



**NATURE**  
**CONSERVANCY**  
**CANADA**



**BRITISH COLUMBIA  
COMMUNITY REPORT  
2018**

Hello friends,

Once again the warmth of summer has passed, bringing us to a time of reflection.

Celebrating achievements is important, and the successes you will find in this report are truly yours, made possible because of your commitment to supporting direct, strategic and science-based habitat conservation.

This year the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has embarked on our most ambitious fundraising initiative in 56 years. We aim to conserve more land at a faster rate than ever before, connect more Canadians with nature and inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

Your support for conservation is essential to our collective success. Thank you — again and always — for being a part of the NCC community.



Michael Gallagher  
British Columbia Regional Board Chair  
Nature Conservancy of Canada

# FIELD NOTES

April 18: NCC staff are startled by a large grizzly emerging from hibernation while they survey owls in Darkwoods. Staff and bear amble off in opposite directions.

May 12: 13 volunteers spot 66 birds, representing 22 different species, and install nine bluebird boxes on Napier Lake Ranch.

May 17: NCC staff rescue a long-eared owl with a broken wing near Dutch Creek Hoodoos.

May 22: 550 native plants are planted in a newly created wetland in the Elk Valley.

September 19-29: 6,000 cones are collected from the endangered whitebark pine for restoration on Darkwoods.

October 2: 41 high school students pull 65 kg of weeds on a snowy day at Lac du Bois.

October 5: 30 volunteers find over 100 mushroom species for a mycological blitz on the Midgeley Conservation Area.

## CONSERVING CANADA'S LANDS AND WATERS

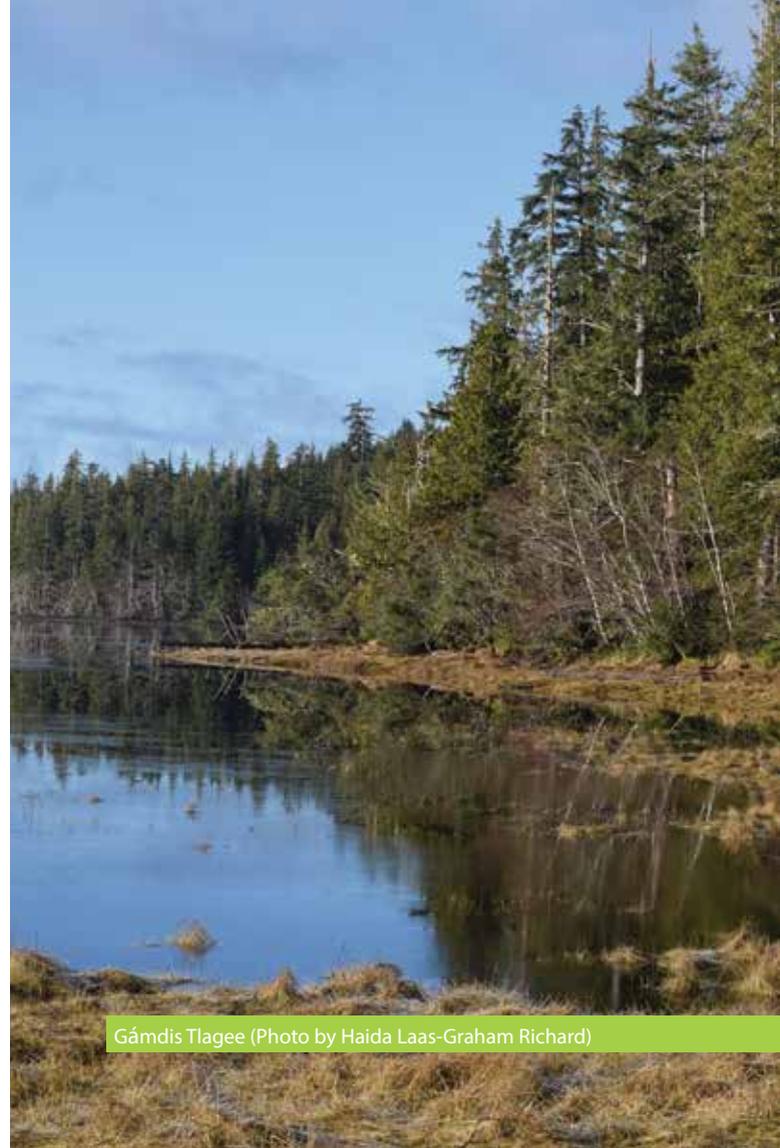
### Gámdis Tlagee Conservation Area

NCC is honoured to have partnered with the Haida Nation to conserve two district lots along the Kumdis Estuary. One contains intact old-growth Sitka spruce and western red cedar forest, which will continue to live and grow undisturbed. The second will undergo extensive restoration to repair past logging damage.

