

2020-2021

# ANNUAL REPORT



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[www.bcparksfoundation.ca](http://www.bcparksfoundation.ca)





## 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Park Supporter,

Being in a BC park is always a joyous occasion for me. Our parks and protected areas offer some of the most spectacular nature experiences in the world, thanks to generations of British Columbians who have supported their creation and maintenance. The BC Parks Foundation exists to continue this even more effectively, by offering new funding, new ideas and new programs to get people into parks for their enjoyment and good health, and by protecting the incredible biodiversity our parks offer.

We had an exceptional year as is described in this report. This was made possible through the amazing work of our staff and our Board, led by the tireless efforts of our CEO Andy Day, and the financial and other support of thousands of others. I'm so proud of what we have accomplished in our short life, and super excited by what's ahead as we continue our mission to help make British Columbia's world-class parks system even greater for all people and all species.

Ross Beaty  
Chair, BC Parks Foundation



### "BC'S PARKS ARE

quite simply wonders. They are places of majesty and beauty. They are gathering places for families and communities. They are engines of our economy in attracting millions of tourists to our province. And they are sanctuaries to millions of plants and animals, creating the biodiversity that gives British Columbians the clean air and clean water so vital to our healthy existence."

- Ross Beaty



# Letter from the CEO

Dear Supporter,

Akamina-Kishinena, Cariboo Mountains, Height of the Rockies, Mount Edziza, Upper Klinaklini, Yaaguun Gandlaay.... British Columbians have worked together to create more than 1040 incredible parks and the 6th largest park system in the world. From the rainforests and kelp gardens of the Pacific Oceans up to the great glaciers of the Rocky Mountains, these places are wellsprings of health and abundance.

I love BC and I love our parks – what they represent, what they protect, and what they provide. That's why I consider it a great honour, joy and responsibility to strive for success in everything we do.

The great thing is that our success is your success - you will have more places to visit, better experiences, a legacy to pass to the next generation, greater health, and the wonderful feeling of belonging to something big, meaningful and lasting. Our success is also the success of millions of other creatures, born and yet to be born.

This year has been an incredible and inspiring year. We set out in a spirit of gratitude and celebration to climb to high places. We reached peaks beyond our expectations. Along the way, we have been joined by people like you, who have brought joy to the journey, no matter what challenges we faced.

From here we enjoy vistas stretching out towards exciting new places, and look forward to new expeditions in the year ahead.

We have many people to thank for the incredible gifts we have been given. With gratitude, and in celebration, we hold this timeless legacy in our hands, so that we may pass the magic of the original earth along to the future, splendour undiminished.

Thank you for being part of something great.

Andy Day  
CEO





## Board of Directors

Ross Beaty  
Ric Careless  
Warren Beach  
Barbara Brink  
Cynthia Callison  
Tim Cormode  
Darcy Dobell  
Dana Hayden  
Dan Johnston  
Jim Standen  
Ivan Thompson  
Gill Winckler  
Greg Moore (special advisor)







# Program Highlights



## Parks Bank

What a year for the Parks Bank of BC! After our first purchase of three properties in Princess Louisa Inlet in 2019/20, we set our sights on pursuing another property in 2020/21. With COVID-19 in full swing, we had no idea what would happen. But good fortune brought us a variety of great opportunities, and Park angels came together to protect more beautiful places than we imagined.

It started in the summer, with an additional parcel in Princess Louisa coming to us—the iconic One Eye Mountain that overlooks the inlet. Within weeks we were able to secure the funds to purchase the parcel, adding another key piece of the puzzle to the Inlet's protection.

