



Somenos Marsh WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Stewards of the Somenos Marsh Conservation Area

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN *2017 - 2022*



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Introduction

1.1 THE SOMENOS MARSH WILDLIFE SOCIETY

The Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (*The Society*) was incorporated in the province of British Columbia in 1989. The purposes of the Society, as documented in its constitution are:

- a) To operate, maintain, manage, and preserve areas for research, nature study, observance of flora and fauna, protection of wildlife habitat, instruction in natural history and other purposes of a like nature for the advancement of public education, including the establishment of a natural history interpretation center dedicated to the use of lands in the vicinity of Somenos Marsh and other places as may be decided from time to time.
- b) To use such means of communication as are deemed appropriate to create a deepened and broadened understanding of the wildlife habitat to ensure public support for its proper use and care.

1.2 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SOCIETY

The Society has achieved a long list of accomplishments over the last 28 years. Arguably the two most impressive accomplishments of all are:

1. Serving as tireless champions and watchdogs over the marsh. Without the efforts of the Society, the marsh would have fallen victim to development accruing from public apathy with the end result being the loss of this unique ecosystem.
2. Building a broad coalition of partners and stakeholders, *The Society* has been very successful in partnership building, bringing together groups including NGO's, government agencies, First Nations and property owners.

The Society has raised and expended over \$600,000 over the past 28 years on land acquisition, habitat restoration, studies and the preparation of a comprehensive management plan.

All of these projects have assisted in taking *The Society* closer to its overall objectives, which as detailed in the Somenos Management Plan (August 2001) is to position the marsh as an ecological jewel for the benefit of all future generations. While the Board of Directors are proud of their accomplishments, they are concerned about the future. They know that *The Society* must transition from a small society and board of friends to a more professional organization with appropriate bylaws, policies, mission statement and goals and objectives; an organization that can act as the acknowledged leader (by all stakeholders) for the rehabilitation, protection and management of the Somenos Marsh Conservation Area (SMCA).



GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Good Board Governance is based on the trust of *Board Members* to engage in discussion and debate offering different and differing perspectives. Key principles of trust include honour, respect and “dignity”. Behaviours consistent with these principles establish an environment of good governance and relationships between *Board Members* providing for a high level of quality of discussion, decision making and the effectiveness of *The Board* to govern.

The following statements can be seen as guidelines for all Board interactions within its functions and with all interactions and discussions with our stakeholders and partners;

- Board meetings shall operate on the principles of “honour” and “respect” and all *Board Members* will conduct themselves consistent with these principles
- All *Board Members* are expected to treat others with dignity and respect
- All *Board Members* have the right to engage in “passionate” debate however it is a debate on an opinion and not to be comments about or directed at another person or group

2.1 VISION

The vision of the *Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society* has two related but distinct components. The vision states;

- 1.** To enable the Somenos Marsh Conservation Area to become the key component of a mountaintop-to-ocean biodiversity corridor within the Somenos watershed by 2018; and
- 2.** To foster respect for the Somenos Marsh Conservation Area to be regarded by the community as a natural treasure that:
 - Provides a sustainable protected habitat for wildlife;
 - Creates a love of conservation education in present and future generations;
 - Encourages positive partnerships with stakeholders and like-minded organizations;
 - Promotes the importance of agriculture and food security; and
 - Supports a love of nature and place.

2.2 MISSION

To be effective and conscientious stewards of the *Somenos Marsh Conservation Area* through beneficial activities that preserve, restore and renew the ecosystem and through active community promotion, education and liaison with various like-minded groups with related stewardship roles.



2.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe that it is important to document the key principles that will guide us in our behaviours and actions as a society within the larger community.

There are three types of principles that are important to *The Society* in achieving its strategic goals and objectives;

1. Those that guide our *relationships* with others in the community.
2. Those that guide our roles as *governors* and stewards.
3. Those that guide our *activities* as a society and as individuals working together on common goals.

2.3 1 Relationship Principles

We will always thank and acknowledge our membership, our industry partners and other *Friends of Somenos* for their generous contributions to *The Society*.

We will develop potential project partners and “*Friends of Somenos*” with those who have a track record for, or commitment to, responsible environmental stewardship.

