



Land Trust Alliance

BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRESS RELEASE

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BC's land trust community shows its strength: Survey suggests land trusts are "On Solid Ground"

Victoria – A recent survey by the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia confirms that BC's land trust community is diverse, financially stable and making a significant contribution to the long-term protection of this province's natural heritage.

"We undertook the survey in light of the high-profile and ongoing financial struggles being faced by The Land Conservancy," said Paul McNair, Executive Director of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). "Naturally we wondered how BC's other land trusts were faring."

Results from the 2013 survey have been compiled in a report titled ON SOLID GROUND. Member trusts report stable and increasing funding. None hold mortgages on their conservation properties.

"Land trusts across BC are engaged in ongoing conservation efforts, with more than fifty new projects on the books," said McNair.

The land trust community contributes significant benefits to the people of British Columbia. In addition to conserving native habitat, protecting fresh water and promoting the community benefits of nature, land trusts support local economies, harness volunteer efforts and strengthen partnerships by participating in joint initiatives.

"Our land trusts range in size from smaller community-based groups to large, province-wide and national organizations," said McNair. "It is this diversity of scope that underpins BC's extremely successful land conservation industry. Collectively we have completed over 1,200 conservation projects, representing 1.4 million acres of land and water."

Several major projects underway include the Pender Islands Conservancy Association Brook's Point project, Fraser Valley Conservancy's \$40,000 RBC Bluewater project grant and the Nature Trust of British Columbia's HSBC Youth Crew program.

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201 – 569 Johnson Rd, Victoria, BC V8W 1M2

T 250-590-1921 info@ltabc.ca www.ltabc.ca

McNair notes that land trusts works to protect land for a variety of reasons including habitat for species and risk (as well as not at-risk species); public recreation; aesthetics; economic (tourism, sustainable resource use); and spiritual.

McNair says that land trusts across the province are doing exceptional work in land conservation, education and protection of species at risk and that people considering volunteering or making donations can review the land trusts of BC on LTA's website at www.ltabc.ca.

The LTA encourages members to adopt the use of best practices, which support ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust in Canada.

“It is clear that LTA members take their ethical responsibilities very seriously –especially in relation to donor dollars,” says McNair “and as a whole have established governance and operational procedures to account for the conservation efforts.”

Facts

- 40,000 members and donors financially support land trusts each year
- More than 90,000 people receive newsletters or e-news from a land trust
- BC's land trusts collectively hold more than \$15 million in endowment funds
- 70% of land trusts report private donations as their number one source of funding
- Fewer than 47% of land trusts receive government funds
- 31 BC land trusts are current LTA members

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For further information:

Paul McNair
Executive Director
Land Trust Alliance of BC
250-590-1921

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