



# Biodiversity Protection Policy

## Draft Policy Report

Aubrey Butcher, Biologist  
Diamond Head Consulting  
February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

# Agenda



- Project Context/Schedule
- Biodiversity Assessment Report
- Engagement
- Biodiversity Protection Policy





# Project Context

# Project Scope



	Task	Key deliverables
Biodiversity Assessment	Ecological Inventory and Habitat Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Collect and combine existing GIS layers</li> <li>✓ Complete LiDAR analysis for tree canopy &amp; watercourses</li> <li>✓ Field assessment of natural areas</li> </ul>
	Biodiversity Assessment & Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ecological inventory summary, maps</li> <li>✓ Biodiversity ranking</li> <li>✓ Identify potential hubs and corridors for a draft Green Infrastructure Network</li> <li>✓ Threats to biodiversity</li> <li>✓ Draft Biodiversity Assessment Report</li> </ul>
Biodiversity Protection Policy	Engaging the Community and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Online mapping tool (StoryMap)</li> <li>✓ Consult with First Nations</li> <li>✓ Council presentation</li> <li>✓ Trails Assessment</li> <li>✓ Finalize the Biodiversity Assessment Report</li> </ul>
	Develop a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review existing policy and legislation, gap analysis, municipal context</li> <li>✓ Develop recommendations for policy, monitoring, education, and stewardship</li> <li>➤ Draft Biodiversity Protection Policy</li> <li>✓ Finalized public-facing BPP</li> </ul>

# Biodiversity Assessment



## Purpose:

- Develop a baseline inventory of biodiversity
- Develop a Habitat Network
- Identify threats to biodiversity
- Summarize current municipal monitoring and management efforts





# Biodiversity Protection Policy

# Why Protect Biodiversity



- Strengthens ecosystem resilience
- Supports ecosystem services
  - Water and air purification
  - Nutrient cycling
  - Pollination
  - Temperature regulation
- Intrinsic value of biodiversity
- Community well-being



