

Panama Flats Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What parks surround Panama Flats?

A. The flats are bounded by a portion of Colquitz River Park (P-4N zone), and Panama Hill Park (P-4 zone) - together they total 48.6 ha (120 acres).

Q. How big is Panama Flats itself?

A. 26.3 ha (65 acres).

Q. How is it zoned?

A. A-1 (Rural Zone) with 8.5 ha in the agricultural land reserve (ALR).

Q. When did Saanich buy it?

A. December, 2011.

Q. Why did Saanich buy it?

A. To:

- Manage critical flood plains effectively,
- Preserve optimal environmental values,
- Enhance food security,
- Develop a new park and trails system.

Q. Why are the flats mowed and tilled every year?

A. Mowing and tilling are needed to control odours, maintain stormwater function and to prevent the open space needed for migratory birds and stormwater storage from filling in with vegetation.

Q. What has been done with it since its purchase?

A. Developed a Concept Plan in 2014,

- Applied to include more land in the ALR; the application was unsuccessful,
- Agricultural potential was explored and found to be very limited without costly drainage improvements,
- It has remained fallow (unfarmed),
- It has been managed to control invasive plants and protect at-risk plant species,
- It has been managed for stormwater management function and odour control.

Q. What were the main elements of the 2014 Concept Plan?

A. Increasing the amount of land in the ALR,

- Improvements to facilitate agricultural use,
- Establishing a managed field for migratory birds, waterfowl, and rare plants,
- Creating new trails, including a perimeter loop trail,
- Realigning and restoring sections of the Colquitz River for fish habitat,
- Restoring and enhancing Garry Oak ecosystems,
- Maintaining floodplain storage.

Q. Why is the 2014 Concept Plan being updated?

A. Large scale agriculture was a dominant feature of the 2014 plan, and has proven to be unfeasible. The Plan needs to reflect how the flats are currently being used, and the community's values, needs, and priorities.

Q. When will the 2014 Concept Plan be updated?

A. Stakeholder meetings, a Workshop and Open House will take place over the coming months. The final updated Concept Plan is anticipated to be complete by fall, 2025.

Q. Who will be involved in the Concept Plan Update?

A. First Nations, community associations, interest groups and the general community will be invited to participate.