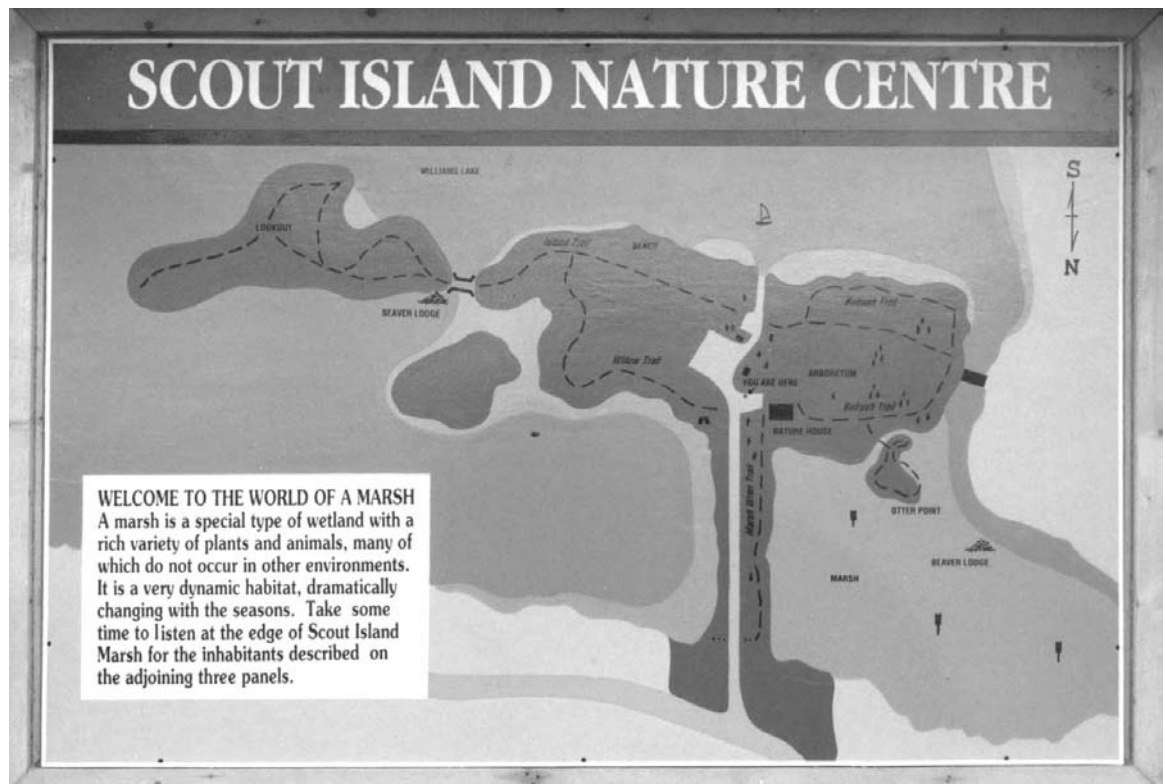


SCOUT ISLAND NATURE CENTRE



MANAGEMENT PLAN FEBRUARY, 2003

(INCLUDES MINOR REVISIONS MADE IN FEBRUARY, 2004)

Title Page: First panel of a four-panel interpretive sign at the Scout Island Nature Centre.

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1. Acknowledgements

This management plan was initiated by the executive of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists in 2002 and was produced through the volunteer efforts of the directors and members.

Jane Perry facilitated the planning meetings and prepared this document with valuable assistance from members of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. Anna Roberts provided all photographs and Patrick Teti electronically scanned and formatted the photos and maps. Susan Paczek of The Nature Trust of British Columbia clarified important details for this updated version.

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists is grateful to the City of Williams Lake for its continued financial and in-kind cooperation and support for the Scout Island Nature Centre. It also appreciates the ongoing support by The Nature Trust of British Columbia.

2. Executive Summary

This management plan for the Scout Island Nature Centre was produced to direct its future and chart a course into the 21st century after 25 years of operation. The plan was prepared in 2002 through member input at five meetings and is divided into ten key areas of the Nature Centre's operations. A short background summary for each area is followed by a primary goal, the various components of a corresponding strategy, and the specific tasks required to achieve the strategy and thereby meet the goal. In total, 70 tasks are presented, ranging from small measures for improving management and operations to significant endeavours requiring a long-term commitment and effort.

In the management of the Nature Centre, the legal terms outlined in the lease between The Nature Trust of BC and the City of Williams Lake must continue to be followed.

The plan presents a vision for the Scout Island Nature Centre, which is to:

- ◆ conserve the Nature Centre's wildlife habitat, vegetation and other natural values;
- ◆ offer nature education and interpretation; and
- ◆ provide a relatively secluded, natural place for wildlife and plant viewing, facilitated by a system of walking trails.

The management plan confirms that the Scout Island Nature Centre should generally continue on its current course, which has established it as a unique asset in the community of William Lake. However, the Nature Centre requires more dedicated fundraising to enable the development of new programs, activities and facilities. This management plan is presented to help achieve that.

3. Introduction

This management plan for the Scout Island Nature Centre was produced to direct its future and chart a course into the 21st century. The executive of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, the body that manages the Nature Centre, felt that after 25 years of operation (Appendix A), the Nature Centre required a comprehensive plan to guide its direction. This plan was prepared in 2002 through member input at five meetings, followed by preparation, review and revisions to draft versions of the plan. It was a collaborative effort that, like most of the Nature Centre's activities, was produced entirely through the time, effort and commitment of many volunteers.

The Scout Island Nature Centre is situated on land located at the west end of Williams Lake near the city centre. This property is owned by The Nature Trust of BC (Appendix B), the City of Williams Lake and the Crown (Appendix C, Map 2). The Nature Centre's main interpretive facility is the log building, the Nature House, in which indoor activities and programs are provided. The Williams Lake Field Naturalists and the City of Williams Lake share maintenance and operating costs of the Nature Centre.

This management plan is divided into ten key areas of the Nature Centre's operations. A short background summary for each area outlines the accomplishments and progress to date since 1977. Each key area includes a primary goal, followed by the various components of a strategy for the future, and the specific tasks required to achieve the strategy and thereby meet the goal.

4. Vision Statement

Members of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists invested a significant amount of time and thought into this management plan. These contributors determined that the Scout Island Nature Centre should generally continue on its current course, but with more dedicated fundraising that will enable the development of new programs, activities and facilities. This would provide the staff and resources needed to initiate and expand the key activities and programs.

