



Resilient Saanich FACTSHEET #2

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Examples



Saanich is currently developing a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. Strategies by other local governments in BC may provide valuable insights and methodologies as Saanich develops its own strategy. The following is provided for residents interested in being informed participants in the strategy development.

What is Biodiversity?

“Biodiversity encompasses all living species on Earth and their relationships to each other. This includes the differences in genes, species and ecosystems.” - Government of Canada

What is a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy?

A ‘biodiversity conservation strategy’ is a plan to enhance and protect the variety of native species and ecosystems in a given geographical area. There have been many biodiversity conservation strategies produced in British Columbia, both at the municipal and regional level. Below is a summary of nine local and regional biodiversity conservation strategies.

1. Nature Without Borders – The Comox Valley Land Trust Regional Conservation Strategy (2008 and 2013)

Two regional conservation strategies have been prepared for the Comox Valley – Phase 1 in 2008 and Phase 2 in 2013. The strategies cover the 1725 sq.km. area of the Comox Valley with a population of 66,527 (2016 data). The strategies are meant for all the stakeholders of the Comox Valley, and address many inter-jurisdictional issues in conservation planning: identification of priority areas for conservation; clarification of conservation terms; establishing common methods and criteria for determining priority areas, and regionally consistent mechanisms for protecting environmentally sensitive areas. A critical network of conservation areas is identified that includes wildlife and plant habitat and biodiversity values. Conservation priorities identify both ecological and recreation areas. Important map layers and a database accompany the report. Finally, recommendations for stakeholders are provided to guide report implementation.

Applicability to Saanich: This report is Island-based and covers an urban-rural landscape similar to Saanich, with Garry Oak ecosystem characteristics. However, it was prepared by non-

governmental organizations for an entire region. It was developed based on broad consultation with many stakeholders in the Comox Valley.

<https://cumberland.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Land-Trust-Nature-Without-Borders-July-2008.pdf>

<http://www.sccp.ca/sites/default/files/species-habitat/documents/nature%20without%20borders%20comox%20valley%20land%20trust.pdf>

2. A Biodiversity Conservation Analysis for the North and Central Okanagan Region (2013)

Keeping Nature in Our Future – A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Okanagan Region (2014)

Two regional conservation strategies have been prepared for the Okanagan Valley, divided into sub-regional reports. The North and Central Okanagan Region report covers an area of 10,417 sq.km and has population of 279,326 (2016 data). The South Okanagan Similkameen Region report covers an area of 10,413 sq.km. with a population of 83,022 (2016 data). Both reports were produced by conservation partnerships in the Okanagan.



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The Okanagan Valley is a unique region of Canada, recognized provincially and nationally as a biodiversity hotspot for richness and rarity of species and habitats. The first report integrates a wide variety of regional-scale environmental and land tenure data with associated attributes to produce a series of maps that depict habitat connectivity and “biodiversity hotspots” across the region. This second report goes beyond the technical and mapping analysis of the previous report to discuss **why** we should conserve and protect natural areas, **which** natural areas should be protected and restored, **who** can contribute to this process, **how** and **when** conservation and restoration can be achieved, and the **role** of natural areas in protecting regional biodiversity.

Applicability to Saanich: Like the capital region, the area is a hotspot for rare ecosystems and species and the ‘biodiversity hot spot’ approach may be applicable. However, neither report was a government initiative and the landscape area is much larger than Saanich. The second report outlines useful tools for local governments to integrate biodiversity protection into the development approval process, policies, plans, and regulations.

https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/acat/documents/r42389/Part2_1416247567273_6247203863.pdf

https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/acat/documents/r42389/BiodiversityStr_1409784064471_9783578053.pdf

3. Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for City of Surrey (2014)

The City of Surrey strategy recognizes Surrey’s biodiversity as a key foundation for a healthy, livable and sustainable community. The report covers an area of 316 sq.km. which holds one of the fastest growing populations in the province – 517,887 people (2016 data). The report identifies threats to biodiversity protection and the limitations of local government in addressing these threats. A Green Infrastructure

Network (GIN) mapping was developed – an interconnected network of open spaces and natural areas needed to conserve ecosystem functions and provide benefits to wildlife and people. Outside of the GIN areas, Development Permit Areas (DPA’s) are recommended to guide development in a sustainable manner, which protects the core network of protected natural areas. A Biodiversity Checklist has been developed to integrate into their Sustainability Checklist, guiding development outside the GIN. In addition, the strategy includes designation of key management areas with unique ecological conditions, and policy and management recommendations for local government.

Applicability to Saanich: The concept of a Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) is an effective approach, combining open spaces and natural areas into a system of connected habitat features.

https://www.surrey.ca/files/Surrey_BCS_Report.pdf

4. Biodiversity Strategy - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (2016)

This report covers the City of Vancouver, an area of 115 sq.km. with a population of 631,486 (2016 data). This report is the most generalized and stylized of all the strategies reviewed, with many graphics for easy public consumption. The report outlines urban threats to biodiversity, maps priority habitats and biodiversity hotspots at a broad scale, includes the status of key priority species, and notes general goals and strategies needed to restore habitats and species. It is not evident what analysis (other than internal) was done to produce the results and conclusions.

