



**NATURE**  
**CONSERVANCY**  

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**CANADA**

**BRITISH COLUMBIA  
COMMUNITY REPORT  
2017**

Dear friends,

With a busy summer behind us and the end of another year approaching, we would like to take a moment to thank you for choosing to work with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to achieve your goals for conservation.

We share your desire to see this country's natural lands and all the species that inhabit them remain as vital and resilient as possible. There is much work to be done to achieve our shared goals, but we cannot walk into the future without knowing where we have been.

This booklet celebrates our recent achievements, which are only possible because of your ongoing commitment to supporting direct, strategic and science-based habitat conservation. Thank you for trusting NCC to carry out this mission.



Michael Gallagher

British Columbia Regional Board Chair  
Nature Conservancy of Canada

# FIELD NOTES

April 30: Hundreds of visitors tour the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual In Bloom Wildflower Festival.

May 13: For the first time in decades an American badger is spotted on Columbia Lake—Lot 48 Conservation Area.

May 20: Coastal wolf tracks are spotted on Clayoquot Island Preserve.

July 7: Seven baby burrowing owls are banded on Sage and Sparrow Conservation Area.

August 15: A curious grizzly bear examines an NCC work truck at Wanukv Conservation Area in Rivers Inlet, as evidenced by muddy paw prints covering the vehicle.

October 27-28: Volunteers plant 100 Douglas-fir seedlings on Swishwash Island in honour of the late Steward of Swishwash, Dick Loomer.

## CONSERVING CANADA'S LANDS AND WATERS

### Luxor Linkage: Wetland

It's not easy for wildlife to safely cross through valleys where humans live. For large mammals like grizzly bear, getting from one mountain range to another is vitally important for their long-term future.

The Luxor Linkage Conservation Area offers animals like the grizzly, bighorn sheep and badger a chance to traverse the Columbia Valley safely. In January we added a 330-acre (134-hectare) wetland parcel to the forested lands that were protected here last year. This conservation area now spans the Columbia River wetlands, across Highway 95 and into the Rocky Mountains, protecting a critical part of a natural corridor for wildlife and ecological communities.

*NCC is grateful to receive funding for this project from the Government of Canada through the Natural Areas Conservation Program, The Vital Ground Foundation, BC Hydro Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, Sitka Foundation and other individuals and organizations.*



The wetlands on Luxor Linkage. (Photo by NCC)

# CONSERVING CANADA'S LANDS AND WATERS

## Osoyoos Oxbows: Ted Pendergraft and Sons Conservation Area

The Osoyoos Oxbows was once a significant chain of wetlands along the Okanagan River. Despite decades of development and agricultural conversion the area remains one of BC's most notable birding hot spots.

We were excited to acquire a property that had long been used agriculturally by the Pendergraft family. Along with our partner, Ducks Unlimited Canada, we will restore some of the fields to wetlands and plant native species along the historic oxbow channels to provide habitat for waterfowl, songbirds, turtles, salamanders and other wetland-dependent species.

*Many funders contributed to the success of this project, including the Government of Canada through the Natural Areas Conservation Program, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, British Columbia Conservation Foundation, Oliver-Osoyoos Naturalists' Club, South Okanagan Naturalists' Club, Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society, Burrowing Owl Winery and many individuals.*

Jimmy Pendergraft. (Photo by Tim Feeney)

**"I like knowing that NCC is going to look after this land, for the curlews and other birds. This land has been important to my family for a long time."**

**~ Jimmy Pendergraft**

## CONSERVING CANADA'S LANDS AND WATERS

### Anne Hicks Conservation Area

Once the homestead of an adventurous family of six, a forested property on Swift Creek near Valemount is now protected for the long term as an NCC conservation area. The land was bequeathed to NCC by Anne Hicks's son George in order to honour her long-standing passion for nature and to see the land conserved for future generations.

The fish-bearing Swift Creek flows into the Fraser River, and the surrounding forests protect the waterway's vitality. Stands of mature spruce and black cottonwood cast shade that helps regulate water temperatures for fish, while the tree's roots stabilize the riverbanks and create microhabitats for spawning fish.

*Stewardship funding has been provided by the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, which is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of BC, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and public stakeholders to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife impacted by BC Hydro dams.*



Columbine on the Anne Hicks Conservation Area. (Photo by NCC)

## CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

Many people are lucky enough to be able to find ways to spend time directly in nature. But what about those of us who can't easily access the wild outdoors?

To help bring nature to everyone, NCC partnered with Google to create virtual hikes of our conservation areas, which can be viewed online. This was our third year bringing the Google Trekker (that funny-looking, 360-degree, backpack-mounted camera) to NCC lands in BC.

NCC's Canadian Rockies program director Richard Klafki carried the Trekker along the new interpretive trail at the Dutch Creek Hoodoos, capturing the panoramic view of the Columbia Valley from the top of the unique and ecologically sensitive hoodoo cliffs.

Visit this trek and more at  
[www.natureconservancy.ca/trekker](http://www.natureconservancy.ca/trekker).



Richard Klafki at the Dutch Creek Hoodoos. (Photo by NCC)

## PLANNING

### A CONSERVATION FUTURE

This year we developed a new conservation plan aimed at expanding our work into the ecologically significant lands at the eastern edge of the Coast Mountains. The Fraser West Natural Area Conservation Plan identifies key ecological features and potential threats within a 2.78 million-acre (1.13-million hectare) area that includes the towns of Pemberton and Lillooet. This diverse region is home to at least 32 provincial species at risk and the provincially significant black cottonwood / sitka willow / thimbleberry ecological community.