The vision for the Scout Island Nature Centre is to:

- ◆ conserve the wildlife habitat, vegetation and other natural values of the Nature Centre;
- ◆ offer nature education and interpretation; and
- ◆ provide a relatively secluded, natural place for wildlife and plant viewing, facilitated by a system of walking trails.



Trail to the lookout on Scout Island

This vision will be achieved through the following objectives:

- ◆ Maintain or enhance the natural integrity of the Nature Centre's wildlife habitats.
- ◆ Increase interpretive education programs that enrich appreciation of nature by students and the public in general.
- ◆ Increase services for visitors to the Nature Centre.
- ◆ Maintain or enhance, to the extent possible, the Centre's natural environments, while at the same time encouraging public access and compatible uses.

5. Staffing and Administration

The executive of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists (WLFN) has served as the administrative body for the Nature Centre since late 1977. The WLFN has operated the Scout Island Nature Centre under a lease between the City of Williams Lake and The Nature Trust of BC, and a sublease between the WLFN and the City (Appendix D). Administrative responsibilities of the WLFN have included employing temporary staff, securing funding for Nature Centre programs, and representing the interests of the Nature Centre to the City of Williams Lake and local groups. Administrative activities have required a considerable commitment of volunteer effort.

In recent years, university students have been trained by members of the WLFN to serve as teacher naturalists. They have provided nature programs to school classes during May and June and to groups of children in July and August. These staff have also served as hosts for visitors who come to the Nature House to learn about the local natural history. Additionally, during the school year, two preschool teachers have been employed to teach children in the nature-oriented preschool called 'Discovery Preschool.'



Boardwalk along the Bullrush Trail

5.1 Goal

Obtain the staff necessary to expand the Scout Island Nature Centre's programs, activities and facilities.

5.2 Strategy

- ◆ Employ a paid administrator to oversee all administration and management of the Nature Centre, including fundraising, managing educational programs, and training and coordinating volunteers.

- ◆ Employ a teacher naturalist on a year-round basis to provide natural history programs to children and adults, and to supervise and train student naturalists from May through August.
- ◆ Continue employing university students during the summer period of May through August.
- ◆ Continue the involvement of volunteers as the foundation for many of the Nature Centre's activities.

5.3 Tasks

- #1 Raise the necessary funds to hire an administrator and teacher naturalist.
- #2 Encourage and organize volunteers through sign-up sheets to help interested members find the activities to which they can best contribute.
- #3 Encourage partnering with businesses, clubs, schools and government in projects that assist the Nature Centre to meet its objectives.
- #4 Expand fee-for-service programs.
- #5 Develop and enhance fundraising activities and seek grant opportunities.
- #6 Increase involvement of the Williams Lake community in Nature Centre management and tasks.
- #7 Continue to recognize volunteer contributions to Nature Centre management.

6. Caretaking

The City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists share responsibility for the caretaking of the Nature Centre. The City has been in charge of caring for the picnic grounds, beach and boat launching site, and for major maintenance requirements of the Nature House and the caretaker's house. The WLFN has been responsible for the grounds, trail development and maintenance, and day-to-day maintenance of the Nature House and caretaker's house. In exchange for rent-free housing, a resident caretaker helps protect and maintain the property, opens and closes the access gate daily, removes litter and assists visitors.

6.1 Goal

Retain caretaking services that maintain and protect the Nature Centre's grounds and properties.

6.2 Strategy

- ◆ Maintain a caretaker in residence at the Nature Centre.
- ◆ Clarify the tasks required for grounds-keeping by the caretaker to ensure the conditions of agreement with the caretaker are met most effectively.
- ◆ Encourage the City to take a more active role in the maintenance of the Nature Centre grounds.

6.3 Tasks

- #8 Define the caretaker's responsibilities by reviewing, defining and enforcing the

conditions of agreement, including back-up support when away.

- #9 Hold ongoing meetings with the City to develop plans for working with City staff to maintain the Nature Centre grounds and the caretaker's residence.

7. Educational Services

Educational programs for children have consistently been a priority for the Scout Island Nature Centre. In addition to nature programs for school classes every spring, exhibits, educational facilities and collections have been prepared. Brochures are distributed to schools each year outlining the topics to be included in current natural history programs. The summer nature programs for children have included the production of brochures and posters to provide information about these programs to families. Children who experience the Nature Centre through an education program frequently return to visit with their families.



Discovery Preschool class

The Discovery Preschool has operated each year from September to the end of May. In recent years there have been three classes with a maximum of 15 children per class.

Public programs have been periodically offered to the community, including travelling exhibits from the Royal British Columbia Museum and presentations by guest speakers.

7.1 Goal

Continue to offer and expand natural history education programs as a key part of the Nature Centre's vision.

7.2 Strategy

- ◆ Ensure that all educational programs are financially self-sustaining using fees, grants and other financial sources.
- ◆ Increase outdoor education for School District 27 students and teachers.
- ◆ Continue and enhance programs for children.
- ◆ Continue preschool for children three years of age and older.
- ◆ Increase adult education programs.
- ◆ Increase public awareness of the Nature Centre and its programs.

7.3 Tasks

- #10 Once funding is acquired, develop new outdoor education programs for School District 27 and hire a capable teacher naturalist to prepare pre-visit educational materials (to

- prepare the students for the program) and follow-up materials (to extend learning).
- #11 Seek funding and partners for the summer programs, and adjust program fees to reflect costs.
 - #12 Continue the nature-oriented emphasis and the financially self-sustaining capacity of the preschool programs, and provide teachers with more outdoor education strategies.
 - #13 Poll adults in the community regarding issues and topics that interest them and can be addressed by Nature Centre programs.
 - #14 Develop new adult education programs based on the poll results.
 - #15 Develop and maintain a website that describes the Nature Centre's educational programs and outdoor activities.

8. Interpretation

Several natural history guides have been produced by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists for the Cariboo-Chilcotin. They include 'mini-books' for children, as well as checklists of birds, trees and shrubs, and butterflies.

The library in the Nature House has been continually expanded to provide reference materials for staff and visitors. A small bookstore in the Nature House enables visitors to purchase nature books for children and adults.

Displays in the Nature House have been prepared by volunteers. Hands-on displays are popular with children.

