



COMOX VALLEY  
**LAND TRUST**

## President's message

As the end of the year nears and the holiday season swings into high gear, it's good for our mental health to take a break from the trials of the past year. If living through a pandemic isn't enough, we have also had a glimpse into what climate change actually means for our province. I highly recommend a walk in the woods to unwind!

None of us is immune from the devastating effects of global warming. But there are actions we can take such as reducing our consumption, switching to an electric vehicle, or making our home more energy efficient. These may be small things on an individual level but add up when more and more people take part.

I have heard our attitude towards climate change described as a crisis of imagination in terms of how powerless we feel as well as our uncertainty about how to address it. There are many things out of our hands, but that does not mean we are helpless. I hope you will join with me and make CVLT a priority for your year-end giving. Please consider making your donation [here](#). All donations made through our website receive a tax receipt right away.

Thank you for your consideration and I wish you all the best for the holidays and the coming year.

Yours in conservation,

Pieter Rutgers, CVLT President



## 2021 year in review

Despite the many challenges we faced in 2021, the Comox Valley Land Trust had a productive year and took many steps forward in protecting environmentally sensitive land in our beautiful Valley. Here are some highlights.

### Land Protection Program

- Perseverance Creek – We are working with the Cumberland Community Forest Society, the Village of Cumberland, and the Comox Valley Regional District towards the protection of more lands (~19 hectares) along Perseverance Creek. We ranked this site as one of the highest value places for conservation in the Comox Valley and, with our partners, hope to complete the project before March 31, 2022.



We respectfully acknowledge that the land we gather on is on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

- qax mot Conservation Area – The former Morrison Creek Conservation Area has been renamed. qax mot means “lots of medicine” in the K’ómoks traditional ayajuθəm (ayajuthem) language and reflects the high diversity of native plant medicines the K’ómoks people have observed on the site. These 22-hectares contain some of the best wildlife habitat left in the Comox lowlands including critical habitat for several species at risk. We hope to protect much more land in the Morrison Creek headwaters and negotiations with the landowner are going well.
- Oyster River – CVLT received \$5,000 from the Canadian Museum of Nature in remembrance of Father Charles Brandt and his lifetime achievement award. Father Brandt lived along the Oyster River and his land is protected by a conservation covenant we hold. The site is currently being transferred to the CVRD to become a park in accordance with Father Brandt’s will. CVLT is using the funds from CMN to explore opportunities to establish additional conservation covenants along this productive salmon river.



### Comox Valley Conservation Partnership

- CVCP added three new organizations to its steering committee in 2021: Comox Valley Youth Climate Council; Denman Island Conservancy Association; and MARS Rescue Society. CVCP now has 15 participating stewardship organizations on its steering committee and 12 stewardship groups that serve as support members.
- The partnership continued to be an active participant in giving guidance and input on a variety of local government plans, strategies, and bylaws.
- We were also invited to take part in several new local government planning processes including the CVRD Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy.
- CVCP also gave input to CVRD regarding setting up a new regional parks service and initiated work to develop a local conservation fund and conservation tax incentive program.
- CVCP took part in an elected officials forum special meeting on watershed protection and management, presenting information on how the environmental non-government organization sector can have positive impacts.
- We continue to work with the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative and local governments on the Comox Lake Watershed Report and the Development of Species at Risk Tool.
- CVCP members reviewed 53 City of Courtenay development referrals in 2021, compared to 19 in 2020.
- We were part of the grant application review committee for the CVRD Climate Change 2030 program.



- CVCP members were sad to lose their wonderful program coordinator Erin Nowak recently. Erin has taken a position with DFO in Campbell River, and we wish her all the best.

### Conservation Science and Research Program

- We formally adopted the Conservation Science and Research Program.
- We are becoming more involved in applied research projects, particularly our multifaceted bat program.
- We made important discoveries of three bat species not previously known on Vancouver Island: the Mexican free-tailed bat; the fringed myotis; and the eastern red bat.
- Habitat suitability models for bats in the Comox Valley are being created from the acoustic data with machine-learning algorithms.



### Covenant monitoring

- Most monitoring expenses are funded from annual revenues from our Stewardship Endowment Fund that is held by Vancity Community Foundation. Thanks to a generous donation we were able to double the size of the fund to \$180,000.
- Our covenant monitor, Ian Moul, retired this year and we send with him our sincere thanks for many years of excellent work. While we search for a replacement, Executive Director Tim Ennis monitored our sites this year, further increasing his detailed knowledge of our land portfolio.

