

***LTA The Land
Of British***



***Trust Alliance
Columbia***

***204-338 Lower Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2V3
www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca 250-538-0112 fax 538-0172***

April 12, 2007

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and
Environment Minister John Baird

Dear Honourable Gentlemen:

We congratulate the federal government on its recent announcement regarding considerable investment in land conservation in Canada. This is a welcome addition to the 2006 announcement that donors of Ecological Gifts will no longer be charged a capital gain. We are excited to see the federal government provide support for protection of Canada's natural environment. We applaud these recent initiatives. Groups such as The Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ducks Unlimited have done fabulous work in Canada and British Columbia.

This letter is an introduction to our BC Alliance and its successful work in helping conserve our nation's natural and cultural heritage. The Land Trust Alliance of BC has 85 members, including 30 land trusts and 22 other stewardship organizations who steward, protect and restore our natural and cultural heritage. We ask that support for the diversity of land trusts and conservancies across the country, including BC be included in plans for this funding initiative. In BC, our alliance just celebrated our 10th anniversary. We enclose a booklet that gives case studies and celebrates the conservation of more than 500,000 acres of land in BC by our member land trusts. Attached also is a list of the research papers and published materials that the LTABC has produced since its inception. The LTABC's training and resource programs have formerly been given financial contributions through the Canadian Wildlife Service's Ecological Gift Program. This excellent program has provided incentives and staff support that have enabled conservation land trusts and their donors to contribute extensive conservation gifts to Canada and BC. Considering that the CLTA is new, and the LTABC and its members are yet to work out agreements for collaboration, we hope that financial support to BC will continue under the new government.

In addition to areas of ecological significance, some land trusts also protect areas of cultural and historic significance. These sites usually have been owned and protected from development for decades, thus they provide both ecological and historical significance in their communities and to the wider nation. The conservation of cultural or historical sites garners tremendous community support and is often a link to relatively intact natural areas and places of recreational opportunity. As renowned author Richard Louv suggests, it is essential that children be able to contact and interact with nature, close to their homes, so that they will learn to connect with and protect it in future – for nature is our source of sustainability and wealth. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these concepts further. Thank you for supporting conservation in Canada and across the country.

Yours sincerely,
Co Chairs

Bill Wagner, BA, LLB
North Okanagan Parks & Natural Areas Trust

Dr. Katherine Dunster, R.P. Bio
Outreach, Garry Oak Recovery Team

Sheila Harrington, BFA, Ed
Executive Director