An arboretum of native British Columbia trees and shrubs has been established at the Nature Centre, with identification signs placed beside examples of different species. Students use the arboretum annually, including those in the biology class at the local campus of the University College of the Cariboo.



Wetlands display in the Nature House

A large interpretive sign focusing on the marsh has been prepared and placed next to the Nature House parking lot. It recognizes the Scout Island Nature Centre as a designated Wildlife Watch viewing site in the Cariboo by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. An interpretive sign has also been constructed at Otter Point (Appendix C, Map 1).

8.1 Goal

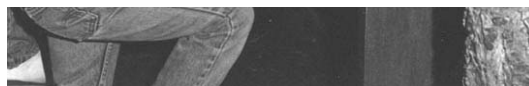
Develop and promote the Nature Centre as a primary natural history interpretation centre for the Cariboo-Chilcotin.

8.2 Strategy

- ◆ Continue to provide interpretive information for the Nature Centre in the Nature House and along the trails, and update and develop new interpretive materials for the Nature Centre and the Cariboo-Chilcotin as needed.
- ◆ Assist in the development and promotion of other natural areas (such as the Williams Lake River Valley) in the vicinity of Williams Lake.
- ◆ Continue to maintain an arboretum at the Nature Centre of native British Columbia trees and shrubs.



Nature House



Students at a wildlife display in the Nature House

8.3 Tasks

- #16 Assess current materials and future needs for interpretive materials, and develop plans to attain needed materials.
- #17 Inform the Williams Lake community more effectively about the Nature Centre's interpretation services.
- #18 Develop the topical mini-books into more substantial booklets—in black and white for free distribution and in colour for sale.
- #19 Establish and maintain a Scout Island Nature Centre website that includes a question-and-answer section and a “virtual tour” for visitors.
- #20 Expand and maintain the arboretum with plants that will grow in the local climate, and replace identification signs as needed.

9. Nature House

The Nature House, a log building, constitutes the indoor classroom and laboratory for the Nature Centre. The ground floor is divided into three main areas—the interpretive display section, a library and an office—and includes washrooms and a covered outdoor porch. The basement is divided into a large room, which has been used as a classroom, preschool centre and meeting room, and also includes two storage rooms. The roof of the Nature House has been constructed for use as a viewing platform overlooking the marsh.

The City is responsible for the maintenance of the Nature House. In recent years, major repairs have included cleaning and re-caulking the outside walls and replacing the roof. Janitorial services have been provided by members of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists with some paid assistance, and WLFN members undertake annual spring cleaning.

9.1 Goal

Use the Nature House effectively as an interpretive place and enhance its usefulness.

9.2 Strategy

- ◆ Continue to provide and improve indoor interpretative displays and materials that promote understanding of the natural history of the Nature Centre and the Cariboo-Chilcotin region.
- ◆ Increase the length of time the Nature Centre is open for visitors.
- ◆ Improve accessibility to the bookstore in the Nature House and promote it as a service to the community.
- ◆ Expand the Nature House building to include a meeting room and a new preschool room with natural lighting.
- ◆ Develop and implement a maintenance plan for the Nature House displays.

9.3 Tasks

- #21 Use staff and volunteers to increase the number of hours the Nature House is open.
- #22 Maintain the Nature House displays and periodically develop new ones.
- #23 Make the bookstore more prominent and highlight items relevant to seasonal events, such as the annual bird count.
- #24 Determine the best location for a new meeting room, such as the balcony, as well as a room for the preschool, and review the interior design of the Nature House. Communicate with an architect to receive advice and to develop plans for the design of a meeting room in the Nature House.
- #25 Move the donation box to the front area and make it more prominent.
- #26 Continue to work with the City to maintain the Nature House. Regularly update City staff on maintenance needs to ensure that it is safe for public use and kept in good condition.

10. Access

The causeway road provides foot and vehicle access to the Nature Centre. The main gate is closed each day between dusk and 8:00 am to control vehicle traffic and limit possible vandalism.

At the time this plan was prepared, future development of the R.C. Cotton site at the west end of the lake was under review. This site borders the west side of the diversion channel and is connected by marshes and open water to Scout Island. The eventual use of the R.C. Cotton site may significantly affect the integrity of Scout Island Nature Centre, as well as the achievement of its objectives.



**Looking south along the causeway road to the
Scout Island Nature Centre**

10.1 Goal

Ensure that Nature Centre visitors, property and assets are protected through access control.

10.2 Strategy

- ◆ Assess the implications of possible foot access between Scout Island and the R.C. Cotton site and, if necessary, develop mitigation measures to protect the values of the Nature Centre.
- ◆ Manage access to the Nature Centre carefully to prevent vandalism and late-night parties.
- ◆ Prevent after-hours vehicle access to the Nature Centre.
- ◆ Manage the traffic speed along the causeway road to ensure the safety of children and walkers.

10.3 Tasks

- #27 Work with the City of Williams Lake and other groups to limit impacts to the Nature Centre of possible foot access from points other than the causeway, while encouraging the inclusion of the Nature Centre in the River Valley Trail network.
- #28 Ensure that the entrance gate on the causeway road is closed and locked each night.
- #29 Meet with city staff about posting and enforcing speed limits on the causeway road.
- #30 Maintain the current width of the causeway road.

11. Trails

The Nature Centre trails have been developed and maintained by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists and they form an important part of the outdoor experience for all visitors. Trail use is expected to increase in the future. Board walkways, timber staircases, bridges, log railing fences and observation blinds were built with the support of volunteers, corporations and government agencies. Plans are being made to build a viewing platform on the Bulrush Trail and to replace the elevated board walkway at Otter Point.



Island Trail

11.1 Goal

Provide a network of walking trails where visitors can appreciate the natural environment.

11.2 Strategy

- ◆ Maintain the current approach of keeping the trails and their surroundings as natural as possible, while encouraging public use but minimizing the associated impacts.
- ◆ Gather strategy information on trail design and maintenance.
- ◆ Prevent bikes, horses and motorized vehicles from using the trails.
- ◆ Manage the trails to avoid damage to adjacent land and vegetation by compaction and trampling.
- ◆ Work with the City on the construction, condition and maintenance of trails.

