



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

Sp C/W March 6/25

To: Mayor and Council
From: Paul Arslan, Director of Finance
Date: February 24, 2025
Subject: 2025 Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary Contract

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee recommend to Council the 2025 management fee for Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary from the options provided in this report.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with details surrounding Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary's 2025 budget request.

DISCUSSION

The Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary provided their budget request for 2025 in accordance with the terms of the Land Management Agreement with the District. The relevant sections are as follows:

- 3(iii). *The Municipality agrees to pay to the Society an annual management fee in accordance with the following terms – The Society may in any year during the term of this agreement apply to the Council of the Municipality for an increase in the amount of the management fee.*

12. *The Society shall submit to the Municipality on or before the 1st day of December in each year, an annual budget for the ensuing year, 1st day of January to 31st day of December, for the management, care maintenance, improvement, and operations of the Lands as a Nature Sanctuary...*

15. *The Society shall be responsible for the maintenance and repair of any buildings or other improvements upon the Lands at the date of this agreement or which may be placed or constructed upon the Lands by the society during the term hereof. The Municipality may assist in part or in full in the implementation of said maintenance programs by providing funds or by providing such services to the Society at not more than cost.*

The 2025 requested budget includes:

1. Annual management fees totalling \$512,120 which represent a 12% increase from the approved 2024 amount of \$457,250.
2. One-time capital funding of \$285,200 for the following items. Last year's request for the 2024 budget was \$13,600.
 - \$97,000 - Swan Creek bridge replacement
 - \$74,800 - Protective fencing
 - \$2,000 - Blenkinsop Creek bridge repairs
 - \$2,000 - Founders' Warf repairs
 - \$10,000 - Darwin Creek bridge repairs
 - \$99,400 - Automatic parking lot gates and doors

The Sanctuary is indicating they require an annual increase of \$54,870, which covers \$13,700 for Indigenous reconciliation support, \$4,600 for maintenance, and \$36,570 for other expenditure increases.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

1. That Council approve the request for an increase to the 2025 Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary management fee to \$512,120.
2. That Council does not approve the request for an increase to the 2025 Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary fee and retain it at \$457,250.
3. That Council approve a different amount for the 2025 Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary management fee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should Council approve the 2025 management fee increase of \$54,870 this will represent a 0.03% increase in property taxes. It is also recommended Council consider the one-time capital requests in conjunction with other departmental requests for one-time funding when the municipality is in a position to review any 2025 annual surplus.

CONCLUSION

Each year Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary is required to submit their annual budget to the District under the current Land Management Agreement. This information is provided to Council for their consideration during the District's annual budget deliberation process.

Prepared by: Jennifer Lockhart, Senior Manager, Financial Services

Approved by: Paul Arslan, Director of Finance

Attachments:
2025 Swan Lake Christmas Hill nature Sanctuary Budget

ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS:

This report presents several options for Council’s consideration. My recommendation to Council is option 2: that the increase to the management fee not be approved. The Society continues to provide excellent value to the District in pursuit of shared goals and objectives. That said, the other reports provided to Council as part of the financial planning process highlight the uncertain economic context the District is operating in and the pressures faced in other areas of the organization, leading to recommendations that limit increases in 2025 and defer additional costs where appropriate. Consistent with this approach, I recommend that the management fee be kept the same for 2025. I also note that the fee was increased in 2024 by 18% following a period of consistent funding.

Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary Society Budget for 2025

Descriptions	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Comments
REVENUES			
Donations - Received	\$ 120,000	\$ 33,000	Major donor streamlined their operations
Donations - Non Received	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	
Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary - Restricted Future Projects Fund	NA	\$ 82,525	For Nature House renovations
Saanich Annual Mmgt Contract	\$ 457,250	\$ 512,120	\$54,870 increase breakdown: \$36,580 increase over FY24; Indigenous Reconciliation Support \$13,718; Increasing urban density cost recovery for compounding damage maintenance costs \$4,573
Capital Request	\$ 13,600	\$ 285,200	\$97K Swan Creek bridge replacement; \$74.8K protective fencing due to fire risk; \$2K Blenkinsop Creek bridge repairs; \$2K Founders' Wharf repairs; \$10K Darwin Creek bridge repairs; \$99.4K Automatic parking lot gates and doors for increased site + visitor safety
Government Funding - Gaming	\$ 80,000	\$ 151,000	BC Gaming Capital for Nature House renovations \$86K; BC Gaming Operational \$65K
Government Funding - Federal	\$ 96,421	\$ 103,434	ECCC Xmas Hill grant \$75.2K; CSJ \$23K
Membership Fees	\$ 15,750	\$ 9,000	Membership dues declining trend for Societies
Grant Income-All Other non Govt	\$ 27,500	\$ 20,271	
Community Sponsorships	NA	\$ 20,000	
Events Gross Rev & Plant Sales	\$ 40,000	\$ 50,000	
Interest Revenue	NA	\$ 8,000	Clearer tracking in FY25
Public Program Revenues	\$ 16,000	\$ 18,000	
Contract Program Revenues	\$ 12,000	\$ 14,000	
School Program Revenue	\$ 18,000	\$ 20,000	
840 Swan Street Rental Income	\$ 31,253	\$ 32,384	
831 Ralph Street Rental Income	\$ 17,834	\$ 18,390	
Facility Rentals	\$ 11,000	\$ 18,000	
Nature PreSchool Rental Income	\$ 6,658	\$ 7,023	
Gift Shop Sales	\$ 21,000	\$ 18,000	
Miscellaneous Revenue (divesting assets)	NA	\$ 3,500	
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 1,014,266	\$ 1,453,847	

