



## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

We acknowledge the lak'wánan-speaking Peoples (Songhees and Kosapsum) on whose territory the Nature Sanctuary stands, and the lak'wánan and WSÁNEC Peoples including the WJOELP (Tsartlip), BOKECEN (Pauquachin), STÁULTW (Tsawout), WSIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEL (Malahat) whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

We respect the vital relationships of First Peoples with these lands and waters for countless generations. We are honoured to receive Indigenous guidance and welcome collaboration in stewardship and appreciation of the Nature Sanctuary.

### Mission

Conserve and restore Nature Sanctuary lands and waters while inspiring stewardship through community engagement and collaboration.



### Values

- LAND STEWARDSHIP
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- CARE & RESPECT
- INSPIRING ACTION
- ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

## Our 50<sup>th</sup> Year in Review

In 2025, we proudly celebrated five decades of community urban nature conservation and education. Throughout the year we held workshops with local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities, and conducted a digital survey, open house, Nature House community input walls, as well as a structured community listening workshop to align with contemporary and forward-looking action. Based on the comments and aspirations that emerged from this engagement, we identified guiding principles, actions, and long-term strategic goals to guide our work and community service. We are grateful to all of the participants who helped to create our **50-Year Vision**:

### A Gathering Place to Practice Land Care

This work and its outcomes are much needed given the challenges the Nature Sanctuary is facing arising from rapidly increasing human density, climate change, geopolitical instability, and shifting cultural expectations. We remain hopeful as Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary's history is one of passion and purpose. We are dedicated to our shared commitment to uplift and renew people in this place. As we step into the next half-century, we do so with gratitude, determination, and a steadfast love for nature that we hope to expand.

This report celebrates and highlights some of our accomplishments in 2025, as well as mentions some of the new and creative ways that we are connecting people directly with nature.

Behind all of our successes are the extraordinary people who show up to create our strong community: Indigenous partners, donors, volunteers, supporters, collaborators, members, and our talented staff and board team.

We are grateful as you walk with us in open-hearted curiosity, co-developing deep stewardship, and further strengthening relational care among all branches of the tree of life.

Thank you to each of you.

Sharon Daly  
Board Chair

Cara Gibson  
Executive Director



Cover Illustration: Aalia Oni, Grade 9, Swan Lake Adopt & Patch Program Participant

## Swan Lake Highlights

33

rare species

231

bird species

4,000

native plants sold

100,000

annual trail visitors

### Indigenous Community

Nine First Nations joined us throughout the year to plan Coast Salish and urban Indigenous Peoples' land-based practices and programming at the Nature Sanctuary.



This is exciting as there is currently no other urban assembly place available for land-based stewardship and sharing.

"It has been so important for our well-being to gather here and do ceremony in a culturally-safe place." -Anishinaabe Elder

### Volunteer Community

From Nature Ambassadors to Cookie Bakers to Visitor Services, Board members, Restoration crews, and the Silver Swans crafting, volunteers power our programs, and breathe life into all of our work at Swan Lake. We welcome you to join our diverse, supportive, beautiful group!

12,000

volunteer hours across programs

### Restoration

Hundreds of kilos of invasive plants were removed from both Swan Lake and Christmas Hill. The Swan Lake Eco-monitors protocols were drafted and an initial trial planned. Our Volunteer Seed Sowers, grew 500 plants as well as many seed packets for the Annual Native Plant Sale. This initiative is an incredible combination of education, conservation, and social enterprise. The Seed Sowers program allows our whole community to be engaged in restoration on site as well as in participants' households and neighbourhoods throughout the region. We are grateful for Victoria Foundation funding to further scale up our Seed Orchards, allowing us to support more community-based restoration projects in BC.



### Conservation

In its third year, the Adopt A Patch Program now has five patches consistently being cared for by youth through Reynolds Secondary, Pacific Christian Secondary, and Rogers Elementary schools, as well as adults from Garth Homer Society, and former Site Manager, Willie MacGillivray. As shown on the beautiful cover, "patchwork" continues to transform the land and its participants with many youth sharing how powerfully this program supports their well-being. We are excited that new funding will allow us to grow this initiative.



### Education

With a \$36,570 management fee shortfall from the District of Saanich last year, we needed to restructure our school and community programs for children and youth. We are pleased that our new delivery model via external contract educators is allowing us to continue offering high-quality land-based educational programming.



Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary continues to be a key third place for young families – the Nature House is open to the public by donation 40h/week and the 171-acre grounds are freely open dawn until dusk every day. The Nature Sanctuary offers unparalleled opportunities for 100,000 urban visitors to learn how to connect to nature responsibly and to develop land care practices. We are creating a new Learning & Training Institute to strengthen these opportunities. Please reach out if you are interested in donating in support of this initiative!

### Facilities Caretaking

This was a busy year for managing Saanich's infrastructure at Swan Lake. We replaced the Blankinsop Creek Bridge, the Founders' Wharf, and began the Swan Creek Bridge replacement. We continued fencing on Christmas Hill to further prevent off trail use. We also renovated the Nature House with an automated front door, and an overhaul of our main teaching and learning space. The Society raised 89% of the funding for this capital work with Saanich supporting the remaining 11%.



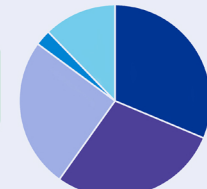
## Finance

### Revenue

In 2025, the District of Saanich Land Management Fee increased by 4% over 2024 (representing 31% of the Society's overall revenue value). Volunteerism rose by 19% and Grants, Donations, and Sponsorships increased by 29%. Social Enterprise, Memberships & Other revenues increased by 5%. Our school group and family educational program revenue was up 5% from 2024; however, enrollment has not rebounded to pre-COVID levels. Where Swan Lake was the first for a lot of environmental education, many similar opportunities are now offered for free through Municipal governments. We must continue to innovate!

Total: \$1,478,923

Volunteer Value:  
\$433,424

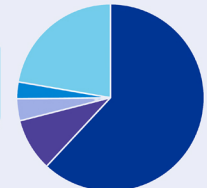


### Expenses

The Society continues to try to keep up with contemporary wages – up 41% relative to pre-pandemic (FY19 Living Wage: \$19.39 vs FY25: \$27.40). Other increased expenses in 2025 were due to specific expenditures funded by individual grant awards (e.g. BC Community Gaming Capital Nature House Renovation Project – \$86,000).

Total: \$1,220,614

Amortization Value:  
\$99,509



Trails & Nature House are Free or by Donation  
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Visit our website for program information  
Get Social: @swanlakenature | swanlake.bc.ca | (250) 479-0211

Charity Number: 1920757