11.3 Tasks

- #31 Assess the current trail network and condition; develop a plan that designates trails as primary, secondary and wheelchair-accessible; and undertake any necessary upgrading and maintenance.
- #32 Request information from the City, BC Parks and other relevant agencies on trail design and maintenance.
- #33 Ensure that all Nature Centre trails meet current access standards.
- #34 Seek funding sources and in-kind support from the City and local businesses (such as an “Adopt-A-Trail” program) to support needed trail maintenance and enhancement, then carry it out as planned.
- #35 Post signs to inform Nature Centre visitors about trail use limitations to achieve successful restoration.
- #36 Post signs prohibiting motorized vehicles, bicycles and horses on the trails.

- #37 Install a bike rack near the Nature House parking lot so that visitors can safely store their bicycle while walking on the trails.
- #38 Work in conjunction with the City to develop and maintain the Williams Lake River Valley trail system.

12. Environmental Management

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists has been continually involved in efforts to protect and manage the Scout Island area through various arrangements and guidance, and has followed the lease agreements in place with The Nature Trust of BC and the City of Williams Lake. The report by Gary Runka (1980) provided practical recommendations and has since been a valuable resource. In addition, the Order-in-Council Conservation and Recreation Reserve #8 has provided direction on the management of the defined area in this reserve (Williams Lake Field Naturalists and the City of Williams Lake 1983; Appendix E).

Over time, there have been problems with various animals at the Nature Centre. Some dog owners have not respected the leash requirement, a city bylaw. The occasional presence of domestic and feral cats has led to the loss of wildlife, particularly nesting birds. With the presence of a large population of beavers, the protection and restoration of trees and shrubs has been difficult, and there have been ongoing efforts to place heavy wire fencing around trees to prevent beavers from destroying them.

Problems with invasive plants have been addressed through continued efforts to control burdock and toadflax. Burdock has been controlled by reducing the seed supply and toadflax with biological controls. A biological control agent for Canada thistle was introduced to Scout Island in the summer of 2002, supplemented by hand-pulling efforts to control this noxious weed. A separate management plan is required to reduce the impact of Canada thistle.

12.1 Goal

Since environmental management is a key aspect of any nature centre, the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of habitat will continue to be a high priority for the Scout Island Nature Centre.

12.2 Strategy

- ◆ Encourage and protect natural vegetation of the Nature Centre but also accept established non-native, non-invasive vegetation.
- ◆ Maintain and augment the arboretum of native trees and shrubs of British Columbia.
- ◆ Maintain or enhance the condition of the Nature Centre's wetlands.
- ◆ Prevent boating of any kind in the wetlands except for research or enhancement purposes.
- ◆ Limit the invasion of noxious weeds by promoting healthy, weed-resistant native plant communities and reducing the presence of exposed mineral soil that could serve as a natural seedbed.

- ◆ Where necessary, use environmentally sensitive methods for noxious weed control, such as hand pulling.
- ◆ Minimize additional threats to vegetation from beavers, visitor overuse and willow weevil.
- ◆ Restore riparian vegetation where it has been degraded.
- ◆ Allow the vegetation along the causeway road to remain in a wild condition.
- ◆ Control dogs, cats and the size of the beaver population at the Nature Centre.
- ◆ Avoid planting non-native plants at the Nature Centre except where necessary for soil stabilization, weed control or other environmental purposes. Where non-native plants are required, however, use only species that are not invasive or persistent.
- ◆ Develop restoration plans for areas of non-native vegetation.
- ◆ Work with the City to ensure that the Order-in-Council #8 (Reserve #84680) is recognized and abided by in land use planning.

12.3 Tasks

- #39 Produce a habitat management plan for the Nature Centre that documents and maps the principal habitats. Develop goals for each principal habitat and prioritize actions to achieve the goals.
- #40 Avoid mowing the vegetation along the causeway road, to maintain it in its wild state, unless necessary for noxious weed control.
- #41 Identify each arboretum species with a permanent sign.
- #42 Monitor the condition of the wetlands and develop plans to enhance their natural values.
- #43 Work with city staff to control noxious weeds at the Nature Centre.
- #44 Enforce the city bylaw that dogs must be on a leash at the Nature Centre.
- #45 Remove feral cats from the Nature Centre.
- #46 Maintain beaver population levels that do not heavily impact the vegetation of the Nature Centre.
- #47 Support local events that can be used to encourage the growth of native vegetation, such as “Communities in Bloom.”

13. Promotion and Tourism

The Nature Centre continues to be a very important asset for the city of Williams Lake and the Cariboo-Chilcotin region. It is one of several nature centres in western Canada and is particularly noteworthy since it is based in a relatively small community, within the city limits, and admission is by donation and not through a set fee. The Scout Island Nature Centre attracts both the local public as well as tourists. The Nature Centre is recognized as a Wildlife Watch viewing site in the province and the Nature House is a popular location for wildlife viewing.

The Scout Island Nature Centre has been included in several publications, including the Williams Lake and Area Guide, the Canadian Automobile Association Tourbook, the Beautiful BC Travel Guide and several nature guidebooks. A simple leaflet about the Nature Centre has been prepared and distributed to the local tourist information centre and various motels.

Directional signs to Scout Island have been placed along Highways 97 and 20 and South Mackenzie Avenue to help direct tourists and other visitors.

Continued local support is required to enhance the Nature Centre's ability to serve local residents and to meet its potential for increased numbers of tourists.

13.1 Goal

Promote the services and natural values that the Nature Centre provides and encourage a sustainable level of use by the public.

13.2 Strategy

- ◆ Increase awareness and sense of community ownership of the Nature Centre by the residents of Williams Lake and surrounding areas.
- ◆ Improve communication about the Nature Centre to the community.
- ◆ Increase membership of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists to increase support of the Nature Centre.
- ◆ Support other natural history and environmental stewardship organizations that currently exist or may develop in the Williams Lake area while maintaining the Nature Centre as a distinct entity that focuses on natural history education and appreciation.
- ◆ Monitor the impacts of visitors and develop strategies to ensure sustainable use.

13.3 Tasks

- #48 Promote the importance of the Nature Centre and its activities through the media (newspaper, radio and cable television).
- #49 Produce a poster about the Nature Centre's background, how it is managed by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, and the programs and activities that it offers.
- #50 Recognize the contributions of the City of Williams Lake, The Nature Trust of British Columbia and all supporters to the Nature Centre in a prominent outdoor sign.
- #51 Produce an informational video about the Nature Centre.
- #52 Increase opportunities for adults in the community to learn about natural history and environmental values.
- #53 Produce an updated promotional brochure about the Nature Centre to provide information on its history, services and trails, and distribute it locally and provincially.
- #54 Create an interactive website for the Nature Centre, post it on the City of Williams Lake website, link it with other websites such as Tourism BC, and update it regularly.
- #55 Promote the Nature Centre within the community by producing a summer program leaflet, adding Nature Centre programs and activities to the Leisure Services bi-annual booklet, maintaining the website, and adding events to community events calendars (newspapers, radio and cable television).
- #56 Hold an Open House to celebrate the Nature Centre's 25th anniversary in 2003.

