



Crowdfunding Campaign Takes Flight to Protect Estuary Where Eagles Gather

Donors rally to protect lands in Salish Sea estuary where a convocation of eagles gathers every year; crowdfunding campaign launched for remaining \$300,000.

February 24, 2022

VANCOUVER, B.C.

Every year, there is a mighty gathering of bald eagles in the French Creek estuary on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. They come by the thousands from as far away as Alaska to join resident and nesting eagles and feast on the teeming abundance of the Salish Sea.

The estuary is a cherished place for those who study and revere the magnificent species. The local [Save Estuary Land Society](#) and [Friends of French Creek Conservation Society](#) have worked for years to protect it and have raised \$200,000 in community donations.

Until recently, their dream of creating Vancouver Island's first eagle reserve seemed out of reach. An independent appraisal recently valued 18 acres of key land in the estuary at \$5,180,000.

Today there is new hope for the dream of a protected eagle reserve in the French Creek estuary, with a major gift from the landowners themselves.

"We are thrilled to announce we have entered into a purchase and sale agreement with French Creek House, Ltd.," says Dr. Andy Day, CEO of [the BC Parks Foundation](#). "As part of their commitment, they have generously agreed to gift \$3,280,000 of land value if we can raise the remaining funds."

"We are very pleased to be able to work with the BC Parks Foundation and local partners to make a legacy gift to the eagles and community," said Quinn Griesdale, Director of French Creek House, Ltd.

With the land and donation secured, plus the money raised locally, the BC Parks Foundation and local partners still were \$1.7M short of the purchase price for the lands. That's when another major donor stepped forward.

"We are thrilled to announce that Dax Dasilva and his non-profit [Age of Union Alliance](#) will provide a landmark gift of \$1,000,000 in matching funds if the remainder can be raised," says Dr. Day.



Dasilva, who founded [Lightspeed](#) – a global commerce solution -- is a British Columbian deeply committed to conservation. When he launched Age of Union in 2021, he pledged to donate \$40 million towards conservation efforts around the world.

“This is an exciting and symbolic project, and I am honoured to join other British Columbians, including local First Nations, who are supporting it,” says Dasilva. “Being a part of this crowdfunding effort shows that all acts, big or small, when brought together can change the trajectory of our planet for the better. Every individual has the power to transform our world for good, especially when we act in unison.”

The Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations have expressed support for the eagle sanctuary. Local government - [the Regional District of Nanaimo](#) - is also onboard.

“We are very pleased to announce \$400,000 toward the purchase of the estuary lands. We will work with the BC Parks Foundation on an agreement to manage this important ecological area as a nature preserve,” says Lehann Wallace, Area G Director. “When added to existing park lands in the area, 23 acres will be conserved.”

Southern BC and the Inside Passage sustain most of the eagles of western North America for 6 or more months each year. Dr. John Elliott of Canadian Wildlife Service and international eagle expert David Hancock of the Hancock Wildlife Foundation estimate between 35,000 to 50,000 eagles migrate along the coast. “We desperately need safe feeding sites for them,” says Hancock.

In addition to protecting eagles, the French Creek estuary is an incredibly diverse and rich ecological system supporting 180 species of birds, 60 species of waterfowl, salmon, river otters and beaver. Nineteen of the species in the estuary are considered at risk. As the estuary is comprised mainly of increasingly valuable private lands, it has always been vulnerable to development and human encroachment on fragile wildlife habitat.

With the combined efforts of local eagle lovers, visionary individuals, land holders and regional governments, and First Nations, there is now just \$300,000 remaining to ensure permanent protection for the French Creek eagle sanctuary.

The BC Parks Foundation will work with all partners on a crowdfunding effort to raise the remaining funds by a deadline of April 10th, 2022.

“When you add your paddle– no matter what size, shape or colour - to this journey, you become part of the doing something meaningful and lasting - keeping BC beautiful, forever,” says Day. “To do something together like this is one of the best feelings you will ever have. It’s as close to the feeling of soaring like an eagle that you will ever get.”

You can find out more and contribute at <http://www.bcparksfoundation.ca/french-creek-estuary>



About the BC Parks Foundation

The BC Parks Foundation is an independent charity with a mission to create the greatest parks system in the world through more and better parks and protected areas. Learn more at bcparksfoundation.ca.

About Age of Union

Age of Union is a non-profit environmental alliance that supports and makes visible a global community of changemakers working on-the-ground to protect the planet's threatened species and ecosystems. Launched in October 2021 by tech leader and environmental activist Dax Dasilva, Age of Union seeks to ignite a flame within every person through conservation efforts that solve critical environmental challenges and show the positive impact that every individual can make. <https://www.ageofunion.com>

About Friends of French Creek Conservation Society and Save Estuary Land Society

FFCCS and SELS are volunteer charitable organizations based in the French Creek area, working together to protect the French Creek Estuary <https://www.saveestuarylandsociety.ca>

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[BCPF French Creek Media](#)

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