



**BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMMUNITY REPORT
2019**

Hello friends,

As winter encourages a turn inward, I am grateful to take time to reflect on the accomplishments and learnings of the past year. I have considered many questions:

- What stories has the land told us this year?
- Which plants and animals have captured our attention and taught us to see the world more fully?
- How has our work helped to move conservation forward in British Columbia?
- Who has helped make all of this possible?

This report touches on those questions, in particular showcasing some of the work we are most proud of.

Of course, all of this is made possible because of the support of people like you. The stories in this booklet are your accomplishments, your discoveries, your legacy to future generations of British Columbians and the world.

With thanks,

Nancy Newhouse

Regional Vice President, British Columbia
Nature Conservancy of Canada

FIELD NOTES

JUNE 4: A burrowing owl is seen hunting at sunset while staff prepare to conduct bat surveys at Sage and Sparrow, South Okanagan.

JUNE 14: Wildlife cameras reveal that mountain goats regularly travel along alpine ridges on Darkwoods throughout the winter.

JULY 2: A pair of sandhill cranes serenade field staff at Gamdis Tlagee, Haida Gwaii.

JULY 13: Five burrowing owlets are banded at Napier Lake Ranch Conservation Area, near Kamloops.

JULY 15: Blooms of rare yellow sand verbena are discovered on the dunes on James Island during a seed collection visit.

OCTOBER 2: Thousands of Kokanee salmon are seen spawning in Luxor Creek, near Edgewater.

OCTOBER 9: The teeny tiny endangered threaded vertigo snail is discovered on Ruby Alton Nature Preserve, Salt Spring Island.

NOVEMBER 1: Beavers move into the restored wetlands on Cherry Meadows, near Kimberley.

CONSERVING CANADA'S LANDS AND WATER

Expanding Darkwoods: Next Creek Watershed

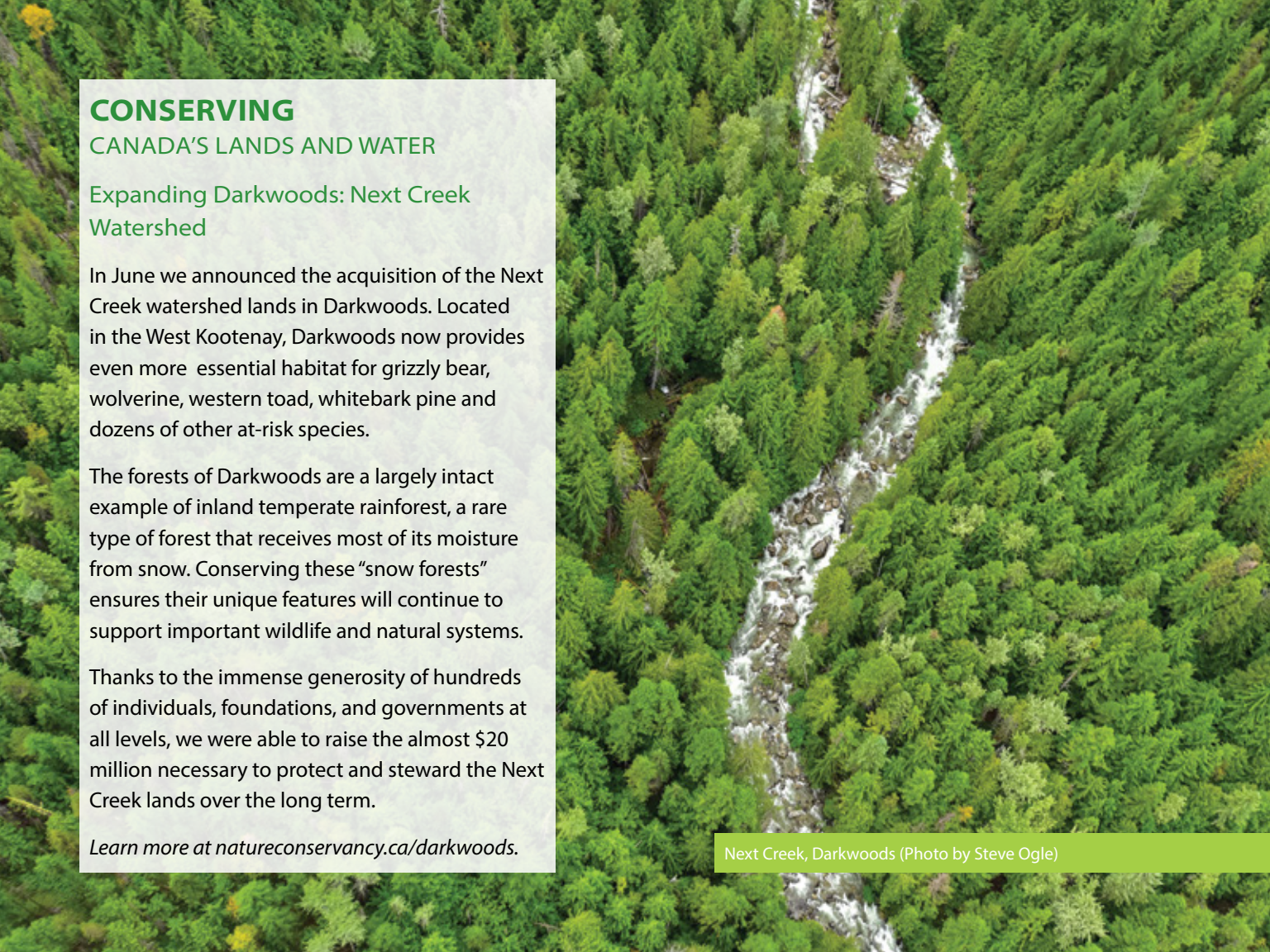
In June we announced the acquisition of the Next Creek watershed lands in Darkwoods. Located in the West Kootenay, Darkwoods now provides even more essential habitat for grizzly bear, wolverine, western toad, whitebark pine and dozens of other at-risk species.