### Natural Climate Solutions Fund

- Natural climate solutions based on the conservation, restoration, and management of forests, grasslands, and wetlands can deliver up to a third of the global emission reductions needed by 2030. Protecting our natural areas is the most important thing we can do to mitigate and adapt to the consequences of climate change, and that is exactly what the CVLT has been doing locally for over 20 years.
- This year we created our Natural Climate Solutions Fund. Support for this fund grows our ability to take climate mitigation opportunities locally, in areas that also strategically target biodiversity and the ecosystem services that help our communities become more climate resilient.

### Organizational update

- Changes at the board level included saying farewell to Marq Diment who is leaving the Valley. We are indebted to Marq for his years of support and legal expertise.
- The board welcomed Nick Page, a registered professional biologist with experience in species and ecosystem conservation. His knowledge of the Comox Valley and his ecological perspective provide valuable insights in our decision making.

- We are working towards full compliance with the Canadian Land Trust Alliance's standards and practices. This year we adopted the following policies: record management; operating reserve fund; and other financial best practices. CVLT is seen as a leader in this area and, as the sector moves towards accreditation, we will be well situated.

## Thank you

On behalf of the board, our thanks to the volunteer CVLT directors, local stewards, and our hardworking team of professionals (Tim, Erin, Tanis, Laura, Jerad, Fran, Kera, and Kelsey) for their outstanding contributions. Most importantly a big thank you to our members and supporters for strengthening our work to preserve and enhance the natural qualities of our Comox Valley.

## Drink World Community Coffee and support CVLT

Since 2003 CVLT member Erik Taynen has been supporting us by selling [World Community Coffee](#). He buys 400-gram bags at the wholesale price (\$10) and charges customers \$12, which is no more than you will pay anywhere else. The \$2 difference goes to the Land Trust. That adds up and, Erik figures, has likely amounted to about \$9,000 over 18 years.

"I take orders four times a year, so you have to be OK stocking up on coffee," said Erik. "World Community supports Nicaraguan coffee farmers; the coffee is certified organic and grown in a way that protects biodiversity."

If you like your java—regular, espresso, or decaf, light roast or dark—and would like to support CVLT, contact Erik at 250-337-8397. He will add you to his customer list and contact you when he's ready to place his order. He also delivers directly to your door. You can't beat that for great service.

"It's a win-win-win scenario," he added. "You get a great cup of coffee, and you support coffee farmers and the Land Trust."



## 2022 CVCP calendars



Looking for a great stocking stuffer? 2022 is just around the corner and so are opportunities to buy your next Comox Valley Conservation calendar. The 2022 full colour wall calendar features stunning photographs of local wildlife and natural areas. Each month includes information about local stewardship groups working hard to protect the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Comox Valley.

The calendars are \$20 each and make great gifts. They are available at a variety of retail store locations in the Valley, or you can contact

CVLT director David Stapley directly at [calendar@cvlandtrust.ca](mailto:calendar@cvlandtrust.ca) or by text at 250-792-0906.

Thank you for supporting this CVLT fundraiser.

## A walk in the woods with CVLT

Thank you to the CVLT members and donors who joined us November 7 and 12 for a guided walk through the qax mot Conservation Area. The weather may not have been the best but there were lots of salmon spawning sightings along the headwaters of Morrison Creek.

If you haven't already, check out these videos from the headwaters: [a bear stalking salmon at night](#); and [footage of salmon spawning](#).

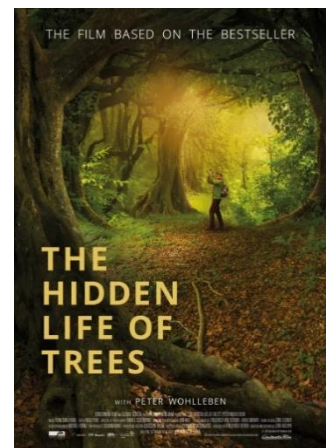
It is so great to see life flourishing in this land we have been entrusted to protect.



## Hidden Life of Trees screenings

CVLT was pleased to work with World Community to present in-person and online screenings of *The Hidden Life of Trees* in November. Over 80 people attended at North Island College's Stan Hagen Theatre November 19, with an additional 131 groups streaming it online the following weekend.

A big thank you to the volunteers who assisted by checking vaccine cards and photo IDs at the door. Thank you also to the World Community volunteers who were a pleasure to work with. We look forward to partnering with them again on other screenings.



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The Comox Valley Land Trust is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that works to protect, conserve, and restore the ecologically significant land, waters, and wildlife habitat of the Comox Valley region.

We are members of the Land Trust Alliance of BC and adhere to the Canadian Land Trust's standards and practices. Since our creation in 1999, we have been certified by the Province of British Columbia to hold conservation covenants.

We are a registered charitable organization;  
registration number 872590278 RR 0001.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation today.

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