

February 25, 2026

Additional Funding Partners Help Secure Hamilton Marsh Forest and Wetlands

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce that funding to acquire the 360 hectares (ha) of land known as Hamilton Marsh has been secured through additional partnerships with the Province of B.C.'s Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (the Province), the Government of Canada, the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC) and the Sitka Foundation.

In January 2026, Mosaic Forest Management agreed to revise the purchase terms to \$28 million in their efforts to help the RDN preserve the site. To fund the purchase, the RDN Board approved long-term borrowing of \$21.2 million and has committed over \$4 million of capital reserve funds. Support from the community has been overwhelming, with almost \$550,000 raised by the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust (NALT), Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region, Hamilton Wetlands and Forests Preservation Society and Ducks Unlimited Canada - Oceanside Chapter. The remaining funding has now been secured through contribution agreements with The Province (in partnership with the Government of Canada), the NTBC and the Sitka Foundation.

The Province, in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada and Parks Canada, has recognized the ecological significance of Hamilton Marsh and the important role it plays in preserving biodiversity and ecosystem health and has made a funding commitment of \$1,250,000.

This project is supported by Government of Canada funding under the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation and supports Canada's commitment to protecting places and ecosystems that are important to Canadians and that support the wellbeing of Canadian communities.

The NTBC is a Canadian recipient of funds under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), which provides grants to conserve wetland habitats for migratory birds and other wetland wildlife in the United States, Mexico and Canada. To support the RDN's vision to protect the important ecological values at Hamilton Marsh, the NTBC has committed \$841,832 in NAWCA funding.

The Sitka Foundation is a family foundation that focuses on conservation of nature and protecting biodiversity. The Foundation has generously pledged \$100,000 through the NTBC.

The sale is anticipated to be completed by March 31, 2026, and will make Hamilton Marsh the RDN's thirteenth regional park and conservation area and add to the over 2,814 ha of land already held within the other 12 regional and 216 community parks in the RDN. The RDN also has 78 km of trails in 10 regional trail systems.

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Background

Hamilton Marsh, owned by Island Timberlands and managed by Mosaic Forest Management, is situated south of Qualicum Beach, mostly within RDN Electoral Area F and partially in Area G. The property is approximately 360 hectares. Hamilton Marsh itself is approximately 36 hectares in size, and the surrounding forest area make up the remaining 324 hectares. The marsh, located on the north side of the property, is part of the French Creek watershed and connects to Beach and Grandon Creek. It features several wetland habitats and is a vital brood marsh for waterfowl. The area supports wildlife listed as species of concern or at risk by the Conservation Data Centre.

The site includes mature forest within the Coastal Douglas-fir moist maritime subzone. Without disturbance, the 100-year-old forest will become old-growth within 150 years, serving as an important recruitment area for this rare forest type. Securing Hamilton Marsh would help advance British Columbia's progress toward Canada's 30 by 30 conservation goal—protecting 30 per cent of land and water by 2030.

For more information on the Hamilton Marsh acquisition, visit getinvolved.rdn.ca/hamilton-marsh-conditional-purchase. For more information on RDN parks, visit rdn.bc.ca/parks-services.

Quotes

"We are deeply grateful to our funding partners, community organizations and residents whose collective support has made the protection of Hamilton Marsh possible. This achievement is an outstanding example of what can be accomplished when government, not-for-profit organizations and the community unite for a shared vision. Together, we are protecting a vital natural legacy for current and future generations."

Stuart McLean, Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo

"We recognize that Hamilton Marsh is located within the traditional territories of Qualicum, Snuneymuxw and Snaw-naw-as First Nations. This ecologically significant wetland provides vital habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, while supporting the health of the French Creek watershed. Our government is proud to partner with the Regional District of Nanaimo and conservation organizations to help secure this important landscape for future generations."

Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

"Hamilton Marsh is one of the largest remaining freshwater marshes on Vancouver Island and a vital stopover along the Pacific Flyway. It supports thousands of migratory birds and an impressive diversity of species, including up to 30 kinds of dragonflies. Together with Sitka Foundation and our partners through NAWCA, we are proud to help the RDN secure this remarkable ecosystem for the future."

Dr. Jasper Lament, Chief Executive Officer, Nature Trust of BC

"The Sitka Foundation is a family foundation that focuses on the conservation of nature and protection of biodiversity. The Foundation has generously pledged \$100,000 through the Nature Trust of BC. We are especially pleased to partner with so many organizations who believed in this project from the early days and be one of so many crucial donors."

Carolynn Beaty, Executive Director, Sitka Foundation

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Hamilton Marsh. Photo credit: MABRRI Arrowsmith Media

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