



Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to you today with urgency, clarity, and also hope!

The **Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre** has long been a cherished place for environmental education, welcoming both youth and adults, and located in the heart of the Cowichan Estuary, one of British Columbia's most vital and sensitive ecosystems and an International Bird Area. The centre serves as a bridge between science, Indigenous knowledge, and local action. We educate youth, support stewardship initiatives, host summer camps and school programs, but most importantly, inspire a deeper relationship with the natural world.

But today, I share a hard truth: we do not have core funding, and without it, our ability to keep the Centre's doors open is in jeopardy.

Why This Matters

Each year, we operate on a shoestring budget of just ~**\$110,000**. That modest amount covers everything - from staffing and educational programming to building maintenance and community engagement. Despite this, our impact is outsized:

- Thousands of students and visitors learn about the estuary's role in biodiversity and climate resilience each year.
- We host hands-on programs, guided walks, events and workshops for all ages.
- We work with Indigenous partners to honour and uplift cultural and ecological knowledge.
- We provide opportunities for youth employment, skills training, and leadership.

And yet, year after year, we patch together grants, donations, and project-specific funding, which is never guaranteed and always uncertain year to year.

The Ask

We are looking for a new partnership, investor, or coalition of committed donors to help us secure sustainable core funding. Your contribution, whether one-time or multi-year, would provide critical stability and allow us to focus on what we do best: education, stewardship, and community engagement.

Imagine what we could do with reliable, unrestricted funding:

- Expand our school programs and nature camps.
- Train and retain passionate, skilled staff.
- Maintain and grow our visitor facilities and grow as a "nature hub"
- Respond nimbly to environmental challenges in the estuary.
- Continue and grow our support for Cowichan Tribes stewardship initiatives

How You Can Help

1. **Make a direct contribution** toward our core funding goal.
2. **Introduce us** to philanthropists, foundations, or businesses who care about conservation, education, or climate resilience.
3. **Share this letter** with those in your network who may be in a position to help.

We are a small organization that has impacted many families in the area. We don't have the safety net of endowments or government operating grants. What we do have is vision, integrity, and deep community roots.

We are ready to scale our impact. We just need the stability to do so.

If you, or someone you know, has the capacity and the heart to support this work, please reach out to me directly. Let's start a conversation about how you can be part of securing the future of the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre.

With respect and hope,

Sierra Harvey

Executive Director

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