

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

Celebrating 5 Years of Stewardship

December 2018

Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society is a grassroots charity that exists to support private landowners and communities in stewardship, conservation and enhancement of important wildlife habitats.

STEWARDSHIP

is the care for natural areas and biodiversity by landowners and community groups.

Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society (OSSS) developed a strategic plan in 2019 that outlined goals and objectives to promote and support private land and community stewardship in the Okanagan and Similkameen region. OSSS achieves its goals by providing land owners and community groups with information about local conservation issues, by assisting and supporting those landowners and community groups in conservation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitats, and by working cooperatively and collaboratively in delivery of programs and projects. We work from Princeton to Osoyoos, up through Vernon and to Lumby.



Wildlife Habitat Stewards

Wildlife Habitat Stewards are voluntary caretakers of important wildlife habitats on their owned or managed properties. They drive stewardship, conservation and enhancement efforts on their properties.

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

50% of Wildlife Habitat Stewards learned of the program through direct mailings from OSSS, 25% were engaged through community stewardship initiatives and 16% were referred by others to the program. The remaining 9% couldn't recall how they heard about the program.



94

Wildlife Habitat Stewards

5150

acres stewarded

4006

acres of Critical Habitat
stewarded



The people I work with in the program are very, very helpful, obliging, informative and supportive.



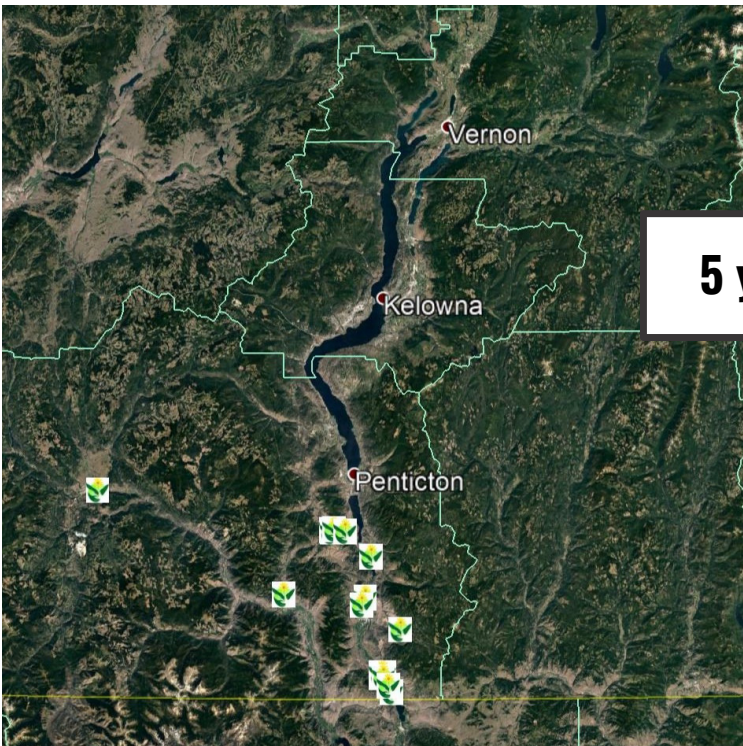
OSS does a great job of coming out and explaining how to do the work and why we are doing it.



