

# **Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society**

**2018—2019 Annual Report**





# AT A GLANCE

Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society (OSSS) exists to promote voluntary stewardship, conservation and enhancement of important wildlife habitats on private lands and within the communities of the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys. Over one-third of the land base in the Okanagan and Similkameen is privately owned and/or managed, and supporting these landowners in making sound and supported land management decisions is critical.

Stewardship in the Okanagan-Similkameen region is achieved through a variety of targeted and community-based landowner contact initiatives. We provide information and technical support to local land managers in a way that puts their interests first.

OSSS carried out a variety of projects in order to work toward goals outlined in the strategic plan:

- » Community Stewardship in 24 local communities, engaging 950 local residents
- » Outreach initiatives, reaching approximately 5,000 individuals each month
- » Direct landowner contact, providing information on local species and spaces
- » Supporting 96 Wildlife Habitat Stewards
- » Habitat Enhancement and Restoration including over 35 individual projects
- » Partnership development and collaboration

## Celebrating 5 Years of Stewardship

This year marks the fifth anniversary for OSSS, and as such, we took on an evaluation of our existing programs and initiatives. The summary has been included as an insert to this Annual Report. Since its inception, OSSS has grown from 13 Wildlife Habitat Steward partners in the south Okanagan-Similkameen to nearly 100 stewards located throughout three regional districts, with 16 new Wildlife Habitat Stewards signing on this year. In total, OSSS supported conservation and stewardship initiatives on 5150 acres.

In 2018-19, OSSS planted 5,324 native trees and shrubs, contributing over one-third of the organization's 5-year total of over 15,000 plants. Planting native trees and shrubs creates a buffer along shorelines and wetlands, aiding in water absorption and flood control, reducing erosion, while providing nesting, feeding and cover opportunities for local wildlife. With just over one-tenth of our natural riparian and wetland areas remaining, enhancing what is left is critical.

Over the past 5 years, the key to our success has been in our consistency and ability to find common ground by developing respectful, mutually beneficial partnerships with landowners, communities and other stakeholders.







# COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH INITIATIVES



Community stewardship and outreach initiatives are a cornerstone in our stewardship program. OSSS focuses on incorporating a hands-on approach to community stewardship and outreach initiatives on the basis that the public has a stronger connection to projects when they are involved directly in the work.

One-quarter of Wildlife Habitat Stewards have discovered OSSS and our initiatives through community outreach initiatives and of those surveyed, one of the priorities identified by stewards was for OSSS to build on and enhance outreach and community networking.

While other partner organizations facilitate education opportunities, OSSS involves schools and residents in on-the ground stewardship in their communities. Two examples of this included planting projects at the Okanagan Crush Pad floodplain where Giant's Head Elementary helped to plant and at SunOka Provincial Park where Trout Creek Elementary helped to plant.



24

Community  
stewardship initiatives

628

Individuals receiving  
our newsletter

950

Locals engaged in  
community  
stewardship initiatives

7500

Website Visits

5000

Social Media Reach  
per month





# LANDOWNER CONTACT

Through directed landowner contact projects, OSSS provides landowners with large properties and wildlife habitat with information and support. This is a key initiative intended to raise awareness and respect for wildlife needs, habitat values and threats to local wildlife populations including habitat loss and fragmentation. This year, we focused on shoreline landowners, landowners in Bighorn Sheep habitat as well as those with Critical Habitat for Species at Risk.

**730**  
landowners  
contacted

## WILDLIFE HABITAT STEWARDS



Wildlife Habitat Stewards are voluntary caretakers of important wildlife habitats on their properties. These landowners and managers still maintain their agricultural, tourism and other land use practices on their properties while implementing best management practices for wildlife. They drive stewardship, conservation and enhancement efforts on their properties.

OSSS partners with Wildlife Habitat Stewards and provides stewards with recognition, technical support in habitat enhancement projects, management plans and implementation of best management practices for wildlife on their properties.

