



Unleash your
inner explorer.

SOOKE REGION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Annual Report

1 Nov 2024–31 Oct 2025



sookeregionmuseum.ca



Land Acknowledgement

The Sooke Region Museum & Visitor Centre operates in the territories of the T'Sou-ke, Pacheedaht and Scia'new peoples who have inhabited this land since time immemorial.

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Purpose

The Sooke Region Historical Society is a non-profit organization and registered charity that operates the Sooke Region Museum & Visitor Centre.

PURPOSE

- a) To gather and preserve information, records, and objects of educational and cultural value associated with the natural and human history of the area, without limiting the generality of the foregoing
- b) To establish and maintain a museum for the purpose of preserving, recording, and exhibiting for public enjoyment of such material
- c) To undertake other such activities, which from time to time, may be deemed appropriate

VISION

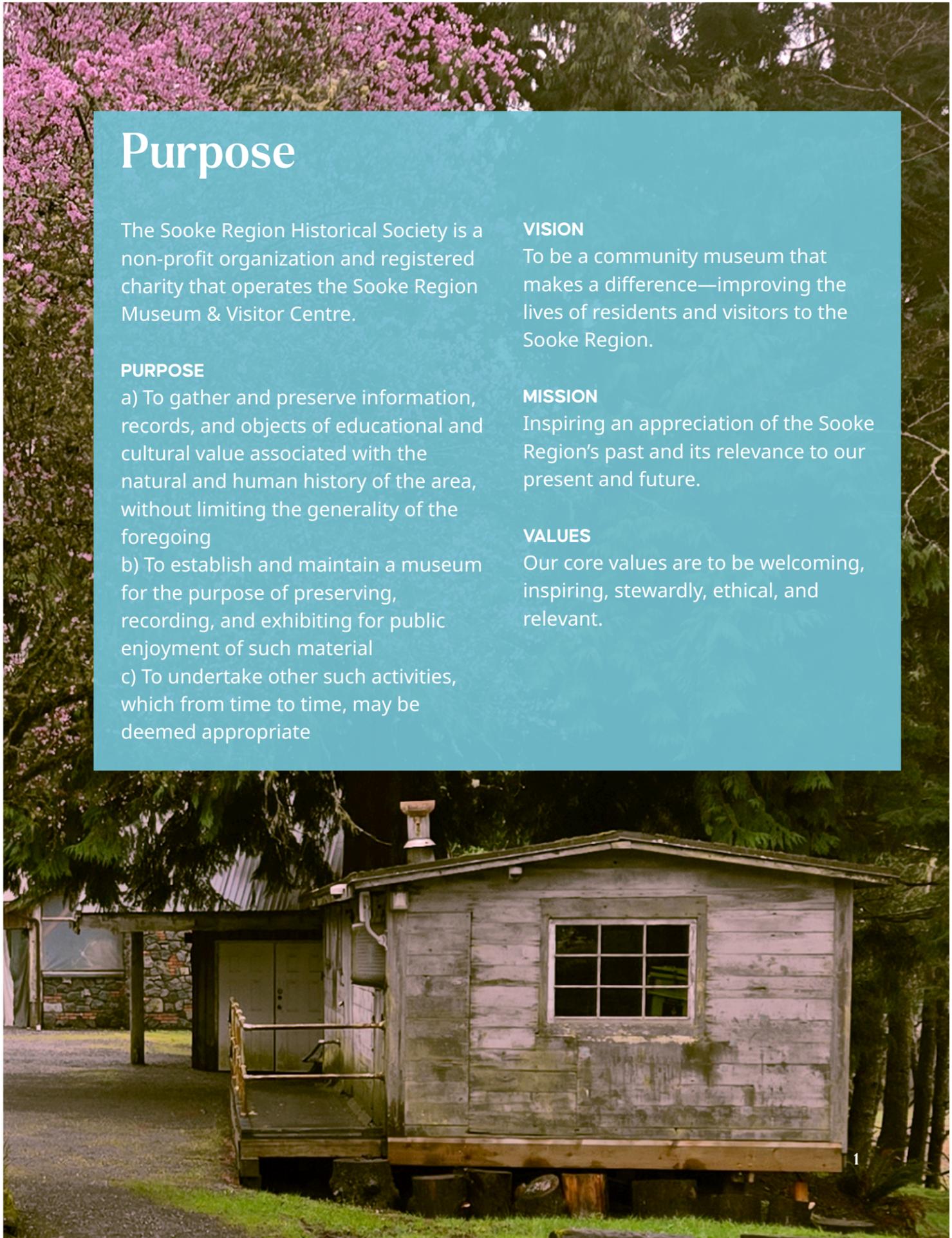
To be a community museum that makes a difference—improving the lives of residents and visitors to the Sooke Region.

MISSION

Inspiring an appreciation of the Sooke Region's past and its relevance to our present and future.

VALUES

Our core values are to be welcoming, inspiring, stewardly, ethical, and relevant.



Message from Board President

This past year was an exciting time for the Sooke Region Historical Society Board and Sooke Region Museum.

We reached out to residents, asking how they view the museum, what could make visits more enticing, and what the museum could offer. From East Sooke to Port Renfrew, most had a positive impression of the museum, and we heard great ideas for the future.

With this solid data, we are set to begin an exhibit refresh. If you haven't seen the interior exhibits lately, stop by to view the work in progress. The space has been carefully disassembled to assess the condition of artifacts, many of which have been on display beyond conservation standard limits. Our communities have changed and grown significantly since the museum opened in 1977. Rebuilding the exhibits over the coming year enables us to add more stories and new ways for visitors to interact, enjoy, and learn about the region.

Last year, we reviewed the heritage signs. Board member Nadine Smith led the work to inspect each sign, and together with Executive Director Michelle Richard, board members Laurie Szadkowski, Georgia Medwedrich, Laurie Wallace, and Trevor Price, and staff Emma Wilton and Jason Arthurs, will begin updating existing signs and planning new signs. We held the CRABFEST fundraiser, steered by the organizational dynamo of Laurie Wallace and Laurie Szadkowski, and many volunteers and staff who made this first-of-its-kind event an overwhelming success.

It was my pleasure to work with board members Rose Dumont, Sheila Dobie, Sheila Needs, and Neil Poirier. Many thanks to Trevor Price, who is moving on from the board after several years of service. My gratitude to all staff including Sarah Wilford, Willy Webb, Patricia Handy, Beverley Myers, Tracy Hetherington, Angela Petrie, Jenna Welch, and the interns and summer students. I am most grateful to Elida Peers, Historian.

None of what we do is possible without our valued funders. Thank you to BC Arts Council, Destination BC, BC Community Gaming, Capital Regional District, District of Sooke, Canadian Heritage, Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs for continued financial support.

Last year brought some unexpected challenges, and we extend heartfelt thanks to elected officials who went to bat on our behalf: Hon. Stephanie McLean, MP Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke, Dana Lajeunesse, MLA Juan de Fuca-Malahat, Al Wickheim, CRD Director, Juan de Fuca region, and Kevin Pearson, District of Sooke councillor.

