A BIOREGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE SAANICH PENINSULA

Produced by:

Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition

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RECOGNITION OF W̱SÁNEĆ HISTORY, CULTURE, AND TERRITORY

W̱SÁNEĆ (hw-say-nitch) means the "emerging people," Saanich is the anglicized form of W̱SÁNEĆ. The Saanich Peninsula, its municipalities, and the Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition are all named after the W̱SÁNEĆ people and territory. The creator, XÁLS (xhails), bestowed teachings for the W̱SÁNEĆ people to care for the territory by respecting the land, the water, each wind, each species, and each person, as a relative. XÁLS transformed many beings in the territory into stone as reminders to the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples of the laws of the land. Starting at the north end of the Peninsula, T̓EUWEṈ (tlow-ung), there is a site where XÁLS, the creator, transformed a being into stone. Along the shoreline on the west side of the Peninsula you pass through K̓EUK̓EUET (kow-kow-it), a place of drumming. W̱SÍK̓EM (hw-sigh-kem), known as Patricia Bay, is a village that used to be full of clams for harvesting. Here you can find two creeks, TELÁW̱EṈ (tuh-lay-hwung) and ȾEṈTEN (ts-ung-tin), which were important salmon spawning creeks, and were shortcuts from the inlet to the Salish strait. On the east side of the Saanich Peninsula is ḰELSET (quell-sit), the mouth of Reay Creek at Bazan Bay. ḰELSET was full of XIW̱E (xhee-hwuh) and SQIȾI (squee-tsee) (purple and green sea urchins). Westward to ŁAU,WELṈEW̱ (lhay-well-ngehw) mountain and further to KEXMIṈEN (kuxh-meeng-un), also known as Hagan Bight, this was a harvesting site for barestem desert parsley, a sacred medicine for W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. South east is ȾIKEL (tsee-kel), known today as Maber Flats, it was a bog full of a wide variety of medicines and fibers for making rope, mats, and baskets. Southward is the location of SṈIDȻEŁ (sngeet-kwulh), Tod Inlet, the place of blue grouse. SṈIDȻEL is known to be the first village of the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples where SŁEMEW̱ (slh-um-oohw), the first man, came down from the sky. W̱MÍYEŦEN, the Highlands, are prominent hunting grounds. The W̱SÁNEĆ people have advocated for the preservation and responsible management of W̱SÁNEĆ, since the arrival of settlers.

According to written history, in 1852, Douglas met with the W̱SÁNEĆ to create a treaty in order to access timber and open a saw mill in Cordova Bay. This treaty states that the W̱SÁNEĆ sold their land to the 'white man forever' and in exchange the W̱SÁNEĆ people would be able to "hunt over the unoccupied lands, and to carry on our fisheries as formerly."

W̱SÁNEĆ oral history tells us, instead, that James Douglas and the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation entered into a Peace and Friendship Treaty in response to a number of significant events. These events include the encroachment/timber extraction by employees of James Douglas near the village of ȾEL̓IŁĆE (Cordova Bay), the shooting of a W̱SÁNEĆ boy by a settler near Mount Tolmie, and threats W̱SÁNEĆ peoples had made against James Douglas and Fort Victoria in response to the above. In 1852, James Douglas met with W̱SÁNEĆ peoples to remedy these concerns and gestured out to the land in recognition of W̱SÁNEĆ's ownership of their territory. The agreement held that settlers and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples would continue to live on these lands with respect for one another. This did not occur. When ȾIKEL, which means bog/swamp, was drained, late Dave Elliott Sr. stated "I remember when it happened. When they did it my Mother cried. She cried openly,

unashamed and said, 'it will be no more good.' She was right, it is 'no more good.' Only a few people benefit now whereas before everybody benefitted including the birds, the animals, the flowers, the trees and everything else." Each development that was built around a creek, disappointed the W̱SÁNEĆ people. When creeks were changed to ponds W̱SÁNEĆ people knew this would confuse the fish, stating that "the salmon aren't going to come back." With agricultural land protections and agricultural pollutants, W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' ability to revitalize their food systems is limited. Agricultural lands have destroyed the wetlands, forests, and beaches that were fundamental to W̱SÁNEĆ health and culture.

The written version of the Douglas Treaty is a direct breach of W̱SÁNEĆ law. As previously mentioned, the W̱SÁNEĆ people have obligations to the land, water, and all living things, these have been given to them by XÁLS the Creator: "I, T̓ÁU, ȻENS QENT E TŦE SĆÁLEĆE LÁ,E TOL" ("You will also look after your Relatives"). W̱SÁNEĆ obligation to fulfill the laws given to us by XÁLS could not have been superseded by any treaty made with James Douglas. The story of the great flood emphasizes the need to uphold W̱SÁNEĆ law. Years ago, the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples forgot the teachings of XÁLS, who then caused the water to rise. To survive, W̱SÁNEĆ ancestors boarded their canoes, tying themselves to an arbutus tree at the top of ŁÁU,WELN̓EW̱ (Mount Newton) with a large cedar rope. As the flood subsided, the peak of ŁÁU,WELN̓EW̱ emerged, and the survivors were able to make it safely back to dry land. They then gathered around the cedar rope and gave thanks and stated, we are W̱SÁNEĆ, the emerging people.

Acknowledging W̱SÁNEĆ territory, people and history is acknowledging W̱SÁNEĆ people as caretakers of the forests, streams, meadows, beaches, mountains, springs and wetlands. Taking action on the ideas laid out in this Bioregional Framework, is an opportunity to support and respect W̱SÁNEC peoples, history, values and future.[1,2]

Here, at the scale of the Saanich Peninsula, the place we inhabit day to day, we can learn so much from the W̱SÁNEĆ people. Their memory and knowing is a great gift in finding a way forward that creates healthy communities and ecosystems. We thank Tiffany Joseph, Joni Olsen, their colleagues, and through them the W̱SÁNEĆ people, for their guidance and help in creating the Bioregional Framework for the Saanich Peninsula.

[1] We would like to acknowledge Joni Olsen, Tiffany Joseph, and Justin Fritz for their work in producing this acknowledgment.

[2] With permission, aspects of this intro are taken verbatim from: W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council. (2019, October 13). Amendments to Cordova Bay Local Area Plan.

CONTENTS

This report was funded in part by WWF-Canada, and the results and recommendations presented in this report do not necessarily represent their official position.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The natural environment is an integral part of and driving force behind the culture, economy, and well-being of the Saanich Peninsula.

During the Sidney Summit on Habitat and Environment in November 2018, there was a broad consensus that more could be done to support the health of the environment. Emphasis on collaborative action sparked the idea of developing a Bioregional Framework to support a Peninsula-wide approach to the environment.

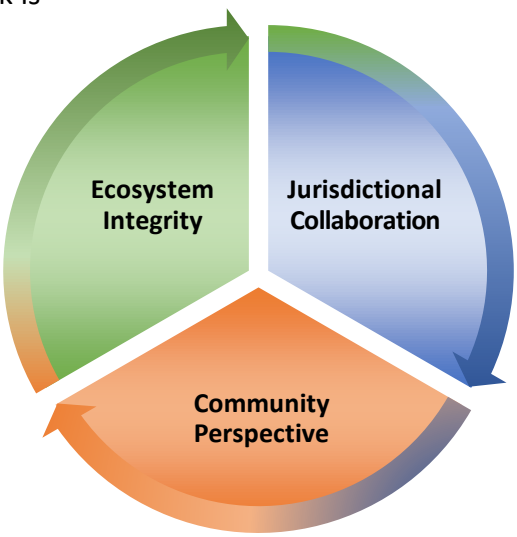
To this end, the Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition formed to develop a Bioregional Framework outlining a holistic approach to environmental health and management and to advocate for its adoption across the Saanich Peninsula.

We recognize that this holistic approach needs to include W̱SÁNEĆ people, relationships, teachings, and responsibilities to all living and non-living things.

The Bioregional Framework is defined by a vision of *ecological sustainability:*

In respectful collaboration with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, the municipalities of Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney recognize the rich and interconnected ecology of the Saanich Peninsula Bioregion and commit to work together to foster a healthy and sustaining environment for the future.

To achieve this vision of ecological sustainability, the Framework is composed of three distinct, but interrelated principles: **Ecosystem Integrity, Jurisdictional Collaboration, Community Perspective**. Within each principle a central outcome and multiple sub-outcomes are identified that are required to fulfill the broader vision.



Implementing the Bioregional Framework is an involved process that can be approached in diverse ways. Based on conversations with municipal staff, local organizations, the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council, and the public, we identified specific strategies and recommendations that we believe will be the most effective in supporting a holistic approach to ecological sustainability.

Strategies

1. Integrate the Bioregional Framework into the Official Community Plans (OCPs) of Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney.
2. Detail a clear implementation plan to fulfill the outcomes of the Bioregional Framework. As part of this we recommend that staff report back on the feasibility of the recommendations made in this document.
3. Establish a Peninsula-wide Environmental Advisory Council of elected and appointed members to guide the implementation of a Bioregional Framework and highlight environmental considerations.

