

# Heritage BC



## **2021/2022 Annual Management Report Dogwood Heritage Society of BC DBA Heritage BC**

This report summarizes the period from May 2021 to May 2022. The report reflects on the strategies and goals set out in “Strategic Directions”, our 2019-2021 planning document, and complements the verbal report presented to the membership at the AGM in May, 2022.

During the last year there was a significant change in Heritage BC leadership and staffing. Laura Saratesky left in August and Paul Gravett, Executive Director since 2017, left at the end of September. His last days overlapped with incoming Executive Director Kirstin Clausen. Nathalie Picard, Program Coordinator, started in December. Completing this small team is Jennifer Dunkerson, Heritage Planner, working in partnership with Columbia Basin Trust.

Heritage BC is an arts/heritage service organization that strives to be relevant to members, donors, sponsors, partners and supporters. We support all people of British Columbia who champion the preservation and conservation of all forms of cultural heritage. We achieve this by developing awareness, appreciation and respect for BC’s built heritage and intangible traditions.

### **Highlights**

- As a trusted partner with the Province of BC, Heritage BC disbursed \$10 million in grant funding under the *150 Time Immemorial Grant Program* (150 TIGP) banner.
- *Heritage Legacy Fund* received \$5 million investment under the 150 TIGP, providing sustaining resources to benefit heritage conservation and awareness projects.
- Financial sustainability was achieved for the 2021 annual operating cycle with the year ending with a small surplus.

### **COVID-19 Response**

COVID-19 remained a preoccupation throughout the year for most heritage, arts and cultural organizations and for those working in the sector. Fortunately, as Heritage BC primarily works virtually, our programs and services were not dramatically disrupted. This however did not lessen our concern over the serious impact the pandemic was having on our members. We distributed to our membership resources developed by other arts service organizations, such as Arts Alliance, BC Art Council and the BC Museums Association. These materials helped keep our members informed about the ever-changing public health guidelines and expectations. We also encouraged members to participate in surveys about impacts of COVID-19 so that our sector was represented in data being used to inform recovery programs and responses to the pandemic. We co-signed a letter to Premier John Horgan and Minister Marks, Minister for Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport asking for action on establishing recovery funding, particularly to organizations that tend to ‘fall through the cracks’ with their grant eligibility.

## **Resources for Contemporary Issues**

We have a responsibility to be part of the process and effort to form a healthy, just and equitable society. Key issues being discussed in Canada today focus on reconciliation, racism, accessibility and climate action. For Heritage BC, we have completed research and developed resources with these themes in mind to assist our members with their own efforts to improve our communities and society overall.

Our publication *Setting the Bar: A Guide to Achieve New Standards for Reconciliation within the Heritage Sector* was published in May 2021. Over the following months we focused our communications on bringing our members' attention to this resource. Developing this resource was a lengthy collaborative process over many months. We valued the opportunity to form genuine friendships and partnerships with Indigenous and other equitably marginalized individuals and communities through the writing of this resource. The result is a guide to new standards for reconciliation within the heritage sector. We recognize that it takes effort to understand, reframe and act to change embedded systems and familiar contexts within our work and we hope that our members find the guide useful. A year after publishing it, much has been learned and there is much more to learn. We are proud to see that within our sector there are improvements in attitudes and values far beyond the reach of this single document.

## **Annual Conferences 2021 and 2022**

Heritage BC's first virtual conference was held in 2021. While a virtual conference was a shift in approach, virtual engagement delivers new opportunities. The virtual format lends itself to focused discussions on 'meatier' topics with new 'voices' and motivational speakers who can join the conference regardless of where they are physically located. We considered three topics a priority: reconciliation, climate adaptation and intangible cultural heritage. Individuals from national and international organizations were able to participate, expanding the conversation. *Conference Sponsorship 2021: On This Spot; RJC; Ankenman Marchand Architects; Donald Luxton & Associates; BC Association of Heritage Professionals; Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals; Gambrinus Malting; Iredale Architecture; Merrick Architecture; Julie Schueck, Schueck Heritage Consulting.*

In September 2021 the *BC Museums Association (BCMA)* invited us to host a joint conference in 2022. We said YES! This sparked the Joint BCMA/HBC conference, in two Acts. Act I was held in May 2022 with Act II to be in person in Victoria, BC in October. This is the first time the two organizations have collaborated on a conference even though approximately a quarter of our membership belongs to both organizations. The primary goals of the joint conferences are to facilitate growth in collaboration between the two organizations and to offer content that is of interest to both heritage and museum workers, highlighting areas of common ground and reducing silos that may exist. The 2022 conference (May 4, 11, 18) looked at contemporary issues through the lens of collaboration, advocacy and redress. *Conference Sponsorship 2022: Gambrinus Malting, Donald Luxton and Associates and BC Association of Heritage Professionals.* Sponsorship seeking continues for the Act II (October) conference time slot.

