



**PACIFIC SALMON
FOUNDATION**



**RESILIENT COASTS
FOR SALMON** 

GREEN SHORES® FOR SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT
DEMONSTRATION SITES: FINAL PROJECT UPDATES, SPRING 2026

Vol. 5



Photo by Kyla Sheehan

Under the [Resilient Coasts for Salmon](#) project (2021-2026) three Green Shores demonstration sites have been established on Vancouver Island to showcase how nature-based shoreline solutions can benefit both aquatic ecosystems and human communities alike. This newsletter, the final in the project series, highlights the current status of each demonstration project and next steps for each site.

ESQUIMALT GORGE PARK

Located within the traditional territory of the *ləkʷəŋən* (Lekwungen) people in the Township of Esquimalt, the Green Shores for Shoreline Development project at Esquimalt-Gorge Park has successfully increased shoreline resilience and improved park values for the community. Key features of this project include an expanded riparian zone to enhance biodiversity, and a re-profiled shoreline slope to increase adaptability to sea level rise and climate change more broadly. Installation of a mobi-mat has improved shoreline access and educational signage tells the story of the project to the many park visitors.



Interpretive signage. Photo credit: Kelly Loch.

GREEN SHORES FOR SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT (GSSD) CERTIFICATION

Credit 2 – Shore Friendly Access:

Access to the beach area has been defined via a newly designated path, with split rail fencing to protect the newly-restored riparian area. The beach used to be broadly accessed from adjacent upland, which had negative impacts on the riparian zone.

Credit 5 – Restoration of Aquatic Habitats:

Points were awarded for creating about 100 linear metres of sand and gravel beach, suitable for forage fish spawning. Cobble placement along the water's edge provides streamside habitat.

Credit 10 – Outreach and Public Education:

One of the exceptional aspects of this project is the degree of public and partner participation in the site design and construction of the project, such as community participation in planting events. Partners included Songhees and Xwsepsum First Nations, World Fisheries Trust, Gorge Waterway Action Society, and members of the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary group.



Drone imagery, taken at different angles, from Capital Regional District; the yellow and white star marks the same location in both images.

RESTORATION SITE MONITORING

Ongoing monitoring of the site’s performance over time is being undertaken by the [Gorge Waterway Action Society](#). Baseline information and periodic repeat measurements are being collected, with a focus on photo point monitoring and vegetation mapping to document change over time. There are future plans to track the slope profile and extent of tidal influence, while also developing a forage fish monitoring program in partnership with [Peninsula Streams and Shorelines](#) BEACH Program. The monitoring program is described in a report [here](#).



“ GWAS is grateful to have had the opportunity to work closely with the Township of Esquimalt Parks and Recreation department and the Stewardship Centre for British Columbia on the GSSD project in Esquimalt Gorge Park. Their collective expertise meant that every step of the project was thoughtfully executed. It's been our pleasure to share in the restoration work and share the story of the GSSD with park visitors and visitors to the Gorge Waterway Nature House. We look forward to continuing to care for the site going forward. For over 35 years, GWAS has been dedicated to stewarding the health of the Gorge Waterway, and it's been rewarding to be involved with a shoreline restoration project that supports the ecology and community of the Gorge so well. Sincere thanks to Robbie Young, Kelly Loch and their teams for leading such a positive and collaborative process.”

- Brad Procter, Executive Director, Gorge Waterway Action Society

“

The Green Shores Project at Esquimalt-Gorge Park represents a powerful example of what can be achieved through collaboration and community-driven restoration. As stewards of the Gorge Waterway, our organization's experience with this project has been deeply rewarding—from transforming a manicured lawn to an ecologically rich area that supports fish, birds, and pollinators. This restoration project not only enhances local biodiversity and resilience to climate change, but also inspires future generations to care for and protect the Gorge. Together, we're reclaiming a space that reflects both ecological integrity and cultural significance.

”

- Stephanie Gurney, Director of Operations, Gorge Waterway Action Society

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE ESQUIMALT GORGE PARK GSSD SITE?

- ▶ Site monitoring will continue under the Gorge Waterway Action Society
- ▶ The Township of Esquimalt, Gorge Waterway Action Society and Peninsula Streams and Shorelines are aiming to install a rain garden upslope of the restoration site, designed to capture stormwater run-off from the Sioux Place parking lot and roadway. Once installed, this rain garden will remove contaminants from run-off, which are currently going directly into the Gorge.

