



2016 - Year in Review

Caring about what you love

There has never been a more important time than now for organizations that bring children and the natural world together in a meaningful way. Since 1970, worldwide populations of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles have plummeted by 58 per cent and trends suggest that, by 2020, two thirds of the world's animals will be gone.

It is when we start talking about who will solve these big issues in the future that we meet another great challenge; kids are not spending enough time roaming and playing outside. Today's children are the future field biologists, academics and environmental campaigners who bring environmental issues to the attention of their governments and demand change. However, studies show that kids spend the majority of their time indoors, much of it on screens. While the indoor world can be enriching in its own way, the experiences that kids can get from being outside are something entirely different. There will never be a substitute for the outdoors; having that direct experience of looking at a sky dark enough to see the beauty of the Milky Way, discovering a salamander under a log, or witnessing the downward swoop of a peregrine as it hunts for prey.

The work we do at NatureKids BC remains as important now as when we were launched in 2000, and we continue to explore new and better ways to help bring children and the natural world together again. Through a unique program of volunteer-led nature clubs across BC, NatureKids provides opportunities for children ages 5-12 along with their families to:

- Discover nature on outdoor Explorer Day adventures with local volunteer leaders and nature experts;
- Learn about native wildlife and plants in NatureWILD Magazine, and;
- Step up for nature with stewardship projects, citizen science activities and the Action Award Quest.



The statistics and the work outlined in this annual review cover the period January 1 - December 31, 2016.

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Message from the Board President



This year flew by in a flurry of growth, transition and outdoor adventures!

Our 26 family clubs took part in more than 225 Explorer Days and we helped our young members across BC contribute to citizen science projects like the Amphibian Road Survey and the Bird Aware Cat Care project. We are pleased to see several new clubs start up and almost 6,000 copies of NatureWILD have been distributed since we made the magazine full colour one year ago. This fall we welcomed Louise Pedersen to the Executive Director role and we have been thrilled with the energy, positivity and skills she brings to NatureKids BC.

First and foremost, I have an incredible amount of gratitude and appreciation for the many volunteers who make this magic happen. This organization would cease to exist without the countless hours put in by dedicated club leaders, nature mentors, board members, NatureWILD editors and authors, and outreach and office volunteers. Thank you for your time, commitment and passion - you have had an enormous impact on the next generation of BC naturalists.

I would also like to thank the generous donors and foundations whose contributions make it possible for us to provide consistent, quality programming to our nature clubs and school groups across the province. Your support makes it possible for more kids and families to get outdoors to explore, play, learn about and take action for nature.

Finally, thank you to the parents, grandparents and guardians who choose to make time for nature in their families' busy schedules. What a wonderful gift to give your children.

The relationship of children and the natural world is now getting more attention than ever and we as a society are beginning to truly understand and appreciate the diverse benefits of spending time outdoors. I couldn't be prouder to be part of an organization with such strong roots in this movement and I can't wait to see what the next few years have in store for us.

Valery Ross, Board President, NatureKids BC

“

Thanks for running such a great experiment - I loved that my kids learned about how a real experiment was done (with a control and a treatment side), and it definitely increased our awareness of the local impact outdoor cats make.”

Roger Boulet

”

2016 highlights and achievements

Delta NatureBlitz

- In February, we co-hosted the Delta NatureBlitz at Reifel Bird Sanctuary. This family-friendly nature adventure offered a dawn-to-dusk line-up of wildlife walks, outdoor exploration and even a photography contest. Local naturalists and nature experts from Nature Canada, the BC Waterfowl Society, the Delta Naturalists Society, the Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust and the Canadian Wildlife Service helped to make the event a huge success.

Citizen science amphibian project

- Through hands-on citizen science, NKBC members gathered data about local amphibians and submitted it to the BC Frogwatch database, where it will be used to inform land use decisions. One of the participating clubs, NatureKids Prince George, enjoyed being outside in the dark, looking for and counting frogs and toads, alive or dead.

NatureWILD magazine, now in full colour

- NatureWILD is the only quarterly nature magazine for children with a focus on the flora, fauna and environment of British Columbia. Through articles by naturalists and specialists on wildlife and ecosystems, plus puzzles and activities, NatureWILD addresses all aspects of a child's interest in the natural world. NatureWILD is also a useful resource for teachers.



