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Photo by Jillian Cooper / Getty Images

### Welcome

I am honoured and grateful to present the 2023-24 Annual Report for The Fur-Bearers. Over the past year, we have prioritized the refinement of our programs and deeply invested in our policies, procedures and processes to maximize and sustainably grow our impact for the animals long into the future.

Among our most notable achievements from this past fiscal year included a focus on commercial trapping. In partnership with Exposed Wildlife Conservancy, we released a 3-part docuseries exposing the harsh realities of the North American commercial trapping industry. We also developed and prompted a video series to assist pet owners in safely releasing their pets should they become trapped. In addition to these films, our advocacy extended to several provinces to voice support for trapping regulatory reform.

Our media presence remains strong, averaging one media mention each week, and our social media channels continue to grow impressively. Our educational programs are expanding rapidly as well.

We're seeing uptake in our door hanger program and annual scholarships. Notably, we're receiving rave reviews of our new children's activity book, distributed in partnership with the BC SPCA.

Additionally, we began a new focus on acquisition management and marketing tools; this is crucial as a growing support base allows for our programs and impact to grow long-term.

The Fur-Bearers received numerous bequests this past fiscal year, for which we are deeply grateful. However, these generous contributions also come with the sorrow of losing cherished members of our community. We feel incredibly fortunate that these individuals included the animals in their final wishes, and we will honour their legacy with great appreciation.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our volunteer board of directors and board of advisors for their steadfast dedication and support. This annual report highlights our shared efforts and celebrates our accomplishments. Every success of The Fur-Bearers for the animals is made possible by supporters like you. Thank you.

For the animals,
Lesley Fox

Executive Director
The Fur-Bearers

Photo: An eastern cottontail rabbit (Sylvilagus floridanus) in a summer field. They are the most common rabbit species in North America!

Photo by mirceax / Getty Images

## **About Us**

The legal name of our society is The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals, although we do business as The Fur-Bearers.

The purposes of the Society are:

- 1. to protect the environment by preserving urban and rural ecosystems and the wildlife therein;
  - 2. to advance education by:
- (a) developing and delivering training, courses, seminars, workshops and conferences that promote the welfare of animals; and
- (b) conducting, commissioning and disseminating research related to the welfare of animals;
- 3. to uphold the administration and enforcement of animal welfare laws by:
- (a) monitoring the practices of commercial fur farms and other commercial operations using furbearing animals to determine compliance with relevant laws; and,
- (b) identifying infractions by monitoring and reviewing publicly accessible information and through tips from the public; and
- 4. to do all such other things as are incidental and ancillary to the attainment of the foregoing purposes and the exercise of the powers of the Society.

#### **Mission Statement**

To protect fur-bearing animals through conservation, advocacy, research, and education.

#### **Values**

We believe that:

- Fur is not a commodity.
- Coexistence with fur-bearing animals is possible and non-lethal solutions to human/wildlife conflicts are effective.
- Fur-bearing animals are a part of a healthy Canadian environment.
- Education and open, respectful and positive interactions will bring about sustainable change.
- Repeatable, reviewed and ethical science should be the basis for solutions.

#### **Our Values**

Respecting Individuals: We strive for a world where non-human animals are respected and acknowledged as individuals.

Solution-Oriented: We believe that all problems must be met with solutions, not complaints alone.

Credible: Our actions and statements will be backed by science, research, and with an understanding of their implications.

Habitat: We recognize that in order to protect fur-bearing animals in the wild, we must protect their habitat.

Compassion: To achieve a more compassionate Canada, we must lead with compassion – even with those who disagree with our values and mission.

### **Vision Statement**

A world where humans and wild animals coexist peacefully.



Photo: An American badger (*Taxidea taxus*) watches a photographer in the Canadian wilderness:

Photo by Jillian Cooper / Getty Images

### **About Us**

#### Governance

The Fur-Bearers is governed by a volunteer board of directors who help provide strategic direction, uphold fiduciary and legal responsibilities, manage organization risks and establish organization policies.

Our <u>board of directors</u> for the 2023-24 fiscal year include:

Erin Ryan, B.Sc, M.Sc, President Dr. Elisabeth Ormandy, Vice President Charly Jarrett, Treasurer Anne Carchesio, Secretary Adrienne Maranduik, At Large Celeste Morales\*, At Large Carlene Field\*, At Large

\* Joined the board just after the turnover of the fiscal year at a Special General Meeting on August 10, 2024.