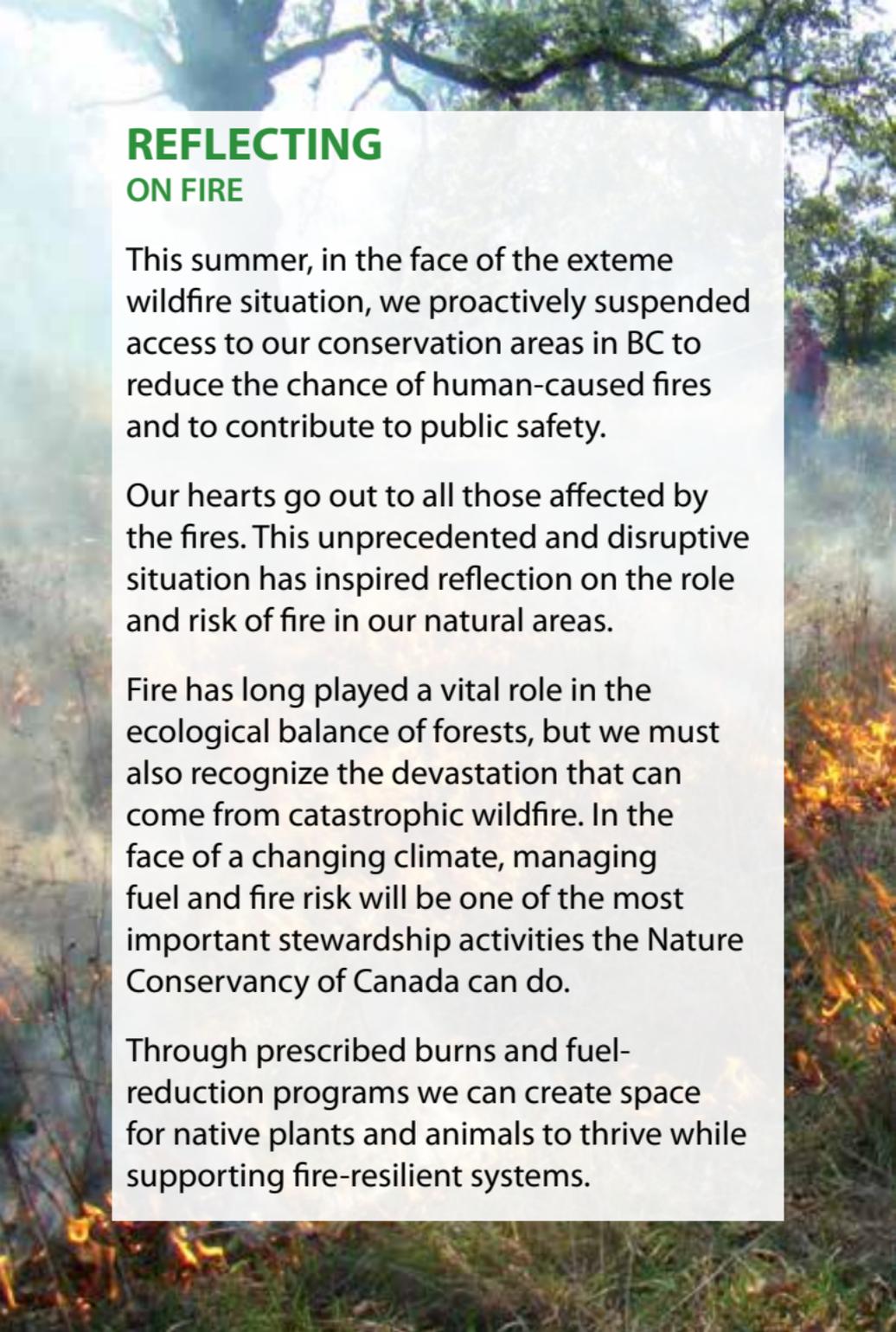


A woman with short brown hair, wearing a blue baseball cap with a colorful pattern, dark sunglasses, and a blue and white patterned short-sleeved shirt, is smiling and holding a small, fluffy owl in her hands. She is standing in a field of tall, dry grass under a blue sky with scattered clouds. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains.

Kara Stanton helps band burrowing owls. (Photo by NCC)

## **INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION**

Planning for the future means making sure the next generation of conservation leaders is given meaningful opportunities to learn about real-world environmental challenges. This year three conservation interns joined the BC team, assisting with field work, outreach and community engagement.



## REFLECTING ON FIRE

This summer, in the face of the extreme wildfire situation, we proactively suspended access to our conservation areas in BC to reduce the chance of human-caused fires and to contribute to public safety.

Our hearts go out to all those affected by the fires. This unprecedented and disruptive situation has inspired reflection on the role and risk of fire in our natural areas.

Fire has long played a vital role in the ecological balance of forests, but we must also recognize the devastation that can come from catastrophic wildfire. In the face of a changing climate, managing fuel and fire risk will be one of the most important stewardship activities the Nature Conservancy of Canada can do.

Through prescribed burns and fuel-reduction programs we can create space for native plants and animals to thrive while supporting fire-resilient systems.



Prescribed burn at the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve.  
(Photo by Thomas Munsen)

We hope to find more ways to support these regenerative fires in the future, and minimize the destructive power of wildfires over the land.

Read more at [www.natureconservancy.ca/bc](http://www.natureconservancy.ca/bc).

Cover photo: Pacific chorus frog (Photo by Tim Ennis)



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