

CENTRAL OKANAGAN LAND TRUST

Legacy

...a newsletter of the Central Okanagan Land Trust



Photo — J. Steeves

Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park Johns property update

— Judie Steeves

From rocky crags that attract climbers to wetlands that are magnets for frogs, the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park is a special place, and one the Central Okanagan Land Trust is proud to own.

The 800-acre property on Kelowna's south slopes, near the boundary of Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park, was bequeathed to the trust by brother and sister Alf and Nancy Johns, with the last piece coming to COLT with the death in 2011 of Alf Johns. Value of the lands is estimated at \$8 million.

This spring, the Central Okanagan Regional District began the process of creating a management plan for the property, in cooperation with the COLT. That will include consultation with the public through meetings as well as input from various stakeholders.

The Johns family requested that the property be maintained as a haven for wildlife, so balancing that with limited public access will form the foundation of a plan for the new parkland. Much of the property was scorched in the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Park wildfire and it is regenerating now, but that fire also opened up panoramic views out over Okanagan Lake from many points within the new park.

Members of the Central Okanagan Naturalist Club report spotting 55 species of birds on one trip to the park last year.

In addition to the Johns family's property, the 197-acre Cedar Mountain Regional Park, immediately to the west, was also added to the park, and the province has protected a further 300 hectares of Crown land.

One parcel lies between the Johns property and Okanagan Mountain Regional Park, and the other is adjacent, but to the north of the Johns land.

Message from the President



We live in one of the most beautiful and desirable regions in Canada. As a consequence, the population in the Central Okanagan is going to continue to grow. The result will be that our human footprint will grow larger and larger and the amount of natural landscape

required to maintain a healthy biodiversity of plants and animals will shrink. This will inevitably lead to a gradual impoverishment of the natural richness of plant and animal species in our region.

For many people, this will be imperceptible as detailed environmental awareness is not yet wide-spread. The loss of habitat for Western Screech Owl, Spadefoot Toads and Mariposa Lily resulting from the pressure of land development may be completely unnoticed by most people. Even if they are made aware of the threats to these populations, economic considerations and convenience often prevail over environmental concerns.

The Central Okanagan Land Trust (**COLT**) was established in 1990 to preserve and protect forever important natural areas, and there have been some significant successes. **COLT's** land assets now include both properties owned outright and properties on which **COLT** holds protective covenants. **COLT** has also contributed funds to several local land acquisitions in association with other environmental partners.

Many of the landscapes in the Central Okanagan which contain valuable habitat, such as wetlands, are owned privately. Fortunately, a number of the property owners are sympathetic to the goals of **COLT** and would like to cooperate in such preservation efforts. Over the years, **COLT** has worked with private land owners, local government and other agencies to move these land preservation projects forward successfully.

If the Land Trust is to continue to fulfill its mission to preserve natural landscape and habitat, it will have to grapple with the necessity to generate funds for such purchases. One of the strategies that **COLT** is pursuing to increase its capacity is to attract like-minded people to join in our efforts. This inaugural newsletter is one of several projects designed to tell potential supporters how they can help. We hope you will find here a strong, stable organization that inspires your support.

Barry Jones
President

Message from the Executive Director



I began work with the Central Okanagan Land Trust in September 2012 with a mandate to begin raising public awareness of the Trust's work over the past twenty years and to encourage others to support the important environmental work the Trust continues to do

across the region. Perhaps most visible at this point is the new website (www.coltrust.ca) launched in the summer of 2013. To this has been added a new brochure, a banner for display at public presentations and events, and background sheets on everything from past projects to resource guides and donation forms.

At another level, we have begun a series of strategic meetings with trust accountants and lawyers, private bankers, insurance agents etc. whose clients may be interested in knowing more about **COLT** and its important work to preserve the region's rapidly disappearing unique habitats and rich biodiversity. These have been well attended meetings, and this encourages us all.

Over the next year we will continue the strategic meeting schedule, respond to community interests/projects in preserving regional environments, and work closely with the consultants who are crafting the Management Plan for the newly-acquired 800-acre Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park.

Please don't hesitate to contact me or a **COLT** Board member if you would like to learn more about the work underway and how you can help. Thank you so much for your support.

