



# *The Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society*



*Protecting the legacy for future generations  
Local food sustainability  
Community access*

Carol Pickup, FLT Society Chair  
February 20, 2019



# *Traditional Territory Acknowledgement*

I would like to acknowledge that the CRD operates within the traditional territories of Coast and Straits Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth Peoples; and that the CRD is committed to respectfully and appropriately engaging said First Nations in regional strategies, decision-making and shared interests.



# *Presentation Overview*

- Local sustainable agriculture and food security
- Overview of the FLT Society
- Notable Milestones
- Newman Farm – “Field to Plate” Initiative Results
- Looking to the Future
- Q&As



# *Local Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security – why are these important issues?*

- . Decline in local food production – 85% to 5% (“Peak Food”)
- . “Farmlessness” - due to high price of farmland
- . Loss of farmland to development and estate properties
- . Health and environmental challenges associated with industrial agriculture
- . Looking ahead: Climate change – Economic change – End of oil
- . Threats to local biodiversity and agricultural capability
- . Lack of whole farm planning and business planning

**= Lack of Sustainable  
Agriculture and Food  
Security**



## *Overview of the FLT Society*

- Founded as a not-for-profit society under the provincial *Society Act* on March 18, 2008.
- Originally established to enhance the farming capability of Mt. Newton Valley (in Saanichton, BC), rehabilitate the stream ecology of Hagan Creek, and create a community trail system.





# *Overview of the FLT Society (cont'd)*

## Our mission:

- enhancing farming capacity in the Greater Victoria area by protecting local farmland;
- protecting eco-sensitive and culturally special areas;
- producing food for those in need;
- providing relevant educational opportunities;
- promoting the economic viability of farmland; and
- providing community access and public awareness programs.





# ***FLT Society's Priorities and Goals***

## **(1) FARMLAND PRESERVATION**

**Goal: Preserve Greater Victoria farmland for future generations**

## **(2) FARMLAND MANAGEMENT**

**Goal: Establish mechanisms to promote sustainable management of farms that contribute to the regional economy**

## **(3) COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND OUTREACH**

**Goals: Increase outreach and interest in Greater Victoria agriculture/food**

## **(4) GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT**

**Goal: Maintain a highly professional and fiscally responsible organization that ensures long-term viability of the FLT Society**





# *FLT Society Organizational Structure*

- Founded by Barbara Souther – Central Saanich resident and health sciences specialist
- Volunteer Board of Directors
  - Honorary Patron, Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Board Secretary and two Board Members
- Volunteer Advisors and Committee Members
  - Two Community Advisors and Two Newman Farm Volunteers at Large
- Staff
  - Farm Manager (Newman Farm) and Webmaster
- Community meeting space located in the Pavilion Building – Centre for Plant Health in North Saanich, BC.

Database of 900+ FLT Society supporters and growing!



# FLT Society's Notable Milestones

## Summer 2009:

- Expanded the geographic and social scope to cover all of the peoples, farmland and adjacent corridors of Greater Victoria with an emphasis on collaboration, farmland management, and outreach to meet the community needs amongst marginalized populations in society.
- Developed its inaugural strategic plan.
- Assisted The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) to complete fundraising for the *Save Madrona Farm Forever* campaign in Victoria, BC. The FLT Society provided sizeable donations to save Madrona Farm at a critical juncture in this campaign.





# FLT Society Notable Milestones (cont'd)

## Summer 2011:

- Obtained federal charitable tax status which provided the organization with enhanced funding opportunities to “grow” community-driven initiatives in Greater Victoria.

## Spring 2012:

- Formalized our working relationship with the District of Central Saanich through a signing of a Letter of Understanding to serve as stewards of the historic Newman Farm in Central Saanich, BC.
- Coordinated a farmer/land match between a local farmer (Ian Paul) and land owners (the Lalari family) - leading to the creation of Beetnik Farm in Central Saanich, BC.





# FLT Society Notable Milestones (cont'd)

## Spring 2012 (cont'd):

- Designated Carol Pickup as the inaugural FLT Society Patron in recognition of her work as a regional champion in sustainable growth and community development.
- Recognized Barbara Souther as the FLT Society Founder acknowledging her pivotal role as the initial “architect” in the creation of the Society.