2.3 2 Governance Principles

We will promote respect, unity and inclusiveness among Board Members, society members, stakeholders and the general public.

We will provide timely information to our membership.

We will integrate, as appropriate, the culture, language and history of the Hul’qumi’num people in the development plans for Somenos Marsh and respect their role and responsibility. We will follow proper protocol in this regard.

We will exercise discipline in establishing, refining, executing, measuring and completing all activities in support of agreed-upon goals and objectives.

We will always be mindful of balancing our responsibility to the ecosystem and our obligation to inform and educate future generations and the general public of the benefits of good environmental stewardship.

2.3 3 Action Principles

We will undertake projects that are sustainable, provide value to future generations and minimize any negative impact on the ecosystem.

We will endeavor to build development facilities that are, whenever possible, inclusive of all generations and abilities.

We will strive to not use any pesticide-treated product in the construction of our facilities, nor will we allow the use of any pesticides within the *SMCA*.



2.4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2.4 1 Roles & Responsibilities

The *Board of Directors* play an important role in setting the direction for and monitoring the operations of *The Society*.

The responsibilities of the *Board of Directors* fall into two categories- Functional and Legal.

Functional Responsibilities

Within the bounds of its mandate, establishes the Mission Statement.

Develop the Constitution and Bylaws.

Engage in annual Strategic Planning.

Develop policies and procedures to guide the operations of *The Society*.

Monitor and control *The Society's* operations.

Encourage and acknowledge community participation and support.

Develop an annual Communications Plan.

Evaluate the Performance of *The Board* and *The Society*.

Legal Responsibilities

Always act in the best interest of *The Society*.

Ensure that decisions are within the mandate as set out in *The Societies* legal documents.

Ensure that all Board decisions are lawful.

The Society's interests always come before personal interests.

2.5 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.5 1 Composition of Board of Directors

The Board of Directors should be comprised of people with a variety of backgrounds, experience and/or expertise drawing from the following general areas;

Natural sciences (biology, ecology, limnology, environment)

Education

Management

Writing, editing, graphic design (newsletter, proposals)

Computer science (web page development and maintenance)

Construction

Accounting & Finance

Fund raising

2.5 2 Board Member – Terms of Reference

All board members must be aware of their responsibilities as summarized in Section 2.4.1 and the following specific expectations of them:

1. Attendance at monthly meetings
2. Participating in project selection
3. Participating in planning
4. Generally advancing the affairs & business of *The Society*

2.5 3 Board Members – Terms

The bylaws of *The Society* specify that *Board Members* serve one year terms. To ensure that *The Society* always has a core of experienced board members it is recommended that *The Society* revise its bylaws under the Constitution regarding membership at the next AGM.

- a. That *The Society* will have a minimum of 3 and maximum of 10 directors
- b. *Board Members* are asked to provide notice three months before the AGM if they do not intend to stand for the next term.

2.6 BOARD SELECTION PROCESS

A three-person governance/nominating committee will be struck and will meet quarterly to identify potential candidates to fill the upcoming vacant board seats. The committee will seek to find candidates from the broad range of skills and experience associated with the general areas noted in Section 2.5.1.

2.7 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Good governance includes sound financial management to provide for the needs of *The Society* on annual and ongoing basis, to achieve strategic goals and to build/maintain infrastructure and other assets of *The Society*. Funds shall be from three main sources; membership fees, donations and grants. These monies will be used to establish an Annual Operating Budget and project budgets (when applicable). Operating Budgets will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and adjusted annually. Project budgets are project and grant based, and are the responsibility of the *Program Manager*.

2.7 1 Operating Budget

The *SMWS* will establish an Annual Operating Budget for each year. Appropriate operational financial management policies and procedures will be developed and maintained. *The Board* is accountable, collectively, to ensure sound financial management of the costs and expenditures are managed throughout the year.

2.7 2 Project Budgets

The *Program Manager* will establish and monitor budgets with the help of the Treasurer for all Society projects under his/her management.

