

Nature Vancouver's Conservation Fund - A snapshot

by Jeremy McCall

Every year Nature Vancouver's Conservation Fund is supported by donations in amounts varying from \$50 to \$100, often made by our members when they renew their membership. However, it is probably fair to say that some of our members are unaware of the Fund and what it is used for. This article will try to summarize how the fund is operated and some of its recent expenditures.

The Fund was formerly administered by the Conservation Section but, since that Section no longer conducts formal meetings with minutes, the Fund is now administered by the Board of Directors based on recommendations received from directors or members.

Until the end of 2012, amounts in the Fund roughly fluctuated between \$4,500 and \$5,500. Then in 2013 and 2014 the amount in the Fund increased dramatically to \$42,483 following a torrent of generous donations totalling \$33,650, most of which were intended for Ron Long's Pink Mountain Research Initiative. As a result, in 2014 a separate Pink Mountain Fund was established with the transfer of \$38,955 from the Conservation Fund, leaving a balance of about \$3,500.

In 2013 the Board of Directors also approved two major grants from the Fund,

- \$1,500 for the Wild Bird Trust's new Nature House project at Maplewood Flats; and
- \$2,000 for The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC). At the time we realized that Nature Vancouver's modest contribution to TLC was insignificant compared to its liabilities but we had often supported TLC's initiatives in the past and we did not wish to desert it completely at its time of need.

Subsequently the Fund has contributed to the following:

- \$500 to the Beaty Biodiversity Museum at UBC;
- \$1,000 towards the VAPOR Society's legal fees for its judicial review of the environmental assessment of the proposed pipeline from the south arm of the Fraser River to Vancouver Airport;
- \$500 to support the website of Against Port Expansion which opposes the expansion of the Deltaport container terminal; and
- \$560 for the printing of brochures and pamphlets for the protection of birds

As at December 31, 2015 the amount in the Fund was \$3,165. In 2016 we granted \$1,200 to the Marine Life Sanctuaries Society to reprint copies of the colourful sponge reef articles from NatureKids BC's excellent newsletter.

And in August the Board approved a grant of \$1,000 to the Living Oceans Society (LOS), based in Sointula on Malcolm Island, to assist with the cost of hiring a tug to tow a barge full of plastic and other debris from the beaches in northwest Vancouver Island, where much of the debris from the Fukushima earthquake landed. This debris was gathered for barging by volunteers whose expenses were covered by a grant from Japanese sources. According to LOS the tow to Steveston has been booked for the third week of September and a volunteer event will be held to sort and recycle it, followed by a celebration of the successful project. Nature Vancouver will be invited to participate so look out for the announcement.

As can be seen from the figures cited above, the Conservation Fund usually has somewhat limited capacity to make grants to appropriate organizations and causes, unless an exciting

project like Ron Long's Pink Mountain Research Initiative comes along. However your donations are always welcomed, made with or without your renewals of membership, and will earn a tax receipt. Donations of \$50 or more will always be acknowledged by a letter giving an update on the Fund. And the Board will always welcome ideas for applying the Fund. A couple of weeks ago I went down the trail to the lovely beach at Lily Point in Point Roberts and I was so pleased that Nature Vancouver had made a donation of \$500 towards the purchase of additional land by the Whatcom County a few years ago to develop the park at Lily Point. Perhaps \$500 was not a lot of money in the scheme of things but it made our Society part of a very successful project.

It is very easy to make a donation! Please see the back cover of any Vancouver Naturalist or touch base with either our Membership Secretary Helen Aqua or myself.

Jeremy McCall is the Treasurer of Nature Vancouver and its current Conservation Coordinator