



For Immediate Release:

The Nature Trust of BC protects 160 acres of ecologically important land near Port Neville

Located on the 'Pacific Flyway', protection of this property will allow millions of birds to continue to use important estuary habitats as they migrate

Tuesday, October 26th 2021 - Vancouver, BC – Today, [The Nature Trust of British Columbia](#), a non-profit land conservation organization, announced that it has protected 160 acres (65 hectares) of ecologically important land in the Shoal Creek Estuary near Port Neville in BC. This is the first phase of a two phase project.

The Shoal Creek property consists of two parcels of land that will be acquired over two years totaling 320 acres. The property is uniquely representative of a naturally regenerating immature forest having been previously logged in the 1990s.

The property lies on the Pacific Flyway, the migration route extending along the Pacific from Alaska to the southern tip of South America. Millions of birds stopover in freshwater wetlands and estuaries each year along the flyway. Protecting these habitats is therefore a high priority for conservation internationally.

Estuaries comprise only about three percent of BC's coast but support 80 percent of all fish and wildlife in the province. Many species can only live in the brackish water of estuaries so they are often home to some of the most rare and endangered species in the world. The Shoal Creek Estuary is no different, ranked by Pacific Estuary Conservation Program (PECP) as Class two importance, the estuary scores near to 80 percent of the maximum biological importance to waterbirds and waterfowl in BC.

"Through the ongoing support and generosity of our partners and donors, we are delighted to be able to protect the first parcel of land on The Shoal Creek Estuary," said Jasper Lament, CEO of The Nature Trust of BC. "The diversity of species and habitats protected by this project exemplifies the importance of acquiring, protecting and enhancing estuaries along the B.C coastline. To support this endeavour, The Nature Trust of BC with its conservation and government partners has established the Pacific Estuary Conservation Program to protect the rich biodiversity of these habitats in perpetuity."

Located adjacent to Fulmore Creek Estuary and 13km east of Port Neville, The Shoal Creek Estuary provides habitat for three species of Salmon: Coho, Pink and Chum use the estuary for



rearing and feeding as they prepare to enter the ocean. The presence of these fish attracts Grizzly Bears to the area, with many being spotted using the estuary to catch a salmon dinner.

There are at least nine 'At Risk' bird species known to use the estuary including Brandt's Cormorant and Western Grebe (both listed as endangered). Other threatened bird species dependent on this estuary include Barn Swallows, Black Scoters, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Herons, Long-tailed Ducks, Marbled Murrelets and Surf Scoters.

The Shoal Creek Estuary is also home to important plant communities, many of which only occur in temperate estuaries making them the most rare and vulnerable species requiring protection in the estuary. These include Tufted Hairgrass, American Glasswort, Sea-Milkwort, and Lyngbye's Sedge. Each of these plants are Red-listed as endangered in the provincial database.

Each of these species has a role to play in ensuring the persistence of biodiversity and a healthy planet. Large protected areas are the best way to ensure biodiversity can flourish undisturbed in perpetuity.

ABOUT:

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is a leading non-profit land conservation organization with a 50 year history of successfully protecting and caring for B.C.'s most critical habitats. Since 1971, The Nature Trust of BC and its partners have acquired more than 178,000 acres (72,000 hectares) of ecologically significant land to save vulnerable wildlife, fish and plants.

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