2.7 3 Society Products & Services

The products and services that will be the focus of *The Society's* financial management activities are many and diverse:

1. **Leadership** in ecological & watershed improvements, including control and eradication of invasive species.
2. **Partnering** with the members of the *SMC* to advance the conservation and rehabilitation of the *SMCA*.
3. **Facilitating education** opportunities for students, tourists and general public.
4. **Facilitating scientific research** in and around the marsh.
5. **Wildlife viewing** opportunities by establishing public viewing facilities & trails.
6. **Implementing invasive species control** and eradication efforts.
7. **Community outreach** through speaker to service clubs, schools and other organizations as requested and generally promoting awareness of the *SMCA*.
8. **Visioning** for the marsh 20 to 30 years in the future.

SOCIETY KEY RELATIONSHIPS

The *SMWS* recognizes that the most important relationship that they must maintain is with their membership and the general public. The *SMWS* also recognizes that establishing and maintaining relationships with certain key organizations is also very important. Following are some of those organizations and a capsule of their potential.

3 SOMENOS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PARTNERS

1 Cowichan Tribes

The First Nations people have lived in the Cowichan Valley for millennia. Somenos Lake and other environs were very important to the lives and culture of the First Peoples. In pre-contact times, oral history records that there were several long-houses in and around the current *SMCA*.

2 Vancouver Island Conservation Land Management Program (comprised of)

The Nature Trust of BC: a major landowner in the *SMCA* and an important Non-Government Organization conservation agency. They have funds and staff to undertake remediation and management activities in the *SMCA*.

Ducks Unlimited: leases and manages the marsh land owned by the British Columbia Forest Discovery Centre and recently acquired the bottom of Somenos Lake from Timberwest.

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations: leases and manages the Nature Trust properties and is responsible for the Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area.

3 Municipality of North Cowichan

A landowner in the *SMCA* and the local government with administrative jurisdiction over the area. The Municipality is a valuable resource and supporter of the *SMWS*.

4 Cowichan Valley Regional District

Includes the *SMCA* in their Regional Parks & Trails Strategy.

5 Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society (CVNS)

The CVNS have taken a lead role in the protection of the *SMCA* for decades, long before the formation of the *SMWS*. This is a large and active group of expert lay people who spend a lot of time in the field, year round, observing and caring for natural things.

6 Cowichan Valley Land Trust (CVLT)

Dedicated to the conservation and protection of natural areas in the Cowichan Valley. One of the main activities of the CVLT is to help private landholders protect their land through the use of conservation covenants. A conservation covenant is a voluntary, written agreement between a landholder and a conservation organization such as CVLT and would be an ideal tool for protecting the shores of Somenos Lake.



OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

7 Ministry of Highways and Transportation

Regular supporters for *SMWS* projects that border the highway.

8 City of Duncan

Like many other local governments the City of Duncan recognizes the need for a team effort to improve the environment and tackle climate change.

9 Duncan-Cowichan Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber has long supported the efforts of the *SMWS*. The members recognize the importance that the *SMCA* has, not only as a valuable ecosystem but as well as the potential to be a major hub and attraction for the growing nature tourism segment.

10 Quamichan Lake Stewardship Group

This relatively new group of concerned citizens around Quamichan Lake have racked some impressive accomplishments in a few short years. The issues and challenges affecting their lake and ecosystem largely mirror those of Somenos Lake. There are many reasons why the two groups should cement a formal working relationship on matters of mutual concern.

11 Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Association (CERCA)

CERCA is the revitalized Cowichan Estuary Preservation Society. They are very active in Cowichan Estuary restoration projects. There are many reasons why the two groups should cement a formal working relationship on matters of mutual concern.

12 Universities

The *SMCA* is in an unhealthy state and urgently needs targeted research and baseline data collection. It has much to offer post secondary institutions as a unique research location with potential for a variety of research options across a wide range of disciplines. The *SMWS*, with assistance from a natural science professional, will develop a “prospectus” of opportunities for distribution to the Vancouver Island University, University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria.

