



# NEWMAN FARM

## MASTER PLAN PROCESS

### PREPARING A WAY FORWARD



## Introduction

In July of 2003, the Newman family generously donated their 6.6-hectare farm to the District of Central Saanich for use as public parkland. The Newman Farm has a special history, having remained in family ownership as a subsistence farm without the benefit of modern conveniences for most of the 20th Century. In addition, seven of the Farm's fifteen buildings have received municipal heritage designation.

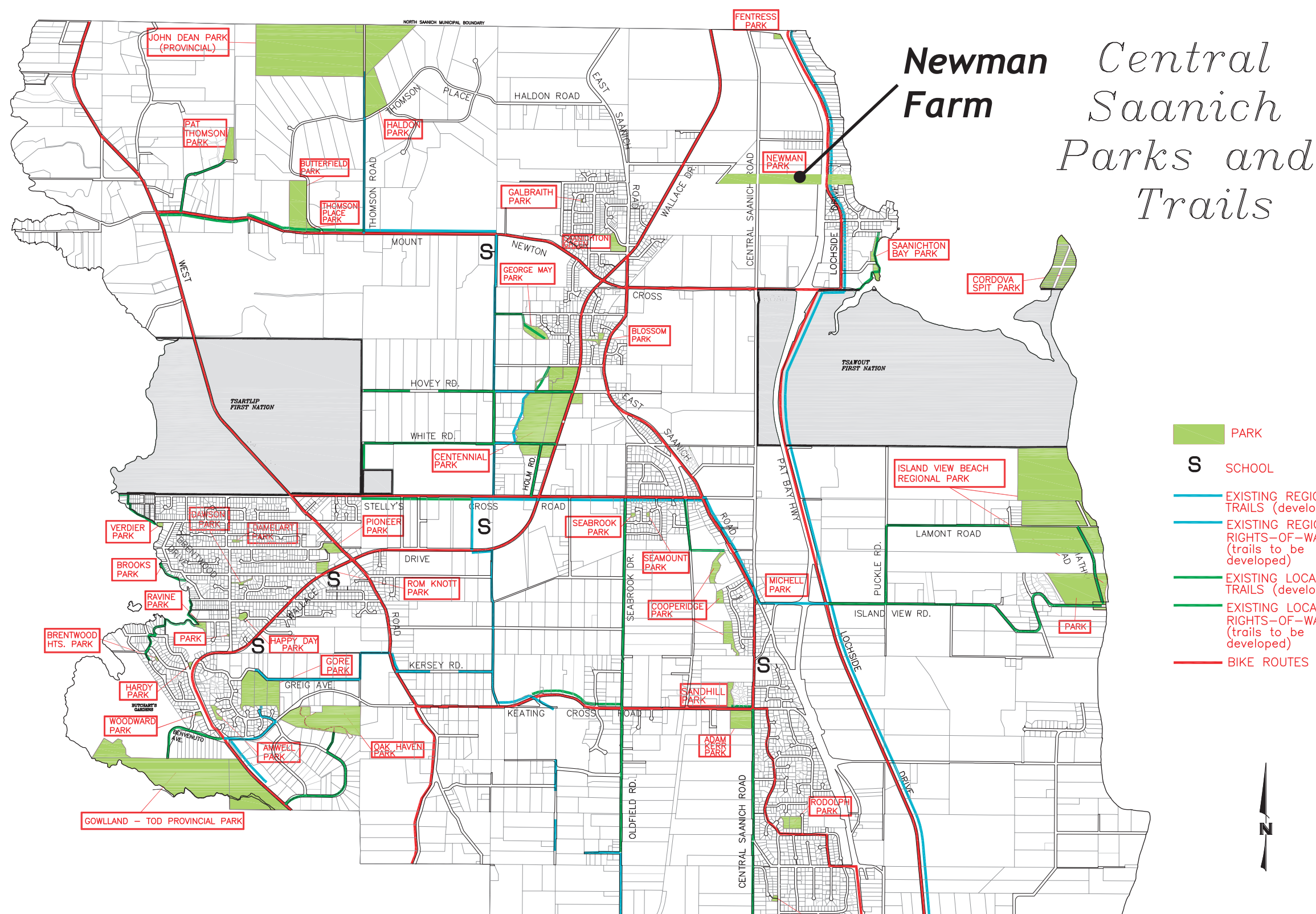
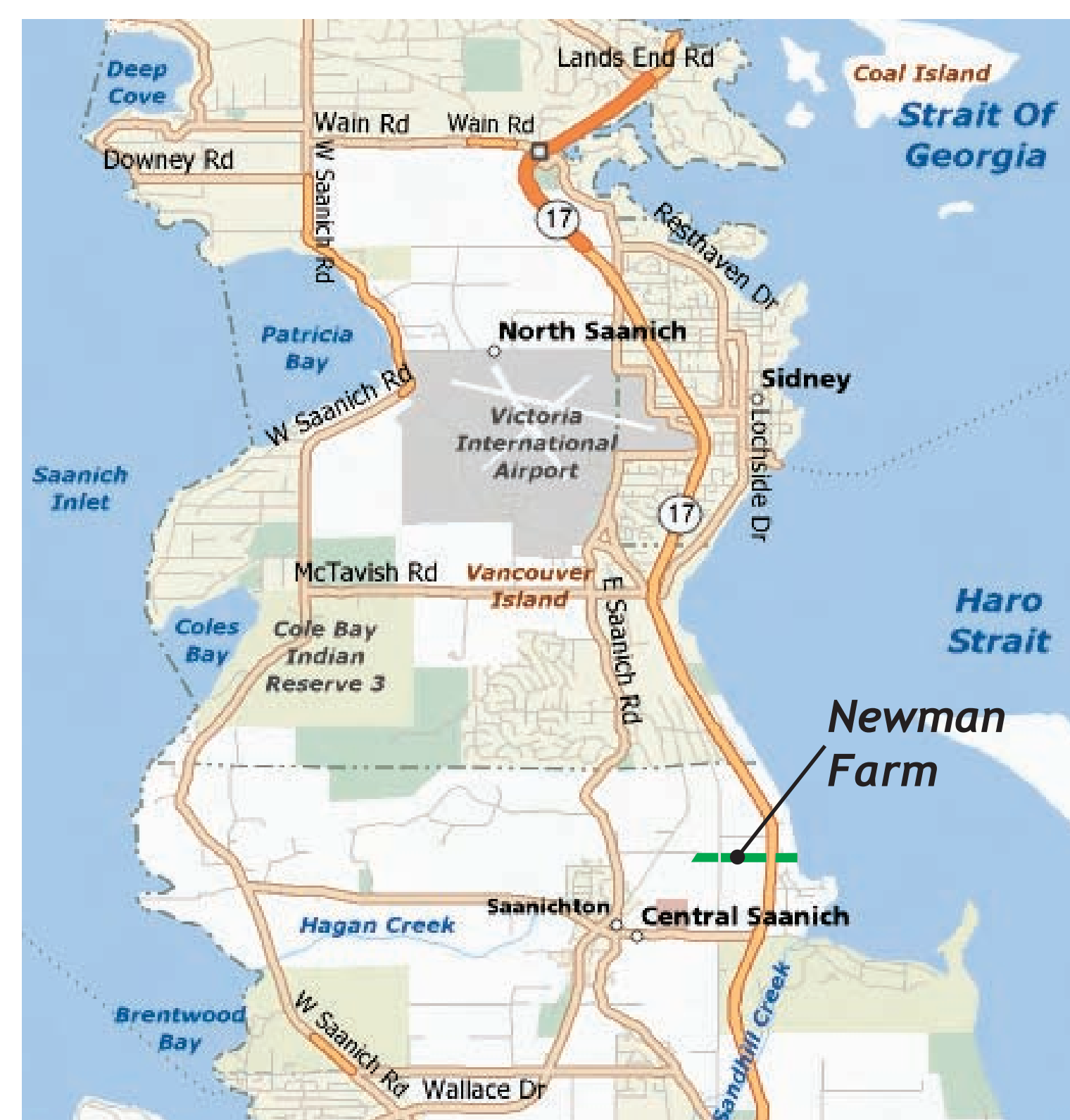


