



To Our Valued Members,

October 31, 2020

Thank-you for your support in 2019/2020. The Wild Pacific Trail Society had a very exciting year with new projects being brought to fruition and ongoing plans being conceptualized for the future. Among the highlights of 2019/2020 are:

◆ **Completion of the Spring Cove Interpretive Trail:**

Nestled near the entrance to the Ucluelet harbor and adjacent to the Wild Pacific Trail's Lighthouse Loop, this section of Trail will grant visitors and local residents the opportunity to learn about the tremendous biodiversity of mudflats. The newly completed Spring Cove Interpretive Trail will be unveiled and officially opened to the public later this year. Nine interpretive signs guide you through this ecosystem offering fascinating information of the unique features of the mudflats' ecosystem, the shorebirds that frequent the cove and the history of the area. Bird watching is also facilitated by a bird blind overlooking the cove. We are eager to share this natural environment, stay tune for an official trail opening announcement.

Thank you to the District of Ucluelet, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and IBA for their support in the project. The Trail Society also received tremendous in-kind support from scientists such as Barb Beasley, Carolyn Prentice, Margot Hessing-Lewis, Ian Cruickshank, Andy MacKinnon and his students with the University of Victoria.



◆ **Anniversary Celebration:**

2019 marked the Wild Pacific Trail's 20th year anniversary since its inception in 1999. To mark the anniversary, we held a community event on September 28th, 2019 at the Ucluelet Community Centre to celebrate the many accomplishments the Society has experienced over the last 20 years and to thank those who have been involved with these successes. The celebration event included exhibits from our educational partners, and a presentation including the unveiling of a new [mini-documentary](#) on the Wild Pacific Trail. Thank you to the participating businesses, the countless volunteers and the tireless directors and all the heart felt speeches. It was memorable!

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Andy Mackinnon led a fantastic mushroom walk with over 30 people. He volunteered his time to offer this special walk during his visit for the WPT 20th Anniversary Celebration (photo below).



◆ **Memorial Benches Restored:**

In March 2020, eight concrete memorial benches that had provided solace along the trail's Lighthouse Loop section for roughly 20 years were found vandalized and destroyed. Oyster Jim worked actively in partnership with the District on this difficult recovery. All eight benches were restored; we thank the generosity of those who donated to the Trail Society in support of their restoration.

Unfortunately, this intentional damage continues to occur in separate targeted instances over the summer of 2020. Interpretive signs, benches, infrastructure and property has been damaged or stolen. The Trail Society and the District of Ucluelet is encouraging anyone with information on the vandalism to come forward. By being a natural guardian of our community, it serves as a reminder to those offenders that someone is watching and cares deeply about these spaces.

□ **Wild Pacific Trail-er:**

In 2019, we were excited to introduce our Wild Pacific Trail-er that was situated at the lighthouse for use by our trail naturalist in the delivery of her programs. This was an excellent facility used as a bad weather shelter for the trail naturalist's health and safety and storage for teaching materials and props.



□ **Trail Naturalist Program:**

The Wild Pacific Trail provides a unique outdoor classroom that presents incredible opportunities to connect people to nature. With our education component growing immensely, the Trail Society is fortunate to have Tanya Nestoruk as our Trail Naturalist.

In 2019, she offered a friendly presence at the Lighthouse overseeing the Discovery Tent display, led interpretive walks on the Trail and developed program curriculum. We were able to extend her interpretive programming to encompass year-round learning opportunities for local and visitors alike.



◆ **Wild Pacific Trail Interpretive Walks:**

With over 2,000 attendees in 2019, the Wild Pacific Trail Society's interpretive walks were a huge success! From eating berries, studying slugs, identifying trees and catching crabs in tide pools, nature immersion was at its best. Thank you to the Naturalist with **Central Westcoast Forest Society** and the **Raincoast Education Society** for leading a weekly rainforest walk. To **Ucluelet Aquarium** and their team for being keen on providing their knowledge for the Intertidal Exploration at Big Beach. To our guest speaker, Karen Topham for being able to share with others your enthusiasm and expertise on geology of Vancouver Island. Silva Johansson shared her "Pass of Melford Shipwreck," program that covered the colourful history behind the **Pass of Melford shipwreck** that led to the building of the lighthouse. Our very own **Trail Ambassador Tanya Nestoruk** had exciting walks of her own including the bog interpretive program, coastal sea wolves, the amazing lives of trees and forces of nature.

We would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our supporters: the District of Ucluelet, The Westerly News, Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Ucluelet, and the Crow's Nest. Thank you to all of the local businesses and community members who promoted the walks.