- #57 Host an annual public event offering activities that help visitors learn about the natural history of the Cariboo-Chilcotin region, such as a festival connected with migratory birds or other seasonal events. Consider modelling such events based on successful approaches used by other nature centres and communities. Include workshops and activities to attract visitors and raise the Nature Centre's local and provincial profile.
- #58 Host a "birdathon" or a spring bird count to help others in the community learn more about birds.
- #59 Encourage the inclusion of bus service to the Nature Centre.
- #60 Add "Scout Island Nature Centre" under the binocular icons on the highway signs on Highway 20 leading into Williams Lake.
- #61 Construct an informational sign about the Nature Centre on the highway pullouts north and south of town.

14. Funding

Annual funding has been needed to operate the Scout Island Nature Centre. One of the main expenses has been wages for the teacher naturalists. Other expenses have included materials and supplies for classes, educational materials for the library and displays, and grounds maintenance.

Funding has come from several sources including grants from governments, a grant from School District 27, fundraising activities such as the spring banquet and the fall fundraising drive, fees from the nature programs in the summer, and donations made by visitors to the Nature House. Visitor admission to the Nature Centre has always been free of charge.

14.1 Goal

Obtain the funds needed to achieve the Nature Centre vision.

14.2 Strategy

- ◆ All fundraising will identify a clear purpose—a defined product with a measurable outcome—to potential contributors.
- ◆ Directors will procure funds from a variety of sources. Once in place, an administrator will handle the paperwork required for grant applications and reports.
- ◆ Fundraising for specific projects will be distinguished from that for general purposes.
- ◆ Evaluations of Nature Centre programs will be obtained and used for successful fundraising.

14.3 Tasks

- #62 Obtain seed funding to employ an administrator and a teacher naturalist.
- #63 Pursue the city's limited-access website for potential funding sources.
- #64 Contact the Wild Bird Trust and other organizations for funding sources.
- #65 Consider applying to obtain funds from bingo after reviewing the requirements and implications.

- #66 Coordinate fundraising as required using a project-based approach. Contact foundations such as the Cariboo, Endswell, Vancouver and Bullet Foundations about submitting applications for funding.
- #67 Investigate establishing a Scout Island Nature Centre endowment fund for bequeathments.
- #68 Enquire with the Federation of BC Naturalists about funding opportunities and sources.
- #69 Produce a more prominent sign suggesting a minimum donation per visitor, and relocate the visitor donation box in the Nature House.
- #70 Continue the annual Scout Island Nature Centre spring fundraising banquet and fall fundraising campaign.

15. Appendices

15.1 Appendix A. History of the Scout Island Nature Centre

The Scout Island Nature Centre consists of two islands, the land on both sides of the causeway at the main entrance, the causeway, the marsh and the surrounding water at the west end of Williams Lake. The Nature Centre has developed into a significant place for visitors to learn about and appreciate the natural environment, and to enjoy the recreational pursuits offered in this natural setting. It has also become an important tourist destination for people visiting Williams Lake.

During the early 1970s, the first steps toward making this area into a nature centre took place. In 1971, the Town Council of Williams Lake began filling in the marsh to create a larger area for parking motor homes. Many citizens, on learning of this action, became concerned at the loss of this prime wildlife habitat and took steps to try to preserve it. As a result of their efforts, the Regional District and the Town requested that the Canadian Wildlife Service conduct a study of the west end of the lake, with particular reference to the marsh. The study, by biologist R.D. Harris, was completed in May, 1972. His report (Harris 1972) pointed out the significance of the marsh and made recommendations on beneficial developmental steps for the marsh and surrounding lands. The National Second Century Fund of BC (now The Nature Trust of BC) was approached about purchasing the property to preserve it as a natural area. This purchase took place, and in August, 1973 a lease was signed between the National Second Century Fund of BC and the Town. The purchase money of \$99,000 was put in trust with the Town for development of Scout Island Nature Centre lands and the marsh as a natural area.

After the purchase, a local committee was appointed to develop the area under the conditions of the lease with Harris Report as a guide. At this time, the area became known as the Scout Island Environmental Complex. This group was involved until the end of 1976 when it disbanded after achieving several improvements, including the construction of the Nature House, marsh improvement and developmental work, and the construction of a culvert through the causeway.

In 1977, the Williams Lake Field Naturalists offered its help to the Town in developing the Nature Centre as an educational and recreational place for the community. Negotiations took place, and in 1978 a sublease between the Town and the Field Naturalists was signed. Since that time many services at the Nature Centre have been provided to the community, including:

- ◆ employing teacher naturalists to provide educational programs about nature;
- ◆ hiring preschool teachers for the nature-oriented preschool called 'Discovery Preschool';
- ◆ developing the Nature House into an interpretive centre;
- ◆ constructing and maintaining trails, walkways and bridges so that people can explore a variety of habitats at the Nature Centre;
- ◆ constructing interpretive kiosks and preparing materials providing information on natural history in the Cariboo; and

- ◆ planting shrubs and trees to improve habitat and provide educational opportunities for plant identification.

The attraction of the Nature Centre encourages many tourists to visit and take advantage of the educational services and recreational opportunities, such as wildlife viewing and walking. As a part of the responsibility of operating the Nature Centre, the Field Naturalists have followed the conditions outlined in the leases and, when needed, have been in communication with both the City and The Nature Trust of BC.

Two important resources have been used in the management of the Nature Centre. In 1980, Gary Runka of G.G. Runka Land Sense wrote a report outlining the ecological, educational and other values of the Nature Centre wetlands, with recommendations on how to enhance this valuable natural resource (Runka 1980). One of his recommendations was to apply for an Order in Council Reserve to legislate protection and management of the wetlands. The Marsh Management Plan was developed as a basis for this Reserve. After public meetings and approval by the City, the application for a Reserve for Conservation, Recreation and Habitat Preservation was made in 1983. On January 4, 1984, the Cabinet of British Columbia approved Order in Council #8 (Reserve #84680) so that this reserve came into being.