# Threats



- Climate Change
- Invasive Species
- Development Pressure
- Biodiversity Loss





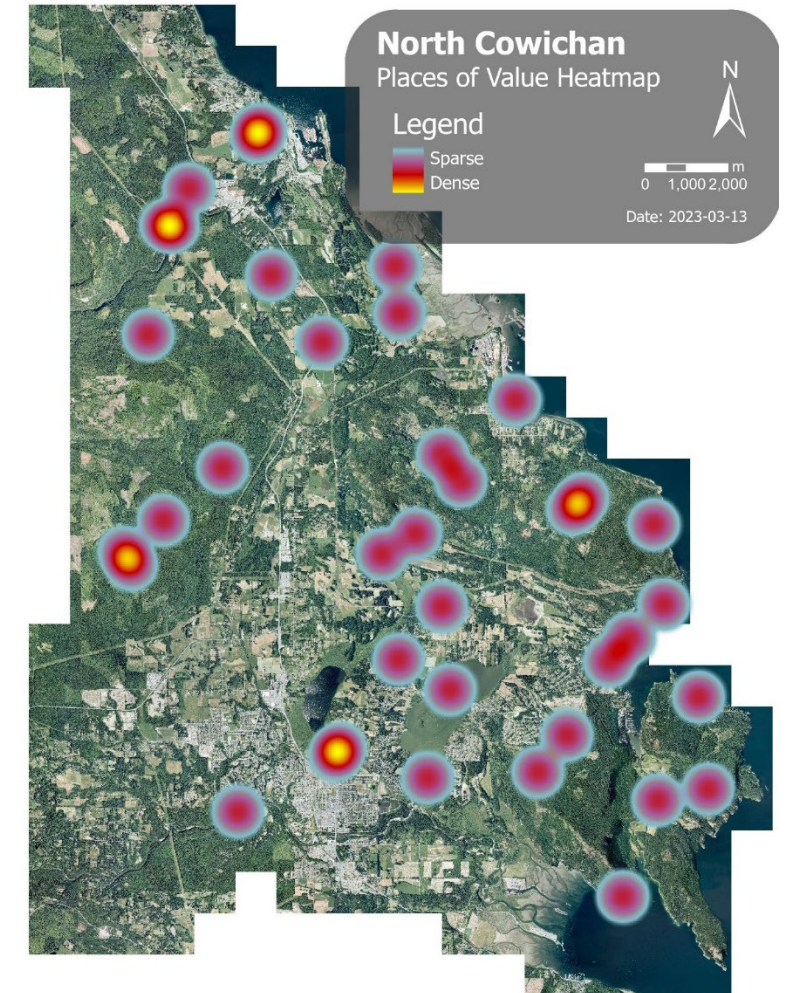
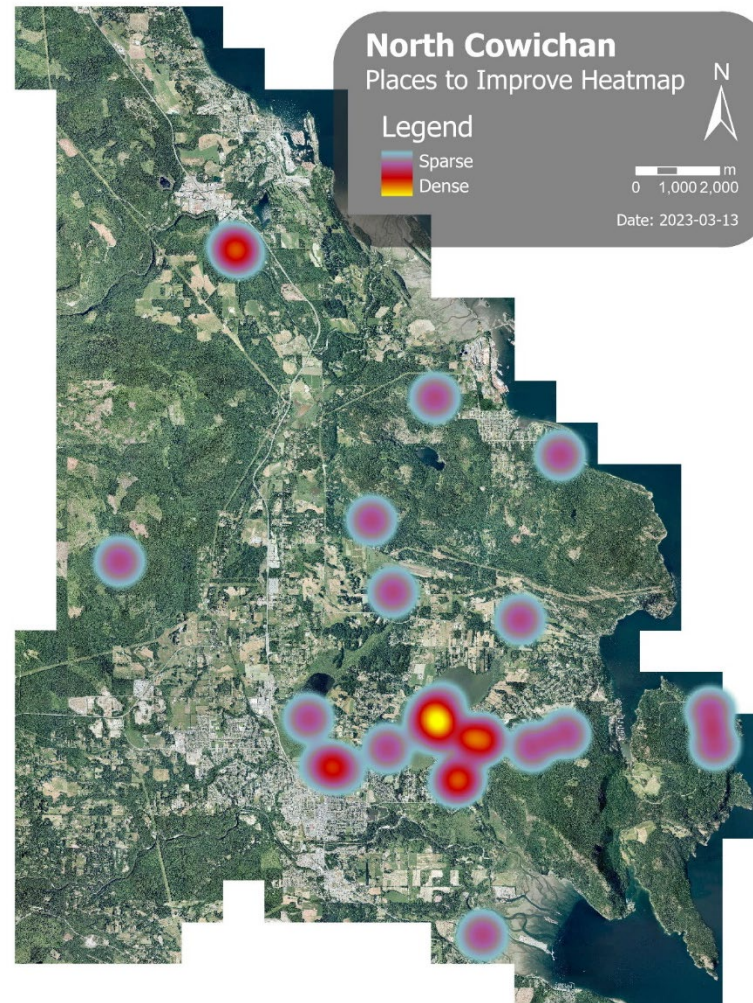
Engagement