Recommendations

Several of the key recommendations are listed here, with all recommendations listed at the conclusion of this report.

Ecosystem Integrity:

1. Perform a gap analysis of municipal policies relative to best practices.
2. Update the guidelines for Development Permit Areas (DPA).
3. Pursue appropriate policy measures to protect natural shorelines.

Jurisdictional Collaboration:

4. Formalize Peninsula-wide meetings between jurisdictions to discuss ecological sustainability.
5. Employ an environmental specialist to work with Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney.

Community Perspective:

1. Support public education regarding the values, culture, and traditional knowledge of the W̱SÁNEĆ people
2. Host a biennial summit on the environment.
3. Support community education and engagement.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, the following terms are defined as:

Ecosystem: A dynamic unit characterized by specific interactions of living organisms and living organisms with their abiotic environment.[3]

Ecosystem Integrity: The maintenance of the structure and function of ecosystems, with particular attention to biodiversity, ecological function, and resilience.[4]

Connectivity[5]*:*

> *Structural Connectivity:* The interaction of landscape features.
>
> *Functional Connectivity:* The extent to which the movement of living organisms and natural processes is aided by landscapes.

Ecological Corridors: A specific geographic region that facilitates ecological connectivity.[6]

Natural Assets: Natural features that carry out services necessary for the sustainability of a population.[7]

Bioregion: A region determined by similarity in environmental characteristics, not political or administrative relations.

Jurisdiction(s): A general descriptor, inclusive of the Tsartlip/W̱JOŁEŁP, Tseycum/WSIḴEM, Tsawout/SȾÁUTW, and Pauquachin/BOḰEĆEN First Nations, as well as Central Saanich, North Saanich and Sidney.

Acronyms

ESA – Environmentally Sensitive Areas

DPA – Development Permit Area

OCP – Official Community Plan

[3] Description. (2010, March 17). Retrieved July 17, 2020, from https://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/description.shtml

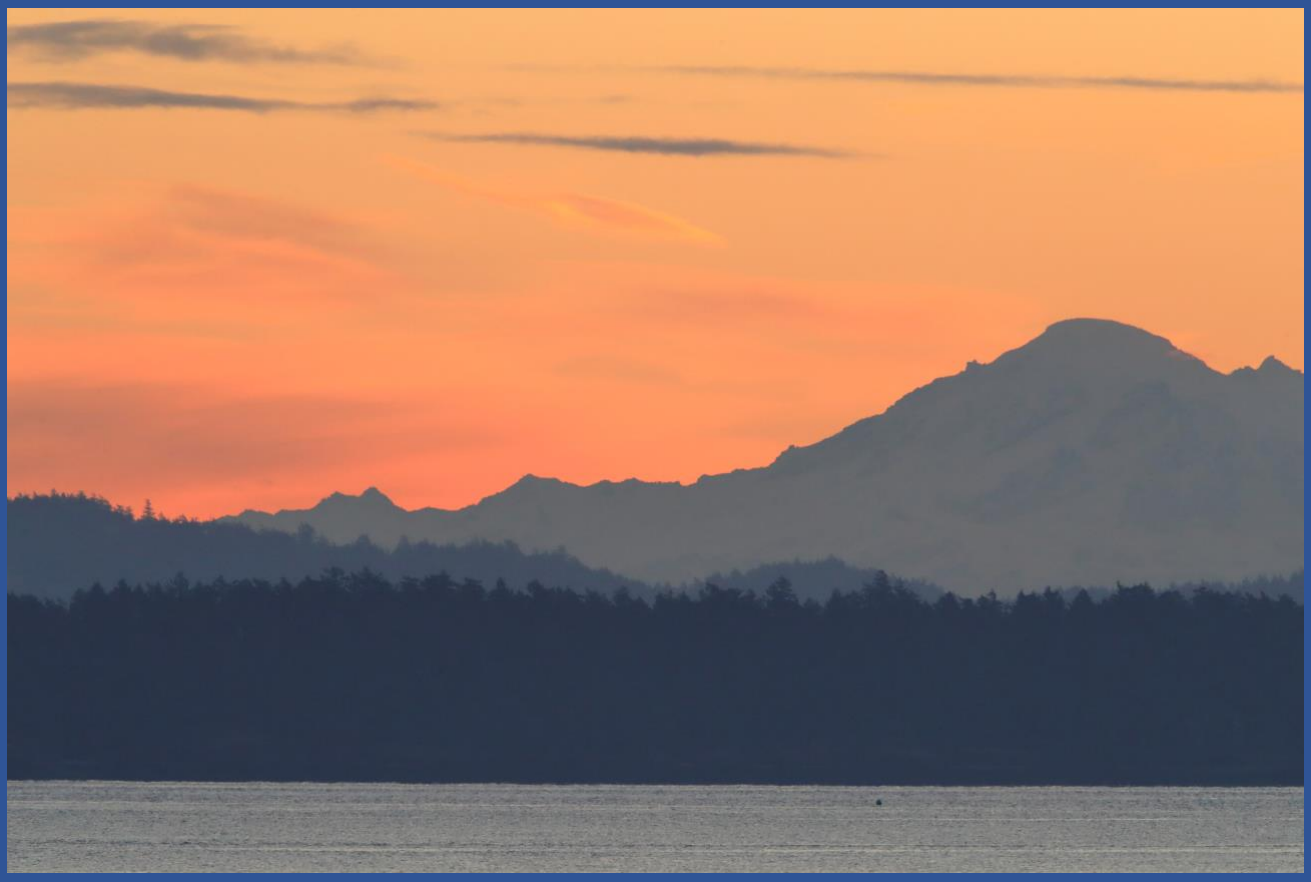
[4] Leo, G. A., & Levin, S. A. (1997). The Multifaceted Aspects of Ecosystem Integrity. *Conservation Ecology*, 1(1). doi:10.5751/es-00022-010103

[5] Meiklejohn, K., Ament, R., and Tabor, G. M. (n.d.) Habitat Corridors & Landscape Connectivity: Clarifying the Terminology. Retrieved July 17th, 2020 from https://www.wildlandsnetwork.org/sites/default/files/terminology%20CLLC.pdf

[6] Hilty, J., Worboys, G. L., Keeley, A., Woodley, S., Lausche, B. J., Locke, H., Tabor, G. M. (2020). Guidelines for conserving connectivity through ecological networks and corridors. doi:10.2305/iucn.ch.2020.pag.30.en

[7] Municipal Natural Assets Initiative. (2017). *Defining and Scoping Municipal Natural Assets.* https://mnai.ca/media/2018/02/finaldesignedsept18mnai.pdf

PART 1: A BIOREGIONAL FRAMEWORK

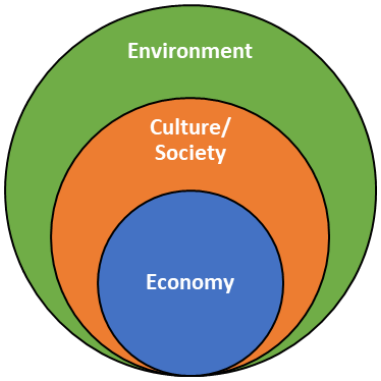


INTRODUCTION

Context

The successful Sidney Summit on Habitat and Environment in 2018 drew attention to the necessity of protecting the health of the Saanich Peninsula's environment and highlighted the need to improve our collective approach. Resolutions that emerged from the Summit placed particular emphasis on the need for collaborative and cooperative action across the Peninsula with regard to the environment. Building on these ideas, the Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition[8] formed to develop an approach to environment health and management that was more sustainable and collaborative.

Purpose



The Bioregional Framework for the Saanich Peninsula is a step toward a more comprehensive approach to environmental stewardship and is inspired by two concepts:

1. The environment does not follow jurisdictional or administrative boundaries.
2. The natural environment is an integral part of the health and well-being of the Peninsula Community.

It is difficult to overstate the entwinement of the environment with our culture, economy, health and well-being. Natural assets like our forests, coastline, and waterways can reduce the need for costly infrastructure development and help sustain our communities. The natural biota on the Peninsula can create both nutrient rich soil for agriculture and healthy productive beaches that support broader food security. The natural features of the Peninsula allow for diverse recreational opportunities and the spectacular vistas bring visitors from around the world. Moreover, the ecology of the Saanich Peninsula will play a fundamental role in mitigating the economic, environmental, and health effects of climate change. Our intimate interdependence with the environment means that there is a lot to be gained by protecting it.

In this sense, the purpose of the Bioregional Framework is to provide a vision to guide the actions, initiatives, and policies of jurisdictions on the Peninsula to support the health of the environment and ultimately the diversity of cultures and interests within the Peninsula community.

Process

The components of a Bioregional Framework presented here represent the culmination of a multi-phase process undertaken over a year, involving literature reviews, public engagement sessions, and specific consultation with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council, government officials, municipal staff, and local organizations.