New nature clubs

- This year we added two new clubs to our province-wide network of family nature clubs. NatureKids Ridge Meadows serves children and families in Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows. NatureKids Otter Home Learners are serving children and families in communities near Langley, Abbotsford and Aldergrove.

Young philanthropist: Felix Dunn

- Felix Dunn, who turned six years old in November, might just be our youngest donor. For his birthday he chose to make a donation towards NatureKids BC's stewardship projects. Felix lives in Penticton, he is a member of NatureKids South Okanagan and he loves exploring nature with his friends and learning about wild animals.



Bird Aware Cat Care citizen science project

- This year we launched a new youth citizen science pilot project that seeks to protect wild birds while keeping cats safe. We asked our members to help us test, through experiments, three different tactics that can help decrease bird predation - by having their cats wear bibs or collars or by training their cat to walk on a leash while outdoors.



NatureKids take action

- NatureKids members continue to help create positive action for our community and environmental health through stewardship activities. In 2016 our members built bird and bee boxes, pulled invasive species and planted native plants, restored trails and sensitive habitats, participated in the Christmas Bird Count for Kids and other bird surveys, assisted with banding birds and helped out with river and beach clean-up initiatives.



Youth mentorship

- NatureKids Eastern Fraser Valley piloted a youth mentor program that encouraged older youth within the club to further their leadership skills by presenting on different topics or co-leading Explorer Days.



Action Award success

- 11 youth from NatureKids Eastern Fraser Valley earned their Bronze Action Awards. Congratulations to Nemo, Sigourney, Tanner, Corbin, Ava, Emma, Paige, Emily, Rowan, Isla and Owen. Also, congratulations to Maya from NatureKids Delta Home Learners on her bronze award and Lena from NatureKids Oceanside on reaching the silver level.



Farewell and hello

- Kristine Webber, our long-standing executive director, moved to Mayne Island with her family to embark on a new career in farming and pottery. Louise Pedersen, took over from Kristine in October 2016.

2016 in numbers

People

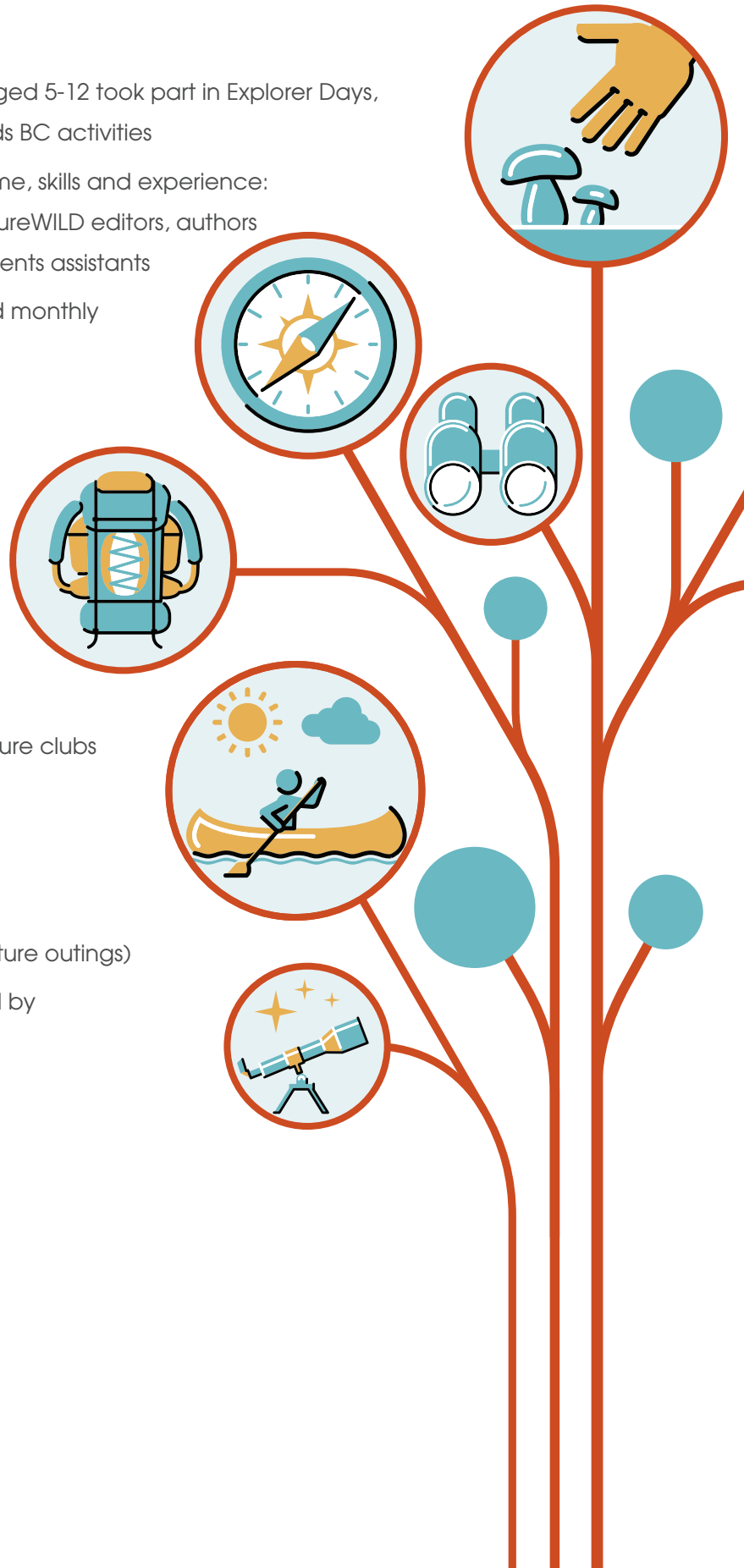
- More than 1,250 enthusiastic members aged 5-12 took part in Explorer Days, stewardship projects and other NatureKids BC activities
- 100 volunteer gave 8,000 hours of their time, skills and experience: nature club leaders, nature mentors, NatureWILD editors, authors and photographers, office and public events assistants
- 57 nature club leaders organized and led monthly Explorer Days throughout BC
- 200 nature mentors provided expertise in guiding Explorer Days throughout BC
- 8 Board Directors
- 3 part-time staff