#### Staff

To implement board directives, The Fur-Bearers has a <u>staff</u> that includes:

Lesley Fox, Executive Director Aaron Hofman, Director of Advocacy and Policy Michael Howie, Director of Communications Marcy Potter, Director of Finance & Donor Relations Sydney Schaffner, Social Media & Communications Coordinator

In addition to the above, a <u>volunteer advisory board</u> provides ongoing expertise regarding our campaigns, communications and projects. These individuals include:

Dr. Kristen Walker, PhD
Allison Render, J.D.
Amelia Porter, M.Sc., RPBio
David Stanford, PhD Candidate
Matthew Brown B.Sc., JD
Chelsea Greer, B.Sc., M.Sc. Candidate
Christina Carrières, RVT, CWR
Dr. Chris R. Shepherd, PhD

More details on our board of directors, staff, contractors and advisory board can be found at **TheFurBearers.com**.



Photo: A family of river otters (*Lontra canadensis*) rest together in Jasper, Alberta.

Photo by Jillian Cooper / Getty Images



### **Fur Farming**

The Fur-Bearers is committed to seeing an end to fur farming in Canada. This is a short list sharing some of what we achieved last year in our efforts to educate the public and work with government to end inherently inhumane fur farming.

In our 2023-24 fiscal year:

- We conducted research to determine the scale of Canada's fur farm sector as federal fur farm statistics are no longer being published. Using available Census data and our research findings, we <u>published key information</u> about Canada's fur farm sector on an interactive map using the ArcGIS platform.
- Our research on fur farms in Canada uncovered fur farms that are <u>actively farming wolves</u>, <u>bobcats</u>, <u>and lynx</u>, species not known to be farmed for their fur in Canada.
- The discovery of new wildlife species farmed for their fur generated media interest and caught the attention of federal policymakers. Supporters across Canada contacted their elected representatives and federal ministers with calls to end fur farming in Canada.
- The Fur-Bearers met with federal ministerial and department staff to discuss our concerns with fur farming and made the case to transition away from the practice.
- We hosted an online panel discussion on fur farming with experts including Victoria Shroff, Dr. Jan Hajek, Judy Wilson Red Hummingbird/tsiqw xwéxwne, and our own Aaron Hofman. Participants learned about the public health risks created by fur farming, the impact on individual animals,

Indigenous perspectives, and why change is needed

- We learned that <u>Nova Scotia quietly closed</u> down a mink industry subsidy after we spoke out about the public financing and subsidization of the province's fur farm sector.
- The Fur-Bearers shared our expertise on fur farming to our colleagues and partners, including a University of British Columbia seminar in animal law and a guest presentation with Humane Canada.



Photo: A mink (*Neogale vision*) on a Canadian fur farm.

Photo by WeAnimalsMedia.org

### **Trapping**

The impact of traps on wildlife, domestic animals, and communities remains significant across Canada.

In our 2023-24 fiscal year:

- We published our original research about pets caught in traps in a policy brief, Collateral Damage, The Unreported Victims of Wildlife Trapping: Cats and Dogs. This brief used freedom of information legislation across Canada to highlight the issue of pets being caught, injured, or killed by traps. It outlines several recommendations that would mitigate the risks and harms to the public caused by trapping. This research generated media interest and was sent to policymakers.
- We released an educational video produced by Kahani Pictures on behalf of The Fur-Bearers, showing how to release pets from three types of traps common across the country. In addition to the full length video on YouTube, snippets showing each individual trap were created and released through social media. The promotion of this video and information on dogs and cats in traps continues into the 2024-25 fiscal year.
- The <u>Trapped in the Past documentary series</u> (with supportive landing page, action item, and donation options) was released in conjunction with our partners at Exposed Wildlife Conservancy. The three-part series focuses on trapping economics, history, the use of snares and other devices, and the impact on wildlife and non-target species. A documentary feature-length version of the project is in development for fiscal 2024-25.
- We advocated for the province of British Columbia to <u>introduce trapping restrictions in response</u> to a record-setting wildfire season, particularly as the direct impacts to wildlife from wildfires are unknown.
- We called on the province of British Columbia to halt all commercial trapping of beavers in response to the increased pressure of wildfires and the positive impact beaver activity has upon their spread.
- We sent an open letter to the Government of PEI in response to a government-commissioned report on trapping. We argued that the report failed to present an independent and impartial position regarding the future of trapping in the province. We supported local advocates calling for an end to the use of snares and trapping on the island province, and our commentary on the report in part led to new hearings by the government in the next fiscal year.



