



Habitat
Acquisition
Trust

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



HELLO AND WELCOME

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Katie Blake
Executive Director

HAT celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2021. As if to mark the occasion, this past year has been a big one for HAT, and a year of growth. We protected 23 hectares of diverse forested habitat in the Highlands adjacent to Thetis Lake Regional Park, and successfully raised more than \$1.2 million in partnership with Capital Regional District to create a regional park at Mountain Road Forest. The Mountain Road Forest campaign marked the most ambitious fundraising campaign HAT has tackled to date. Thanks to grants with a focus on hiring and economic stimulus, HAT's staff numbers are as high as they've ever been and include a restoration crew in a sustained effort to restore and enhance the ecological integrity of HAT's protected lands. You'll read about their incredible success in this report. This year we also expanded the scope of HAT's Good Neighbours Program beyond a defined geographic scope to one that includes the breadth of imperiled coastal oak and prairie in our region. We're seeking to work with an increasing number of partners and are so glad to welcome a new lead on Indigenous-led planning, Tiffany Joseph.

Even in times of growth, some things remain constant – including HAT's commitment to being rooted in community, and our reliance on our members and supporters to be involved in our work in so many ways, whether it's as a volunteer, monthly donor, board member or habitat steward, HAT can only succeed with the help of all of you. Thank you for the myriad ways you have supported HAT and thank you for continuing to be part of our community.

With gratitude,

Katie Blake

” *While this has been another challenging year in many respects, Habitat Acquisition Trust has continued to thrive, grow and succeed in meeting our vision of protected and healthy natural areas on southern Vancouver Island.*

On behalf of the Board of Directors I'd like to thank all those who have participated and supported HAT in 2021 and before. Public and member involvement is our life blood. Partnerships and collaborations are our way forward.

Habitat Acquisition Trust would not be what it is, or do what it does so very well, without its enthusiastic, hard-working, committed, generous volunteers, partners, donors, and of course, amazing staff. Together we can continue to make a difference through protection, collaboration, stewardship and education so that everyone and everything can enjoy the beautiful and unique lands and habitats of the area for years and generations to come. Thank you so much for being involved! ”



Elizabeth Easton
Board President

CONSERVING NATURAL SPACES

WHERE WE WORK

HAT strives to work in partnership with the original stewards of this region, including the WŚÁNEĆ, ləkʷəŋən, SC'IA̱NEW, and T'Sou-ke Peoples, and the many other Coast Salish families who have lived in relationship with and stewarded these lands since time immemorial, and continue to live in relationship to the land today.

Through our new 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, HAT has been working to align organizational practices with reconciliation principles. We acknowledge that decolonizing takes time, and we are prioritizing relationship-building based on trust at both the nation-level and grassroots community-based level. In the past year, HAT has been strengthening our working relationships related to long-term land protection and co-management with the WŚÁNEĆ Leadership Council, the SC'IA̱NEW (Beecher Bay) First Nation, and the Te'mexw Treaty Association.

Our mandate area centers around the Capital Regional District of British Columbia, and consists of southern Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands. A disproportionate number of BC's threatened and endangered species occur in our region.



A photograph of a forest with several tree trunks. The foreground is covered in green moss and grass. A teal vertical bar is on the left side of the image, and a purple horizontal bar is at the top left. The text "PROTECTED LANDS" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the teal bar.

PROTECTED LANDS

43

Hectares Protected

2

New Protected Areas

“The campaign to protect Mountain Road Forest was truly a community-led effort. The number of people who contributed to save this forest demonstrates the importance that people place on keeping nature a part of their lives and their community.”

Katie Blake

Executive Director

PROTECTING LAND LEAVING A LEGACY

Southern Vancouver Island the Gulf Islands provide habitat for some of the most pristine and rare ecosystems found across Canada. HAT works in partnership with landowners, community organizations and governments to protect these natural areas forever.

