





# Newman Farm Update—Calendar Year 2023

The following summary report is from The Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society which outlines our key activities at Newman Farm during the period of the calendar year of 2023.

The Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society

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## Dedication: In Memory of David A. Clark (1934 - 2023)



In November 2023, the FLT Society Board of Directors sadly loss an esteemed member of the FLT Society team. David Clark passed away in November 2023. He was a founding board member of the FLT Society from circa 2007/2008 to May 2023. David served in various volunteer FLT Society positions: FLT Society Board Director, Vice-Chair and Co-Chair. His longest standing role with the FLT Society Board of Directors was in the position of FLT Society Vice-Chair.

Often referred to as the "FLT Society's elder statesman", David provided strategic guidance and wise counsel to the FLT Society team throughout his tenure on the FLT Society Board of Directors.

The FLT Society Board of Directors dedicates the 2023 Newman Farm report in his honour.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to David for sharing his time and vast array of knowledge, skills and abilities with the FLT Society team.

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## 1. Organizational Background

Founded in 2008, <u>The Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society</u> [FLT Society] is a charitable not-for-profit organization based in Saanichton, BC—Registered Charity #80839 3359 RR0001.

Our <u>mission</u> is to enhance farming capacity in the Greater Victoria area 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.

The FLT Society is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of Greater Victoria community members who have a diverse array of competencies that enrich the planning and implementing of farmland preservation and local food security activities.

The FLT Society team is also comprised of an honorary Patron, Founder, volunteer community advisor, part-time farm manager, part-time farm assistants, contracted landscaper and contracted webmaster/social media specialist.

The FLT Society is a recognized model for sustainable farming and food re-distribution in the Greater Victoria region, using national award-winning certified pollinator-friendly, sustainable farming and green gardening practices.



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## 2. Agricultural Stewardship at Newman Farm



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

#### **Interesting Facts**

The <u>District of Central Saanich</u> is the landowner of the historic Newman Farm in Saanichton, BC.

In May 2012, the FLT Society signed a <u>three year Letter of Understanding with the District of Central Saanich</u> to serve as stewards of a designated portion of Newman Farm off Central Saanich Road.

From October 2015 to present, the FLT Society is advancing a <u>10-year license agreement</u> (October 2015 – October 2025) with the District of Central Saanich to continue the Society's agricultural stewardship of the historic Newman Farm.

The *License to occupy for agricultural park purposes* agreement facilitates the future long term stewardship of the historic Newman Farm. Please refer to Appendices A and B for an excerpt of said agreement and a map of the current licensed area.

During this time, the FLT Society team installed an irrigation line and deer fencing; pruned, ploughed, planted, harvested produce at the historic Farm; installed a new fruit orchard; installed 30+ raised garden beds (for assorted vegetables and herbs); installed a small greenhouse, gazebo and tool shed as part of the FLT Society's "field to plate" initiative—where fresh produce grown and harvested at Newman Farm is shared with Our Place Society, Nil,tuo Child and Family Services, Tsartlip First Nation and Tsawout First Nation.

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As a pollinator and agricultural advocate, the FLT Society engages in certified environmental, pollinator-friendly, wildlife-friendly sustainable farming and green gardening practices—includes the "field of dreams" sunflower and wildflower field; installation and maintenance of a pollinator garden; installation and maintenance of hedgerows.

As part of the regional food supply chain, via the "field to plate" initiative, the FLT Society grows, harvests and re-distributes fresh local produce at Newman Farm to food insecure populations in the Greater Victoria region (Sooke to Sidney, BC). This initiative supports food security and dignified access to food.



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## 3. 2023 Activities

In 2023, we focused our initiatives on producing food for those in need and protecting ecosensitive areas.

### FLT Society "Field to Plate" Initiative



- The FLT Society's "field to plate" initiative at the historic Newman Farm is a provider of food for food insecure populations —as part of the Greater Victoria food supply chain. This is part of our long-term commitment to provide agricultural stewardship (2015— 2025) on a three-acre licensed portion of the Farm.
- With our on-going focus on the FLT Society "field to plate" food redistribution initiative (producing apples, assorted squash, beets, blackberries, cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, garlic, kale, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, pears and turnips), we had an extended farm season and record breaking year for our production at Newman Farm.
  - In 2023, the FLT Society grew, harvested and shared 26,736 lbs., worth \$173,200.75 of fresh local produce.
- From 2014 2023, our cumulative "field to plate" initiative total has reached 129,420 lbs. of produce grown, harvested and shared in the Greater Victoria region with recipient organizations, worth \$488,861.73
- The FLT Society continues to lead the "field to plate" food redistribution initiative at Newman Farm where our FLT Society team and local volunteers grow, harvest and share local produce to those in need at <u>Our Place Society</u> and their supportive housing sites across the Greater Victoria region in support of their meal and snack programs (for example, preparation of entrees, soups, side vegetables, nutritious salads, snacks and desserts).