- We issued a news release after three raccoons were found suffering in traps in Mission, British Columbia.
- We engaged multiple stakeholders to outline our concerns over a government-funded research project that would use leg-hold traps and neck snares to trap coyotes in Stanley Park.

More on next page

Photo: A coyote pup (Canis latrans) stands among tall grasses in Jasper National Park.

Photo by Jillian Cooper / Getty Images

### **Trapping**

• We learned about Pearl, a dog who was caught in a trap outside her family's farm for three days, and eventually had her leg amputated. We generated significant media coverage, which led to the Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship Nathan Cullen to say he was open to signage and other solutions to protect pets from becoming caught in traps.

• In response to Pearl's incident, we met with provincial department staff to discuss stronger trapping regulations in British Columbia.

• We profiled an incident of a dog being trapped by a snare in Hay River, Northwest Territories. We sent a letter to the community's mayor and council recommending trapping restrictions.

• We published a <u>database of municipal trapping</u> <u>bylaws in Canada</u>. This is an ongoing project as we learn about more municipalities that have introduced trapping restrictions.



Pearl the Anatolian Shepherd lost her front left leg to a leg-hold trap.

Submitted photo



### **Living With Wildlife**

Our Living With Wildlife campaign is all about creating solutions that help communities not only accept, but thrive alongside wildlife.

In our 2023-24 fiscal year:

- We teamed up with Coyote Watch Canada to call on the Province of Saskatchewan to end coyote bounties after bounties were issued in numerous municipalities.
- We communicated the need for greater actions from the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to prevent lethal management of coyotes in parks, including appropriate updates to signage, garbage management, and enforcement of existing/new bylaws.
- We called on Canadians to speak against amendments to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act in Ontario that would allow new licenses for "dog train and trial areas", also known as penned dog hunting facilities. These facilities hold wild animals like coyotes who are used as practice for dogs trained to hunt them. The Fur-Bearers submitted a formal comment to reject proposed changes.
- We shared news that a coyote who allegedly bit a child was consuming peanuts and dog food prior to being killed by RCMP officers - more evidence of how direct feeding impacts wildlife behaviour.

- We supported <u>Petition e-4351</u> calling for the government of Canada to replace fireworks with light shows.
- We released the <u>deadliest communities for BC</u>
  <u>Black Bears list in June 2023</u>. This list organizes the black bears killed by BC Conservation Officers by community and shows trends within municipalities that need to be addressed; this program has generated significant media coverage and led to numerous political leaders indicating new priorities for black bears and attractants.
- Following the release of our black bear community list, we sent letters to several municipalities to encourage strengthening wildlife attractant bylaws and offering our support to help promote coexistence with wildlife.

More on next page

Photo: A black bear (Ursus americanus) walks down a forest boardwalk.

Photo by Greg Norgaard / Getty Images

### Living With Wildlife

- We issued a <u>news release in British Columbia in August 2023</u> reminding residents that black bears are on the move and the need for a focus on attractants around homes and businesses. Multiple media outlets covered the story.
- We partnered with Drs. Valli Fraser-Celin and Stephanie Rutherford, and Research Co., to conduct a national survey of Canadians on their perceptions of wolves. The results show that Canadians want wolves protected, disagree with the notion of killing one species to save another, and that specific educational gaps could be addressed. This research was later published (2024) in a peer-reviewed journal.
- The <u>City of Airdrie chose to adopt a coexistence-centred management strategy for beavers</u> following several residents contacting The Fur-Bearers regarding killing practices in the Alberta community. We thank everyone for their work in getting more progressive policies in place!
- We called on supporters to engage in a public input process from the BC government regarding a draft Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework. The Fur-Bearers submitted a formal comment.
- We learned that the province of British Columbia spent \$1.65 million killing wolves and cougars in the

- first few months of 2023. In total, 217 wolves and 8 cougars were killed. We continue to advocate for an end to the wolf cull and encourage supporters to contact their MLAs and the premier with the same message. Data from our wolf survey informed us that most residents oppose killing one species to save another.
- Following the <u>release of footage of penned dog</u>
  <u>hunting by Animal Justice</u>, we cosigned their letter
  calling for an end to the practice. Cosigners included
  World Animal Protection, Humane Canada, Zoocheck,
  Humane Society International/Canada, Animal
  Alliance of Canada, and Coyote Watch Canada.
- We challenged the government of British Columbia's wildlife enforcement agency to <u>begin fining municipalities</u> where black bear deaths remain high and steps to mitigate the attractant/feeding issues are not being actively taken.