# StoryMap (Mapping Tool)



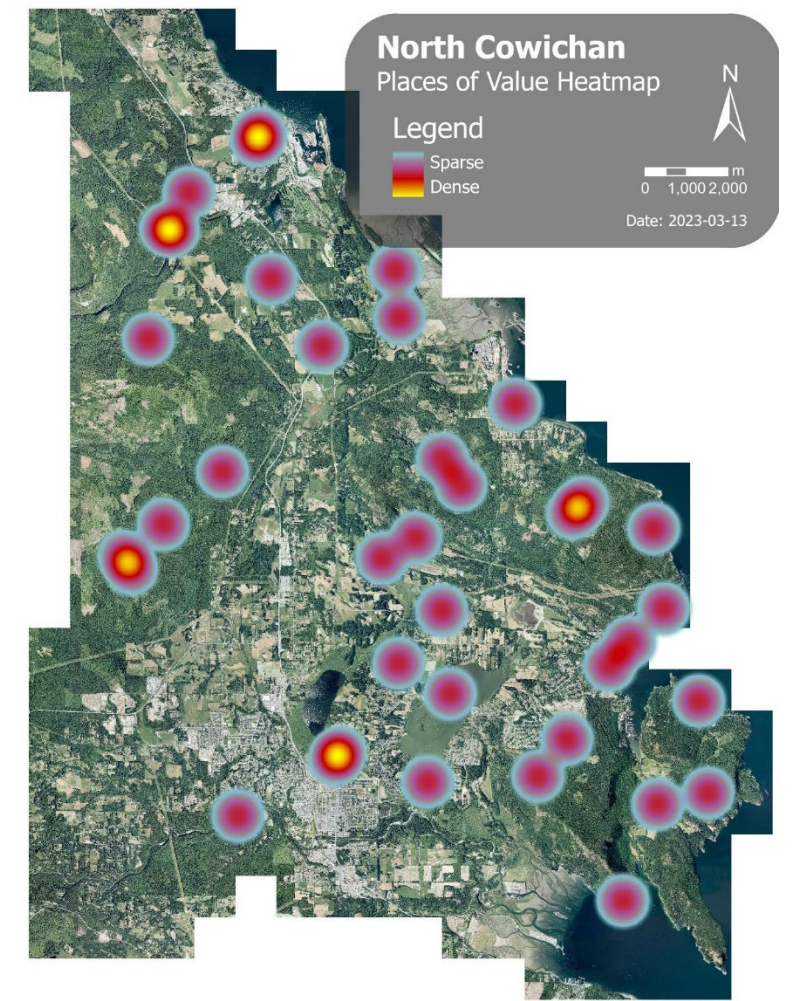
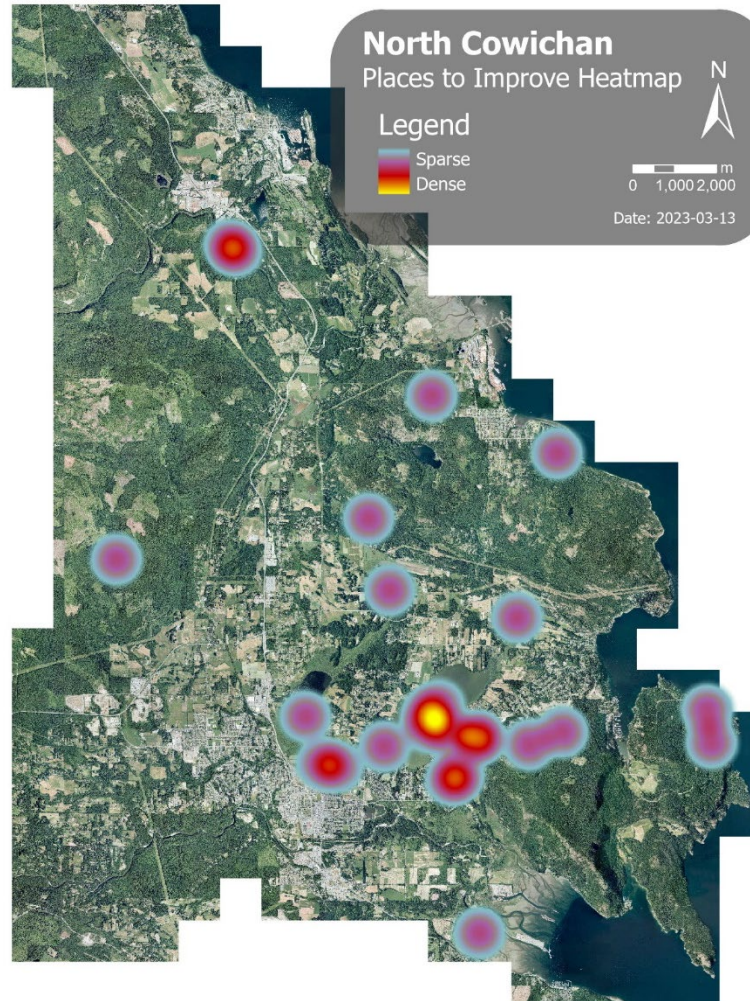
Launched:  
**Dec. 2022 to  
Jan. 2023**

