



## **2019/2020 FLT Society Annual Report**

From April 2019 to April 2020, The Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society [FLT Society] engaged in protecting local farmland, protecting eco-sensitive and culturally special areas, producing food for those in need, and providing relevant educational and related public awareness opportunities.

Our charitable not-for-profit organization advanced the following suite of initiatives and related activities in 2019/2020:

### **Farmland preservation and management**

As part of our mission, the FLT Society produces food for those in need. From 2012 to present, the FLT Society has been gradually returning the 100+ year-old historic Newman Farm in Saanichton to active agricultural uses. In 2019, the FLT Society (via our Newman Farm “field to plate” initiative) grew, harvested, and donated 18,127 lbs. of organic produce to marginalized and vulnerable individuals in the Greater Victoria region (e.g., Our Place Society) – equating to \$54,711.50 – an organizational record! As part of the FLT Society’s “field to plate” initiative, the produce grown at Newman Farm is shared with people in need throughout the Greater Victoria region. This produce is primarily provided to Our Place Society for use in their meal and snack programs (e.g., preparation of entrees, soups, side vegetables, nutritious salads, and desserts). **To date, The FLT Society “field to plate” initiative (producing assorted squash, beets, carrots, onions, garlic, pears, apples, plums, turnips, arugula, kale and leeks) has grown and shared over 64,000+ lbs. of fresh, local produce.**

In 2019, via a Community Grant through the Victoria Foundation, the FLT Society team installed a new fruit orchard (approximately 30 fruit trees) at Newman Farm - included corresponding deer fencing and irrigation installation. Thank you to Le Coteau Nursery for donating the fruit trees and the Megson Fitzpatrick Insurance staff for assisting us with the fruit tree installation coordinated by the United Way of Greater Victoria (as part of the annual day of caring). The new fruit orchard provides another food source that the FLT Society can share with Greater Victoria individuals and families in need.

The FLT Society advances best management farming practices which included receiving 2019 certification from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership for completing an environmental farm plan assessment.

Bert James continues to provide valuable farm management services at Newman Farm - managing the various daily operational duties and responsibilities for the historic farm, the FLT Society vegetable garden plot and raised garden beds, and sunflower/wildflower field. Bert James and FLT Society volunteers participated in planting and harvesting produce on the property as well as winterizing the vegetable plot.

As a charitable not-for-profit organization, the FLT Society remains committed to making the Newman Farm property a productive farm and fulfilling our mission to promote the economic viability of farmland in the Greater Victoria area through our “field to plate” and bee-friendly

farming “field of dreams” initiatives, while continuing public awareness and educational programs. We have been happy to work with the Island Pollinators Initiative to continue growing pollinator-friendly plants and crops for the local native bee population. In 2019, via a Saanich Peninsula Community Foundation grant, the FLT Society installed a lavender garden to expand our bee-friendly farming program.

In 2019, Carol Pickup (FLT Society Chair), Brian MacDonald (FLT Society Treasurer) and Dr. Steve Grossnickle (FLT Society Board Director) participated in a series of Select Standing Committee meetings on the Newman Farm Agricultural Program and presented recommendations to the District of Central Saanich Council. Zeb King (District of Central Saanich Councillor) chaired the meetings with support from the District of Central Saanich Community Services Manager, Britt Burnham. Megan Misovic (Central Saanich citizen) also participated in said meetings.

### **Financial**

Many thanks to the following individuals and organizations who supported the FLT Society in 2019-2020 with regard to farmland preservation and local food security protection activities in the Greater Victoria region, in particular, our work at Newman Farm in the form of financial and in-kind donations: Bartlett Tree Experts; Center for Plant Health; Coast Capital Savings (Saanichton Branch); District of Central Saanich; individual FLT Society supporters; Megson Fitzpatrick; Peninsula Agricultural Commission; Peninsula Co-op; Saanich Peninsula Community Foundation; Stantec; United Way of Greater Victoria; Vancity Savings; Victoria Foundation.

We continue to have a good working relationship with the District of Central Saanich and many other community partners. A special acknowledgement to Britt Burnham (Manager of Community Services, District of Central Saanich) and District of Central Saanich staff members for their consistent support and assistance. The FLT Society Patron and Board of Directors are appreciative of the District of Central Saanich granting our charitable not-for-profit society with a permissive tax exemption. The permissive tax exemption provides certainty to the FLT Society as a means of advancing our farmland management activities at Newman Farm.

### **Communications and public outreach**

In 2019, the FLT Society led a series of volunteer work parties, walkabouts, and guided tours of Newman Farm which brings the practical component of our work to strategic partners, collaborators, funders, and the broader public.

The FLT Society team was delighted by the opportunity to be profiled in local media (*Peninsula News Review* and CHEK News) about our organizational mandate and mission, particularly our agricultural stewardship and charitable “field to plate” initiative at the historic Newman Farm. Check out the [Peninsula News Review article](#) and [CHEK News video](#).

In fall 2019, the FLT Society was recognized as part of the Our Place Society Donor Appreciation Day at Shoal Centre. A poster/plaque is permanently posted in the Our Place Society Food Services area in recognition of the FLT Society “field to plate” initiative.

For more information about the FLT Society, visit

- FLT Society website: [www.farmlandstrust.org](http://www.farmlandstrust.org)
- FLT Society Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/The-Farmlands-Trust-Society-190493347776568/>
- FLT Society Twitter site: <https://twitter.com/FarmlandsTrust>

### **Looking to the future**

During 2020/2021, the FLT Society Board of Directors are proposing the following activities:

- ***Maintain Newman Farm program operations – includes diversification of crops.*** As part of achieving this mission, the FLT Society has a commitment to provide long-term agricultural stewardship (2015 – 2025) on a three-acre portion of the historic Newman Farm located in Central Saanich, British Columbia. In 2020, the FLT Society team will be installing a series of raised-bed herb gardens with funding provided by the Peninsula Co-op and Vancity Savings.
- ***Support the CRD Foodlands Trust concept.*** Under the leadership of FLT Society Chair Carol Pickup, the FLT Society Board remains supportive of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Foodlands Trust concept.
- ***Maintain our irrigation management*** (includes repair, maintenance and updates to our irrigation line and watering systems to support optimal food growth). The FLT Society maintains the water line on the designated portion of Newman Farm that we manage. We also monitor any risks of deficiencies in said infrastructure throughout the growing season particularly as we expand our vegetable plots each year based on demand and interest.
- ***Continue our pollination activities at Newman Farm.*** This includes planting sunflowers, wildflowers, and other bee-friendly flowers in the westerly field next to our vegetable garden plot to support pollination activities at the Farm and surrounding area.

***Many thanks to our 2019/2020 FLT Society Patron, board members, founder, advisors, members-at-large, farm manager, webmaster, Newman Farm volunteers, and supporters for your ongoing commitment to regional farmland preservation and food security protection in Greater Victoria!***