

President's Report, November 2013 through October 2014

During the year we had a table at Seedy Saturday, participated with Earth Week, formed a network with northern Gulf Island conservancies, hosted a visit from land conservancies from Cortes Island and Campbell River and have recently struck up a relationship with a biologist to help with rehabilitation projects.

With very few members and a small board, 2014 was a year of keeping commitments manageable. We participated in Seedy Saturday held in March, at the recreation complex. We have attended this event each year and always have a good opportunity to spread word about land conservation and meet property owners. The event draws people who are interested in preservation and also newcomers to Powell River.

In April Powell River celebrated Earth Week. At the 2013 AGM I mentioned MLCS's participation as the charity to receive and process donations, to be the supporting charity for the week. Helping to facilitate the week took a lot of time. It went extremely well, but did not serve to promote MLCS as much as I had hoped. Our participation involved acting as treasurer, which gave our bank account far more action than it has had before, grant writing, requesting funds from a business, attending City of Powell River Council meeting and participating in organizing meetings. I mentioned to the organizing team that perhaps it would be good to find another organization to support the week in 2015. The organization needs to be a charity and unfortunately, the obvious choice of Pebble in the Pond Environmental Society, which has held the event in previous years, is not a charity and therefore would not be able to provide tax receipts for donations. So, at the moment, it looks as though MLCS will continue as the supporting charity. I am truly hoping we have somebody step forward to do the treasury for the society.

Last November, Rob and I attended a conference on Cortes Island for northern Gulf Island land conservancies to get together and pool knowledge. It was a great opportunity to network and inject new inspiration into MLCS. We still are a land conservancy in our infancy. There are conservancies with dozens of properties, either owned or managed; and then there are conservancies, such as Discovery Coast, which are yet to own land, but which are heavily involved with restoration and rehabilitation projects, raising the profile of the society's work. This was the first of such meetings. The second was hosted here and we were visited by representatives from Cortes and Discovery Coast. The event molded into an intensive support session for MLCS. We spoke at some length about dealing with Island Timberlands – very recently Cortes managed to strike a deal with IT for the purchase and preservation of Whaletown Commons, a 75-acre piece of land that will now remain in the hands of the community. We took our visitors on a tour of Stillwater Bluffs, guided by Nola Poirier and Jason Addy.

Rounding out the year, recently I saw a request from a biologist to receive letters of support and collaboration with restoration and rehabilitation of land in our area, to assist with aiding species at risk or other species whose populations are challenged by human activity. I responded on MLCS's behalf and hope the spring will bring MLCS projects we can assist with, and projects that will engage our membership. Also, these projects will

Speak directly to our mission of education and learning about our responsibilities when managing and preserving land. I believe the collaboration will be win win both for the biologist and for us.

Moving forward, this coming week we will be heading to Texada Island to oversee the conservation covenants on the land. We did this last year for the first time and we have been asked to do this again. It is an opportunity to learn how to manage conserved land, before we have conservation covenants of our own. It is a day-long excursion to meet the landowner and tour his property, while taking notes and photographs. The notes form a report and photos form a record of the present state of the land.

For the new year we need to increase our membership, involve membership in activities, have a strong board and repopulate our committees. We will also need to revisit our strategic plan, as the one we currently have in place was for the five years 2010 through 2015.