[8] See Appendix 3

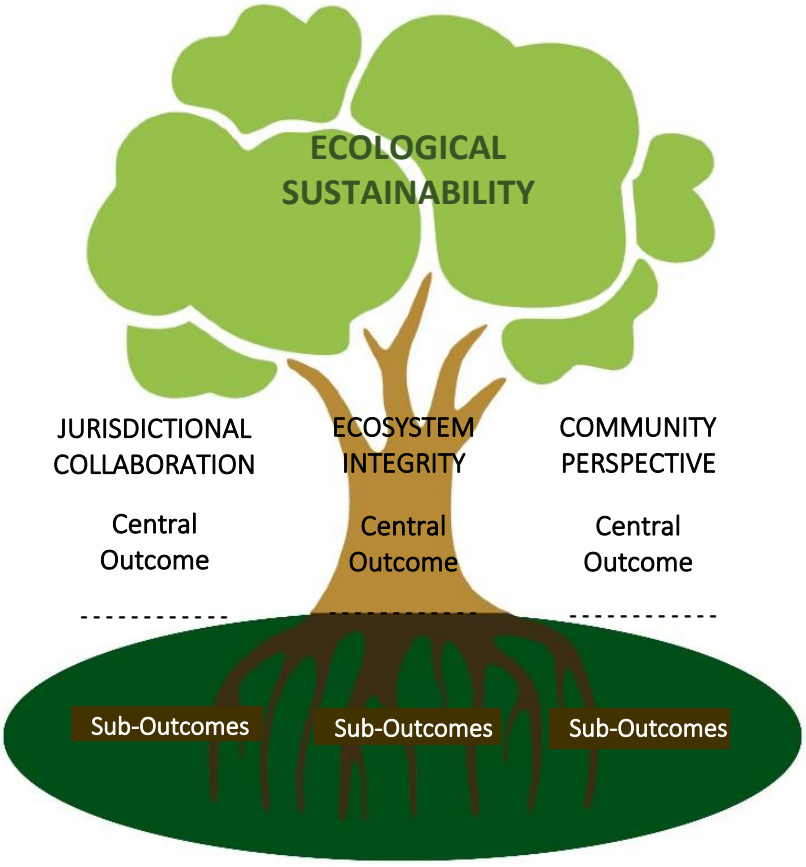
VISION

The Bioregional Framework is defined by a vision of *ecological sustainability*:

In respectful collaboration with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, the municipalities of Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney recognize the rich and interconnected ecology of the Saanich Peninsula Bioregion and commit to work together to foster a healthy and sustaining environment for the future.

THE FRAMEWORK

Fulfilling the vision of ecological sustainability requires attentiveness to three (3) principles shown in the diagram below: **Ecosystem Integrity**, **Jurisdictional Collaboration**, **Community Perspective**. Each principle is further broken down into a central outcome and multiple sub-outcomes. The vision, together with the central and sub-outcomes, creates the Bioregional Framework.



The Framework is progressive, contextual, additive, descriptive, and reconciliatory:

Progressive: The Framework aims to maximize the effectiveness of our approach to ecological sustainability.

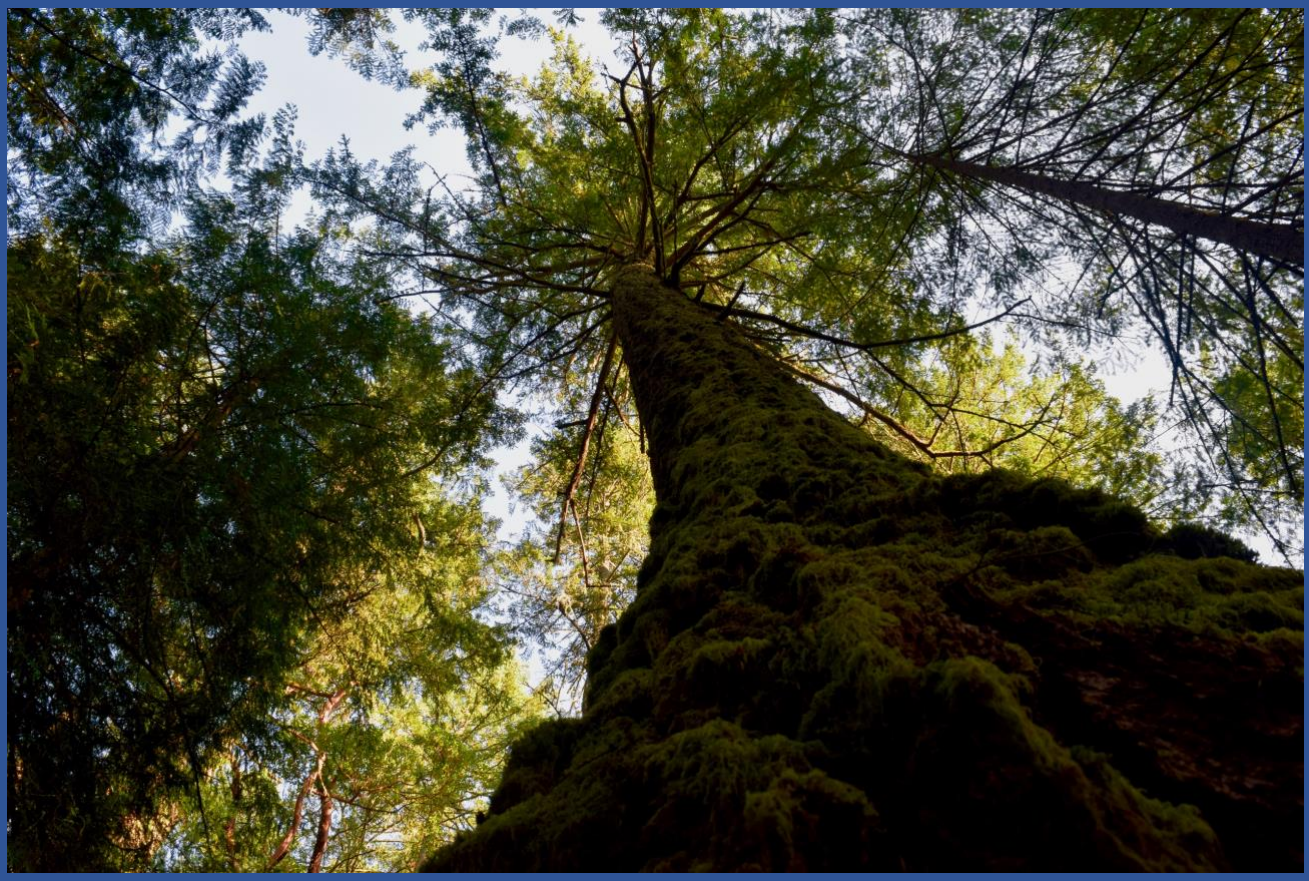
Contextual: The Framework can be implemented differently in different jurisdictional contexts.

Additive: The Framework is meant to expand on existing strengths and approaches in each jurisdiction.

Descriptive: The Framework describes the vision and the ideal outcomes that can orient the specific actions and strategies of jurisdictions, public stewards, and local organizations.

Reconciliatory: The Framework engages environmental sustainability, in part, as a means to support the culture, traditions, and rights of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation.

PART 2: FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES AND OUTCOMES

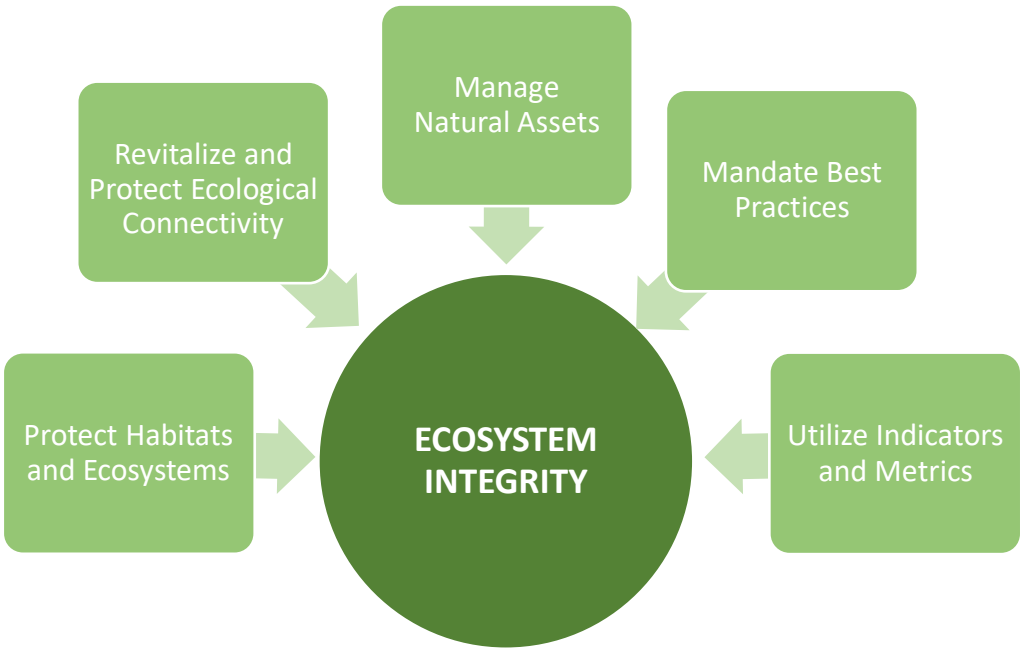


ECOSYSTEM INTEGRITY

Situated within the Coastal Douglas-fir bioregion, the Saanich Peninsula is home to a wealth of vital, dynamic, and interconnected habitats, ecosystems, and species. Eelgrass spreads along the coast, forage fish, Á̱ĆEX (crab), ŁÁU̱K̲EM̱ (Bay mussel) and T̲EX̲T̲EX̲ (Pacific oyster) inhabit the shallow waters along beaches, salmon journey the rivers and streams of the Peninsula's watersheds, herons perch atop trees within many wildland settings, and owls nest in forested landscapes. Supporting ecosystem integrity and connectivity based on informed best management practices protects vulnerable species and supports important ecosystems. Maintaining ecosystem integrity also functions to mitigate the effects of climate change, support food security, and ultimately sustain a high quality of life on the Peninsula.

