

BC Nature, A Fifty-Year History, 1979-2019

Appendix 15. Recollections from Former Presidents

1998 - 2020

The Fifty-Year History of BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists) encompasses 10 Chapters and 15 Appendices, including personal interviews with five former presidents who held office from 1989 to 1998 (Appendix 13). Appendix 15 encompasses presidents from 1998 to 2020 and was compiled by presidents' responses to a series of written questions. For Jeremy McCall (deceased 2018), his section was prepared by Bev Ramey, with assistance from Anne Murray and from Jeremy's wife, Ruth Foley, including accounts of Jeremy's published president's reports and other articles in the BC Naturalist Magazine (BC Nature Magazine as of 2007). In the introduction to the questions provided to past presidents, it was noted that following the proposed format was not essential and that if preferred, presidents had the option to write their own description or use a bullet point format. Sheila Byers provided review and edits to these accounts.

The following questions were presented to these past presidents:

- 1. Your Background:** What was your involvement with nature clubs and/or BC Nature prior to becoming president? And if you would like to, also describe involvement that continued on after being president.
How did your experiences and/skill set in this or other organizations prepare you for this role?
If possible, please identify the timeframes held for the different leadership or committee roles that you had while involved with BC Nature and your local club.
E.g.,
2000-2004 BC Nature President
1998-2000 role with local natural history club or other organizations
- 2. Accomplishments:** During your term as President of the FBCN/BC Nature, what did you see as major accomplishments and/or focus? Or it could simply be the smooth running of the organization.
Did you receive any BC Nature, club or other non-club, awards for your efforts? (BC Nature Award recipients are listed in Appendix 3).
- 3. Projects:** During your term as President, what did you see as major projects and undertakings? Please highlight major projects with only a brief overview as projects are described in Chapter 7 and publications in Appendix 9.
- 4. Conservation and Education:** Any significant activities and accomplishments or efforts to describe?
- 5. Challenges:** What did you see as the major challenges in the Federation during your term as President – both internal and external?

Were there specific environmental concerns, issues that were needing continued attention; or new issues needing immediate attention?

6. Changes: What changes did the FBCN undergo during your term? What initiatives were started, what were discontinued? Were there changes in the structure or function of the Federation and how were those resolved?

7. Stories: Historical accounts are best enriched with anecdotes – what stories can you recall about people, places, or events that exemplify a trend or situation for BC Nature? Which particular camps, meetings, correspondences, etc., had significance?

8. Perspective: Why do you think FBCN is important to the province? Looking back over your involvement with FBCN, what concerns, predictions, or advice can you give to future presidents, executives, Board of Directors and nature clubs?

9. What have you enjoyed most about BC Nature, as President or member? Describe your most memorable recollection.

Past Presidents’ Recollections follow:

Anne Murray, President 1998 – 2002	p. 3
Jeremy McCall, President 2002 – 2006	p. 7
Bev Ramey, President 2006 – 2010	p.12
John Neville, President 2010 – 2014	p.30
Kees Visser, President 2014 – 2016; 2019 – 202	p.33
Alan Burger, President 2016 – 2019	p.37

Anne Murray, President 1998 – 2002

To begin, I am not mentioning names in this summary as there are far too many wonderful people that were involved; also, I don't want to forget anyone, which I surely would do. If you were a staff person or member during my Presidency years, then thank you for everything you did to make our Federation of BC Naturalists such a wonderful group!

1. Background

In 1988, I was a founder Board member of the Delta Naturalists Society, becoming active in that group and the Boundary Bay Conservation Society shortly after I moved to BC. I have been involved with many educational and conservation activities associated with the promotion and protection of the Fraser River Estuary and Boundary Bay, from that time onwards. I also became active with Bird Studies Canada programs in the 1990s, doing Christmas Bird Counts and 'Beached Bird' surveys. When my terms as Vice-President (1996-1998) and President of BC Nature (1998-2002) were completed, I stayed on the Board as the Conservation Chair, later sharing that role.

Currently, I remain a member of the Conservation Committee. My main involvement has been as BC Nature's continuing liaison for the national Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Program (IBA) since the late 1990s, when this program began in Canada. This role has involved ensuring that the Program Manager staff position is filled and financially supported, while acting as an ongoing liaison between the Program Manager, BC Nature Board, BCN members and partner organizations—Birds Canada (previously Birds Studies Canada) and Nature Canada—to ensure the continuity and smooth-running of the IBA Program and the IBA Caretaker Program. I continue to be a member of Delta Naturalists Society and Nature Vancouver.

2. Accomplishments

When I stepped into the President's position, the organization was in a very tough financial situation due to mismanagement of some serious project-overrun costs in previous years. The challenge to confront the shortage of funds characterized the first couple of years of my Presidency (I served two terms: four years in total). Expenses had to be cut, volunteer work increased, and new sources of funding had to be found. With the help of supportive volunteers and Staff Managers, we were able to refresh the Camp Program into a strong and popular income-source, move the IBA Program forward under the guidance of excellent Program Managers and volunteers, run an extremely successful multiyear Living by Water Project that attracted numerous grants, campaign for Species at Risk laws, the protection of the Fraser River Estuary, run the Help MELP campaign to increase BC government funding for the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, support the designation and protection of Provincial Parks and Ecological Reserves, and many other

conservation initiatives.

3. Projects

As mentioned above, Important Bird Areas, Living by Water Project, Parks and Protected Areas including the Help MELP campaign; the BC Endangered Species Campaign, the conservation of grasslands, and protection of Boundary Bay and Fraser River Estuary wetlands, are all activities that I was pleased to be involved with over a period of years. We also reinvigorated the Camp Program to become a profit-making enterprise. Camps became a great success, very much valued and enjoyed by members and a good source of finances for BC Nature.

4. Conservation and Education

I consider the work done to reinvigorate the Conservation Committee and develop a more extensive network of Conservation activities around the Province, to be a significant accomplishment at the time. The Living by Water Project started as a BC Nature project and went nationwide. The Important Bird Area Program has continued in BC for over 20 years and the IBA Caretaker Program we initiated became a model for other provinces. The designation of habitat as parks and protected areas is another memorable achievement of BC Nature during the 2000-2010 period. None of these achievements could have been accomplished without the dedication of a multitude of member volunteers, a committed Board and Executive, and supportive staff.

I was also happy to be one of those involved in getting the Young Naturalists' Club of BC Society started, as this was a program that was long recognized as critical to BC Nature's goals. The Society is independent of BC Nature but well supported by BC Nature members and clubs.

5. Challenges

Finding the funds for the Office Manager salary and rent for the office (at that time on West Broadway), organizing conservation campaigns in the early days of email and the internet, and struggling with environmental destruction in many areas of the province were all front and centre issues that were very demanding for a volunteer President and Board. I was able to work part-time hours and evenings, but it could be overwhelming, especially as online communications were only getting underway at that time.

There were dozens of specific environmental concerns, issues that were needing continued attention, new issues needing immediate attention – continuously!

6. Changes

See above. The Board also formulated a Strategic Plan for the Federation that laid out a road map of where we were headed and what we wanted to achieve. This was a helpful exercise, though not everything came to fruition. The Board has continued to use Strategic Plans to guide its activities.

7. Stories

I very much enjoyed the company of other naturalists and there were dozens of wonderful people involved in the years I was active on the BC Nature Board. Many good friendships were made with happy times enjoyed at camps and general meeting weekends. I got to see every part of beautiful BC in the company of knowledgeable members, for which I am very grateful.

8. Perspective

The cumulative knowledge of naturalists in the province is priceless. The opportunity to meet and exchange knowledge and enjoy nature together is very special. We are also a respected voice for nature and have the power to do much to protect nature within our province and beyond.

My main concern is that we are not changing with the times. I became Vice-President then President at a time when the world was rapidly changing its means of communication. Our family were early adopters of the personal computer and online technology; now that is commonplace. Children of my generation grew up playing outside; now far fewer children know anything about nature. It was common for the older generation to volunteer for the Federation, on retirement or earlier, but now there seem to be many other options, like continuing to work, looking after grandchildren, travelling, or other types of volunteerism. There are many more nature and environment-related organizations that employ more staff and have more presence in the media and in online spaces. Grants are competitive and the more visible organizations get the money.

I believe that BC Nature will need to change its organizational structure somewhat, to be able to survive in the changing world and to attract younger members. While clubs are a mainstay of the organization, a strong core is essential to hold the network together. We need full-time paid Executive and Conservation Directors to help steer our ship forward into the new decades.

9. Most enjoyable recollection BC Nature, as President or member

I very much enjoyed the camps. Returning from the first Bamfield Camp I led, we had an evening meal at Port Alberni dock. Sitting around the table, as the sun went down, I was blown away by the life stories of our group. They had climbed high

mountains, ridden motor bikes across Canada, sailed the oceans, and knew their plants, animals, birds and every other creature! And then we went outside the café and danced spontaneously to a string band that was playing in the courtyard. It was a lovely evening with great people, that I will never forget.

Written by Anne Murray, May 20, 2020 (updated April 2021)

Anne Murray is an independent writer, naturalist, and author of nature, natural history, and conservation related articles and books.

Publication Highlights

Books:

2006. *A Nature Guide to Boundary Bay*. 224pp.

2007. *Community Mapping Network Atlas. Georgia Basin Habitat Atlas: Boundary Bay*. Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society & Community Mapping Network. 89pp.

2008. *Tracing Our Past: A Heritage Guide to Boundary Bay*. 240pp.

