



Sale of UBC farmland ensures haven for Island wildlife

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(SURREY, BC) – The announcement that ownership of an exquisite 1,750-acre parcel of Vancouver Island agricultural land will be passed from the hands of university researchers into those of an experienced farm family, came as good news to conservation groups.

“Agriculture is essential to wildlife,” says Les Bogdan, Manager of Conservation for DUC, Coast Region. “Without agriculture, wildlife would suffer significantly. So to have this amount of agricultural land available for fish and other wildlife habitat, along with a landowner who agrees to participate with conservation on his land, is a great outcome.”

The Oyster River Research Farm near Campbell River was recently sold by the University of BC (UBC) to the Evans family of Evansdale Farms. The Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) and The Nature Trust of BC are also pleased with the sale because the Evans family has demonstrated their interest in long-term conservation agreements that protect salmon, waterfowl, and other wildlife, through the use of permanent covenants.

Already the Evans family has a five-year successful partnership working with DUC on the Comox Bay Farm, adjacent to the Oyster River on Vancouver Island. The family has been faithful to an interest and support of traditional soil-based farming and wildlife habitat on their leased and owned lands, says Bogdan.

“With proper planning this farm could become a legacy for biodiversity due to the variety of its landscape, the natural climate, and the wildlife species living there,” says Bogdan.

The farm remains under the Agricultural Land Reserve, and has been home to the Oyster River Fish Hatchery, educational facilities, and community walking trails for many years.

“The Pacific Salmon Foundation has supported salmon enhancement and habitat restoration projects at the farm by working with the local stewardship community over many years,” says Paul Kariya of PSF. “In fact this year a new spawning channel was opened thanks to a group effort by private donors, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Oyster River Enhancement society and our organization.”

“We are pleased to see the Evans family as the successful buyer of this important conservation property,” says Doug Walker, Executive Director of the Nature Trust. “because the family has indicated their willingness to work with conservation groups to enhance the fish and wildlife resources of an incredible property.”

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