

**Comox Valley Nature**  
**(Comox Valley Naturalists Society)**  
**PO Box 3222, Courtenay BC V9N 5N4**

June 18, 2019

Employment and Social Development Canada

*Re: Support for Mack Laing Heritage Society research program on Hamilton Mack Laing*

To whom it may concern;

I am writing to you today on behalf of Comox Valley Naturalists Society (CVNS), to show support for Mack Laing Heritage Society's (MLHS) proposed program of research at the British Columbia Archives on Hamilton Mack Laing. Laing was one of the last of the great Victorian naturalists and collectors, and during his long life (1883 to 1982) he was a profuse writer with a keen eye for detail and understanding of the natural world. His legacy and passion lives on through his students, which include Ian McTaggart Cowan and David Suzuki. On Laing's death in Comox, the bulk of his many years of journals, notes, drawings and photography were transported to the BC Archives in Victoria for safe keeping.

During his later years, Laing was an honored member of Comox Strathcona Natural History Society, the predecessor to CVNS. On his death he left his estate to the people of Comox Valley. CVNS is wholly behind MLHS' program to research Laing's documents with a goal of publishing one or more of this internationally known conservationist's writings. MLHS has been using volunteers from the Comox Valley to search for focussed items for MLHS' own purposes, but their effectiveness has been limited by time constraints when the members visit Victoria. Having funds in place to permit researchers to go to Victoria for the express purpose of spending long days in the Archives will vastly improve the existing processes. Leads can be followed immediately and not left for the next time someone has an opportunity and a few hours to spend.

Laing was far-sighted, and was writing about the Athabasca tar sands in the 1920s and the dangers of uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources long before the general public even know what ecology was. MLHS has taken on the task of ensuring that Hamilton Mack Laing, and the lessons he has for today, are not forgotten and thrown on the dust heap of history, but will be brought to light and help to inform us of the directions and actions we have to take to make the world a better place for all living creatures.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Boulter, President Comox Valley Naturalists Society  
#27 -2140 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Courtney,  
BC, V9N 2G6  
250-898-8548