Central Saanich has taken initial steps to stabilize the buildings on site & address immediate safety & security issues. The Newman Farm Working Group, made up of a dedicated group of volunteers, has been preserving archival materials left by the family & researching the family's place in the history of the Saanich Peninsula. While the Newman Farm is not currently open to the public, Central Saanich is working on the appropriate transition of the property to public parkland. The development of a master plan is an important part of this transition process.

## Master Plan Process

In November of 2006, Central Saanich, with the assistance of Masselink Environmental Design, began an indepth analysis & master planning process for the park. The goals established for the master plan process were:

- Determine the management direction for the Farm as public parkland;
- Establish a guiding vision & set of stewardship principles;
- Determine priorities for short-term action; &
- Identify opportunities & partnerships for assistance & support.



## Context

Central Saanich currently has over 80 hectares in 32 municipal parks.

Central Saanich's park system includes 20 nature parks, 5 neighbourhood parks, 3 community parks, & 4 children's play areas. These parks protect a variety of cultural and natural areas & provide a wide range of recreation opportunities.

Newman Farm is one of the latest editions to this system.





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## Proposed Guiding Vision

*"The community of Central Saanich will care for Newman Farm in a manner that honours the legacy of the Newman Family, reveals our agrarian heritage, demonstrates our values & involves & considers our community."*



## Central Recommendation



Manage the Park in a manner that effectively protects & expresses its agricultural heritage - that of a small, subsistence, maritime Peninsula Farm - & maintain the high stewardship standards established by the Newman family for over a century.

By accepting these limitations Central Saanich will ensure the protection and maintenance of this fragile but truly unique, ecologically complex & healthy, heritage farm.





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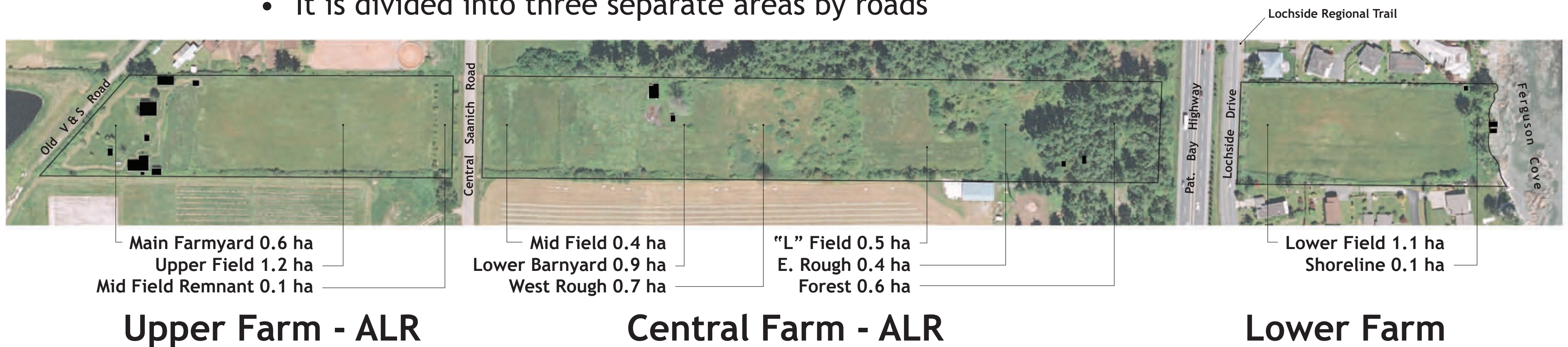
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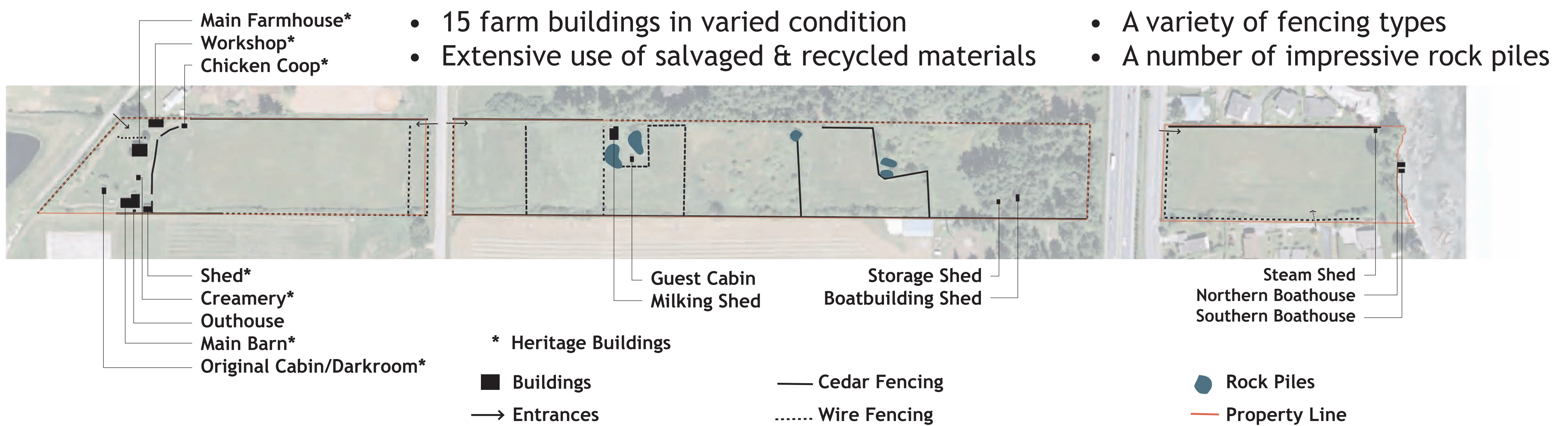


## Farm Areas

- 80% of the Farm is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve
- It is divided into three separate areas by roads