Georgia Straight Opinion Columns from 2011 onwards, together with several other articles can be read on Anne's website: [natureguidesbc](http://natureguidesbc.com)

Nature Vancouver:

Conserving Wildlife Congregations in the Fraser Estuary. *Discovery* 2018. Vol 46:109-111.

Awards

BC Nature Club Service 1992 (with Delta Naturalists)

BC Nature Elton Anderson Award 2002

Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal Award for Conservation (2002),

VNHS (Nature Vancouver) Davidson Award for Nature Conservation 2010

Douglas H. Pimlott Award for Conservation from Nature Canada (2015)

Long Service Award from Sierra Legal Defence Fund (now Ecojustice)

Canada 150 Medal from the MP for Delta

BC Nature Merit Award 2020

Delta Municipality's Friend of Heritage Award 2021 (for book, *Tracing Our Past*)

Jeremy McCall, President 2002 – 2006

This record was prepared posthumously by Bev Ramey, as Jeremy passed away in July 2018. Details are from Jeremy's President's Reports in the quarterly BC Naturalist Magazine, over his four years as President, plus several other articles and reports that Jeremy wrote for the magazine during his years as President and shortly afterwards. Anne Murray also helped with the content. In addition, some material is included from Jeremy's tribute, written by his wife, Ruth Foley, and published in Nature Vancouver's Discovery Journal 2018, Volume 46, and Ruth's review is appreciated.

Jeremy had a deep love of the British Columbia landscape and habitats and devoted many hours to ensuring its protection for future generations. His good organizational capacity, strong writing skills, and clear thinking were a huge asset to BC Nature as he volunteered in a variety of roles for over fifteen years.

Jeremy's first President's Message, summer 2002, describes his vision as President:

- To serve the Federation's member clubs
- To preserve the present system of parks and protected areas in BC.

Jeremy's term as President began a year or two after a new BC government made major cuts to staffing for parks, fish and wildlife, including ending the BC Park Naturalist program.

Jeremy participated in workshops organized by the Recreation Stewardship Panel, although he pointed out its dysfunctional name: "surely habitat needs stewardship but not recreation". He participated in meetings to reinstate the Provincial Park Naturalist programs and to urge the government to confirm the status of the South Chilcotin Provincial Park. He wrote several letters and made presentations to government to reinstate funding for parks, fish and wildlife. These were also topics for the annual meetings with government ministers and senior staff in Victoria.

Although funding and staffing for provincial parks and fish and wildlife were at an all-time low, two positive events did happen at the federal level:

- Passing of the Federal Species at Risk Act, December 2002
- Announcement May 2003 of the Southern Gulf Islands National Park Reserve as Canada's 40th National Park.

A leading member of the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists, Rene Savenye, died unexpectedly in July 2002, killed by lightning when checking out routes for a club trip. When donations arrived in memory of Rene, Jeremy worked to set up a scholarship in his name. The scholarship was first awarded at the AGM in 2006, when Jeremy retired as President.

In 2003, under Jeremy's term as President, FBCN began contributing annually to cash prizes to recognize student science fair projects focused on nature. These

Regional Science Fair prizes are awarded in 13 regions around the province. Both the Savenye Scholarship and Science Fair awards continue to the present day.

Throughout his term as President, Jeremy appreciated and recognized the efforts of the member clubs hosting AGMs and FGMs: FGM 2002 Whistler Naturalist Club, AGM 2003 Kamloops Naturalist Club, FGM 2003 Rocky Mountain Naturalists, AGM 2004 Vancouver Natural History Society, FGM 2004 Central Okanagan Naturalists, AGM 2005 Shuswap Naturalists, FGM 2005 Lillooet Naturalists, and AGM 2006 Comox Valley Naturalists. In his President's messages, Jeremy wrote a warm thanks to each of these host clubs and also paid tribute to all the FBCN Club Directors contributing at the meetings. He noted the importance of Regional Coordinators and the Regional Meetings which the five coordinators organized for FBCN clubs throughout the province.

In May 2004 Jeremy led a group of Nature Vancouver volunteers to host the BC Nature AGM at the UBC Student Union Building in Vancouver. As part of the conference, Jeremy organized a Thursday symposium on Marine Reserves, plus a boat tour of Indian Arm on the Friday. Marine protection was a strong interest for Jeremy.

A memorable trip for Jeremy was summer 2005 when he visited naturalists and their clubs in Quesnel, Dawson Creek, Mackenzie, then along Hwy #16 to visit June and Dennis Wood at their Nechako Retreat, and then on to Smithers, the Skeena Valley, Prince Rupert and Kitimat. He wrote an article on this trip in the Fall issue of the magazine, noting how very much he appreciated the hospitality that naturalists offered to him during his visits around the province. In a report as Past President, he recalled that he visited more than 30 clubs throughout his term as President. Jeremy's wife, Ruth Foley, recalls these were some of Jeremy's most treasured times.

Jeremy participated nationally with the Canadian Nature Federation (now Nature Canada) and supported its partnership with provincial organizations through the Canadian Nature Network. He attended meetings in Ottawa as the FBCN representative.

Jeremy was deeply concerned about the Fraser River Estuary ecosystem and was active for many years with the Boundary Bay Conservation Committee, a group representing BC Nature clubs and other organizations with a concern for the integrity of habitat around Boundary Bay and the Fraser Estuary.

In 2004 Jeremy wrote an article on the importance of making BC bird data available in one location to have it accessible to the public. He noted the long term FBCN volunteer project—the BC Nest Records—which compiled nesting data beginning in 1955. Jeremy became the FBCN's representative in 2002 to discuss with several stakeholders a plan to ensure this data was made publicly available. As Past President, Jeremy continued efforts to make that nest data public and was able to facilitate its reproduction into a 3 CD set, which subsequently was made available

to researchers and Bird Studies Canada (now Birds Canada). (See Jeremy's articles in *BCnature* Magazines, Winter 2007, and Summer and Fall 2008 issues.)

Regarding reinstatement of park naturalists, he credits the work of Bev Ramey who spearheaded this initiative, begun in 2004, when BC Nature hired eight students through the federal government's Job Creation Program. This program continued to grow over the next seven years. In his Past President's message in summer 2006, Jeremy wrote:

the FBCN's greatest accomplishment during his term as President was to make sure the flame of nature interpretation continues to burn in BC's provincial parks.

Another special interest of Jeremy's was the Young Naturalists' Club of BC (YNC now known as NatureKids BC). This organization was formed through Nature Vancouver and with the intention of extending its scope province wide, Jeremy helped YNC founder, Daphne Solecki, establish the provincial YNC as its own society. He provided YNC with office space within the BC Nature office (2005) and helped prepare its constitution and bylaws. Wording was included in the YNC Constitution and Bylaws about the special link between YNC and the FBCN: "The Society is affiliated with the Federation of BC Naturalists [BC Nature] and is committed to supporting the objectives of the Federation."

Jeremy also served on the founding Board of YNC (NatureKids) and provided space in the BC Naturalist Magazine beginning in 2004 for a regular column, a tradition which continues today. In 2005 the FBCN contributed funds to help YNC become an independent society and, in that year as well, the Daphne Solecki Award was established to recognize persons who have contributed to nature education for children in BC.

In 2005, through donations and grants, Jeremy oversaw three special FBCN brochure publications:

- South Chilcotins Trail Map, jointly with Outdoor Recreation Council
- Fraser River Estuary brochure – to publicize this Important Bird Area
- Pocket Field Trip Guide for Naturalists Clubs, as a reference for field trip leaders.

Another project publication that Jeremy supported was Wildlife Viewing. He oversaw FBCN's publication of a series of brochures, with provincial grants from the then Ministry of Water, Land & Air Protection. These brochures described wildlife viewing in six regions of BC to promote public awareness and knowledge of wildlife throughout the province, especially aimed at the 'touring public'. (*In our present day, the online Wildlife Viewing website coordinated by BC Nature provides in depth information and maps on nature viewing sites.*)

Jeremy was elected as President of the BC Naturalists' Foundation in 2003. At that time, he wrote that he harboured some doubt that he could give that role enough

time. He did however contribute considerable time to the Foundation and oversaw publication of two pamphlets for the Foundation:

- Naturalists, Their Legacies and Conservation
- Planned Giving for Naturalists.

He served as the Foundation's President until 2009.

Jeremy continued his focus on the administrative well-being of the FBCN. As example, he wrote an article for the BC Naturalist Magazine which:

- Described the FBCN's liability insurance and the need for well-worded waivers for member participation in club activities,
- Reviewed Canada Revenue Agency's scope of approved activities for a charitable organization and established that the FBCN conservation activities conducted, were in compliance. Jeremy concluded *when FBCN makes representations to elected representatives and public officials advocating that laws, policies or decisions of government be retained, opposed or changed, these activities are within the scope of the FBCN's charitable activities.*

As further support for a well-run organization, Jeremy developed procedures so that grants to FBCN clubs for their conservation and education projects would be considered on an equitable basis.

In 2005 Jeremy began to organize a member survey and then circulated a questionnaire in the Spring 2006 BC Naturalist Magazine. The questionnaire was to be a prelude to a strategic planning workshop, as he noted that it was long past time to review the previous Strategic Plan (1998 – 2003), and to plan for the future. Questions in the survey included:

- Comments on the FBCN societies' objectives,
- Comments on extent of conservation advocacy,
- Comments on nature education and FBCN's role, plus field camps and workshops
- Future structure and funding—should the existing model continue or should we strive for funding for a paid executive director and paid contractors for projects
- Comments on magazine and website
- Clubs – suggestions on how to attract new and/or younger members, as well as retaining members
- Operating name.

