

The CVLT Newsletter

Spring 2006
Number 13

"The Comox Valley Land Trust works to maintain the land heritage of the Comox Valley as a living trust, through long-term planning, cooperation and conservation."



WHAT'S NEW

- **CONSERVATION COVENANTS** • This spring we registered two covenants on properties in the Millard/Piercy watershed. The Land Trust now holds conservation covenants on nine properties with significant habitat values, including the Cumberland Community Forest, Masters Greenway and Wildlife Corridor, Hurford Hill Nature Park, and Sandwick Forest.
- **GREAT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!! SANDWICK FOREST AMPHIBIAN HABITAT COMPENSATION PROJECT** • The City of Courtenay's newly-created amphibian habitat in Sandwick Forest compensates for habitat lost in constructing the Lerwick Road connector. Of particular concern is the loss of habitat for the federally and provincially designated Species-at-risk, the Red-legged frog. CVLT is being funded by the City of Courtenay to monitor the long-term viability of this new habitat. We have hired local biologist, Kayt Chambers, to supervise CVLT volunteers with weekly monitoring. More volunteers are welcome to help with amphibian surveys as the breeding season comes to a close, and/or with vegetation surveys in June/July. All new recruits will be trained by Kayt on the required survey methodologies, and will be assisted by her whenever needed. Contact Kayt at 336-8023 or for more information.
- **"FRIENDS" PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC COVENANT LANDS** • CVLT is developing a program to increase community involvement in taking care of protected areas. We already have two excellent models for the Friends program--the Cumberland Community Forest Society helps the Village of Cumberland manage the Cumberland Forest, and CVLT volunteer Gordie Fyfe coordinates work on the One Spot Trail. We now want to expand this kind of volunteer participation to the protection of Hurford Hill Nature Park, Masters Greenway and Wildlife Corridor, and Sandwick Forest. We are looking for interested residents who enjoy these natural areas and who want to help care for them. Guided by agreements with the City of Courtenay, the Regional District, and Sandwick Waterworks District, the volunteers will act as "eyes and ears", reporting trail hazards or problems such as dumping, vandalism, and damage to vegetation. They may also choose to help with trail building and maintenance or with environmental projects in the park, such as removing invasive species, tree planting, etc. The Friends of Hurford Hill group is already being formed—if you would like to help, contact Mike Laughlin at 334-2963. For information about the "Friends" program in general contact Diana Caldwell at 337-8397 or Lynda Fyfe in our office at 339-1619.
- **CUMBERLAND COMMUNITY FOREST UPDATE**—submitted by *Mary Lynn Des Roches, Cumberland Community Forest Society* • **Fundraising Progress:** The CCFS plant sale was a whopper again and raised \$3,450. Monthly donations of about \$4,300 continue to come in to pay off money borrowed to purchase the Forest. We really appreciate that support. **Management Plan:** The first management plan is being drawn up and will soon be submitted for the approval of the Village, The Land Conservancy of BC, and the Comox Valley Land Trust. **Volunteer Opportunities:** There are lots of volunteer opportunities, most of them outdoors. Contact Mary Lynn Des Roches at 336-8628 for more information on how you can help by making a donation, becoming a monthly donor, or volunteering your time.
- **ONE SPOT TRAIL** • CVLT and the Regional District plan to enter into a more formal agreement for maintenance of the One Spot Trail. This year, trail work will include improved drainage and the addition of crushed rock to some sections.

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This is your Land Trust.
Find out how to work with your neighbours
to protect our green space.
Join us! Bring a friend!
EVERYONE WELCOME!

Seventh ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING • INVITATION

MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2006 – 7:00 pm

Evergreen Seniors' Lounge - Florence Filberg Centre

✓ Presentation on our Regional Conservation Strategy
and Celebration of the Community's Conservation Success 1999-2006

✓ Election of 2005/06 Board



Bulletin Board

• CVLT ANNUAL VOLUNTEER GARDEN PARTY - SUNDAY, JULY 16 - 3 PM TO 7 PM •

We'd like to invite all donors, members, volunteers, Board members, and friends to attend our annual family potluck and garden party at Diana Caldwell's house, 7147 Headquarters Road in Merville. This is our way of saying thank you to all the great folks who keep our Land Trust going. Please bring a dish of food to share, cutlery, plates, and glasses (this is an environmentally friendly event), also swimsuits and lawnchairs. There will be live music, great food, and a short lecture (topic TBA). Phone Diana at 337-8397 for more info.