13 Landowners Adjacent To Somenos Lake

What is done to or put on the land adjacent to Somenos Lake can either have a negative or positive impact. This key stakeholder group could play an important role in the restoration of the lake and surrounding uplands.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

(5 YEARS: 2017-2022)

GOAL #1 STRIVE TO BE AN EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION THAT MAKES BEST USE OF THE TALENTS OF ITS MEMBERS
4.1

OBJECTIVE Establish a strategic planning portfolio and manage the strategic planning portfolio through an ongoing process of annual reviews and every three year AGM acceptance review of the plan.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Identify a member portfolio lead. ¹	The SMWS will engage in planned activities to establish, review and modify an ongoing living strategic plan to ensure a future orientation to the Society's key goals.	Portfolio Lead ² : President
Establish annual review cycle process.		The strategic plan priority activities are reviewed at every board meeting.
Present revised plan at AGM every three years for <i>The Society</i> approval.		2014-2017 review completed for May 9, 2017 AGM.

OBJECTIVE Identify the appropriate level of support, structure and process required to achieve *The Society's* strategic goals.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Develop governance and committee procedures for <i>The Society</i> .	The SMWS will establish key governance and working group/committee policies and procedures to facilitate activities of the groups and decision making within them.	No formal procedures have been developed to March 2017.
Board and committee members and interested society members attend governance workshops.	The SMWS will invest in sound governance and working group/committee approaches and additional governance training as required to continuously improving the board's skills and abilities.	Program Manager and some <i>Board Members</i> have attended governance workshops.

¹ | Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society, 5 Year Strategic Plan, 2012 – 2017 Pp. 10-14.

² | A member portfolio lead is either a *Society Board Director* or a *Society Member* in good standing approved by *The Board* who is willing to take the responsibility and accountability for a specific portfolio or combination of portfolios. They are accountable to report to *The Board* of *Directors* quarterly and at the Annual AGM on their respective portfolios.



OBJECTIVE Establish sound financial management practices and identify opportunities for short-term and long-term financial stability annually.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Identify a member portfolio lead	Re-establish sound financial practices.	Portfolio Lead: Cheri Beaulieu
Update and improve financial management systems.	The SMWS will have a formal mechanism to apply for and acquire funds and grants.	Accounting system has been fine tuned and monthly reporting procedures established.
Search out and apply for grants and funds to meet the strategic plan goals.		<i>Program Manager</i> is principal grant application writer.
Identify criteria for “ethical” evaluation of funding sources that <i>The Society</i> would endorse as acceptable sources.		Implementing “ <i>Friends of Somenos</i> ” fundraising and community support model for businesses, organizations and individuals who would like to support <i>The Society’s</i> work without becoming members.
		Ethical evaluation of funders is completed before applying for funds.

OBJECTIVE Establish a membership/volunteer coordination portfolio to maintain a core strength of members and volunteers by offering knowledge about the opportunities for involvement in Marsh activities.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Identify a member portfolio lead.	The SMWS will support good membership and volunteer management through maintaining open and transparent communications with its members and volunteers.	President still acting as Portfolio Lead and maintains the membership records.
Manage and coordinate membership.		<i>Program Manager</i> acts as the volunteer and member coordinator.
Manage and coordinate volunteers.		On line posting of alumni not under consideration at this time.
Develop out the concept of a Society Alumni and posting lists of alumni on the website.		

OBJECTIVE Develop a marketing plan portfolio to focus on attracting tourists to the SMCA.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Identify a member portfolio lead.	The SMWS will promote wildlife preservation and viewing as benefits of what we do.	<i>Program Manager</i> is the lead. <i>Event Coordinator</i> will take on this role as their hours increase.
Develop a marketing plan.	The SMWS will actively promote wildlife viewing as an economic generator for the Cowichan Valley.	A marketing plan has not been developed.
Continue the annual Wild Wings Nature & Arts Festival but involve more local community groups to eventually broaden the base to become a community event.		WildWings 2016 was our most successful festival yet. Wild Wings 2017 planning is currently underway with various board and committee members involved.

GOAL #2 PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND RESTORE THE ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SMCA
4.2

OBJECTIVE Establish *The Society* as a trusted leader in the management of the SMCA.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Participate on the Somenos Management Committee.	The SMWS through the activities described establish itself as a sought out partner that is a trusted leader in preserving, protecting and restoring the ecological; integrity of the SMCA.	Paul Fletcher continues to be the Chair of the SMC.
Monitor and respond to land use issues that could have a negative impact on the SMCA.		York Road Pedestrian Crossing: SMWS is in the process off determining our position in regards to the York Road pedestrian crossing considering the recent, and increasing, social impacts created by the Beverly Street dike construction. Forest Discovery Centre to Open Air Classroom bicycle trail: SMWS is in the process off determining our position in regards to the bicycle trail recognizing that that the MNC has received a grant and the municipal budget supports the project's construction. If the project goes ahead the SMWS is going to hold North Cowichan to their promise to involve <i>The Society</i> in the design of the trail.