The last set of questions focused on whether or not to change the operating name from Federation of BC Nature to BC Nature. At the Lillooet FGM in 2005, Club Directors discussed this possible name change and recommended that the question be put to members. The questionnaire to members noted that the former Canadian Nature Federation changed its legal and marketing name to Nature Canada. The outcome to this name-change question was YES. The new operating name, "BC

Nature”, was approved at the Comox AGM in 2006 and Jeremy registered it with the Societies Registrar in Victoria. He also registered the domain name “bcnature.ca” for the website. The legal name remains the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists. The opportunity for a strategic planning workshop did not arise until 2009.

In his final President’s Message, Spring 2006 magazine issue, Jeremy thanked the more than 300 members who *responded magnificently and have donated \$30,000 to the fall annual appeal of the FBCN.*

Awards

VNHS (Nature Vancouver) Davidson Award for Conservation 1997
BC Nature Elton Anderson Award 2005
BC Community Achievement Award 2011
VNHS (Nature Vancouver) Kaye and Charles Ney Award for Distinguished Service 2019

Positions

Federation of BC Naturalists (BC Nature):
Treasurer 1993 - 1994
Club Director for Nature Vancouver 1998 - 2002
President 2002 – 2006
Past President 2006 – 2008

BC Naturalists’ Foundation:
Director 2002 – 2009 and President 2003 - 2009

Nature Vancouver (Vancouver Natural History Society):
Director 1992 – 2018
Conservation Committee Chair 1995 – 2001
Vice-President 1998 – 1999
President 1999 – 2001
Treasurer 2007 - 2018
Camp Committee 2003-2004
Discovery Journal Editor 1999 – 2001, and again 2010 - 2018

Boundary Bay Conservation Committee:
Director 1995 - 1999

Young Naturalist Club (now NatureKids):
helped to establish as an independent society and on its first Board of Directors 2006

Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia:
Director 2017 - 2018

Outdoor Recreation Council:
Director 2005 – 2009 and Executive Director 2006 – 2018

Bev Ramey, BC Nature President 2006 – 2010

Bev notes that as this account was written during COVID-19 times, it grew in length from short answers to the questions, to a reflection on years leading up to president and time as president. This account also includes mention of several special people who helped along the way; this was done realizing the risk of leaving out some key folks, so my sincere apologies to those missed. Editing by Sheila Byers, August 2020 and March 2021 is much appreciated. Photos: some by Bev and some by unknown AGM and FGM host club photographers.

Background

This account begins with an answer to an additional and formative question. “What path did you take and what prepared you for your role as President?”

My interest in nature was fostered as a child growing up in the then rural area of Saanich on Vancouver Island. As a young adult in the 1970s I became active with the Sierra Club, Lower Mainland Branch, and participated in the Save the Stein Coalition as its secretary. Through that coalition of environmental groups, I became acquainted with active members of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists, including Adeline Nicol (FBCN Office Manager from 1984 until her untimely death in 1990).

My interest in natural history flourished and I joined the Vancouver Natural History Society (VNHS; now operating as Nature Vancouver) in 1976. I participated in several field trips, including backcountry hikes led by Bob Harris. As a Sierra Club representative, I met Dick Stace-Smith at meetings of the provincial Forest Land Use Liaison Committee, which Dick co-chaired. Dick was also a co-organizer of the Fraser River Estuary conference and chaired that large meeting with skillful, diplomatic abilities. Further, when working in the 1980s as a Park Planner with GVRD (now Metro Vancouver), I met and worked with Bert Brink, as well as Dick. They both volunteered with public advisory committees and provided input on natural areas such as Pitt Wildlife Management Area, Boundary Bay, Minnekhada and Pacific Spirit Regional Park (then the University Endowment Crown Land). I was impressed with this natural history organization, the FBCN (now operating as BC Nature) and especially its members with their great depth of nature knowledge and who communicated in a diplomatic and respectful style, yet firmly presented their views.

Raising a young family, I did not have time for volunteer involvement over the next decade. However, in the 1990s, living near both Bert and Dick, I would occasionally see them and discuss nature matters. Bert talked me into attending a workshop to finalize the naturalists’ identification of important natural areas in the Lower Mainland in the early 1990s. (See Chapter 7. Projects for details on Land for Nature Project). There I met Anne Murray and together we took on the task of compiling the key areas that naturalists had identified into a presentation usable by regional and provincial governments for the Lower Mainland Protected Areas Strategy. We

did this quickly to meet government deadlines and were pleased to see the 'fruits of our labours' included in several of the significant natural areas announced for protection in 1995.

Conservation Chair for FBCN

Bert then encouraged me to join with him as FBCN representatives in 1994 on the Fraser Lowlands Interagency Study (Hope to Mission). The aim of this study was to protect some scattered pockets of important natural habitats, about 1,000 hectares in total. These smaller areas at lower elevation had been overlooked in the big push for large, protected wilderness parks. This was a great learning experience for me, attending these interagency meetings together with Bert, and especially the conversations during the drives to meetings and field trips viewing potential sites to recommend for protection. Bert then encouraged me to become the FBCN Conservation Chair as that position was vacant.

I was acclaimed as Conservation Chair at the 1998 AGM, hosted by the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club in Kelowna. I still remember Pat Westheuser so very warmly welcoming me. The drive to this AGM and accommodation was also an interesting welcoming experience, as I 'hitched' a ride with Dick and Joan Stace-Smith and camped with them (me in tent, they in their Westphalia Van) at Bear Creek Provincial Park near the AGM venue. That was also the AGM where Anne Murray became President. Anne and I then worked closely together over the next four years. We also, together with Ron Speller of Qualicum, had the pleasant task of interviewing prospective Office Managers and hired Maria Hamann in September 2000. Maria worked in this position until her retirement in November 2009. After another candidate search, I hired Betty Davison, with assistance during the interview process by future president John Neville. Betty continues in the Office Manager position through 2021. It was a pleasure working with Maria for her nine-year term, and then with Betty over the next decade. My activities as Conservation Chair are covered in the Chapter 5 (Conservation, A Fifty-Year History), while the record of the many letters sent and received are posted on BC Nature's website. I owe much to the people who helped mentor me in my path to president.

With Anne's four-year term as President nearing an end, she encouraged me to take on the President's role, but as I still had considerable family commitments with young children, I wasn't yet ready. Fortunately, Jeremy McCall stepped up to the President position having finished his term as Nature Vancouver's President, and I continued as Conservation Chair for another four years.

President

By 2006, I was persuaded by Jeremy to take on the role of President as he noted that the organization was running smoothly (which it truly was) and that he agreed to continue to help out as the lead in a few key areas (including BC Nature Magazine, finances, Canadian Nature Network through Nature Canada, and Wildlife

Watch). Convinced by his offer of help, I was elected President at the spring AGM 2006, hosted by the Comox Valley Naturalists Society.

New Logo and Letterhead Design

During Jeremy's term as President, the new operating name—BC Nature—was proposed, considered and approved at the Comox AGM 2006. The Federation of British Columbia Naturalists remains our legal name. My first task as President was to oversee the design of a new logo and letterhead. This process took considerable dialogue and viewing of possibilities by club representatives, to reach broad consensus on the design. After consideration of options, the logo, designed by a Prince George firm, was approved at the FGM 2006 and continues in use today. The design includes both our operating name, BC Nature, and our legal name, Federation of BC Naturalists, to avoid any possible confusion. Approval of the new logo and letterhead was immediately followed by the task to consider and approve a redesign of our website.



Office Relocation

Recalling the persuasion to stand for President given the smooth running of the organization, I was shocked to learn during my first year that our office rental space would be terminated within a year. We had to find new premises.

For the previous 20 years, the FBCN office had been located in rental space within Sport BC premises at 1367 West Broadway, just east of Granville Street in Vancouver. Sport BC supported and provided administrative services to several non-profit organizations focused on sports. Although not a perfect fit for BC Nature's focus, it worked well for us to join with other non-profits for logistics such as office space, common area, kitchen, meeting room, washroom, payroll and print shop. Many Regional meetings for FBCN were held in that building's large meeting room. The news that Sport BC was moving to Richmond in February 2007 to be housed in the newly built BCIT Aerospace Technology Campus, came as a total surprise. The rent at that new location would be higher, so the Board decided to look for other premises.

It was not only the FBCN that needed to find new space, but also NatureKids. The FBCN office also housed the Young Naturalists' Club of BC (now NatureKids). Jeremy, who had helped them form their own organization (See Chapter 8. NatureKids), had offered them free space in our rented office during the time of their formation. It was a good arrangement for both organizations and from the perspective of the FBCN, fostered close communication with the next generation of naturalists. Jeremy was unfortunately no longer available to help BC Nature search for new office space as he had recently become the volunteer Executive Director for the Outdoor Recreation Council. ORC was also renting space from Sport BC and

needed to find new premises. ORC chose to search on their own as Jeremy wanted a central Vancouver location for ORC; FBCN was more flexible.