Central Outcome:

Conserve, protect, and maintain ecosystems and the connectivity of the natural environment with an approach that is proactive and informed by both W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological and comprehensive scientific knowledge.



Sub-Outcomes:

1. Identify and Protect Existing Vital Habitats and Ecosystems on the Peninsula

There are many diverse habitats and ecosystems on the Peninsula; some are protected and others are not. The protection and effective management of these existing features needs to be ensured.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Support the use of W̱SÁNEĆ place names and traditional knowledge to characterize the original ecology of the Saanich Peninsula.
- Identify and protect natural features that are important for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation.
- Preserve natural vegetation.
- Support the resurgence of traditional W̱SÁNEĆ methods of habitat and ecosystem protection and restoration.
- Identify and protect forage fish spawning habitats in upper intertidal sections of sand and gravel beaches.
- Protect species at risk.

2. Revitalize and Protect East/West-North/South Ecological Connectivity

Connectivity[9] is fundamental to ecological integrity, profoundly influencing the health of the environment. Connectivity can also support environmental resilience to erosion, drought, storms, and some negative effects of development. Furthermore, connectivity and ecological corridors will be increasingly important as climate change alters the ecological landscape. The protection and remediation of connections between ecosystems across the Peninsula will foster resilient and sustainable ecosystems.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Facilitate connectivity from the top of watersheds to the shoreline.
- Identify and revitalize W̱SÁNEĆ trail networks.
- Address the impact of backshore development and agricultural lands on the marine shoreline.
- Identify and address barriers to connectivity.
- Establish restoration and remediation funds.
- Develop mechanisms to incentivize the preservation of ecological connectivity on private lands.

[9] See Appendix 2

3. Identify, Protect, and Effectively Manage Natural Assets

Many natural features perform vital functions that benefit our societies: carbon sequestration, stormwater management, and water filtration. Developing effective management and protection measures to preserve these natural assets is often more beneficial and cost effective than developing new infrastructures. Natural assets on the Peninsula need to be identified in order to protect and effectively manage their vital functions.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Determine the role, the extent, the dynamics, and the connectivity of natural assets on the Peninsula, including their net benefit for municipalities.
- Protect and support natural areas that are important for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation regarding their cultures, traditions, and food security, including Indigenous foodscapes and archaeological sites.

4. Inform Development and Planning Processes with Best Practices

Resources exist to instruct development and planning practices regarding the preservation of ecosystem integrity. Outdated procedures need to be replaced with best practices.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Integrate W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological knowledge respectfully.
- Incorporate an attentiveness to future and current challenges of climate change.
- Compile resources on best practices that are easily accessible and interpretable.

5. Use Clear Indicators and Metrics to Assess and Monitor Ecosystem Integrity

It is important to understand the initial condition of an ecosystem as well as the effectiveness of our approaches to stewardship. Recognized, effective, and consistent indicators and metrics need to be used to generate a more comprehensive understanding and more effective approaches to ecosystem integrity.

KEY COMPONENTS:

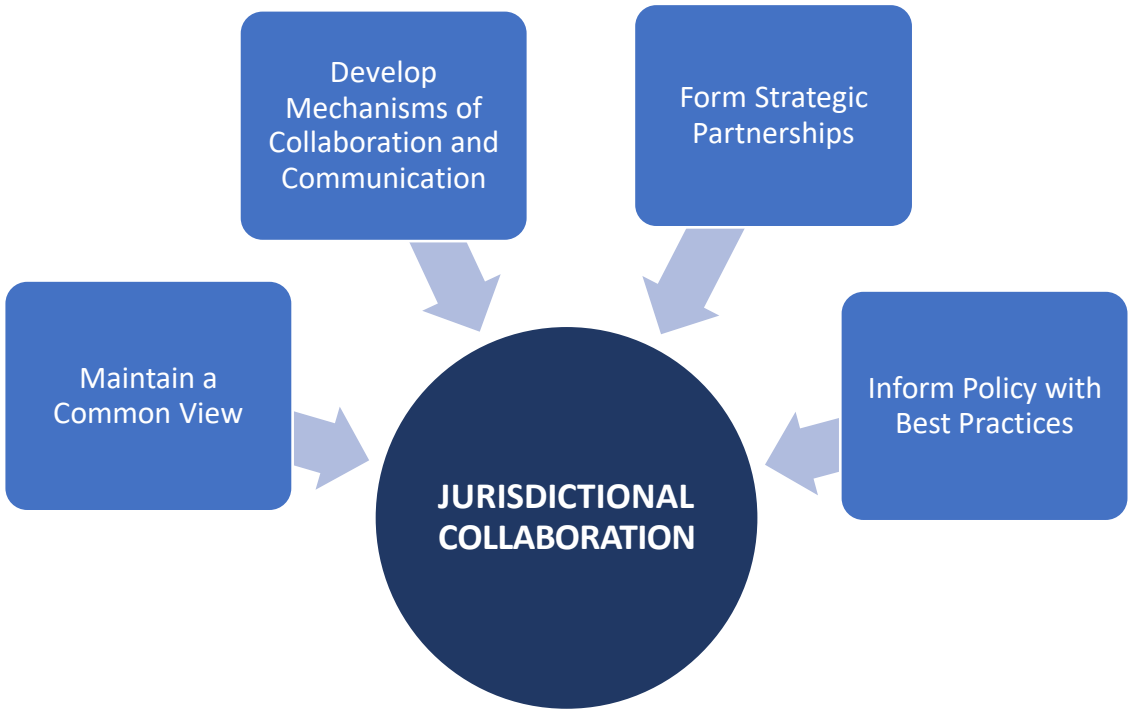
- Incorporate W̱SÁNEĆ traditional knowledge regarding the original ecology of the Saanich Peninsula to establish baselines.
- Develop a holistic set of metrics and indicators to monitor ecosystem integrity, connectivity, and sustainability.
- Monitor ecosystems throughout the planning, implementation, and maintenance of development projects.
- Utilize metrics and indicators to assess social dimensions.

JURISDICTIONAL COLLABORATION

Upholding ecological sustainability requires increased coordination and collaboration among jurisdictions, particularly among the municipalities of Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney and the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations. Each jurisdiction plays a distinct role on the Peninsula and they have their separate government functions; however, they all operate in the same bioregion. Increasing cooperation and coordination among jurisdictions improves efforts of conservation and ecological sustainability and also increases available funds and resources by addressing redundancies.

Central Outcome:

Operate collaboratively and cooperatively to support sustainable practices on the Saanich Peninsula.



Sub-Outcomes:

1. Maintain a Common View of the Natural Environment

Endorsing jurisdictions establish a collectively determined, consistent view of the natural environment.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Center W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological knowledge within the vision.
- Communicate consistently to allow the vision to evolve but remain consistent across the region.
- Use up-to-date data and the principle of Ecosystem Integrity to inform the common view.

2. Formal and Informal Mechanisms Facilitate Collaboration, Communication, and Cooperation

Endorsing jurisdictions develop formal and informal mechanisms to communicate consistently and effectively regarding actions that impact ecological sustainability.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Communicate consistently through the planning, implementation, and maintenance of any developments/works near to or potentially impacting adjacent jurisdictions.
- Create mechanisms for transparency and accountability.

3. Formal and Informal Strategic Partnerships Support Ecological Sustainability

Endorsing jurisdictions jointly pursue opportunities for collaboration, including various public-private and public-non-profit partnerships.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Develop respectful and mutual partnerships with the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations that recognize and support the interconnection of Indigenous peoples with the land.
- Local environmentally-focused organizations, the municipalities, and the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation work collaboratively to gather data and perform research.