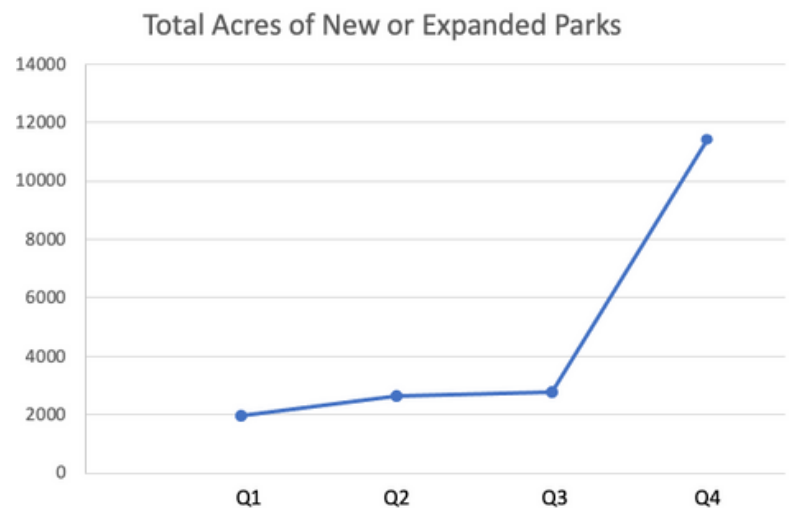
With the blessing of the Snaw-naw-as Nation, we then set our sights on West Ballenas Island—one of the Salish Sea's most biodiverse places. The Wilson 5 Foundation generously provided a matching gift challenge, and we had a tremendous response from all communities as word spread far and wide about our efforts. With only a few weeks left, CNN ran an international story, and there was a tremendous response. A few hours after we announced the successful campaign, a donor sent us a photo he had just taken of the Ballenas Islands. A full rainbow ran from one side of one of the islands, over them, to the other side. Absolutely pure magic!



Only one month later we were able to work with BC Parks to protect 100 acres of land on the Cowichan River. The river is designated as both a BC Heritage River and a Canadian Heritage River. It is internationally renowned for its wild salmon and steelhead, and is home to thousands of birds of over 200 species. The property we helped purchase is a missing piece along the Great Trail and Cowichan River Trail, joining parks on either side of it.

After Christmas we raised money for a trail connector parcel adjacent to Mt. Erskine Provincial Park on Salt Spring Island, and an extension to Gowlland Tod Provincial Park near Victoria. We also secured purchase and sale agreements on several other properties, including Lonesome Lake—the place where trumpeter swans were brought back from the edge of extinction. These were set to close in 2021/22 fiscal year, but we started the fundraising on them.

If that wasn't enough, we didn't stop until the 11th hour. Adding over 8600 acres of new protected area to Mt. Edziza Conservancy was a thrilling adventure that came right down to the wire—literally minutes before the deadline. This was a unique arrangement and major accomplishment, with \$5m total raised and an Order in Council passed that established the Conservancy. It was a real team effort from all involved and a pleasure to be a part of it. It was a special pleasure to work with Tahltan members and be able to complete a successful project together with them.



### Annual Stats:

- New or expanded parks: 5
- Total acres of new or expanded parks: 9,448 (for a total of 11,430)



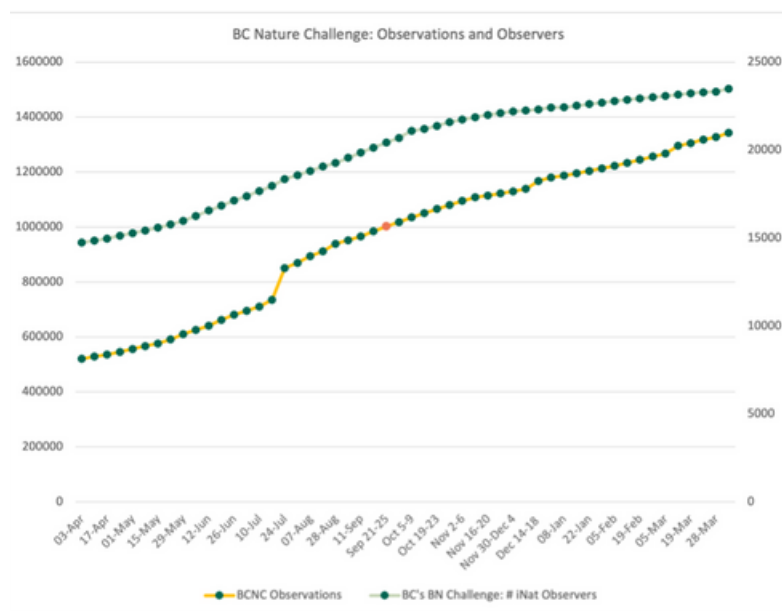
## Wildlife Forever

### Citizen Science: BC's Big Nature Challenge and the BC Parks iNaturalist Project

For Wildlife Forever, the last couple years have been building a solid foundation for citizen science. This past fiscal year brought all plans together to dramatically shift the perception, availability, and prevalence of citizen science and its data.