In the early 1990s, the Scout Island Nature Centre was recognized as one of the principal wildlife viewing sites in British Columbia under the BC Wildlife Watch program of the Ministry of Environment (now the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection).

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists decided to prepare the Scout Island Nature Centre management plan in 2001, and the process for developing and completing this process began in 2002.

In 2003, the Williams Lake Field Naturalists will have been involved with the responsibility of operating the Nature Centre for the community for 25 years. This group is planning to mark the occasion through a celebration with the public.

15.2 Appendix B. The Nature Trust of British Columbia

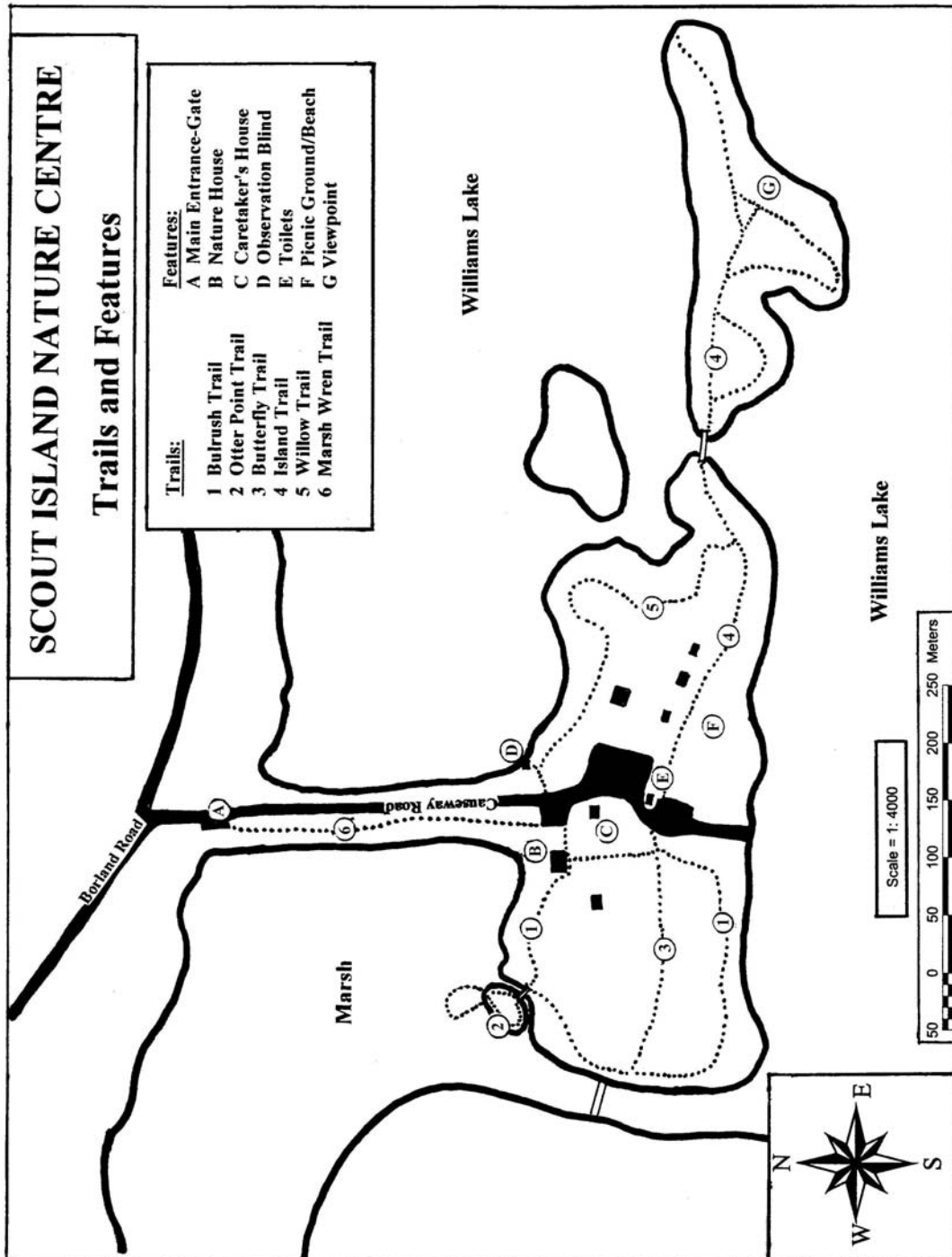
The Nature Trust of British Columbia is one of the oldest and largest private, non-profit charitable land conservation organizations in the province. It was founded in 1971 as the National Second Century Fund of BC during the province's centennial anniversary. The Nature Trust conserves critical habitats and other areas of ecological significance and scenic beauty throughout British Columbia.

The Nature Trust and its partners in conservation invested more than \$45 million between 1971 and 2003. This money has secured over 220 properties in 116 projects covering over 21,000 hectares. More than 41,500 additional hectares of land have been secured by The Nature Trust through land leases and conservation covenants.

