

For Immediate Release:

City of Parksville and The Nature Trust of British Columbia Partner to Protect Critical Habitat along the Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River

The Nature Trust of BC and the City of Parksville partner to conserve 13 acres of riparian habitat along the Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River and establish an agreement to cooperate on the completion of a community pathway.

Sept 28, 2023, Parksville, Vancouver Island: The [City of Parksville](#) and [The Nature Trust of British Columbia](#), a leading non-profit land conservation organization in BC, announce plans to conserve an ecologically important property along the Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River in perpetuity at 130 Shelly Road. The 5.2ha (13 acre) property contains important floodplain, riparian and forested habitat immediately adjacent to the Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River and supports numerous species of fish and wildlife throughout the year. The partners also announced an agreement to cooperate on the completion of a community pathway designed to protect ecologically and culturally significant areas while providing links to the existing trails that access the natural beauty of one of Vancouver Island's most ecologically important estuaries with a spectacular coastline and an active salmon river.

Recognizing the ecological and community values of the area and the City of Parksville's commitment to natural asset management, the City has agreed to donate \$1.8 million of the property's appraised value of \$2.6 million to this project. Once built, the pathway will extend from the eastern terminus of Nerbus Lane to the northern terminus of Shelly Road. The partnership between the City of Parksville and The Nature Trust of BC is a milestone towards increasing connectivity within the Parksville region while ensuring this critical area is protected in perpetuity.

"We are thrilled to partner with The Nature Trust of BC to protect this vital area and create a pathway to showcase this breathtaking estuary. The City of Parksville is committed to create a safe and accessible pathway which will allow the community to enjoy this natural haven while ensuring its protection for generations to come," said Mayor Doug O'Brien, City of Parksville.

The Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River estuary is one of British Columbia's most endangered rivers due to declining fish stocks. It is also one of the most important salmon spawning rivers on the mid coast of Vancouver Island, providing habitat for all five species of salmon as well as trout species such as rainbow, cutthroat, and steelhead. The area is in a Moist Maritime Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone (CDFmm) - currently only 11.5% of these rare ecosystems are conserved.

The Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River estuary and the nearshore coastal area is also an internationally significant habitat for migratory and breeding birds, and many other species, like black bear, cougar, deer, river otter, and Roosevelt Elk.

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The acquisition of this property expands The Nature Trust of BC's existing conservation properties near the Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River and in the Regional District of Nanaimo. Dr. Jasper Lament, CEO of The Nature Trust of BC, explains: *"Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River is one of the most ecologically important estuaries in BC, providing essential riparian habitat for fish, birds, mammals, and amphibians. The benefits of conservation ripple out far and wide, with a direct impact on wildlife, people, and our planet. That's why we're proud to work with the City of Parksville and Snaw-naw-as First Nation to safeguard our future by protecting these vibrant ecosystems."*

The Nature Trust of BC and the City of Parksville will work closely with the Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose) First Nation to support the long-term stewardship and management of this area and in the design of the community pathway including interpretive signage. This builds on the stewardship and restoration work that The Nature Trust of BC and the Snaw-naw-as Nation have implemented at the estuary spit, the ongoing inventory and monitoring of the estuary as well as the fish habitat restoration work completed on the lower river. In September 2022, The Nature Trust of BC entered into a Stewardship and Management Agreement with the Snaw-Naw-As Nation which recognizes the Nation as a rights holder to manage their lands and resources, improve stewardship with ecosystem-based land use planning, and protect the cultural and ecological values of traditional lands. The land at 130 Shelly Road will be a part of this agreement.

"Everything is connected. From the mountains to the shoreline and everything in-between, it is all one thing. It is our responsibility to protect and care for all things connected to Kwa'a'luxw. Snaw-naw-as has a meaningful partnership with The Nature Trust and other stewardship groups with the watershed in mind for future generations. Working together and moving forward is the goal." Chris Bob, Snaw-Naw-As community member.

Once constructed, the pathway will improve accessibility and walkability in the community with linking trails, parks, and green spaces and will include interpretive signage that not only highlights the ecological richness of the area but will also share the important cultural history of the river and estuary. The City of Parksville will assume all costs for the design, development, and maintenance of the pathway, while The Nature Trust of BC is responsible for conservation and management of the land in perpetuity.

** Please see photos on next page

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ABOUT:

City of Parksville

In the heart of Oceanside, on the sheltered east coast of Vancouver Island, the City of Parksville, with a population nearing 14,000 is an active community of urban professionals, families with young children and retirees who have chosen to live in our community for the quality of life and the region's natural environment.

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ABOUT:

The Nature Trust of British Columbia

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is a leading non-profit land conservation organization with over 50 years of success protecting and caring for B.C.'s most critical habitats. Since 1971, The Nature Trust of BC and its partners have acquired more than 73,000 hectares (180,000 acres) of ecologically significant land to save vulnerable wildlife, fish and plants.

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