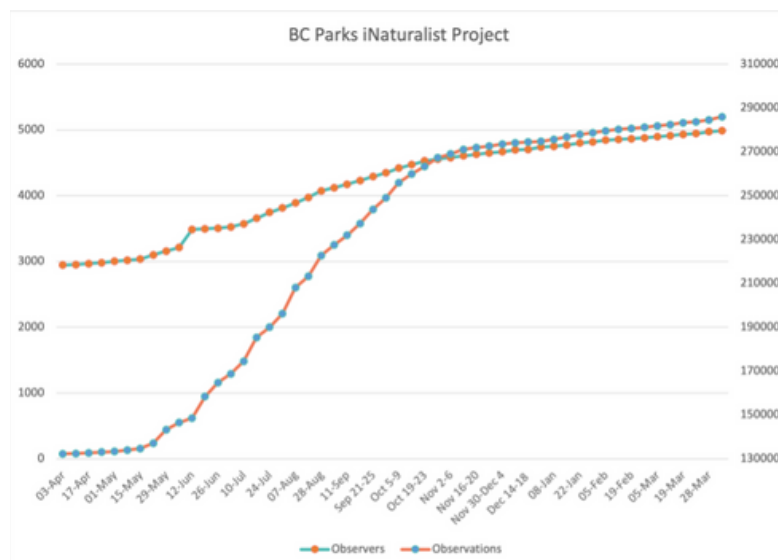
BC's Big Nature Challenge was created to elevate the BC Parks Foundation's community science work, setting an ambitious goal of 1 million observations around the province. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the campaign was launched in April 2021. And only one year later, over 24,000 British Columbians have responded to the call, collecting over 1.3 million observations of life.

This program was truly a grassroots effort, with an intensive initial period of outreach in the spring to connect with naturalist, outdoor, gardening, and photography community groups as well as corporate partners around the province. New resources included new social media channels, a new custom website, and assets such as stickers and bingo cards were created and enhanced for external distribution. The public eagerly engaged with the concept of citizen (or community) science, and our work was featured in 10 mainstream media pieces, including articles in the Vancouver Sun, Global News, and a broadcast news feature on CBC.





Within the Nature Challenge, the BC Parks iNaturalist project also expanded this year. As shown by the graph to the right, the launch of the Nature Challenge in April significantly affected the overall observation total -- especially the number in our parks and protected areas. The BC Parks iNat field team was able to squeeze in a short season in our parks, collecting huge amounts of data in parks which had been empty due to COVID-19. This information has huge potential in showing the impact of human presence on our natural wealth, allowing us to better manage it in the future.



## Annual Stats:

- Over 1.3 million observations province-wide, including more than 275,000 in BC Parks
- Almost 15,000 new observers in FY 2021
- 10 mainstream media features
- 19 dedicated campaign partners, including eBird, Birds Canada, Arc'teryx, and the Girl Guides
- Over 300 community and naturalist groups taking part
- Public webinars
- New social media channels, co-managed with our SFU partners, whose following nearly doubled in FY 2021