This fiscal year HAT helped permanently protect 43 hectares (that's more than 106 acres) of forested Coastal Douglas-fir habitat on two parcels. In December 2020, HAT secured the title to the Ginns Conservation Area in the Highlands, representing 23 hectares (56 acres) of forest and riparian habitat. Also, HAT is thrilled that the Mountain Road Forest Property has been permanently protected, thanks to an incredible community-based fundraising effort. This **nearly-20 hectare property** (about 50 acres), a stunning example of a

mature urban forest located just a few minutes from downtown Victoria, will be protected forever as a CRD regional park with conservation status, with HAT holding a conservation covenant on the property in perpetuity.

HAT also successfully completed its 2021 covenant monitoring, which entailed **monitoring 16 covenant properties** that total **over 1000 hectares of protected lands**.

This work could not have been completed without the dedicated efforts of HAT Wildlife Technician Danielle Buckle, as well as numerous volunteers who pitched in over the spring and summer months.

Looking ahead to 2022, HAT is well-positioned to continue expanding its protected lands program, focusing on forested and imperiled oak habitats.



“Despite the challenges of the pandemic, HAT’s protected lands program continued to grow in 2021, with the permanent protection of Mountain Road Forest testifying to this success. As we ring in 2022, HAT is well-positioned to continue working with our partners and members of the community to help protect our most beautiful and most threatened natural areas.”

Chris Wiczorek

Land Protection Coordinator

HABITAT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM THRIVING TOGETHER

**Many hands make light (and fast) work!
New funding and staff have brought new momentum to habitat restoration on HAT's protected lands.**

HAT has always relied on **community-based volunteer restoration events** to support the restoration and removal of invasive species on our protected lands. Community-based events are essential to connecting people to the natural environments around them, and sustaining and maintaining restoration efforts over time.

After many months of postponing community-based habitat restoration events due to COVID-19, HAT regained momentum on its protected lands thanks to a one-time grant from the Conservation Economic Stimulus Initiative (CESI) and Priority Places funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

This new funding enabled HAT to employ a full-time restoration crew to restore oak and associated ecosystems on HAT's protected lands. The team comprised of four youth restoration crew members: Hannah Glass, Ellie Fox, Max Mitchell, and Emma La Fontaine.

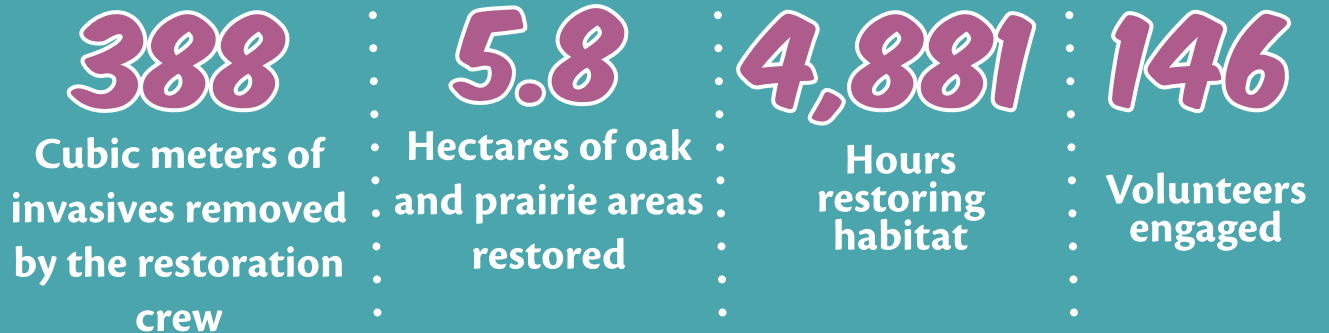
Thanks to this small but mighty full-time restoration crew who worked from June to November 2021, we were able to cover more area and remove more invasive plant biomass in one season than we had in the previous two years.

