

CENTRAL OKANAGAN LAND TRUST



Legacy

...a newsletter of the Central Okanagan Land Trust



COLT receives ecologically-diverse property donation

by Judie Steeves

An ecologically-diverse 19 acre farm in Kelowna has been donated to the Central Okanagan Land Trust to ensure its natural features are preserved and restored, to benefit both wildlife and the community.

Okanagan pioneer, Dorothy Thomson, says she made the donation in memoriam to her late husband Ken, and the future naming of the new park will acknowledge her desire and carry his name.

A year-round brook in which kokanee fish have been observed borders the property's eastern boundary, and there is a wetland on the south side. The property also includes a patch of Black Cottonwood forest and a peat bog and it has the potential to be

COLT president Tanis Gieselmann thanks Dorothy Thomson for planting western redcedar seeds to commemorate her generous land donation to COLT

even more ecologically diverse, according to retired UBC aquatic ecologist Laura Hooker, a director and former president of the COLT board.

She is enthusiastic about the existing and potential conservation values on the property.

"The old hay field and its intact organic soils and the bordering spring-fed waterway, overhung by aged willows, and the copse of Black Cottonwood at the south end of the farm, are well worth conserving," she noted.

She notes the soils store carbon, the field is home to different types of snakes, insects, small mammals and their predators and the waterway is alive with watercress and other leafy aquatic

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The Central Okanagan Land Trust acknowledges that we live and work in the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Syilx Nation, and we give thanks for the opportunity to help steward the land and learn from those who have been here since time immemorial.

President's Report

Tanis Gieselman



It is amazing to have witnessed how much people have given of themselves for the conservation of our natural areas over the past year! All year long, I get to see the contributions from COLT supporters, our dedicated Board, and our community partnerships. This past year has been particularly monumental, and it is wonderful to have this opportunity to share some of this news with you.

We are so thankful for all our supporters this past year. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the late Ms Kathy Swedos for arranging to leave a significant donation to COLT in her estate. The Board is working to set up an Endowment Fund with the Central Okanagan Foundation to help support COLT's work in perpetuity, on projects like restoration of donated lands, and working with the community to protect ecologically important lands and conservation covenants.

I am also in complete awe of Dorothy Thomson, who we celebrated in November as we announced her very generous donation of the 19 acre farm that her family has owned for more than 125 years, in honour of her late husband Ken Thomson. We marked this event by planting some western redcedar seeds that were collected by six Bachelor of Sustainability students that worked for COLT over the past two years at the Johns Family Nature Conservancy, completing a cedar restoration project there. As it turns out, the family let us know that Dorothy and Ken were friends of Alf and Nancy Johns, who donated the Johns Family Nature Conservancy to COLT. The drive to protect the land clearly runs deep in these friends, and the

seeds that we planted together, are deeply representative of this long-standing commitment for the benefit of natural ecosystems. We are so grateful to Dorothy for entrusting us to care for this land that she loves so much.

Our dedicated Board of Directors has changed a bit over the past few months. Judie Steeves has retired from the Board after donating 25 years of her volunteer time towards writing newsletters, meeting minutes, websites, and social media posts for COLT! Bill De Bosch Kemper has also stepped away after dedicating a hard-working 7 years of volunteer time to COLT, serving as our Treasurer before handing that role to Shane Matheson, who also donated several years of his time to this role before needing to step away. We have missed seeing these faces at the monthly meetings and wish them our heartfelt best. Thanks so for your time and friendship on this Board!

At the same time, others have been nominated to our Board, and Dave Taylor, Jason Mann, and Ian Walker have now joined us. We appreciate your willingness to lend your time and expertise to this important work.

Spring has fully engulfed us in planning for the year ahead. COLT Board members have struck a new committee to plan how to manage the Thomson farm and restore some of the natural ecosystems that were once more common on the Mission Creek floodplain. COLT is working with the City of Kelowna on restoration plans around Munson Pond. We have committed to supporting summer students in partnership with the Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society, who will help us battle invasive weeds on COLT properties. This fall we also expect to mentor three Water Engineering Technology students from Okanagan College, and another cohort of UBCO sustainability students in helping us reconstruct a wetland. We have given ourselves ambitious goals, and we look forward to a productive year ahead!