- Web-based tool
- Residents indicate places in NC they value, or places needing improvement or are threatened
- 65 locations shared



# What we heard

- Valued Locations
  - Parks
  - Natural areas
  - Marine shoreline
- Needing improvement
  - Parks
  - Developments
  - Informal trails
  - Habitat degradation
- Larger role in planning
- Additional protection



# First Nations Engagement

**Summer 2023 -  
ongoing**

- Initial multi-nation workshop
- Engagement session with elders and community members
- Quw'utsun First Nations Technical Working Group (TWG)



# What we heard



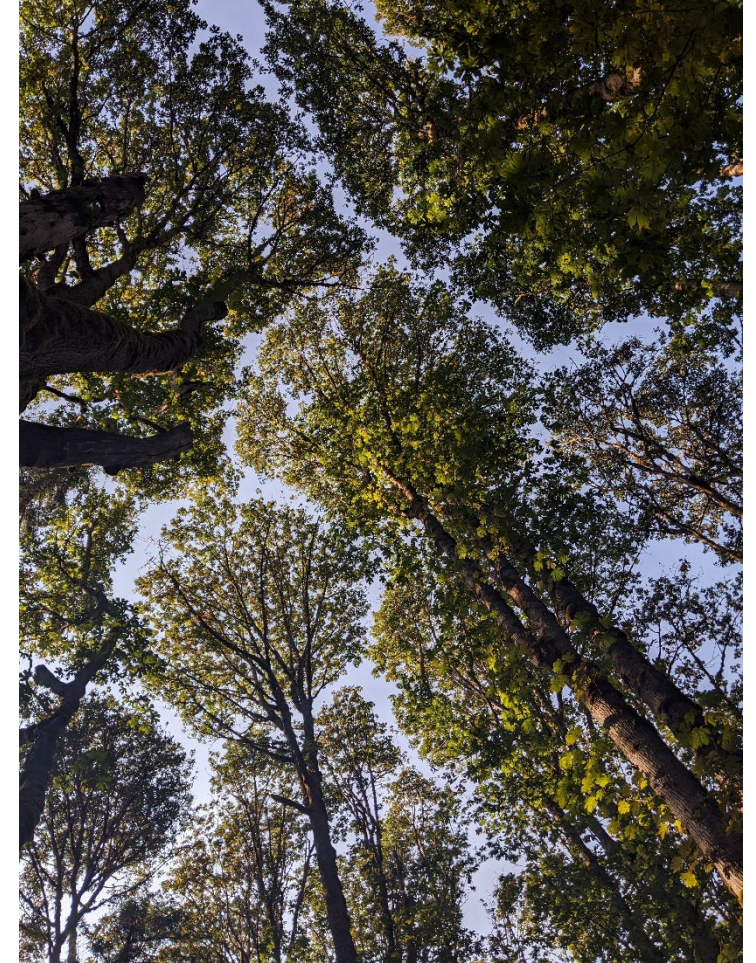
- Salmon Habitat
- Freshwater Health
- Marine foreshore protection
- Importance of heritage sites
- Concerns over pressures on biodiversity



# Policy Review



- OCP (2022)
  - Chapter 6 – Regeneration and Protection of the Natural Environment
  - Environmental DPAs
- Climate Energy Action and Energy Plan (2022)
- Climate Adaptation Strategy (2024)
- Municipal Forest Reserve
- Many other bylaws, policies, and plans