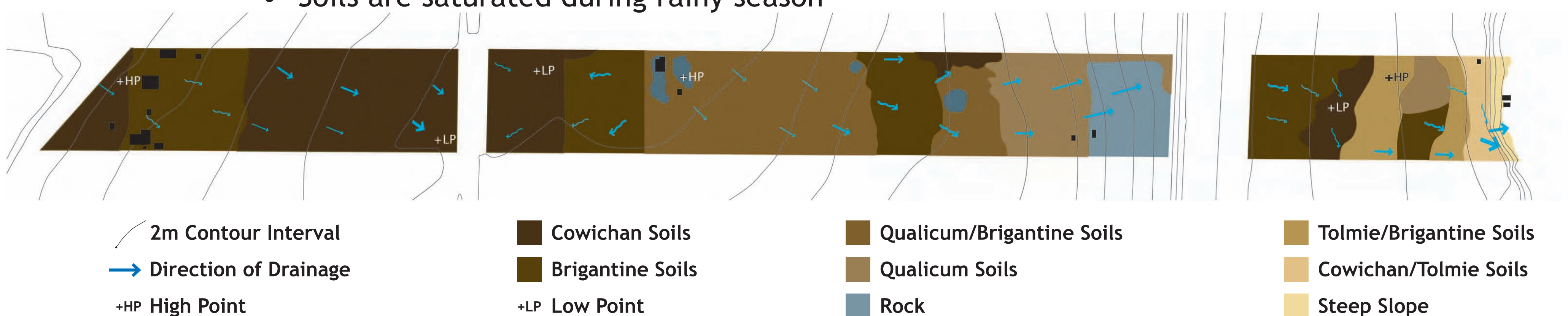


## Existing Infrastructure



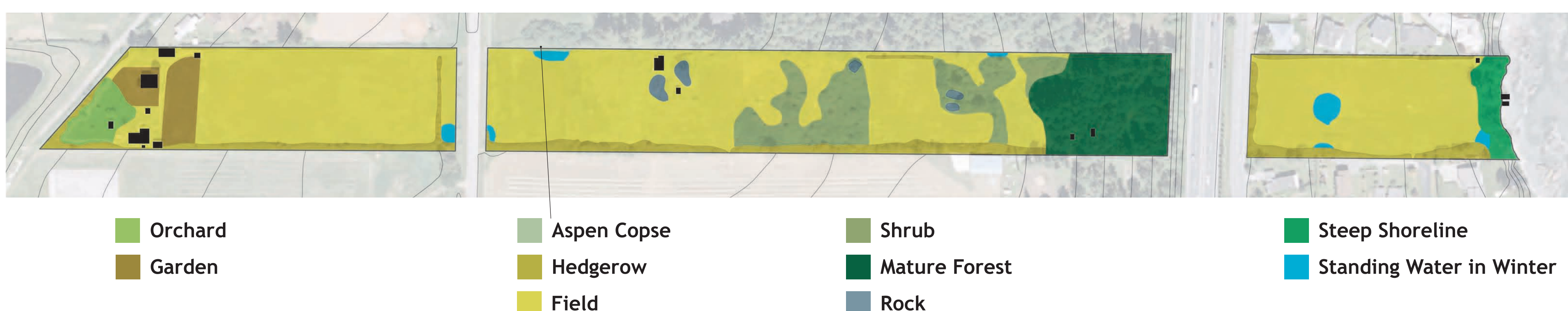
## Soils & Drainage

- Soils are generally gravelly & stoney
- Soils are saturated during rainy season
- Sustainably managed & improved



## Habitat

- Important & visible aspect of Farm
- Wide variety of habitat types present
- Valued by Newman family







