

STORY OF IMPACT: THE FARMLANDS TRUST SOCIETY – OUR VISIT TO NEWMAN FARM

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Time is a funny thing! Sometimes it passes by so quickly and other times so slowly! It felt like such a short time ago when PECSF HQ engaged with donors, volunteers and champions during our ThoughtExchange in the spring. You expressed how important it is to hear about the impact that giving through PECSF can have in your communities. We listened.

Recently, members of PECSF HQ and the Greater Victoria Regional Committee visited Newman Farm in Saanichton, where members of the [Farmlands Trust \(Greater Victoria\) Society](#) (FLT) are the agricultural stewards. During our visit we learned more about the FLT Society's history and achievements. We were grateful for the chance to meet them in person and see their labour of love, growing assorted fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers.



What is the Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society?

The FLT Society's mission is to facilitate Greater Victoria farmland preservation and to enhance food security to benefit current and future generations. After having the chance to support the preservation of Madrona Farm, located in the Blenkinsop Valley, the FLT Society was grateful to get more involved with the historic Newman Farm. The farm was willed to the District of Central Saanich following the passing of John Newman in 2003, with the stipulation that the land be used for a park and/or organic farming.

The FLT Society's success comes from developing unique partnerships with other organizations and not-for-profits, and from incredible support from local volunteers. Their [Field to Plate](#) Program was a new addition to the 2020 to 2022 [Greater Victoria Fund Supported Pool](#) (FSP).

This unique initiative is based on engagement between Our Place Society (OPS) and the FLT Society. OPS is consulted about what gets planted at Newman Farm, so they can maximize the benefits of the donated organic produce. This allows OPS to meet the needs of vulnerable citizens who access their regional meal and snack programs, dining facilities and local drop-in facilities daily. The focus on planting, growing and harvesting healthy organic produce helps people who are in need in Greater Victoria, aiding in relieving poverty and addressing food insecurity.

Our visit to Newman Farm



When we arrived on the farm, we were at once humbled by the incredible work taking place. We visited while the produce and flowers were still in full bloom. What had once been a vacant field was now rows of beautiful, lush vegetables, fruit and flowers. The work necessary to tend this land, from planting to weeding, pruning and harvesting is carried out by a part-time farm manager, part-time farm assistant and volunteers contributing their time and effort.

As PECSF champions, many of you know that food brings people together to create meaningful and lifelong connections, whether it's a chili cook-off, a soup fundraiser or a community farm like Newman Farm.

Meeting the farmers



During our visit we had the opportunity to meet Dr. Natasha Caverley, Secretary of the FLT Society Board of Directors, and Bert James, FLT Society Newman Farm Manager. They shared their passions and lessons learned from the Newman's legacy and working on the farm. As a retired farmer from Ontario and a long-time neighbour of the Newmans, Bert got involved with the recovery and transformation of the property.

Bert's sunflower 'field of dreams' garden is a proud accomplishment, along with the other work he does aiming to increase pollinators in the area. This goal led to a partnership with Sea Cider, the closest apiary. The farm is alive and producing beautiful, healthy fruit and vegetables because of his passion and work.

Newman Farm has been recognized worldwide as a Certified Bee Friendly Farm by the [Pollinator Partnership](#). In 2018, the FLT Society was awarded the Pollinator Advocate Award for

Canada from the Pollinator Partnership, the world's largest organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of pollinators.

Natasha and Bert share their story as far and wide as possible, promoting their approach as an easily adoptable model for other organic farms to follow. Their hope is that others feel inspired to try it as well.

Their story proves that you can have a big idea, and people will join you to create an even bigger impact. That community can come together to create opportunities. That you are not alone.

Contribute to a better tomorrow with PECSF



We share this story to remind you of the impact your PECSF donations make, and to think about the upcoming PECSF campaign. We each have the chance to contribute to a better tomorrow with the choices we make today. Whether it's in the planting of a single row of seeds or having the courage to nurture new ideas and create positive change, taking the time to connect, listen and support each other can make an impact.

The theme for this year's PECSF campaign is recovery. This past year held incredible challenges, but we as a public service and community will recover because of the ways we come together. What better way to think about recovery than by the work, time and patience involved in successfully planting, tending to and harvesting something so meaningful, and then coming back to do it again every season.

Plan to succeed

If a PECSF campaign were like a season on a farm, success would require:

- Having a vision and a plan: knowing what you want to grow and why.
- Creating a team, sharing the load with as many people as possible and setting realistic expectations. For example, by keeping it simple and focusing on easy payroll deductions in any amount!
- Learning about your tools! Check out the new [resources](#) PECSF HQ created to help you and [reach out](#) for advice if you need it!
- Focusing on the right things, such as growth and development, and knowing the results will come! For PECSF, this means focusing on your people and impact through connection and engagement, and respecting people's diverse choices, ways of giving and causes that matter to them.

We hope sharing these stories reminds you of the impact you can make. [Find out more](#) about the Fund Supported Pools and charitable organizations you can choose to support in your region.

This year's campaign kicks off with our virtual launch event on September 28 and runs until November 5.

Stay tuned for more blogs and information!