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- In 2023, the FLT Society "field to plate" initiative expanded donations of food produce at Newman Farm to Nil, tuo Child and Family Services Society, Tsartlip First Nation and Tsawout First Nation in support of food security protection and reconciliation.
- In fall 2023, we also installed an additional tool shed for clean, dry storage of farm supplies.



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 expert guidance and support from Bartlett Tree
Experts who maintain the health of the orchard. The orchard provides another food
source to share with food insecure populations in the Greater Victoria region.



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#### **Certified Farm Practices**

- The FLT Society's licensed area of Newman Farm is certified by the <u>Canadian</u>
   <u>Agricultural Partnership</u> for completing an environmental farm plan assessment, is a
   certified bee-friendly farm via <u>Pollinator Partnership</u> and is a certified wildlife-friendly
   habitat via the <u>Canadian Wildlife Federation</u>.
- Every year at Newman Farm, we plant a portion of our lands into a pollinator-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 <u>national award-winning certified bee-friendly</u> farming program.



 As part of our certified wildlife-friendly habitat practices, we have bird baths on site at the Farm, provide shelter for wildlife (for example, potted plants, shrubs and rock pile), use green gardening practices (for example, limited water use via irrigation on timers) and use sustainable (gardening) practices (for example, integrated pest management, invasive plant removal, use of native plants).



The FLT Society's licensed area of Newman Farm is a certified bee-friendly farm via the Pollinator Partnership Bee-Friendly Farming Program.

The FLT Society's Bee-Friendly Farming Program was recently re-certified at the historic Newman Farm for the next three years (2023 – 2026).

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The FLT Society is also a certified wildlife-friendly habitat via the Canadian Wildlife Federation.



Canadian Wildlife Federation would like to recognize

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for outstanding effort in helping wildlife through the creation of habitat



#### **Farm Management and Operations**

- The 2023 farm season was marked by dry, drought-like weather in summer/fall 2023 which contributed to the season extending until late November 2023. With an extended farm season, this assisted us in having a record breaking year for our production at Newman Farm.
- The FLT Society continues to lead the "field to plate" food redistribution initiative at the
  historic Newman Farm in Saanichton, BC where our FLT Society team and local
  volunteers grow, harvest and share local produce to those in need at Our Place Society
  and their multiple supportive housing sites across the Greater Victoria region in support
  of their meal and snack programs.

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- In 2023, the FLT Society "field to plate" initiative expanded donations of food produce at Newman Farm to Nil, tuo Child and Family Services Society, Tsartlip First Nation and Tsawout First Nation in support of food security protection and reconciliation.
- Many thanks to Kael Markle for his continued landscaping work at Newman Farm which greatly aids in blackberry management, drainage clearing and the overall aesthetics of the three-acre farm.
- Since 2016, Bert James has been the inaugural Newman Farm Manager who annually oversaw the operations of the historic Farm which included the FLT Society "field to plate" initiative and national award-winning certified bee-friendly farming program. As part of Bert's farm management team, Guy Saplywy provided farm labour assistance at Newman Farm. At the end of 2023, Bert and Guy both announced their retirement from the Newman Farm Manager and Farm Labour Assistant roles respectively. Bert will be pursuing more travel in 2024 and he also plans to spend more time with his family. Thanks to Bert and Guy for their commitment and dedication to advancing the FLT Society's mandate at Newman Farm.



**Bert James** 



Guy Saplywy

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#### **Volunteerism at Newman Farm**



- In 2023, the FLT Society hosted and supervised various small and medium scale seasonal volunteer work parties at the Farm. Local employers, families and friends, and citizens at large share their time and skills with the FLT Society.
- Key volunteer activities include preparing seeds and starter plants, managing weeds, organic fertilizing of plants, tidying up the two vegetable garden plots and 30+ raised garden beds at the Farm to support optimal growth; boxing and packing produce for donation to FLT Society "field to plate" initiative recipients; and winterizing the Farm.



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#### **Educational Walkabouts and Guided Tours**





 From July 2023 to September 2023, the FLT Society team led a series of walkabouts and guided tours of Newman Farm which brings an experiential component of our charitable agricultural work with strategic partners, collaborators and funders.

Also, the <u>District of Central Saanich hosted open house events in August 2023</u> for the public at large to visit Newman Farm.

