

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Organization Requesting Grant: <i>(Please list parent/sponsor organizations in parenthesis)</i>	Whistler Naturalists
Name of the program (if applicable):	BioBlitz
Society Registration Number:	S40150
Organization Mailing Address:	Box 845 Whistler BC V0N 1B0
Contact Name & Title:	Kristina Swerhun and Bob Brett – Board members
Organization Phone Number:	
Organization Email Address:	WhistlerNaturalists@gmail.com
Organization Purpose or Mandate: (Please provide this answer in one sentence.)	To increase the knowledge of and appreciation for the natural world in the Whistler area through education and research.
Organization Category (choose between Environment, Social Service, Community Service, Recreation and Sports, Arts and Culture)	Environment

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

How many years has the organization existed?	25
How many active members/participants does the organization have in the current year? (e.g. how many athletes have signed up for this year)	Approximately 1,500 are participants at our events. Our active Facebook "Whistler Naturalists Community" has 1,824 members.
For sport organizations, how many youth (U18) participants are enrolled in your programs?	n/a
How many Whistler residents members does the organization have in the current year?	We do not ask if people are local to become a free member but can in the future if it's important to our funders. 48 of our 61 paying members live in Whistler, Pemberton or Squamish.
How many volunteers/executive/staff are required to administer the organization in the current year?	7 board members
Age range of participants in the organization:	1-99

Please list active website URLs and active social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.):	www.whistlernaturalists.ca https://www.facebook.com/groups/whistlernaturalists https://www.facebook.com/whistlernaturalists
What are the membership and participation requirements?	An interest in nature. We have two membership options: a) join the WNS mailing list for free b) join the WNS under the umbrella of BC Nature and additionally receive the BC Nature quarterly newsletter (\$20 individual/year; \$30 family/year).
<p>Does the organization have any outstanding debts or other means of funding from the RMOW? If yes, please state the amount and reason.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Please include any Value In Kind support that you receive from the RMOW (eg. reduced rent, utilities in RMOW buildings)</p>	No

GRANT INFORMATION

1. Purpose of Grant	<i>Explain in detail how the funding will be spent. Please refer to Council Policy A-7 Community Enrichment Program, available at www.whistler.ca/cep for funding criteria and eligibility. Please be as concise as possible using the space below.</i>
<p>This year marks the 18th year of our annual BioBlitz event that promotes biodiversity research, education and stewardship.</p> <p>The Natural Environment chapter in the RMOW OCP is about “Protecting, monitoring and restoring the natural environment in Whistler”. Our events and programs work towards all these outcomes because they all have both public education and research components that complement each other. Additionally, data from BioBlitz is being used to help develop Key Initiative A3.1, A3.2, A3.3 and A3.5 in the Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan. Overall, our annual BioBlitz events help us move towards our community's vision of a place where nature is protected.</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Funding will go towards presentations on the wonders of nature and biodiversity to students in Whistler and Mount Currie. Nature education leads to appreciation, which leads to stewardship. From all the great feedback we've gotten from the public, students and teachers alike, we know our events have helped community members on their journey towards stewardship/restoring the natural environment in Whistler. 2) Funding will go to collecting data about the species that call Whistler home. With more data about the species that live in Whistler, better management decisions can be made to support biodiversity. Although this is fundamentally true, information alone is not enough. Without political will (fostered by increased stewardship in point #1), biodiversity conservation can get ignored. 3) Funding this program will also generate hope and connection. Our BioBlitz events have been uncovering new species every single year. At a time when most news is about the decline of biodiversity, new species discoveries are hopeful news to celebrate as a community. We also encourage citizen science by introducing students and residents to iNaturalist, an online social network of people sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature. This information can then be used by researchers to advance understanding of our natural world and how best to use limited resources to protect it. When people feel they are part of the solution, it can help counter the looming environmental doom experienced by many. 	

