



**FRIENDS of  
CORTES ISLAND**

**For nature, for people, for life**



# 2025 Annual Report

# Friends of Cortes Island

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2025 has been full of collaboration and hands-on action. From our Summer Events program to transformative school grounds projects, we've connected people of all ages with the natural environment, built partnerships, and empowered volunteers to take action for nature.

We continued to run impactful programs. Our new Eelgrass Program and ongoing European Green Crab monitoring are safeguarding vital marine habitats, while Dillon Creek Wetland restoration and lake monitoring are protecting our freshwater ecosystems.

We maintained our local parks and trails, enhanced salmon populations and cleaned up all of the island's beaches.

We've also been working on building organizational resilience, setting us up to be able to take on more in the years ahead. This year we formed an Annual Giving Circle, a community of people whose ongoing financial gifts will help us to plan, grow and keep our island's wild beauty thriving.

We are thrilled by this year's achievements, and delighted to share some highlights with you.

**A big thank you to our many funders, partners, volunteers, donors, supporters, contractors, and staff for their fantastic contributions to our important work. Special thanks to the following:**

**Klahoose First Nation**

**Klahoose Aquaculture**

**Project Watershed**

**Hakai Institute**

**Department of Oceans and Fisheries**

**Cortes Island School**

**Sea Change Marine Conservation Society**

**BC Parks**

**Strathcona Regional District**

**Linnaea Farm Society**

**Cortes Island Museum and Archives**

**Comox Strathcona Waste Management**

**Province of BC Community Gaming Grant**

**Rewilding Water and Earth Inc**

**Madrone Environmental Services Ltd**

**Hollyhock Leadership and Learning Centre**

**BC Timber Sales**

**Cortes Community Foundation**

**Folk U Slow Coast**





**496**

hectares of  
parks & trails  
maintained  
year round

**45**

ecological  
monitoring  
activities  
carried out

**1**

eelgrass  
program  
started

**140**

people  
joined us  
for our  
events

**1**

wetland  
created  
with Cortes  
School

**5**

community  
work bees

**5**

salmon  
redds built  
in James  
Creek

**1150**

kilograms of  
beach garbage  
removed

**1**

Giving  
Circle  
launched

## Parks and trails

We renewed our contract with the Strathcona Regional District for another three years and brought our Park Rangers in-house to strengthen our delivery of on-the-ground monthly maintenance in all the regional parks and trails. We ran a community work bee with BC Parks at Mansons Landing Provincial Park removing invasive broom to protect sensitive coastal ecosystems.



## Cortes Island School

We helped create an amazing new wetland at the school, preparing the site, coordinating volunteers, planting, and installing fences. We also reseeded and maintained the butterfly meadow, which was alive with beautiful blooms and busy pollinators all summer long. We hosted a bug hotel workshop for students at the Spring Fair. These projects are transforming the school grounds into a rich, hands-on learning space where students can explore, learn, and deepen their understanding of nature.

## Beach clean-up

We ran our second island-wide beach clean-up, a major community effort to protect the island's marine environment. During May, locals collected beach garbage and deposited it into super sacks stationed around the island. These were taken to an Ocean Legacy Bin, hosted by Klahoose Aquaculture, and transported off-island for recycling. This work not only reduces marine pollution but also builds community awareness and collective stewardship of our precious coastal ecosystems.



## Wetland and lakes

We continued restoration work at the Dillon Creek wetland, developing a management plan to guide ongoing stewardship. Key activities included planting native trees and shrubs, installing bird and bat homes and erosion control. We also hosted 2 community work bees and 3 educational tours. In addition, we continued year-round water quality monitoring in Hague and Gunflint Lakes, supported by our dedicated community volunteers.



## Action for eelgrass

We started a new eelgrass program, a collaborative initiative with Klahoose First Nation, Sea Change, and Project Watershed. We hope to protect and enhance vital eelgrass habitats and provide opportunities for community engagement.

In August, Sea Change delivered specialized eelgrass survey training for Klahoose Guardians and FOCI contractors, building local capacity for long-term stewardship. We look forward to strengthening this collaboration in the years ahead.



## Summer Events

We hosted our popular Summer Events series, offering hands-on experiences that connected people of all ages with the natural world. From a low-tide shoreline exploration to a guided forest walk and an herbal plant workshop, each event invited the community to discover, learn, and celebrate the incredible biodiversity of Cortes Island.



