

Protecting the Natural Environment in Saanich



Saanich is a wonderful place to live, full of natural beauty. We all have a role to play in protecting the natural environment in Saanich to ensure that future generations are able to have the same experiences in nature that we enjoy. Fortunately, the protection and enhancement of natural areas also helps reduce our carbon footprint and adapt to a changing climate.

As a local government, Saanich uses policies, guidelines, and bylaws combined with the promotion of partnerships, stewardship, and awareness to protect the environment. Add federal and provincial regulations and it can be complicated to understand how everything works together to protect the environment locally. This brochure has been created to give you an idea of the legal tools Saanich uses to help protect the environment, as well as the opportunities and responsibilities that come with citizenship.

One of the early steps Saanich took in protecting the natural environment was to take stock of what we have and to create policies to protect and/or acquire land. An early example of this was the Urban Containment Boundary which was created in 1968 to concentrate urban growth and preserve rural areas for farming

saanich.ca/environment

and forests. Another good example is the acquisition of major floodplains and the lands along the Colquitz River since 1967 which has resulted in protected habitat and flood control.

Saanich also created an Environmentally Significant Areas Atlas in 1999 (one of the first in the province) and several subsequent editions. The atlas is used to flag important environmental features and inform decision-making. Much of this information is now accessible on our public mapping (GIS) system.

Best Management Practices are guidelines that help people carry out work without damaging the environment. There are many Best Management Practices on our website for residents to use— from removing invasive species to maintaining oil tanks. Saanich also has an internal process for our own projects to identify best practice when working in the natural environment.

This brochure will give you an overview of our major bylaws and policies to protect the natural environment. If you would like to know more about any of the information presented in this brochure, we invite you to find out more on our website or contact Saanich Environmental Services.



How are Bylaws created?

Senior governments (Federal and Provincial) enable local governments to create bylaws through provisions in the Community Charter and the Local Government Act. The provisions state how local governments can regulate and to what degree.

Staff are requested to create or modify Bylaws by Council or senior government. Staff engage the public to inform them of the changes needed and consult on how they can be achieved.

The decision to adopt Bylaws rests with Saanich Council. A Public Hearing is required as well as three readings.

Why do we need Bylaws?

The combination of bylaws, awareness programs, and stewardship tools are seen as the winning combination to protect and enhance the natural environment. Bylaws are just one of the ways to protect the environment. They set standards, rules, and remedies to create an 'even playing field' for residents.

How can I stay informed about the natural environment in Saanich?

Opportunities to participate are listed on the Saanich website. Becoming a member of your local community association is a great way to stay informed. You can also subscribe to:

Our Backyard newsletter saanich.ca/ourbackyard
Climate Action Quarterly saanich.ca (contact us > newsletters)

How can I be involved with stewarding the natural environment?

There are many ways to be involved in protecting the environment in Saanich. Start with being a good steward at home and consider these opportunities:

- Join *Pulling Together* saanich.ca/parks
- Join a watershed group
- Join our Native Plant Salvage Program saanich.ca/plantsalvage
- Commit to the principles of Naturescape Saanich.ca/naturescape
- Use alternatives to pesticides saanich.ca/pesticide
- Attend Saanich Council meetings and Public Hearings
- Nominate someone for the annual Environmental Awards saanich.ca/enviroawards
- Start a restoration project in your back yard or neighbourhood
- Walk the trails, parks, and beaches
- Report and remove invasive species saanich.ca/invasives
- Plant a Garry Oak tree or other native vegetation—check out our plant lists saanich.ca/environment
- Start a conversation and “walk the talk”!

**FIND OUT
FIRST!**



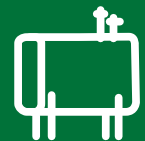
Environmental protection is regulated by all levels of government: Federal, Provincial, Regional, and Municipal.

Find out which regulations apply and obtain approvals before you begin work!

Key agencies include:

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Canadian Wildlife Service
- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
- Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development

**REPORT
SPILLS**



**PROVINCIAL EMERGENCY
PROGRAM 1-800-663-3456**

**Saanich Public Works
After Hours 250-475-5599**

DISCLAIMER

This pamphlet is only a brief summary of Saanich Bylaws and relevant legislation. Saanich Bylaws may be viewed on the web at saanich.ca or in person at Legislative Services at the Municipal Hall. Policies and regulations are subject to change without notice.