2. Is This a New Program or Activity?	<i>If yes, what are your targets and goals for this program/activity?</i>
No	

3. Current Year Highlights and Community Benefits:	<i>Detail the specifics of activities and community benefits your organization provides.</i>
<p>Promoting and fostering stewardship of the natural world Providing opportunities to learn about Whistler’s natural world strengthens the connection people feel to nature. We all moved to Whistler to be able to call this spectacular landscape home, but in our busy lives or fast sports, the connection piece is often missing. When you have more people connected to nature, you have more people who are inspired to become natural stewards and take care of this beautiful place for the benefit of all. Through education, connection; through connection, stewardship.</p> <p>Education focuses on our school program which has been growing due to the phenomenal response from teachers and their students. We have built strong connections with the local schools and keep working to improve and expand students’ exposure to all aspects of local biology and biodiversity delivered by some of BC’s best biologists. BioBlitz biologists will again present to classes in local schools, and at the Xit’olacw School in Mt. Currie. We finally achieved our goal of including Lil’wat youth and educators with successful presentations in 2022. Last year, the timing of our event unfortunately did not work for Xet’olacw School, but we intend make sure we can return in 2024.</p> <p>In June 2023, scientists gave presentations to 38 classes (about 750 youth participants!) at Spring Creek Community School, Myrtle Philip Community School, Whistler Secondary, and École La Passerelle.</p> <p>Providing data essential to an effective strategy to protect nature</p> <p>Collection of species data involves scientists scouring different ecosystems to increase our knowledge about the diversity of species in our area. In total, volunteer contributions for BioBlitz exceed 1,000 hours each weekend. In just 17 weekends of BioBlitz spanning back to 2007, BioBlitz findings now represent close to half of all records on the Whistler Biodiversity Project (WBP) master list (www.whistlerbiodiversity.ca). Results from the 2023 BioBlitz will bring the total number of species documented in our area close to 5,000. This exact number will be finalized in the coming months as our volunteers confirm identification of hard to identify species and collate data. Please see figures 1 & 2 below.</p> <p>The highest priority initiative in the RMOW’s Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan Adaptation Goal 3 is to: “Develop policy, planning and legislative strategies to protect and restore local ecosystem health and support continued provision of natural infrastructure services. E.g. develop/implement Priority Habitat Strategy and Species & Ecosystems at Risk Plan.” BioBlitz events provide data for this plan.</p>	

Whistler Biodiversity by the Numbers

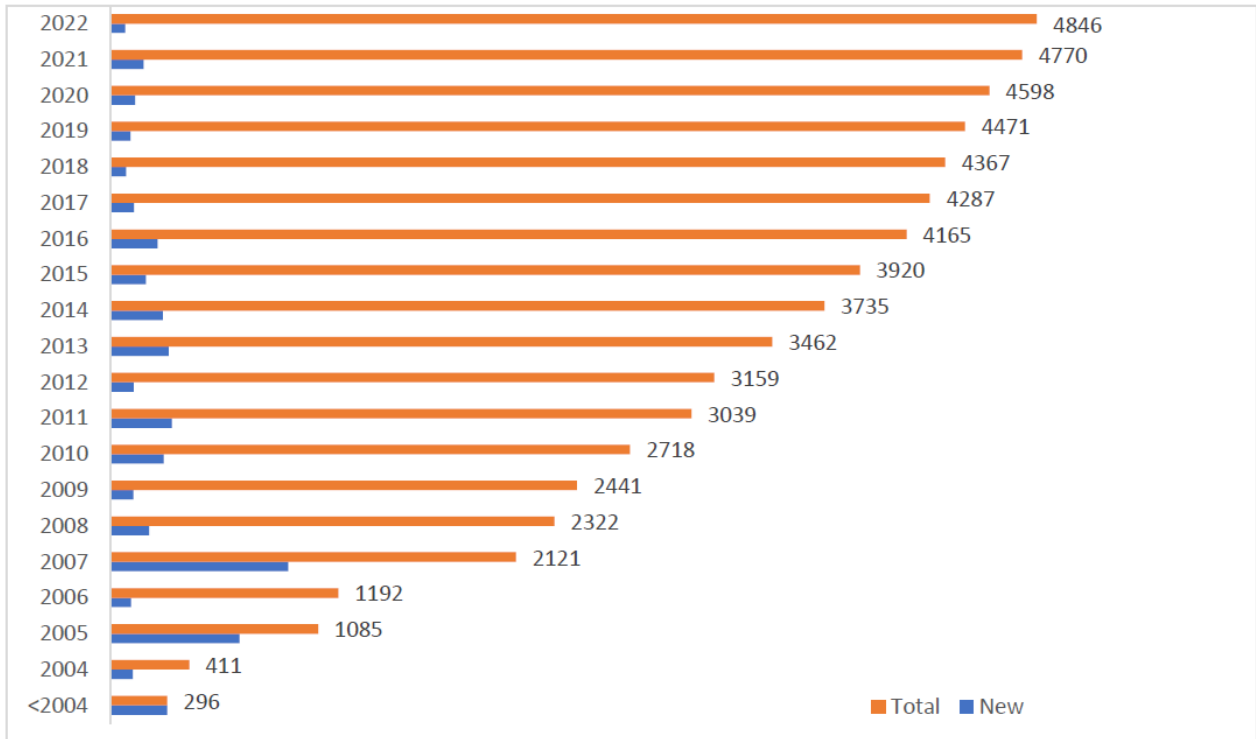


Figure 1: Number of species recorded in Whistler since the Whistler Biodiversity Project started in 2004. Note the jump in species starting with the first BioBlitz in 2007.