More on next page



Photo: A wolf (Canis lupus) calls out with a howl in the Rocky Mountains.

Photo by John E. Marriott / WildernessPrints.com

### **Living With Wildlife**

- We shared news that a <u>woman was fined \$3500</u> for leaving attractants in Vancouver's Stanley Park in 2021; the incident for which she was charged came shortly after 11 coyotes were killed in the park due to animals biting visitors, which is believed to have been caused by feeding.
  - · We celebrated Canada's ban of strychnine poison!
- We spoke out against a plan to trap and kill rabbits on Granville Island, and created an advocacy campaign for supporters to follow. A rabbit rescue, Rabbitats, was ultimately able to take on

- management of the situation and protect many individuals.
- With our wildlife organization partners in Ontario, The Fur-Bearers presented to the council of Huntsville, Ontario and met with town staff to advocate for beaver coexistence strategies to be implemented.
- We cosigned a letter with Canadian and international organizations calling on the federal government to support an international protocol against wildlife trafficking.



### **Humane Education**

Providing education is a cornerstone of advocacy and long-term, sustainable change. Our Humane Education programs focus on these - with significant impact!

In our 2023-24 fiscal year:

- We introduced <u>General Wildlife door hangers to</u> <u>our Door Hanger Program</u>, addressing potential issues related to skunks, raccoons, squirrels, and other wildlife that are often victims of homeowner trapping.
- We released a report on what Canadians consider humane, based on a national survey commissioned by The Fur-Bearers. This data supports a move toward compassionate conservation and greater protection for wildlife.

importance of large terrestrial mammals.

- The Fur-Bearers was a community partner for a University of British Columbia upper-level course on human-wildlife conflict. Our collaboration with students <u>focused on wildlife feeding</u>, a project that involved survey design, data analysis, and an educational component.
- We <u>awarded our annual Beaver Institute training</u> <u>scholarship to Janalene Kingshott, Director of Animal Welfare at Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Ontario.</u> By increasing the availability of experts who can install flow devices, we reduce the number of beavers who are lethally trapped.

More on next page





### **Humane Education**

• We were invited to spend a day at Whole Foods North Vancouver, distributing information on wildlife coexistence and helping reduce the negative impacts on animals in the community.

• We began developing a <u>Wildlife Feeding program</u>, including new videos and landing pages. This process concluded and is live as of fiscal 2024-25.

• We developed a Wild & Free Activity book, featuring colouring pages from an Indigenous artist (Simone Diamond, Coast Salish artist), coexistence-themed games and activities, and educational information. We distributed copies to nearly 1,000 campers attending the BC SPCA kids camps across eight locations. The BC SPCA was extremely grateful, and the book has become an annual program that we are seeking to expand in coming fiscal years.



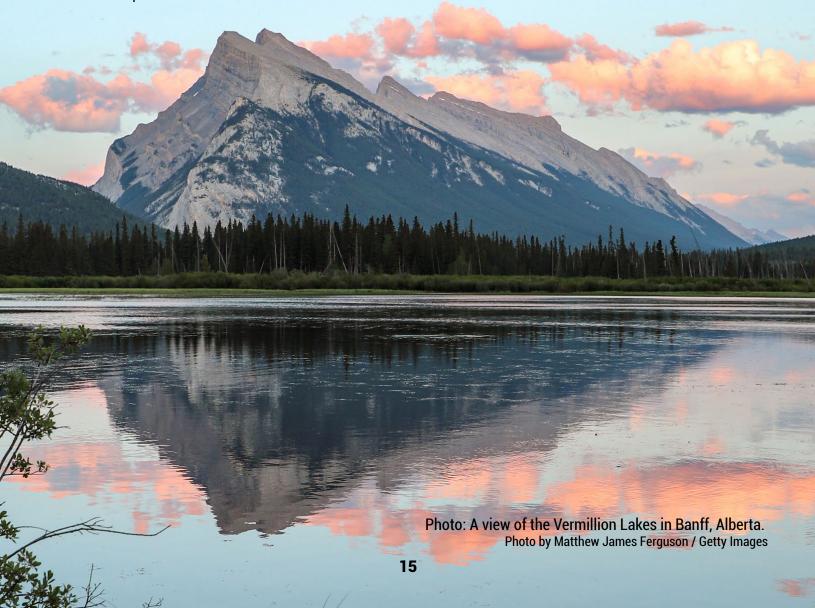
Photo: A grizzly bear (Ursus arctos horribilis) takes a break from the heat by sitting in BC's Khutze River. Photo by Sophia Granchinho / Getty Images

# **Administrative Highlights**

Administrative work was prioritized through the fiscal year, with investments in our infrastructure, long-term planning, developing programs, and ensuring sustainable growth into the future.