OBJECTIVE Establish *The Society* in a broader governance leadership role for management of the properties, for example; Chair the Somenos Management Committee, facilitate the acquisition of additional important lands, and achieve legal protection of lands for conservation purposes.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Advocate for the acquisition of critical habitat and ecologically significant properties.	The <i>SMWS</i> will lobby to improve the legal status of the <i>SMCA</i> lands ensuring the ecological integrity of the area is protected for current and future generations.	The <i>SMCA</i> will soon gain additional properties thru the dike mitigation process and the <i>SMP</i> review process once completed.
Lobby for conservation zoning by Municipality of North Cowichan.	The <i>SMWS</i> will lobby to improve the legal status of the lands bordering the <i>SMCA</i> through conservation agreements.	The Somenos Management Plan (<i>SMP</i>) review supports both municipal Conservation Zoning and provincial Wildlife Management Area designation. Both processes are now underway.
Lobby for designation as Wildlife Management Area (<i>WMA</i>).		
Pursue conservation covenant agreements with <i>SMCA</i> neighbours.		The review also identifies lands that should be considered for Conservation agreements with property owners. <i>The Society</i> is hoping to partner with the Cowichan Land Trust on this endeavour.
Collaborate with partner groups (<i>Quamichan</i> , <i>CLT</i> , and <i>CERCA</i>) to raise awareness and advocate for the establishment of a biodiversity corridor from Mount Prevost/ Mount Richards to Cowichan Bay and the need to preserve it over time.		No action yet on biodiversity corridor.



OBJECTIVE Restore the lands to near-historical levels.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Determine Program lead.	The <i>SMWS</i> through active advocacy and support will encourage and promote restoration of land and water that will benefit the <i>SMCA</i> .	This goal is led by the <i>Program Manager</i> .
Encourage and promote agriculture that benefits wildlife, in particular migratory birds.		The <i>SMWS</i> continues to provide input at the <i>SMC</i> table into the agricultural practices in Somenos.
Control and eradicate invasive species.		The <i>SMWS</i> now has 2 years of funding left in the Somenos Ecosystem Stewardship Project (SESP) to tackle invasive plant species.
Improve Somenos Creek riparian corridor to enhance for fish rearing and to manage in stream invasive species (Parrot Feather).		The <i>SMWS</i> has 2 years left in the Somenos Creek Salmon Habitat Restoration Project to restore riparian habitat along the shores of Somenos Creek.
Capture stormwater effluent before it enters the Somenos system.		The <i>SMWS</i> is waiting on funding to complete the Beverly Street Stormwater Treatment Wetlands Project and continues to lobby for the old police station site to be returned to a wetland to manage stormwater effluent in Bings Creek.
Restore Richards Creek as a salmon habitat.		Richard's Creek is a priority for future stream restoration projects.



GOAL #3 4.3 CONDUCT GENERAL RESEARCH, COLLECTION OF BASELINE DATA AND ONGOING MONITORING PROGRAMS

OBJECTIVE Develop ongoing research relationship portfolio.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
<p>Identify a member portfolio lead.</p> <p>Get a formal memorandum of support from the Vancouver Island University.</p> <p>Expand the Open Air Classroom concept to encompass the entire SMCA for graduate student research.</p> <p>Identify and develop relationships with other research partners.</p> <p>Encourage and engage in defining types of data to be collected on the ecosystem of the SMCA.</p>	<p>The SMWS will be responsible for ongoing collection of baseline data to establish a record of changes within the SMCA.</p>	<p>Program Manager is portfolio lead</p>