**16**

NEW landowners who became  
Wildlife Habitat Stewards

**366**

NEW Acres stewarded

**95**

Wildlife Habitat  
Stewards

**4036**

Acres of Federally  
designated Critical Habitat  
Stewarded

**107**

Private land parcels cared  
for by Wildlife Habitat  
Stewards

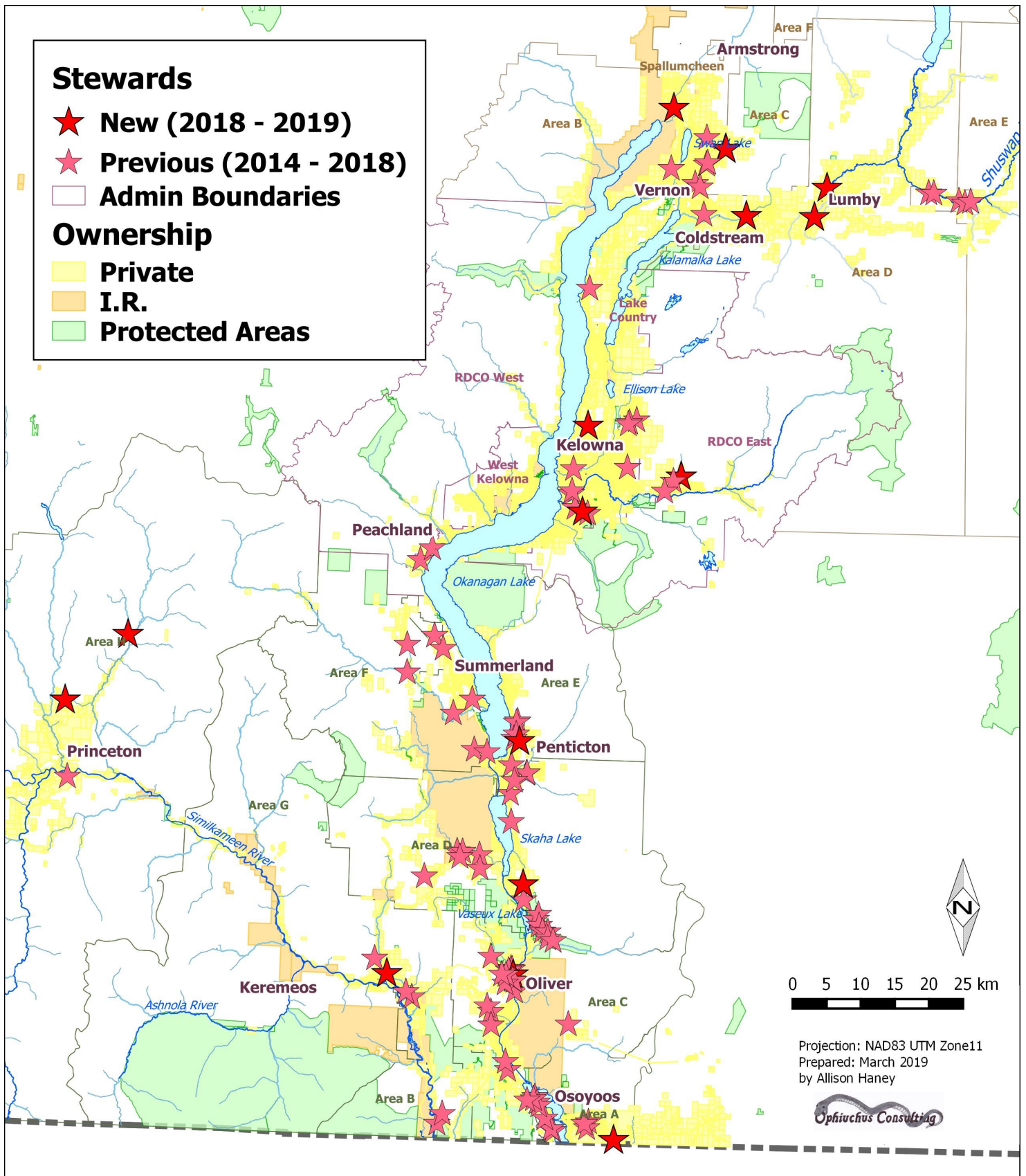
**5324**

Total number of acres  
stewarded.





# WILDLIFE HABITAT STEWARD MAP







# HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

OSSS assists landowners and communities in wildlife habitat enhancement projects. Projects are agreed upon through mutual partnerships with stakeholders (landowners, communities, or local government involvement).

OSSS had a record-breaking year, with one project involving the planting of almost 2,000 plants— our largest project to date!