Wayne Wilson
Executive Director

Okanagan College Biology Students

– Ellen Pedersen

I have a great job; I get to teach a 2nd year Ecology class at Okanagan College. Once a week, until the snow starts to fly and the afternoons get too dark, we head out to local sites for field trips. For the past 4 or 5 years, one of our field trips has involved monitoring vegetation in Benvoulin Woods, one of the few remaining stands of Black Cottonwood along Mission Creek. COLT holds a covenant on this ecologically important piece of land so it is protected.

The field trip gives me an opportunity to teach students some field techniques, introduce them to some native plant species, open their eyes to the beauty of the Okanagan, and allow them to feel that they are a part of something important - the preservation of natural habitats. The students are thrilled to be part of a real, ongoing project, and work very hard to identify plants correctly. They want to learn more about the Land Trust and what they can do to help protect our rapidly disappearing wild spaces.

COLT has provided my students with valuable learning experiences and, in return, we can be optimistic that these young people will continue to cherish and protect natural spaces.



Photo — J. Steeves

New Board Members

Laura Hooker - Associate Professor (Biology) UBCO

Laura moved to the Kelowna area about twenty years ago to join the Biology faculty at Okanagan University College, and is now an Associate Professor of Biology at UBC Okanagan campus. Prior to coming to Kelowna she obtained a MSc. in Zoology from UBC in Vancouver and worked as an environmental consultant.

Laura's teaching and research specialties lie within the field of aquatic ecology. She has taught such courses as Flora and Fauna of Inland Waters, Limnology, Environmental Microbiology, Freshwater Microbiology and will soon offer a course on Biology and Conservation of Freshwater Fishes. Her current research addresses questions regarding microbial community structure and functional redundancy in lakes of very different water chemistries.



Our Mission

...to protect land for wildlife and parks so biodiversity and natural features are preserved for future generations.

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Ex Officio – Representative, Regional District Central Okanagan

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New Board Members cont.

Laura has sat on numerous University committees, and COLT (2014) is her first foray into community service. The Central Okanagan Land Trust's mission resonates with Laura's philosophy that natural places have a right to simply 'be' and that our world is enriched by this; further value is not necessarily required. Laura's recreational activities include skiing (alpine and nordic), mountain biking, swimming and simply hiking around with her dog Mia, Queen of the Shibas.

Bob Groves - Lawyer, Professor (Business Law) Okanagan College

Bob Groves is a lawyer in private practice, having arrived in Kelowna in 1983. In addition to acting as an advocate, Bob is a chartered arbitrator and an accredited mediator. He is also a Professor in the Faculty of Business at Okanagan College. Bob served as an executive member of the Kelowna Bar Association for several years, and is a Past President. He was a Director with the Kelowna Museums Society from 2003 - 2013. Bob joined the Board of the Central Okanagan Land Trust in 2013.

Building a Legacy

The landscapes and natural habitats we live in and move through every day are a continuum of interaction between human activity and richly biodiverse settings. Increasingly, the richness of that biodiversity is under threat.

Fortunately, there is something we can do, and you can play a role in strengthening the region's biodiversity. In turn, your support will contribute to even wider environmental goals that benefit us today and reach far into the future for our families. This is an important way for us to, 'think globally and act locally.' Establish a named endowment fund with the Central Okanagan Foundation, make a donation to our Lands Acquisition Fund, talk to us about donating land for conservation, remember the Central Okanagan Land Trust in your will.

If you would like to learn more about how you can support the Central Okanagan Land Trust in its work to improve the region's biodiversity, please contact us at info@coltrust.ca. To learn more about COLT and its work, please visit our web site at www.coltrust.ca



Photos — H. Westheuser

Partners

The Central Okanagan Land Trust is fortunate to enjoy the financial, operational and/or development support of individuals, companies, local government, and other agencies. These partnerships help build a stronger network of parklands and conservation areas for wildlife – and we are the collective and individual beneficiaries of those healthy natural spaces. We thank all of them for their continuing support of our work and for their faith in our land stewardship practices.



Named Endowment Funds

- J. W. & M. E. Scott Family Fund
- Charles Pettman Memorial Fund
- Harvey & Ruth Whitson Fund
- Central Okanagan Land Trust – Open Fund
- J. W. Bootle Family Fund
- Bernice Mabey Memorial Fund
- Dick & Jean Hall Fund