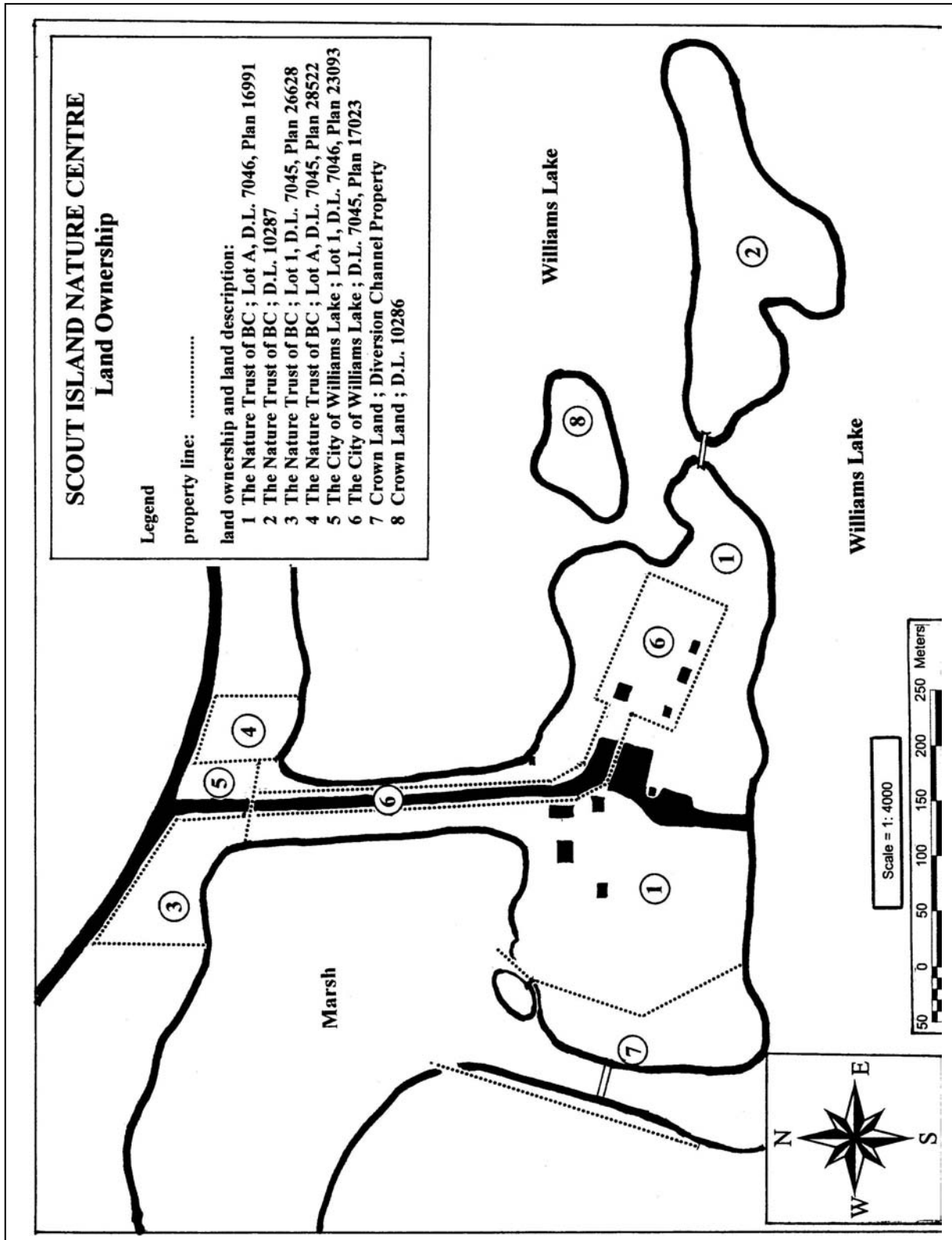
Land acquired by The Nature Trust of BC through purchase or gift is then leased under a 99-year agreement to a government or private agency on condition that the property is preserved and protected as a site of ecological interest. The Scout Island Nature Centre property (properties 1 and 2, Figure 15.3.2, Map 2) is owned by The Nature Trust and was purchased in 1973. Two additional properties were purchased in 1982 and 1989 (properties 4 and 3, respectively, Figure 15.3.2, Map 2).

15.3 Appendix C. Maps of the Scout Island Nature Centre

15.3.1 Map 1. Trails and Features



15.3.2 Map 2. Land Ownership



15.3.3 Map 3. Recreation, Conservation and Habitat Preservation Reserve

15.4 Appendix D. Leases

15.4.1 Lease between The Nature Trust of BC and the City of Williams Lake

This lease was first signed in 1973 (for properties 1 and 2, Figure 15.3.2, Map 2). Additional leases were signed in 1982 following the acquisition of parcel 4 and in 1989 following the acquisition of parcel 3, (Figure 15.3.2, Map 2). This legal agreement outlines the responsibilities of the City toward the management and care of the property owned by The Nature Trust of BC. In this agreement, the Lessor is The Nature Trust of BC and the Lessee is the City of Williams Lake. The term of the lease is 99 years. Some of the major points in this agreement are as follows:

1. The Lessee covenants to pay taxes; and to pay rates for water, electric light, gas and telephone.
2. And to repair; and to keep up fences; and not to cut down timber.
3. And that it will leave premises in good repair.
4. And that it will not carry on any business that shall be deemed a nuisance on the premises.
5. Under 'General' items the following clauses are included:
 - Clause #2. “The Lessee will, at all times during the term of the lease, maintain and preserve in good order and condition the grounds of the premises, and carefully preserve the trees, bushes, shrubs, plants and flowers now growing and which may, at any time during the said term, grow therein from waste, injury or destruction.”
 - Clause #4 “The said premises shall be preserved and/or developed by the Lessee as a sight of ecological interest for the use, enjoyment and benefit of the people of British Columbia. The sole decision of the lessor shall determine whether the said premises are being preserved and/or developed as aforesaid and such decision shall be binding upon the parties hereto.”
6. Clause 5(b) of the 1973 lease shows that “the Lessee may continue during the term hereof to use: i) the present public swimming beach and facilities attendant thereto; ii) the present picnic facilities; iii) the present small boat launching site.”

15.4.2 Sublease between the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists

This agreement was signed in 1978 and 1982. Major points include:

1. The Williams Lake Field Naturalists shall perform all the covenants and conditions contained in the main lease between The Nature Trust of BC and the City of Williams Lake.
2. The City is responsible for the maintenance of the picnic facilities, beach and boat launching site.

Plans have been made by the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists to rewrite this sublease in early 2003 to clarify and update conditions within this agreement.

15.5 Appendix E. Recreation, Conservation and Habitat Preservation Reserve #84680 and Scout Island Nature Centre Marsh Management Plan

15.5.1 History

This Recreation, Conservation and Habitat Preservation Reserve was approved by the British Columbia provincial Cabinet through Order-in-Council #008 on January 4, 1984 under section 11 of the Land Act. The area included under this reserve is shown in Appendix C, section 15.3.3.

The City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, along with Land and Water British Columbia Inc., are responsible for managing the defined area of the reserve in accordance with the terms of the Scout Island Nature Centre Marsh Management Plan. This management plan was approved by the City and the Field Naturalists in 1983, before the application requesting an Order-in-Council Reserve was submitted to the Cabinet of the Province of British Columbia.

The term of this reserve is 30 years. The reserve needs to be renewed prior to 2014, following a review of the Management Plan.

