

President's report 2012

This year began with three board members, myself, Rachel Botting and Lesley Thorsell. It has been a transition year, bridging the responsibilities of still forming a strong foundation yet reconnecting with land owners to solidify plans.

Transition takes a different board that can adjust to growth and movement.

Rachel and I took a five-week course on working with a board. This workshop, aimed at board members involved with non-profits, taught the principals of effective board work, the importance of having a board that reflects the requirements of the organization—be that a working board or a sitting board—and how to work with organization staff, something not necessary yet with MLCS but again something that will signal a transition. What taking the workshop did was two-fold. We realized that foundation work continues regardless of the maturity of the organization, and that there are responsibilities that come with being a board member.

Using the handouts from the workshop there will be future board development sessions.

Wendy Cocksedge joined the board early in 2012, bringing her knowledge of forest lore and her registered professional biologist designation. She has a past of traveling throughout the province with colleagues from Royal Roads University spreading her knowledge of non-timber resources found within forests.

Shortly after Wendy joined us we had the opportunity to receive a front page on the Weekend Shopper, which helped raise our profile and remind readers of our existence.

Around that same time, news of the possibility of Stillwater Bluffs being logged by Island Timberlands hit the community and we made the decision to put our support forward as an organization to help with negotiations with Island Timberlands and also fundraising for the possibility of purchasing the lands. The regional district has informed Island Timberlands of its intent to negotiate a sale price, although no conversations on Stillwater Bluffs are going on at this moment, as far as I know.

In April, until September, we were joined by Angie Davey, who joined as secretary for the board. She has moved back from the position and remains a member of the land conservancy.

Also in the spring we had a board field trip south of town to a property where the owners are unsure what to do with their land.

I joined the Parks and Greenspace Implementation Advisory Committee of the regional district, partly on the merit of being president of MLCS. The group is forming advice for the regional district on increasing parkland and greenspace in line with the previously created Parks and Greenspace plan.

In June we held a special meeting for membership to pass a motion to make an addition to our bylaws. This addition is one part of the steps necessary for us to take in order to be authorized to receive Ecogifts. Ecogifts are the donations of land designated by Environment Canada as important to Canadian heritage. Tonight I hope we can make the next step along this path.

We have approached a local realtor to act on behalf of the conservancy at some future point when we are to acquire land through purchase. This realtor shares a view of conservation. Likewise, we are approaching a local lawyer to work on behalf of the conservancy in the future. There is no doubt we will require the services of a lawyer at some point in our work.

In the summer we restarted conversations with one of our members who has property on Texada Island and who has been a firm proponent of MLCS since we formed in 2008. You'll be finding out more about this land a little later in the meeting.

We have joined up with the Powell River Dollars initiative, receiving dollars as donations. To start us off, Creative Rift Gallery and Kevin Wilson Website Designs donated local dollars to us as a way to distribute the dollars throughout the community.

Rounding out the year, Rachel has moved to Penticton and yet remains interested in helping with MLCS. We are, however, looking for more board members to be integral in moving MLCS forward and securing management plans and interest in property that we can help preserve in perpetuity.