



## **2022/2023 FLT Society Annual Report**

From April 2022 to March 2023, 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 2022/2023:

### **Farmland preservation and management**

The FLT Society is a charitable not-for-profit organization and a recognized model for sustainable farming and food redistribution in the Greater Victoria region, using national award-winning certified pollinator-friendly farm practices.

Our charity's mission is to enhance farming capacity in the Greater Victoria region 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.

In 2022/2023, we focused our initiatives on producing food for those in need and protecting eco-sensitive areas.

From 2012 to present, the FLT Society is the agricultural steward of the historic Newman Farm in Saanichton, BC. As a charitable not-for-profit society, the FLT Society continues to gradually return the 100+ year-old historic Newman Farm in Saanichton to active agricultural uses.

The FLT Society's "field to plate" initiative at the historic Newman Farm is a provider of food for vulnerable populations—as part of the Greater Victoria food supply chain for food insecure populations. This is part of our long-term commitment to provide agricultural stewardship (2015 – 2025) on a three-acre portion of the Farm.

During the 2022 farm season, we continued to focus our efforts on our "field to plate" initiative (producing apples, assorted herbs, assorted squash, beets, cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, garlic, kale, leeks, lettuce, onions, pears and turnips). In spite of a cold and wet spring which meant a late start followed by a warm and very dry summer, we grew, harvested and shared 12,912 lbs., worth over \$75,000 of fresh local produce.

**From 2014 – 2022, our cumulative "field to plate" initiative total has reached 102,684 lbs. of produce grown, harvested and shared with food insecure populations in the Greater Victoria region, worth \$315,660.98**

The primary recipient of the “field to plate” initiative is [Our Place Society](#)—linking food production with a local homeless shelter and regional meal and snack program that serves the Pandora Street dining facility location and supportive housing sites across Greater Victoria to aid in relieving poverty and mitigating food insecurity for marginalized populations in society.

Since 2014, the FLT Society supplies produce to Our Place Society throughout the summer and fall – estimated 1,200+ daily meals and snacks.

We installed additional raised garden boxes and now have over 30 raised garden beds. This provides more growing space at the Farm which extends our “field to plate” initiative into the fall season each year.

We also installed a small greenhouse that allows us to start young plants at the beginning of the growing season in a semi-controlled environment.

In recognition of the important role that trees play in aesthetics, air quality, soil and water conservation and protection of the environment, a 30+ fruit tree orchard at Newman Farm continues to flourish with in-kind support from Bartlett Tree Experts who maintain the health of the orchard. The orchard provides another food source to share with vulnerable populations in the Greater Victoria region.

Also, every year at the Newman Farm, we plant a portion of our lands into a bee-friendly meadow; including sunflowers, wildflowers, buckwheat and clover. This beautiful display of flowers is an attractant for birds and bees from the local agricultural lands to support pollination activity. A series of lavender beds and assorted pollinator-friendly flowers and crops are also thriving as part of our national award winning certified bee-friendly farming program.

**The FLT Society’s licensed area of Newman Farm is certified** by the [Canadian Agricultural Partnership](#) for completing an environmental farm plan assessment, is a certified bee-friendly farm via [Pollinator Partnership](#) and is a certified wildlife-friendly habitat via the [Canadian Wildlife Federation](#).

### **COVID-19 pandemic**

Farm operation and COVID-19 safety protocols continue to be in place at Newman Farm with volunteers (employers and citizens in the Greater Victoria region) who support the Newman Farm Manager and his farm assistants with spring planting, summer garden maintenance, fall harvesting and winterizing operations.

### **Financial**

Many thanks to the following individuals and organizations who supported the FLT Society in 2022-2023 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/or in-kind donations: Arbutus Grove Nursery, Bartlett Tree Experts, BC Housing, Coast Capital Savings, Farm to Garden Organics, Flagstone Fund through the Victoria Foundation, FLT Society donors/supporters (individuals and families), Gobind Farms, Integrity Sales and Distributors, Michell’s Farm, Nature’s Path, Peninsula Co-op, Provincial Employees Community Services Fund, Royal Bank of Canada, Saanichton Farm, Sea Cider, Thrifty Foods, United Way

of Southern Vancouver Island, Vancity Savings, Victoria Foundation (Vital Victoria Fund), West Coast Seeds, and Western Forest Products.