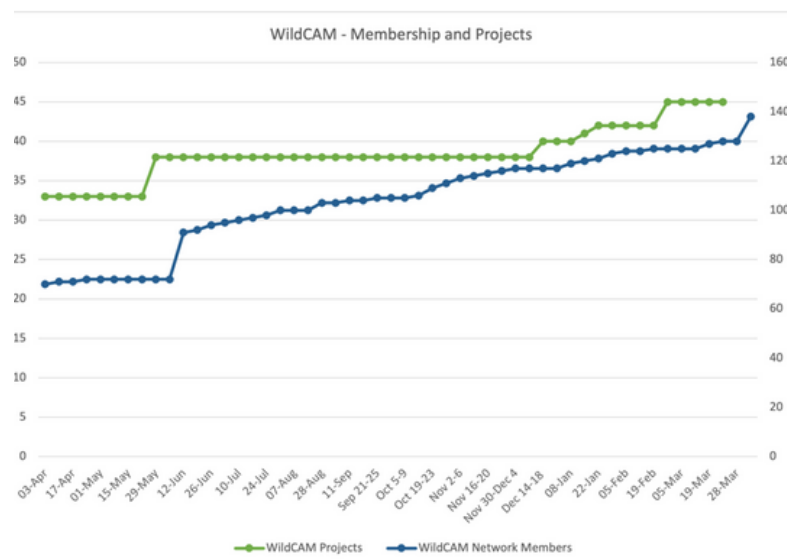


## WildCam

This year, Canada's only network for remote camera scientists continued to expand and support its members. A monthly newsletter began circulation in the late spring, establishing regular contact with network members and increasing reciprocal engagement and information sharing amongst researchers, government and academic, as well as citizen scientists. The newsletter has continued to garner high response rates and positive feedback. A monthly blog also commenced, featuring project updates and spotlights, and increasing visitation to the WildCAM website.

This year also brought an exciting opportunity for wildlife and megafauna with large home ranges—especially those that cross provincial borders. In 2021, WildCAM merged our network with the Alberta community of practice, welcoming dozens of new members and projects. Many projects that focus on areas of high biodiversity sit close to or straddle the provincial border between B.C. and Alberta. WildCAM now serves as a way for these researchers and wildlife supporters to collaborate and share resources to better advocate for our biodiversity. Our Advisory Committee is in regular communication with the support staff in Alberta, leveraging one another's connections and assets to magnify the ways that we support network members.

In March, 2021, an agreement was secured with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources. Funding supports the work of WildCAM, and enabled the hiring of a WildCAM coordinator, who will work to expand and improve the network in the coming fiscal year.



## Annual Stats:

- More than doubled the number of network members
- Successful merger with Alberta Community of Practice
- Wage subsidy funding (50%) obtained for the Coordinator position
- Above industry average engagement rates maintained on newsletters and blogs



## Healthy by Nature

This year, we continued to host events to connect marginalized and vulnerable Canadians, healthcare practitioners, and other groups with nature for improved health.

We partnered with Foundry, an integrated health service organization serving youth aged 12-24, to get them outside and unplugged. With the help of Parkbus and volunteer guides, we were able to provide guided exploration in Golden Ears Provincial Park.

Feedback from Foundry youth: "I enjoyed going on the hike because I love being outdoors and it helps me with my mental health to be out in nature with people. I would absolutely love to go again. Even though it was pouring rain, the trail was amazing and I really enjoyed my time there."

This year, we also launched a crowdfunding campaign to offer remotely guided nature therapy sessions to healthcare workers, in partnership with the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy guides. The gift campaign provided a way for British Columbians to give back to frontline healthcare workers as well as natural and green spaces, both of which have helped keep us healthy during the pandemic.



British Columbia

### Free 'nature therapy' offered to pandemic-stressed health-care workers



B.C. Parks Foundation offering free 'forest baths' to health-care workers to help ease pandemic-related stress



Margaret Gallagher - CBC News - Posted: Dec 13, 2020 9:00 AM PT | Last Updated: December 13, 2020



Certified nature therapist Ronna Schneberger is part of a program that leads virtual, guided nature therapy sessions for B.C. health-care workers. (Submitted by B.C. Parks Foundation)



## PaRx

The BC Parks Foundation believes creating more parks and getting people into them is a powerful strategy for reducing health-care costs and stimulating the economy. A 2014 report estimated that national and state parks in the U.S. contribute a value of \$24.7 billion US annually through increased physical activity alone. Worldwide, a recent global study found that access to protected green spaces provides an estimated \$6 trillion US annual savings in mental health costs.

