



GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY

President's Report

The past year (2024) has brought several changes to Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society as it carries out its activities into its 32nd year of existence as a charitable organization.

Reflecting on the overall changes over the last 32 years in collective stewardship and governance of Garry oak ecosystems and Garry oak trees, it is most encouraging to see the overall public awareness has grown substantially. A 22 km² expansion of built environment expanded across the CRD between the years 1986 and 2011, and tree protection bylaws provided minimal protection in few communities as GOMPS launched in 1992.

Through collective advocacy and stewardship efforts of non-profit organizations like Habitat Acquisition Trust, Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team, and Peninsula Streams, the conditions have improved in the measuring, monitoring, planning and management of Garry oaks and Garry oak ecosystems on public and private lands.

GOMPS has weathered the post-pandemic period and grown in several capacities to strengthen relationships and better support the broader community in advocacy and stewardship. Thanks to a generous donor, a new GOMPS advocacy project entered the planning stages in 2024 to map Garry oak presence distinct from all other tree species in Saanich and Victoria's urban forests. The project is intended to support partner organizations and community members in their advocacy and stewardship efforts and to also support urban forest managers to make Garry oak and ecosystem-based decisions with accurate and timely information.

Activities at the GOMPS nursery were similarly thriving with the arrival of a new steel shelter to improve the comfort for volunteers at weekly nursery gatherings made possible by a grant from the Victoria Foundation. Results from nursery trials and reviews of research on container nursery production provided inspiration for modernizing our practices to improve success rates of tree establishment with end users. As our capacity grew for potting new acorns, the local population of Garry oak declined to provide us with acorns in fall of 2024. This minor setback allowed the GOMPS team to complete an inventory and organize nursery stock to enable improved planning and tracking of materials and volunteer labour inputs.



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The rapid urban development policy shift across the region is undermining environmental policies and regulations, and we are rising to the occasion to support community members who increasingly describe feelings of disengagement by local and provincial government policymakers. Your continued support as a member, donor or collaborator enables our ability to grow the next generation of locally adapted Garry oak trees, to write letters to elected officials, and to empower community members with scientific evidence-based urban forest knowledge.

Ryan Senechal
President - Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society