## Summer 2012:

- Collaborated with the former Local Environmental Action Divas (LEAD) to support the Stop Fruit Drop Program which coordinated land/homeowners with volunteers (from LEAD and the FLT Society) to harvest fruits on properties in and adjacent to the Saanich Peninsula.





# FLT Society Notable Milestones (cont'd)

## Fall 2012:

- Made a capital improvement to Newman Farm by installing a water line in readiness for the 2013 inaugural growing season.

## Spring 2013:

- Developed a management plan for Newman Farm - honouring the history of Newman Farm while integrating current farming practices on this property.
- Commenced the inaugural growing season at Newman Farm which led to the “field to plate” initiative where the FLT Society grows, harvests and shares local vegetables to those in need at Our Place Society.





# FLT Society Notable Milestones (cont'd)

## Spring 2014:

- Installed deer fencing to protect the Newman Farm vegetable garden plot for the “field to plate” initiative with Our Place Society.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Seaward Farm to operate a small scale sheep farm on a designated portion of Newman Farm. The MoU was renewed in 2016 for another three years.

## Spring 2015:

- Published the *Resource guide for beginning small scale organic farmers in the Greater Victoria Region*. This Guide (available in hard copy and digital format) is intended for individuals who are interested in building their own small scale organic farm operation.





# FLT Society Notable Milestones (cont'd)

## Fall 2015:

- Formalized a 10 year (pro bono) license agreement with the District of Central Saanich regarding the agricultural stewardship of Newman Farm.
- Updated its organizational strategic plan for 2016-2019.
- Planted hedgerow on Newman Farm via Bartlett Tree Services. The purpose of the hedgerow was to provide year-round wildlife habitat along designated areas of Newman Farm – included working alongside the District of Central Saanich, Central Saanich Lions Club and Tree Canada on Tree Appreciation Day – planting trees and native shrubs at Newman Farm.





# FLT Society Notable Milestones (cont'd)

## 2016-2017:

- The FLT Society set up six raised garden beds at Newman Farm to expand the customized menu of food options to share with individuals in need within the Greater Victoria area.

## Spring 2017:

- Planted sunflowers, wildflowers, buckwheat and clover to support pollination activity at Newman Farm and the surrounding area. The FLT Society is a member of the Island Pollinator Initiative.
- Had a field trip to Newman Farm to study the soils at the property.
- Appointed Dr. Lenore Newman as the new FLT Society Patron.





# Newman Farm “Field to Plate” Initiative - Results

- From 2012 to present, the FLT Society has been gradually returning the 100+ year old historic Newman Farm in Saanichton, BC to active agricultural uses. Licensed area: 9.6 acres.
- From 2013 to present, the FLT Society leads the “field to plate” initiative at Newman Farm.
- Twelve raised garden beds, leased sheep operation, vegetable garden (three acres), sunflowers and bee-friendly wildflowers (two acres).





# Newman Farm “Field to Plate” Initiative - Results

- From 2014 to present, the FLT Society via the “field to plate” initiative has **shared over 48,000+ lbs. of produce with Our Place Society**
  - linking food production with a local homeless shelter and soup kitchen to aid in relieving poverty and mitigating food insecurity for marginalized populations in society.

**Did you know?** To date, the FLT Society is the largest single supplier of produce to Our Place Society’s Food Services Department from late July to early October.





Bee-friendly farming earns Newman Farm a national award

For more information, visit <https://www.centrialsaanich.ca/our-community/news/newman-farm-providing-habitat-bees>

# Lessons Learned

- **Good governance**
- **Partnerships and collaborations**
- **Community engagement and strategic communications**



# *Questions?*

## Harvesting Health and Hope



Thousands of pounds of vegetables have been harvested this summer at the District of Central Saanich's Newman Farm. Thank you to the many volunteers who assisted Farmlands Trust Society and Our Place Society with the "field to plate" initiative—the harvest was donated to Our Place to offer the less fortunate local, healthy food.



**The Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society**  
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