

Backgrounder: The Protection of the Sooke Potholes and the Partnerships Behind the Acquisition

The Sooke Potholes property consists of 63 hectares (156 acres), running for 8.5 km along the east side of the Sooke River, where the deep and polished rock pools and carved canyons known as "the Potholes" are found. These clear green pools are linked by picturesque waterfalls and gorges and surrounded by the beautiful forests of the Sooke Hills. Along the eastern boundary of the property runs the Galloping Goose Regional Trail, a tremendously popular recreational corridor used by cyclists, equestrians, runners and hikers from every part of the Capital Region, and by visitors from around the world.

For more than 20 years, the property was the subject of various development plans which could have compromised public access and even the integrity of the potholes themselves. Early in 2004, however, the property became the object of a court-ordered sale. Overnight, *TLC* was inundated with calls from the public to purchase and protect this local treasure, and the campaign to save the Sooke Potholes began.

March 8, 2004 - *TLC* announces launch of the Sooke Potholes campaign.

May 28, 2004 - *TLC* announces the completion of the first phase of the Sooke Potholes acquisition. By buying out the financial interests of the property's major creditor, *TLC* takes ownership of a direct interest in the site.

July 14, 2004 - CRD announces support for *TLC*'s acquisition of the Sooke Potholes, after agreeing to a cost sharing model on the project.

October 18, 2004 - *TLC* wins 'Order Absolute' from BC Supreme Court transferring the titles for the Potholes property to *TLC*.

November 2004 - March 2005 - *TLC* undertakes a major public fundraising campaign to acquire funds necessary to complete the Potholes purchase. Over 2,700 individuals, from all across BC, respond with donations in support.

March 31, 2005 - *TLC* and CRD announce the conclusion of an agreement to create the Sooke Potholes Regional Park. Under the agreement, CRD acquires 85% of the Potholes property, while *TLC* continues to own the lodge and operations sites, as well as the campground area.

May 25, 2005 - Shaw Communications announces their donation of \$200,000 to the Potholes project. This generous gift completes the acquisition phase of the Sooke Potholes campaign.

June 26, 2005 - The Sooke Potholes Regional Park officially opens to the public.

June 30, 2005 - The Sooke Potholes Campground, located at the northern end of the Sooke Potholes Regional Park, opens to the public.

January 30, 2007 - TLC erects a large thank you sign at the Potholes which highlights Shaw Communications and CDR's contributions to the campaign.

July 13, 2007 - TLC completes new bicycle shelter and cycle camping spots at Sooke Potholes Campground.

June 28, 2007 - Shaw Communications provides \$161,900 in funding for the Sooke Potholes Enhancement Project to help with improvements at the Sooke Potholes Campground.

August 8, 2007 - CRD announces the purchase of 932 hectares of land from TimberWest Forest Corporation for regional parkland. 8.65 hectares is added to the Sooke Potholes Regional Park, and the remainder 923 is added to the Sea-to-Sea Green Blue Belt east of the Potholes. TLC's contribution towards the overall purchase price was \$500,000.

November 6, 2007 - TLC creates the Larry Talarico Memorial Campaign.

April 16, 2009 - Shaw Communications donates \$250,000 to TLC which allows them to complete the last portion of the Larry Talarico Memorial Campaign and their commitment to CRD.

In total, Shaw Communications has generously donated over \$600,000 towards the Sooke Potholes area since 2005.