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## Heritage

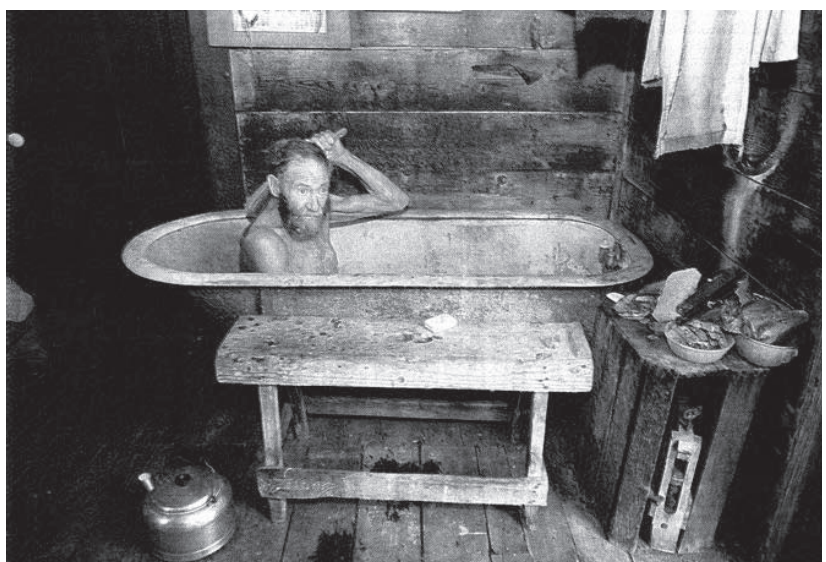
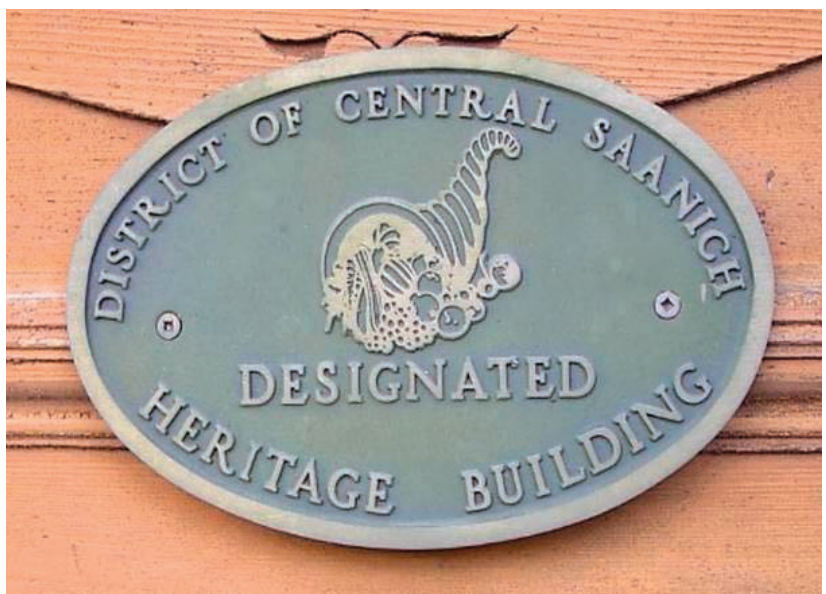
Newman Farm has a unique & important history. The Farm remained in one family's ownership & was maintained as a subsistence farm without the benefit of indoor plumbing, running water or electricity for over 100 years. Its relatively unchanged condition provides an opportunity to understand & appreciate both the Newman family & the lives of many turn-of-the-century pioneer Peninsula farm families.

### Suggested Approach:

*Bring the history of the Farm to life & demonstrate its relevance through the Farm's programs & activities.*

### Recommendations:

- Maintain & reveal the Farm's cultural & historic features.
- Retain & preserve or rehabilitate all buildings with the exception of the abandoned boatbuilding shed.
- Initiate a comprehensive historical study of the Farm.
- Consider municipal heritage designation for the remaining buildings.
- Involve the community in the care & preservation or rehabilitation of the Farm's historical features.



## Agriculture

Agriculture was a central & defining activity around which the Farm & its buildings were developed. For over a century the Newmans practiced a type of subsistence farming that was organic in nature, involved little or no irrigation, improved the health of the Farm's stoney soils, & allowed for the integration & protection of nature. Today, two-thirds of the Farm is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The re-establishment of the Farm's agricultural activities & management approach would provide a more complete expression & understanding of the Farm, the Newman family & early pioneer families like them.

### Suggested Approach:

*Encourage the resumption of agricultural activities that relect the organic & subsistence practices of the Newman family.*

### Recommendations:

- Respect & embrace the limitations imposed by the Farm site & its history.
- Develop the agricultural program slowly - resources & interest permitting.
- Involve interested members of the public in the care & restoration of the Farm's agricultural features.
- Make the proposed caretaker position responsible for the management of the Farm's agricultural programs.







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Photo Credit: John Newman  
Date: September 29, 1989



## Ecology

Newman Farm encompasses a wide range of habitat types including shoreline, mature Douglas fir forest, mixed scrub, open field & extensive hedgerows. This diversity of natural areas in turn supports a wide diversity of wildlife. The amount & extent of natural habitat found on the Farm, the presence of numerous bird houses, the number of nature photographs taken on the Farm by John Newman, & stories remembered by friends & neighbours indicate that nature was important to the Newman family & a valued part of the Farm.

### Suggested Approach:

*Demonstrate how farms, residential properties & regional parks can benefit from the consideration & incorporation of wild & natural ecosystems, habitats & features.*

### Recommendations:

- Protect & enhance the Farm's existing ecological features.
- Avoid the establishment of utilities, recreational facilities & maintenance programs that might negatively impact the Farm's ecological attributes.
- Establish programs & activities that reveal & benefit the Farm's ecological features.