Visitors often comment that the Sooke Region Museum is among the best. We're committed to keeping that feel of a community museum while reflecting the people, natural heritage, and stories of our region. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to those who created the museum as an esteemed community asset. Sadly, last year we lost Ray Vowles, one of those dedicated visionaries. We will continue to honour their work and legacy.

One of my favourite quotes we heard from the community engagement is "small but mighty!" I think it sums up what we have always been, and what we will strive to be.

Doni Eve, President

Message from Executive Director

We had a positively busy year at the Sooke Region Museum & Visitor Centre.

The year started with an update to our logo by two local artists: Jen Eckert and Shelley Davies. Jen updated the best elements of the former logo, while Shelley added Indigenous elements from her Coast Salish ancestry. Jen's design was inspired by the museum roofline, the lighthouse, and the tree that symbolizes the Sitka and Western Red Cedar, so important to our local history and an integral part of our natural heritage. Shelley chose the Bald eagle "Qelensen" for its wisdom and the Raven (SQTO) because he is also known to bring back higher knowledge from the Creator. Shelley also chose Raven as a storyteller which represents the Museum sharing stories of the community.

Sharing stories is one of our core roles. Museums play many important roles in communities, and some say that we need museums now more than ever.

Museums are guardians of our collective memory, helping to preserve the past that informs local identity and culture. Understanding the past shapes our understanding of the present.

Our exhibit *Hearing Heroics* did that, as we explored the realities of local men from different cultural backgrounds who served the country in WWII, and how those experiences impacted the lives of the men who served and their families in the years since the war.

Understanding the past can also inform the future. Our exhibit *Detours: Bypass the Expected* did that, as we looked at how creatively people from the Sooke Region moved around in the past, not restricted to cars on roads.

Museums bring communities together. Participating in events, talks, or workshops allows community members to share experiences and learn together, hearing different perspectives, or celebrating a collective heritage. Looking at events like our Open House & Salmon BBQ, CRABFEST, Sooke Spook, the weekly Sooke Night Market all summer long, and our school programs, hundreds of community members came together, and by all accounts, they enjoyed themselves while celebrating local culture together.

Museums offer a way to learn about local culture and identity. For 45 years the Sooke Region Museum has hosted the official Visitor Centre, welcoming visitors from all over the world who come to explore and learn about this place. To learn more, people visit exhibits. To bring home a souvenir, or dive deeper into certain subjects, visitors enjoy our fabulous Gift & Book Shop.

I am so fortunate to work with passionate and experienced staff, a supportive and energetic Board of Directors, and 84 generous volunteers who give their time, expertise and positive vibes - together we make a great team. Collaborating with this team are numerous community groups and partners who all help us accomplish our goals.

Thank you all for coming together to accomplish all that we did last year, fulfilling our role as a community museum, inspiring an appreciation of the Sooke Region's past and its relevance to our present and future.

Michelle Richard, Executive Director

Historian Report

In my experience, there has been no lessening of interest in history. I find that people will approach me whether they know me or not, to comment on my weekly newspaper column. Perhaps it's because it's easy to read short stories of human interest. I've also had a lot of photographs and other items dropped off for me, sometimes without me even knowing where they came from.

Currently in whatever spare time I can find I am sorting through materials for their eventual site at the museum. I continue to work in my home office as I have done for years now. As I hope to shortly retire from the Charters River Salmon Interpretive Centre, I look forward to being able to complete the important documenting of the real estate records left with me by the Carmichael family.

I am really looking forward to completing the movie our film committee has been working on for several years, the extremely important documentation of the history of Woodside Farm, a chapter of BC history which will be such a thrill to introduce when it is completed. I am looking forward to working again with Beverley Myers of the museum staff and Rose Dumont on the Board, in carrying that project through to completion.

Between answering requests for information on almost a daily basis, working on files and creating my weekly column—which often requires quite a bit of time to ensure accuracy—I would estimate my time contribution to the museum as about one thousand volunteer hours in the year.

One of the most noteworthy events of this past year was the opening of the new T'Sou-ke Nation Community Complex and Health Centre in September, truly a once in a lifetime

event, and I was honoured to be invited to represent the museum for that ceremony.

It was also an honour to be invited to attend the opening announcement of the John Horgan Campus of Royal Roads University, which I attended with Doni Eve. It was always great to work with John Horgan, as, while our MLA and as our Premier, he was always supportive of our efforts.

Recently, the heritage shields have come into discussion, and I am reminded of the days back in 1986 when we had gotten an initial grant for the project, started group committee meetings to discuss locations and subjects that were considered of interest, and to consult all relevant bodies on the appropriate wording. Working with the community, we were able to create dozens of shields, a process which has continued for many years.

In closing, I would be remiss if I did not note the enormous contribution that was made by longtime Historical Society president Ray Vowles. One of the reasons we were able to accomplish so much in our early years as we were creating a museum and archives out of whole cloth, was the strength and commitment of Ray Vowles, and his understanding of the importance of what we were doing.

Though I wish we had been able to document more history, it was amazing that we were able to gather as much as we did, considering our financial resources, and I'm happy that I was a part of it. Thank you.

Elida Peers, March 14, 2026





University of Victoria Ethnographic Novels class, at left T'Sou-ke Elders Fern Albany, Willow Dodge, Jackie DeYaeger (Planes)

Collections

YEAR AT A GLANCE

- Over **1300 items** processed— researched, moved to a new location, or accessioned into the collection
- **21** archival image orders totalling **154 individual images**
- **22 Donations** with a total of 270 items

Collaboration with UVIC Ethnographic Novels Class

In Spring 2025, students connected with T'Sou-ke Elders and the belongings that they had donated to the Museum. 27 February 2025, students spent the afternoon listening to T'SOU-KE Elder Jackie DeYaeger (Planes) share stories of her father's canoe and her uncle's medals. Students drew what they witnessed and explored the museum through drawing. From this engagement, students created three-panel graphic stories that illustrate the stories and relationships shared with them by Jackie.

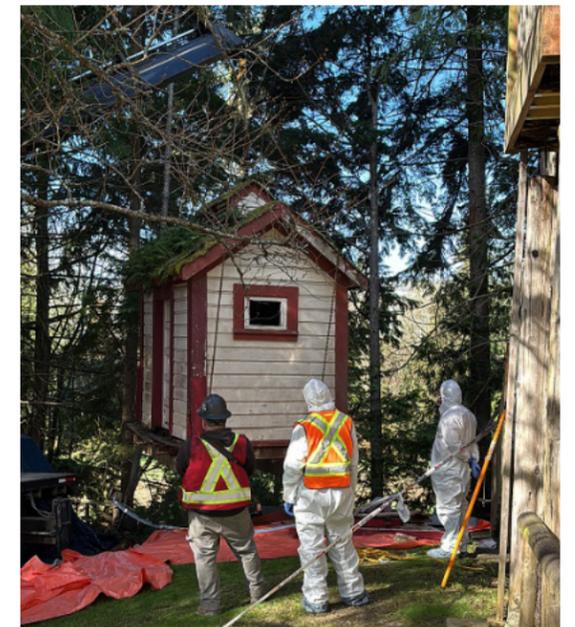
3 April 2025, students returned to the museum to present completed projects to T'SOU-KE Elders Jackie DeYaeger, Willow Dodge, and Fern Albany. One by one, students presented their projects to the Elders. Jackie, Willow, and Fern saw the care and respect that students put into their projects portraying their stories and connections to the belongings

NOTABLE DONATIONS:

- East Sooke Community Association fonds - 4 banker boxes worth of papers related to association
- Victor Syrett WWII letters - over 100 letters written by Victor to his family in Sooke, sent between 29 Aug 1940 to 2 March 1942. Victor was captured by Axis powers and passed away in a POW camp in Japan.