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary Society Budget for 2025

Descriptions	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Comments
EXPENSES			
Advertising	\$ 11,500	\$ 17,650	Increased for 50th Anniversary
Audit & Professional Fees	\$ 15,850	\$ 22,000	Increased legal fees due to Land Management Agreement negotiations with Saanich
Banking and Other Fees	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	
Board Development & Training	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,000	
Cash over short	NA	\$ 50	Clearer tracking in FY25
Computer Systems	\$ 11,000	\$ 15,000	Loss of IT volunteer
Dues and Licences	\$ 2,685	\$ 3,000	
Hospitality	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,000	Increased for hosting community listening engagements
Insurance	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	
Office Supplies & Equipment	\$ 4,000	\$ 5,000	Increased for 50th Anniversary
Postage & Courier	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,000	Decreased due to end of Xmas Hill Grant
Printing & Copying	\$ 4,300	\$ 4,000	Decreased due to end of Xmas Hill Grant
Staff Development & Training	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,500	Decreased due to end of Xmas Hill Grant; new structure to program
Travel Expenses	\$ 7,800	\$ 4,385	Decreased due to end of Xmas Hill Grant
Utilities	\$ 13,000	\$ 11,000	Streamlined
Internet & Telephone	\$ 8,000	\$ 6,000	Streamlined
Website Expenses	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,000	Maintenance costs only
Safety Supplies	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
Capital Expenses	\$ 13,600	\$ 285,200	\$97K Swan Creek bridge replacement; \$74.8K protective fencing due to fire risk; \$2K Blenkinsop Creek bridge repairs; \$2K Founders' Wharf repairs; \$10K Darwin Creek bridge repairs; \$99.4K Automatic parking lot gates and doors for increased site + visitor safety
Gift Shop Purchases	\$ 8,000	\$ 5,000	
Senior's Craft Costs	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,200	Increased for 50th Anniversary
Event Expenses	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,000	Increased for 50th Anniversary
Membership Discounts	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,500	Increased discounts at Native Plant Sale
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,500	Increased for 50th Anniversary
Education Program reimbursements for cancellations	\$ 3,500	\$ 500	Streamlined due to more structured system
Education Bursaries	NA	\$ 1,000	
Education-Animal Care Expenses	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,000	
Education-Equipment	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,480	
Program Supplies	\$ 31,000	\$ 24,152	Decreased due to end of Xmas Hill Grant
Education-NH Display	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000	
Volunteer Appreciation	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,230	
Volunteer Training	\$ 2,000	\$ 900	

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary Society Budget for 2025

Descriptions	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Comments
Volunteer Program Supplies	NA	\$ 800	To support Native Plant Seed Sowers program and volunteer-run social enterprise initiative for 50th
Caretakers & Custodial Supplies	\$ 14,000	\$ 15,200	
Residential Tenancies Expenses	\$ 1,200	\$ 400	
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 4,800	\$ 188,000	Nature House renovations \$172.5K; Other repairs \$15.5K
Facility Rental Expense	\$ 500	\$ 500	
Appliances & Furnishings	\$ 3,100	\$ 1,000	
Benches Expense	\$ 500	\$ 250	
Ecosystem Management	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,200	Decreased due to end of Xmas Hill Grant
Equipment & Tools	\$ 8,000	\$ 1,500	Decreased due to end of Xmas Hill Grant
Fencing Expenses - Site	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000	Spot of problem issues
Hauling & Heavy Equipment	\$ 500	\$ 500	
Mowing Expenses	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	
Plant Sales Expense	\$ 35,000	\$ 30,000	
Signage Expense	\$ 2,000	\$ 14,000	Signage refresh due to 50th and rebrand
Trails Expense	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,000	
Vehicle Expenses	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	
Water Quality Expenses	\$ 5,000	\$ 8,000	
Wildlife Management Expenses	\$ 500	\$ 500	
Wages & Salaries	\$ 557,775	\$ 562,777	
Wages - Subcontractor	\$ 115,450	\$ 71,000	Decreased due to end of Xmas Hill Grant
Contract- Summer Students	\$ 26,596	\$ 61,185	Increased youth support for site work, educational outreach and communications for the 50th anniversary celebrations
Receiver General Non-taxable Expense	NA	\$ 250	Clearer tracking in FY25
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,014,056	\$ 1,453,809	
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 1,014,266	\$ 1,453,847	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,014,056	\$ 1,453,809	
Net	\$ 209	\$ 37	