With the March 2008 deadline looming, I was helped in the search by Dick Stace-Smith, Elaine Golds of Burke Mountain Naturalists, Jude Grass, and Daphne Solecki of NatureKids. Daphne was very appreciative of the office sharing arrangement with FBCN having finally moved most of NatureKids materials out of her home and into the office. Clearly, she wanted the shared office space arrangement to continue. Many members also helped with suggestions and at least ten potential facilities were viewed. Luckily, timing proved opportune. The Elders' Council for Parks in British Columbia had just entered into a five-year agreement with BC Parks to operate the historic ranger station at the base of Mount Seymour to house historical parks materials and provide displays and programs for the public. They were looking for office assistance. The former ranger station had in previous years been used by BC Parks planning staff, but with budget cuts to BC Parks and staff layoffs, it was sitting empty.

Mel Turner, a retired BC Park Planner, was now active with the Elders' Council and spearheaded the lease arrangement. I'd known Mel for years through my work as a Park Planner and hearing of our search for office space, he put forward this possibility for a mutual agreement for BC Nature to share office space and provide assistance to the Elders. Daphne and I toured the facility and thought it a lovely location - so very fitting for BC Nature and NatureKids to be located within a Provincial Park.

BC Parks carefully considered this arrangement and approved the proposal: BC Nature would provide time allotted to administrative assistance for the Elders' Council, as well as keeping the office open for public viewing of displays. We moved in with our office furnishings on a day of light snow and drizzle at the end of March. A celebration of our new premises, together with BC Parks staff and the Elders', was held in May 2008. As the years passed by, BC Nature's time contribution to the Elders' become regularized in our annual work plan with one day a week staff/administrative time for the Elders' as well as keeping the building open. With displays now in place, the number of visitors to the Heritage Centre is gradually increasing.



Daphne Solecki in front of the Park Heritage Centre, Mount Seymour Provincial Park, as we toured these potential premises for our office, early 2008.

Regular Presidential Duties

In addition to the new logo design and office relocation, regular duties as President continued. My first general meeting was the 2006 FGM hosted by Burke Mountain Naturalists in Port Coquitlam. During my President's term and throughout my 22 years on BC Nature's Board, I truly appreciated the host clubs' contributions of organizing AGMs and FGMs. The work involved is huge: making all the arrangements in diverse and special venues, organizing the speakers and field trips, offering interesting events to entice members to attend from all over the province, as well as highlighting local conservation needs, projects and accomplishments.

Presidential duties were made easier for me by the very capable support of Secretary, Sue Loveless, who kept us all organized and on track with careful minutes and records during my four-year term.

As for finances, I have slowly learned that these are the essential component of a non-profit society to ensure it functions well. Most members do not want to spend time looking at the financial statements and typically give quick approval at the AGM. The Treasurer during my term, Elisa Kreller, provided outstanding service not only in keeping our financial statements accurate, but by ensuring that members understood the statements with clear explanations and answering questions at the general meetings.



AGM 2009, Duncan, hosted by Cowichan Valley Naturalists. Bernice (Bunny) Ramsdin of Cowichan Valley Naturalists, seated on photo left front row; on photo right front row, Treasurer Elisa Kreller, Harold King of Oliver-Osoyoos Naturalists and Pamela Jenkins of North Okanagan Naturalists. Secretary Sue Loveless has her back to camera, photo lower right, with laptop open to transcribe minutes.

My understanding of the financials gradually improved under Elisa's guidance! The Operating Budget is fairly easy to grasp - simply put, the income must at least meet the expenditures to provide a year-end balanced budget. It is another step, however, to review the separate tables for the restricted funds that in many ways tell the main story of the organization's activities—funding its projects. For projects to function smoothly the funding must already be in place, generally through grants. In years when the Operating Budget has a surplus, the Executive can vote to transfer some of those surplus funds to support a project or a scholarship. When Elisa's four-year term ended in 2009, we recruited another competent CPA, Kate Prusova.

Our restricted funds for projects were a huge component of our budget with several ongoing projects. In 2008, the year we hired many summer-student Park naturalists, the restricted fund expenditures for projects topped \$330,000. We continued with the annual appeal for funds and many members were very generous with donations. For example, in the Fall of 2008 appeal, 338 members gave generously with over \$26,000 raised. This was in addition to the \$22,000 donated in travel and accommodation expenses by the Executive and Club Representatives.

Another administrative financial task was the need to increase club membership dues. This had not been done for a decade, and when considered ten years previously, had caused a great deal of dissention. This time round, the increase was thoroughly discussed with the Regional Coordinators, at the club director meetings, and at general meetings. Wonderfully, the \$2 membership increase received 100% affirmation at the 2008 AGM, showing strong support for the Federation by members.



AGM 2008, Penticton, hosted by South Okanagan Naturalists. Brenda Balaam of West Kootenays in front, behind her is David Hutchings from Qualicum, and to his right is Annabel and Rees Griffiths, Langley Field Naturalists.

During Anne's term as President, she encouraged BC Nature to once again support clubs to host field camps not only as a means of generating surplus funds but also in contributing to nature education. These camps were (and remain) very popular with members while also enhancing members' knowledge of the many different habitats in our province. During my term as President, about four field camps a year were offered with camp revenues ensuring that BC Nature continued in a fairly good financial position.



2010 Gavin Lake Field Camp hosted by Williams Lake Field Naturalists. Fred McMechan standing on photo right, with Hugh Westheuser behind; on photo left kneeling is Fiona Flook and standing behind her, Pat Westheuser, the key camp assistants.

In addition to field camps, BC Nature took over coordination and sponsorship of the Manning Park Bird Blitz in 2007, its 25th Anniversary year. BC Parks was no longer sponsoring or assisting with the organization so BC Nature continued to sponsor the Manning Bird Blitz for three more years. Then in 2011, the Hope Mountain Centre were welcomed as a joint sponsor through to 2016, as well as the new Skagit Bird Blitz beginning in 2012. In 2017, BC Nature handed over the sponsorship to Hope Mountain Centre, who continue to provide excellent coordination.



2008 FGM, Sorrento, hosted by North Shuswap Naturalists included evening entertainment where club performed humorous musical skits and marshmallow roasting around a campfire. Photo shows host club, with Rudi VerVoort waving on photo right.

The lively character and personalities of host clubs for the AGMs and FGMs provides many pleasant memories.

The Executive positions during my term as President included President, Vice-President (not filled until fall 2009), Past-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Conservation Chair, Protected Areas Chair, Education Chair and five Regional Coordinators. The Executive (now known as Board of Directors) functioned well together. We had about four meetings a year by telephone conference. In addition to regular and ongoing business, policies were prepared and revised regarding BC Nature's acceptance of proposals from a club, or sponsorship of a project by an external organization. A discussion paper was prepared for receiving of grants and recognition of grantors. A revised version of the Directors Guide (Directors are now known as Club Representatives) was prepared and circulated. The Executive was well supported by the Awards Committee, chaired by Joan Best of Kamloops and later by Pat Westheuser of Kelowna. The BC Nature Magazine was ably handled, including layout, by contractor Dawn Hanna. The website was managed by volunteer David Lassmann.

We reaffirmed ties with Nature Canada through the Canadian Nature Network. Facilitated by Nature Canada, clubs participated in three workshops around the province in 2006 to 2007, as did naturalists across Canada, to strengthen the Canadian Nature Network. The Network functioned with monthly conference calls.



Canadian Nature Federation workshop in Vancouver, December 2006.
Back row: Jeremy McCall, Jude Grass, Anne Murray, Maria Hamann, Joan Snyder (partly hidden), Sarah (Weaver) Kipp on contract to Nature Canada, Dana Inibruldt for Nature Canada; Standing Centre: Rosemary Fox; Front row seated: Eva Durance, Betty Collins, Daphne Solecki, Bev Ramey.

Regional Representation

The Executive structure with five Regional Coordinators worked well to ensure an effective voice for BC Nature throughout the province. The regions had in-person meetings once or twice a year (for Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, Okanagan and Kootenays). For the North, given the distances between clubs in that region, the meetings were by phone conference. For all regional meetings, the BC Nature Executive provided an agenda of its business and areas for regional comment and/or vote. In turn, the region would add their own items to that agenda and then report back to the BC Nature Executive. This reciprocal system worked well, ensuring that the regions had a say in the Executive's business while keeping the Executive updated on regional issues. The AGMs and FGMS also provided regional input as the Club Directors (now known as Council of Club Representatives) met before the general meeting to discuss the issues of the day. The FGMS also had input from all the clubs through their annual reports.

As President, it was a pleasure to work with Regional Coordinators, as follows: Vancouver Island—Ron Speller, Betty Collins and then Donna Monty, ably assisted by Secretary Tom Gillespie of Victoria; Lower Mainland—George Bangham and then Jude Grass; Thompson-Okanagan—Ed McDonald and then Don Guild; Kootenays—

Brenda Balaam; and for the North—Fred McMechan. Thinking of Fred McMechan, it must be noted that my long term on BC Nature’s Board has almost been matched by that of Fred’s service. It seems timely that both Fred and I retired from the Board in May 2020.

Each of the Regional Coordinators took care in organizing their typically day-long meetings. I fondly recall Johanna Saaltink hosting the Lower Mainland meetings at her Bradner home. Johanna was with the Central Valley Naturalists (now Abbotsford-Mission Naturalists) and a lovely example of the dedication and commitment of our member naturalists. It is essential to the wellbeing of BC Nature that the voice of its regions is well recognized and respected. As President, I was able to attend some of the Vancouver Island regional meetings, but unfortunately time did not allow me to travel further afield, given family demands.



2010 AGM hosted by Kamloops Field Naturalists: Rick Howie holding Burrowing Owl, Peter Blokker, North Okanagan Naturalists, behind the owl.