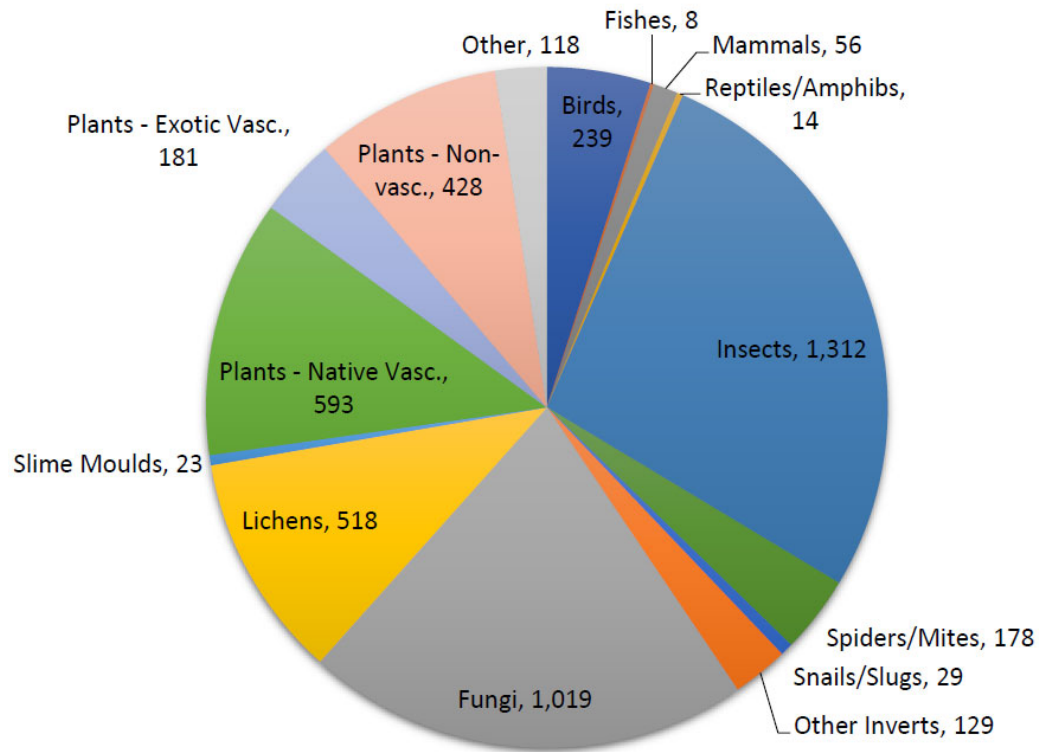


Figure 2: Number of species in Whistler by group. Not that vertebrates (fish, mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians) represent a small percentage of the total.

4. Existing Funding and Grant Applications:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>List the specific grants, funding and fundraising planned, approved or pending for the existing year, and</i> 2. <i>Please also list rejected or non-approved funding (with reasons).</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resort Municipality of Whistler Community Enrichment Program: \$5,700 (pending) • Whistler Community Foundation Environmental Legacy Fund: \$12,000 (pending) • BC Nature: \$2,000 (pending) 	

GRANT INFORMATION (CONTINUED):

5. Grant Request Amounts and Financial Breakdown:

Please ensure numbers provided in this table coincide with the required financial documents you provide in your application

	Annual Operating Budget	Grant Requested	Provide a brief description of the specific amount requested. (Ex: Products, services, staffing roles, advertising, etc.)
Salaries/contracts:			
General operations:			
One-time project / program:	23,400	5,700	Youth engagement at schools, public nature programs, biodiversity data collection
Physical assets:			
Rent (RMOW facilities):		N/A	
Rent (other facilities):			
Other:	76,000		In kind
Total	\$ 99,400	\$ 5,700	5.7 % (Grant request ÷ Annual budget amount)
Reminder: The grant amount requested cannot be more than 50% of the annual operating budget of the organization.			

6. Additional Information:

Please list any additional information, details or explanations regarding your grant request that you would like to be considered by Council.