Tanis Gieselman
President, COLT

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plants. In some years, kokanee have been spotted in the waterway trying to find somewhere to spawn.

Artesian springs keep the ground moist for Black Cottonwood, which in turn provide habitat for many species of woodpeckers, songbirds, bats and Bald Eagles.

"We could open a window to habitats that existed prior to drainage of the land for agriculture—habitats which have largely been eradicated. Restoration could provide habitat for species-at-risk such as the Yellow Chat, Giant Hellebore Orchid and the Great Basin Gopher Snake, as well as Western Screech Owls and Rubber Boas.

"Either way, this is a gift for biodiversity and the liveability of the city growing around it," she concludes.

COLT executive-director Wayne Wilson adds, "As Kelowna grows and the population densifies, it becomes more and more important

to have nature parks that support wildlife, its habitat and species-at-risk and to conserve natural features for our children and grandchildren to know,"

This is the third major donation of land to COLT: Benvoulin Woods on the Mission Creek Greenway, and the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park were donated to COLT in earlier years.

Ultimately, the property will operate under a strategic plan—work which is currently underway—but until that's completed, there will be no public access to the property.

For more information on how COLT can help you achieve your conservation goals, or to donate to support its work, go to the website at: www.coltrust.ca

Executive Director Report

Wayne Wilson



To say the past year was busy goes without saying but much of the focus of our COLT work this year turned around 3 projects.

One of our longstanding collegial groups is the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club, and this year we worked closely with them as they built a new bird viewing platform at Thomson Marsh on Conservation Covenant lands held by COLT. This was a long and detailed process, but the community now has a wonderful asset that will bring benefits long into the future.

Munson Pond Park holds one of COLT's Conservation Covenants with the City of Kelowna. With City Council's direction to complete the Burtch

Road extension, there were many consultation meetings with City staff and their environmental consultants. While the extension project sits a considerable distance west of COLT's actual covenants lands in the park, the City chose to engage both COLT and the Central Okanagan Naturalists' Club as the planning moved forward. As work continues to unfold over the coming year, the Project Manager will provide us with regular updates on the environmental mitigation work at the pond - including new plantings, invasive plant management, fencing to protect birds on adjacent City land to name a few.

A couple of years ago, Dorothy Thomson generously donated her 19 acre property on Gordon Drive to COLT. We have been working since then to start the planning work for a wetland park site - beginning at the eastern end of the property. That has meant land survey work, site inspections, soil survey work, and other planning functions to bring the plans into play.

One important element in this was a more formal and public announcement of this generous donation, and we were able to acknowledge Dorothy's gift at the property last fall. With some of our collegial partners and other community friends (and with Dorothy's wider family there) it gave us a wonderful opportunity to do just that...and you can read more about the event in this issue's lead article by Judie Steeves.

In addition, COLT continued its wider community work with public presentations, committee representation (MCRI), events and more...and we look forward to a great 2026-27 opening before us.

Wayne Wilson
Executive Director

Jason Tivadar-Mann New Board Member

Kelowna, BC

Jason Tivadar-Mann is a Kelowna-based media and marketing executive with more than thirty years building brands, audiences, and community in the Okanagan and beyond. His entrepreneurial career has spanned media, marketing and technology — always with a strong sense of place and responsibility to the region he calls home.

Jason has quietly supported environmental causes throughout his time in the valley — including the Return of the Peregrine Falcon recovery program through SUN FM in the late 90s/early 2000s, and as part of the executive team who championed the donation of a portion of AM1150's Kelowna transmitter site lands to the Mission Creek Greenway. He joins the COLT board with a genuine love for the Okanagan landscape and a belief that protecting it is one of the most meaningful things our community can invest in.

CENTRAL OKANAGAN
LAND TRUST



Our Mission

To steward the land in its trust for the conservation of natural ecosystems in the Central Okanagan, in perpetuity.