## Streamkeepers

FOCI Streamkeepers and Klahoose Fisheries did a successful spring fry release in Basil Creek, while 14,000 fry incubated in-stream were released in Whaletown Creek. Cortes School students raised and released 100 coho fry into Hansen Creek. Volunteers built 5 redds (salmon egg nests) and placed 10,000 eggs in them to enhance chum numbers in James Creek. Fall 2025 spawner returns were moderate, with about 300 chum in Basil Creek, 25 in Hansen Creek, and none recorded in Whaletown or James Creek.



## Friends of Cortes Giving Circle

This year we launched our Giving Circle, empowering supporters to donate annually to provide the stability needed to expand programs, build staff capacity, and respond to emerging challenges including the ever-present threat of climate change.

## European Green Crab detection

The European Green Crab is a highly invasive species spreading along the BC coast, posing a serious threat to local ecosystems. We did monthly early detection monitoring in partnership with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Klahoose Fisheries, setting traps in Manson's Lagoon. Thankfully, no crabs were found this year.

We also partnered with the Hakai Institute on a pilot green crab larvae monitoring project, collecting biweekly samples from a mesh bag filled with oyster shells placed in the lagoon. This was done to strengthen early detection efforts, and results are pending.



# 2025 Financial Landscape

**Opening Balance**  
**\$43,476**

**Total Income**  
**\$162,458**

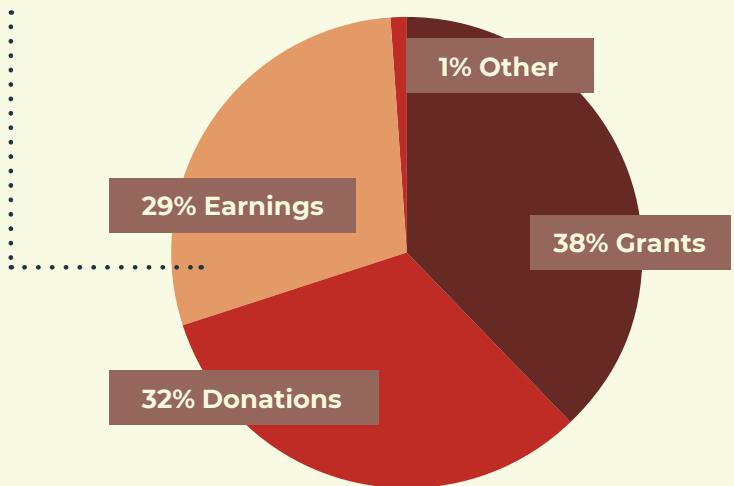
Sourced from grants, donations, and earned revenue

**Total Expenditures**  
**\$103,680**

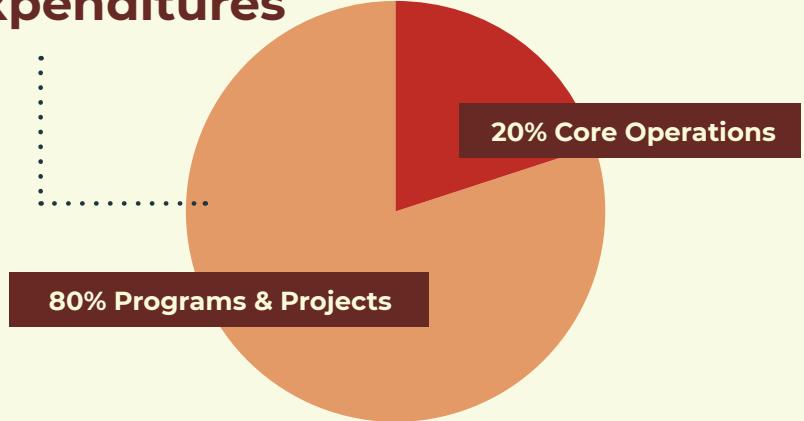
Program and Projects: includes expenditure on staff and contractors, materials and equipment. Core operations: includes insurance, office supplies and administration

**Closing balance**  
**\$102,254**

## Revenue Sources



## Expenditures



Friends of Cortes Island acknowledges that we live and work in the traditional, and ancestral, territories of the *toq qaymixw* (Klahoose), *ɬəʔamən qaymixw* (Tla'amin), *ʔop qaymixw* (Homalco) Nations.

Support our work at  
[friendsofcortes.org/  
donations](http://friendsofcortes.org/donations)



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