## Education

Newman Farm's historic, ecological & agricultural features provide a range of educational opportunities. Newman Farm is perhaps the best remaining example of a small, subsistence-based, maritime farm on the Saanich Peninsula. It provides an incredible opportunity to establish a better understanding of how the region's early farm families lived & farmed. Through careful development & management the Farm could also become a living example of sustainable land management practices.

### Suggested Approach:

*Recognize that "everything educates" & realize educational opportunities through the careful restoration, revitalization, sharing & use of the Farm's unique values & features.*

### Recommendations:

- Establish guided site tours & talks that allow visitors to develop a better understanding of the Farm & local history.
- Involve interested members of the public in the care & restoration of the Farm's historic, agricultural, & ecological features.
- Provide appropriate directional & interpretive signage.
- Host workshops & courses that connect to & reveal the Farm's core values & features.





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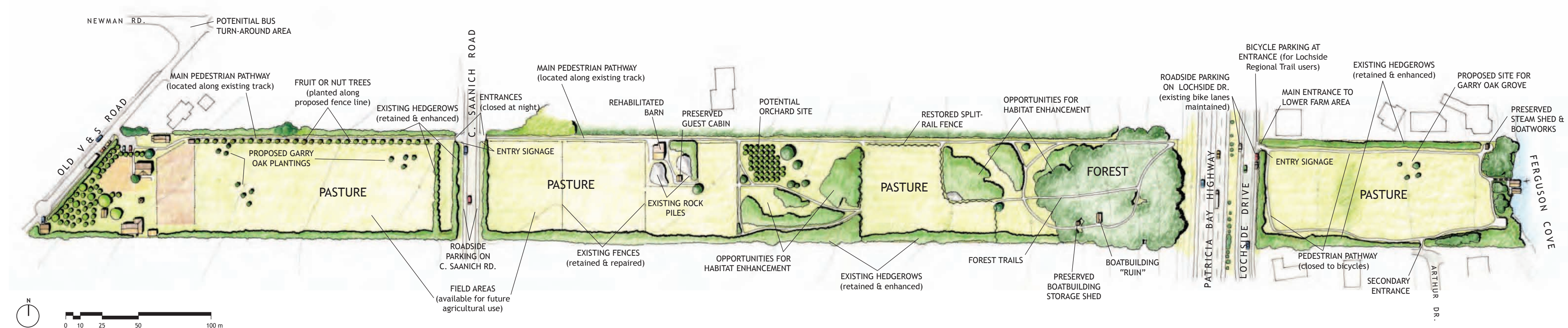
## Recreation & Park Use

The Newman family left their farm to the District of Central Saanich to be managed in perpetuity as a park. They felt that the Farm should be protected & shared with the larger community. Given that the Newman's lives were so connected to & described by the Farm it may be beneficial to have their former on-farm activities & pursuits guide future park uses.

### Suggested Approach:

*Support activities that are historically appropriate & enhance the Farm's unique & sensitive historic, agricultural & ecological features & values.*

Newman Farm



## Potential Park Activities:

- Subsistence-focused agricultural activities & demonstrations.
- Boat building.
- Restoration work on buildings, fences, etc.
- Natural history.
- Passive recreation (unstructured play & exploration of the fields & forest, walking, tours of the Farm, picnicking, viewing/appreciating nature).
- Photography & artistic pursuits.
- Associated community events or gatherings.

## Recommendations:

- Promote the establishment of facilities that support the Farm's features & values.
- Provide natural walking paths through the Central & Lower areas of the Farm.
- Provide parking along Old V&S & Central Saanich Roads, & Lochside Drive.
- Provide parking along roadways located adjacent to the Farm.
- Establish directional & interpretive signage.
- Restrict beach access to Ferguson Cove due to safety & security issues.
- Where possible use existing Farm buildings to accommodate park functions & activities.
- Establish a permanent presence on the site i.e. caretaker & residence.