Some of our more notable projects this year were:

**SunOka Provincial Park Swale Restoration**  
**Riverside Marsh Restoration**  
**Lumby Flight Park Riparian Restoration**  
**Arion Therapeutic Farm Riparian Restoration**  
**Osoyoos Desert Centre Grassland Restoration**  
**Webster Farm Wetland Restoration**  
**Grist Mill Riparian Restoration**  
**Okanagan Crush Pad Floodplain Restoration**  
**Penticton Creek TD Tree Days**  
**Manders—Garnet Valley Ranch Riparian Restoration**  
**Mountain Springs feral horse exclusion**  
**BX Pond Goldfish Removal**  
**Three Gates Tree Encroachment Mitigation**

354

Volunteers

2556

Volunteer-hours

5234

Native plants planted

7500

Pounds of invasive plants removed

36

Habitat enhancement projects completed

1230

Acres of wildlife habitat enhanced

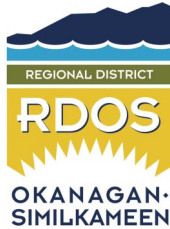






# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society gratefully acknowledges the support of our funders in 2018-2019:



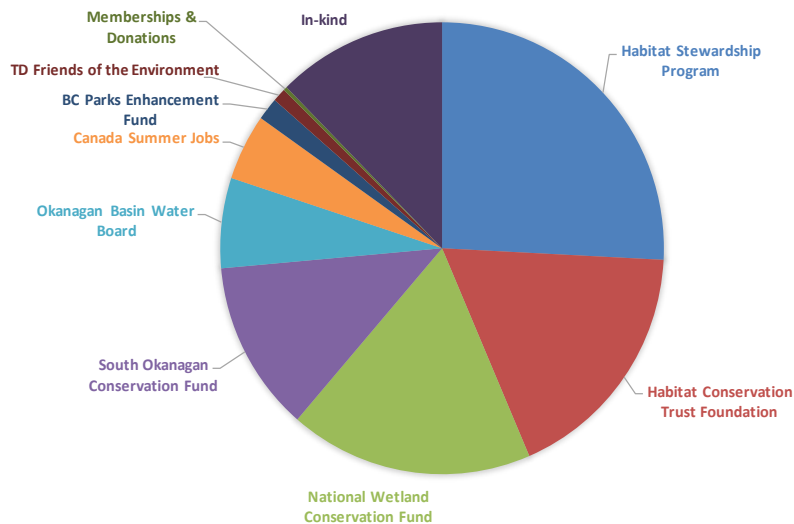
SOUTH OKANAGAN  
CONSERVATION FUND



Canada



## 2018-19 REVENUE



## Income for 2018-19

(including outstanding holdbacks)

Cash: \$271,522

In-kind: \$38,340

Total: \$309,862

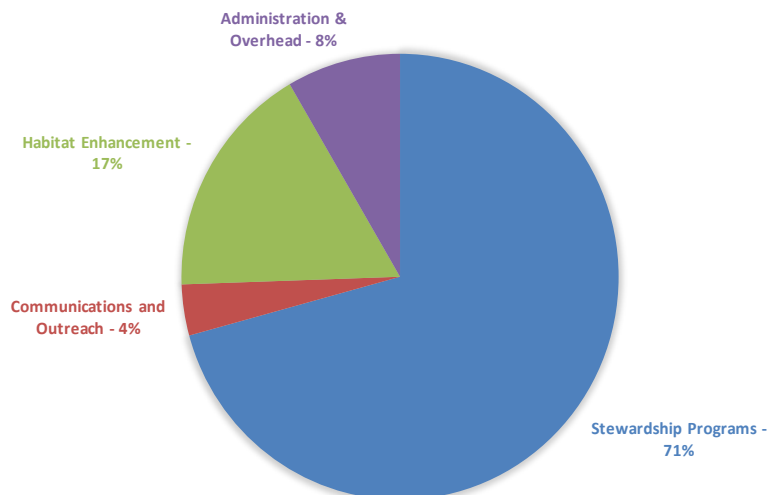
## Historical Grant Revenue

2017-18: \$254,142

2016-17: \$244,985

2015-16: \$228,126

## 2018-19 EXPENSES



To request a copy of our  
annual financial  
statement, please  
contact us at  
[info@osstewardship.ca](mailto:info@osstewardship.ca)





#### **Volunteer Board of Directors**

Jennifer Miles, Chair  
Patrick Allen, Treasurer  
Susan Latimer, Secretary  
Sara Ashpole, Past Chair  
Eva Durance, Director  
Natasha Lukey, Director  
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo, Director

#### **OSSS Representatives**

Alyson Skinner, Executive Director  
Lia McKinnon, Stewardship Biologist  
Valerie Blow, Stewardship Officer  
Michelle Stanley, Stewardship Officer

#### **For more information, please contact:**

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