The forests of Darkwoods are a largely intact example of inland temperate rainforest, a rare type of forest that receives most of its moisture from snow. Conserving these “snow forests” ensures their unique features will continue to support important wildlife and natural systems.

Thanks to the immense generosity of hundreds of individuals, foundations, and governments at all levels, we were able to raise the almost \$20 million necessary to protect and steward the Next Creek lands over the long term.

Learn more at natureconservancy.ca/darkwoods.

Next Creek, Darkwoods (Photo by Steve Ogle)



Did you know?
Close to half of Canada's
wildlife species and a third
of Canada's species at
risk rely on wetlands
for at least part of
their life cycle.

CONSERVING CANADA'S LANDS AND WATER

Wetland health assessment survey

Wetlands act as natural filters that purify fresh water, buffer the effects of flooding and drought, and provide crucial habitat for wildlife.

This year we developed a wetland health assessment survey that helps us evaluate the health status of wetlands on our conservation areas. This evaluation offers important information that will help guide our land management decisions as we steward these lands over the long-term.

"Establishing a baseline for the health of any natural area that we have conserved allows us to monitor our success in maintaining or improving ecosystem health over time," says Ginny Hudson, director of science and stewardship. "This is critical to understanding if our efforts are having the positive conservation impact."





CONSERVING CANADA'S LANDS AND WATER

Tidal Flats: A salmon sanctuary in the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest

The Bella Coola River is part of the largest salmon-producing system on BC's central coast, supporting the majority of the region's coho population. Despite being right beside the town of Bella Coola, the estuary remains largely naturally productive. We have a chance right now to ensure it remains that way forever.

We are fundraising to conserve the last unprotected property on the estuary, known as Tidal Flats. Success will significantly enhance the span of connected conservation lands on the estuary, protecting essential habitat for a wide range of migratory birds, fish and mammals.

We have until the end of 2019 to raise enough funds to protect and steward Tidal Flats.

Learn more and consider adding your support to this project at natureconservancy.ca/bc.

Grizzly bear, with salmon, Bella Coola (Photo by Mick Thompson)



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

Dozens of volunteers joined us this year to hunt for mushrooms on our conservation lands in the South Selkirks. These “bioblitzes” are helping to catalogue the immense diversity of mushroom species in BC. To date we have discovered hundreds of species of fungus, some of which have proven to be very tasty sautéed in butter!

Big fungus, Darkwoods (Photo by Pat Morrow)



INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Worldwide conservation efforts depend on fostering the next generation of conservation leaders. This year two conservation interns joined our team and made significant contributions to our summer field work. These internships provide valuable opportunities for students to gain hands on learning in environmental stewardship.



STEWARDING FOR THE FUTURE

The forest on Lehmann Springs Conservation Area in the South Okanagan provides some of the best remaining habitat in BC for the Williamson's sapsucker, a bird that is endangered largely due to loss of old growth larch and Douglas-fir forests.

Our aim is to maintain and enhance this habitat by reducing forest fire risk and encouraging the growth of larch and Douglas-fir trees.

This summer our conservation interns began reducing the fuel load in the forest by removing numerous trees that had blown down in recent storms. Clearing this debris also created space for new trees to regenerate.

This project had benefits for more than just the birds. Community members happily helped out by taking home the free firewood cut and stacked by the interns!

Note: unsanctioned public access is not permitted on this property as disturbance and overuse could cause the birds to abandon the site.

Did you know?
The largest larch
on Lehmann Springs
measures a whopping
51.7 metres tall.

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

Chase Woods Nature Preserve on Vancouver Island has joined NCC's list of top Nature Destinations for visitors seeking time in nature. The 40-hectare (100-acre) nature preserve is connected to a popular network of trails that criss-cross Mt. Tzouhalem in the Cowichan Valley.



A defining feature of the mountain is a giant cross that stands on the cliffs of Chase Woods. The white cross can be seen across the valley and is a beloved local landmark. The challenging trek to the cross rewards hikers with panoramic views of Cowichan Bay and the valley beyond.

Discover all our Nature Destinations at naturedestinations.ca.

All photos by NCC unless otherwise noted.
Cover image: Great horned owl (Photo by Barry Hetschko)



NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA | BRITISH COLUMBIA REGION

1.888.404.8428 | bcoffice@natureconservancy.ca

natureconservancy.ca/bc