

Saanich's Role

The District is responsible for ensuring proposed activities meet the terms of the covenant. Environmental Services will review your plans to verify that they are compatible with the covenant area or write letters of permission. If damage occurs as a result of an accident, we will help you determine how best to restore an area. If an intentional violation of the covenant agreement takes place, the District may apply the financial penalties outlined in the covenant agreement.

Please visit these websites for additional information:

Naturescape Kit Georgia Basin
(Lower Mainland, Southern Vancouver Island,
Gulf Islands):

www.naturescapebc.ca
250-356-7111

Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team:
Garry Oak Gardener's Handbook:

www.goert.ca/handbook

Controlling invasive plants on your property:

www.environment.saanich.ca



Contact Environmental Services for:

- A copy of the covenant document
- A list of native plant and seed suppliers
- Information on invasive species control
- Information about gardening with native plants, habitat protection, urban forests & management.

Please contact Saanich Environmental Services at 250-475-5494, local 3418, to obtain resources, ask questions or request permission for making changes within the covenant area.

If you have any questions about Tree Covenants please call the Saanich Parks Department at 250-475-5522.

www.saanich.ca

Natural State Covenants

Information for property owners



District of Saanich
Environmental Services
770 Vernon Avenue
Victoria, BC V8X 2W7

What is a Natural State Covenant?

Covenants are registered agreements between a property owner or developer and the District of Saanich. Covenants are legally binding on all future owners of the property. The covenant document identifies an area of the property that is to be left in its natural state. Covenants are usually created at the time of subdivision or rezoning and may therefore join up with covenants on adjacent properties.

The purpose of a Natural State Covenant is to protect significant environmental features or habitats such as nesting sites, forests, rare plants, sensitive ecosystems, and wildlife corridors.



What You Can Do as a Property Owner

Congratulations! You own a piece of natural habitat in Saanich. As a property owner, you play an important role in protecting these areas for future generations. The covenanted area is part of your property. You have the right to use and enjoy this area, as long as you honour the terms of the covenant agreement. Be sure to read the covenant document thoroughly to determine what is permitted in your covenant area. Most Natural State Covenants in Saanich prohibit blasting, excavation, filling, building and tree cutting and clearing. Many activities require advance written permission from the District of Saanich.



Covenant Care

Even natural areas can use a little help! We encourage property owners to maintain the covenant area by removing invasive plants, mulching non-native weeds, amending compacted soil and planting native species. Invasive plants are a common problem in urban natural areas, especially ivy, broom and blackberry. At the very least, try to keep these under control to prevent their spread.



Generally, these agreements require the owner to leave the covenanted area undisturbed. There are over 200 registered Natural State Covenants in the District of Saanich. Natural State Covenants are different from Tree Covenants because they protect all plants and natural features, not just trees.

Pruning/Tree Removal

Both Natural State Covenants and the Tree Preservation Bylaw protect trees. Tree pruning and removal is sometimes permitted provided it is overseen by a Certified Arbourist, under permit from Saanich Parks. Written requests for tree removal, accompanied by an arbourist's report, can be directed to Environmental Services.

Replacement trees will be required.

Trails/Fences

Requests to build fences or trails within the covenant area will be considered provided they do not require the removal of any native trees or significant vegetation or, in the case of fences, block the passage of wildlife in a known corridor area. Written requests for trails or fences can be directed to Environmental Services.