Read more about the project and stay up to date by visiting [Green Shores at Esquimalt Gorge Park](#).



Photo by Kyra Sheehan

SONGHEES WALKWAY POCKET BEACH

The Songhees Walkway Pocket Beach Restoration Project is located in the Victoria Harbour on the traditional territory of the Songhees First Nation.

Partners have included the City of Victoria, Songhees Nation, Pacific Salmon Foundation, and the Stewardship Centre for BC. The collaborative work has transformed a pocket beach with limited ecological and human use value into a shoreline that supports important aquatic food webs and provides cultural and recreational enjoyment for many visitors.



Images of the Restored Site: Before and After

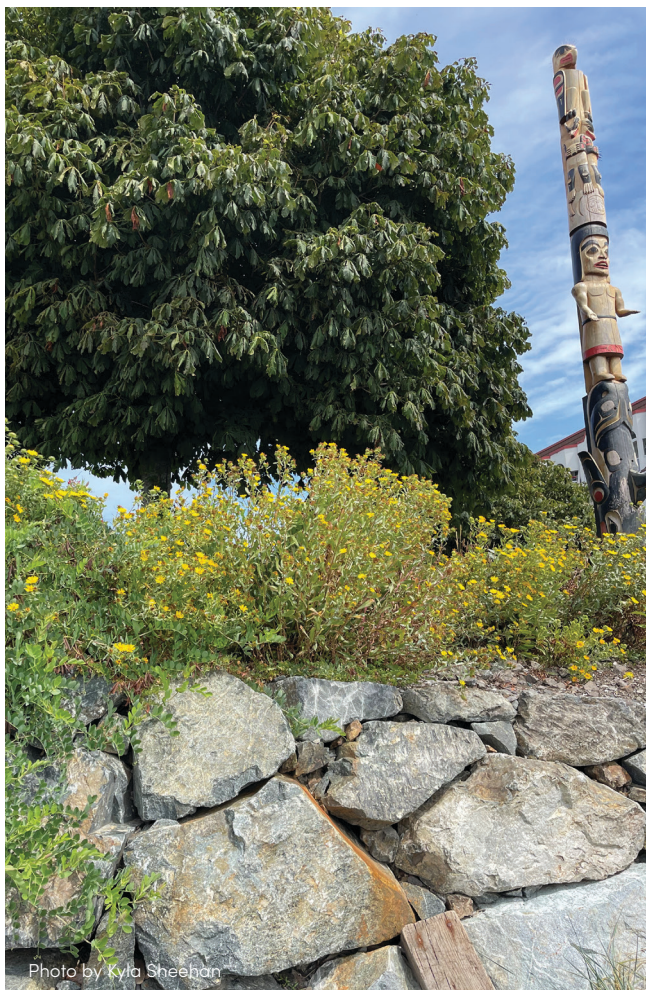


Photo by Kyla Sheehan

GREEN SHORES FOR SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT (GSSD) CERTIFICATION

The project was recently verified to a rating of SILVER under the Green Shores for Shoreline Development framework with 18 points assigned. Key features of the project include beach nourishment that has been suitable for forage fish spawning, planting of extensive native vegetation that is supporting pollinator species, and installation of rock sills below the high water mark that protect the shoreline from erosion and minimize maintenance requirements.