Education

Education is imbedded in most AGMs, FGMs and field camps, as well as our conservation and project initiatives. Education Chair, Joan Snyder, was very involved with Mountain Caribou conservation in the Kootenays and brought significant educational information and updates on this issue to the Board.

The Rene Savenye scholarship was established in 2005 to recognize his untimely death and this scholarship was first awarded at the AGM 2006. The scholarship recognizes Rene at his best as a consummate educator of nature and is available to a BC Nature member who is a post-secondary student enrolled in an undergraduate degree program that contributes to awareness, appreciation and understanding of our natural environment. A scholarship was a new activity for BC Nature to administer, advertise, adjudicate applicants, present and raise funds to support. BC

Nature also began providing annual grants for prizes for BC's Regional Science Fairs in 2008.

Conservation

As President, I continued to work closely with Conservation Chair Anne Murray. Our Executive expanded to include the position of Parks and Protected Areas Chair, filled by Eva Durance. This was especially helpful for our involvement with the many groups promoting dedication of the South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Reserve (as of 2020, more than a decade later, we are still awaiting that announcement). Anne also enlisted a Species at Risk Coordinator, Kathy Wilkinson. This was not an Executive position, but Kathy kept us well informed and attended many meetings on our behalf (again as of 2020, we're still awaiting provincial SAR legislation). We were also pleased when Rosemary Fox of Smithers stepped forward to help with the Conservation Committee. I'd worked closely with Rosemary back in the 1970s with Sierra Club efforts, so it was lovely to enlist her help and work with her again.

Carrying on the long tradition of BC Nature, representatives from the Board would meet with provincial politicians and staff, at least twice a year. I recall trips to Victoria with Anne and Jeremy to meet with Ministers of Environment and senior staff. Ministers were welcomed speakers at AGMs and FGMs and attended at least two meetings during my term as President. Twice a year, the Minister of Environment hosted a gathering of stakeholder groups to discuss issues. These were productive meetings, not only to convey our views to the Minister and senior staff, but also to meet and learn more from other organizations and to work in partnership with them on some issues.

The need for Off-Road Vehicle licensing (also referred to as ATVs or all-terrain vehicles) had been an ongoing issue, dating back as far as the 1960s when FBCN first wrote government on this topic. More letters and at least ten different resolutions followed over the subsequent decades. In the 2000s, the Coalition for Licensing and Registration of Off-Road Vehicles was launched by the Grasslands Conservation Council, in which BC Nature was active along with several other organizations. Representatives Joan Best and Bev attended meetings in Merritt and at the historic Quilchena Hotel on Nicola Lake. Then Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources Operations took over the lead and finally in 2014, legislation was enacted requiring a visible numbered decal or plate on all Off-Road Vehicles. ICBC now administers these licenses. That 50-year campaign to finally reach legislation, fits neatly within the 50-year history of BC Nature. Conservation achievements do happen, albeit frustratingly slow to come, and often requiring continued vigilance.

Resolutions submitted by members continued to raise conservation topics at AGMs; an average of six resolutions were discussed and approved at each AGM during my Presidency. This required letters to the appropriate government officials, and then for some responses, a follow-up letter.

Another big conservation issue that arose during my term was the Run-of-River independent power projects. At first glance these seemed like they could be beneficial to a green economy, but the enormous scale of the dams and electrical transmission lines identified for most of the proposals, plus the sheer number of proposals throughout the province, was not fitting with a green economy. BC Nature wrote letters, attended meetings, and made presentations such as the meeting to discuss the Upper Pitt, attended by an overflowing crowd.

Yet another demanding issue, was the proposal for "Fixed Roof Accommodation" within BC Parks. Government was looking at ways to save funds and so proposed permitting private lodges to be operated within BC Parks. Several meetings of environmental groups took place, letters written and fortunately this proposal was dampened down, to only a very few backcountry style small huts.

The Wetlands Stewardship Partnership was a very active group of several organizations, together with government staff. At the time, it was chaired by Ian Barnett of Ducks Unlimited. As President, it was a pleasure to speak at the long-awaited announcement of the new Serpentine Wildlife Management Area in August 2009. That was also when Peter Ballin became a representative for BC Nature on the Conservation Committee and a few years later, stepped up as chair!



Announcement of dedication of Serpentine Wildlife Management Area, August 2009: Minister Barry Penner on left, Bev second from right, front row. This WMA was first proposed in 1964 by naturalist Barry Leach!

To see the full range of conservation topics addressed during my years as President, refer to Chapter 5. Conservation, and to BC Nature's website, 'Members Log-in' section, under 'Archives'.

Liability Insurance

Liability Insurance is one topic that most of us would prefer not to discuss, but in our present-day reality of lawsuits, it is essential that waivers, or 'release of liability' and 'informed consent' forms be properly worded and signed. The process to agree upon appropriate forms resulted in lengthy debates at two Club Director meetings. I very much appreciated the help of Frank Dwyer of the Kamloops Naturalist Club who prompted his club to hire a lawyer who specialized in this subject. The lawyer advised on appropriate forms and the advice was followed by BC Nature. The two forms prepared are still used by BC Nature, with only minor modifications. We now have a system in place to ensure that clubs are taking steps to minimize risks in their outings, training trip leaders, and ensuring that members are aware of potential risks by signing an informed consent form.

Projects

As mentioned under discussion of finances, projects were prolific and very active during my term and in 2008 our project expenditures topped \$330,000. (See Chapter 7. Projects). Here is a brief summary:

- Living by Water: continued until 2007, coordinated by volunteer Anne Murray. Originating in BC, this project then expanded to other provinces through Nature Canada. The lead authors subsequently wrote lessons from their experiences as *A Handbook of Conservation Marketing Tools and Techniques*, 2010.
- Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs): caretakers continued and expanded under Anne Murray's volunteer leadership.
- Wildlife Tree Stewardship (WiTS): continued under Jude Grass' leadership and expanded from Vancouver Island and Lower Mainland to the Okanagan Valley.
- Breeding Bird Atlas: Bev assisted Anne on the multi-group organizing committee to compile bird species or sightings for the five-year Breeding Bird Atlas for BC, coordinated by Bird Studies Canada (now Birds Canada), to document breeding bird species number and locations throughout BC. I was keen to combine wilderness backpacking with surveys for breeding birds and so with my husband Bill, we organized weeklong backpacking trips for BC Nature birders over five years to remote high elevation areas during the peak of the breeding season (first week of July), beginning in 2008. By year four, the success of these trips led to two such backpacking trips each year in early July. See listing in Appendix 2. Camps – Field and Exploratory



BC Nature Breeding Bird Atlassing, Big Creek Provincial Park, Graveyard Valley, July 2012.

Park Interpretation Program

The Park Interpretation Program continued through my term as President. It was adopted by BC Nature when the government cut the Park Naturalist program in 2002 and I coordinated over the next seven years. I was ably assisted over three summer periods by summer staff in the office, Lara Tisseur, Sonya Resnitsky and Victoria Alleyne. I also very much appreciated the help and guidance from Gail Ross, BC Parks Visitor Services, who continued to assist with the program even after her retirement.

The reach of this program was tremendous. For example, in 2008 the 37 Park Naturalist interpreters delivered programs in 23 Provincial Parks with an estimated 133,000 people attending. An additional estimated 50,000 people visited Nature Houses at Goldstream, Rathtrevor Beach, and Miracle Beach Provincial Parks on Vancouver Island, Kokanee Creek Provincial Park, Kootenay Lake, and Scotch Creek, Shuswap Lake Provincial Park, Thompson Okanagan. In 2010, the province reduced the amount of funding provided to BC Nature to support this program which unfortunately resulted in the decision at our FGM 2010 by Club Directors (Representatives) to end our program coordination. This decision was a difficult one to reach, but with reduced provincial funding the program was just not financially workable.

Celebration of Life for Bert Brink

Sadly, Bert Brink passed away on November 29, 2007. Yet, it was a pleasure to organize the celebration of his life, together with Dick Stace-Smith and assisted by Jim Hope of The Nature Trust. The celebration was held January 31, 2008 and the reminiscences told by his many colleagues and friends provided a glimpse of his broad influence.

Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment, Nancy Wilkin, was one of the many who spoke. She promised that a fitting protected area or wildlife area would be named in his memory. True to her word, the Bert Brink Wildlife Management Area was announced and dedicated in April 2009.



Dedication of Bert Brink Wildlife Management Area, wetlands adjacent to and extending across the Fraser River, near Sumas Mountain, April 2009. Environment Minister Barry Penner (tallest) and Bert's family in front row.

Five Year Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan for BC Nature was long overdue, since the 1998-2003 plan, which had been coordinated by Anne Murray in 1998. In 2010, my last year as President, I welcomed Anne's initiative to again lead us in preparing a new plan. She organized a two-day retreat for the Executive and generously hosted us at her home. Anne was assisted by Joan Snyder and Eva Durance, as well as our Executive's active participation. The draft plan was circulated to all clubs and approved at the 2010 AGM in Kamloops. Note that this plan highlighted the need for new staff positions focused on areas of Communication and Projects. It was also noted, however, that the staff position should not detract from our strong volunteer base. Unfortunately, those staff positions have not yet been created. Our current plan (2020) has once again highlighted these additional staffing needs and we hope they will be successful this time round.