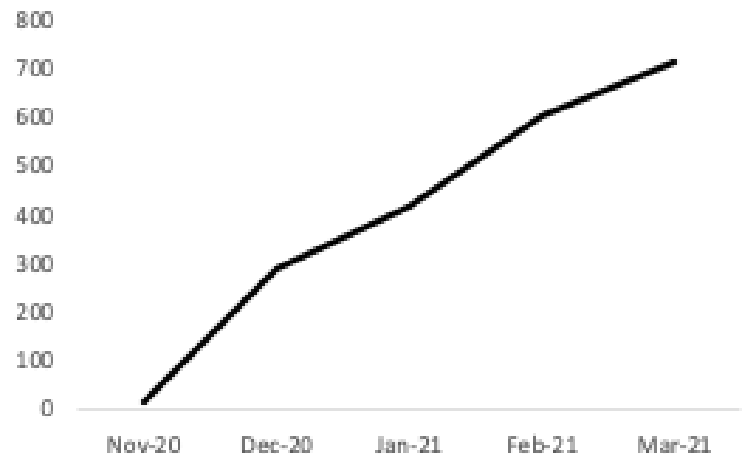
As COVID-19 cases rose across the country and government budgets ballooned, the BC Parks Foundation built on our steadfast belief that parks are an essential part of our health-care infrastructure. Engaging health-care providers to prescribe nature to their patients is a powerful tool for keeping Canadians and our economy healthy.

That is why in 2020 we launched Canada's first national nature prescription program — PaRx — to help set our country back on a healthy path.

PaRx was initially launched in BC and then in Ontario. PaRx has been endorsed by a range of major health partners, including BC Family Doctors, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC, Ontario Public Health Association, Ontario College of Family Physicians, and Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario.

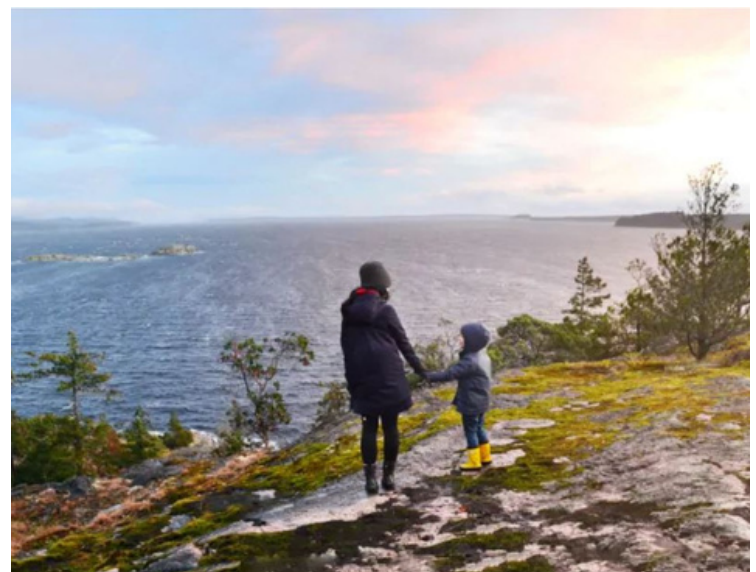
The launch received widespread media attention with over 36 national and international media pieces, including features in the Globe and Mail, CTV, Global National, and CBC.

Number of prescribers signing up



## Annual Stats:

- Number of prescriber sign-ups: 715
- Number of verified prescribers in BC: 243
- Number of verified prescribers in ON: 344

