

# COMOX VALLEY NEWS

## Cumberland Community Forest Society set to complete transaction

14 April 2020



The Cumberland Community Forest Society has raised enough money to purchase a 91.4-hectare parcel along Perseverance Creek.

The total costs of 'Project Perseverance' were \$2.38 million, including land appraisals, timber cruise and valuation, surveys, subdivision and legal work.

The society had been in the final push to raise \$150,000 by March 31 when the COVID-19 crisis hit.

"We were very worried about our ability to meet our targets, with trivia and other events cancelled, but this community is remarkable," CCFS executive director Meaghan Cursons said. "And the protection of nature, forests and watersheds is more important than ever. Nature has provided sanctuary and solace for so many of us during this time. We are so grateful to have this forest to nurture our community on so many levels."

The CCFS had raised about \$110,000. An anonymous donor then provided \$20,000. Another \$10,000 was raised in the Perseverance Auction, and The Cumby registrants donated their fees — even though the 2020 race was cancelled. The total came in at about \$145,000, but it sufficed to proceed and work with sustaining donors over the next two months to bridge the difference.

“Those sustaining donors are critical for our ongoing work,” Cursons said, noting the family of Rob H. Daniel contributed \$50,000 in February as a matching fundraising challenge. “Our community met this challenge and exceeded it by March 20, with support from incredible business and private donations. Big shout out to Harmonic Arts and Cumberland Brewing Company for their incredible ongoing support.”

At this point, the CCFS is not planning to create or change any trails within the purchase area.

“There are wonderful existing trails within these lands that our community continues to enjoy,” Cursons said.

The society is working with other funding agencies to complete conservation covenants and other requirements to collect remaining funds and to complete the transaction, hopefully this spring. It will then dive into restoration and collaborative land use planning, and identify projects and priorities.

Later, the society will identify future acquisition and watershed protection areas, including 35 hectares known as Middle Earth.

This week, the CCFS is launching a community art project called ‘Going Batty’ to mark BC Bat Appreciation Day on Friday, April 17.

The CCFS welcomes donations to ongoing work to protect forests, watersheds and species-at-risk. Donor links can be found at [www.cumberlandforest.com/protect/](http://www.cumberlandforest.com/protect/)

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