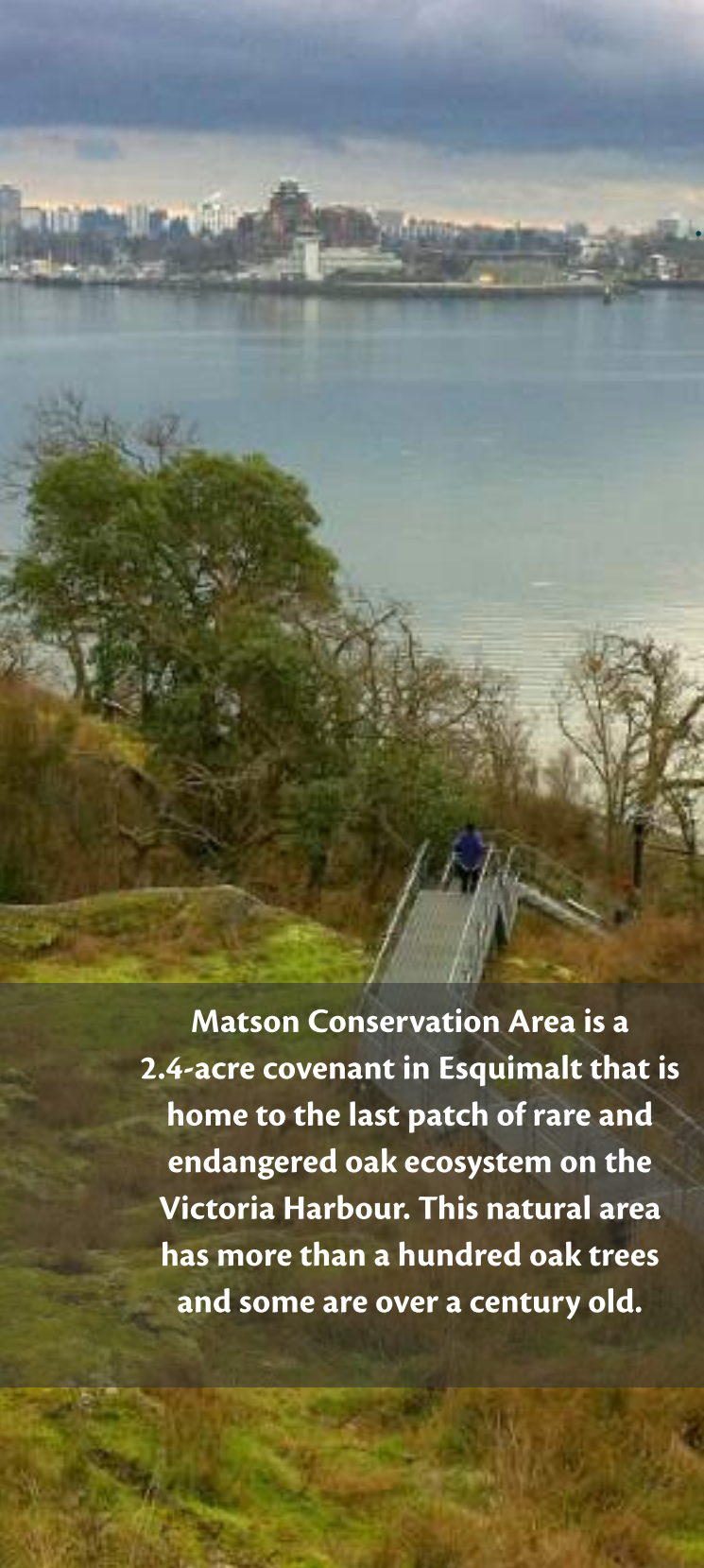
The concentrated restoration efforts of a full-time restoration crew this past season was unparalleled. **Together, they spent over 2,850 hours across 5.8 hectares of land removing 388 m³ of invasive plants from oak ecosystems - that is about 150 pickup truckloads full!**

HAT continued to strengthened its partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations this past year by supporting Indigenous-led restoration projects in the meadows, woodlands, and forests of WSÍ, KEM (Tseycum), SNIDŽEŁ (Tod Inlet), SĆIÁNEW (Sc'ianew or Beecher Bay) and BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin).