Our organization

- 26 family nature clubs across BC
- 33 schools are members
- 225 Explorer Days delivered by family nature clubs

Our impact

- 4,320 individual outdoor adventures
- 13 Action Awards awarded
- 76 Passports to Nature submitted (456 nature outings)
- More than 2,566,144 m² of land improved by stewardship activities



NatureKids BC inspires young naturalist to follow his dreams



If you ever needed proof that family nature clubs – and NatureKids BC in particular – can transform the lives of children, look no further than Nemo de Jong. A teenage boy with Asperger's syndrome, Nemo joined NatureKids Eastern Fraser Valley when he was seven.

"I was concerned he didn't have enough opportunities to socialize with other children," explains Nemo's mother, Laurie de Jong. "I wanted to find something that he didn't have to adjust to other than the social aspect, so because he was already so interested in insects, something connected with nature was an obvious choice."

When he first became involved with NatureKids BC, Laurie says that Nemo didn't interact with anybody. But by the time he was 13, he was leading whole groups of children on nature tours of his own.

"He took a group of kids on a tour of his back yard – it's a bigger deal than it sounds; there's a lot going on back there – and that was a real breakthrough for him," Laurie adds. "The purpose of NatureKids BC is not specifically to improve kids' social skills, but for Nemo it's been such a transformation."

Nemo's resume is an impressive document. It details his studies of alpine spiders, Western toads, Western painted turtles, the spring migrations of birds, the habits of amphibians and, of course, insects of all shapes and sizes. It also gives a picture of the network of friends, mentors, conservationists and scientists that he's built up over the years.

The very first NatureKids meeting that Nemo attended was with David Gillespie, an entomologist who later won the Order of Canada for reducing the use of pesticides in greenhouses by 92 per cent. Fast forward six years or so and Nemo will be doing a research project over the summer arranged by that same entomologist.

"If you keep going to events over time, you meet other families as well as scientists and conservationists in your community," Laurie says. "It gives you all kinds of connections to go out there and take action for nature in so many important ways. But even if you don't come all that often, a seed is planted in your mind that there is this beautiful world out there that needs looking after. It's very nurturing for you to be out in nature and you just end up making so many great friends."



What our supporters say

Kristina Charania, volunteer:

The magic of the great outdoors was integral to my development as a child and still is now, as a young woman. Through volunteering with NatureKids BC, I've been able to pass that spark of excitement to the generations following me. It's priceless to me to hear a gasp when a kid listens to the haunting call of a Pacific Loon or see a smile when they touch a crow's nest.