GOODBYE OUTHOUSE, 31 March 2025

The "four-holer" Outhouse, originally from the old Otter Point School (1913-1952) was removed from the Museum property and collection. The Outhouse had been at the Museum since 1983 but was severely compromised from its high concentration of toxic lead paint. We were sad to see it go, but to protect the collection, staff, visitors, volunteers, and the saltwater marsh below, the Outhouse was removed.



Original art created by UVic students from the Ethnographic Novels class following their time spent with Elders



Detours: Bypass the Expected, upper level gallery



Temporary Exhibits

Detours: Bypass the Expected
16 October 2024 - 19 December 2025

Moving around the Sooke Region is not always done in expected ways. This exhibit explored the unexpected ways people have moved through the Region, by water, wheels, foot, and air.

Living and working around the Sooke Region means thinking outside the box (or the lines

of the road!). We don't just use roads. People move around this region on trails, through water, and by air.

The exhibit featured three objects in the upper gallery of the Museum (tricycle, canoe, bicycle) and four objects outside on Museum grounds (dory, Model T, boom boat, locomotive).



The Women of the Sooke Region: From Pioneers to the Modern Wonder Woman

Online Exhibit, continues to 29 September 2026

This exhibit is an exploration of women who had a key role in shaping the Sooke Region, celebrating formidable women who helped create today's Sooke and those who are building the Sooke of tomorrow.

Hearing Heroics

1 November - 21 December 2024

Exhibit inspired by two donations received from community members related to local Sooke residents' WWII service. Frank Plane's war medals (T'Sou-ke Nation), and Frank Richardson's letters (Sooke). The exhibit helped build awareness of the contributions of Indigenous people to war efforts and personal descriptions of service. The exhibit also explored the practice of enfranchisement by the federal government and the different treatment of people who served in the army and navy.



We Needed You Yesterday

8 November 2024

Event held on Indigenous Veteran's Memorial Day to share the stories of Frank Planes and Frank Richardson and their WWII service.



Chief Larry Underwood and Councillor Rose Dumont, T'Sou-ke Nation, 8 Nov 2024



Edward Milne Community School students talk with Jack Cook about his art created when he was a child at Alberni Indian Residential School



Left: Jeff Cook talks about his childhood art created at Alberni Residential School Right: Emma Wilton introduces the group at public event.

The Art of Reconciliation

29-30 September 2025

In collaboration with the Alberni Indian Residential School Art and Education Society, we presented two days of programming. A group of survivors from the Alberni Indian Residential School were at the Museum with art they had created as children at the residential school.

Survivors: Arthur Bolton, Jeff Cook, Laverne Cook, Jack Cook, Deb Cook, Sherri Cook, Shelley Chester, Fran Tait, Mark Atleo, Tammy Squitti & Jeannie Polkinghorne

On 29 September, four high school classes from Edward Milne Community School spent time talking to the survivors about their art

and their experiences at the school. On 30 September, the survivors spoke at a public event about their art, with over 70 people in attendance.

Students and public who attended the events had the opportunity to talk to survivors about their time at the school and the experience of reconnecting with a rare surviving piece of their childhood. Having reproductions of the art at the Museum provided a glimpse into 'art as truth', as the works are expressions of their resilience as children, showing their memories of place and community.



Nadine Smith & Doni Eve with community at Shirley Day



Collections & Exhibits Manager Emma Wilton reading community input during Open House



Abbey Haywood, Neil Poirier & Laurie Wallace at Canada Day, Sooke



Michelle Richard, Nadine Smith, Al Wickheim in Port Renfrew

Community Engagement

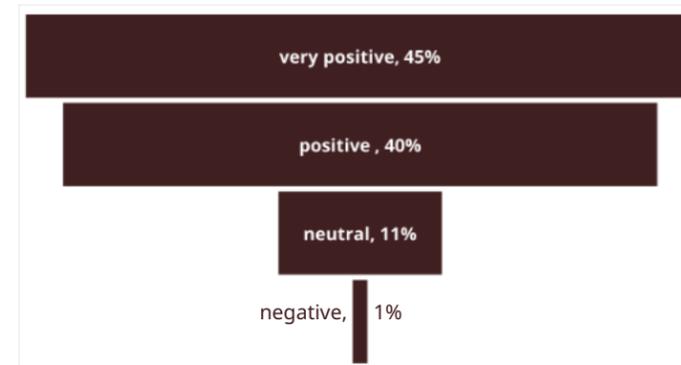
The Sooke Region Historical Society invited the community to play an active role in shaping the future of the Sooke Region Museum & Visitor Centre. From March to September 2025 we had an online survey, conducted community conversations in Sooke, East Sooke, Otter Point, and Shirley, and took our tent to 9 events over the spring/summer with a pop-up in Port Renfrew in July.

- 1,924 participants responded through the survey, focus groups, open house, and other events
- 1,589 provided feedback through 21 in-person activities,
- 320 participants completed survey

TOP FINDINGS:

- Museum highly valued as a keeper and sharer of stories of Sooke and the surrounding region.
- Staff are praised for their helpfulness, professionalism, and welcoming attitude.
- Program participation (events, workshops, talks, and tours) is the primary motivation for visiting the museum; people appreciate the opportunity to learn something new.

A majority of respondents have a positive or very positive impression of the Museum:



KEY THEMES FROM THE RESPONSES:

Cultural representation is important to the community. Present more Indigenous stories, Indigenous/settler relationships, and how to support reconciliation.

Update and improve exhibits: More interactive; early and modern history, audio/visual elements, rotate artifacts, diverse perspectives, more natural heritage
Increase community outreach.

More learning workshops, talks and events.
Improve accessibility; Parking, grounds and buildings, expand operating hours.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION:

The Sooke Region Historical Society board and Sooke Region Museum staff are very grateful for the ideas shared. We will implement recommendations, where feasible, to support and inform strategic and operational planning.

JOIN OUR Community Conversations!
sookeregionmuseum.ca

Your ideas belong in a Museum.

Play an active role in the future of the Sooke Region Museum!

Thursday April 24th
2:00pm - 5:30pm

Thursday April 24th
7:00pm - 8:30pm

Friday April 25th
10:00am - 11:30am

RSVP BY APRIL 21st

SCAN TO RSVP ON OUR WEBSITE!