CLIMATE CONSIDERATIONS: The RMOW and other jurisdictions have realized the threats posed by climate change and redirected much of their efforts and budget towards reducing those impacts. Unfortunately, that redirection has sometimes meant that the protection of wildlife habitat and biodiversity is forgotten or, at best, reduced.

As science has shown, biodiversity is our strongest natural defense against climate change. Therefore, one of the best ways to reduce the effects of climate change is to protect habitats and the birds and other species that require them. We believe that the activities and events we've described in this application provide valuable contributions to the protection of wildlife habitats and biodiversity by both inspiring individual residents to start/expand stewardship efforts and allow local government to make better management decision to support biodiversity based on our findings.

7. Attachments:	<i>Please indicate the attachments you are including with your Grant Application Form:</i>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Statement (audited preferred) or Organization Budget (Required) • Proof (copy) of registered not-for-profit society status or registered charity status (Required) • Other: </div> </div>	

COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

8. Please list how your organization may improve Community Performance Indicators:	<p>Please visit https://www.whistler.ca/municipal-gov/strategies-and-plans/strategic-plan/ to learn about the four priority areas of RMOW 2023-2026 Strategic Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing 2. Climate Action 3. Community Engagement 4. Smart Tourism <p>Please determine how your grant (or organization) can contribute to fulfilling any priorities described in the four areas listed above. Each priority has numerous specifications to choose from while describing how your grant (or organization) may help to improve Strategic Plan.</p>
<p><i>Example: This grant addresses the priority of “Community Engagement” because it strives to connect locals to each other. Specifically, this is because...</i></p>	
<p>PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT: Because people only care FOR what they first care ABOUT. Through nature educating we help people care ABOUT the environment and in turn those people are much more likely to become stewards. Because to make environmental management planning decisions that protect the environment, you need good data. All our programs have a research component where leading scientists in BC contribute. This unbiased data is invaluable when making environmental management planning decisions, e.g., (i) the protection of the Fitzsimmons Creek Delta; (ii) CCF logging plans and (iii) it has been incorporated conservation reports for the RMOW such as the bi-annual update of local Species and Ecosystems at Risk.</p> <p>ENRICHING COMMUNITY LIFE: Because our community loves to learn, through our programs and online resources we give the community access to learning opportunities. For example, our school program gives students an opportunity to learn from some of BC’s best biologists. Since we are completely volunteer run, we have diverse volunteer opportunities where volunteers feel a sense of belonging with likeminded people who love nature.</p> <p>ENHANCING THE RESORT EXPERIENCE: Our programs and online information give visitors the opportunity to participate in community events and/or explore on their own with a much deeper appreciation of the natural world in Whistler. This promotes a positive atmosphere for the visitor who will feel more connected to the community after participating.</p> <p>ENSURING ECONOMIC VIABILITY: The more the community learns about the natural environment in Whistler, the more we can collectively act as curators of this wonderful place to visitors that come here primarily for a natural experience.</p>	

SUPPORT FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

<p><i>The RMOW is committed to working with the Líl'wat People, known in their language as L'il'wat7úl and the Squamish People, known in their language as the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to: create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.</i></p>
<p>9. How has your organization considered truth and reconciliation with the Indigenous Nations?</p>
<p>According to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee reconciliation is about “establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this country.” For many years we tried to include presentations to Xet'ólacw Community School in Mount Currie to build a relationship with youth and educators from the Líl'wat Nation. We finally achieved that goal with successful presentations in 2022. Last year, the timing of our event unfortunately did not work for Xet'ólacw School, but we intend make sure we can return in 2024.</p>

GRANT APPLICATION AUTHORIZATION:

Submitted by:	Kristina Swerhun
Phone number:	
Email:	WhistlerNaturalists@gmail.com
Acknowledgement:	<div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that the information provided in this CEP Grant Application Form is true;</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that a representative is required to present this grant request at a future Council Meeting;</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that if any amount is granted that the Grant Reporting Form is due by December 1 of this year;</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that if any amount is granted, it will be used only for its intended purpose unless otherwise approved by Council.</div>
Signature:	

Funding decisions will be announced during a Regular Council Meeting in April 2024.

Please contact the Legislative Services Department at corporate@whistler.ca if you require any assistance.

Personal and third party information provided in this application form is collected under the authority of Section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Should you have any questions regarding the collection, use and disclosure of this information please contact the Legislative and Privacy Coordinator at 604-935-8118 or at 4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler.