

## **105th Nature Vancouver AGM - President's Report**

The past year has been both challenging and rewarding. Challenging to follow on the heels of excellent past-president, Nigel Peck, but also rewarding to witness the resumption of past activities and the growth of new endeavours for the society

Evening presentations were the glue that held us together throughout COVID, and remain as one of our premier activities. This past year, along with on-line events, there was tentative resumption of in-person presentations, while maintaining the on-line connection for those unable to attend, plus recordings for follow-up viewing at a later date. Thanks to all the various committee members who organized these presentations, the Zoom hosts, as well as our technical team of Denis, Adam and Masa who facilitated the hybrid connections, and Denis for the video editing.

Field trips resumed as well, with a variety of outings planned and well-attended, many in collaboration with other nature groups such as Friend of Cypress Park, and Pacific Spirit Park Society. Thank you to all the field trip leaders, organizers and participants for making this a success, and in particular to Janet Snell, for her efforts as the coordinator. The Christmas Bird Count continued in 2022, with organization from Colin Classen and data compilation by Peter Candido. Almost all of the areas were covered this year for a successful count. The first nature trip in years was organized by Cynthia Crampton, with maximum participants, to the Adams River for viewing of salmon returning to a major spawning area. The success of this trip suggests that there is an appetite amongst our members for future Nature Vancouver trips.

A winter social, ably organized by Sue Garber, was also a huge success. Many members attended the Sunday afternoon event, reconnecting with others they may not have seen in years, and meeting our newer members. This was so successful that Sue has another one in the plans for later this spring. Mark your calendars for June 3rd.

After a 3-year hiatus, summer camp will return in July. The drive-in camp planned for 2020 at Big Bar Ranch, which had to be put off due to travel and gathering restrictions, is back on and fully booked, thanks to the ongoing efforts of everyone on the Camp Committee.

The New Brighton Park Restoration project has been ongoing for just over 1 year, and what a difference the efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers have made over a total of 51 work days! Where once overgrown with invasive plants, New Brighton Park, and the adjacent Port of Vancouver lands, have a much reduced presence of Himalayan Blackberry, thistles and Scotch Broom, with native plants taking their place. A huge thanks to Nigel Peck

for coordinating the work, and the many volunteers, ranging in age from 13 to 81. This project has brought together our members and the community around New Brighton Park.

Nature Vancouver has also embarked on some new endeavours. Citizen Science, particularly with the use of i-Naturalist, has been a pet project of Board member John Martin. Nature Vancouver participated in the City Nature Challenge in 2022, and John has organized 4 outings to take place this coming weekend to participate again. Our Society also had a presence during the False Creek BioBlitz in September of 2022. This led to a collaboration with Friends of False Creek Society on a water quality improvement project. The first step of Nature Vancouver's role is to survey the oyster population in False Creek, as bivalves are known to be excellent at water filtration. The surveys will be happening this spring and summer. You can find more details on the website under the Conservation menu. We would like to acknowledge the generous grant received from the BC Naturalist's Foundation to embark on this project.

On the artistic side, the creation of a nature sketch group, led by Vicky Earle, has been meeting nearly monthly to observe and record nature as was historically done. As a professional artist, we are grateful to Vicky for taking the time to assist our members in improving their nature journaling skills. On the modern side of art, Nature Vancouver held a first-ever photo show, with more than 40 photographers submitting over 200 images. These were critiqued by past member and professional photographer Michael Wheatley, and beautifully organized by Adam Wang. The success of this event will hopefully spur further nature photography outings and events throughout the year. Also a first - a member's choice component, with the top three photos being announced later during our evening. Thanks to Teresa Gagne and Denis Laplante for running the survey and compiling the results.

Nature Vancouver, along with the Vancouver Public Library, co-hosted the presentation of two movies, Heart of the Fraser and Soul of the Fraser, which were created by Ken Ashley of BCIT, and produced by Brendan Chu and Chris Jenkins. Thanks to Adele Liu's persistence, these two movies gained wider appreciation and awareness of the fragility of the Fraser River ecosystem.

Of course, communications play a huge role in keeping our membership aware of upcoming events. A huge thanks goes to Harvey Dueck and Kelly Sekhon for updating, maintaining and editing our website. The weekly e-news is always a welcome sight in my Monday email Inbox. Thanks to Denis Laplante and Lyndsey Smith for keeping us informed of what is up next, and to Teresa Gagne for selecting member's photos and poem suggestions to enhance the wow factor of the newsletter. And a thank you to our membership team of Donna Underhill and Kelly Sekhon, who keep our membership records up to date.

Teresa also stepped up last month, on very short notice, for a CBC radio interview on spring wildflowers. She even brought a wildflower bouquet to host, Gloria Makerenko. If you missed the interview, the details are on our website, under the blog menu, with a link to the interview.

*Discovery* Volume 50 was printed and distributed to our members in January. This is another excellent journal, with contributions by so many authors and photographers. The editors, Sheila Byers and Bev Ramey, did an amazing job, with Laura Fauth completing the graphic design. Thanks to all who took part.

Of course, not all was good news. We sadly lost two long time members, Katherine Steig and Wayne Weber. Katherine was an avid defender of wild places, being strongly associated with Friends of Cypress Park. She had also served on Nature Vancouver's Board of Directors and on the Conservation Committee. Wayne Weber will be remembered as a dedicated Birder, but he also enjoyed botany and photography. Wayne served on the Birding Committee, on the *Discovery* editorial committee, and on the Board. Katherine and Wayne will be missed for their mentorship and dedication.

On the environmental side, the Federal Government last week approved the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 project, despite strong opposition from their own scientists, and a variety of groups, including Nature Vancouver. A petition, co-led by Adele Liu of Nature Vancouver and James Casey, of Bird Studies Canada, was presented in parliament by MP Don Davies in March. This was in addition to the many letters written by our members and the surveys completed. And yet, RBT2 was given the go-ahead. The approval came with a list of 370 conditions which must be met, however, this further industrialization remains an insult to the fragile Fraser River Delta ecosystem.

To finish, I would like to thank all the volunteers who contributed in any way to the Society. Nature Vancouver would not be successful without your assistance, whether that was leading a field trip, submitting articles for *Discovery*, the blog or the newsletter, taking part in a committee, weeding out invasive plants, counting birds or submitting photos for the show. If you are interested in getting more involved, Nature Vancouver is always seeking additional volunteers. I would especially like to thank the Board members for 2022/23 - Adele Liu, Nigel Peck, Donna Underhill, Janet Snell, Colin Classen, John Martin, Laura Cottle, Selina Wong, Stephen Hui, and Caroline Penn. Regrettably, Stephen will be leaving the Board for a year or two to take on a challenging work role, and Caroline was able to serve only until October. We thank them for their time and efforts, while the remainder have agreed to continue for another year. This is a wonderful group of people to work with, and the Board continues to seek additional members to join us, to guide Nature Vancouver forward.