Museum
& Visitor Centre



Programs

SCHOOL TOURS

Educational programs are offered in the spring and fall each year for students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. Activities are inspired by local cultural and natural heritage to compliment the BC Curricular Competencies.

Activities: Artifact Detectives, Bannock, Butter-making, Craft (flower-pounding and holiday swags), Detours exhibit, Hidden Treasures, Moss Cottage tour, Museum Explorers, Triangle Island Lighthouse visit, and Spinning Fashion. Activities are led by dedicated and passionate volunteers from the community.

November/December 2024 and April/May 2025

807 students, from 10 schools participated and 21 volunteers gave over 200 hours to lead activities.

We also hosted two groups of exchange students with customized programs: one from Japan (45 students) and one from Quebec (80 students).

From Curiosities to Contemporary Culture: Museums in Community

Sooke Region Lifelong Learning, Executive Director Michelle Richard presented two sessions looking back and forward.

1 April 2025: Brief history of museums and the Sooke Region Museum, with guest Dr. Megan Hull, author of 'What We Are Nostalgic for: Place-making and social capital in a local museum', using Sooke Region Museum as a case study.

8 April 2025: Role of a community museum in the 21st century and community

STORYWALK

Diggersaurs, Jan-Mar 2025

When Emily Was Small, Mar-May 2025

AUTHOR TALKS

300 Mason Jars, November 2024 with Joanne Thomson

Teachings of Mutton, September 2025 with Liz Hammond and Andrea Fritz (Lyackson First Nation)

SPEAKER SERIES

Plants & Fungi with Andy MacKinnon, 14 June 2025

WORKSHOPS

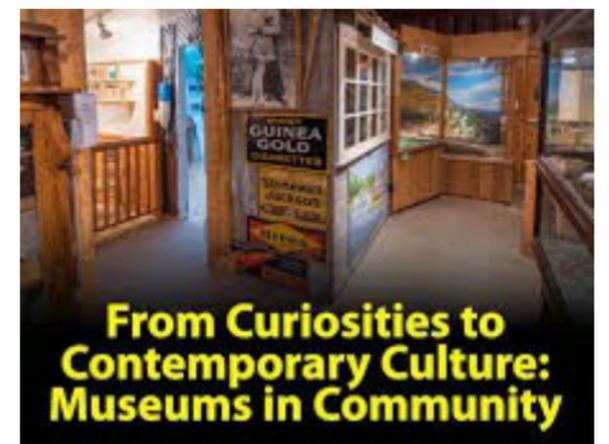
Eco Dyeing with Nora Ready, July 2025

Canning Your Harvest with Kayla Siegfried, September 2025

MEN'S SHED launched Feb 2025

Every 3rd Saturday of the month

The Men's Shed provides a space for men to have a workshop environment where they can do hands on projects for themselves and the community in a collaborative atmosphere. Museum groundskeeper Willy Webb leads the Shed, providing access to tools and equipment and guidance on small projects.





Moss Cottage Christmas & Market



CRABFEST



Moss Cottage Christmas & Market



Sooke Spook



Charlie K, we miss you



Open House & Salmon BBQ

Events

MOSS COTTAGE CHRISTMAS & MARKET 7 December 2024

- 26 vendors, 4 community groups, 3 musical performances, 1 historical interpreter
- Wild Wise Society, Vancouver Island Regional Library, Sooke Branch, and Sooke Lions
- Friends of Sooke Parks offered a free lantern-making activity
- 'Aunt Tilly' welcomed visitors to Moss Cottage, decorated for a 1902 Christmas

**PASTIMES IN PAST TIMES
Heritage Week, 17-23 February 2025,**
District of Sooke proclaimed Heritage Week! Scavenger Hunt inside Museum exhibits launched on Family Day, continued through Heritage Week: *Pastimes in Past Times*.

Visitors looked for toys & games hidden in the exhibits, all objects from the collection, but in surprising places!
Saturday 22 February event
Men's Shed launched: Men's Shed Association of BC presented a premier screening of the Men's Sheds Canada Impact Video.
All Sooke Day film screened in the Events Pavilion, Aunt Tilly received visitors in Moss Cottage, and Lanny Seaton greeted visitors to the Triangle Island Lighthouse.

**OPEN HOUSE & SALMON BBQ
22 June 2025**
Annual gathering to celebrate food, history, and community.
Food: Salmon grilled over an open fire, served with salads and strawberry shortcake.

Activities: Behind-the-scenes, tree-ring printmaking and mobile exhibits about photography, wool hand-processing, historic laundering, and math.
Community Organizations: Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society, Sooke Fine Arts Show, Lions had tents at event to connect with guests
Live music: Gord Phillips, 3-Bits Worth, Bodeus
36 volunteers contributed 145 hours

CRABFEST | 27 September 2025
The inaugural CRABFEST fundraiser was an opportunity to share fresh, local food with community, while raising money for the museum. 200 meals were enjoyed, with live music by the *Groovediggers*.
Event partners: Sooke Community Association and Heggelund Fishing Ltd with bread donated by Sooke Harbour House. \$5,000 was raised to replace some glass panels in the Triangle Lighthouse Dome. 34 volunteers contributed 235 hours

SOOKE SPOOK | 25 October 2025
Stories inspired by local history brought to life by Sooke Harbour Players, with spooky poetry readings by Sooke Writers' Association, and scary dance by Revolution Dance Collective. Community members of all ages came in costume, roamed museum grounds to meet characters from the past and enjoy hot dogs, chili, cupcakes and fresh hot apple cider pressed at the event from local apples!

As the event was during International Bat Week, event partners HAT (Habitat Acquisition Trust) joined us with stewardship guides, a bat box display, colouring sheets and photos to help identify bats and learn about the important role of bats in nature. 20 volunteers contributed 80 hours

Sooke Night Market

SINCE 2013, THURSDAYS | 5-8PM

5 June–28 August 2025

Live, local musicians in 2 locations, 14 different acts throughout the season

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Free space to connect with community:

- District of Sooke
- Emergency Support Services
- Friends of Sooke Parks
- Juan de Fuca
- Vancouver Island Public Library - Sooke
- Sooke Spectacular Seniors Contest
- Sooke Transition House Society
- The Gathering Place
- The Hospice Art Project
- Wild Wise
- Zero Waste Sooke

Vendors reported sales of over \$87,000 through the season, with an average \$7,500 in sales each Market.