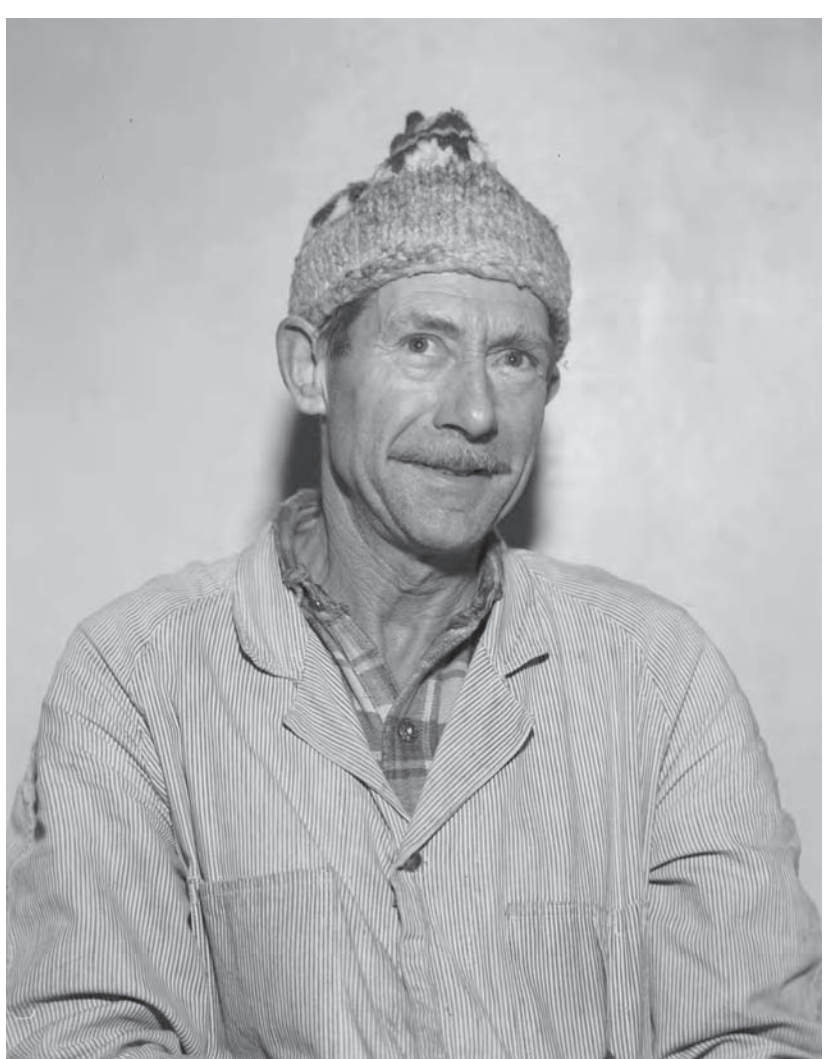




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## Community Involvement

For the better part of a century neighbours & the local community have helped support the Newman family & their Farm. Today that support continues through the help of interested community members & neighbours who are assisting Central Saanich with the preservation of the Farm & family's history. The protection & management of the Farm in perpetuity while effectively honouring & sharing the history & values of the Newman family depends on the continued interest & involvement of the community.

### Suggested Approach:

*Involve the interested individuals, community groups & organizations in the care & restoration of the Farm.*

### Recommendations:

- Support & formalize the existing Newman Farm Working Group.
- Establish a volunteer docent program to provide guided site tours.
- Implement a Neighbourhood Park Watch program to improve site security.
- Invite the local First Nation community to share their knowledge & become involved in the management of the Park.

## Responsible Management

Newman Farm should be managed in a way that is fiscally responsible & in a manner in keeping with values & principles of Central Saanich & the Newman family. The Newmans managed the Farm carefully, utilizing local resources in a restrained & respectful manner. Today, this is referred to as an ecological or holistic management approach. Such an approach will require careful planning, & community participation & support.

### Suggested Approach:

*Restore the Farm carefully & slowly. Work should proceed only if there is the knowledge, community interest, & resources necessary to support it.*

### Recommendations:

- Establish a permanent committee to oversee the implementation of the master plan.
- Practice restraint, thrift & creativity in the Farm's development & operation.
- Create a new agroecological park category that more accurately describes & maintains the Farm's historical, ecological & agricultural features.
- Address safety & security issues before opening the Farm to the public.
- Involve the community & ask for their support & participation.





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## Implementation

To successfully restore this unique heritage farm the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the master plan will require careful consideration. Therefore, the Farm must be restored slowly & carefully, limiting expenditures, & allowing for the time necessary to acquire the required knowledge, support, & resources. Apart from immediately addressing pressing issues of security, safety, & the protection of aging buildings, time should & can be taken to properly restore & open this unique & special park.



## Suggested Approach:

*Work should proceed only if there is the capacity (knowledge, community interest, & resources) necessary to support it.*



### Phase I - *short term (1-2 years)*

- Begin once Master Plan is accepted by Council.
- Establish a permanent committee to oversee the implementation of the master plan.
- Address structural, rot & water penetration issues for the Farm's buildings.
- Reduce liability & security concerns.
- Establish the proposed Neighbourhood Park Watch programme.
- Develop & implement an interim landscape management plan.
- If resources allow, provide limited public access.
- Apply for funding & explore partnership opportunities.



