

President's Report – by John Martin, May 2025

I am pleased to be able to present an update on some key activities by our Nature Vancouver Board of Directors so that there is a better understanding of what our board is striving to achieve on behalf of Nature Vancouver.

This past year has seen quite a few changes in the members who have volunteered to be on the board. Several longer standing board members have decided to pass the baton to new board members. People like Nigel Peck, a past president who has directly supported the board for over 20 years, Joan Lopez who has moved to the gulf islands but has been a past president and continues to be a strong member of the marine biology section, and Adele Liu our past treasurer who took over that role under challenging circumstances yet made tremendous contributions to strengthen our fiscal health, have all left the board. *(Request a recognition and thank you for those leaving by the attendees).*

With these changes came a chance for new board members, and in fact, a number of younger members decided to join the team. We know we can always tap the shoulders of previous board members when needed, but these new board members are bringing new ideas and different perspectives to this role.

This new board has already started to develop a process to map out a new strategic plan which we hope to reveal soon. One key activity was delivering a membership survey. On this note, and on behalf of the board, we thank the 73 respondents which represented a strong response level, who provided great insights. We heard about what is working well, what can be improved and some terrific new ideas and we will use all of this information in our planning.

Before the survey we had already been made aware that our society is not well known in the general public. While we all know about Nature Vancouver through life-long friendships with other members, the stark reality is that most people who are not members, have never heard of us. The board has started to find ways of improving our outreach to more

people but it also became clear early on we had a significant brand recognition challenge. You may have noticed on our tables are some business cards that we want everyone to take and share with others. We have tried to make it easy to access our website through a web URL but also there is a QR code for many who now use this for quick responses. You will also see some reference to social media sites which the board has focused on recently, but there is more.

Earlier this year, the board created a new communications coordinator team role which is striving to improve all facets of communication. During the summer we have lined up a university student as an intern with experience in this area to help structure relevant goals and strategies going forward. Our new team has already begun developing sub categories where those who wish to volunteer on parts of this broad role, can have an opportunity to do so. Expect to see more roles being published as we refine where we believe our society needs more support based on what we hear from all of you. We hope you continue to use our website and newsletter as a source of information on these important opportunities.

Our survey results also revealed other key messaging on concerns about our society not doing more in terms of financial support to other organizations and groups. It was expressed that we should have a much stronger role in our conservation activities and advocacy. We have begun to assess how to improve in all of these areas and others highlighted in the survey. Again, there will be opportunities for you to engage here.

One example of collaboration close to my heart is our engagement with 23 local authorities made up of municipalities, indigenous nations and other naturalist organizations in a major global citizen initiative known as the City Nature Challenge. This is facilitating a much broader degree of outreach expanding from our city of Vancouver roots to the greater Metro Vancouver Regional District. We can reach more citizens and hopefully realize our primary objectives now with over 3 million people. By the way for the second year in a row we were number 1 in Canada in terms of total observations of nature made and set a new Canadian record with over

36,000 observations made in the 4-day event. So, if you missed out, we are already starting to plan for 2026.

Now I would be remiss if I did not mention a strong base of collaboration that has existed for many years through our support of the annual Christmas bird count. Our birding section is already planning for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count and they will need your support if we are to exceed past results.

Another activity we are starting to explore is working more closely with the British Columbia Parks Foundation. They have several programs to promote citizen access to our parks as well as citizen science activities and community stewardship programs. It is a new initiative and again a response due to your requests to increase our support of other like-minded organizations.

Hopefully a key theme is becoming evident. In the past the board was highly focused on operational management issues and we were doing a good job at what we were doing. We are fortunate in that we have very capable volunteers as section leaders and others who take care of things like memberships, our newsletter and our Discovery journal, socials and more. They are really managing their areas effectively which importantly allows us, the board of directors, to work more on bringing best practices to our board and shift the focus to the future. Now like everyone else, we are just members who volunteer in this role so we appreciate and need your input and feedback as we progress along our new path.

I do hope that there are some of you who will consider joining our board of directors. It is a vibrant and supportive team and one that is open to ideas, embraces diversity and inclusivity which we believe can only help all of us realize the objectives of Nature Vancouver in new and exciting ways.

On behalf of the board, I want to close by thanking everyone for your support.