

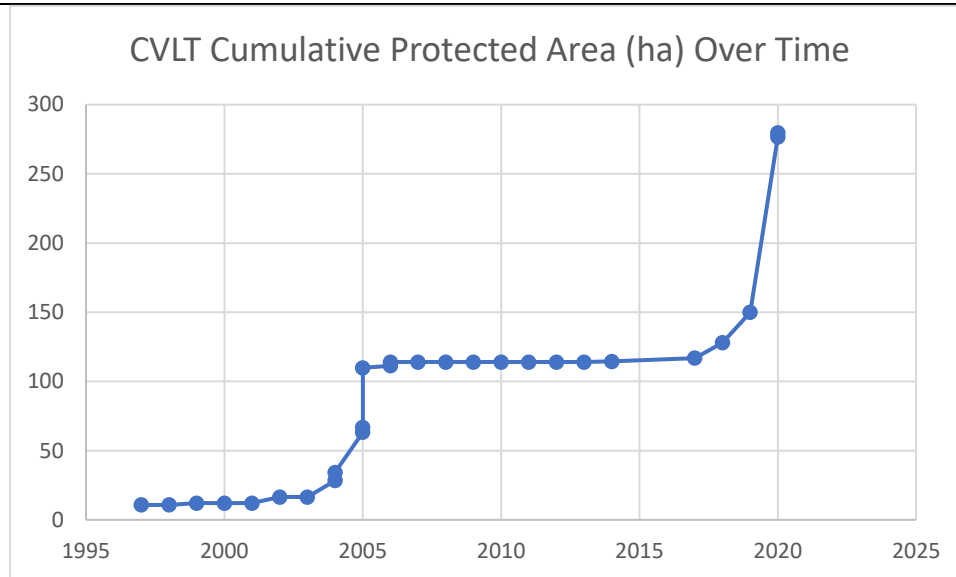
Land Protection Program

Having just closed an acquisition in the Morrison Headwaters Nature Preserve the year started off in a celebratory mood. The acquisition of the 55-acre parcel was made jointly with the Comox Valley Regional District. The Morrison Creek Streamkeepers played a key role in fundraising support and community outreach. Local community support for this project from CVLT members, residents and businesses exceeded all expectations and we are so proud of the support from our members. Funding was also received from Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund Society, Sitka Foundation, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, the Courtenay and District Fish and Game Protective Association and the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program.

Many of you joined us on a lovely, sunny afternoon in June 2019 to celebrate our collective success in the protection of these lands in perpetuity. The success and enthusiasm generated by this initial acquisition has inspired our team to expand our conservation efforts in this area, and we have been working hard towards that goal.

Our team also focused efforts on playing an active supporting role in the protection of 224-acres along Perseverance Creek in Cumberland, known as Project Perseverance. This acquisition project has been led by our partner the Cumberland Community Forest Society and the lands will be owned and managed as parkland by the Village of Cumberland. The Comox Valley Regional District's water service played a special role in the project by providing significant funding in recognition that protecting source water tributaries to Comox Lake is consistent with their Watershed Protection Plan. The CVLT will be the primary covenant holder regarding both these lands as well as an additional 89-acres acquired in 2016 (locally known as Space Nugget) to ensure their protection in perpetuity. Registration of this 313-acre covenant will double the amount of land protected in trust by the CVLT to nearly 700-acres¹.

¹ On September 1, 2020 the Perseverance Creek acquisition was successfully completed and the legal registration of the covenant on title is to occur later in the month.



The Board is committed in establishing a more robust relationship with the K’omoks First Nation. To this end the parties met and agreed to look at our Land Protection Priorities through a First Nation’s lens in collaboration. Prior to advancing this objective, CVLT decided to first update the existing Land Protection Prioritization Project originally completed in 2016, which has now been done. Engagement with KFN will take place in this calendar year.

Comox Valley Conservation Partnership

The Comox Valley Conservation Partnership (CVCP) collectively represents 24 local conservation, resident and community organizations. We were actively engaged with all our local governments and K’omoks First Nation on various initiatives that strengthen the protection of environmental values throughout the Valley. In 2020, we welcomed the Courtenay & District Fish and Game Protective Association as our newest member to the CVCP Steering Committee team.

While in the past the CVCP made thoughtful, and well-informed submissions at the final stages of policy development and land use decision making processes, the partnership is now increasingly being invited to participate and provide technical input at the front-end of these initiatives and projects. Such as:

City of Courtenay:

- Urban Forestry Strategy;
- Parks Master Plan;
- ICLEI Climate Adaptation Strategy;
- Official Community Plan;
- Integrated Rainwater Management Plan, and;
- Development Referrals.

Comox Valley Regional District:

- Comox Lake Watershed Advisory Group;
- Tsolum River Agricultural Watershed Plan;
- Comox Lake Watershed Municipal Natural Assets Initiative (pilot project);
- Liquid Waste Management Plan;

Cumberland, CVRD and Courtenay:

- Morrison Creek Watershed Municipal Natural Assets Initiative Species at Risk Assessment Tool.

We are thrilled with this evolution in transparent and inclusive work with local governments. This will better enable us to integrate our science-based conservation goals and apply “boots on the ground” knowledge into environmental land use policy and regulations.

Unfortunately, the planned CVCP April 2020 Symposium on “Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate” was postponed due COVID-19 provincial health orders. With a successful 2017 Symposium behind us, community enthusiasm for this event was very high and our local team is currently developing an online approach to delivery of the symposium in the fall of 2020. Stay tuned!

Administration

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged at the end of this reporting year, has affected some CVLT initiatives. Our biggest shift is now using Zoom as the preferred way to interact with partners, stakeholders, consultants, directors and members to ensure adequate safety protocols.

The Board quickly adopted a “COVID” budget, which trimmed projected revenues to only those with high confidence, and reduced expenditures accordingly. We are grateful for uninterrupted monthly member donations and continued commitments by some of our larger funders such as the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia, the Comox Valley Regional District, and the BC Government.

Notwithstanding the challenges presented by the pandemic, the Comox Valley Land Trust is confidently looking forward to the coming year with a continued focus on land protection and providing the community and local decision makers with the best information to maintain and enhance our environmental values.

We would like to thank the volunteer CVLT Directors, local stewards, our hard working team of professionals (Tim, Erin, Ian), and most importantly you, our members and supporters for their contributions to preserving and enhancing the natural qualities of our Comox Valley.



Yours in conservation,

Piet Rutgers, President

Tim Ennis, Executive Director