## **Partnerships: Province of BC, Heritage Branch and Columbia Basin Trust**

We continue to value our trusted partner relationship with the Heritage Branch. Together, both organizations can better tackle broader issues facing the heritage community. The products of this collaboration and partnership in 2021/2022 remain impressive with two significant Provincial grants

administered and managed; website hosting and updating of seven cultural heritage maps; and guidance and alignment on advocacy issues with benefit to the heritage sector. The grants are described below. With the transfer of the Heritage Branch from *Forest Lands and Natural Resources* to the *Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport* we are embarking on a transition into a new Ministry.

## **Heritage Grant Disbursements**

### **Columbia Basin Trust**

The Heritage Planner position within the *Heritage Program* of the *Columbia Basin Trust* (CBT) has continued to evolve and be shaped to meet expectations that address the overall needs of the heritage sector in the Basin. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions and limitations, and remaining program potential within the CBT's current strategic plan, the contract has been extended to December 31, 2022.

There was no organized intake for the *Built Heritage* and *Heritage, Museum & Archives Grant* programs in 2021. Awarded projects continue with many having had deadlines for reporting as of March 2022. Many projects have been delayed and some have had to revise their scope to address restrictions and limitations due to the pandemic and other factors. We have remained very flexible and adaptable to delays giving organizations a chance to complete their projects. The deadline for the final projects to submit reports is December 2022. The program continues to support heritage organizations by providing communications regarding resources, professional development, and capacity building as well as funding opportunities through other CBT grant programs, and Heritage BC's *Heritage Legacy Fund*.

#### ***Built Heritage Grant:***

There were three years of intakes (2017, 2018, 2019). We are still supporting 14 projects as of December 31, 2021, with \$780,000 (out of \$5,600,000) still to disperse for completed projects.

#### ***Heritage, Museum & Archives Grant:***

There were three years of intakes (2018, 2019, 2020). We are still supporting 37 projects as of December 31, 2021, with \$72,000 (out of \$940,000) still to disperse for completed projects.

### **Heritage Legacy Fund**

The 2021 *Heritage Legacy Fund* (HLF) intake ran from March 1 to April 30. In total, the Heritage Manager fielded 91 queries and received 62 complete applications: 22 for Heritage Awareness, 27 for Heritage Conservation, 6 for Planning and 7 for Indigenous Partnerships. The total ask was \$659,639.30. In total, 24 applications were approved for funding: 8 heritage awareness, 6 heritage conservation, 8 planning, and 2 Indigenous Partnerships. The total amount approved across all streams was \$150,088.30.

We continue to support 38 projects from three years of intakes, 2019, 2020, 2021. There remains \$117,000 still to disperse for completed projects from the three years. HLF grants are managed by our Heritage Planner, Jennifer Dunkerson, as of September 2021.

The Province of British Columbia also made an investment in the *Heritage Legacy Fund* as part of the *150 Time Immemorial Grant Program*. The investment of \$5 million brings the fund to \$13,622,000 and as a result, future heritage conservation, awareness and education will all benefit from increased funding. It has been a long-standing advocacy commitment of many Heritage BC Board Directors to secure this investment, and 2021 was the year this milestone was achieved.

Early 2022 saw preparation for a comprehensive evaluation of the *Heritage Legacy Fund*. We hired Ference & Company to complete this evaluation in 2022 for implementation under the 2023 intake. One of the key questions to be explored is how to modernize the grant to be responsive to new interests of heritage such as intangible heritage, while continuing to strengthen and apply resources to place based heritage activity.

**Climate Disaster Response Fund.** Late in 2021 and in response to a year of unprecedented emergency and weather events that occurred throughout British Columbia, we set aside some funding to assist impacted organizations. While we have not yet awarded any grants, we remain committed to this fund. Applications can be submitted anytime. Details are on our website.

***Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP). Unique Heritage Infrastructure (UHI). One-time Provincial program – administered by Heritage BC***

Contracts were confirmed and funds dispersed in early 2021. The program funded 68 projects; the awarded funds totaled \$15,520,000. All funds were dispersed as 100% funding and all projects must be completed by March 2023. We continue to support organizations carrying out projects as needed. Provincial reporting required an interim report from each recipient to gauge progress. As of December 31, 2021, 33 organizations had submitted reports, with three final reports available by that time.

***150 Time Immemorial Grant Program. One-time Provincial program – administered by Heritage BC***

In 2021 we were asked to administer and manage the Province's 150 TIGP grant. The grant program is intended to raise cultural awareness, educate people about BC's colonial past and its ongoing impacts, advance reconciliation and promote inclusivity and diversity as a foundational aspect of BC's future. Applications were accepted up to December 2021 and final approvals were announced in February 2022. All awarded projects must be completed by July 2024. The program was funded with \$10 million from the Province.

There were three streams: heritage infrastructure, cultural awareness, and community planning. The 150 TIGP accepted 196 applications, with 92 awarded. Five culturally diverse peer review juries comprised of 28 arts, cultural, or heritage professionals provided the adjudication in early 2022. The overall ask for the projects was far above the amount available, at \$26,000,000. Many projects therefore received partial funding.