27-32 vendors each week

MUSICIANS

- 3 Bits Worth
 - Brittney Danielle, Andy Moreno
 - Aruna Kalulanthri
 - Ben Goerner
 - Bodeus
 - Charlie K
 - Dos Cabezas
 - Gord Phillips
 - Henry Unrau
 - John Rewers
 - Karaoke with Marion Schuls
 - Sooke Community Jazz Band
 - Out of the Woods
 - Willis Taylor
- Attendance over 6,000, with an average of 411 people each market
 - Over 1,800 people visited Moss Cottage, with an average of 141 visits each market, with 245 people visiting at the 31 July Market!
 - Over 1,700 people visited the Triangle Island Lighthouse during the Night Market, with an average of 133 at each Market



2025 Vendors:

A Van Isle Shop
Amanda Beads
Avan Island Shop
Babka Bakery House
Bits of Bliss
Blue Angel Creations
Bromley
Catch a Star
Chromamoon Studio
Coastal Crunch
Costal Scoops
Creative Obsessions Lab
Crochet Vibes Only
Dana Nygard Arts
Davidson Farm
Designs Buy Denise

Driftwood Studio
Gaia's Coffee Cart
Hide N Seek Sooke
Huckle Beads
Island Passion Sauce
Island Tarts and Catering co
Island Vibes and Scribes
John Rewers and Gary Brewer
Kurry King Indian Feast
Love Lemonade/Ryan's Cookies
Marley's Doodles and Designs
Megan JL Evans Art
ML Sushi Takeout
Moonseed Herbals

Moonset Candles
Nana's Knots Crochet and Concrete
Nettle and Fern Homestead
Nurture by Nature
Orange Cape Sewn Goods
Paper Cuts
Rooted With Love
Roxy's Chocolate
Sea Enna West Coast Jewelry
Soule Flower Farm
South Island Lunch Box
Sunroot.Aromatics
The Cake Joint
The Little Sooke Soap Company

The Wedding Zinger
The Wild Side Farm Collective
Tones Stones Sooke
Trotter Bakes
True West Coast
Tsunummies Street Food
Vortex Spice Co
West Coast Esthetics
West Coast Hygge
West Coast Soap
Woodside Farm
Woven and Wired
Xocolat



Gift & Book Shop



New Museum Merch



Stickleback design by Darlene George, T'So-uke Nation



Items with artwork by Shelley Davies, T'So-uke Nation

Our Gift & Book Shop provides important revenue to fund the Museum, supports local makers, and offers visitors opportunities to bring back souvenirs of their time spent here.

60 DIFFERENT MAKERS AND LOCAL ARTISTS sell through our shop on consignment. We also work with trusted suppliers such as Native Northwest, Oscarco, Stuffed Animal House and publishers such as Harbour Publishing, Orca, Heritage House, Royal BC Museum and many more.

717 DIFFERENT BOOK TITLES

- Indigenous stories & histories
- Settler histories
- Field & identification guides
- Travel guides
- Children's books
- Cookbooks
- Gardening

INDIGENOUS ART & LOCAL SOUVENIRS

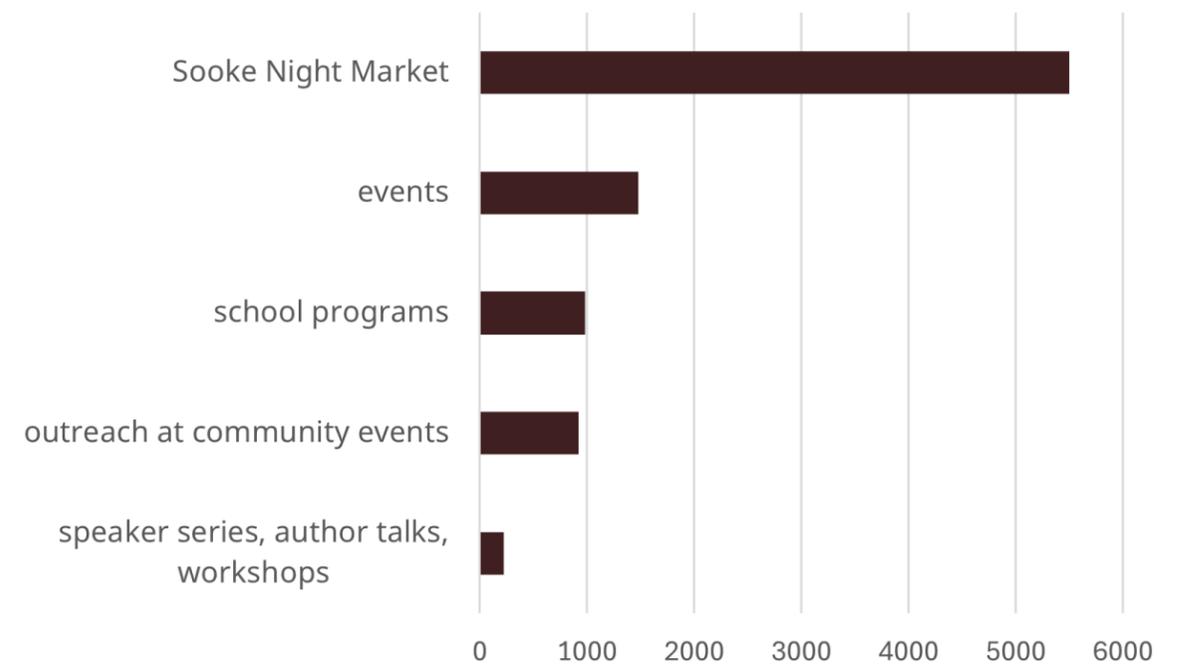
- Carvings and jewellery by local Nuu-cha-nulth and Coast Salish artists and items with Indigenous artist designs
- Locally inspired souvenirs and we support Canadian suppliers whenever possible
- Museum Merch that helps to extend our visibility in the region