15.5.2 Scout Island Nature Centre Marsh Management Plan

The plan (Williams Lake Field Naturalists and the City of Williams Lake 1983) provides long-term direction for preserving the natural values of the area, and providing a recreational and educational place for people to enjoy these values. This plan outlines the management goals and recommendations for the defined area, as well as the history, physical and biological resources, and visitor uses of the area.

Some of the main points of the Scout Island Nature Centre Marsh Management Plan are:

A. Uses within the Reserve area (Section 4.0 of the Plan)

1. Nature interpretation programs and facilities should continue to be developed at the Nature Centre.
2. Plans for major projects on Crown property should be submitted and approved by Land and Water British Columbia Inc. (formerly the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing in 1983).
3. Development and maintenance of facilities at the Nature Centre should be carried out under the terms of the lease between the City of Williams Lake and The Nature Trust of BC.
4. Buoys should be placed annually to demarcate a safe swimming area off the beach.
5. The present boat launching site should be maintained but not expanded.
6. Ice skating and cross-country skiing should be encouraged on the lake but not in the marsh. Snowmobiling should not be allowed on the Nature Centre grounds or the marsh, and should be discouraged on the lake in the Reserve area.

7. The boating speed limit in the Reserve should be 8 km/hour and water skiing should not be allowed in the Reserve. (Note: the City applied for this speed limit before this Plan was developed).

B. Plan Designation and Recommendations (Section 5.0 in the Plan)

1. Application should be made for an Order-in-Council Reserve under recreation, conservation and habitat preservation.
2. The following developments should be considered:
 - ◆ improvement of water flow by dredging in the marsh and placing additional culverts in the causeway;
 - ◆ construction and maintenance of a reasonable number of trails and boardwalks;
 - ◆ introduction and maintenance of native plant species; and
 - ◆ improvement of the habitat to encourage the presence of a wide variety of native fauna.
3. Funds should be obtained to develop worthwhile educational programs and complete various projects at the Nature Centre.

15.6 Appendix F. "What is a Nature Centre?"

The following excerpts are from Kordish and Graham, date unknown.

15.6.1 What is a Nature Centre?

A nature centre has its beginning when local people preserve an open area with its plants and animals. To help visitors enter this land and become familiar with its life and natural contours, the founding members unobtrusively add a carefully planned system of trails and various interpretive facilities. Teacher-naturalists, in programs adapted to the local environment, lead adults and children through a series of compelling outdoor experiences toward an understanding of the complex elements of their natural surroundings.

A nature centre is more than simply another park or playground or museum. Established in a modern community where man's works tend to obscure the other things to which he is related, its facilities and programs focus exclusively on nature interpretation. The emphasis lies on man as *a part of*, and not *apart from*, the natural systems that underlie all life on this planet.

A nature centre, then, is designed to create among its visitors an awareness of the ties that bind them to the natural world. It is a vital addition to a community's educational, scientific and cultural life.

15.6.2 Why a Nature Centre?

Several years ago a large estate near a Midwestern city came on the market. Its owners obviously had loved the land. There were stands of native trees and shrubs, gently flowing streams, rolling hills and meadows. Birds, small animals, snakes and toads roamed the estate, undisturbed by human encroachment. Upon the death of the owners, the land seemed ripe for inclusion in the swiftly moving tide of development that reached out from the city.

A naturalist who had photographed plants and animals on the land looked at it from a different point of view. He showed the estate to a friend of his, a man prominent and respected in the city.

"Should this land be developed like all the rest of the land around here?" the naturalist asked. "Or should it become a nature centre for the whole urban area?"

Both men, loving and understanding the land, instinctively knew the answers to those questions. Here the germ of an idea eventually flowered in a magnificent green enclave that will serve the urban area for decades to come. But it did not become a reality overnight. A great deal of hard work and, much harder to come by, a great deal of money were needed before the land was preserved and established as a nature centre. That meant convincing other people, getting them to share the dream. The question had to be asked and answered: "Why a nature centre?"

More than seven hundred communities, enjoying year round nature centres with professional staffs and interpretive buildings and programs, have already answered that question to their own satisfaction.

A nature centre: –

- ◆ Creates an oasis in the developing urban or suburban sprawl. It can be a vital link in the community's open-space plan, providing a breathing hole for body and spirit.
- ◆ Maintains living space for wildlife. As the land disappears under buildings and concrete, native plants and animals die or retreat to remoter areas, and the marvellous diversity of our world continues to dwindle. We are beginning to realize how much wild things contribute to our well-being. In preserving places in which they can live, we are enriching ourselves.
- ◆ Serves, in a very real sense, as an educational institution, nourishing an awareness of and an appreciation for natural values. Here children, confined within the walls of a classroom for much of their young lives, experience adventure and wonder among living things in the outdoors. One child, gravely examining the web-footed duck at the edge of a nature centre's pond, was heard muttering to himself, "That bird ain't got no between the toes!" With such electrifying discoveries, knowledge soon blossoms into understanding.
- ◆ Offers local people various opportunities to develop new skills. Programs range from academic (teacher workshops and junior naturalist training) to those of general interest (spring wildflower walks and bird identification) to those of direct participation (working with natural dyes).
- ◆ Provides recreation for young and old. Regardless of one's physical or mental capacities, the trails, fields and ponds invite reflection and spiritual refreshment—strolling, birdwatching, or simply smelling the wildflowers. Here distinctions blur between young and old, while families come together to explore their natural surroundings.
- ◆ Supports traditional values. Workers at nature centres report that vandalism, often a serious problem for isolated institutions, quickly decreases when programs get underway and the area attracts more visitors. As they become to appreciate the wild treasures around them, visitors are more inclined to protect them. This new responsibility, in turn, often matures into a general respect for public and private property.

- ◆ Develops leadership for action on both local and national environmental issues. "Why should we not look on the universe with piety?" Santayana asked. "Is it not our substance? Are we made of other clay? All our possibilities lie from eternity hidden in its bosom." Once men and women begin to see the enduring connection between themselves and the rest of the planet, its other life and its envelope of air, they assume their moral stewardship of the earth. They become eager to protect it for their own and future generations.
- ◆ Enhances a community's cultural life. A well-run and effective nature centre is a matter of community pride, as important as an art centre, a museum or a community centre. Like other cultural institutions, it tends to attract new residents, businesses and industries. It helps to build a community that is "a nice place to live."

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread," John Muir once wrote, "places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer, and give strength to body and soul."

At a nature centre people of all ages come to *understand* and *enjoy* their roles in the natural world.

16. References

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