Board of Directors

Tanis Gieselmann - President
Gord Savage - Past President
Steve Thomson - Secretary
Angela Cormano - Recording Secretary
Dr. Ian Walker - Director
David Taylor - Director
Laura Hooker - Director
Don Knox - Director
Kalin Ocana - Director
Eve Wegscheidler - Director
Leah Schurian - Director
Kim Inglis - Director
Jason Tivadar - Director

Ex Officio — Wayne Wilson, Executive Director

Ex Officio — Representative, Regional District Central Okanagan

Central Okanagan Land Trust
306-1726 Dolphin Ave.
Kelowna, BC V1Y 9R9
Email: info@coltrust.ca
www.coltrust.ca

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David Taylor New Board Member Kelowna, BC



David was a third-generation apple grower- his grandfather came to Kelowna in 1912 and planted a pear orchard. This land was farmed by the family for a century. While actively farming, David was involved with various organizations that promoted local agriculture as well

as time on the S.E. Kelowna Irrigation District board.

He became involved with several provincial marketing boards and chaired those for Tree Fruits, Eggs, and Vegetables as well as two terms on the Agricultural Land Commission. In total nearly two decades with various provincial boards.

For the last several years, he has enjoyed being a director of the Friends of Mission Creek. After some thirty years of activity in establishing the greenway, a decision has been taken to bring the Friends to an end.

This provides an opportunity to join the board of COLT, something he will do with enthusiasm.

Ian Walker New Board Member Kelowna, BC



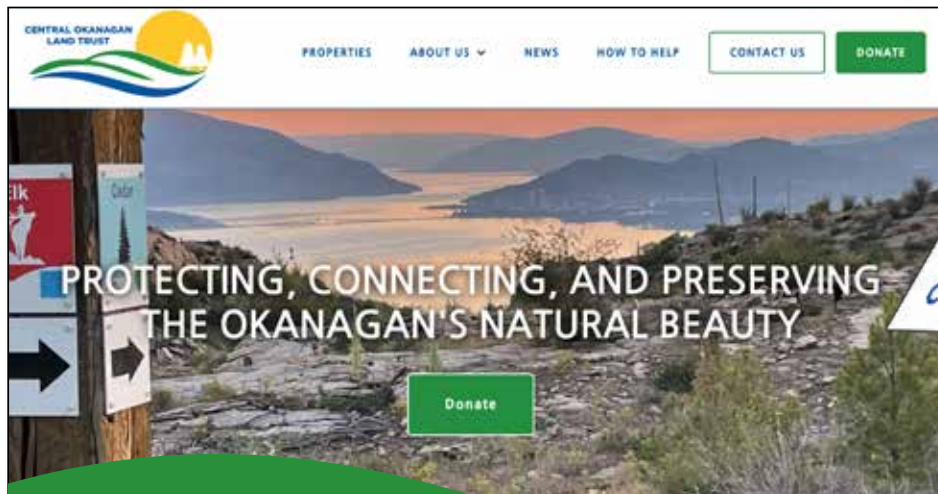
A member of the Science Faculty at Okanagan University College (OUC) from 1991 to 2005, Ian was hired as one of the founding faculty members at the UBC Okanagan campus. Ian is a specialist in freshwater ecology and climatic change research.

His academic research mostly focused on the relationships among aquatic insects and current and past climatic change, especially in arctic and cordilleran ecosystems.

He is an author on over 50 peer-reviewed research papers published in international journals and specialist texts. In addition to his duties in the Okanagan, Ian has held adjunct professorships at, and has supervised graduate students at, Simon Fraser University and Université Laval.

He has served as an external referee for Canadian, Austrian, British, Dutch, Norwegian and American research funding agencies, and as a reviewer for over 30 different scientific journals.

He is now retired and spends much of his time documenting Okanagan biodiversity. Most importantly, he is almost completely unrelated to Farley Mowat.



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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.



Grant Thornton



Named Endowment Funds

- Central Okanagan Land Trust Fund
- COLT Johns Family Conservation Area Fund
- COLT Munson Pond Fund
- Bootle Family Fund
- COLT Cynthia Hunter Fund
- Dick & Jean Hall Fund #1
- Hobson Family Fund for COLT
- Bernice Mabee Memorial Fund
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- Westheuser Family Fund
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- John & Monica Shantz Fund
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