



Crowdfunding Campaign For Eagle Sanctuary Soars Across the Finish Line

Volunteers and donors rally to protect lands in Salish Sea estuary where eagles gather

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VANCOUVER, B.C.

The combined efforts of local eagle lovers, visionary individuals, land holders, regional governments, and First Nations, have raised funding for the purchase and protection of an eagle sanctuary at French Creek, Vancouver Island.

“This is a fantastic story,” says Andy Day, CEO of the BC Parks Foundation. “There has been an incredible outpouring of goodwill in the community, making the longstanding dream of an eagle sanctuary come true. A lot of people feel like they are soaring with the eagles right now.”

The BC Parks Foundation led an effort to raise over \$5,180,000 in donations to purchase 18 acres of estuary land and join it to 5 acres of existing protected area, for a 23 acres nature reserve. The land hosts bald eagles who come by the thousands from as far away as Alaska to join resident and nesting eagles and feast on the teeming abundance of the Salish Sea.

Donations came from all sides, with the biggest coming from the landowners, French Creek House Ltd., who generously agreed to gift \$3,280,000 of land value. That was followed by a \$1,000,000 donation from British Columbian Dax Dasilva and his non-profit [Age of Union Alliance](#). The Regional District of Nanaimo then agreed to provide \$400,000.

The remaining amount - over \$500,000- came from people from every walk of life. “It was thousands of people like you and me, who want to keep BC beautiful,” says Day, who noted a few special donors honouring loved ones who had passed on. “That’s the beauty in this – many people being moved in some way to do what they could, in a spirit of gratitude and celebration, and all of that adding up to make something wonderful and lasting happen.”

Day credits the efforts of volunteers, and in particular the local [Save Estuary Land Society](#) and [Friends of French Creek Conservation Society](#), who spearheaded local efforts and have worked for years to protect the estuary.

“It’s been so inspiring to see people come up with such creative ways to raise awareness and donations for the French Creek Estuary Eagle Sanctuary,” says Denise Foster, Chair of the Save Estuary Land Society. “When we come together in our local neighbourhoods to help protect nature, it’s an amazing feeling. It unites us as a community.”



Supporters ranged from youth to elders in the community. Student enthusiasts from Ballenas and Kwalikum Senior Secondary schools planted hundreds of native trees along the lower corridor of French Creek’s riparian zone during the campaign. The Parksville Golden Oldies Sports Association (PGOSA) held a cycling event for the eagles. Barry Mountain, 86 years young, was thrilled to take part. “This is one our most important areas of biodiversity; it’s critical to conserve nature, oceans, rivers and the life they support,” said Mountain.

Southern BC and the Inside Passage sustain most of the eagles of western North America for 6 or more months each year. Dr. John Elliott of Canadian Wildlife Service and international eagle expert David Hancock of the Hancock Wildlife Foundation estimate between 35,000 to 50,000 eagles migrate along the coast. “We desperately need safe feeding sites for them,” says Hancock, “and this is one of the important ones.”

In addition to protecting eagles, the French Creek estuary is an incredibly diverse and rich ecological system supporting 180 species of birds, 60 species of waterfowl, salmon, river otters and beaver. Nineteen of the species in the estuary are considered at risk. As the estuary is comprised mainly of increasingly valuable private lands, it has always been vulnerable to development and human encroachment on fragile wildlife habitat.

Day also credits the Nanaimo Regional District, and in particular Electoral Area G Director Lehann Wallace, who personally contacted and inspired a lot of people to donate.

“The Regional District of Nanaimo is proud to be a partner in this important land acquisition. We extend our gratitude to the many in our community whose efforts and generosity helped make this nature preserve a reality,” says Wallace. “The Eagle Sanctuary at French Creek Estuary is a truly special place, and we are delighted that it will continue to be vital habitat for many threatened species and a natural green space for the community to enjoy.”

The land remains private and off-bounds to visitors for the coming months as the deal closes and restoration and planning begin. When the purchase goes through, the Regional District of Nanaimo will be a co-owner with the BC Parks Foundation, and will manage the lands as a nature preserve under the Electoral Area G Community Park Service through a 99-year renewable lease agreement with the Foundation. The lease provides for the new parklands to be managed in a manner that will ensure the protection, preservation, and conservation of the natural state of the land for ecological, environmental and aesthetic reasons.

About the BC Parks Foundation

The BC Parks Foundation is an independent charity with a mission to create the greatest parks system in the world through more and better parks and protected areas. Learn more at bcparksfoundation.ca.

About Friends of French Creek Conservation Society and Save Estuary Land Society



FFCCS and SELS are volunteer charitable organizations based in the French Creek area, working together to protect the French Creek Estuary <https://www.saveestuarylandsociety.ca>

About Age of Union

Age of Union is a non-profit environmental alliance that supports and makes visible a global community of changemakers working on-the-ground to protect the planet's threatened species and ecosystems. Launched in October 2021 by tech leader and environmental activist Dax Dasilva, Age of Union seeks to ignite a flame within every person through conservation efforts that solve critical environmental challenges and show the positive impact that every individual can make. <https://www.ageofunion.com>

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Media Resources:

[BCPF French Creek Media](#)

Media Contacts:

Casey Walker
BC Parks Foundation
casey.walker@bcparksfoundation.ca
+1-604-343-3975

Rebecca Taylor
Regional District of Nanaimo
RTaylor@rdn.bc.ca
+1-250-713-2400

Victoria Baker
Age of Union Alliance
Victoriab@nkpr.net
+1-416-726-8002