WHAT'S NEW (cont'd)

CVLT also wants to see the One Spot extended north of the Tsolum River. Although the Regional District has no approved plan for continuing the trail north of the Tsolum, it is encouraging that the One Spot is identified as a parks priority for Area C, and that Areas A, B and C have agreed to work toward a Greenway Plan. And finally, thanks to Gordie Fyfe and all the other dedicated volunteers — the trail would not exist without you!

• **NEW TRAIL IN HURFORD HILL NATURE PARK** • Over the winter, the City of Courtenay repaired damage done by an unauthorized mountain bike trail in the Park. This spring Katimavik volunteers completed a new pedestrian trail that will help the City and CVLT keep an eye on the southeast area of the Park.

♥ Volunteer Corner

• submitted by Diana Caldwell

"One is not born into the world to do everything, but to do something."

• H.D. Thoreau

Let's take a moment to say a huge and heartfelt "thank you" to all those dedicated volunteers who "do something" for CVLT. It all adds up to a whole lot!

Special thanks

- Anelyse Weiler for the terrific display board she made for us
- Karen Melnyk (Fiesta fundraiser), and all those who donated baking
- Ann Halstead for looking after the CVLT booth at the Volunteer Fair
- Barb Haffner and Naomi Stevenson for looking after the CVLT booth at Film Fest
- Andrew Cruickshank and Pat Fyfe for pitching in to keep the office organized
- Jennifer Harrison and all other volunteers and plant donors who helped make the recent sale such a success. (See below)
- Mike Laughlin for becoming our first "Friends of a Covenant" coordinator, and for all those Broom Bashers in Hurford Hill Park

- Starbucks' Coffee Ltd and local barristas for their support
- Thrifty Foods for sustaining Broom Bash and Plant Sale volunteers with snacks
- Brent Reid, Brian Walwork, Beverly Michaluk – photographers par excellence!

Sandwich Amphibian Monitoring Project

- Russ Petersen- he's been a great help!
- Dianne Sanderson and Patti Mathews

Board Volunteers

- Special thanks to Peggy Zimmerman who resigned from the Board recently. Her research skills, humour, and tireless efforts on behalf of the CVLT are greatly missed.
- Many thanks to Brian Conroy (covenants and legal aspects of land protection).
- Also, two new Board members bring some valuable skills and expertise to the Board: Barb Haffner (non-profit and volunteer management); and Vivian Dean (promoter of communication between conservationists and land developers). *Welcome all!*

BCLTA Seminar Series March 17 through 18, 2006

The BC Land Trust Alliance annual seminar series was held at the North Vancouver Outdoor School (NVOs) in Paradise Valley. The series began with Marc Smiley's "Planning, Organizational Structure and Fundraising for Success" showed how vision flows through organizational structure to the budgets. The "Media & Communications Workshop" was filled with Briony Penn's quirky wit and sense of humour. Among the many other useful and topical seminars, the standout for me was that of Victor "Sky" Elderton, Principal of the NVOs, about how he came to appreciate the wonders of nature and how his position has touched the lives of thousands of children. Events such as this recharge us and help direct our energies. Thank you for a wonderful weekend!

• Jack Minard



Overheard remarks at CVLT's recent Plant Sale on April 29th....

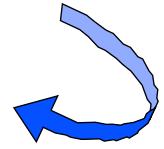


Volunteer – "The doors don't open for forty minutes."

Customer – "I always come early to stand in line; this is my favourite plant sale in the Comox Valley." (We think so too!)

The Plant Sale netted \$3,450 this year, and offered a fabulous variety of plants, some of which were specialties. And many thanks to Jennifer Harrison and her team of terrific volunteers for making it so. We would also like to thank Lauren Hay and Thrifty's for sustaining our volunteers with muffins, and World Community Education and Development Society for coffee. The advice and experience offered by the Master Gardeners under Jay Ringstead and Tony Berniaz was much appreciated, as was the presence of Seed Savers. Also, thanks to Highland Interact Club for clean-up....and once again, thank you volunteers and plant donors – We could not accomplish any of this without you!