□ **Learn Where You Live Web Series:**

Our organization was able to responsively adapt to the challenges that COVID19 presented this year (2020). Despite the cancellation of our regular interpretive walks and talks this past season, we were able to shift their delivery to an online format. We created a series of short educational and entertaining videos, for all ages to get up close and personal with flora and fauna of the Pacific Northwest. This series entitled **Learn Where You Live** consisted of 7 videos and received positive response- over 48,000 views across all media platforms utilized.

The Learn Where You Live series videos continue to be available online through all current Wild Pacific Trail platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Website, Instagram) and continue to educate, inspire and personally connect viewers with nature, aiming to create a wave of environmental stewardship.

Thank you to our enthusiastic and dedicated naturalist Tanya Nestoruk and our talented videographer, Arya Touserkani (www.waterlogue.ca).

The LWYL Series has provided new and expanding partnerships, we were grateful to have been able to work with the following inspiring individuals and organizations:

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| -Carl Sieber, Interpreter with Pacific Rim National Park (PRNP) | -Andy MacKinnon, Mycologist |
| -Jeneva Touchie, First Nations Administrative Assistant-PRNP | -Barb Beasley, Biologist |
| -Gisele Martin of the Tlao-qui-aht First Nation | -Westcoast NEST |

-Ian Cruickshank, Bird Naturalist

- Bob Hanson, WildSafe BC

-Sam Touchie, Ucluelet First Nation Heritage and Culture Assistant

We are also grateful to the Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ elders and teachers who shared traditional wisdom, offering priceless insights. The program was funded by donations as well as partial funding from grants; special thanks to our supporters Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the District of Ucluelet.

◆ Special Events:

Special Events in 2019 consisted of a Seabird Special led by local Bird Expert Ian Cruickshank at the Lighthouse with spotting scopes; allowing participants to watch and learn about sea birds on migration. For Whale Week, The Trail Society partnered with Parks Canada, Raincoast Education Society, Strawberry Isle's Build a Whale and Silva Johansson. We delivered free guided interpretive whale walks, drop in activities for all ages at the lighthouse, whale spotting with scopes and Pass of Melfort Shipwreck Theatre show at the Community Centre. It was extremely well attended. Unfortunately, Whale Festival was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic, hopefully the festivities will resume next year.

We continue to partner with Wild Safe BC for their annual BC Goes Wild Weekend with this year's event featuring a scavenger hunt where participants explored the outdoors while learning and being inspired by the flora and fauna along their travels. Thank you to WildSafe BC's Bob Hansen for coordinating and for being a special guest at our Discovery Tent in previous years.



◆ Citizen Science:

In partnership with Strawberry Isle Marine Research Society, we hosted a Sea Star Community Science Program at Big Beach where volunteers surveyed sea stars to detect if wasting disease was present in any of the species. Data collected assisted in obtaining an idea of the spread of the disease and the population demographics within the sites.



Through the use of the iNaturalist APP, the Trail Society held a **BioBlitz**, encouraging individuals to head outside, wherever they live, to help us document the incredible biodiversity of our planet. Bioblitzes are great ways to engage the public to connect to their environment while generating useful data for science and conservation. We took photos and attempted to catalogue as many species as we could find in that day; data that can be used for future projects and in determining environmental health. Thank you to our participating partners and sponsors of the event (Central Westcoast Forest Society, Ucluelet Aquarium, Zoë's Bakery and Café and Piña).

◆ Media Attention:

Trip Advisor continues to rank the WPT as one of the top attractions on Vancouver Island! Last year, we received a Certificate of Excellence which recognizes our consistent high trail reviews and our ability to deliver superior experiences for the trail users. The Trail continually receives a great deal of media attention thanks to our new trail expansions and our educational programming. Tourism Ucluelet and the Westerly News also provide the Trail with fantastic promotion and coverage of all our successes big and small. Magazine writers and videographers contact us frequently for material on the trail.

◆ Wild Pacific Trail Logo Wear Program:

Our Wild Pacific Trail branded clothing continues to be popular with strong sales. We thank Tracy & Ted Eftink of Majestic Ocean Kayaking for coordinating this program and donating the profits from the sales to the Trail Society. The logo wear is available through the Visitor's Centre who donated the full proceeds from the sales.

◆ Maintenance of the Trail:

During 2019, Danielle Francis, with support from Oyster Jim Martin, oversaw the maintenance contract for the trail and the surrounding areas. We thank them for their hard work keeping the trail in top condition.

