

BC Nature and Elders Council share a passion for parks – and a place to call home

By Lara Tisseur

In 2005, the Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia struck an agreement with BC Parks to establish a Heritage Centre in the old ranger station at the entrance to Mount Seymour Provincial Park, one of only two ranger stations in BC's provincial park system. In April of this year, BC Nature and the Elders Council established a cooperative agreement to work together to deliver similar programs in the Heritage Centre and, surrounded by cedars, hemlocks and a multitude of native species, BC Nature has found a home quite fitting to the values and passion of BC Nature.

Currently, the Heritage Centre is recommended for designation as a District of North Vancouver heritage building and as a provincial heritage site.

The Heritage Centre is dedicated to the provision of public education on why regional, provincial, national and international parks are important to society, how they are created and how they are managed. The centre will serve as the staging ground for numerous educational and interpretive programs designed to carry out the Elders Council's objectives.

The purpose of the Elders Council for Parks in BC is to recognize the accomplishments of people who have worked both for governments and with governments and to provide people who have contributed to BC's regional, provincial and national parks systems an opportunity to continue supporting parks and continue to advocate the importance of parks in BC.



Photo: Bev Ramey

Home sweet home: BC Nature office manager Maria Hamann enjoys the surroundings.

The Elders Council in 2006 recognized 16 influential builders of BC's parks system through the 1960s and '70s, including: Harold Eidsvik, Bob Williams, Jake Masselink, Charlie Velay, Dennis Podmore, Ian Leman, Milt Goddard, John MacFarlane, Kerry Joy, David Stirling, Freeman King, Rich Hankin, Ken Farquharson, Ric Careless, Ed Mankelow and Ruby Dunstan. In 2004, the Elders Council previously recognized the pioneers of BC's parks system, including Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan and Dr. Bert Brink.

BC Nature helps the Elders Council at the Heritage Centre

by meeting and greeting visitors, explaining the objectives of the Elders, the centre and its existing and proposed programs. BC Nature has also agreed to host and conduct an on-site family event by the Young Naturalists' Club in July or August on the significance of parks in BC. Keep posted for confirmation of the event date.

The Elders Council has been involved in sustainability dialogues and provide seasonal newsletters to the public. The Elders have been a society since their inception in 2004. The society estimates they have around 250 elder members throughout BC. Current and ongoing projects of the BC Elders include:

- Staff mentoring
- Collecting and compiling historical archives
- Development of histories from the experience of parks elders
- Recognizing those elders who have contributed parts of their lives building BC's parks systems
- Bringing together individuals to develop support for BC's various parks systems

The Elders Council for Parks in BC encompasses people who have spent much of their career or volunteer life working for parks and protected areas. If you think you know of anyone who would enjoy being part of this society pass it on. Membership is free! ❁

To discover more about the Elders Council for Parks in BC check the website at www.elderscouncilforparks.org Or contact: Suite 410, 698 Seymour St., Vancouver, BC, V6B 3K6