“ Having the opportunity to be a part of the restoration crew was a great way to gain first-hand experience working on the land. Through being on site every day you develop a deeper understanding on what stewardship means and what it really looks like in practice. ”

*Max Mitchell
Restoration Crew Member*





Matson Conservation Area is a 2.4-acre covenant in Esquimalt that is home to the last patch of rare and endangered oak ecosystem on the Victoria Harbour. This natural area has more than a hundred oak trees and some are over a century old.

MATSON CONSERVATION AREA

In 2021, Matson Conservation Area received more staff and volunteer hours dedicated to restoration work on the ground than ever before thanks to new funding. Matson Conservation Area is located on the traditional unceded territories of the ɫəkwəŋən peoples (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations).

From June to July, HAT's restoration crew could be seen working throughout the rocky oak outcrops and meadows. This work included **removing a 424 square meter patch** of densely packed Scotch broom, English ivy, and periwinkle, revealing dozens of hidden Kwetlal (Camas). In the fall this area was re-planted by the HAT restoration crew and Matson Mattocks. **We installed 702 native plants** purchased from Satinflower nurseries and 1200 native plants saved and relocated during HAT's salvage program.

In September, two more areas were restored that totaled to **894 square meters** and planting **261 native meadow plants**. If you come to visit the park you will see that the central meadow, near the conservation area's popular elevated metal staircase, has been de-thatched (meaning cleared of dead grass stalk build-up). Prior to European colonization, ɫəkwəŋən families stewarded these as gardens through cultivation, harvesting, and regular prescribed burning, to encourage growth of native bulb species such as Camas. After de-thatching, we sowed **one kilogram of native plant seed including:** Seablush, Woolly Sunflower, Yarrow, Farewell-to-Spring, and Blue-eyed Mary.



Matson Mattocks - Spring 2021

This important planting work would not have been possible without the 12+ years of dedicated, year-round, invasive plant removal work done by the Matson Mattocks volunteers: Roger, Allan, Peter, Eva, and Robbie.



"The gifts of time and care provided by our stewardship groups are priceless, and have infinite positive impacts on the future of the remaining natural spaces in this region."

Sara Lax

Habitat Management Coordinator

CARING FOR NATURE





31

SITE VISITS

29

STEWARDSHIP SKILL BUILDING WORKSHOPS

GOOD NEIGHBOURS PROGRAM

LET'S GET ENGAGED

The Good Neighbours Program aims to work in collaboration and in partnership with individual landowners, stewardship groups, and Indigenous communities. Through education, on-the-ground training, and support we strive to empower residents to become stewards of the natural spaces around them.

WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP

There are many creatures great and small the share our region's natural spaces with us. Teaching a stewards about creating or protecting habitat to ensure the survival of our wildlife is an important part of the program.



INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL

HAT helps landowners identify and remove invasive plant species from their properties using best management practices. We often connect them with experts to reach their goals, and will support with volunteers when possible.



NATIVE PLANT SALVAGING

HAT staff have been able to train 98 new plant salvagers in the last year, which have saved over 35 pickup truckloads of native plants that found their way into several restoration projects across the region.



RESTORATION AND PLANTING FOR HABITAT

Whether they are creating new or enhancing existing meadows, woodlands, forests, wetlands, ponds, and hedgerows, HAT works to support Habitat Stewards in proper techniques for planning, planting, and maintaining.





22,291

Individual Plants
Salvaged

61

Different Species
Salvaged

508

Volunteer Hours
Salvaging

A SECOND CHANCE AT CONSERVATION

.....

We cannot protect every piece of land, so salvaging plants from tracts of land slated for development gives us an incredible second chance at conservation. Salvaging plants allows their genetic material to continue to thrive in protected and restored landscapes.

In 2021 HAT staff Paige, Ronna, and Sara have run over 20 training sessions with around 98 people salvaging plants from a development site in the Langford area. The developers agreed to give HAT volunteers permission to salvage native plants. The training sessions include the ethics of salvaging informed by an article, "The Ethics of Plant Rescue," written by Moralea Milne for The Victoria Naturalist 60.4(2004): 8-9, as well as the how, when, and what is possible to salvage.