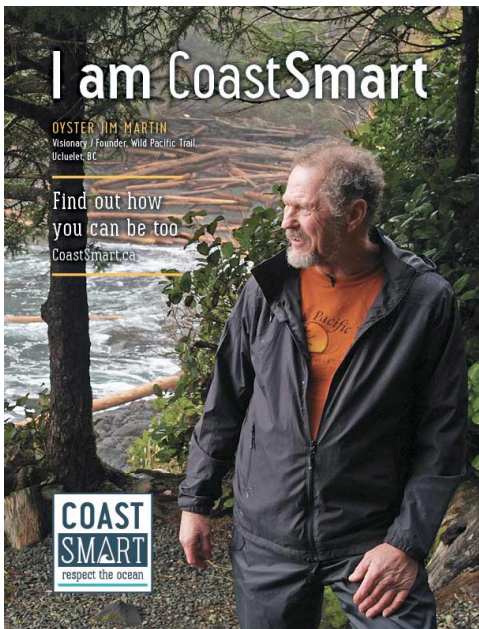
Danielle has subsequently stepped down from her maintenance role having been in the position since 2017. She worked diligently to maintain the trail bed and trim the vegetation and was a big part of restoring the Trail after the epic storm of 2018. Thank you, Danielle, for the positive impact you had on our organization and community, we wish her all the best!

The District of Ucluelet as of 2020, is now overseeing the maintenance of the Trail with Russell Roper (Public Works and Parks) taking the lead.



◆ Annual Events:

Edge to Edge Marathon remains an annual event, weaving the race route to run the entire trail, popular with 'off road' runners and media. Runners in 2019 raced through a torrential downpour, experiencing the stunning trail and storm watching all at once. The **Family Day Fun Run** is held every year with a walk/run around the Lighthouse Loop. This event is hosted by Endless Fitness and the District.



◆ CoastSmart:

The Wild Pacific Trail is a proud supporter of the **CoastSmart**, a communication and education campaign, designed to enhance coastal safety along the shoreline. The Trail Society is keen to help people avoid hazards along the coastline and keep people safe as they enjoy coastal recreation. CoastSmart universal signage, outlining the potential hazards, was installed on the Trail and Oyster Jim also promotes their safety message in one of their videos online.

◆ Local Fundraising/Volunteer Efforts:

Bruce and Monique Schmaltz of the Raven Lady in Ucluelet have been an ongoing supporter of the Trail and have consistently donated to the Trail. Customers can hang an oyster shell message in the Wanderers' Tree and their donation supports the programs and improvements to our ever-expanding trail.

The Wild Pacific Trail is extremely grateful to the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust for initiating and facilitating the Giving Catalogue in response to the challenges incurred by COVID19. As a non-profit, our funding was significantly impacted by the pandemic; with less visitors to the Trail, our donation boxes saw less funds received. Thank you to all who donated to the Giving Catalogue and to the Vancouver Foundation who generously provided matching funds for the donations. It means the world to us!

Volunteers have been instrumental in collecting storm debris from the trail that has washed ashore. Thank you for keeping our coastline pristine. A pruning work bee to assist in trimming the trail was a success. Many hands definitely make a lasting impact. Thank you!

◆ **Trail Promotion: Business & Tourism Ucluelet Support**

The Society wishes to thank businesses that have donated generously, your contributions have supported the promotion of the trail and our brochure printing. Tourism Ucluelet continues to promote the Trail in all of their marketing materials. RTown this past year updated our video with great footage of the Trail. We appreciate everyone's efforts in showcasing the value of experiencing the trail.

What's next?

◆ **2021 Youth Naturalist Program**

Our Trail Naturalist, Tanya is currently developing a Young Naturalist Program (ages 13-18) that works with and encourages local youth to explore topics and career opportunities in the natural sciences. We will utilize our amazing coastal trail network to inspire, facilitate discovery and a personal connection to nature through a series of naturalist-led classes. During this nine-week program participants will gain knowledge of Nuu-chah-nulth culture, ecology, plant/animal identification, interpretation/storytelling, environmental stewardship and first aid certification. We are hoping to be able to offer this program in the late Spring of 2021 and are thrilled to receive funding by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for this program.

◆ **Virtual Trail Walks**

We will be bringing the Wild Pacific Trail Walks to the public every Friday morning. These short Instagram and Facebook Stories will feature our naturalist and social distanced special guests exploring the diverse species of the land and sea for your viewing pleasure!

◆ **Education Centre:**

The Trail Society's board of directors continue to develop plans for a Wild Pacific Trail Centre. The Centre would offer a centralized location to offer indoor and outdoor educational programs, be a welcome/information centre, provide classrooms, administration office space and amenities.

Thank you to the many volunteers, donors, partners, and community members who support the Wild Pacific Trail and make our programs thrive!

Sincerely, Wild Pacific Trail Society