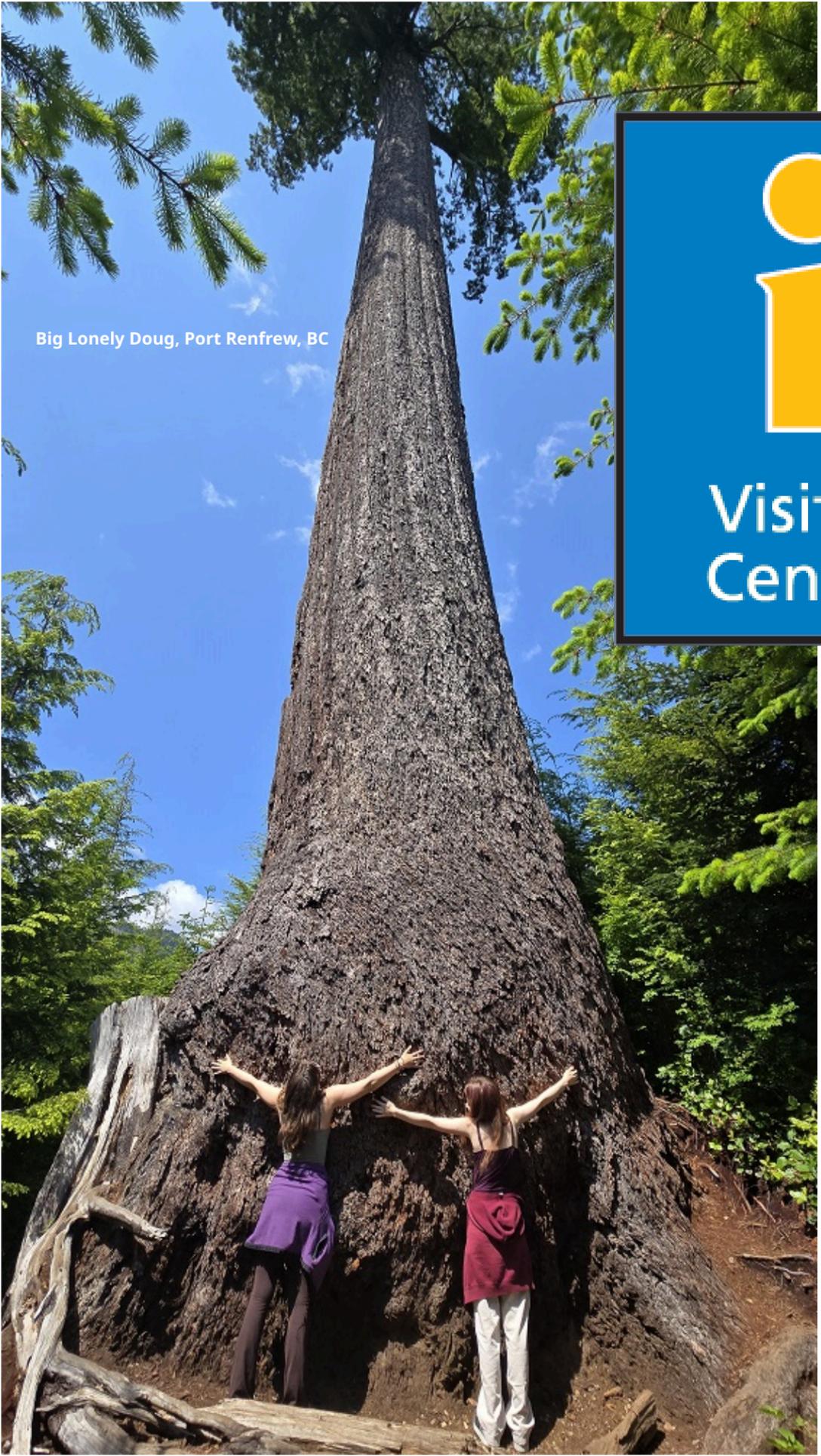
Partners

We were fortunate to work with a lot of great community partners over the year, including:

- Alberni Indian Residential School Survivors' Society
- District of Sooke
- Habitat Acquisition Trust
- Friends of Sooke Parks
- Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society
- Revolution Dance Collective
- Sooke Community Association
- Sooke Fine Arts Show
- Sooke Harbour Players
- Sooke Lions
- Sooke Region Tourism Association
- Sooke Writers' Association
- T'Sou-ke Nation
- University of Victoria–Department of Anthropology
- Dr. Andrea Walsh, Smyth Chair of Arts and Engagement

Participants





Big Lonely Doug, Port Renfrew, BC



Visitor Centre

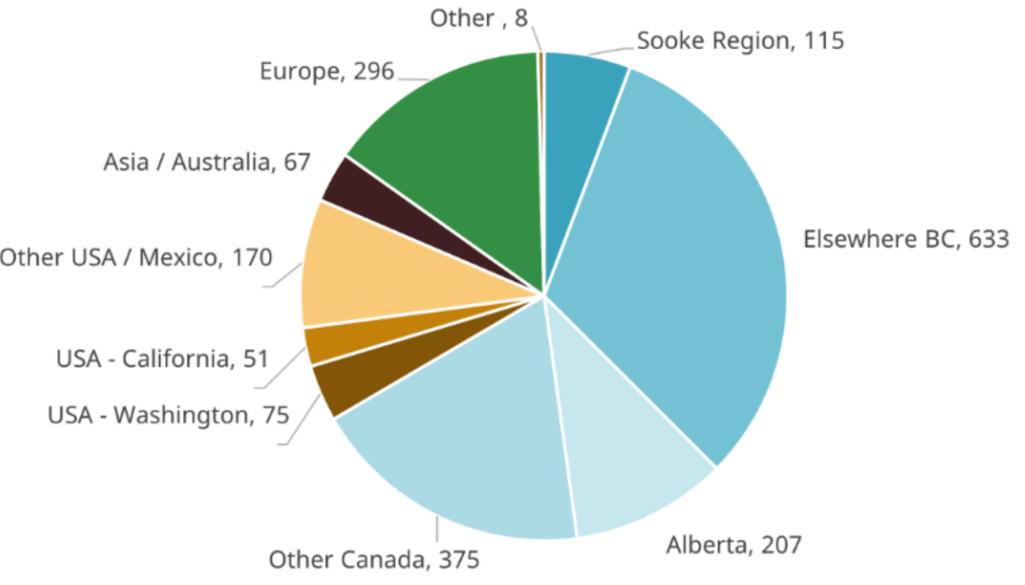
The Sooke Visitor Centre has been hosted by the Sooke Region Museum since 1981 and is part of the Destination BC Visitor Services Network. All staff are trained through Destination BC programs as well as through familiarization tours to ensure information shared with visitors comes from experience.

- Staff offer personally adapted information
- In-person, by phone, or by email;
 - Online community calendar;
 - Maps, brochures and guides for the Sooke Region and for other Visitor Centres in the Visitor Services Network.



Botanical Beach, Port Renfrew, BC

Origin of visitors in 2024-2025, counted in 'parties':



Heritage Signs

HERITAGE SIGNS

Since the 1980s the Sooke Region Historical Society has placed heritage shield signs throughout the region, with almost 60 signs along roadsides and pathways sharing stories of people and places of the region.

As signs deteriorate and language changes over time, we are working to replace those signs.

From summer 2024 to winter 2025 we inventoried current signs with photos and condition reports. Stickers were added to signs with a QR code, sending people to the website with project updates.

In the coming year we will review the locations and content of the existing signs with the aim of replacing a few each year.



LONG-AWAITED historical markers that will identify places of historical interest throughout Sooke are now being erected. Members of the committee who worked on the signage program are shown here with the signs at the Sooke Region Museum. Left to right: Ray Price, Gordie

Govenlock, Doug Wallace, Sally Bullen, Gwyn Owen, Ed Robinson, Harry Corbett, Jean Robinson, Phoebe Dunbar, Ken Shepherd, Shirlye Vowles, Faith Jacobsen, Joan Putney, Brenda King, Yvette Szaloky, Darlene George, Mike Soderberg, Russell Weir.

