

President's Report 2016

We have had an active year with six board meetings, two public meetings, three visits to properties covered by covenant, an information table at Seedy Saturday, attendance at a meeting of the Ministry of Environment regarding Marbled Murrelets and Northern Goshawks, and hosted the chair of the Coastal Douglas Fir Conservation Partnership of which we are a member. We also updated our five-year strategic plan.

We visited the Fernwood Avenue covenant area to meet with the owners and discuss some alders. Three alders were nearing their lifespan and an arborist had suggested to the owners that the trees be removed for safety of property and people. We agreed and wrote a letter to the file stating as such.

We had two trips to a parcel of land, on Padgett and Centennial roads, to view the proposed covenant area. This property was part of Martin Rossander's estate, sold at the end of September and the covenant is now in place. The covenanted area is roughly five acres of treed land. Neighbourhood awareness of the covenant will take place.

The covenants will be monitored annually, and we are looking to increase the number of people who know how to do this.

While obtaining the second covenant, we went through a process to be accepted for holding statutory rights of way and covenants over land on the entire Sunshine Coast. Letters of permission, which used to be free and now cost \$500 each, through BC Lands and Surveys Authority, no longer need to be obtained. I say this with great gratitude to the estate of Martin Rossander, which helped us achieve this blanket designation.

We were successful in applying to be recipients of Environment Canada's EcoGift Program donations. EcoGifts provide a tax benefit to donors, whether individuals or corporations, and land qualifies through environmental analysis by Environment Canada to ensure the land is of national heritage. Being a recipient means MLCS can receive these donations and monitor the land for covenant purposes on behalf of the program.

April was Earth Month in Powell River. MLCS assisted Climate Action Powell River in obtaining grant money from the City to support a speaker series relating to reducing our effect on the climate. CAPR was not a non-profit at the time, but has now achieved that status. The first speaker was Guy Dauncey, in April, and the second Tree Canada's Frederik Vroom this past Friday. Another speaker is being invited before the end of the winter.

MLCS held two public meetings regarding Stillwater Bluffs. Both were facilitated by Kelly Chapman. From the meetings, a new non-profit was formed, Friends of Stillwater Bluffs Association. Both organizations will work together to advance public ownership of the land.

Earlier this month I attended the Land Trust Alliance of BC seminar series on behalf of MLCS in Victoria.

We are involved with helping biologist Aimee Mitchell and her project to increase public awareness of Coastal Douglas Fir and associated ecosystems, the species at risk found within these areas, and how to protect them.

As we step into next year, I hope to see structural changes in MLCS to allow the Society to grow. This involves me vacating the president seat, which I have held since MLCS was created in 2008.