The Gámdis Tlagee Conservation Area adds to a network of protected lands in the estuary, enhancing protection of an area sometimes called a "fish factory" for its prolific salmon populations.

The Haida Nation and NCC will co-manage the lands for both ecological and cultural values, and hold the land in trust for future generations.

*NCC is grateful to receive funding for this project from the Government of Canada through the Natural Areas Conservation, the Sitka Foundation, Fred Green and the Green family, Tony Paine and Susan Collacott, and other individuals and organizations.*



Gámdis Tlagee (Photo by Haida Laas-Graham Richard)

## CONSERVING CANADA'S LANDS AND WATERS

### Morrissey Meadows Conservation Area

Located along Highway 3 near Fernie, Morrissey Meadows was once the homestead of the Fitzen family, and members of that family are now happy to see the lands and the species they contain conserved by NCC. Securing valley bottom land like the 106-acre (43-hectare) Fitzen homestead is essential for maintaining corridors used by wildlife as they move between habitats.

Morrissey Meadows is frequented by grizzly and black bear, mule and white-tailed deer, elk and moose as they travel across the Elk Valley. The Elk River flows through the conservation area, creating meandering, braided wetlands that provide vital spawning and rearing grounds for fish.

*Many funders contributed to the success of this project, including the Government of Canada through the Natural Areas Conservation Program, the British Columbia Conservation Foundation, the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, Ellen Almond Stuart and many other individuals.*



Morrissey Meadows Conservation Area (Photo by NCC)

## CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

This year, thousands of people visited NCC conservation areas, joined a volunteer event, attended a nature presentation or participated in a conservation workshop.

**573** Conservation Volunteers removed invasive plants, collected seeds, replanted wetlands, constructed burrows for owls, identified plants and generally helped NCC reach our land stewardship goals for the year.

**1,536** people came out to open houses and nature walks on Clayoquot Island, Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve, Sage and Sparrow, Dutch Creek Hoodoos and Morrissey Meadows.

**388** guests attended lectures on grizzly bears, the ocean tides, wolverines, whitebark pine, wetland restoration, migratory birds and other conservation topics.

**127** school kids enjoyed hands-on field trips to NCC lands in Kamloops, Cowichan, Squamish and Invermere.



University students visit Chase Woods (Photo by NCC)



## YEAR OF THE BIRD

Did you know 2018 is Year of the Bird?

Year of the Bird recognizes the centenary of the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* between Canada and the United States. NCC celebrated this important environmental milestone throughout the year by promoting migratory bird awareness and conservation efforts. We restored 35 acres (14 hectares) of waterfowl habitat, built burrows for burrowing owls, joined bird counts and participated in the 2018 International Ornithological Congress in Vancouver.

Burrowing owl (Photo by Lauren Mead)

## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Planning for the future means training and inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders. This year, we welcomed four interns to our team. They picked up practical skills, learned from their mentors and offered fresh energy and perspectives to staff and volunteers.



Ella Van Cleave collects seeds in a Garry oak meadow. (Photo by NCC)



New wetland ponds on Cherry Meadows. (Photo by NCC)