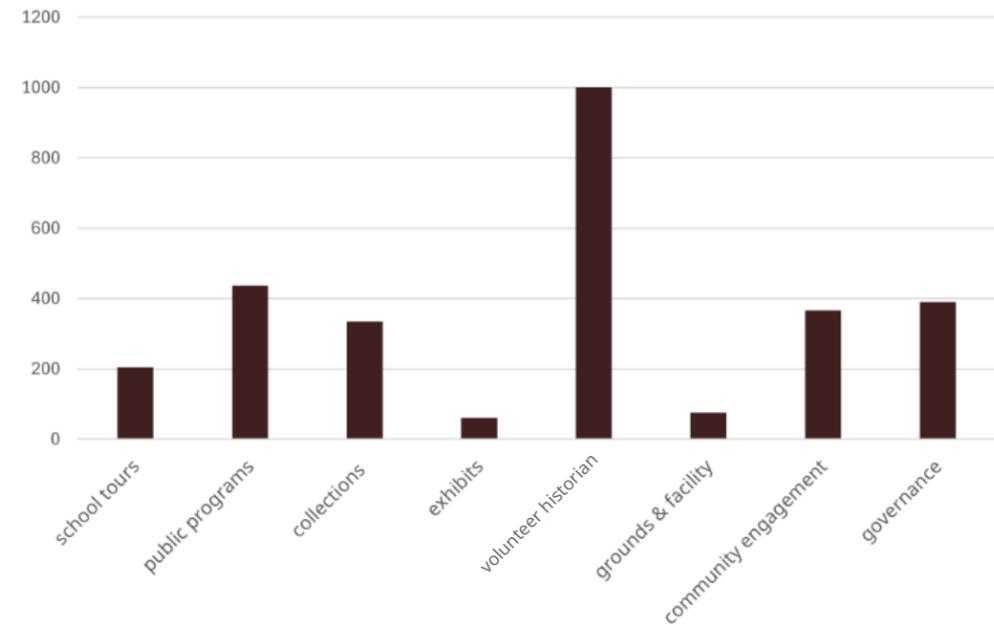
Board Member Nadine Smith



Volunteers

The Sooke Region Museum is driven by dedicated and passionate volunteers, and volunteers are essential to accomplishing what we do today.

Volunteers contributed over 2,800 hours in 2024-2025!



PROGRAMS & EVENTS

School Tours: Leading tours & hands-on activities to make the school tours fun while learning about local history.
Events: Moss Cottage Christmas & Market, Heritage Week, Open House & Salmon BBQ, Sooke Night Market, CRABFEST and more.

COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITS

General Collections Assistance: Assist projects such as processing donations; assisting with inventory procedures; transcribing audio records; data entry.
Exhibit Assistance: Assist with research, production, and evaluation of exhibits.

MAINTENANCE

Gardening: Assist in maintaining grounds with gardening and grounds clean up.
Maintenance: Assist with maintenance activities throughout the year for grounds, and facilities.

GOVERNANCE

The museum is a non-profit charitable organization. Governance is provided by an elected volunteer Board of Directors.

Staff & Volunteers



STAFF

Executive Director, Michelle Richard
 Visitor Services & Office Manager,
 Patricia Handy

Collections & Exhibits Manager, Emma Wilton
 Programs Manager, Sarah Wilford
 Exhibits Technician, Jason Arthurs

Gift Shop Manager & Visitor Information
 Councillor, Beverley Myers

Gift Shop Assistant & Visitor Information
 Councillor, Tracy Hetherington

Groundskeeper, Willy Webb

Programs Assistant, Angela Petrie

SUMMER VISITOR INFORMATION

COUNCILLORS:

Abbey Hayward
 Jenna Welch

T'SOU-KE NATION SUMMER PLACEMENTS:

Tessa Routhier-Lavoie
 Jack Vince

PROJECT INTERNS, supported by Young Canada Works:

Karina Hill, Emergency Planning
 Ella Thomas, Exhibit Research

VOLUNTEERS Gavin Andrews, Bridgett Barnett, Joelle Beauchamp, Tommy Beauchamp, Bev & Kevin Berger, Colleen Blatchford, Margaret Blocka, Cathy Brooks, Pete Bulger, Ginger Cabilin, Jessie Cabilin, Colleen Cailles, Doreen Carscadden, Sheila Dobie, Rose Dumont, Doni Eve, Dena Fiddler, Linda Gabriel, Aprille Gallentes, Gemma Gale, Jami Gisel, Laurie Gitzel, Aster Goudie, Michelle Guiney, Sarena Gulseren, Kimberley Hadford, Jeff Haisell, Dean Haldane, Lindsay Haldane, Donna Haldane, Katana Hounsoume, Stephanie Hedley-Smith, Cindy Heggelund, James Heggelund, Jen Herkes, Rob Hill, Rick Kasper, Brad Kennedy, Hannah Little, John Makkinga, Jason Maat, Asha Macleod, Dave McClimon, Elaine McMath, Georgia Medwedrich, Don Merlo, Sharon Nash, Sheila Needs, Hazel Nelson, Matt Nelson, Lisa Nilsson, Shane Nilsson, Kevin Pearson, Trudy Pearson, Elida Peers, Neil Poirier, Coral Poser, Trevor Price, Clementine Richard, Anna Ring, Cheryl Ring, Glen Ring, Helen Ritts, Nadine Smith, Laurie Spence, Reagan Stauble, Cheri Sutherland, Laurie Szadkowski, Randy Szadkowski, Ella Thomas, Doug Titchkosky, Amelia Tyrrell, Brian Wallace, Jason Wallace, Laurie Wallace, Nicki Wallace, Athena Warbrick, Anne Welch, Sue White, Al Wickheim, Pete Wilford, Buddy Williams, Glen Wilson, Marie Wilson, Paula Wilson, Rachel Winchester.

Members

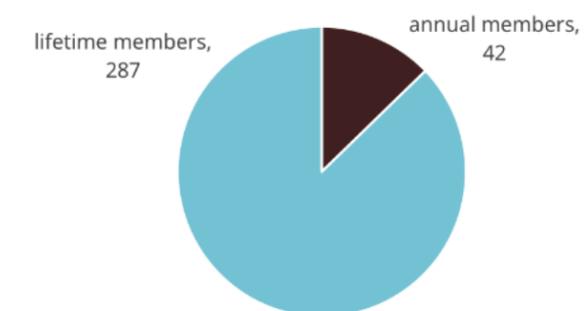
The Sooke Region Historical Society was established in 1974 to operate the Sooke Region Museum and continues to maintain this local museum serving the communities of East Sooke, Jordan River, Otter Point, Port Renfrew, Shirley, and Sooke.

Members provide essential support to the Society, enabling us to care for the collection entrusted to us by donations from community members, provide programming such as talks, events, and school programs, and create exhibits to share local stories.

BENEFITS

- 10% discount at the Museum Gift Shop (on non-consignment items)
- 20% coupon for one purchase at the Gift Shop in December
- 10% discount on archival services (photos, research)
- advance tickets for events
- voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting
- monthly e-newsletter with events, opportunities, and updates

Membership as at 31 October 2025



Board of Directors

President, Doni Eve

Doni joined the board in 2019, continuing a path blazed by great-grandmother Margaret Perron, who was part of the original Juan de Fuca Historical Society that began its work in the 1960s. She brings a lifelong love of storytelling and passion for promoting the community and its history, along with a varied career in journalism, management, social marketing, and creative writing that took her to Regina, Ottawa, Montreal and back to Sooke, where she raised her son. She feels honoured and privileged to have served as president, working with a terrific board and skilled staff for the past seven years.

Vice-President, Laurie Szadkowski

Laurie was eager to join the board in 2022 after retiring from a career in education. A fifth-generation Sooke resident, she raised her children here and is delighted to watch her grandchildren grow in the community. She currently supports local school programs, food services, and the museum's ongoing refresh. Laurie is honoured to contribute to a dynamic museum board and staff serving the Sooke Region.