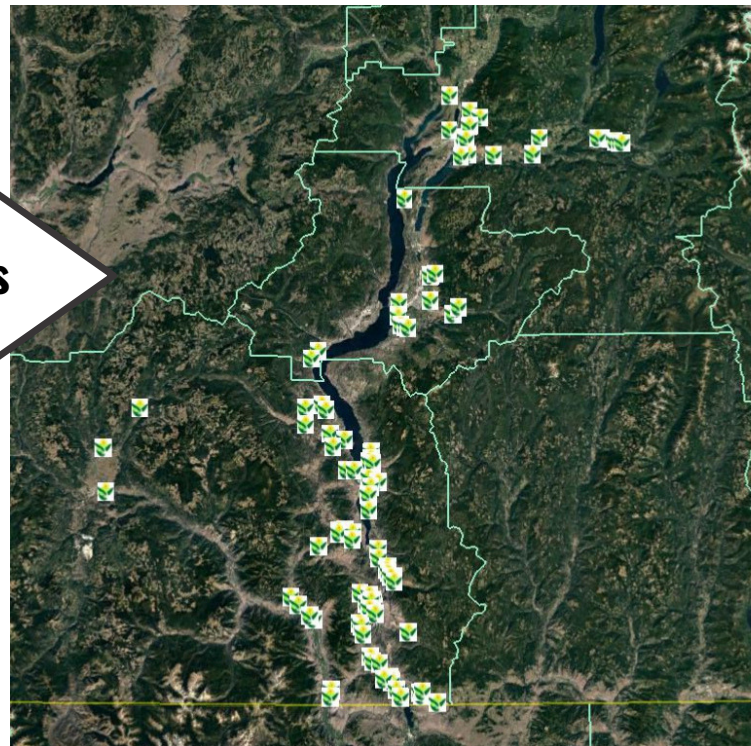
Thank you so much for an amazing learning experience! We had great discussions when we returned to the school! It was the best field trip I have ever done!!



This is awesome, gives us hope for tomorrow!



Locations of Wildlife Habitat Stewards in 2013



Locations of Wildlife Habitat Stewards in December 2018

On forming an independent society, OSSS responded to requests from conservation partners in the north and central Okanagan to develop a basin-wide approach and expand to fill the gap in private land stewardship. Since 2013, we have grown from supporting 13 stewards with nearly 1,000 acres of wildlife habitat to 94 stewards caring for over 5,150 acres, over 75% of which is designated Critical Habitat for Species-at-Risk.

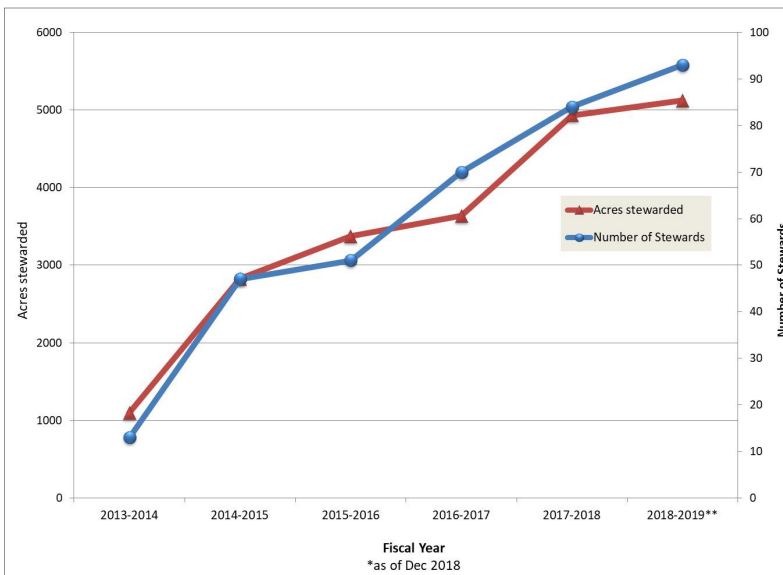


Figure 1: Number of stewarded acres and signed stewardship agreements held by Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship from 2013 to 2019.



Habitat Enhancement - a 5 year snapshot

OSSS implements natural area restoration and enhancement projects that are landowner-driven and mutually beneficial, achieving environmental conservation goals while supporting current land uses.

Projects implemented by OSSS in partnership with landowners and communities include: planting native trees and shrubs, exclusion fencing, invasive species management, nest and bat box installation, turtle nesting beach enhancement, and garbage removal.

**15,600
native trees
and shrubs
planted**

**70 habitat
enhancement
sites**

**101
nest boxes
installed**

**5,700 kg
garbage
removed**

**Over 800
volunteers**

**2,311
acres
enhanced**

**2,900 m
of fencing
installed**



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Funding partners in stewardship and conservation:



SOUTH OKANAGAN
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