# Biodiversity Protection Policy

# Biodiversity Protection Policy



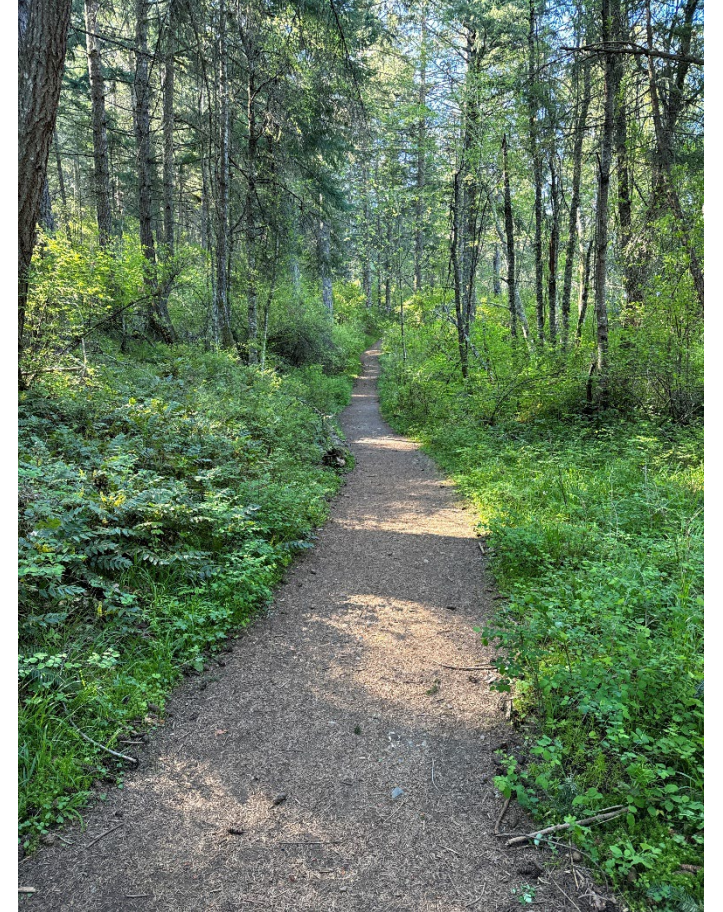
1. Integrate biodiversity protection into urban growth and land use planning
2. Protect and enhance watercourses and their riparian areas
3. Protect and enhance terrestrial ecosystems



# Biodiversity Protection Policy



4. Protect and enhance marine and shoreline ecosystems
5. Develop a trail network which doesn't compromise ecological values
6. Strengthen education, stewardship, and knowledge to support biodiversity protection



# Also discussed



- Trails, Recreation and Biodiversity
  - Impacts of trails
  - Criteria for planning
  - Mitigation/BMPs
- Monitoring Metrics
  - Water Quality
  - Indicator species
  - Canopy cover
  - Invasive Species



A low-angle photograph of a forest with tall trees and sunlight filtering through the canopy. The sun is visible in the lower center, creating a bright lens flare. The trees are tall and thin, with dense green foliage. The sky is visible through the canopy.

Questions?

# Biodiversity in North Cowichan



- Biodiversity Ranking
  - 52% of the land base is forested
  - Aquatic habitat also high value
  - These form backbone of the Habitat Network

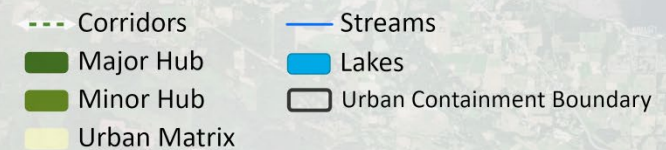


# Habitat Network

- Major and Minor Habitat Hubs
- Travel Corridors
- The Urban Matrix



Green Infrastructure Network



2

Kilometers