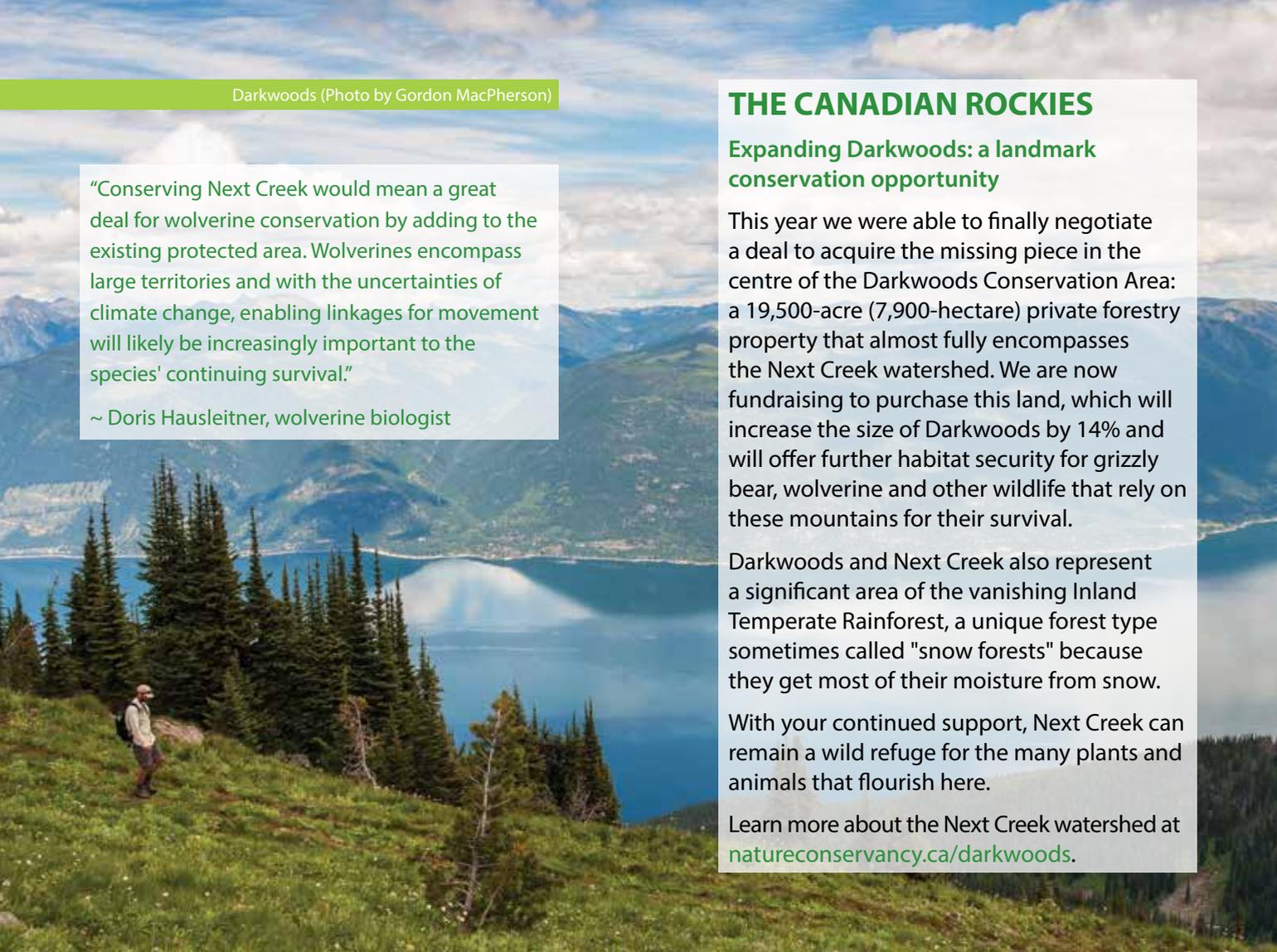
## REFLECTING ON WETLANDS

Wetland restoration became a key focus for our stewardship team in 2018.

We completed the first phase of a project to re-establish functioning wetlands on the Chase Woods Nature Preserve on Vancouver Island. The restored area used to connect to the Cowichan Estuary through tidal flooding, but for more than a century the wetlands have been drained and converted for farming, cutting them off from the estuary.

At Cherry Meadows, near Kimberley, we have been rehabilitating 20 acres (8 hectares) of former wetlands. This project will benefit waterfowl, including mallard, wood duck and Canada goose, and may offer new habitat for the endangered northern leopard frog.

In the Elk Valley, we worked with wetland specialists to design a wetland restoration plan that would transform a defunct gravel pit into a naturally functioning wetlands. The design includes features that will attract badger, grizzly bear, Townsend's big-eared bat, western painted turtle and western toad.



Darkwoods (Photo by Gordon MacPherson)

“Conserving Next Creek would mean a great deal for wolverine conservation by adding to the existing protected area. Wolverines encompass large territories and with the uncertainties of climate change, enabling linkages for movement will likely be increasingly important to the species' continuing survival.”

~ Doris Hausleitner, wolverine biologist

## THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

### Expanding Darkwoods: a landmark conservation opportunity

This year we were able to finally negotiate a deal to acquire the missing piece in the centre of the Darkwoods Conservation Area: a 19,500-acre (7,900-hectare) private forestry property that almost fully encompasses the Next Creek watershed. We are now fundraising to purchase this land, which will increase the size of Darkwoods by 14% and will offer further habitat security for grizzly bear, wolverine and other wildlife that rely on these mountains for their survival.

Darkwoods and Next Creek also represent a significant area of the vanishing Inland Temperate Rainforest, a unique forest type sometimes called "snow forests" because they get most of their moisture from snow.

With your continued support, Next Creek can remain a wild refuge for the many plants and animals that flourish here.

Learn more about the Next Creek watershed at [natureconservancy.ca/darkwoods](https://natureconservancy.ca/darkwoods).

Cover photo: Bald eagle at Kumdis Estuary (Photo by NCC)



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