Boleyn Relova, volunteer nature club leader:

As a volunteer, I am contributing to more kids spending more time outside with their families and encouraging them to be active shaping the natural world in which we live. It warms my soul when kids get excited about a new nature discovery. With NatureKids, we are giving them that every month with different Explorer Days.



Dr. Rob Butler, co-founder of NatureKids BC:

The clear evidence of the benefits of nature to children is a rallying call to everyone to reconnect to the natural world. NatureKids has a proven track record of opening eyes, minds and lives to nature for children across BC.

Skye Ladell, member (mother to Rupert and Franny):

We have been involved as a family with NatureKids Victoria for five years. Our current club leader Stephanie Weinstein is a dynamic and committed leader who goes above and beyond to provide enriching educational and experiential opportunities for our NatureKids community. Stephanie not only cares about providing positive NatureKids experiences for children and families, she also is a deep supporter of individuals and nurtures their interests inside and outside the group.

Jill Sturdy, funder

As the National NatureHood Program manager for Nature Canada, I am thrilled to have NatureKids BC as one of our regional partners. Together we work to give children an appreciation for nature which can lead to advocating for the protection of natural places.



Get involved with NatureKids BC

If you love nature and being outdoors, there are lots of ways to get involved with NatureKids BC. To purchase a NatureKids BC membership or to learn more about the benefits of joining, visit our website: www.naturekidsbc.ca

Donate

NatureKids BC believes that nature should be accessible for everyone. Your donations help subsidize membership fees so that no family is excluded from participating. Monthly donations are especially important because they provide a reliable funding source.

Become a family member

Come explore, learn about and take action for nature with us. You will become a member of a local club, receive a welcome pack, be automatically enrolled in our Passport to Nature and Action Awards Quest programs and receive NatureWILD Magazine. Most importantly you'll be invited to participate in local Explorer Days and have the opportunity to meet other families interested in exploring outdoors.

Volunteer

We are always on the lookout for volunteers and passionate individuals who are keen to inspire the next generation of nature leaders. Whether you are interested in playing the role of a nature mentor, event ambassador so help in the office, we would love to hear from you.

Become a school member

An elementary school membership will provide your school with resources and strategies to use nature as a springboard to address the new BC curriculum. In 2016, we released a new curriculum companion guide with each NatureWild magazine.

Subscribe to NatureWILD

Issued four times per year and redesigned in full colour, NatureWILD is the only magazine about British Columbia's wildlife, plants and ecosystems written for kids and youth. Subscribe for just \$20.





...to our supporters

As a not-for-profit organization with bold aspirations and a proven track record but limited resources, NatureKids BC can only exist with the financial contributions of people, businesses and organizations that care about a world where children are connected to the great benefits of nature. You help lay the foundations for the future health and emotional well-being of more than 1,000 children across BC each year. We are very grateful to our supporters who through donations, grants, sponsorships, memberships and volunteerism help us get kids and their families outdoors all across British Columbia.

Funders:

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



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Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