Secretary, Sheila Dobie (Bio coming)

Treasurer, Georgia Medredwich

Georgia was born and raised in Victoria, moved to Sooke in 1967. 25-year career with the Federal Government, volunteered as a Brownie leader, Sooke Minor Fastball Association and the Lions club. Her interest in local history drew her to the Museum in 2016, and she has been helping our community grow its history ever since!

Rose Dumont (Bio coming)

Sheila Needs has called Sooke home for many years. Sheila has always had an interest in the historical family ties and connections in various cultures and communities, including the Sooke community and area. Through her own family, her career as a social worker with families and now as a local flower farmer, Sheila is part of Sooke history—and that feels amazing! She has been on the Board for the Sooke Regional Museum for 2 years and in that time she has learned how strong the community is and how everyone pulls together to make things happen—not just at the museum. She is proud to call Sooke her home.

Neil Poirier (Bio coming)

Trevor Price is a third generation Islander, being born in Victoria and moving to Sooke at a young age. He enjoyed many years of competitive sports, including multiple district and provincial fastball titles on successful Sooke teams. Graduating from Edward Milne Secondary, Trevor went on to a 35 year career with the Province of British Columbia, where he specialized in procurement and asset/facility/fleet management, in particular."

Now long retired, he and his wife moved back to Sooke to be closer to their daughter and son-in-law. They now operate an Airbnb while he also works on his classic Ford and Meteor cars.

Nadine Smith brings nearly four decades of federal public service experience and deep Sooke roots to her role on the Board of Directors. Descended from a family that settled in Saseenos in 1936, she is a second-generation graduate of Edward Milne Secondary School and holds a Bachelor of Arts and an Advanced Certificate in Management Studies. Nadine's government career included postings in Calgary, Ottawa, and Victoria, preceded by formative museum work as a summer student at the Creston Museum. She moved back to Sooke just ahead of the record 1996 blizzard. Nadine holds the 1965 title of All Sooke Day's "Best Baby", marched in Pet Parades, competed in the venerable Sooke River Raft Race and was once "Grand Aggregate" winner at the Sooke Fall Fair. Nadine and her husband David Van Dyck have two daughters, Andrea and Garnet.

Laurie Wallace (Bio coming)

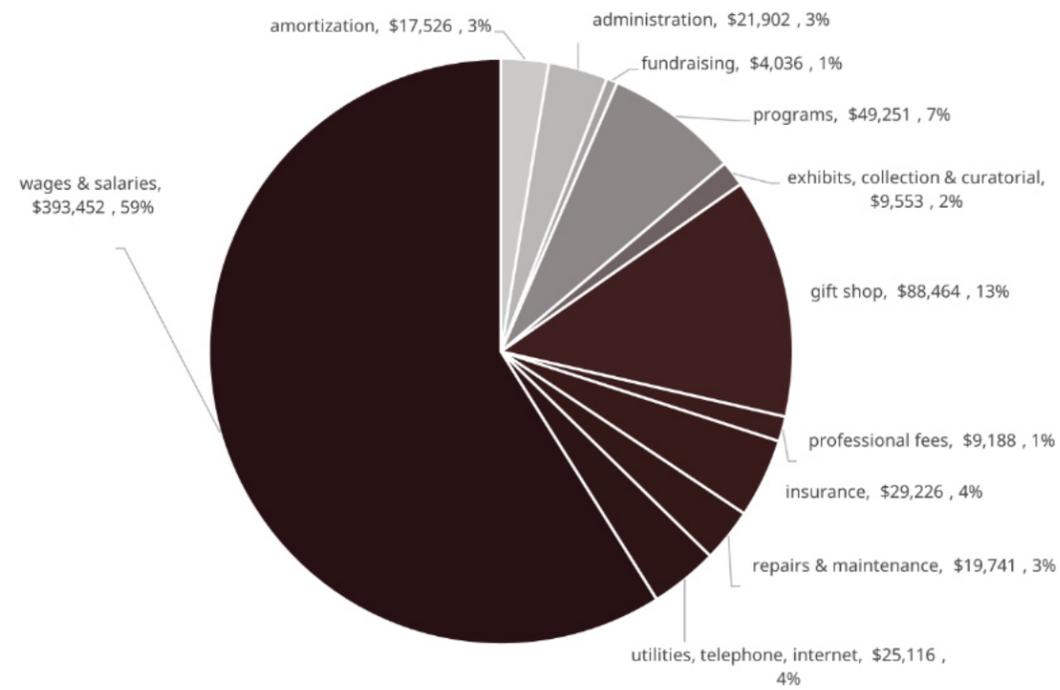
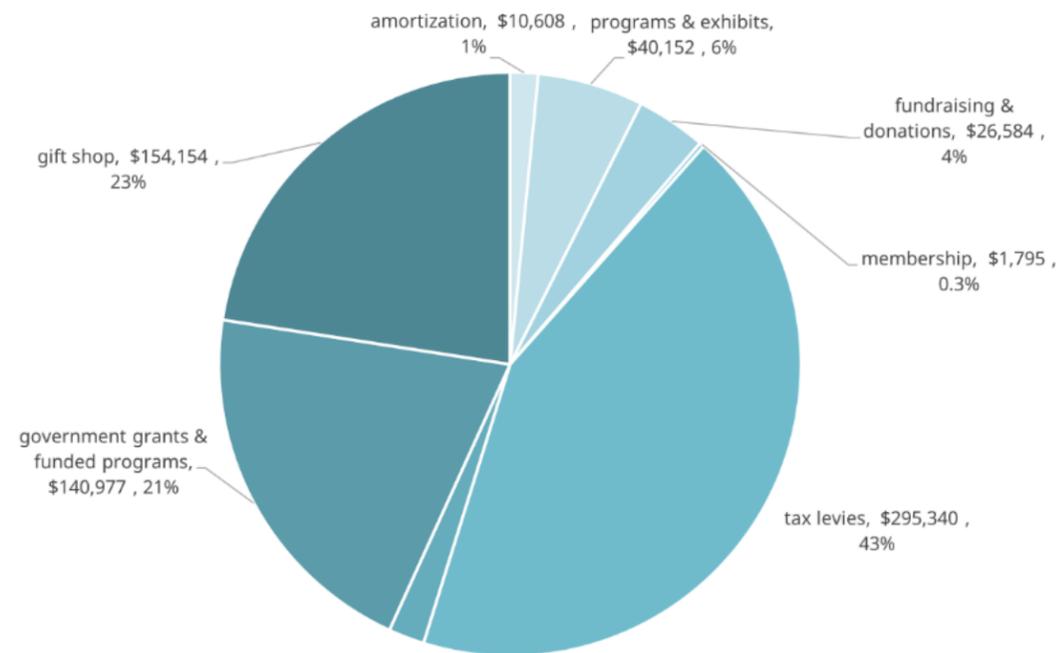
Board of Directors

Councillor Kevin Pearson, District of Sooke Council Representative

Al Wickheim, Director Juan de Fuca Electoral Area



Financial Report



Funders & Sponsors



Supported by the Province of British Columbia

Memberships





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