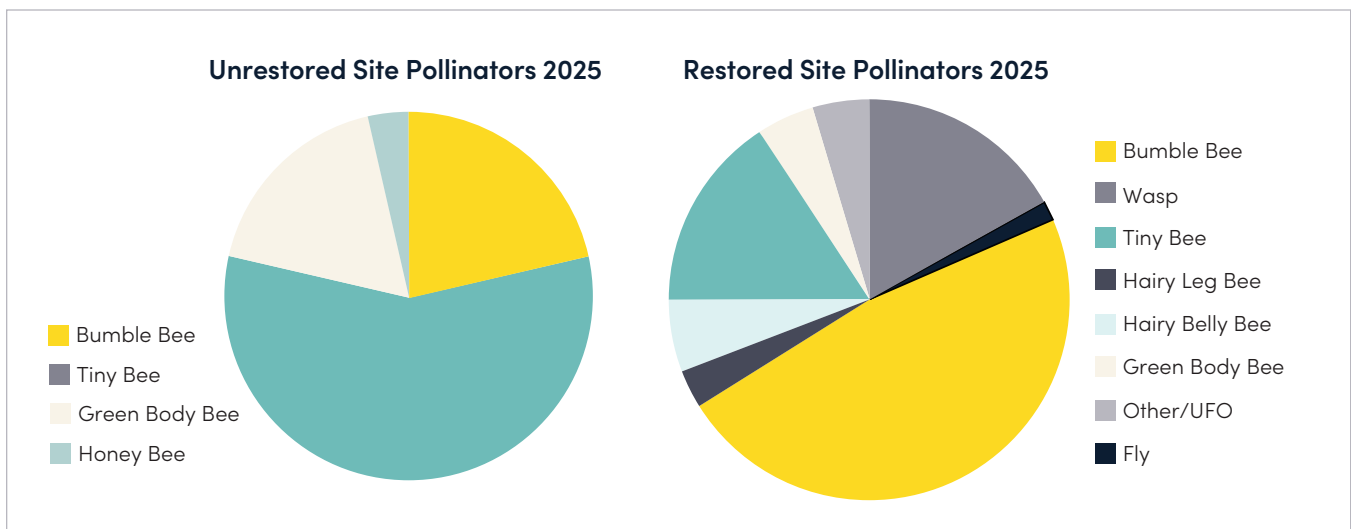
RESTORATION SITE MONITORING

Peninsula Streams and Shorelines has an extensive post-restoration monitoring program designed to track the ecological performance of the site over time and assess the effectiveness of restoration efforts. This program ensures that outcomes align with project objectives while also providing valuable data to inform and improve future restoration initiatives.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM MONITORING PROGRAM

Pollinator: Results show more pollinator diversity in the restored area, as demonstrated in the pie charts below.



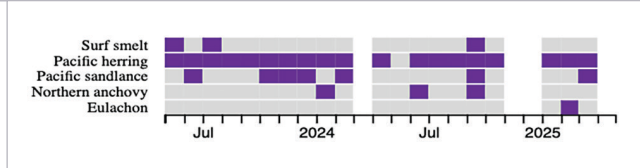
Pollinators observed at unrestored site (left) and restored site (right); credit Peninsula Streams and Shorelines

eDNA: By collecting and sequencing eDNA, it is possible to generate a snap-shot of the organisms that inhabit a particular place and time, without the need to visually observe or measure each species. eDNA analysis identifies the presence or absence of aquatic life and can be a useful tool for monitoring biodiversity, as well as for detecting, rare, endangered, and invasive species.

Peninsula Streams and Shorelines, in collaboration with Hakai’s [Integrated Coastal Observatory](#), has been undertaking eDNA sampling to determine possible species presence in this location. So far 74 different species have been recorded, including a number of salmon species, forage fish, wolf eels, and other aquatic species. Check out the figure on the next page to see which forage fish species were detected near the site throughout summer 2024 and 2025.



Snapshot of forage fish eDNA monitoring results for Songhees Walkway Pocket Beach. Source: [Hakai Institute](https://www.hakaiinstitute.ca/)



“ The Songhees Walkway Pocket Beach Restoration Project is a testament to the power of partnership and the importance of restoring the culturally and ecologically significant shorelines around us. ”

- Peninsula Streams and Shorelines, 2025

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE SONGHEES WALKWAY POCKET BEACH GSSD SITE?

- ▶ Collaborate with the City of Victoria Parks Department to introduce additional riparian trees and shrubs in selected areas to enhance biodiversity and aesthetics.
- ▶ Work with the City of Victoria Parks Department and Victoria International Marina to introduce alternative vegetation in selected areas where grass is not holding up to dog activity.
- ▶ Work with Songhees Nation and the Parks Department to promote the use of the site for Songhees Cultural Tours, such as for canoe launches.





Photo by Nick Page

DYKE ROAD PARK

The Dyke Road Park demonstration project, located along the K'ómoks Estuary on the traditional territory of K'ómoks First Nation, is the result of strong partnerships. Hapa Collaborative led the landscape architectural design and other project partners included the Comox Valley Regional District as project lead, Project Watershed, K'ómoks First Nation and K'ómoks Guardian Watchmen, Guardians of our Salish Estuaries Society (GooSE), Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Stewardship Centre for BC, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants and Current Environmental. Phase 1 is complete, and Phase 2 is anticipated to be finished in Summer 2026.

