



Conserving BC's Natural Beauty

MEDIA RELEASE

Jen Morgen Gets Her Hands Dirty Conserving Nature

**For Immediate Release
August 11, 2008**

(Nanaimo, BC) Vancouver Island HSBC Conservation Youth Crew member Jen Morgen says, "I am a biology girl and love going out into nature, getting my hands dirty and learning new things. When I heard about The Nature Trust and what they do, and then heard about this position, I knew it would be a perfect match for me."

For four years, The Nature Trust of British Columbia has been working with the Ministry of Environment's BC Conservation Corps and the BC Conservation Foundation to hire crews. These crews do a wide variety of conservation activities and learn valuable skills for future employment. This year 32 young people were trained, and then sent to tackle on-the-ground activities on conservation properties and parks across the province.

On the job since May, Jen explains: "I have learned so many things I don't even know where to start! Everything from brushing and clearing trails to re-vegetation work, bridge building, fish and water sampling, GPS work and more. I have also learned a lot about government policies and regulations, particularly regarding riparian areas and stream works, from our projects with the Ministry of Environment."

From May to September, crew members remove invasive weeds, repair perimeter fences, install signs, monitor wildlife, and restore wetlands. In addition, participants attend workshops from specialists in the field on topics such as bird counts, and forest and wetland ecology. After completing the program, many go on to study conservation and return as supervisors on the crews.

"Getting the opportunity to work outdoors and visit many unique and beautiful sites all over the island is definitely the best part of this job. This week we went to Mount Washington, next week we're off to Salt Spring Island and the week after that to Tofino," says Jen. "I can't imagine a better way to spend a summer!"

"One particular project stands out for me: Willow Creek Park in Campbell River. We spent three weeks there and during that time, I cannot tell you how many times local people stopped and thanked us for the work we were doing. It really feels great to know that you're making a difference and that what you are doing is appreciated."

In 2008, HSBC Conservation Youth Crews are operating on Vancouver Island (Nanaimo), Lower Mainland (Boundary Bay), South Okanagan (Oliver), East Kootenay (Cranbrook), and Cariboo Chilcotin (Williams Lake). In addition, there is a special Baseline Ecological Inventory Crew that is collecting information on 25 to 30 conservation properties this summer.

When asked about her plans for the future, Jen responds with: "I am going to continue with my Restoration of Natural Systems courses at the University of Victoria, but am also looking at the different career options out there. I absolutely love this job and hope it leads to more great opportunities."

The Nature Trust is pleased to have HSBC Bank Canada as the title sponsor of the crews for the third year. Other sponsors include BC Ministry of Environment, BC Trust for Public Lands, BC Hydro, and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is a leader in protecting BC's natural diversity of plants and animals through the acquisition and conservation of critical habitats and other areas of ecological significance. Along with our partners, The Nature Trust has invested more than \$63 million to secure over 61,000 hectares (150,000 acres) of critical habitat throughout British Columbia.

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