Travels through BC with Naturalists

Travel as a topic does not fall directly under the 'duties' of President, but I do want to mention the highlights of the many road trips to AGMs and FGMs; especially with passenger, Bert Brink. He would contribute his encyclopedic knowledge of the 'lay of the land', geologically and botanically speaking, the back road detours of interest, plus stories of the people ranching and farming. I especially remember the

road trip to the East Kootenays for the FGM hosted by the Rocky Mountain Naturalists. Bert, Duanne van den Berg (Alouette Field Naturalists) and Maria Hamann were passengers, so as you can well imagine this was a wonderful, two-day drive, with a stop along the way to visit one of Bert's old friends!



Road trip to Kimberley for FGM 2003, picnic stop at Midway: Bev with Bert Brink and Duanne Van Den Berg of Alouette Field Naturalists. Photo: Maria Hamann

BC Naturalists' Foundation

The Foundation was established in 1991 by BC Nature as a separate society for receiving and handling large bequests and to disperse funds for nature projects. The President and Treasurer of BC Nature are ex officio officers, and so I attended meetings, but was dismayed to learn in late 2007, that due to challenges of attracting new Directors, the Foundation Board wanted to bring on new Directors who were not members of BC Nature and to disburse funds to organizations beyond the member clubs of BC Nature. This approach was being considered by the Foundation's President and some of its Board because the Foundation was no longer able to enlist willing volunteers from within BC Nature to serve on its Board; furthermore, clubs were not applying for Club Support Grants.

There is a strong relationship between the two organizations, not only with the President and Treasurer of BC Nature being ex officio directors, but also because BC Nature established the Foundation and the Foundation's Bylaws state that BC Nature appoints the Foundation's members and nominates its Directors. To bring the Foundation back on track, I was able to encourage one of its Founders, Dick Stace-Smith to again become a Foundation Director. Also, long-time former Foundation Director, Frances Vyse, again agreed to serve on its Board. Together with Harold King of Oliver-Osoyoos Naturalist Club, a strong voice and direction was

provided to get the Foundation back in line as a focused supporter of BC Nature and its Clubs, and to encourage Clubs to apply for Club Support Grants.

There were heated discussions at a couple of meetings, but a set of Working Principles was drafted and then agreed upon by both organizations. (These Working Principles can be found in Appendix 12. BC Naturalists' Foundation, Relationship and Grants). Since then, the Foundation has ably attracted volunteers to its Board and the interest of clubs has increased in applying for Club Support Grants. See the Foundation's sub-page on the BC Nature website and listing of grants disbursed.

Archival Materials and History

To draw this lengthy account to an end, as Past President (2010-2014), I organized all the historical office files to a single copy of minutes arranged chronologically and transported them for storage at the University of Victoria (UVic) Archives. Similarly, I organized the extensive Conservation files, arranged to have them scanned by summer students, posted on our website, and stored with the originals in the UVic Archives. See Appendix 8 for Archival Records, listing of materials.

During my term as President, I had visualized a 40-year history of BC Nature (to be completed in 2009). The writing was to be done through a contractor, but unfortunately that person moved on to another job. Sorting through the historical records took a couple of years, and at that time I had documented many items into the Appendices of this history. Then Sheila Byers was hired on a short contract to write the outline and the first chapter for the history. This gave the project some momentum, and it was also very timely that Sheila was able to interview the five presidents from the decade 1989 – 1998. Sheila's time was limited, due to her job at the UBC Beaty Biodiversity Museum and her volunteer work to further marine protection of glass sponge reefs in Howe Sound. Sheila has, however, provided assistance and support over the past few years, especially with editing, suggestions, and writing up the accounts of former Presidents from the 1989 to 1998 years. Her attention to detail has been very much appreciated.

Wrapping up the entire project for Fall 2019, we then discussed, why not include something on the Presidents for the next decade (1998-2019). Rather than the lengthier process of interviews, each of the Presidents was given free rein to write their account and recollections, with reference to a set of questions that Sheila had prepared for the original interviews. It was a pleasure for me to document this history of naturalists, together with Sheila's help, in time for BC Nature's 50th Anniversary in 2019.

Concluding Remarks

With the example of Anne and Jeremy 'hanging in there' for two two-year terms, it fell to me to continue that tradition as President for four years. With such a supportive Board and Clubs, however, it was my pleasure to do so. Looking back in

past magazines and my last "President's Message" from Spring 2010, my remarks remain fitting today:

Nature inspired me to donate my time as a volunteer and it is the inspiration of you naturalists who have kept me at it - your caring for nature, willingness to share your skills and knowledge, your enthusiasm for projects and your numerous club activities.

The Future

BC Nature does need more staff to handle all the demands, so as I 'retire' from the Board in 2020 after 22 years, I wish all the best to the new President and Board to progress with 'engagement organization' and fundraising to hire staff to promote natural history interests and the need identified a decade ago for additional staff to help with Communications and Projects.

Written by Bev Ramey, August 25, 2020

Awards

Fraser Lowlands Working Group Recognition 1998
Nature Vancouver John Davidson Award for Conservation 2002
BC Nature Elton Anderson Award 2003
Burns Bog Science & Technology Award 2006
BC Nature Merit Award 2020
Nature Vancouver's premier Ney Award 2021

Membership

Nature Vancouver since 1975, and on Board of Nature Vancouver since 2011
BC Nature Conservation Chair 1998 – 2006
BC Nature President 2006 – 2010
BC Nature Past President 2010 - 2014
BC Nature Director-at-Large 2014 to 2020
BC Naturalists' Foundation – ex officio 2006 – 2009
BC Naturalists' Foundation Board 2009 to present:
 President 2012 – 2016
 Secretary 2018- present

John Neville, President 2010 – 2014

Here are some of my previous experiences which brought me to my Presidency position with BC Nature:

- member of Nelson Naturalists (now West Kootenay Naturalists)
- nature audio recordist and partner of Neville Recording
- member of City Council and Mayor of Nelson
- President of Salt Spring Rotary Club
- President of Salt Spring Arts Council
- Treasurer of Assembly of BC Arts Councils

In 2010 as Vice-President, I participated in the Five-Year Strategic Plan for BC Nature. Anne Murray invited the Strategic Planning Committee to stay at her house for the weekend and created the plan. I well recall Fred McMechan, Al and Jude Grass, Bev Ramey, Anne, Heather and myself in attendance. I proposed a novel idea to create a Nature Viewing Guide online. It became clear, however, that the primary goal looking forward was to reverse the declining membership.

As additional experience for my soon role-to-be, then President Bev Ramey, asked me to join her to interview candidates for the office manager's job and we picked a beauty, didn't we! Betty Davison is at the heart of our organization and is the person most of us deal with concerning BC Nature. She is the only permanent member of the BC Nature Board but has no voting rights.

Thus, I entered the President's position with two major goals to achieve that would help to move the organization forward. Firstly, membership had declined to 4,200. It was easy to promote the goal of increasing membership, but harder to plan how to do it!

Planning how to increase the BC Nature membership was the bigger challenge of the two main goals. Nonetheless, I set myself the task of visiting all the clubs in the province to encourage them in their endeavors, including membership. I visited about 42 out of the 48 clubs, falling slightly short of my goal. This was a wonderful experience meeting volunteers who appreciated nature. They valued a visit from the BC Nature President and wanted to talk about nature! I quickly developed birding talks with my recordings and included my wife, Heather's, photos.

I will always remember some of those events: giving a talk on a paddle wheeler near Penticton; presenting in a renovated railway station in Fernie (I had to stop talking for several minutes until the noise of a passing coal train had faded away); members of the Kitimat Club meeting at Walter and Sue Thorne's house-only five of them-but they made up for their numbers with enthusiasm! The Kitimat Club has now expanded into a vibrant club. Another delightful memory of a club visit was standing outside the meeting hall of a club on the Sunshine Coast when a bus suddenly pulled up driven by Michael Jackson, full of naturalists from the neighboring club. It became a great social event!

After two talks in Prince George, a new BC Nature Club was formed which gave me a great deal of satisfaction. Two other clubs were created: Northern Amphibians Naturalists Society (in northwestern BC) and WildResearch based in Richmond. My most valuable experience as President was meeting our naturalists on their own turf and hearing their nature experiences. Imagine my delight when the clubs came up big, and the membership of BC Nature increased to above 6000 for the first time!

For the second goal, we needed to get back to nature! There was too much emphasis on reports and not enough of "know nature and keep it worth knowing". I promoted the plan to create a website that could be used as a guide for viewing wildlife and nature in BC. In my first year, we gradually discovered how to set up the website and Krista Kaptein became the site administrator. We obtained Gaming Grants to support the project and since then, thousands of people have visited the site - BC Nature Guide - and it is still expanding. Fortunately, we were successful in 2010 and every year since, in obtaining a Gaming Grant to create bcnatureguide.ca.

Another idea for promoting nature was to change the content of our *BC Nature Magazine*. This was a little more difficult but received wide support. I have continued that goal of promoting nature in the last few years by writing the series 'North in the Spring' in each issue. Eleven of these articles have been written as of Spring 2020 (Vol 58, No 1).

Within BC Nature, our Executive practices at the time (now Board of Directors) needed some changes. We made changes to the Bylaws and I attempted to rewrite some of our guiding documents. For example, the *Policy and Procedure Manual* was created and made available to the membership in 2013. The 2020 President, Kees Visser, further extended and improved this document.

An issue taken up by the BC Nature Board about half-way through my term was the opposition to the proposal to build the Northern Gateway pipeline. This task was led by our Conservation Chair, Rosemary Fox. After several months into this, Professor Chris Tollefson of Environmental Law from the University of Victoria approached me and offered legal representation for BC Nature at the court hearings. This was ultimately a great success but there were a few heartaches along the road. Although the court case was somewhat beyond our experience, the Board showed a lot of moral fortitude during the ordeal.

