



EARLY MEDIA RELEASE

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Rewilding Vancouver connects the city with its natural history

(VANCOUVER, BC) – Vancouver is known for its connection to nature — a unique quality in a major urban centre. Despite this, our city has dramatically transformed the natural environment. *Rewilding Vancouver*, opening on February 27, 2014 at the Museum of Vancouver, explores Vancouver’s nature as it was, is, and could be.

“*Rewilding Vancouver* is an act of remembering,” explains J.B. MacKinnon, curator of the exhibition and author of *The 100-Mile Diet* and the recently released *The Once and Future World*. “It offers a window into a forgotten history in order to look at the present and the possible future with new eyes.”

In 2010, for example, Vancouverites were mesmerized when a grey whale came for a swim in False Creek. Few were aware that, just 150 years ago, hundreds of whales visited local waters each year, including a resident population of humpback whales — famous for their haunting underwater songs. *Rewilding Vancouver* seeks to encourage people to discover such stories from Vancouver’s past as inspiration to imagine a wilder city today.

The first major exhibition on urban historical ecology in Canada, *Rewilding Vancouver* features 12 tableaux that mix taxidermy, material culture, projection and sound to reveal the natural “understory” of familiar Vancouver locations. An extinct Steller’s sea cow hovers over the Stanley Park Seawall and a coyote remembers Expo 86, while 120 km of former fish-bearing streams flow beneath our feet.

“Almost everyone has experienced the loss of some treasured natural space — whether an entire forest or a simple vacant lot,” says MacKinnon. “This exhibition is a way to connect with that feeling, and to explore the unlimited possibilities of melding the urban and wild.”

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The Museum of Vancouver is an independent non-profit organization with the mandate to hold a mirror to the city and lead provocative conversations about its past, present and future.

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Biography

J.B. MacKinnon | author and guest curator of *Rewilding Vancouver*

J.B. MacKinnon is the author or coauthor of four books of nonfiction. His latest, *The Once and Future World*, is the inspiration behind the *Rewilding Vancouver* exhibition. The book, which looks at the abundant natural world of the past as inspiration to “rewild” the planet, has been shortlisted for two of Canada's top prizes for nonfiction.

MacKinnon is well known for [The 100-Mile Diet](#) (co-authored by Alisa Smith), a bestseller widely recognized as a catalyst of the local foods movement. He also works in the field of interactive documentaries; most recently he was the writer for [Bear 71](#), a National Film Board of Canada project that explores the intersection of the wired and wild worlds through the true story of a mother grizzly bear. *Bear 71* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was named 2012 Site of the Year at the international Favourite Website Awards.

MacKinnon has won more than a dozen national and international awards, including the Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Nonfiction. He is a past editor of [Adbusters](#), the “culture jamming” magazine that launched the [Occupy](#) movement, and a past senior contributing editor of *Explore*, Canada’s national outdoors magazine. He lives with his partner Alisa Smith in Vancouver.