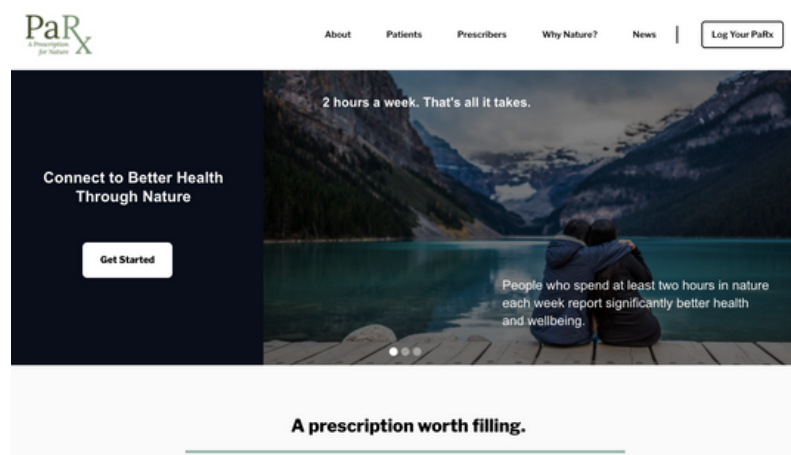




With Dr. Melissa Lem at the helm as Director, PaRx continued to flourish through the year, steadily gaining prescribers and patients. Reception to the program has been overwhelmingly positive, with many calling it an inspiration. Between its launch on November 30, 2020 and March 31, 2021, PaRx received 715 signups from healthcare practitioners and verified a total of 344 prescribers in Ontario and 243 prescribers in BC, the majority physicians.

The launch included a brand-new custom website with resources about the health benefits of nature, which has continued to gain attention and traction nationally and internationally as a 'go to' site for the latest studies and information.

PaRx received a prestigious 2020 Joule Innovation Grant from the Canadian Medical Association, awarded for physician-led social innovation in the category of sustainable healthcare. The award supports initiatives addressing the impact of climate change on the health and well-being of Canadians.



## Discover Parks

In the summer of 2020, BC Parks Foundation launched the pilot of the Discover Parks Ambassador program, in collaboration with BC Parks. A team of 9 Discover Parks Ambassadors was recruited, trained and deployed at 12 BC Parks. This included three Parks in the Parksville area (Rath Trevor, Little Qualicum Falls, Englishman River Falls), three Parks around Rock Creek (Conkle Lake, Kettle River, Gladstone), three Parks close to Kamloops (Lac le Jeune, Monck, Paul Lake) and three Parks in the Fort St John area (Beatton, Charlie Lake, Kiskatinaw).





The team delivered a range of programming, including Jerry's Rangers programs for kids, provided responsible recreation messaging and promoted the use of iNaturalist to collect nature observations. Throughout the summer, the team interacted with 6,664 visitors, scheduled 295 programs, and collected 4,955 iNaturalist observations.

Overall, visitors had overwhelmingly positive reviews of the Discover Parks Ambassadors' programs and interactions. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, we were able to try new approaches to program delivery and adapt our approach to meet the conditions. Together with BC Parks, our program partners, we will apply all that we learned in 2020 to expanding and developing the Discover Parks Ambassador program through 2021 and beyond.





# Inspire Highlights

## Marketing and Communications

This year, the Foundation saw success across all marketing and communication channels.

### News Media Coverage

- Nearly 100 earned media placements in Canada and internationally
- A total global reach of over 1.6 billion