In a somewhat lighter vein, I enjoyed recruiting interesting speakers to make the AGMs more palatable to our members and to help improve the brand of BC Nature. Speakers included Steven Price, President of Birds Canada, Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party, Lieutenant Governor Honourable Judith Guichon OBC, and Ric Careless who promoted BC Parks. Having the pleasure of introducing Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon, I was given a series of protocols including "no touching". In a narrow space between the podium and the wall we had to change places several times and our hips and shoulders bumped. She gradually began to chuckle and that soon became infectious (the laughter that is...).

Amongst my errors, I attempted to answer all emails when I was on the road each spring recording bird songs. More recent presidents have delegated that responsibility and I wish I had done likewise.

I sincerely thank the members and the very capable office staff for their support during my Presidential term. After my term as President, I remained active on the BC Nature Board until stepping down in 2021, but I will add a few more wonderful memories that I have gained through my experience with the BC Nature Board and Club members.

The Club Representatives for the Vancouver Island Region have become special friends and acquaintances in recent years: Michael Stebbings working on his club's website; Bruce Coates presenting environmental issues; Sharon Niscak sharing her common-sense approach to life; Kathleen Maser, her genuine enthusiasm; Genevieve Singleton, her willingness to impart knowledge; and Jim Boulter and Loys Maingon contributing their efforts to organize regional conferences. We have attended many polished presentations by Ann Nightingale and others at our Victoria Natural History Society.

There are many individuals that also come to mind: Mel Coulson from Smithers who jointly produced two bird song guides with me, one for BC and another for North America; Pat McAllister introduced me to a Boa Constrictor in Vernon; Doreen Olsen prompted me to handle a tiny Burrowing Owl (when it's alarmed, it gives off the sound of a rattlesnake!) in Okanagan Falls; the Cannings family, starting with Steve and Jean, directed me to many places to record Okanagan birds; Pat Westheuser from Kelowna, was not only Awards Chair for many years but a great camp cook (she once handed me a glass of wine as I started my presentation and things slowly went downhill from there); good times with Marg Cuthbert and Dave and the late Ursula Easterbrook with her dog Farley, where we were together in our campers and motorhomes parked at AGMs around the province; also the late Tom Bearss, a larger than life character, whose birding trip reports we enjoyed for years along with many others.

In recent years, I have worked with three great Presidents—Bev Ramey, Kees Visser and Alan Burger—who have demonstrated great skill, empathy for the members and professional expertise.

I'm sorry I can't mention you all, but I would like to thank BC Nature for enriching my life. Naturalist clubs are really important for their communities to allow everyone to "know nature and keep it worth knowing".

Written by John Neville, August 20, 2020 (updated with additional details on his retirement from Board in 2021)

Naturalist Awards

BC Nature Elton Anderson Award in 2014

Kees Visser, President 2014-2016 and 2019-2020

1. Background with Nature Clubs:

Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club

Member since 2003 to present

2005-2007 Hiking Coordinator

2007-2009 Vice-President

2009-2012 President

2012-2014 Past President

2005 to 2014 trip leader and organized multiday camps for club members

Learned to deal with various government levels, and improved interpersonal skills

2017-2018 Secretary

BC Nature

2013-2014 Vice-President

2014-2016 President

2016-2019 Past President

2019-2020 President

BC Naturalists' Foundation

2014-present Director

2. Accomplishments

During my term as President of the FBCN/BC Nature

- Smooth running of the organization
- Solved a few interpersonal issues within the Board of Directors
- AGM on Salt Spring Island; my spouse Nieke Visser was the Conference Chair. I think this is the first time in the history of BC Nature that the Conference Chair and the President of BC Nature were married (*editor's note: this conference was outstanding and received praise from many participants*)
- The fight (during my term as Vice-President) and win of the cancellation of the proposed building of the Northern Gateway Pipeline in 2016 (as President)

3. Projects:

Learning about, and involvement with, the various BC Nature projects was interesting. As President and a retired Geologist, I gave presentations on geology when I visited clubs around the province. Trips were made to the Northern Region and along the Crowsnest Highway (Hwy #3 from Princeton to Cranbrook). Many members, although interested, have much to learn about geology.

4. Conservation and Education:

As President, I worked extensively with the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre to take the Federal Government to court to stop the Northern Gateway proposed project (Enbridge pipeline).

Interviews with radio stations, added to the geology presentations to clubs, and helped to identify the geological concerns associated with the proposed building of the Northern Gateway. Finally, in 2016 BC Nature was successful in stopping the project.

5. Challenges:

- Interpersonal challenges within the Board of Directors to make decisions remained a very strong concern, and especially in my last year as President, 2019 -2020.
- It was difficult to gain interest and support from clubs to organize and host AGMs and FGMs. The COVID-19 crisis, beginning in February 2020 was an additional major challenge – it stopped most club activities, such as camps, the 2020 AGM planned for Princeton and face-to-face meetings
- The ongoing Trans Mountain Pipeline proposal and Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Expansion proposal needed continued attention.

In my last year of Presidency, the functioning of the Board was changed to add Committees to help spread the workload. Although necessary, the specific functions of the Committees added an additional layer of reporting, communication and therefore time demands.

6. Changes:

The change and introduction of Board Committees started in October 2018 and we now have the Governance Committee, Finance Committee, and Human Resources Committee, in addition to the already existing Education and Conservation Committees. We did eliminate the Communication Committee and started the Outreach Committee. BC Nature is still reflecting on which Committees work and which do not. I believe the Finance and Governance Committees work well.

I am part of, and will remain a part of, the Governance Committee. I assisted in the complete re write of the Bylaws and am now focused on the Policies and Procedures.

BC Nature is changing from a volunteer driven 'easygoing' organization to a more rigid and formal organization. The future will tell if that is the right direction in which to go.

7. Stories:

Interactions with my fellow Board members have often been very congenial and hilarious. I cannot give any particular anecdotes although Fred McMechan usually offered materials in a humorous way when needed- good for a laugh! Joan Snyder likes to talk a lot to people next to her, and I had to reprimand her a few times, which usually resulted in a shocked reaction. Margaret provides lengthy commentary, and I had to stop her a few times. But both Joan and Margaret took my interjections well and we all got along wonderfully.

For BC Nature, I led the Provincial Cathedral Lake Park field camp in 2018, and I have very good memories of times with the participants from all over the province, and especially from Kelowna.

I have been working closely with Betty Davison, our Office Manager since 2009. As I was not a native English speaker, but Dutch, she always teasingly made fun of my 'Denglish', given her Dutch connections. So we had a good rapport. I believe that people could mostly understand me at our meetings, Board, Club Directors and AGMs, although occasionally I did see puzzled or surprised faces.

8. Perspective:

The FBCN is a very important organization for the province, because we have a strong membership with a strong scientific background and deep connections with nature. The various government levels know the value of this and tend to listen. We should continue to strengthen this position and relationship.

Our major concern is the lack of younger members (under 60) and I am aware that this is a long-standing problem. We are trying to solve this by more social media platforms, hence the creation of the Outreach Committee. Another opportunity is to focus on particular issues such as the protection of the Southern Resident Killer Whales, the Fraser River Delta or the Flathead Valley. These topics would likely gain more traction with the younger generations than the broader, generalized 'Nature' approach we have been taking over the last 50+ years. I am concerned about BC Nature taking an approach that is too strict and formal and am afraid that this will frighten off potential members. The future will identify this consideration as a problem, or not, but future presidents should be aware of the potential.

9. What have you enjoyed most about BC Nature:

My interactions with my fellow Board members and my trip to visit the Northern Region's clubs. The AGM 2015 on Salt Spring Island was a very positive meeting and we had over 200 attendees. It was a busy, but also a rewarding time.

Written by Kees Visser, May 31, 2020

Naturalist Awards

Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club Trail Blazer Award 2019

BC Nature Elton Anderson Award, May 2019

Alan Burger, President 2016-2019

1. Your Background:

My involvement in nature clubs goes way back to my undergrad student days at the University of Cape Town where I was involved with the nature/wilderness group there. Once I moved to Canada in 1980, I was involved in various nature clubs. In Corner Brook, Newfoundland, where I lived for five years, I was the President of the Tuckamore Wilderness Club. Later when I moved to Victoria in 1988, I immediately joined the Victoria Natural History Society and remained a member for the next 20 years. I was on the Board for several years and organized the evening presentations, as well as giving my own presentations to the Society. Around this time, I attended my first BC Nature AGM.

In 2006 my wife and I moved to a rural property near Merritt. There was no naturalist club in Merritt so a group of us founded the Nicola Naturalist Society in 2010 and the club immediately became part of the BC Nature Federation. I remain the President of the Nicola Naturalists and am responsible for evening meetings, the club website and newsletter and many of the field outings. In 2014 our young club ran a very successful Spring camp for BC Nature in Merritt. This brought me further into the BC Nature realm. Around 2014 I was elected to the BC Nature Board as the regional representative for the Thompson-Okanagan-Shuswap region, taking over from Vivian Birch-Jones. In May 2016 I became President of BC Nature and served three years until May 2019.