- The Annual General Meeting was held July 5, 2023, and saw a board slate of Erin Ryan, Dr. Elisabeth Ormandy, Anne Carchesio, Charly Jarrett, and Adrienne Maranduik confirmed.
- We launched our search for a Director of Development to help us grow - Christine Jeyarajah was hired early in our 2024-25 fiscal year to fill the role!
- We developed and published our <u>organizational</u> <u>statement regarding Indigenous trapping</u>.
- We developed <u>new and revised existing policies</u> related to the internal mechanisms of The Fur-Bearers, including our privacy, cookies, social media, and rewards policies.

- We developed and implemented new Terms of Reference for our advisory board.
- We created a procedures manual for much of our internal work to ensure consistency and clarity, and proactively promote succession management.
- We launched professional development and wellness programs to ensure staff have a sustainable work/life balance and are functioning in a healthy, high capacity manner.
- Long-term investment in legacy giving has helped establish sustainability through this and future fiscal years.
- We have continued to refine and develop new tools within our CRM, <u>Keela</u>, including automation processes, email series, and receipting.



## Strategic Plan Review

The following pages are an overview of how The Fur-Bearers met stated priorities and objectives from our 2022-23 Strategic Plan.

**Engagement** 

Provide amazing service and experience for our donors and supporters.

- We invested in a new CRM to improve service and user experience for supporters and donors, including improved communications.
- We introduced new eCards for supporters to send a loved one while creating impact for wildlife.
- We developed clear policies regarding privacy, cookies and social media.

Broaden public awareness of the organization and our work.

- We engaged with thousands of new visitors to our website through the application of monthly Google Ad Grants, allowing us to showcase educational content through the world's most popular search engine.
- We had an average of more than one media mention per week, and were frequently featured on major news outlets.

and through events like the Union of BC Municipalities conference.

Develop highly effective communications, tools, and campaigns.

- We developed a kids' Wild & Free Activity book, which was met with great accolades by recipients.
- We worked with partners to develop a docu-series on snares and trapping.
- We produced a professional video on how to safely remove pets from traps.
- We produced high-calibre reports on the impact of trapping on pets, transitioning out of fur farming, and other subjects.

Collaborate with academic partners to advance research and evidence-based problem solving.

• We partnered with researchers to conduct a national survey of Canadians' perspectives of wolves. The results were published in a peer-reviewed journal in our next fiscal year.

More on next page



Collaborate with decision-makers and regulators to improve outcomes for furbearing animals.

 We met with representatives of all levels of government in one-on-one meetings, calls,

Photo: An Eastern grey squirrel (Sciurus carolinesis) stands upright in grass.

Photo by Shayne Kaye / Getty Images



## **Strategic Plan Review**

### **Sustainability**

Invest in our people to ensure a healthy and sustainable staff and the ability to recruit and retain.

 We created professional development and wellness policies to improve the work/life balance of employees and contractors.

Build organization capacity through collaboration with internal stakeholders and members, and review and enhance policies, systems, and processes.

• We conducted a survey of donors to learn more about their values, their perceptions of our work, and how they like to hear about impact.

### Ensure financial health through diversified revenue and donor base.

- We identified the need for and began the process of hiring a Director of Development to guide The Fur-Bearers' fundraising and growth.
  - We expanded donation programs to incorporate

new workplace giving opportunities like 1% for the Planet, increased our online raffles, and are utilizing numerous services to ensure ease of access and an optimal journey for donors.

### Ensure governance excellence through strategic board recruitment, orientation, and development.

- We developed and implemented new Terms of Reference for our advisory board.
- We developed new online resources for prospective and existing board members.

### Be responsive to cultural traditions and shifting societal currents.

- We developed an Indigenous trapping policy with the support of our Advisory Board and Board of Directors.
- All team members participated in Home on Native Land, an online course series about Indigenous justice in Canada, offered by Raven Trust.