The CV Land Trust Moves Toward a "Committee" System of Governance



Public interest groups are a force for effective and long-term change in a democratic society. They start from the strength and energy of committed and visionary individuals and, if successful, turn into sophisticated, busy, and effective organizations that inform and improve public policy.

This is definitely the case with the Comox Valley Land Trust.

With little funding to hire full-time staff for our general business or "core" operation, the Board of Directors is responsible for managing all initiatives. This workload can no longer be addressed effectively at regular Board meetings. To address this issue the CVLT has implemented a "Committee" system that requires Board members to participate in or lead at least one committee.

The first committees have been formed, each chaired by a Board member. These committees are reaching out into the larger community for volunteers who would like to focus on a given area. The detailed

work of the Land Trust will be done by committee members and committee reports, and recommendations will be presented for decision at regular Board meetings.

The CVLT's goal is to conserve the beauty and livability of the Comox Valley for all time. Consider becoming an integral part of this democratic process--help us build a conservation ethic that transcends political boundaries.

Please feel free to contact any of these folks to become involved with committee work. We encourage all members to consider participating on one of these committees:

Personnel Committee – Peggy Carswell

Executive Committee – Jack Minard (Board members only)

Fundraising Committee – John Edwards

Community Outreach Committee – Barb Haffner

Land Protection Committee – Shirley Ward

Regional Conservation Committee – Jack Minard

• Submitted by Jack Minard

WE ARE IN NEED OF – (1) A SECRETARY; WE ARE DEVELOPING A PREFORMATTED MINUTE-TAKING PROCESS TO STREAMLINE MEETINGS AND MINUTES; (2) SOMEONE EXPERIENCED IN NEGOTIATING LEGAL CONTRACTS; AND (3) SOMEONE TO MANAGE OUR VOLUNTEER LABOUR FORCE. ☷ CALL JACK AT 338-4934.

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The Regional Conservation Strategy project demonstrates the Land Trust's progressive and holistic approach to conservation in this land of plenty. The past six months have seen exciting progress in identifying priority areas for conservation and producing accessible visual materials to communicate those priorities to our partners and the broad community.

The technical details of compiling the digital map information were daunting. The RCS project area is large and the multi-layers of land-use plans, policies, and ownership make your head spin. Keeping all of this information organized (especially with plans constantly changing) is our major challenge. Lynda is now coordinating mapping with Sibylle Walkemeyer at Econ Consulting in Black Creek, and is making rapid progress.

We have met with local government councilors and planners to present the digital maps. These maps are innovative and show a Valley-wide picture of currently protected lands, highly sensitive unprotected areas, and proposed parks and greenways from local Official Community Plans. This information has never before been compiled and presented together, and it is good timing – we are promoting the Regional Conservation Strategy when local governments are meeting to discuss Regional Growth Management. As a planning tool, the map can "flag" inter-jurisdictional conservation issues and promote cooperation between government and other organizations to acquire parks and



greenways.

CVLT's funding to continue this vital project work hinges on financial support from local governments. Our requests have been positively received but we cannot yet say that all local governments have included this project in their budgets. And this is what potential funders want to hear! For now we are committed to doing as much as we can with the remainder of last year's funds.

Conservation planning must take place on a regional scale and coordination is necessary to make effective conservation possible. Through the RCS project, CVLT has compiled an incredible resource of regional conservation information. We will rely on multiple partnerships with resource agencies, local groups, and individuals to continue to provide us with historic and up-to-date information on important lands. By August CVLT hopes to have the regional conservation database and map available to the community as an online resource, and hard copy maps available for purchase. We are committed to maintaining these information resources and promoting their use in facilitating the conservation of key lands... that is, until the day when regional environmental issues are being effectively coordinated within local government. We're keeping our fingers crossed that the day will come!

• Submitted by Lynda Fyfe



One Yard (Cliff!) At A Time

• submitted by Judy Walker

On one of my many walks below Willemar bluffs I noticed the daily changes – the beach’s level and composition, trees slumping downward, and water seepage from various soil layers. I realized how much beach process and cliffs are misunderstood.