Both HAT restoration projects at Matson Conservation Area and Oak Haven Park, as well as community restoration projects such as SNIDŽEL Resiliency Project, Moralea's Meadow Restoration Project and Bowker Creek Watershed, have benefited from salvaged plants, adding genetic diversity to projects through plants that are often expensive

to purchase and take a long time to grow.

HAT plans to continue to support community lead conservation by providing training and sharing knowledge. There is a waitlist but if you are interested in salvaging for our community projects, then please reach out to us.



WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP

AN EYE OUT FOR WILDLIFE

In 2021 we continued engaging landowners in wildlife stewardship, and our two wildlife monitoring programs proceeded without a hitch. HAT works to support our local wildlife through monitoring, outreach, and habitat enhancement.

In the summer, we ran the Annual Bat Count, as part of the South Island Chapter of the BC Community Bat Program. The Annual Bat Count allowed us to perform a census of the bat roosts we know of in the CRD. **We had the help of 40 wonderful volunteers and a there was a total of 370 volunteer hours spent counting bats.** Throughout the rest of the year, we helped to realign the public perception of bats. This included communicating with curious or concerned members of the public, helping homeowners perform safe exclusions of bat colonies in human structures, and monitoring for the presence of White-Nose Syndrome in our local area. One volunteer built 4 bat boxes for the program and HAT organized 4 bat presentations to the public.

In the winter and spring, our Western Screech-Owl Project, we had 10 volunteers out listening for the presence of owls, and 51 owl nest boxes were monitored for the presence of owls. **We had one successful nesting pair in one of our boxes and had 3 chicks fledge!** We installed 4 new nest boxes to increase owl nesting habitat. In addition, thanks to the dedication of two new HAT Habitat Stewards, we were able to confirm with audio recordings the presence of a Western Screech owl that had not been heard since the 1980s.

"The best way to measure our conservation impact is to understand our wildlife populations."

Danielle Buckle
Wildlife Stewardship Technician



50

MONITORING
HOURS

51

OWL NEST BOXES
MONITORED

3

CHICKS
FLEDGED

12

BAT ROOSTS
MONITORED

40

BAT COUNT
VOLUNTEERS

370

BAT COUNT VOLUNTEER
HOURS

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



3

SCHOOLS

530

KIDS INVOLVED

625

NATIVE PLANTS
INSTALLED

GREEN SPOTS PROGRAM GETTING KIDS OUTSIDE

HAT's Green Spots Program works in school to help kids connect with nature and to assist schools in providing educational spaces where kids can get their hands dirty and watch things grow.

In 2021, Green Spots led three successful school-based garden projects with native plants at View Royal Elementary, Colquitz Middle School, and Royal Bay Secondary School.

Royal Bay Secondary School's Indigenous Education teacher Lindsay Lockhart established two new native planting areas totaling 60 square meters installing over **315 native plants** with **68 indigenous students**, including a pit fire, plant knowledge and learning with elders in residence. Royal Bay students also visited Havenwood Park with Carol Brown from the Friends of Havenwood Park to learn from Andy MacKinnon about forest ecology and from Sc'ianew Elder Hank Chipps about cedar bark stripping practices and ceremonies.

View Royal Elementary School's native plant garden project brought **288 students** into an outdoor classroom on their school grounds to learn about native ecosystems and seasonal native plant care. This outdoor learning experience allowed the students to work together in small teams to achieve their shared goal of creating a garden they could come back to for nature classes. **These students planted 160 plants in a 63 square meter area.**

Colquitz Middle School's native pollinator hedgerow project got **174 students** applying their classroom

learning in the field. Students who participated in this pollinator hedgerow project researched a native plant in the classroom, then shared their knowledge of that plant with their classmates in the field, and had the chance to plant their researched plant in the pollinator hedgerow. This planting project highlighted native species that provide food for pollinators and encouraged students to think about the relationships between plants and different kinds of pollinators. **These students planted 150 plants in a 24 square meter area.**

