

## 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 a violation of the covenant agreement takes place, the District may apply the financial penalties outlined in the covenant agreement.



Contact Environmental Services for:

- Changes within the covenant area
- A list of native plant and seed suppliers
- Information on invasive species control
- Information about gardening with native plants, habitat protection, urban forests and other resources



Visit these websites for additional information:

**Naturescape Kit for the Georgia Basin**  
A resource on caring for wildlife habitat at home  
[www.naturescapebc.ca](http://www.naturescapebc.ca)

**Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team**  
Garry Oak Gardener's Handbook:  
[www.goert.ca/handbook](http://www.goert.ca/handbook)

**Controlling invasive plants on your property**  
[www.saanich.ca/invasives](http://www.saanich.ca/invasives)

**Habitat Acquisition Trust**  
Gardening with Native Plants Guide and other resources in a stewardship series  
[www.hat.bc.ca/publications](http://www.hat.bc.ca/publications)



Saanich Environmental Services  
250-475-5471  
[planning@saanich.ca](mailto:planning@saanich.ca)  
[www.saanich.ca/environment](http://www.saanich.ca/environment)

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

# 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. 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. 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.

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.



## 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, tree cutting and clearing. Many activities require advance written permission from the District of Saanich.

## 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 Arborist, under permit from Saanich Parks. Written requests for tree removal, accompanied by an arborist's report, can be directed to Environmental Services. Replacement trees will be required.



## Care of Natural Areas

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.

## 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.