As a university professor and wildlife researcher, I focused mainly on seabirds. For 30 years I led research programs on Marbled Murrelets in many parts of BC and Alaska. This work involved both marine and old-growth forest conservation issues. I've also worked on the impacts of oil spills on seabirds and on seabird distribution, diving, foraging ecology and breeding. My lecturing career, as well as more recent gigs as a lecturer/naturalist on small ecotourism vessels in the Antarctic and Arctic, made me realize the tremendous need for scientists to promote science, stewardship and conservation. BC Nature is an excellent platform for this important activity.

2. Accomplishments:

My term as President from 2016-2019 covered a difficult time for BC Nature. It became obvious that we needed to re-structure as an organization and adopt a more professional approach to a range of activities that included fund-raising, increasing our staff capacity, better management of membership records and many other aspects of the organization. With \$8,000 funding from the BC Naturalists' Foundation, we hired an organizational consultant, Valerie Mayes, who did a complete review of our organization and led a workshop for the Board at the 2018 FGM in Kelowna. Based on Valerie Mayes' report and our own deliberations, BC Nature undertook some major changes, including:

- A major revision of the BC Nature Bylaws
- Changing the name of the Executive to the Board of Directors
- Changing the name of the Club Directors to the Council of Club Representatives
- Establishing three new committees to help oversee our operations
 - Governance Committee
 - Finance Committee
 - Human Resources Committee
- Establishing formal Terms of Reference for all our standing committees
- Reviewing the Office Manager's job description
- Establishing an on-line membership database that covers all our clubs and their members
- Appointing a Harassment Officer and an overhaul of our Harassment Policy
- Establishing a Disciplinary Committee consisting of the President, Past-President and Harassment Officer (thankfully not needed during my term)
- Undertaking a major revision of our Policies and Procedures Manual
- Running a workshop on fund-raising
- A renewed agreement with the Elders Council for BC Parks on sharing the office space at the Heritage Centre, Mount Seymour Provincial Park.
- Hiring our first part-time office assistant to assist the Office Manager.

This re-organization was, at times, controversial and revealed some divisions of opinions within our organization. During this process the Vice-President and the Treasurer both resigned, linked to re-organization and financial issues.

Some of the re-organization resulting from the Mayes' report continued after my Presidency. In April 2021 the Board approved the hiring of a part-time Fund-raiser and a part-time Conservation Coordinator. The plan is to have both of these jobs expand to be full-time as funding increases.

Some other achievements/events during my term:

- Establishment of the Bert Brink Scholarship for graduate students;
- Re-establishing the Nanaimo Naturalists (former President John Neville and I both gave presentations to promote the rejuvenation of this important club);
- Close work with the Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria (UVic) and its non-profit offshoot - Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation (CELL) - in several issues of national importance including:
 - Successful litigation to end the Northern Gateway Enbridge crude oil pipeline;
 - Litigation and scientific reports opposing the Trans Mountain crude oil pipeline;
 - Input into the revised Federal Environmental Assessment Act;
- Provision of scientific data, finding funds for expert reports and ongoing opposition against the expansion of the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 container port which threatens globally important wetlands.

3. Projects:

- Major re-organization of BC Nature's operations and committees;
- Work with UVic Environmental Law Centre to oppose nationally critical development projects and help draft federal environmental legislation;
- Expansion of the wildlife and nature viewing website (BC Nature Guide);
- Ongoing support and funding for the BC Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBAs).

4. Conservation and Education:

- Establishment of the Bert Brink Scholarship for graduate students.
- Increased funding for BC Nature scholarships from the BC Naturalists' Foundation.
- Ongoing support for Science Fairs in BC.
- Expansion of the activities of the Conservation Committee (increased letters to governments, increased participation in wildlife management and environmental committees, e.g., Columbia River, caribou, wildlife management workshops).
- Work with Nature Canada, Bird Studies Canada (now Birds Canada) and several local BC Nature clubs on promoting conservation of the Fraser River Delta wetlands, with funding from the Sitka Foundation.
- We collaborated with Nature Canada and naturalist groups across Canada to work with the federal government on their *Pathway to Canada Target* to meet the Aichi Target #11: protect at least 17% of Canada's land and inland waters and 10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020.
- Promotion of the South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Reserve.
- Support for the Ecoforestry Institute in protecting and managing Wildwood Forest (the late Merv Wilkinson's model forest on Vancouver Island).
- In 2018, BC Nature joined many other environmental and wildlife groups to successfully oppose a movement to privatize wildlife management in BC.
- We also joined other groups to successfully push for the end of trophy hunting of Grizzly Bears in BC along with an ongoing push to ban wildlife hunting competitions focused on wolves.
- Our special representatives contributed thousands of volunteer hours on important conservation and management issues: notably, Roger Emsley (Roberts Bank terminal developments), Greg Ferguson (wildlife management consultations), Joan Snyder (caribou conservation), Hilary Miller (Outdoor Recreation Council), and Virginia Rasch and Gerry Warner (Columbia River Basin Environmental Collaborative).
- Our Office Manager, Betty Davison, working with the Communications Committee made major changes to our quarterly BC Nature Magazine, resulting in a more professional and dynamic publication.
- In collaboration with Nature Canada, we ran two workshops at our general meetings on outreach and communication, where use of websites and social media were emphasized to target the public online.

- One particularly pleasant and fruitful endeavour was to work with the Abbotsford-Mission Nature Club in their funding and construction of the viewing platform at Willband Creek Park.



At the Willband Creek opening ceremony, Alan on left (representing BC Nature), Betty Davison in centre (BC Nature Office Manager) and Tom Bearss on right (representing the BC Naturalists' Foundation)

5. Challenges:

Environmental challenges during my term were many. A few of which BC Nature responded included:

- Northern Gateway oil pipeline;
- Trans Mountain oil pipeline;
- Logging in the Manning - Skagit Provincial Parks 'donut hole'" threatening the integrity of those parks and the Skagit River;
- Drastic declines in caribou populations and the failure of BC and federal governments to act effectively on this issue (numerous interventions and letters);
- The Roberts Bank Terminal 2 expansion proposal which threatens the integrity of the important mudflats and shallows of Roberts Bank (appointment of Roger Emsley as BC Nature's special representative on this issue and numerous interventions);

- Predator management and culling of wolves;
- Impacts of neonicotinoid pesticides;
- Proposals to develop Liquid Natural Gas facilities on highly sensitive coastal environments in Prince Rupert;
- Negative impacts of fish farms on native salmon populations;
- Revitalization of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC);
- Better protection of the Southern Resident Killer Whales;
- Input on proposed livestock water regulations under BC's Water Sustainability Act;
- And many other issues (see Chapter Five: Conservation, a Fifty Year History).

BC Nature also responded to several regional conservation issues brought to our attention by member clubs. As examples:

- Proposed Fraser River bridge to replace the Massey Tunnel;
- Destruction of important foreshore habitat in the Comox area;
- Impacts of rodenticides on owls in the Fraser River Delta;
- Impacts of a proposed solar power farm in the Kootenays;
- Preservation of a bat colony in the old Burr Villa in Deas Island Park, Delta;
- Importance of the Herrling and Carey Islands gravel reaches on the Fraser River.

6. Changes:

Major organizational changes (covered above in #2).

7. Stories:

During my term as President, I visited and gave presentations at many clubs (Princeton, Kelowna, Penticton, Kamloops, Victoria, Nanaimo, Abbotsford, Merritt, Castlegar, Lillooet). In all cases I was impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the small groups of people who were central to the success of each club. Visiting these clubs and being at BC Nature general meetings brought home to me the disproportionate number of older people involved in our clubs – meeting the needs of people under 50 remains a challenge to BC Nature. I also participated as a resource person at a summer camp in the southern Chilcotin near Lillooet.

8. Perspective:

BC Nature is important because it fills a unique niche providing a meeting place for all people who love nature and are interested in preserving our environment. Unlike many mainstream environmental groups, we are not strident activists but are in a good position with our province-wide representation to quietly and strongly push

forward the application of science-based management measures and conservation of our wildlife and environment.

During my term, much of my time and energy, and that of the Board, was focused on our organizational review and renewal. This was a necessary step, but there was some cost to this in that we did not have the capacity to keep expanding BC Nature with new clubs and increased membership. During my term, our federation remained at around 50 clubs and just over 6,000 members. With a more structured and formalized organization in place I hope that we can put more time and energy into building up BC Nature. I would hate to see our Board and management continue to focus on organization at the expense of expansion. During my term, our two primary committees—Conservation and Education—also expanded their activities and continued to do great work.

Our strength is in our clubs and this is where I hope BC Nature will focus much of the future efforts. By expanding our clubs, we give more people opportunities to enjoy nature and learn about nature in their own 'backyard', and at the same time we increase our voice and our influence with governments and other decision-makers.

9. What have you enjoyed

Visiting nature clubs and meeting fellow naturalists from all parts of the province at our general meetings has been a great pleasure. I am also proud to have been involved with some of the major conservation and education initiatives that BC Nature has undertaken. Even though I am not fond of committees and organizational details, I am happy that BC Nature achieved most of what was required during the major organizational renewal that began during my term.

I love attending our AGMs and FGMs. The presentations are nearly all excellent and informative. Best of all, I love the outings to explore new areas in the company of a knowledgeable leader, and to share that experience with fellow naturalists from other clubs.

I am a strong supporter of our sister organization NatureKids BC, and some of my most memorable times were when my wife and I led outings for the local Merritt NatureKids club. The uninhibited exuberance and thirst for information of those kids was just wonderful.

Written by Alan Burger, June 8, 2020 (updated April 2021)

Naturalist Awards

BC Nature Elton Anderson Award, May 2021