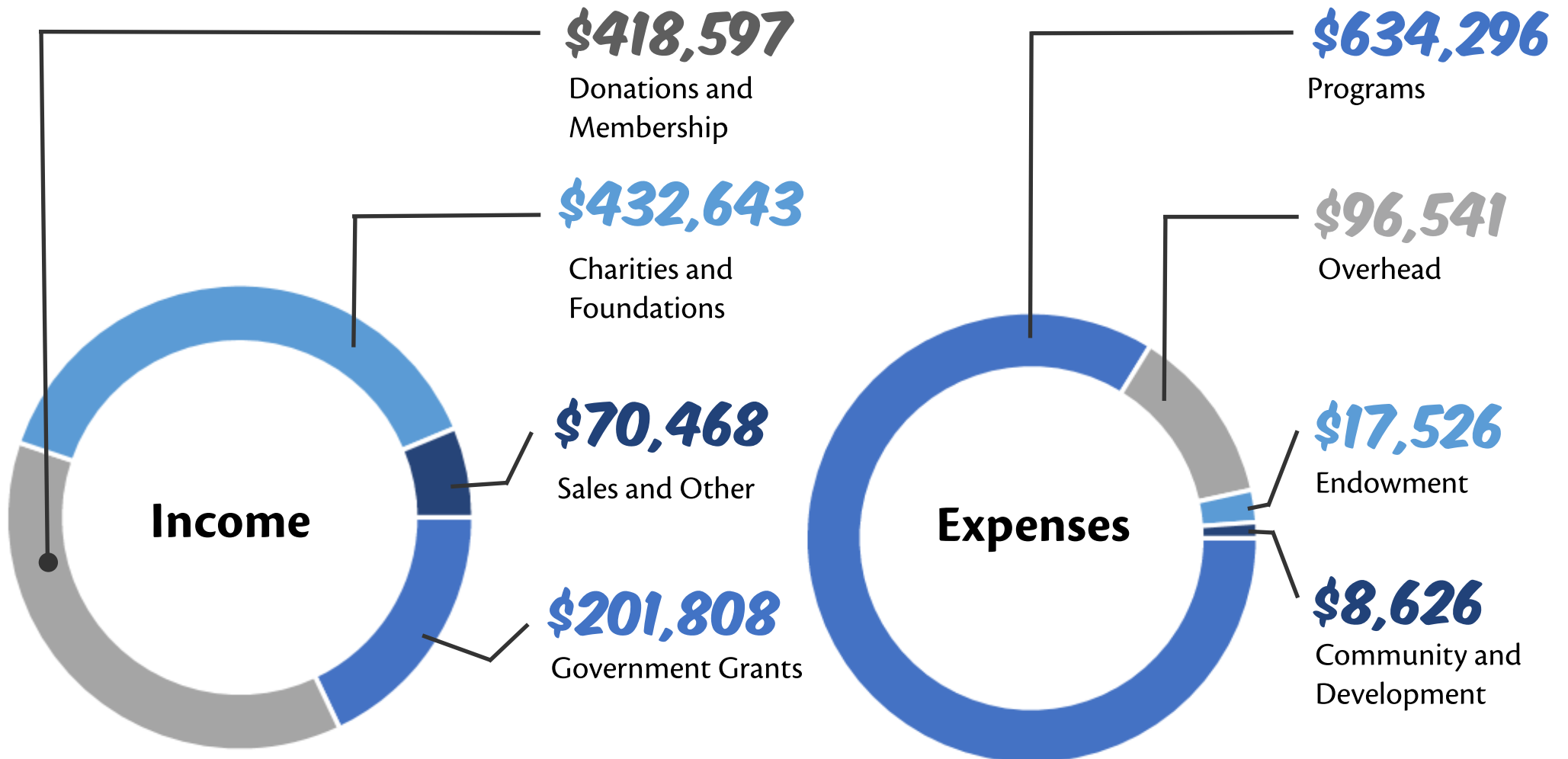
In addition, the HAT - sponsored **Goldstream Chums Program** hosted **2715 K-12 students** to learn about salmon in Goldstream Provincial Park



