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.





AN OVERVIEW OF MUNICIPAL LEGAL TOOLS THAT PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

Sustainable Saanich

The Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw, is a very important overarching policy document adopted by Saanich Council. There are many policies protecting the environment and promoting sustainability that express the fundamental values and goals of the community.

Also attached to the OCP are:

- Local Area Plans
- Development Permit Areas Justification and Guidelines

Natural State Covenants (NSC)

- Covenants can be voluntary or required when a development is approved
- Protects areas identified in the NSC document
- Protection 'runs with the land', not the owner
- Protects all vegetation, soils, and other natural features at all times, unless specifically exempted
- Permission is needed to make changes within a NSC area
- Restoration can be required or fines applied

Noxious Weeds Bylaw

- Property owners are required to clear vegetation that can spread or become a nuisance
- 12 specific plants are listed in the bylaw and must always be removed

saanich.ca/invasives

Form and Character Development Permit Areas

When applicable, the guidelines promote:

- Native vegetation retention
- Protection of endangered species and habitat
- Reduction of impervious cover
- Riparian area protection and restoration
- Protection of the Colquitz waterfront along Portage Road

Boulevard Bylaw

- Protects trees and native vegetation
- Requires removal of invasive species
- Protects rain gardens

Animals Bylaw

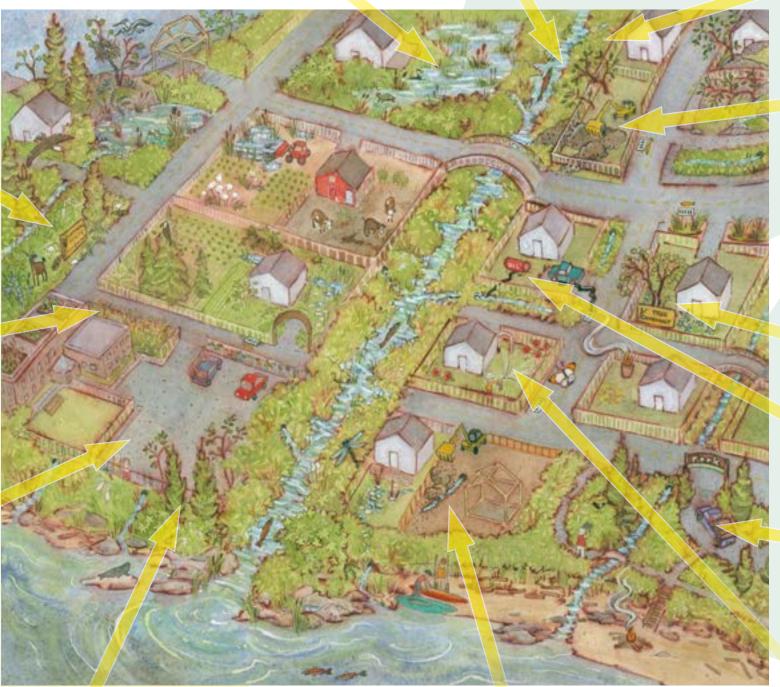
- Prohibits feeding of deer or feral rabbits
- Prohibits releasing of rabbits

Floodplain Development Permit Area

- Regulates buildings encroaching into floodplains
- Guides native vegetation retention and impervious cover reduction during development

Watercourse Bylaw

- Protects all watercourses from pollution, obstruction, or fouling
- Permission is needed to pipe or culvert a watercourse



Zoning Bylaw

- Regulates buildings and structures extending into the ocean, such as docks and wharves
- Restricts heights of buildings, structures, etc. near the ocean
- Provides a minimum setback from watercourses
- Allows for bonds to ensure restoration requirements

Subdivision Bylaw (Schedule H)Protects downstream habitat and water quality

- Protects downstream habitat and water quality during development
- Sets stormwater requirements for new development
- Higher level of protection for the Gorge Waterway plus the Colquitz/Elk and Beaver Lake, Tod Creek/ Prospect Lake, and Hobbs Creek/Mystic Vale watersheds

Streamside Development Permit Area (SDPA)

- Protects streams and specifies setbacks as shown in the SDPA Atlas
- Protects all vegetation, soils, and other natural features at all times, unless specifically exempted
- Permits are needed to guide development in buffer areas
- Restoration can be a requirement of development or as a result of previous damage

saanich.ca/streamside

Deposit of Fill Bylaw

- Protects floodplains from the impacts of fill
- Regulates filling outside of floodplains
- Regulates buildings encroaching into floodplains
- Requires control of invasive species when filling

Tree Protection Bylaw

- Protects trees depending on their size, location, and type
- Regulates tree-damaging activities
- Limits tree removal on steep slopes
- Defines protection of trees during the development process
- Can require tree replacements and fines
- Designates Significant Trees

Tree Covenants

 Similar to the Natural State Covenants, but protects trees only, as individuals or groups

Oil Burning Bylaw & Fire Prevention Bylaw

- Restricts outdoor burning including on beaches
- Prohibits burning of garbage and limits air pollution
- Regulates home heating oil tank installation, maintenance, inspection, and removal
- Limits thickness of smoke from burning

Park Management Bylaw

- Protects vegetation, birds and other animals in parks and on beaches
- Restricts beach fires
- Prohibits removal of sand, soil, plants, trees, wood, logs, or other matter
- Prohibits polluting

Pesticide Bylaw

- Protects human health and the natural environment from chemical use
- Restricts use of pesticides in lawns and gardens
- Affects private land only (public land is governed by Council policy)
- Permits can be issued for specific pesticide use

saanich.ca/pesticide

Soil Removal Bylaw

- Regulates extraction of soil, sand, gravel, rock, etc.
- Protects streams from impacts

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 <u>saanich.ca/ourbackyard</u>
Climate Action Quarterly <u>saanich.ca</u> (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.