The FLT Society Board of Directors extends our sincere appreciation to the District of Central Saanich for granting our charitable not-for-profit society with a permissive tax exemption. The permissive tax exemption provides our charity with certainty as a means of advancing our agricultural stewardship activities at Newman Farm.

### **Governance**

In summer 2022, [Robert \(Bob\) Maxwell became the FLT Society Patron](#) for a two-year appointment. Bob has previously served as a long-standing volunteer community advisor to the FLT Society.

Thank you to [Dr. Lenore Newman](#) who completed her multi-year appointment with the FLT Society in 2022 as the outgoing Patron. Lenore's family history with the historic Newman Farm and agricultural stewardship expertise was appreciated over the past five years.

Brian MacDonald has been generously volunteering his time with the FLT Society since 2014/2015 – as a FLT Society supporter, Newman Farm volunteer, and then serving on the FLT Society Board of Directors (as Treasurer from 2017 to 2023). After volunteering for close to a decade with the FLT Society, Brian is stepping down from the role of FLT Society Treasurer.

Brian, thanks for sharing your time, energy and financial skills with us! We are glad that Brian will continue to be a FLT Society team member in his new role as a volunteer community advisor.

We extend a warm welcome to Cindy Petrowski who is joining the FLT Society Board of Directors as the incoming Treasurer. Cindy brings depth and breadth in volunteerism and community development complementing her accounting/financial background.

### **Communications and public outreach**

For more information about the FLT Society, visit

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

### **Looking to the future**

During 2023/2024, the FLT Society Board is proposing the following activities:

- **“Field to Plate” Initiative - Crop Production Program.** The FLT Society is sustaining its licensed area cultivated by continuing to (1) diversify crops, which includes purchasing seeds and gardening equipment; (2) expand the range of produce that we grow in the

coming years; (3) expand the raised garden bed program; and (4) maintain the FLT Society fruit orchard.

- **“Field of Dreams” and Agricultural Best Practices - Certified Bee-Friendly Farming/Pollinator and Certified Wildlife-Friendly Habitat Program Activities.** This includes continuing to offer forage – providing good nutrition for native bees on approximately 30% of the licensed area. To conduct and maintain this program requires planting a continuous bloom of different flowering plants throughout the growing season, especially in early spring, offering a clean water source for bees, providing a variety of habitats for nesting and mating utilizing hedgerows, natural brush, and buffer strips, and practicing Integrated Pest Management – using no chemicals on the Farm. This program requires an annual maintenance and revitalization program to operate these activities using pollinator-friendly and wildlife-friendly habitat wise practices.
- **Irrigation Management.** Repair, maintain and update our irrigation line and watering systems at Newman Farm to support optimal food growth (includes our fruit orchard, raised garden boxes) and our national award-winning certified bee-friendly farming practices. The FLT Society maintains the water line on the designated portion of Newman Farm that we manage, and we also monitor any risks of deficiencies in the irrigation system infrastructure throughout the growing season. Irrigation line upgrading supports our “field to plate” initiative along with our award-winning certified bee-friendly farm and wildlife-friendly habitat practices on our three-acre+ Farm.
- **Volunteerism.** We will continue our small and medium scale seasonal volunteer work parties at Newman Farm during the 2023 farm season with local citizens and employers.

***Many thanks to our 2022/2023 FLT Society Founder, Patron, Board of Directors, Community Advisor, Volunteers-at-Large, Farm Manager, Farm Assistants, Landscaper, Webmaster/Social Media Specialist, Newman Farm Volunteers, Donors and Funders, and Supporters for your unwavering commitment to regional farmland preservation and local food security protection in Greater Victoria!***