Financials for 2020-2021

YEAR END OCTOBER 31, 2021

\$1,123,516 RAISED IN FY 2020-21





THE PEOPLE

THE HAT TEAM

Katie Blake, *Executive Director*

Paige Erickson-McGee, *Program Manager*

Sara Lax, *Acting Habitat Management Coordinator*

Chris Wieczorek, *Land Protection Coordinator*

Ronna Woudstra, *Acting Stewardship Coordinator*

Chris Perrin, *Community & Development Coordinator*

Stanley Mason, *Office & Systems Administrator*

Danielle Buckle, *Wildlife Stewardship Technician*

Jordana Herron, *Conservation Technician*

ŚW,XELOSELWET Tiffany Joseph, *Indigenous-led Planning Consultant*

Michael Brinsmead, *Bookkeeper*

Sara Loos, *GIS Technician and Spatial Analyst*

Max Mitchell, *Restoration Crew*

Hannah Glass, *Restoration Crew*

Ellie Fox, *Restoration Crew*

Emma LaFontaine, *Restoration Crew*

BOARD

Elizabeth Easton, *President*

Pierre Iachetti, *Vice-President*

Liz Belcher, *Treasurer*

Rhonda Korol, *Secretary*

Andrew Harcombe, *Director*

Charlie Gordon, *Director*

Katie Bell, *Director*

Larry Statland, *Director*



THANK YOU **TO OUR PARTNERS AND DONORS**

Thank you to our individual and monthly donors, and our members. Your contributions were responsible for 37.5% of our 2021 funding. A full list of individual donors for 2020-2021 can be found at hat.bc.ca/partners/individual

In Memory

Andrew Renwick
Barb Peters
Chris Gower Reese
Dan Sherwood
David & Thelma Powell
David Caiger
Eric Marshall
Germaine & Paul Genton
Gertrude Johnston
Gillian Sanderson
Gustav von Sacken
Irvin Neufeld
Jamie Duncan
John Scull
June and Glenn Ward
Ken Brown
Leo
Milford Ashley Lightbody
Nancy Braithwaite
Nathan Soto
Paul Mably
Pete Over
Peter Clarke Harrison
Ralph Barer
Richard Pearson
Robert (Bob) Ruggles
Tim de Lange Boom
Val Fletcher
Warren Nickerson

Businesses

American Dreamer Films
Blanshard Street Winery
Country Grocer
D.F. Capital Ltd
Edward Jones
First Capital Realty Inc.
Gartside Marine Engines
Haultain Health Centre
Horticultural Centre of the Pacific
Island Equipment Owners Assn
LesPlan Educational Services
Metchosin Farm
Peninsula Co-op
Phillips Brewing & Malting Co.
R.L.C. Enterprize Ltd
Rudi and Company Holdings
Satinflower Nurseries
Sea Cider Farm & Cider House
Smoke & Mirrors Coffee Co.
Soulful Sister Aromatherapy
Victoria Residential Builders Assn
West Coast Refil
Wildergarden Vacation Rental

Government

Capital Regional District
City of Colwood
City of Langford
District of Highlands
District of Oak Bay
District of Metchosin
Government of Canada
Province of British Columbia

Foudations

BC Conservation Foundation
Benevity
Clean Foundation
Charitable Impact Foundation
David Charitable Trust
Habitat Conservation Trust
Foundation
MakeWay Foundation
Metchosin Foundation
Real Estate Foundation of BC
Thomson Understory Foundation
United Way of Greater Victoria
United Way of Southern
Vancouver Island
Victoria Foundation
Wildlife Habitat Canada