**Program Measurements - Heritage Week, Awards, Webinars, Memberships, and et al**

An emphasis of our "Strategic Directions, 2019-2021" is to expand the audience in order to increase awareness of heritage issues and programs and, of course, Heritage BC's role and profile. The following statistics and programs reflect on many of the directions in the plan:

Heritage Week. Held annually in February and recognized by the Province of BC with an official proclamation. As the only heritage event that unifies the province at a single time, it is a key initiative to raise widespread awareness of heritage in its many forms and cultural meanings. For the most recent Heritage Week (February 21-27, 2022), we mailed 1250 posters to libraries, community heritage sites, and related public spaces throughout the province. We supported communities with Heritage Week

programming through our awareness-building communications. We amplified heritage activities with a social media campaign and online calendar. Our online reach for Heritage Week this year included 7000+ engagements on our social platforms and 1900+ visits to our Heritage Week landing page and events calendar. This is a 42% increase from site visits in previous years.

Website and Education Resources. The goal of the Heritage BC [website](#) is to offer a community hub of information with key resources for education, skills building, and awareness building. As we add new resources (e.g. Heritage Week Poster, downloadable guidebooks, cultural maps, advocacy information), the number of visitors has increased year on year. The website features several key modules that support communities in protecting and managing heritage assets. The website also supports the hosting of popular cultural maps which are among the most visited pages of our website. Fresh and relevant new resources on heritage and reconciliation are on the website including *Setting the Bar*, a significant 2021 project for us. *Setting the Bar* offers ten standards and calls to action to drive heritage volunteers and organizations forward, beyond conversation about reconciliation or redress and to take concrete, measurable action. It has been accessed 3200+ times to date, and sees over one hundred unique visitors a month.

Cultural Maps. These have remained in the top ten visited pages for many years. There is often a spike in visitation to these maps after news or noteworthy media events. For example, there is an increase in visitors to the *Chinese Canadian* and *Japanese Canadian Cultural Heritage Maps* during Asian Heritage Month in May. When the discovery of 93 potential burial sites on the grounds of a former residential school near Williams Lake was publicized in the news, this was reflected in a spike of 200 visits to our francophone heritage site which featured the former residential school, the Mission of Saint-Joseph School and its cemetery. This is evidence that the general public seeks to understand tough societal questions such as reconciliation, decolonization and racism and want a safe place to explore cultural heritage to find answers. Since 2018, website views for the maps have grown from 16,400 to over 55,000 with the *Japanese Canadian* and *Chinese Canadian Cultural Maps* making up 13% of overall website traffic.

Communications. Our newsletter is our core communication tool, and its growth is reflective of our organizational growth. Significantly, since January 2021 we increased from 1677 subscribers to 1863. This is a result of adding proactive tactics to invite website visitors to register. Moreover, open rates for our newsletter can be up to 55%, much higher than the industry standard as reported by MailChimp. Through the newsletter we promote all programs, important advocacy opportunities, resources and other relevant heritage news. We have enjoyed a marked increase in social media engagement – more than doubling the number of interactions on our Facebook posts. Our social media communications focus on supporting BC events and sharing news that will encourage learning and awareness.

## **Advocacy and Governance**

Advocacy has long been a focus for us and our efforts now centre on sector-wide awareness at the Provincial and Federal levels. Many of our activities are coordinated with partnering organizations.

- Active with Arts, Heritage, and Cultural Service Organization networks and participate in joint initiatives such as letter writing to highlight issues and encourage opportunities to benefit the sector.

- Active with the *National Trust for Canada* on their *Heritage Reset* project. This is about accelerating conversations within our sector about our shared values and the purpose of our work. We are participating in focused research and contributing data and perspective to this national advocacy effort.
- Continuing the effort to improve the understanding and context of heritage conservation in the BC Building Code. This includes letter writing and participating in meetings with key individuals within and outside of government including with the *Building Officials Association of BC*, *Building Standards and Safety Branch*, and *Joint Task Group, Alterations to Existing Buildings* (National Research Council). *Heritage BC's Building Code Advocacy Committee* is active and providing guidance on our advocacy inputs.
- Working with the *BC Museums Association* we have developed a *Statement of Cooperation* with *BC Heritage Emergency Response Network* (BC HERN). The purpose of the Statement is to outline actions that can be developed to aid members before, during and after disasters and emergencies.
- Networking and collaborative conversations with aligned organizations such as *First People Cultural Council*, BC Historical Federation, BCMA, and other heritage organizations.
- Letters of introduction about Heritage BC sent to Ministers and key staff within Provincial and Federal governments.
- Media releases sent with our achievements including 150 TIGP, Heritage Week, Heritage Awards, investment in Heritage Legacy Fund.
- Successfully managed the transition of management leadership so that Heritage BC's team can develop and prepare for fresh strategic planning.