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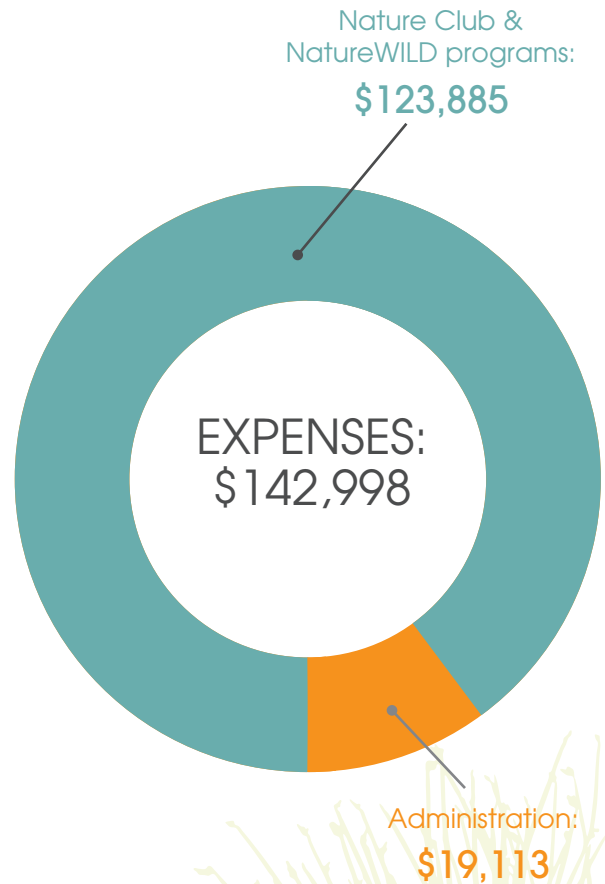
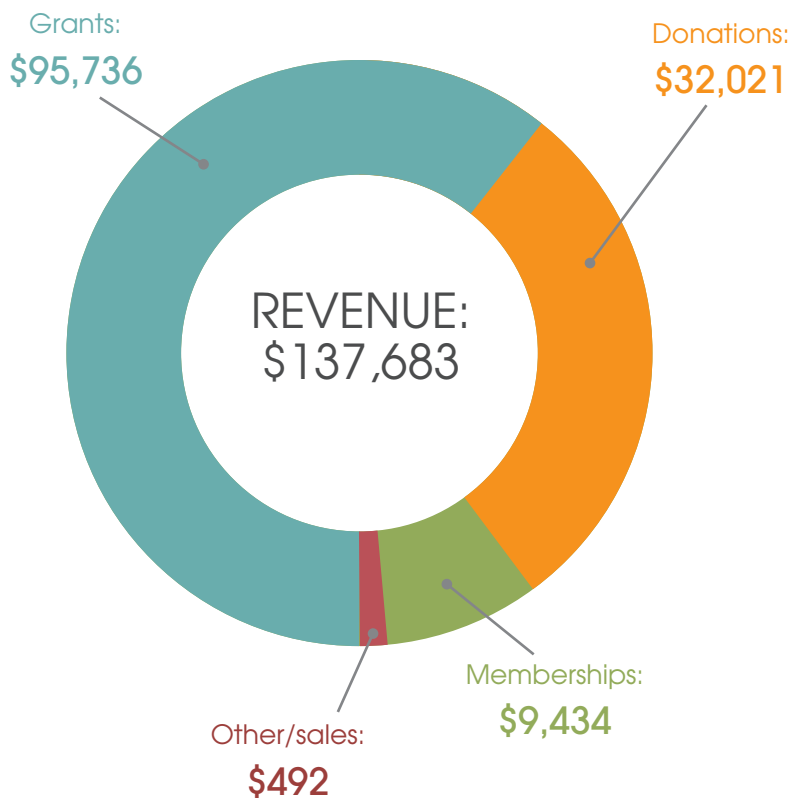
Volunteers:

Thank you to our many volunteers from across the province who generously gave us their knowledge, enthusiasm and almost 8,000 hours of their time.

Donors and sponsors::

Dawn Germyn & Desmond Belton, Bugs R Us School, Lisa Chiang, Kevin & Kathryn Chu, Cynthia Crampton, Marjorie Dawn, Tricia Edgar, Greg Fenty, David A. Gosse, Innovative Research Group Inc., Tammy Keetch, Vanessa Lee, Ian McKeachie, Fred McMechan, Sara Mimick, Susan Mooney, Eva Nagy, Bob Peart, Louise Pedersen, The Phelps family, Barry Price, Provincial Employees Community Services, Pamela Robertson, Dan Robinson, Peter Robinson, Gail Ross, Valery Ross, Daphne Solecki, Susanna Solecki, TD Bank, Kristine Webber, Samantha Watt.

Financial summary



2016 Board of Directors/staff

Staff:

Executive Director: Kristine Webber (until 10/2016)
 Executive Director: Louise Pedersen (10/2016 -)
 Nature Clubs Coordinator: Tammy Keetch
 Membership & Office Coordinator: Daniel Kell
 Summer Student: Kristina Charania

Board of Directors:

President: Valery Ross
 Vice-President: Cynthia Berg
 Treasurer: Romy Tong
 Honorary President: Daphne Solecki
 Director: Vanessa Lee
 Director: Victor Elderton
 Director: Frances McCoubrey
 Director: Tricia Edgar





NatureKids BC (formerly the Young Naturalists' Club of BC Society) is a registered charity that helps children get outdoors to explore, play, learn about and take action for nature. We do this through an award-winning network of volunteer-led family nature clubs that extends across British Columbia. Together with our volunteer club leaders, nature mentors and supporters we share a vision of working together to help children develop a love of nature and a lifelong connection to the natural world.

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Registered charity: #84961 1926 RR0001