4. Current Research and Best Practices inform Local Bylaws and Policies

The municipalities of Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney develop policies and bylaws based on up-to-date research and best practices to support ecosystem integrity.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Update existing bylaws and policies and develop new bylaws where necessary.
- Inform and align best practices with traditional ecological knowledge of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation.
- Make existing and proposed research easily accessible for councillors, municipal staff, and the public to develop and advocate for policy changes.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Supporting ecological sustainability on the Saanich Peninsula depends on the efforts and actions of the entire community. Conversely, the well-being of the Peninsula community and our sense of place comes from the unique ecology of our bioregion. Community Perspective addresses this inherent interconnection of people and nature, recognizing that the Peninsula public has the power to foster healthy and resilient ecosystems that, in turn, will provide the foundation for healthy, resilient, and prosperous communities on the Peninsula.

Central Outcome:

Public knowledge and stewardship of the natural environment supports ecological sustainability.

Sub-Outcomes:

1. Engage and Integrate W̱SÁNEĆ Traditional Ecological Knowledge in a Respectful Manner

The W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has historic and continuing ties to the lands and waters of the Saanich Peninsula. Their cultures, traditions, laws and practices are intimately connected to the Peninsula. The pursuit of ecological sustainability on the Saanich Peninsula is, in this sense, fundamentally tied to the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. A willingness to learn, attentiveness to, and respectful integration of traditional ecological knowledge, is therefore paramount to the process of ecological sustainability.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Respectfully align objectives of the municipalities and the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations.
- Form meaningful protocols and effective avenues of communication between the municipalities and the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations.
- Identify and respect W̱SÁNEĆ foodscapes and important archaeological sites.
- Support W̱SÁNEĆ representation and resilience.
- Promote public education and awareness of W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological knowledge.

2. Emphasize the Connection Between the Environment and the Health of our Society, Economy, and Culture

This framework is based on the understanding that a healthy and resilient environment is the foundation of a healthy society, economy, and culture. This understanding needs to be an integral part of our dialogue and broader actions as a community on the Peninsula.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- Support educational opportunities, resources, and public engagement events for children and adults, to help develop community knowledge.
- Approach challenges and actions with an attentiveness to the environment.

3. Contextualize Ecological Sustainability within Global Climate and Environmental Change

A climate emergency has been declared in many jurisdictions. There needs to be a clear understanding of the challenges that global climate and environment change presents for the Saanich Peninsula. The value of ecological sustainability also needs to be emphasized with regard to its importance for combatting climate change.

KEY COMPONENT:

- Support ongoing understanding of the climate emergency.
- Recognize the negative impacts of climate change on W̱SÁNEĆ Nation Douglas Treaty rights.

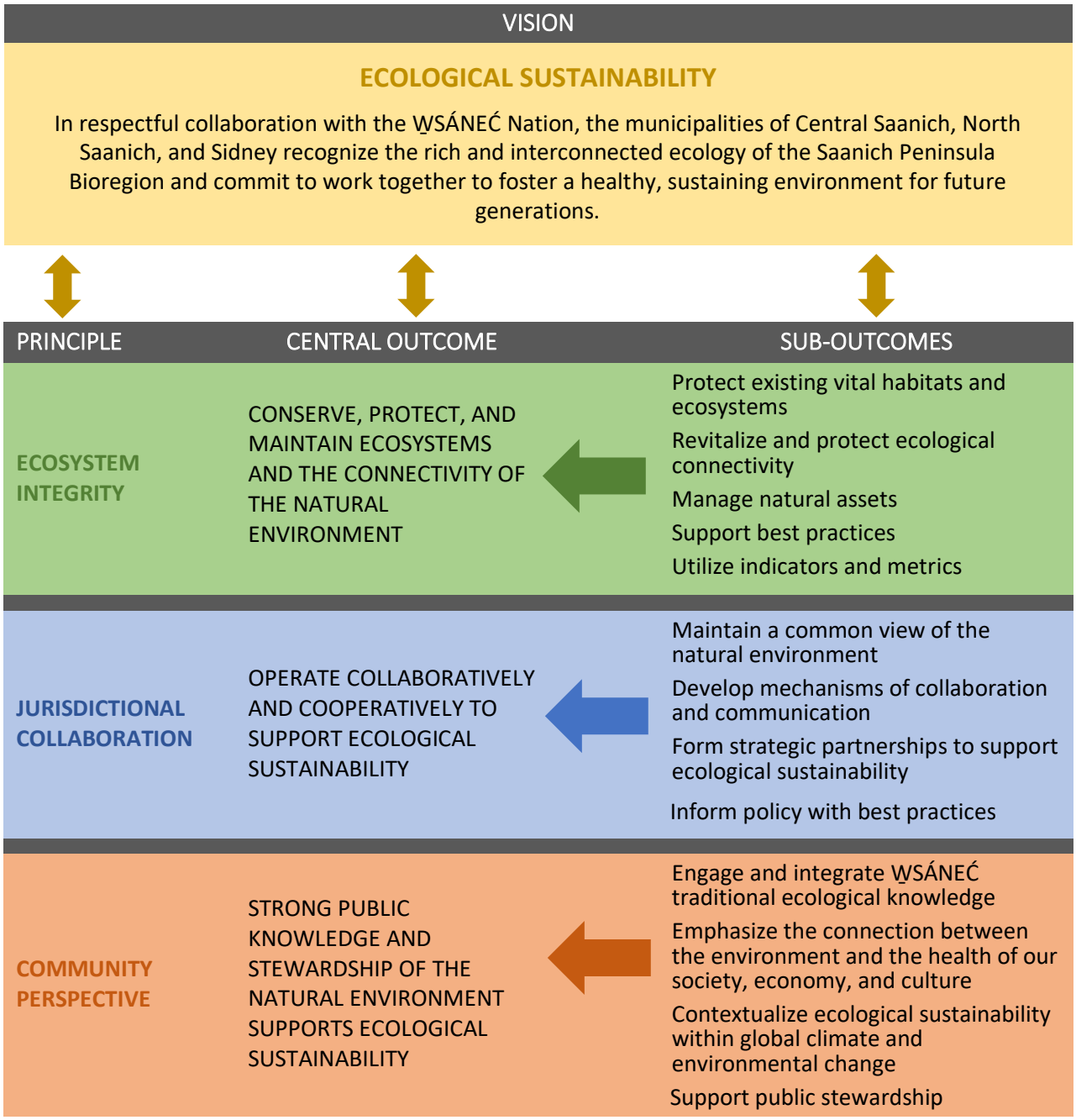
4. Support Public Stewardship

Many local organizations play a significant role in supporting ecosystem integrity on the Saanich Peninsula. They also play a vital role in informing and engaging the public on ecological issues – building engaged communities. Public stewardship needs to be consistently supported.

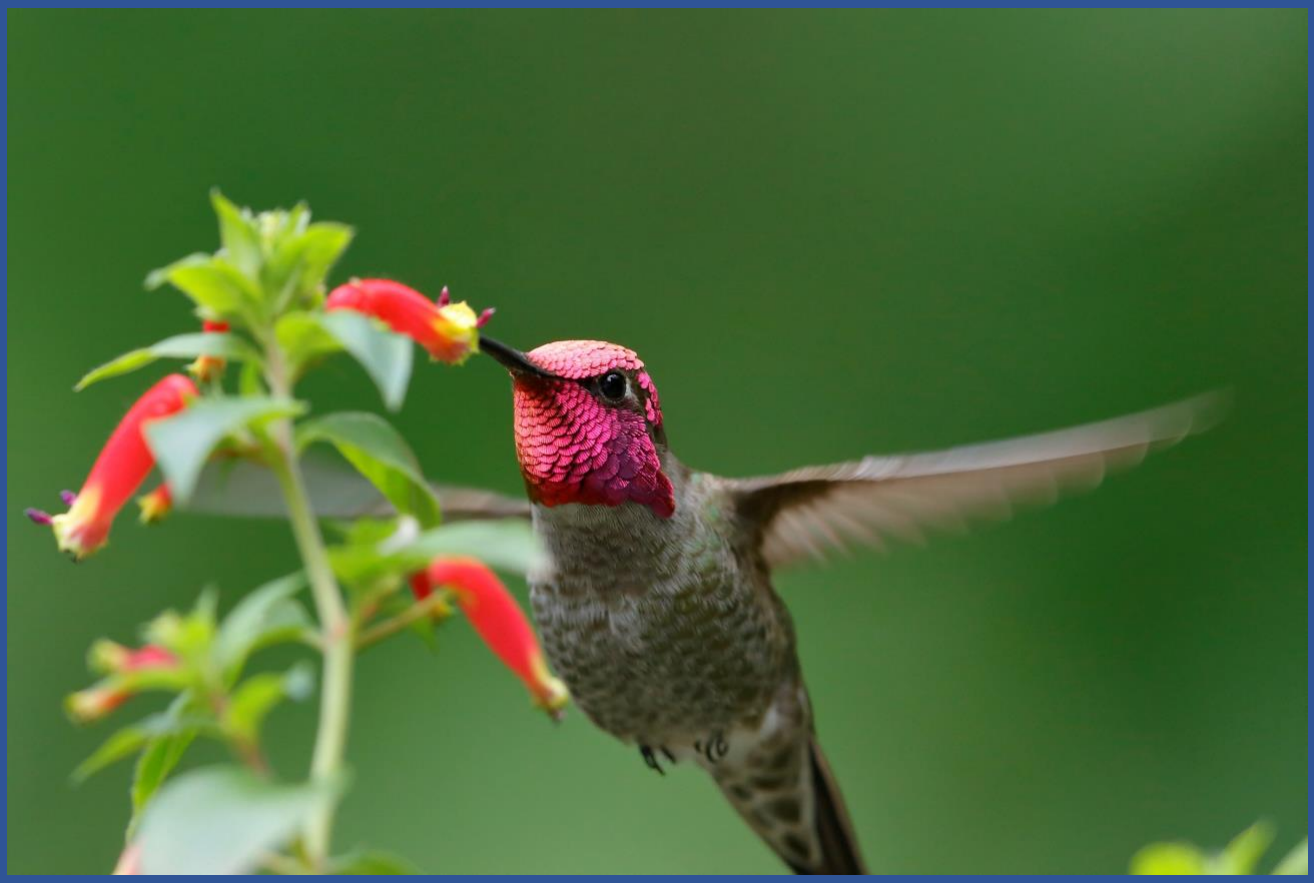
KEY COMPONENTS:

- Support stewardship activities with funding and resources.
- Develop strong avenues of communication between local organizations and municipal staff to aid the dissemination of information, data, and resources.
- Encourage public support of local organizations.
- Encourage private initiatives.
- Promote the integration of and attentiveness to W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological knowledge in public stewardship.

BIOREGIONAL FRAMEWORK: PRINCIPLES AND OUTCOMES SUMMARY



PART 3: STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



STRATEGIES

Successfully adopting a Bioregional Framework is an involved and ongoing process. Identified below are three (3) key strategies that support the implementation of the Bioregional Framework. Each strategy is briefly elaborated upon with regards to how it impacts the three (3) principles of a Bioregional Framework.

Integrate the Bioregional Framework outcomes into municipal Official Community Plans (OCPs)

Develop an Implementation Plan

Establish an Environmental Advisory Council

INTEGRATE THE BIOREGIONAL FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES INTO MUNICIPAL OCPS

The municipalities of Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney facilitate the integration of aspects of the Bioregional Framework into their respective OCPs during consultation processes in the OCP review. Two places within the OCP would be ideal for integration of the Bioregional Framework:

1. **Climate Change/Environment Section:** Adopt the Framework in full and reference it within the Climate Change or Environment Section. Alternatively, adopt the outcomes identified in the Bioregional Framework as broad outcomes/policies in the Climate Change or Environment Section of each OCP.

2. **Regional Context Statement:** Adopt the Framework in full and list it as a subsidiary document within the regional context statement. The Bioregional Framework is written within the context of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and would align municipal policy/vision particularly with objectives 2.1 and 7.1 of the RGS.

Impact:

- OCP vision reflects a holistic approach to ecological sustainability
- Shared natural areas are *consistently* protected and maintained Peninsula-wide

- A harmonized view of the Peninsula and ecological sustainability is reflected in each OCP
- Inter-municipal partnerships can be formed more easily

- Public consultation during the OCP revision processes ensures that the elements of the Bioregional Framework adopted reflect public interest
- Public stewardship can expand across jurisdictional boundaries more easily
- Public education on W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological knowledge builds cultural understanding

DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Adoption of the Bioregional Framework is the beginning of a larger process of implementation. Specific changes need to occur on the ground to fulfill the tenets of a Bioregional Framework – some of which are detailed in the Recommendations section below. Outlining a clear plan in collaboration with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation that accounts for capacity, timeline, funding, and general limitations in jurisdictions is necessary for successful implementation of the Bioregional Framework.

Impact:

- The most effective approaches to uphold ecological sustainability, for each jurisdiction, are outlined
- A consistent approach to the environment reduces redundancies
- Long-term plans increase the potential that jurisdictions can align future projects and research
- Development of Implementation Plans can occur collaboratively
- Funding and project redundancies are reduced
- Public can help define the plan

FORM AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

A diverse group of individuals selected from across the Peninsula form an environmental advisory board that advises on decisions, highlighting environmental considerations. Members could include, but would not be limited to W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations representatives, environmental specialists, a councillor liaison, industry representatives, and general members of the public.

Key mandates:

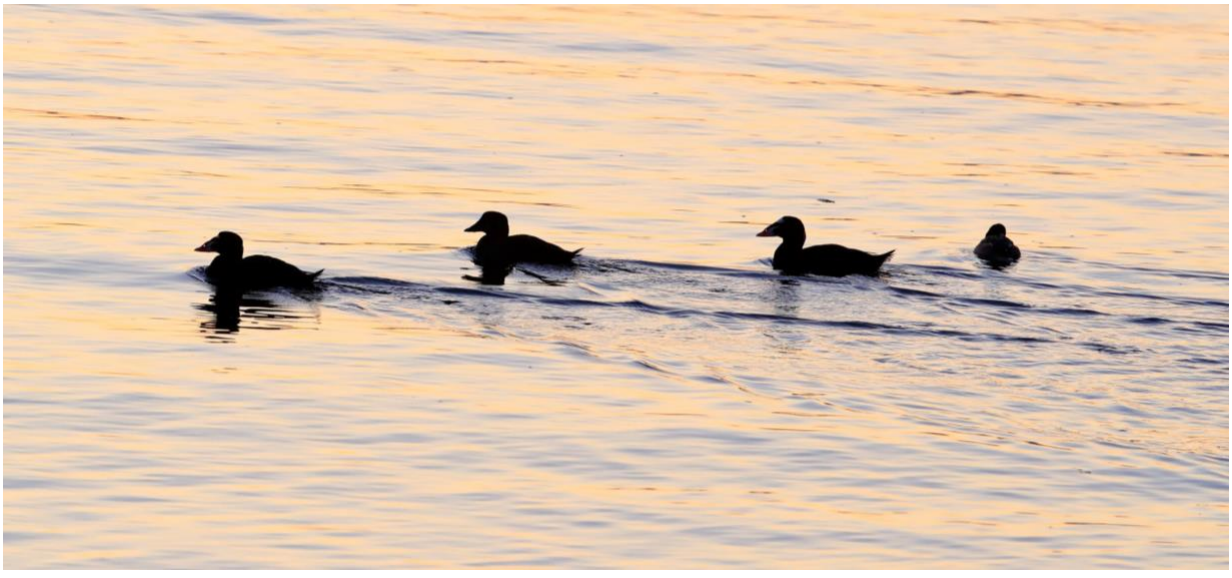
1. Highlight environmental considerations in municipal decisions.
2. Facilitate communication between jurisdictions and local organizations.
3. Support initiatives aligned with the Bioregional Framework.
4. Promote ecological health as a fundamental aspect of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's Douglas Treaty rights

Impact:

- Increased focus on the environment and the Bioregional Framework
- Continuity of best practices exists across the Peninsula
- Approach reflects the understanding that we live in the same Bioregion

- A Peninsula-wide voice advocates for the environment
- Peninsula-wide partnerships are facilitated
- Staff have access to additional information/expertise when requested

- Public perspectives/expertise on the Peninsula are utilized
- W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological knowledge and practices are integrated
- Communication between local organizations and municipalities is improved



RECOMMENDATIONS

A list of key recommendations is provided below. Recommendations are given for each principle and suggest clear actions that can be made to fulfill the Bioregional Framework. The recommendations range in their time, funding, and resource requirements to implement and therefore support the development of short-term and long-term implementation plans. More detailed descriptions of each recommendation are provided in Appendix 1.

BIOREGIONAL FRAMEWORK: RECOMMENDATIONS

PRINCIPLE	RECOMMENDATIONS
ECOSYSTEM INTEGRITY	1. Issue a *Guide to Sustainable Development* 2. Establish a research database 3. Establish a mapping database 4. Promote the Salmon Safe Certification 5. Perform a gap analysis of municipal policies relative to best practices 6. Pursue policy measures to protect natural shorelines 7. Update DPA guidelines 8. Undertake a Peninsula-wide, State of the Environment Report (SOE) 9. Develop Integrated Land/Marine Management Plans
JURISDICTIONAL COLLABORATION	1. Incorporate ecological sustainability in climate change strategic plans 2. Hold regular Peninsula-wide meetings 3. Hire an environmental specialist 4. Establish protocol agreements with the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations 5. Pursue external partnerships 6. Outline mechanisms to improve conservation and ecological sustainability on private lands
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE	1. Support public education regarding the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation 2. Host a Peninsula-wide summit 3. Increase public engagement and education 4. Develop a *Local Organization Guide*

APPENDICES

1. Detailed Recommendations
2. Connectivity
3. Acknowledgements
4. The Coalition Terms of Reference
5. Geospatial Data References

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are provided for each of the three principles of the Bioregional Framework: Ecosystem Integrity, Jurisdictional Collaboration, Community Perspective. The recommendations are listed in order of predicted ease of implementation (easier to more involved), but are all proposed on their potential to contribute to fulfilling a Bioregional Framework.

