drain swamps; we collect all our roof water and send it into the ocean as rapidly as we can; we get distressed if there is a puddle of standing water in our back lawn; and we build houses in floodplains and expect compensation when they flood.

The September 6th edition of the Vancouver Sun had a huge article on the designs of new communities, such as East Clayton in Surrey, and how they are dealing with stormwater on site. The idea is to try and mimic the natural system of rain falling on the soil and slowly seeping into the ground. Rain runs off the tree leaves and drips onto the plants below; they in turn shed the water to the groundcover and the humusy rough soil. The water slowly works its way through the composted needles, leaves, and woody debris into the soil layer. Organisms utilize some of the water as it slowly percolates down. Perhaps the water hits a layer of heavy blue clay, and then slowly travels sideways, looking for an opportunity to move downward again. The whole process moves slowly - endless rough surfaces trapping miniature puddles, then slowly releasing that water.

As a gardener, this year especially, I noticed that the little indents from the travels of the cats, dog and deer (bless their hearts!) trapped the water from my meager offering from a hose. The smooth areas were annoying as they shed the water immediately, as if the soil were pavement. So the trick is roughness I thought... and remembered exploring a forest with Will Marsh, a friend, professor and professional ranter about how we treat stormwater. Will said the key is the bumps and hollows, and told me to look at the forest floor as we struggled

over big hummocks of sword ferns and moss and down into wet hollows. He pointed out that once standard development came to this area, the water processes would be disturbed forever.

The development in East Clayton and other places is trying to return water to the soil as soon as possible - not pipe it elsewhere - it's needed right where it falls. Paving everything in site forces water to move great distances to find a way to get back into the soil.

As homeowners there are small and significant things we can do. Replace every inch of impervious surface with another material in the yard and garden. Gravel (there are many kinds; you can get a great surface; and it's inexpensive!) allows water to percolate into the soils. Small unit pavers do the same. Small pavers and gravel do require good preparation with proper drainage below them. Throwing down some bricks onto a backyard of hardpan clay will probably not give you the desired effect, unless a reflecting pond was your intent. A friend said that after he had his country driveway paved, he never heard visitors coming up to the house - he missed the sound of the crunch of the gravel as his early warning system, and his soil probably missed the even distribution of rain.

So take a walk around your yard and think "rough"-humusy mulches (no bare soil!...), longer grass, even better, groundcovers rather than lawn, more shrubs and trees, rent a jackhammer and take up some of that asphalt driveway (in old parts of Seattle only the tire tracks are paved-concrete was too dear to spread all over the yard!) and replant the areas with plants lower than your car bumper! Remember - to recharge your water table, trap the water, slow it down, give it back to the soil.

Water is far too precious to throw away!

• Who's Who • at the Land Trust

OFFICERS

- Shirley Ward, President
- Diana Caldwell, Vice-President
- Pam Munroe, Treasurer
- Judith Walker, Secretary

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

- Peggy Carswell
- Leslie Henderson
- Winston Schell

• Membership •

Our members are our strength. If you aren't already a member of the CVLT, please consider joining today. If you are already a member, we need your continued support. A membership form is attached to this newsletter. Monthly donors (minimum \$10 per month) automatically become members.

• Donation Receipts •

Receipts are now issued for fees & donations of \$20 or more

• Land Trust Contact •

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Courtenay, B.C.
V9N 5N5
Phone: (250) 338-1368
Email: cvlt@uniserve.com
Website:
www.communitythings.com/cvlt

• Board Meetings •

3rd Tuesday Monthly
7 - 9 PM
221 - 2270 Cliffe Avenue
Members Welcome

THE CVLT NEWSLETTER

is designed and produced by
Land Trust Volunteers.
PLEASE RECYCLE
and pass it on to a
friend or neighbour.

GARDENERS!

It's time to put your gardens to bed.
Remember to pot up extra seedlings
and divide and pot clumps of perennials
for CVLT's spring plant sale.

Environmentalists
make terrible
neighbours, but
great ancestors.
• David R. Brower, 1990