Applicability to Saanich: This document does not contain any detailed analysis or strategies for local governments to undertake. However, its format would be very useful as a public education tool about biodiversity.

<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/biodiversity-strategy.pdf>



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5. Strategic Directions for Biodiversity Conservation in MetroVancouver Region (2008)

An earlier report for the MetroVancouver region covers an area of 2700 sq.km. with a population of 2,463,400 (2018 data). Produced by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Partnership of government and non-governmental partners in the Georgia Basin, this report describes the importance of biodiversity and threats to its protection. Roles and responsibilities for protecting biodiversity are addressed in general terms for different levels of government. Details are provided regarding guiding principles and goals, strategic directions and opportunities, and actions needed to move forward. Maps are included showing regional habitat types, habitat connectivity corridors and classification of sites of different levels of biodiversity. The scale of the mapping is broad and regional, leaving a lot of ground-level detail unknown.

Applicability to Saanich: The regional scale and generalized nature of the goals, strategies and conclusions for MetroVancouver's report do not translate well to a much smaller area (and single municipality) like Saanich. The guiding principles from the report however could provide guidance to Saanich.

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/StrategicDirectionsBiodiversityConservation.pdf>

6. Richmond's Ecological Network Management Strategy - Phase 1 (2014)

Richmond covers a 129 sq.km. area with a population of 218,300 (2018 data). This report takes an approach similar to Surrey, identifying an interconnected system of natural areas and green infrastructure (built environment) into the Ecological Network (EN). Both of these components provide the essential ecosystem services on which the City depends for drainage, erosion protection, flood mitigation and water filtration, as well as cultural, recreational and

aesthetic values. The EN is composed of five main components: hubs (>10ha.), sites, corridors and connectivity zones, shorelines and riparian areas, and parks and greenways. This management strategy uses the EN as a guide for on-the-ground planning and development decisions, land use decisions and area-specific projects.

Applicability to Saanich: The integrated mapping of natural ecosystems and green infrastructure into a common network of ecosystem services is similar to the City of Surrey's approach in identifying a Green Infrastructure Network.

https://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/ecologicalnetworkmanagementstrategy39324.pdf

7. Sunshine Coast Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (2013)

Prepared by the Ruby Lake Lagoon Society, this report covers an area of 3,827 sq.km. with a population of 29,970 residents (2016 data). The report provides a very broad overview, mainly qualitative, of Sunshine Coast biodiversity. It contains Guiding Principles/Vision/Goals/Objectives/Strategies, and an action plan to implement strategies. Next steps to be developed include timelines, targets and lead organizations. The report represents the collective efforts of local residents and attests to the value of protecting biodiversity on the Sunshine Coast.

Application to Saanich: This report covers an area larger than Saanich and was prepared by a local conservation organization. It is mainly qualitative in nature, and awaits the preparation of a 'next steps' companion report.

<https://lagoonsociety.com/files/9914/3699/5088/SC-Biodiversity-Strategy-web-version-for-circulation.pdf>



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8. Islands Trust Regional Conservation Plan 2018-2027

The Islands Trust Conservancy Regional Conservation Plan covers an area of 790 sq. km. with a population of 26,200 people (2016 data). It describes the Islands Trust Area, placing it in the context of the region ecologically and culturally. The plan provides detail on land status and land use, current ecosystems, protected areas and changes to the landscape over the last ten years. Goals and areas of focus are set out for the Islands Trust Conservancy over the next ten years. The approach uses a decision-making matrix to evaluate conservation priorities for each local trust area/island municipality within the Islands Trust Area. The Islands Trust has set a strong goal to build relationships and work in collaboration with the local First Nations of the area. Limited resources will be focused on protecting areas with the highest biodiversity values and greatest need for conservation.

Application to Saanich: This is an evaluation process that could be duplicated in Saanich as the ecosystems are similar within the Coastal Douglas-fir zone. Both Saanich and the Islands Trust areas are dealing with development pressures on rare and disappearing ecosystems and species. (Note: the Island Trust has different enabling legislation than Saanich.)

http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/media/84821/itc_2018-11_rcp-2018-2027-web_final.pdf

9. Wildlife Conservation Strategy for Township of Langley (2008)

The Township of Langley comprises 316 sq. km. and holds 143,225 people (2017 data). Jointly prepared by the Township of Langley and the Langley Environmental Partners Society, this report is a framework for long term planning and management of wildlife habitat in the Township of Langley. The objectives of the strategy are to protect wildlife habitat patches and connectivity along riparian and upland corridors within a local legal framework. The framework helps set clear expectations for the public and developers, and to integrate wildlife protection measures into Township instruments (bylaws, policies and programs). The Township of Langley's Official Community Plan, and community and neighbourhood planning processes were used as tools to guide public involvement in the development of the strategy. A case study is included in the report to demonstrate how the strategy can be implemented on the ground.

Application to Saanich: The simple approach of using protection of wildlife habitat as the impetus for creating a series of connected protected areas is an approach that could guide Saanich in the initial stages of protecting its biodiversity.

http://www.leps.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Wildlife_Habitat_Conserv_Strat.pdf

There are examples of other local government strategies beyond BC. If you find a strategy you think will be useful to Saanich for review, please send to Thomas Munson: Thomas.Munson@saanich.ca.