### Phase II - *as resources permit*

- Consider parking, entrance & enhanced security (i.e. caretaker) issues.
- Open the Farm up to the public.
- Further restore the Farm buildings & infrastructure.
- Explore the utilization of the Farm's buildings for activities & events.
- Begin to develop & implement agricultural & educational activities & programs.



## Additional Support

The successful restoration & management of Newman Farm will require the support from outside funding sources & partnerships with appropriate & interested community groups & organizations. A number of potential funding sources have already been identified that could assist with the protection & restoration of the Farm's buildings.

A number of community farms located on Vancouver Island & further abroad are available for additional guidance & ideas.

Central Saanich is open to proposals of interest from community groups & individuals interested in participating in the realization of the vision for the Newman Farm.

## NEXT STEPS...





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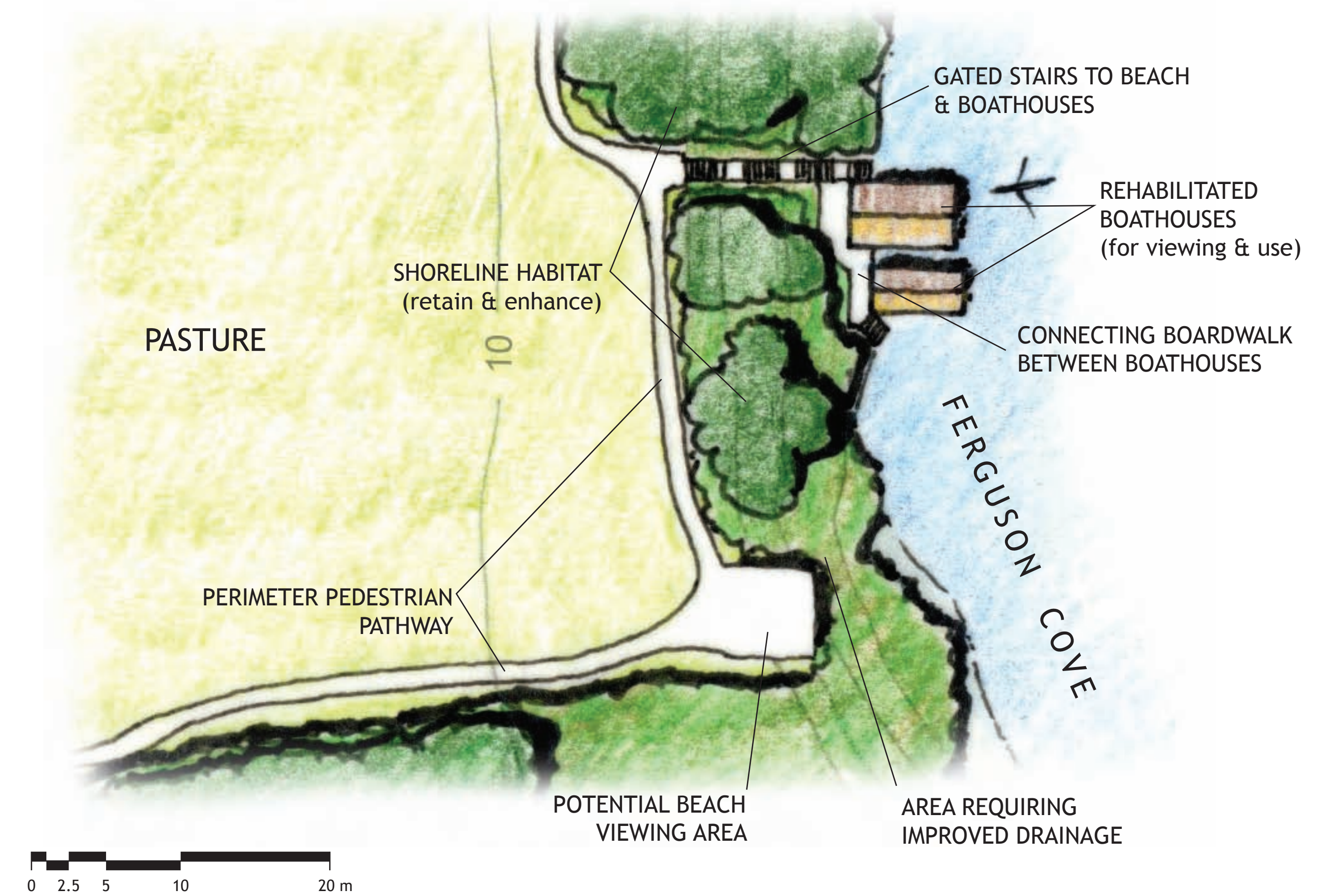
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## Homestead Area



## Shoreline Area



## Newman Farm