# By The Numbers

171,941

154,523

36

Views of blog posts (471 per day)

Downloads of our podcast (423 per day)

FOI requests filed

1,470.7

90

5,701

Hours of YouTube videos viewed (61.2 straight days worth!)

Media mentions (1.7 per week!)

Door Hangers Distributed (15.6 per day!)

115,406

1.12M

114,012

Twitter (X) reach

Facebook reach

Instagram reach



## Media Coverage

The Fur-Bearers were again successful at profiling our work through the use of <u>traditional and new media</u>. Here's a list of the many media outlets we worked with in our 2023-24 fiscal year. Please note this does not include syndicated content:

Castanet **CBC News CJDC TV Penticton Herald** EnergeticCity.ca **CTV News Global News Victoria Times Colonist Mission City Record Vancouver** is Awesome **Trent University News** Saskatoon StarPhoenix **Globe and Mail Express Healthcare Management** Sask Today UnchainedTV

**Rossland News Frontiers in Animal Science BCIT Radio CKNW Radio CKPG Today Langley Advance Times The Wolf Connection Kelowna Now North Shore News** The Georgia Straight **National Post Vancouver Sun Daily Hive The Conversation CBC On The Coast CBC Daybreak** 

Airdrie City View
Nelson Star
My Prince George Now
Castlegar Source
Chek News
Revelstoke Review
Prince George Citizen
iHeartRadio
Tri-City News
Victoria News
Pique News Magazine
Richmond News
Farms.com
Kingston This Week





## You may have seen us at...

Humane Canada's 2023 Summit for Animals May 3 to 4, 2024 Victoria, BC

**Vancouver Vegan Night Market** 

June 8, 2023 Vancouver, BC

Webinar – Urban Wildlife June 21, 2023 Via Zoom

**BC SPCA Kids Camps** 

August 2, 3, and 22, 2023 Via Zoom, and Nanaimo, BC

Union of BC Municipalities 2023 Convention September 20 to 21, 2023 Vancouver, BC Ending Real Fur Documentary Screening November 18, 2023 Toronto, ON

**Ending Real Fur Documentary Screening** 

November 24, 2023 Via UnchainedTV

**Whole Foods Market** 

January 16, 2024 North Vancouver, BC

Webinar – Fur Farming Panel March 6, 2024

Via Zoom

Photo: Sydney Schaffner, The Fur-Bearers' Social Media and Communications Coordinator, at the Lynn Valley Ecology Centre.



We'd like to issue a special thanks to businesses who support us through our Fox Box program and Silent Auction. We also would like to thank those grantors who support our campaigns and programs.

#### Fox Box Partners

Parade Organics Tribal Rugs and Art Rhinoceros Accessories Heller Murch Realty Fiallraven Thunderbird Vapes Cambie Village Family Practice Cotton Auctions and Appraisals Padmanadi Vegetarian Restaurant Cafe Mosaics The Moth Cafe Strawberry Blonde Bakery Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre The Blackfish Liquor Store Vegan Supply Frickin Delights Donuts Virtuous Pie Windsor Plywood (West, North East, and North Edmonton)

Petro-Canada & Car Wash

(Edmonton) Nature's Way Canada

#### **Silent Auction Contributors**

Planted Expo To Live For Bakery **Lush Cosmetics** Vino Spa Skincare Plant Curious Pan Pacific Hotel Whistler Scandinave Spa Zimt Chocolates Puzzle Lab Victoria Catherine Babault Photography Wild Coast Perfumery Elena Markelova Cotton Auctions & Appraisals **Bravocados Bistro** WhiteLotus Design Jewelery Vancouver Island PyroArt Design Sarah Ronald

Valerie Rolfe Anita Utas Julie Popowicz Sarah Hammond Peter Mark Bioéthique Spa on 4th Karen Fahrlander

#### Grants

The Grant MacEwan Charitable Foundation G & G Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation **Provincial Employees Community** Services Fund Carol and Don Lyster Foundation Ann Julia MacLeod Legacy Foundation **Greygates (Vancouver Foundation)** Nature's Way of Canada Limited

# **In Loving Memory**

Diana Belhouse
Joan Marda Paterson
Mary Petrowitch
Lily and Merle Ash
Irene Bodnar
Alexis Dorothy and David MacKenzie
Penelope Jane Harris
Stephen John Hives
Irene Horne
Joan Winifred Poulsen
Doris Patricia Drummond
Rosmarie Colquhoun



Photo: A raccoon (Procyon lotor) stands in a field of blue flowers.
Photo by Enrico Staine / Getty Images