- In 2023, the FLT Society Team was in the news about our charitable agricultural stewardship work at Newman Farm:
  - <u>Celebrating the success of the Farmlands Trust at Newman Farm in Central Saanich</u>

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## **Funding and Related Charitable Donations**



- Many thanks to the following individuals and organizations who supported the FLT Society in 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
  - o 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
  - Longview Farms
  - Michell's Farm
  - PBX Engineering
  - o Peninsula Co-op
  - Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
  - o Sea Cider
  - United Way of Southern Vancouver Island
  - Vancity Savings
  - Victoria Foundation (Vital Victoria Fund)
  - West Coast Seeds
  - Western Coast Financial
  - Western Forest Products

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 The FLT Society Board of Directors continues to extend our gratitude 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 registered charity with certainty as a means of advancing our multi-year agricultural stewardship activities at Newman Farm.



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# 4. Cumulative Experience

The effects of high food inflation and food insecurity/affordability continue to be major issues associated with rising food prices in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

- The FLT Society "field to plate" food re-distribution initiative assists Our Place Society
  and its expanding regional meal and snack programs which include the 919 Pandora
  Avenue dining facilities and multiple supportive housing sites across Greater Victoria to
  aid in relieving poverty, mitigating food insecurity and providing access to nutritious food
  to low-income, food insecure and unhoused populations in the Greater Victoria region.
- Furthermore, in 2023, the FLT Society expanded its "field to plate" collaboration by working with and alongside Nil,tuo Child and Family Services Society and Tsawout First Nation in support of food security protection and reconciliation.
- The following table provides an overview of annual weight and dollar value equivalent for food grown and harvested as part of the FLT Society's "field to plate" initiative at Newman Farm.

#### FLT Society Newman Farm "Field to Plate" Initiative Summary (2013/2014 – 2023)

Year	Amount/Weight (in lbs.)	Value (in \$)
2014	3,500 lbs.	\$ 7,005.00
2015	2,400 lbs.	\$ 4,900.00
2016	7,580 lbs.	\$16,005.00
2017	15,830 lbs.	\$32,373.75
2018	17,585 lbs.	\$38,147.60
2019	18,127 lbs.	\$54,711.50
2020	7,369 lbs.	\$24,353.79
2021	17,381 lbs.	\$62,685.50
2022	12,912 lbs.	\$75,478.84
2023	26,736 lbs.	\$173,200.75
TOTAL TO DATE	129,420 lbs.	\$488,861.73

#### Notes:

1. 2013/2014 was the pilot testing phase of the FLT Society's "field to plate" initiative at Newman Farm.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> <u>https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/sites/agrifood/Canada%27s%20Food%20Price%20Report%202023\_Digital.pdf</u>



- 2. 2014 2019 heavily focused on assorted squash as the "menu options" for food grown at Newman Farm based on consultations between FLT Society representative(s) and Our Place Society.
- 3. Newman Farm 10 year license agreement signed in 2015 between the District of Central Saanich (Newman Farm landowner) and the FLT Society (licensee). As such, the FLT Society is the agricultural steward of a licensed area of Newman Farm from 2015 to 2025.
- 4. In 2016, Bert James was retained to provide FLT Society Newman Farm management services. Bert's work continued from 2016 to 2023.
- 5. From 2020 to present, Our Place Society and the FLT Society Newman Farm Manager updated the "menu options" to diversify produce grown at Newman Farm based on the expanded regional meal and snack programs offered by Our Place Society across the Greater Victoria region.
- 6. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. The FLT Society's program aligns with BC Government pandemic essential services: service provider for vulnerable populations and provider of food and agriculture as part of the Greater Victoria food supply chain for marginalized peoples. Access to and from Newman Farm by volunteers during the 2020 and 2021 farm season was restricted due to provincial health orders on safe distancing, etc. Farm operation protocols and COVID-19 protocols were established in adherence with provincial health orders which facilitated the FLT Society to continue safely operating during the 2020 and 2021 farm seasons. Part time farm labour assistance was coordinated by the FLT Society to support the FLT Society Newman Farm Manager during the 2020 and 2021 farm seasons.
- 7. From 2013 to present, the FLT Society team recognizes and endeavours to adapt to the annual effects of extreme weather conditions and related climate change considerations. In particular, drought and windy conditions at Newman Farm during the annual farm season placed stress on the soil, produce, and pollinator-friendly plants. In 2021, British Columbia experienced a "heat dome" in late June/early July 2021 with an extended drought for the remainder of summer 2021.
- 8. Canada's Food Price Report (11th Edition) and subsequent reports highlighted the increased cost in food in Canada for the year 2021 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the entire agricultural food supply chain as well as the growing impacts of climate change on agriculture and related farming practices in Canada.
- 9. From 2013 to present, harvesting calculations with corresponding market value price are carried out as follows:

For produce weight calculations and interrater reliability of said calculations, FLT Society representative(s) and Brian Cox (Our Place Society) calculate same. From 2020 to present, a minimum of two FLT Society representatives engage in weight calculations for the weekly harvest tallies.

