

WHO WE ARE

Established as a non-profit organization in August, 2008, we became a registered Charity in the spring, 2010.

We have a board of five directors:

Janet Southcott - President
Lesley Thorsell - Vice-President

Gord Kennedy - Treasurer
Rob Southcott - Secretary
Ted Crossley - Director at large

We have four committees:
Membership
Fundraising
Public Engagement
Land

MISSION

Protection of natural, agricultural, historic, and scenic lands in our region through the use of conservation covenants, land acquisition and education.

VISION

People living within a healthy diverse region where respect for the natural world is paramount.

Out in the Wild

When Malaspina Land Conservancy Society was born in 2008, it was with a vision of one day building a network of land parcels conserved for the Powell River community's future.

During 2015 we took great strides in that direction. In February, we received our first conservation covenant, over a parcel of land owned by the late Martin Rossander.

That initial two-thirds of an acre in town provided an opportunity for us to put on our outdoor shoes and venture onto land that would remain in its natural state in perpetuity.

In January 2016 we found ourselves on another of Martin's properties, this time at the corner of Centennial and Padgett roads. It is multiple acres of treed land upon which we will hold a covenant.

Sandwiched in between, we were invited to tour land, some of which already conserved under a covenant, on the west coast of Texada Island. The weather conspired for a beautiful gentle ride by boat down the coast, providing a great vantage point for the idyllic setting and scenery afforded by this partly private and partly Crown land property.



Rock-hopping to shore, board members of Malaspina Land Conservancy Society enjoyed a couple of field trips during 2015 to look at land for potential preservation.

Approved Recipients for Ecological Gifts

Just before Christmas, we celebrated the designation of being accepted as recipients for Environment Canada's Ecological Gift Program.

This designation provides a valuable incentive for landowners and corporations to donate property to a land conservancy such as MLCS.

If the land is determined, by the minister of environment, to be ecologically sensi-

tive (such as a mostly untouched forest or wetland, for example), when the land is donated the fair market value of the land will be returned to the owner in the form of a charitable income tax receipt. For a landowner, there are 10 years in which to claim the full tax benefit. For a corporation, it deducts the amount directly.

The program was created in 1995 and between 1995 and 2015, Canadians donated

Board Members at Work



MLCS board members spent some time this past year exploring the Martin Rossander estate, [left] Centennial Road and [above] Fernwood Avenue.

Eco-Gifts

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more than 1,200 parcels of land, amounting to 172,000 hectares, and with a value of more than \$746 million.

Another benefit to landowners is an ecological gift carries no tax on capital gains for capital gifts.

If you are a landowner and believe you have land MLCS may be interested in working with you to conserve, please contact us. If the belief is your land has a possible chance of qualifying for the ecological gift program, we will help guide you through the process.

As each situation is different, please also seek independent professional legal and tax advice.

As marketing for the Eco-Gift program states, “a legacy for tomorrow—a tax break today”.

What is a Land Conservancy?

A land conservancy is a non-profit, charitable organization committed to the long-term protection of natural and/or cultural heritage. A land conservancy may own land itself, or it may enter into conservation covenants with property owners to protect or restore natural or heritage features on the owner's land. Land trusts also engage in stewardship, restoration and management of lands. The terms land trust and land conservancy are often used interchangeably.

Combined Call for Bioblitz

A 12-hour or 24-hour intensive cataloguing of an area of land can be lots of fun!

This is a bioblitz. It is a gathering of many groups of people with diverse knowledge to enable the recording and tracking of current activity on a piece of property.

Such an event has been successfully held various years on Cortes Island, and we think at least three can be held here: one on Stillwater Bluffs, one on Valentine Mountain, one on PRSC's Lot 450 land. Interested? Get in touch!

Presentations to Community Groups

Board members are happy to provide a presentation to your community group about the work of land conservancies.

If you would like to schedule a talk, please contact us at info@malaspinaland.ca.

Forest Land Preservation

This article was first published on our website in August 2015.

Within the Powell River region there is privately owned forest land. As with any privately owned land, Malaspina Land Conservancy Society opens its doors to negotiation with owners over the purchase or preservation of land, however, the society can only step forward into negotiation if the owners are willing to discuss sale or conservation.

If the land falls within the mandate of MLCS (it is of scenic beauty, scientific, cultural, recreational or historic interest to the community) and is of a size and quality that MLCS can justify fundraising for or managing under conservation covenant, the society will be interested in preservation in perpetuity of the land for the good of the community.

MLCS is a registered charity. In order to keep its charitable status it cannot engage in activism or lobbying. Instead, it can engage in fundraising and education.