ECOSYSTEM INTEGRITY

1. **Issue a *Guide to Sustainable Development*:** Create a checklist of key practices, important options to consider, and preferred approaches to assist developers to better implement sustainable best practices.
   Examples:
   a. Campbell River Sustainability Checklist
   b. Central Saanich Subdivision Development

2. **Establish a research database:** Compile a database of research regarding the natural features and ecology of the Peninsula, that can be easily accessed by all jurisdictions, staff, and the public. Ease of access will increase the likelihood that data is effectively utilized. This database, ideally, would include W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological knowledge.

3. **Establish a mapping database:** Compile a database of maps and mapping data that can be shared between all jurisdictions, staff, and the public. In particular, support the integration of maps that highlight traditional place names and identify important regions for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation – Indigenous foodscapes, culturally/historically significant regions.

4. **Promote the Salmon Safe Certification:** Promote the Salmon Safe Certification for relevant developments, businesses, and landowners.

5. **Perform a gap analysis of municipal policies relative to best practices:** Determine the inadequacies of existing bylaws and support the creation of development practices and policy structures that align with sustainable practices and comply with broader legislation such as the Provincial Wildlife Act, the Federal Migratory Birds Convention Act, and the Federal Species at Risk Act. Utilize existing resources to aid this process:
   a. Develop with Care Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development, 2014
   b. Green Bylaws Toolkit for Conserving Sensitive Ecosystems and Green Infrastructure, 2016
   c. Climate Caucus
   d. Natural Resource Best Management Practices: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/laws-policies-standards-guidance/best-management-practices

6. **Pursue policy measures to protect natural shorelines:** Pursue municipal legislation that aligns with the University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre's recommendations for a provincial Shoreline Protections Act[10]:
    a. identify critical shoreline habitats,
    b. adopt land use policies that protect and enhance the foreshore, intertidal zones and marine environment; as well as mitigate the expected erosion as a result of sea level rise, and
    c. pursue a no-net-loss policy.

7. **Update DPA guidelines:** Identify opportunities for more detailed guidelines within DPAs to provide clear and consistent expectations for contracted Qualified Environmental Specialists (QEPs). Key DPAs include:
    a. Marine DPA
    b. ESA DPA
    c. Interaction between DPAs Ex. Hazard with Steep Slopes

8. **Undertake a Peninsula-wide, State of the Environment Report (SOE):** Undertake a Peninsula-wide SOE to facilitate more effective planning, implementation, and monitoring of actions pertaining to ecological sustainability**.**
    a. Sidney has indicated in their Strategic Plan that they will be pursuing a SOE in 2021. This provides an opportunity for Central Saanich and North Saanich to follow suit or match funding with Sidney to collaboratively undertake a Peninsula-wide SOE.

9. **Develop collaborative Integrated Land/Marine Management Plans**: Identify natural features shared between jurisdictions and establish co-management or integrated approaches to support ecosystem integrity. Prioritize co-management plans with the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations, that support the integration and implementation of traditional environmental land management.

    Examples:
    a. Reay Creek
    b. Roberts Bay/Mermaid Creek
    c. Shoal Harbour/Tsehum Harbour
    d. Peninsula Coastline
    e. Ecosystem Corridors

[10] Buchanan, M., Lesperance, A., McArdle, A., Sanborn, C., & Curran, D. (2019) *Saving Orcas by Protecting Fish Spawning Beaches*. Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria.

JURISDICTIONAL COLLABORATION

1. **Incorporate ecological sustainability in climate change strategic plans:** Ensure that ecological sustainability forms an integral part of climate change strategic plans. Highlight the importance of ecosystem integrity in combatting climate change as well as pre-empting inevitable ecological changes resulting from climate change within strategic plans.

2. **Hold Peninsula-wide meetings:** Formalize regular meetings between jurisdictional representatives, quarterly or more frequently, to discuss topics relating to ecological sustainability and potential collaborative/cooperative opportunities.

3. **Hire an environmental specialist:** Currently there are no environment specialists on staff in Central Saanich, North Saanich, or Sidney. Employ an environmental specialist to ensure a consistent focus on ecological sustainability is maintained. Potentially share the specialist among jurisdictions to facilitate a comprehensive, Peninsula-wide, approach.
    a. This role would necessitate an attentiveness to and understanding of W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological knowledge
    b. Note: This recommendation parallels the recommendation made by the North Saanich Climate Change Select Committee's recent report to Mayor and Council.

4. **Establish protocol agreements with the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations:** Outline meaningful and clear protocols for consultation, communication, and decision-making between the municipalities and the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations, on topics of ecological sustainability

5. **Pursue external partnerships:** Establish external public and private partnerships that support ecological sustainability on the Saanich Peninsula.
    Examples:
    a. Municipal Natural Assets Initiative: Work with the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative to identify and maintain natural assets on the Peninsula.
        i. Support staff using the Professional Learning Budget to take the natural assets course at Royal Roads: https://pcs.royalroads.ca/natural-asset-management-online.
    b. Identify mechanisms and opportunities for collaboration with local schools and universities
    c. Be more directly involved in important initiatives, such as: Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership and the Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification Program.

6. **Outline mechanisms to improve conservation and ecological sustainability on private lands:** A large portion of the land within the Peninsula is privately owned. Develop collaborative, mutually beneficial, mechanisms for ecological sustainability with private landowners.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

1. **Support public education regarding the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation**: In conjunction with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, develop opportunities and mechanisms to support improved awareness of, attentiveness to, and understanding of the W̱SÁNEĆ people, their history, values, culture, and traditional knowledge. Feature, and make prominent W̱SÁNEĆ art, design, and history: place names; visible and informational signage; commemorative events**;** recreation and creative activities.

2. **Host a Peninsula-wide summit:** Host a biennial summit on issues of ecological sustainability. The Sidney Summit on Habitat and Environment in 2018 was highly successful, generating ideas and social momentum regarding ecological sustainability.

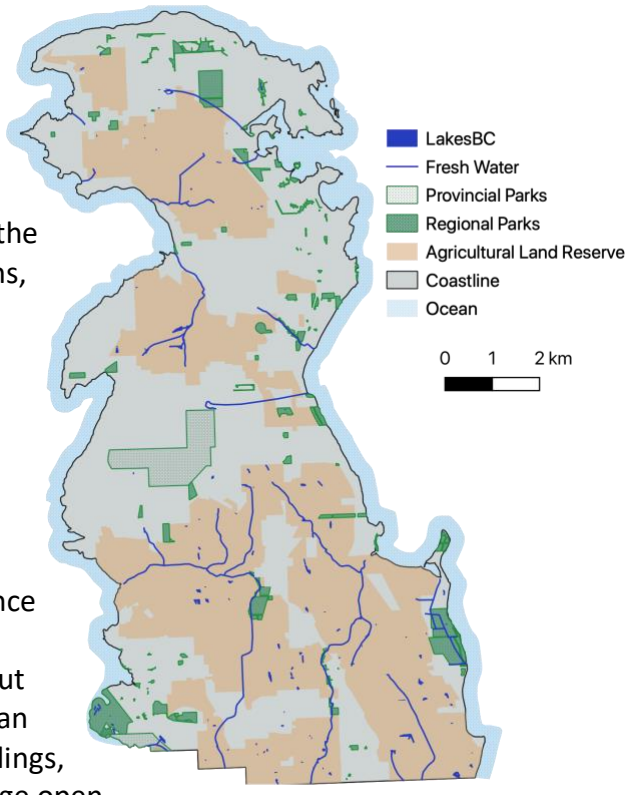
3. **Increase public engagement and education:** Increase mechanisms for public engagement and education on topics relating to ecological sustainability. COVID-19 has made the need for alternative forms of public engagement exceedingly clear – technological advancements will likely be useful in this regard.
    a. PlaceSpeak **–** A mechanism for Civic Engagement

4. **Develop a *Local Organization Guide*:** Develop an accessible guide to highlight all the local organizations working with respect to the environment and their specific actions on the Saanich Peninsula.