For market value calculations, a minimum of two FLT Society representatives calculate same based on the FLT Society Farmer Resource Guide and annual southern Vancouver Island and/or BC-based annual organic produce price lists.

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Our Place Society attests to the weight calculations (lbs.) and market value calculations (\$) for produce donated by the FLT Society via the "field to plate" initiative at the historic Newman Farm.

10. The 2022 farm season was marked by a cold spring which meant a late planting in June 2022. From there, the dry weather in the summer and fall extended the farm season until early November 2022. The Year 2022 was also marked by historically high costs (market value) for accessing nutritious food due to global inflation which disproportionally affects individuals and families living at or below the poverty line in society.

11. In 2023, the FLT Society "field to plate" initiative expanded to four recipient organizations: Nil,tuo Child and Family Services Society, Our Place Society, Tsartlip First Nation, and Tsawout First Nation. The 2023 farm season was marked by dry, drought-like weather in summer/fall 2023 which contributed to the season extending until late November 2023.



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# 5. Looking Ahead

From late 2023 to early 2024, the FLT Society team engaged in an expression of interest recruitment and selection process which led to us retaining Satnam Dheenshaw to be the new Newman Farm Manager for the 2024 farm season. He will be joined by Don Clark who will provide farm labour assistance at the historic Farm. We look forward to working with and alongside Satnam and Don in 2024!

#### Interested in knowing more about the FLT Society and Newman Farm?

Visit our website: www.farmlandstrust.org

Volunteer with the FLT Society: <a href="http://farmlandstrust.org/join-us">http://farmlandstrust.org/join-us</a>

Donate to the FLT Society: http://farmlandstrust.org/donate

Join us on X (formerly Twitter): @FarmlandsTrust

Join us on Facebook: The Farmlands Trust Society

Email us: <a href="mailto:farmlandstrust@gmail.com">farmlandstrust@gmail.com</a>

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Many thanks to our FLT Society Founder, Patron, Board of Directors, Community Advisor, 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, local food security protection and reconciliation in Greater Victoria!

Sincerely, FLT Society Board of Directors

Note: Photo contributions for the 2023 Newman Farm Summary Report are courtesy of Natasha Caverley (former FLT Society Board Secretary), Bert James (former FLT Society Farm Manager) and Mike McQuay (FLT Society Newman Farm Volunteer – Fathers and Sons Volunteer Group)

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# Appendix A: Background information about the Newman Farm License Agreement

#### LICENSE TO OCCUPY FOR AGRICULTURAL PARK PURPOSES

THIS AGREEMENT (this "Agreement") dated for reference August 20, 2019,

BETWEEN:

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF CENTRAL SAANICH

1903 Mount Newton Cross Road, Saanichton, British Columbia, V8M 2A9

(the "District")

AND:

THE FARMLANDS TRUST (GREATER VICTORIA) SOCIETY (Inc. No. 5-0053429)

P.O. Box 9

Saanichton, British Columbia, V8M 2C3

(the "Licensee")

#### WHEREAS:

A. The District is the registered owner of that parcel of land known as the Newman Farm located in the District of Central Saanich and legally described as:

Parcel Identifier: 009-396-985

Those Parts of Section 3, Ranges 3 and 4 East, South Saanich District, Lying to the South of Parcel K (DD 47799I) of Said Sections, and to the East of the Road Dedicated by Plan

7532, except Part in Plans 3 RW, 2306 RW and 2319 RW

(the "Park");

- B. The portion of the Park named Upper Field and Mid Field Remnant highlighted on the plan attached as Schedule A hereto, comprising approximately 1.3 ha, called the "License Area";
- C. The Licensee wishes to be granted a license and the District wishes to grant a license of the License Areas for the Licensee to establish and operate a productive organic farm dedicated to enhancing local food security through sustainable practices and community engagement, and preserving the cultural heritage of the License Areas, on the terms and conditions of this Agreement;

NOW THEREFORE in consideration of the covenants and agreements hereinafter set forth, and other good and valuable consideration (the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged by the Parties), the District and the Licensee (collectively, the "Parties" and individually, a "Party") hereby covenant and agree as follows:

Source: Excerpt from updated license agreement between the District of Central Saanich and the FLT Society – signed August 20, 2019.

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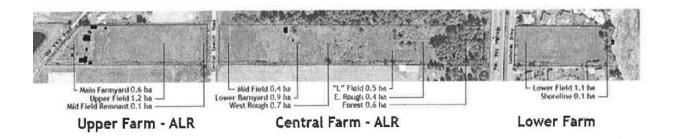
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# **Appendix B: Current Site Plan of Newman Farm Property**

Note: FLT Society licensed area is in the Upper Farm – ALR (upper field and mid field remnant areas of Newman Farm).

### SCHEDULE A SKETCH PLAN OF LICENSE AREAS



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