### Social

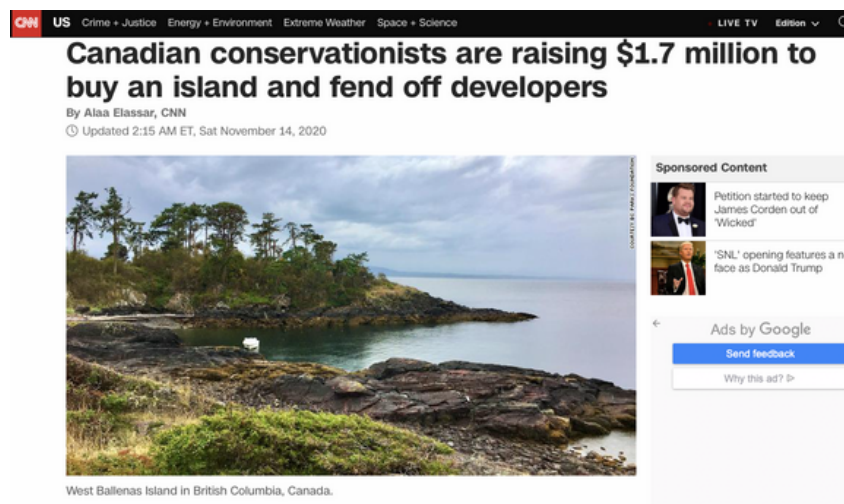
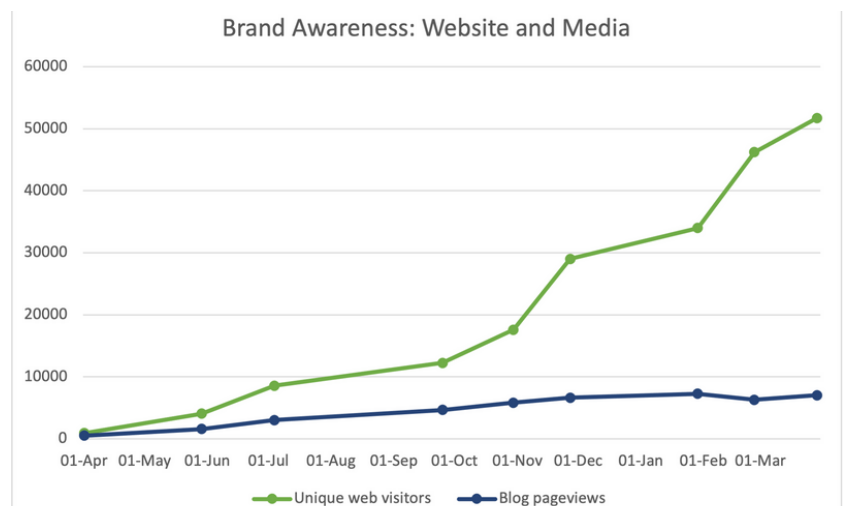
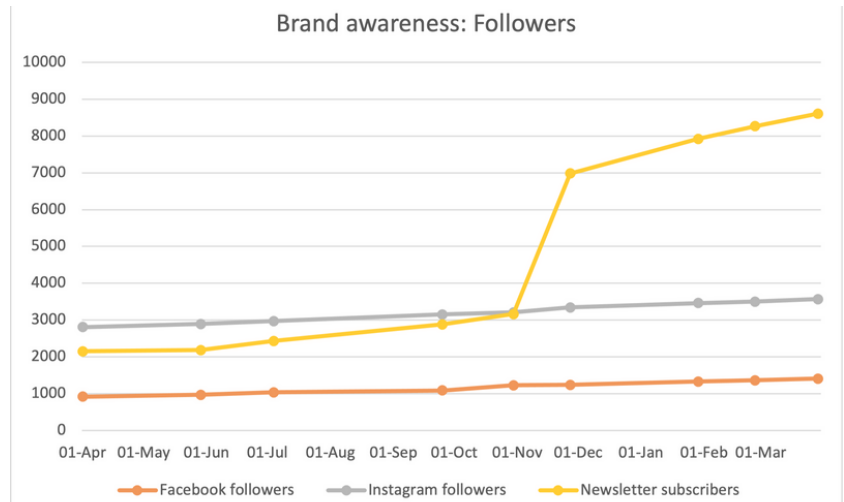
Our social media channels all experienced tremendous growth. Our blog alone saw a 628% increase in monthly readers and our Facebook following increased by 514%.

Overall, we gained nearly 8,000 new followers, including over 6,000 new newsletter subscribers

We established new hashtags on our social media accounts: #ParksForever and #KeepBCBeautiful.