2021 DONATIONS IN HONOUR OF

Alberta Ellis	David McKay	Helle Kallas	Louise Milner	Robert Ennis
Alexander Campbell	Deborah Curran	Irene Noakes	Lydia and Don Kasianchuk	Robert Furber
Alison Archibald	Don and Lulu	Jake and Kalie	Lynne Donnelly	Robyn Ennis and Darren Johnson
Allen G. Stirrett	Doreen Webb	Jake Skinner	Martin E. Bolger	Rod Mitchell
Amy Campbell	Douglas Homer-Dixon	Jakob Hjalmar Holm	Marvin and Marilyn Milner	Roland Rabien and Kyle Todoruk
Angela Engelhardt	Dr Jean Weir	James Hay	Mary Jean and Eliot	Rory and Sheila O'Riordan
Ann and Nancy Mortifee	Dr. Anathalie Lee	Jamie Grant and Hunter Poole	Mel Simonson	Ross Frith
Ann Ishiguro	Dr. Margaret Onosko	Jamie	Melanie Thomson	Russ Redman
Barb	Dr. Henry and Health Care Workers	Jasmine and Bailey	Michael and Jenica	Ruth Laming
Ben and Win Hooker	Edward Arnold	Jean & Gary Harrison	Michael Jarvis	Sanjara Omoniyi
Brenda Slaney	Eileen Curteis	Jean Vivian	Miles Craig	Sarah Aldinger
Brent Laing	Elmo Lahtinen	Jim and Gill Crowley	Milford (Mel) Ashley Lightbody	Sarah Norrad
Bret William Stafford	Ennis Family	Jim and Jane Green	Moira and Colin Millar	Scott Rogers
Brian Bury	Evan and Farrah O'Shea Hesketh	Joan Marsh	Mom and Dad	Shaleyn Coulson
Bruce Brown	Ewan Wu	Joanie Hesketh	Mother Earth	Shelley Murphy
Cameron Frith	Frances Litman	Joanie McCorry	Mother Nature	Stella Dilay
Carmine Sparanese	Frances Pugh	Johnny Quay	My father	Stephanie Travis
Carol Ruth Sheldon	G.A. Victor and Florence M. Thomson	Jon O'Riordan	Natalie Rogers	Sue Ennis
Cassandra Dilay	Gage Hibbins	Judith Carder	Nathan Lampard	Sung Lee
Cathy Baker and Dick Jackson	Georgia & Peter Ramos	Judy Peetz	Neil Burroughs	The Pawluk family
Cayla Naumann	Geraldine Pugh	Kara & Serena Locke	Neil Young & Daryl Hannah	The Walkie-Talkies
Chad and Austin Thiessen	Gerri and Rob Laundry	Karen Vinge	Nick	The world famous Enviroman
Chloe Faught	Gerry Smith	Ken Wong	Nicola Benn	Thom Hess
Chris & Jen Snow	Gettin Higher Choir and Wavelengths	Kevin Kline	Our relatives the trees	Tim Ennis and Leah Ballin
Christopher Bullock	GHC concert	Kevin O'Riordan	Paddi Wood	Tim O'Riordan
Cindy Quaite	Gillian Harvey and Mike Munroe	Kim Hesketh	Pamela Lewis	Tom Zaban
Colin Tilson	Gillian Pugh	Kirby and Stella	Paola Camorlinga	Vanessa Gelhaar
Craig Darling	Gordon	Kirby Dilay	Paul Destrooper and Ballet Victoria	Vicki Kendrick
Creviston Family	Granddaughter Penny	Kirsten Marie Roy	Paul Jarman	Vicky Helmink
Dan Potter	Grant D Lee	Kyle Todoruk & Denise Mahon	Paul Leitch	Zequiel and Nico Juarez Mackas
Darrell Pettyjohn	Gwen Taylor	Laila Vass	Pia and Ralph Archibald	Zoe, Kai & Kestrel
David A Ross	Hannah Clausen	Lea Morris and the GHC choir	Ringer Family	
David and Thelma Powell	Hazel Cullen and Gen 3	Leo Sauve	Rob Oldfield	



Habitat Acquisition Trust is a registered Canadian Charity: #88962 6545 RR0001

CONTACT US

Visit us at: #202-661 Burnside Rd East

PO BOX 8552, Victoria, BC, V8W 3S2

hatmail@hat.bc.ca | 250.995.2428

hat.bc.ca/donate

Habitat Acquisition Trust • Follow us on Facebook | Twitter | Instagram - @HabitatAcqTrust