Currently, there are many calls for MLCS to get involved with the Lot 450 parcels of land. One parcel, a privately managed forest land, owned by Island Timberlands, was targeted for logging in the spring. On Earth Day, April 22, chainsaws were revved and the community, especially in Cranberry, began living with the daily crashes of trees. The situation engaged local citizens and through actions and the very successful declaration that such logging was against the *Wildlife Act* due to nesting season, the logging was halted. Over the summer, the fire risk has remained extreme and currently logging cannot take place due to fire hazard. But, as the days tick by and a chill develops in the air, the air is getting more moist and by early fall those fire restrictions may be lifted. What will stand in the way of further logging?

For MLCS to be involved in this particular privately owned parcel, there needs to be a willing owner wishing to negotiate a sale price. Using that as a launching step, the community can look at a target fundraising amount and MLCS could be involved with assisting with the fundraising.

Another portion of Lot 450 is forest land owned by PRSC (City of Powell River and Tla'amin First Na-

tion) upon which Island Timberlands has a one-time right to the trees. Here there are two entities with an interest in the land—PRSC and Island Timberlands. If Island Timberlands were to show interest in negotiating a sale price for the value of the trees left standing on the lot, and if this were to be in keeping with the wishes of the landowners PRSC, then MLCS would be happy to be involved with the negotiations and creating a fundraising campaign. Until that situation happens, MLCS cannot take an active part in fundraising.

However, MLCS can help with education. In both of these situations, the society could assist with engaging the community, drawing in interest on the educational, aesthetic, health-giving and biodiverse value of the land, and thereby helping to capture the heart of the community. Doing so would be a positive move toward future fundraising as it is essential people feel some connection to the land for them to open their pocket books and donate to a cause.

MLCS is keeping a close eye on the Lot 450 situation because other forest lands within the Powell River region are also key to the community. Stillwater Bluffs has long been a focus for MLCS. At least four years ago, MLCS offered to be involved with negotiations for the purchase of the Bluffs. The Powell River Regional District took on the lead negotiation position and engaged Island Timberlands, the owner of the land. The response from Island Timberlands was to connect the regional district with its real estate arm. Negotiations seem to have gone quiet and MLCS has not been invited into any action to assist. However, here again, education could happen. MLCS is interested in hosting a bioblitz on the land. This is an in-depth, limited time exploration of the biodiversity of the land. It involves all sorts of community groups and knowledge, from biologists to girl guides, hikers to artists, in a 12-hour or 24-hour marathon of data capture.

But, the society cannot do this alone. It is interested in engaging with other community groups to host a bioblitz. Interested? Please send us a note.

And, what about Valentine Mountain? As another beautiful scenic parcel of land with a key emotional attachment to the community, it could be protected and preserved...

If we are not doing this for our children, who would we do this for?

Since this article aired, Green Heart Environmental Protection Foundation was created and has approached both PRSC and Island Timberlands about purchasing the land and trees in one portion of Lot 450. MLCS supports this action and is keeping up to date on negotiations.



[back row from left] Ted Crossley (director at large), Gord Kennedy (treasurer), Rob Southcott (secretary); [seated from left] Lesley Thorsell (vice-president), Janet Southcott (president) and Kelly Chapman (member).

Who We Are

We have come to land conservation from various avenues. Our president, Janet Southcott, was brought up a naturalist and has always had a deep respect for nature; husband Rob Southcott is a city councillor, caring about the welfare of community and sustainability of Powell River; Lesley Thorsell fights for forest preservation, believing in the health of nature for the health of humanity; Gord Kennedy is an active volunteer with Powell River Parks and Wilderness society, helping with cabin building and trail clearing; Ted Crossley uses his wealth of knowledge about nature to act as detective in sluthing out possibilities; and Kelly Chapman, while not a board member, is a valued member of the society and uses her vast background as a registered professional biologist to keep us on task on project.

Education

We are all learning as we go. With over 30 land conservancies in BC alone, and hundreds across the nation, we are not having to re-invent the wheel. Almost everything has been done by some conservancy somewhere and we benefit from that collective knowledge.



Join Us

Perhaps we are biased, but we believe we are a nice bunch of people to work with. Why not join us? We have various places for committee volunteers, and with our progress into owning interest in land, we are having more opportunities for members to participate in rehabilitation and restoration activities. There is always room for more board members, too, so get in touch!

**How to
get in
touch...**

If you wish to become a member, are looking for more information, or have land to conserve through purchase or conservation covenant, please contact us.

Send mail to Malaspina Land Conservancy Society
3852 Gordon Avenue
Powell River, B.C. Canada V8A 2T5

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