APPENDIX 2: CONNECTIVITY

Ecological Connectivity:

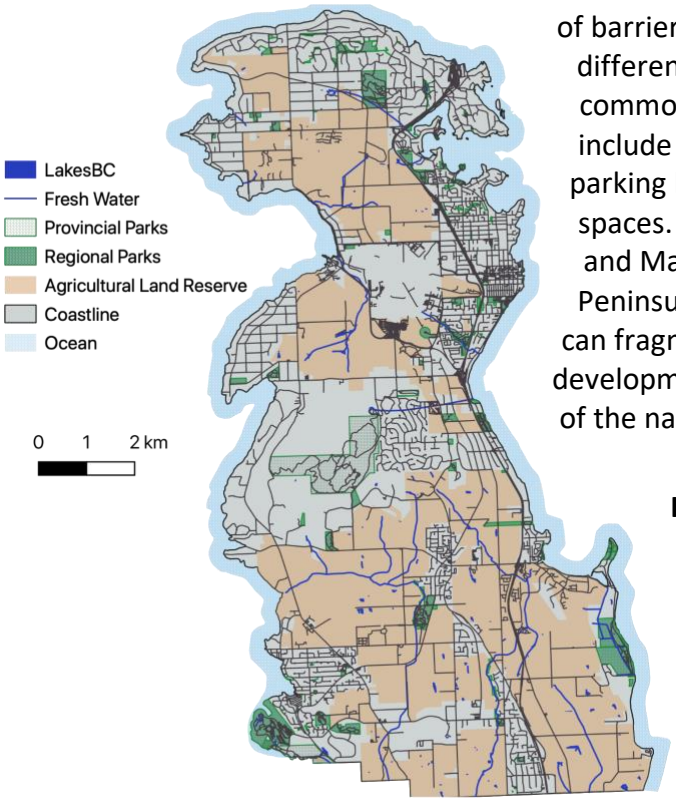
Natural spaces that are small and isolated are not sufficient to support ecological health. Functional and structural connectivity of natural spaces play a fundamental role in environment health. Connectivity on the Saanich Peninsula is facilitated by various features: streams, coastlines, forests, wetlands, parks, and air. Identifying potential areas to increase connectivity or significant barriers to connectivity that can be eliminated or altered, can improve connectivity[11] and overall ecosystem health.



Map 1: **Functional Connectivity**

Barriers to Ecological Connectivity:

Barriers limit the functional connectivity of natural environments. The significance of barriers differs for different species, but common barriers can include roads, buildings, parking lots, and large open spaces. Comparing Map 1[12] and Map 2[13] of the Saanich Peninsula, provides a representation of how urbanization can fragment natural landscapes. However, innovative development or adaptations can improve the connectivity of the natural environment despite these barriers.



Map 2: **Barriers to Connectivity**

Interfaces of Connectivity:

Ecological connectivity on the Saanich Peninsula can be facilitated at three (3) key interfaces (see next page).

[11] Mcrae, B. H., Hall, S. A., Beier, P., & Theobald, D. M. (2012). Where to Restore Ecological Connectivity? Detecting Barriers and Quantifying Restoration Benefits. *PLoS ONE, 7*(12). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0052604

[12] Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence – British Columbia and contains information from © OpenStreetMap contributors. A complete reference list of geospatial data is found in Appendix 4.

[13] Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence – British Columbia and contains information from © OpenStreetMap contributors. A complete reference list of geospatial data is found in Appendix 4.

Land to Land: Significant development on the Saanich Peninsula has reduced the connectivity of the Coastal Douglas-fir bioregion. Land use planning and innovative development going forward is necessary to maintain connectivity corridors on the Peninsula. For this reason, planning for in-fill, densification, and greenways is important.

Land and Freshwater Interface: There is an intimate relation between the land and the creeks, streams, and aquifers that move through it. Run-off from the land can and has drastically impacted the health of bodies of water, the ecosystems they support, and many W̱SÁNEĆ foodscapes. Legislation like the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation that safeguard this connection highlight its importance.

Land and Marine Interface: Development or alterations on the backshore (above the high-water mark) can profoundly impact the foreshore environment. For example, hard shore armouring prevents the sloughing of beach material which can alter beach ecosystems, directly impacting eelgrass habitat, forage fish spawning habitats (e.g. sand/gravel beaches), overall beach structure[14], and the traditional harvesting grounds of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. These changes can indirectly impact many other species, including the critically endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales because forage fish are an important food source for Chinook Salmon, which are the primary food source for the Southern Resident Killer Whales[15]. Other policies and regulations regarding agriculture, wastewater management, and development practices along the backshore, similarly, have profound implications for the land and marine interface. The current legislation to protect this interface is weak and inconsistent[16]. Advocacy for regulations similar to the provincial Riparian Areas Protection Regulation is ongoing, because it would help protect shorelines at the land/marine interface.

[14, 15, 16] Information for *Land and Marine Interface* taken from: Buchanan, M., Lesperance, A., McArdle, A., Sanborn, C., & Curran, D. (2019) *Saving Orcas by Protecting Fish Spawning Beaches*. Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria.

APPENDIX 3: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bioregional Framework for the Saanich Peninsula has been a major collaborative effort. We would like to acknowledge a couple key individuals/organizations for their contributions of time, expertise, and passion:

W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council:
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Joni Olsen
Gordon Elliott
Justin Fritz
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Crystal Tremblay
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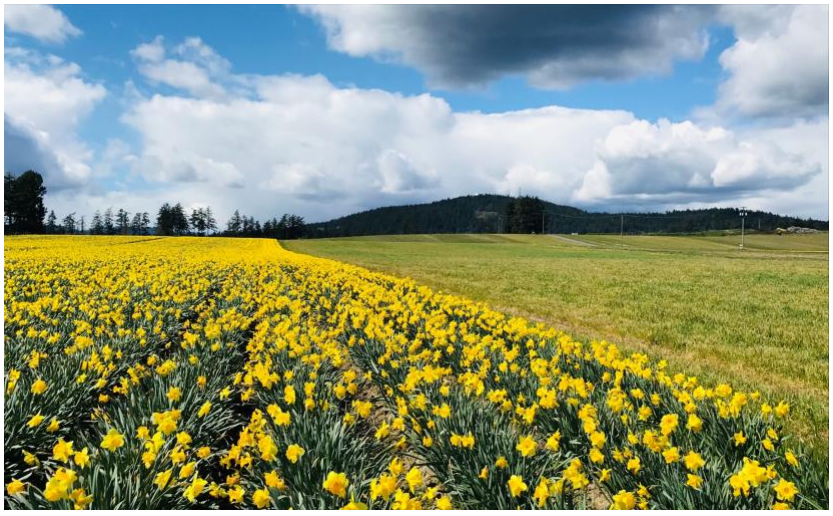
Central Saanich Community Association

North Saanich Residents Association

Sidney Community Association

Visual Credits: Terry Venables, Natural Images Canada: http://www.naturalimagescanada.ca/, Jerram Gawley (pg. 11, Part 2), and Janice Howard (pg. 35, Appendix 3)

Report Design Credit: Janice Howard, Source Consulting



APPENDIX 4: THE COALITION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition

Protecting nature by building community

Terms of Reference

November 2020

The Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition is a collection of independent environmental groups and other organizations[17] that have come together to further the values, purposes and interests outlined below. We are an informal, collaborative, advisory group that works closely with the current MLA, Adam Olsen.

We acknowledge that the territory of the Saanich Peninsula is unceded, and that the inherent rights and title of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation as well as the W̱SÁNEĆ Douglas Treaty rights remain undefined to this day. We appreciate that the aboriginal-federal-provincial-municipal jurisdictional landscape is complex and fragmented and that there is insufficient collaboration among the governing agencies.

PURPOSE: To promote ecological sustainability as a means to help ensure future environmental health on the Saanich Peninsula.

GOAL: Facilitate the development of a Bioregional Framework – in respectful collaboration with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation and the municipalities of Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney – that will serve as a set of common guiding principles around conservation and ecological health on the Saanich Peninsula. Support the use of these principles to, in turn, guide the process of updating the three Council's various regulations, bylaws, and commissions.

FOCUS: Maintain ecosystem integrity, increase jurisdictional collaboration and harmonization, and support community perspectives.

For further information on the Bioregional Framework or the Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition please contact Bob Peart (**Phone:** 1 (250) 655 0295 **Email:** bobpeart@shaw.ca) or visit www.PlaceSpeak.com/bioregionalframework.

[17] **Member groups are:** W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council, Friends of Shoal Harbour, SeaChange Marine Conservation Society, Peninsula Streams Society, WWF Canada, Roberts Bay Residents, Tsehum Harbour Task Force, Friends of North Saanich Parks, North Saanich Property Responsibility On the Waterfront (PROW) Association, Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea, Climate Justice Advocacy, Saanich Inlet Protection Society, Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce.

APPENDIX 5: GEOSPATIAL DATA REFERENCES

Crown Corporations and Agencies – Agricultural Land Reserve. (2019). *ALC Agricultural Land Reserve Lines* [geospatial dataset] https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/alc-agricultural-land-reserve-lines

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy – BC Parks – Provincial Services. (2020). *BC Parks, Ecological Reserves, and Protected Areas* [geospatial dataset] https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/bc-parks-ecological-reserves-and-protected-areas

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Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – GeoBC. (2020).

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OpenStreetMap. (2020). *Natural, Coastline, MultiPolygon* [geospatial dataset] openstreetmap.org[18]

[18] Note: All Open Street Map data (Boundary, Administrative/Highway/Natural, Coastline) was retrieved using the OSM plugin in QGIS.