

French Creek Estuary Eagle Sanctuary

The magnificence of Bald eagles soaring through the sky has long been a symbol of courage, power, vision and freedom plus an important connection to nature for people living in the Oceanside community. With 47 eagle nests located between Craig Bay and the little Qualicum River, watching and enjoying eagles forms a wonderful part of the fabric of peoples' daily lives and attracts others from across Vancouver Island and beyond to visit and make their homes here. The French Creek Estuary is an outstanding destination for people and photographers to watch wildlife and experience the joy of being in nature.

Of special note, "the Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations have given their approval and support for a Nature Reserve for all life in the estuary."

Thanks to partnerships with the BC Parks Foundation, the Regional District of Nanaimo, French Creek House Ltd. (land owner), Vancouver Island University, Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Regional Research Institute, Nanaimo and Area Land Trust, Hancock Wildlife Foundation, many local conservation organizations, and generous community donations

We're 97% of the way to success with over \$1,700,000 raised of the \$1,900,000 to purchase 18 acres of land in the heart of French Creek Estuary, a purchase that would see a total of 23 acres of ecologically valuable land protected.

The east coast of Vancouver Island is 1 of the 9 most at risk areas in the southern half of Canada and has more biological diversity than anywhere else in British Columbia. Estuaries are rare, making up only 2.3% of BC's coastline, but they are highly productive and diverse, supporting thousands of species of wildlife that use it for food, shelter and to raise young. Acting as a protective buffer, estuaries play a key role in helping mitigate climate change by absorbing flood waters and dissipating storm surges, an important factor to consider in the coastal communities of Oceanside with recent events such as atmospheric rains, strong onshore winds and tidal surges causing damage.

Yesterday the Eagle Sanctuary campaign reached a Canada wide audience due to an unprecedented announcement by the Age of Union Foundation in partnership with the BC Parks Foundation. Dax Dasilva and his Age of Union Foundation (AUF) pledged \$14.5 million to preserve BC's threatened ecosystems to combat climate change and provide sanctuaries for at-risk wildlife. This is one of the single largest gifts in BC conservation history. The AUF has previously committed \$1 M to the French Creek Eagle Sanctuary. Here is a link to the announcement (included in the video footage are scenes from the French Creek Estuary): [Age of Union Pledges \\$14.5 M](#)

A wonderful opportunity now exists for local businesses and professionals to be part of this success story, a story that is already creating headlines. We would be thrilled to see local businesses be recognized at the finish line by contributing to this Oceanside legacy, Vancouver Island's First Eagle Sanctuary, one of only three in BC.

Below please see a link to the BC Parks Foundation website (our major partner) where you'll find additional details about the campaign:

<https://www.bcparksfoundation.ca/projects/enhance/french-creek-estuary/>