

President's Report - 2026 AGM

by John Martin

I am pleased to be able to present an update on some key activities and changes that have occurred in the past year. Before I do, I wish to summarize the essence of many of these changes in one word and that is renewal.

This past year has seen quite a few changes in the members who have volunteered to be on the board of directors. Out of 10 board members, 6 were new for this past year and they have brought in new ideas, energy and commitment to Nature Vancouver. I would like all board of directors who are here tonight to stand up, so we can give them a round of applause.

This new board has worked hard to develop the first strategic plan for Nature Vancouver. We have voted on several resolutions including increasing the funding for NatureKidsBC, and the funding levels for the yearly scholarships. Our new treasurer, Elisa Kreller, has not only taken care of our finances but has updated a number of key policies including a new funding model focused on supporting other organizations. For example, we have recently completed an agreement to support "WildResearch" and strengthen our strategic relationship with them in addition to the time that many of our members give at the Iona Beach bird banding station.

The board has a number of new focus areas. We have Nicki who is leading the revitalization of our conservation section. We also have Karolina who is leading the charge to improve our internal and external communications. Another new board member, Melissa, is helping us improve our support and collaboration of younger members and youths in our communities. Kelvin and Sunny provide support in numerous ways including researching ideas that will enhance our branding recognition, planning activities, providing technical meeting support and even leading outings themselves. By the way, let's give a round of applause for our meeting technical team who are hard at work right now. It's all vital work they are all doing.

Our team is also supported by Laura who leads the scholarship committee, Donna our VP who continues to help in so many ways including our being on our awards committee. Sheila is our wonderful recording secretary that miraculously manages to document what we do, as she is doing now! Thank you Sheila

We heard the messaging about onerous administration that can demotivate volunteers so we have backed the rollout of a modern online system that will allow us to better manage many aspects of our society. The hard work here was completed by our technical and implementation teams and the board treasurer and we will be looking for ways to make the many volunteer roles easier.

The renewal also shows up in all of our sections. We have had many new volunteers step forward to lead outings and you may have noticed some new names. Perhaps we can have anyone here tonight that led a walk or event for the first time to stand or raise their hand on zoom so we can recognize and thank them.

I would also like to mention the renewal that took place for the annual Christmas Bird count. Many may not know but the registration process was modernized through a new online registration system spearheaded by Harvey. While being one of the longest running citizen science initiatives this was the first major modern process improvement in a long time and made things a lot easier for all those involved.

How can I not mention the great new members who weekly put out our wonderful and informative newsletters.

Hopefully a key theme is becoming evident. In the past the board was highly focused on operational management issues and we did 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 focus on the future. 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 would be remiss if I did not also mention how we are also striving to protect the elements of our history. In addition to keeping our recent activities online in our website, Bev Ramey and Margaret Bear and Donna Underhill worked with the City of Vancouver archives to ensure as much as possible is logged in the archives for everyone to access and enjoy.

I do hope that there are some of you who will consider joining our board of directors and/or signing up as a volunteer in one of the many roles we need. You can check opportunities on our website on where you can join the volunteer team. 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.