Willemar bluffs consists of a thick sequence of stratified sands and silts known as the Quadra Sand. It is topped by a compact, erosion-resistant bouldery till unit (Washon till) generally only a few metres thick. These layers largely control the erosion, which has gone on here and in many other locations around the Strait of Georgia for several thousand years. The erosion creates steep fans of sandy sediment. These are then transported to the west by longshore drift, and deposited on Goose Spit, while the coarse gravels and cobbles largely stay in place. Without understanding the whole beach process, or “bluffs & waves” theory as I call it, any and all manmade interventions will be systematically altered by nature or actually accelerate the unwanted processes.

All the players, whether local, federal, or provincial governments, or individual homeowners, look at their “own” segments of the beach as isolated entities – divided according to ownership. And when unwanted activity occurs, like “erosion” in a particular piece of the beach or cliff, we tend to think only of how to stop any change and to protect “our” property. David Suzuki once said that erosion isn’t a problem until property ownership is involved.

Single focus-single purpose actions will end the sandy beach at Goose Spit, the safe harbour for moorage in the small bay, and the narrow road out to the DND land. Of course, we never allow nature to win... so there will be extraordinary efforts and finances put into annual “beach nourishment” (importing tons of sand), dredging the bay, and engineering a magnificent raised causeway to stop the neck of the spit from eroding.

We must start treating this coastal

unit like a book with many chapters. Each chapter - on water seepage, soil types, slopes, etc. - only makes sense if we read the whole book.

Look at where riprap ends, which promptly transfers the wave energy to the next available land form, and accelerates the erosion. Notice the water seeping out the edge of the cliff, above a compacted till layer and remember the record rainfall of 200-300 mm (approx. 7-12 inches!) in 10 days in December. Most of that water infiltrates into the soil, hits the compacted till layer and moves out to steep, unvegetated cliff face. What happens when cliff homes with excessive water consumption pump it all into a septic field? Or when branches are pushed over the cliff to help “stabilize” it and the sheer weight starts a debris slide? Or when all the vegetation is removed for that perfect view? Or when this entire coastal unit has “shoreline protection devices” (i.e. riprap and groins) and there is no source of sand that creates the wonderful swimming beach at the spit?

At university one day I was deep in research and saw a familiar site – a perfect aerial photo of Willemar bluffs – touted as the classic feeder bluff system* – a world class example of how these cliffs and beaches form and **change!** And that is the most important issue – these are natural systems – we can balance our activities with the change but we cannot stop the forces. We must work with nature to have these dynamic systems continue – stop building where nature clearly won’t issue a permit – and remember that we are barely a blip in the geologic time of these magnificent bluffs and waves!

* From “Reports on Geological Conditions, Willemar Bluffs, Vancouver Island, BC; B. Bornhold; Geological Survey of Canada; March 1995.



• Who’s Who • at the Land Trust

- John A. Edwards (Co-Chair)
- Jack Minard (Co-Chair)
- Peggy Carswell (Co-Secretary)
- Barb Haffner (Co-Secretary)
- Pam Munroe (Treasurer)
- Diana Caldwell
- Vivian Dean
- Eva Nagy
- Shirley Ward

Staff • Lynda Fyfe,
Regional Conservation
Strategy Coordinator

• Donation Receipts •

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

• Membership •

Our members are our strength. Please consider joining today. If you are already a member, we need your continued support. A membership form is attached to this newsletter.

• Board Meetings •

3rd Tuesday Monthly
6:30 - 9 PM
105-156 Manor Dr. • Comox
Members Welcome

• Land Trust Contact •

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Quality Foods Points Donation

Do you have **QUALITY FOODS POINTS** that you never seem to use? You can donate them to the Comox Valley Land Trust.

THE CVLT NEWSLETTER is designed and produced by CVLT Volunteers.
PLEASE RECYCLE and pass it on to a friend or neighbour.
If you would like to help conserve paper and receive this newsletter BY EMAIL
please advise us at connect@cvlandtrust.org.

“We must be the change
we wish to see”
• M.K. Gandhi