OBJECTIVE Develop a formal mechanism to store and share information and data that is collected.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
<p>Develop an accessible library of Somenos Marsh literature and data.</p> <p>Establish a formal place to store and maintain a SMCA literature collection.</p> <p>Establish various channels of access to the Society’s materials.</p> <p>Identify other opportunities and activities for research partnerships.</p>	<p>The SMWS will establish a literature legacy of materials for the community about and in direct relationship to the Society’s activities and the SMCA.</p>	<p>Discussion at SMC re North Cowichan housing the ‘Somenos Library’.</p>

OBJECTIVE Continue water quality and salmon habitat assessment project.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Identify a member portfolio lead.	The SMWS will establish a sustainable quality monitoring program to ensure ongoing and routine monitoring and reporting occurs.	Coordinated by the <i>Program Manager</i> .
Establish a program of ongoing water quality monitoring and storm sewer effluent measurements.	The SMWS will collect, disseminate and distribute the data.	Beginning our 4th year of water quality and storm water monitoring sampling with citizen science volunteers.
Access training funds to train volunteers in appropriate methods of baseline data collection.		Partnership through affiliations with the Quamichan Lake task force looking at the increase in algae issues in Quamichan Lake.



GOAL #4 4.4 BROADEN THE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE SMCA IN THE COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

OBJECTIVE Develop a communication plan.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
<p>Identify a member portfolio lead.</p> <p>Develop a Communication Plan.</p>	<p>The SMWS will improve its communications strategy to include both passive and active means to get out information and key messages.</p>	<p>The <i>Program Manager</i> and <i>President</i> will co-share responsibilities.</p> <p>Communications Plan has not been developed.</p>
<p>Develop quarterly reports or news releases to be distributed to local media (bird counts).</p>	<p>The SMWS will have used formal mechanisms through a range of activities to communicate more effectively within the local community and more broadly to include the following 2 measures;</p>	<p>Website updated. <i>Program Manager</i> updates blogs when necessary.</p>
<p>Conduct an online user survey for suggestions to improve communications through various media channels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing quarterly reports. • Conducting an online survey. 	<p>Community targets were developed in 2012.</p>
<p>Transition to electronic distribution by encouraging all members to share their e-mail address for communications purposes.</p>		<p>Social Media presence increased. WildWings Facebook page added.</p> <p>Online survey not completed.</p>
<p>Create a 30th (2019) anniversary publication about the marsh and the Society.</p>		<p>Quarterly reports or news releases not done.</p> <p>“Bird Report Marsh Warblers” is shared weekly November to March.</p>
		<p>All members communications are via electronic media except for members who do not have electronic access. These members will continue to be served by regular mail.</p>



OBJECTIVE Encourage more site visits to inform visitors about the *SMCA*.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Invite community to participate in work party events.	The <i>SMWS</i> will develop a variety of means to engage the broader public through encouraging more visits to the <i>SMCA</i> .	Work parties are regularly scheduled and the public is invited to participate.
Use interpretive signage and publications to inform and educate visitors to the <i>SMCA</i> .	The <i>SMWS</i> will develop a variety of means to broaden the awareness and understanding of the <i>SMCA</i> .	Interpretive signage and kiosks are in place and plans for additional signage are being developed.
Encourage the public to participate in seasonal events or on an opportunity basis.		The WildWings Nature & Arts Festival continues to attract greater numbers of visitors to the <i>SMCA</i> .
Inform the community about the scientific and historic nuances of the <i>SMCA</i> .		Currently in partnership with Vancouver Island University to develop a new <i>SMCA</i> trails map.

GOAL #5 PLAN FOR, BUILD AND MAINTAIN WILDLIFE VIEWING INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN THE SMCA.
4.5

OBJECTIVE Build public access and wildlife viewing infrastructure that is safe and effective in managing visitors of all capability levels.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Identify a member portfolio lead for the oversight of the infrastructure review, planning and building.	The <i>SMWS</i> will improve its communications strategy to include both passive and active means to get out information and key messages.	Paul Fletcher is Portfolio Lead. Viewing tower being planned as 25th anniversary project to allow for complete view of the Somenos area.

OBJECTIVE Invest in assuring the ongoing viability of the Society’s assets throughout the year.