### Website

- Over 50,000 unique site visitors and nearly 7,000 blog page views





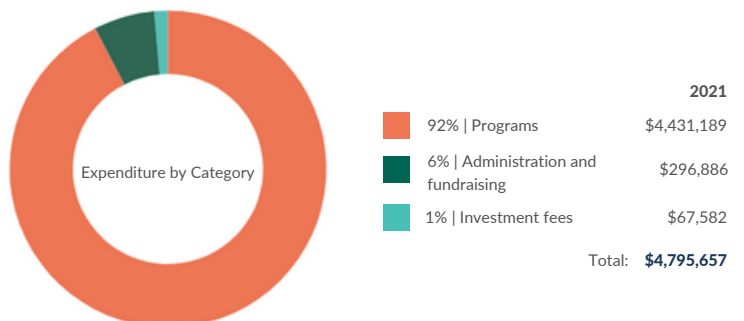
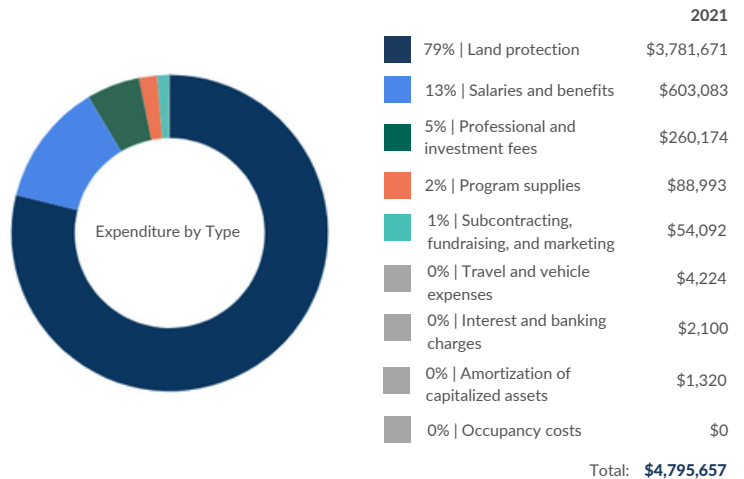
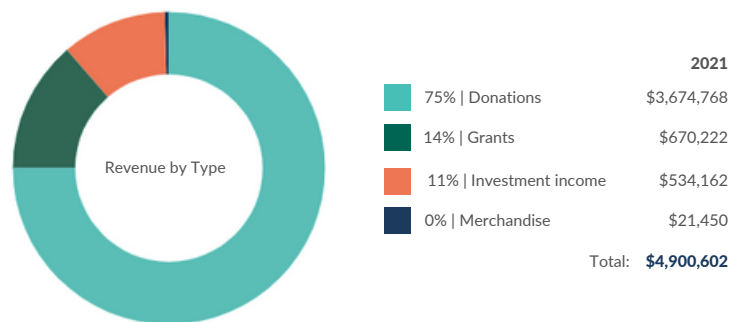
# Sustain

## Financial Summary

The BC Parks Foundation remained in a strong financial position in FY2021. Revenue and cash flow were strong, our Legacy Fund and other investments grew, and risk of uncontrolled expenditures remained low. As with the prior year, our expenses were mostly programmatic, with administrative and fundraising expenses making up a low percentage of total expenses.

Our Parks Bank initiative performed particularly well. The Foundation purchased and protected \$2,701,626 of land, and made a further \$1,080,045 of contributions to qualified donees to support the transfer of other land into protected status, for a total of \$3,781,671 of land transferred into protected status. Our Legacy Fund, which provides long-term stability for our mission, also did well. Through targeted donations, realized gains reinvested (\$158,056 of the \$534,162 investment income), and unrealized gains (\$2,421,520), our Legacy Fund and other investments increased by \$4,790,648 (46%) in the year. These strong unrealized and realized gains in the Legacy Fund resulted in a surplus of revenue over expenses as of March 31, 2021.

Should you wish to know more, our audited Financial Statements are available upon request. Your continued generosity and support form the basis for our strong financial position and the remarkable results achieved in creating the greatest parks system on earth.





## Sponsors

Thank you to our sponsors. You are helping create the greatest parks system in the world.

### Peak Partners



BC Parks



Sea to Sky Gondola



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### Mountaineering Partners



Vancouver Airport Authority



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Ministry of  
Forests, Lands, Natural  
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Traction on Demand

### Expedition Partners



ARC'TERYX

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YERVANA

Yervana

### Park Partners



Atlin Mountain Coffee Roasters (Tarahne Park)



## Champions

Thank you to our park champions.

Robert Bateman

Wade Davis

Ben Haggar

Greg Hill

John Montalbano

Dr. Sally Otto

Eric Peterson



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