Phase 1 construction focused on restoration work in the estuary, with some work on the adjacent upland. Since establishment of the saltmarsh the sedges (*Carex* spp.) and rushes (*Juncus* spp.) have grown significantly and are starting to fill in the restored area. Irrigation was installed to support upland vegetation during establishment. Project Watershed, Current Environmental and Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) have been undertaking site monitoring of Phase 1 estuary works.



Newly established salt marsh plants.



Eco-cultural goose exclusion fences. Photos: Nick Page



Viewing pavilion for Dyke Road Park. Graphic credit: Hapa Collaborative

Goose exclusion fencing was installed to help the salt marsh get established. Landscaping textile material was placed beneath the boardwalk to suppress invasive plants from growing up through the metal decking.

Phase 2 construction will focus on work in the upland and parking areas, and will include a new pavilion and picnic deck. Construction began in January 2026 with the contractor Island Family Works, and construction monitors will be onsite throughout the work.



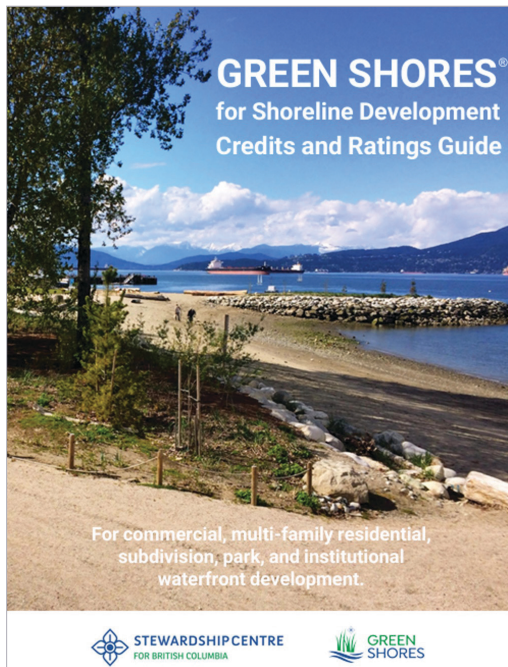
Photo by Mitch Miller



Photo by Nick Page

GREEN SHORES FOR SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT (GSSD) CERTIFICATION

Verification of the site under the Green Shores for Shoreline Development framework is planned upon project completion. A preliminary submittal by CVRD Planning and Parks Departments and Current Environmental has been reviewed, and on preliminary assessment the Dyke Road Project may qualify for certification as Green Shores **GOLD**. Final verification will confirm all completed work at this site in fall 2026.



Rating Levels	Point Requirements
GSSD Bronze	All prerequisites plus 10 points
GSSD Silver	All prerequisites plus 16 points
GSSD Gold	All prerequisites plus 22 points

Green Shores for Shoreline Development Guide (left) and rating Levels (above)

WHAT'S NEXT FOR DYKE ROAD PARK GSSD SITE?

- ▶ Other project activities include creation of interpretative signage, which is being developed by CVRD, Hapa Collaborative, and GooSE (Guardians of our Salish Estuaries) under the leadership of K'ómoks First Nation. A new name for the park has been gifted by K'ómoks First Nation (to be publicly announced later this year), and a member of the K'ómoks First Nation community has also provided salmon artwork for the new park entrance sign.
- ▶ CVRD is developing a public communications strategy for the project, and the Pacific Salmon Foundation is working on a documentary to tell the story of this amazing project from the perspective of those involved.
- ▶ Completion of this award winning project is anticipated in spring or summer 2026 with a formal park opening to follow.



The Federation of Canadian Municipalities' "Sustainable Communities Award: Climate adaptation" was awarded to the Dyke Road Park Green Shores project in 2024



The Dyke Road Park Coastal Resiliency Project is a vital step forward in restoring the health and resilience of the K'ómoks Estuary. In conjunction with other estuary restoration efforts, this work not only enhances ecological function and community space but also honours the deep stewardship and leadership of the K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) in caring for this land and waters. Project Watershed is grateful for the collaborative vision and commitment of the Comox Valley Regional District, KFN and all partners in creating a future that supports healthy habitats, honours traditional stewardship and strengthens the ecological function of our coastal ecosystems.



- Caitlin Pierzchalski, Executive Director, Project Watershed



Photo by Kyla Sheehan



Photos by Mitch Miller

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PROJECT PARTNERS, FUNDERS, AND VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THESE PROJECTS

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