Activities	Expected Outcome	2017 Evaluation
Establish a 3-year budget for infrastructure maintenance and upkeep.	The <i>SMWS</i> will develop a variety of means to will ensure budget is available on a planned basis for small and large infrastructure maintenance projects.	Facilities account collects donations on site and at events for ongoing maintenance.
Review existing facilities semi-annually and establish priorities to address deficiencies in a timely manner.		Open Air Classroom boardwalk decking needs 2/3 of planks replaced. Replacement material has been provided at no charge. Replacement project being planned.
Identify a volunteer for maintenance.		Volunteer person for regular maintenance is needed to maintain and monitor <i>SMWS</i> properties and infrastructure.
Develop an annual inspection & maintenance plan.		Annual inspection and maintenance plan has not been developed yet.



IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY BASED TARGETS

5.1 The following community targets are associated with the SMWS's five strategic goals. They were established to help *The Society* and their partners to achieve a sustainable vibrant *Somenos Marsh Conservation Area (SMCA)*.

Goal	Community Development Targets
Strive to be an efficient, effective and sustainable organization that makes best use of the talents of its members.	Be a strong viable society that uses sound governance principles and approaches and seeks out opportunities for collaboration with other Cowichan Valley community groups.
Preserve, protect, and restore the ecological integrity of the SMCA.	Take on leadership roles within the Cowichan Valley on joint projects as part of developing an active community of societies/groups with an interest in the SMCA.
Conduct general research, collection of baseline data and ongoing monitoring programs.	Use knowledge as the energy to promote community based change from passive management to an active joint management of the SMCA.
Broaden the awareness and understanding of the SMCA in the community and beyond.	Establish the society as a key community asset that groups and individuals will support in conducting eco-friendly projects and the overall effective and efficient management of the SMCA for the good of all valley communities.
Plan for, build and maintain wildlife viewing infrastructure within the SMCA.	Carry out joint community supported projects leveraging what exists now (outdoor classroom) and what can become supporting assets (the new dike) to improve community access and appreciation of the SMCA.



8 VALUES THAT SHOULD DRIVE DEVELOPMENT IN SOMENOS MARSH

(taken from the presentation by Phil Jennings September 27, 2013 at the SMWS Public Forum)

1 Land and what is in and on it is for all people and for all creatures.

Humans can develop land, control the plant and animal domains and use natural resources for benefit and gain but they should not without serious consideration of the impacts. Open community dialogue must be used as part of a principled decision making process before any actions are taken that could exploit or harm these assets.

2 **What we do to our world in each generation affects future generations.** No generation has the right to steal opportunities to experience the things in our world from another generation. No generation should harm our world or species within it. All generations have the responsibility and authority to preserve it for all generations.

3 **We must have a sense of human ecology promoting human relationships and interactions that respect the dignity and opinions of communities, fosters a good for all solution and respects our natural assets.** All voices need to be heard when sensitive area development is being discussed.

4 **We must practice deep, responsible and active stewardship.** Conservation areas are not ours to own but a gift for us to use that we are called to protect, enjoy its variety of life, and cultivate or develop it without damaging living things within it.

5 **Care for the environment is a moral issue.** Every decision made about sensitive ecosystem lands will affect people or other living things, therefore, we must consider every decision from a known moral perspective. Options against survival of the fittest and power controls must serve as the basis of community development decision making.

6 **Communities develop an intergenerational solidarity between individuals, peoples, and political organizations.** We must preserve sensitive areas for this and future generations.

7 **Certain places in our world foster human spirituality.** Wetlands, marshes and bogs have for many centuries and by many different cultures been associated with spirituality and a sense of communion between a creator, humans, creatures and plants. We must allow these places of peace to continue to provide a sense of transcendence for those who see it in their lives and within their beliefs.

8 **We must balance solutions and decision making by more than just financial and convenience factors.** We must act consciously in our development decisions to save what we should by doing good and doing no harm. We must make the right decisions not just good ones. We must use sound policy based decision making with sensitive land use policies published by local governments and acceptable to communities. We must have full cooperation between communities and government through open and honest, fruitful and meaningful dialogue before decisions about sensitive area usage are made. We must be able to eliminate adverse effects on our wetlands and other sensitive areas when deciding how to use these lands while achieving benefits for people and the sensitive areas themselves.