



Ginty's Pond Phase 2 (2024) Wetland Restoration CONSTRUCTION AND RE-VEGETATION PHASE 2

Southern Interior Land Trust | February 2025



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¹ Cover photo is the restored pond looking west toward Wooden Road on September 19, 2024. Phase 2 (2024) is in the foreground; Phase 1 (2022) is in the background beyond the low isthmus.

Introduction

Ginty's Pond is a cut-off river oxbow of the Similkameen River at Cawston, BC. Wetland habitats are rare in the region—over 90% of wetlands and their associated riparian areas have been lost since the 1800's. Ginty's Pond is a 6.3-hectare conservation property owned since 1990 by the Southern Interior Land Trust (SILT) and leased to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (MWLRS) for management. Ginty's Pond, also known as nʔaŋxʷt (nah-wheet) is within smelqmix Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) territory.

Construction of river flood dikes has largely forfeited the opportunity for new wetland creation in the lower Similkameen watershed. Dikes built in the 1970s fully separated Ginty's Pond from river flooding and flood disturbance. From 1990 to 2020, Ginty's Pond transformed from an open water marsh fringed with cattail to a near monoculture of cattail with little open water, a probable result of hydrologic change and nutrient inputs.

Restorative efforts at nʔaŋxʷt began in 2019, with a Wetland Keepers community workshop sponsored by the BC Wildlife Federation (BCWF). Since then, SILT, LSIB, BCWF, and MWLRS have partnered to heal nʔaŋxʷt - Ginty's Pond—to restore its more productive open water cattail-fringed and riparian-woodland edged habitats. In 2021, the project team completed environmental and safety plans and permitting, some fencing, and some initial riparian habitat improvements. In 2022, the team completed Phase 1 of the wetland restoration, with about 1.2 hectares of cattail wetland deepened to open water conditions, and about 0.8 hectares of new shrub-thicket riparian habitat created by planting of about 1800 native trees and shrubs on the excavated soils.

In 2024, the project team completed Phase 2 of the wetland restoration. Phase 2 objectives included: 1) restore a further 1.16 ha of cattail-marsh/open water habitat and 0.47 ha of at-risk riparian woodland-shrub habitat, and 2) Facilitate First Nations (smelqmix) engagement in wetland restoration actions.

Results

In 2024, the project team accomplished:

- Deepened 1.0 hectare of cattail-dominated wetland to open water conditions.²
- Created 0.7 hectares of new (former cattail) shrub-thicket riparian habitat.³
- Over 115 large pieces of Cottonwood, Douglas-fir and Larch (including stumps) were added to the wetland for long-term habitat structure and diversity.
- Four turtle nesting mounds were built from excavated sand and gravel, and 19 basking boulders and riparian rock piles were placed for turtles and other wildlife.
- Continuous monitoring during construction activities detected no indigenous cultural or archeological features.
- Continuous monitoring during construction activities detected no known wildlife injured or killed. One Northern Pacific Treefrog and five Western Terrestrial Garter Snake were moved to secure habitat for their safety on a discretionary basis.
- About 2,500 native trees & shrubs (2,200 rooted, 300 live stakes) were planted in the newly created riparian area. Species included Cottonwood, Water Birch, Red-Osier Dogwood, Snowberry, Wood's Rose, Oregon Grape, and native willow.
- The 0.7-hectare riparian area was also seeded with Fall Rye to quickly establish a weed-limiting ground cover.
- Four new permanent photo plots were established for monitoring the Phase 2 area.
- Wood debris, and all remaining construction materials and supplies were removed from the equipment and materials staging area, and disturbed soils re-seeded.
- Removed and properly disposed of 375 kg of invasive Purple Loosestrife plants.
- Removed and properly disposed of 250 kg of invasive Yellow-Flag Iris seed pods.
- Surveyed ten 1x1-metre vegetation plots (pre-construction) in the Phase 2 area.
- Re-surveyed five 3x3-metre vegetation plots in the Phase 1 restored area.
- Mowed (to setback) 0.63 hectares of cattail regrowth in the Phase 1 restored area.
- Removed and properly disposed of all encountered garbage, glass, golf balls, plastic items, tires, milled wood, and metal debris from the project area.
- In collaboration with The Nature Trust of BC, facilitated installation of 750 metres of wildlife-friendly property boundary fence on both sides of the Phase 2 area.
- Installed two cavity-nesting duck boxes donated by a South Okanagan naturalist.

² Area calculations for excavation and soil placement from RWE post-construction report.

³ Based on presumed normal water level (pending pond filling) and planted areas.

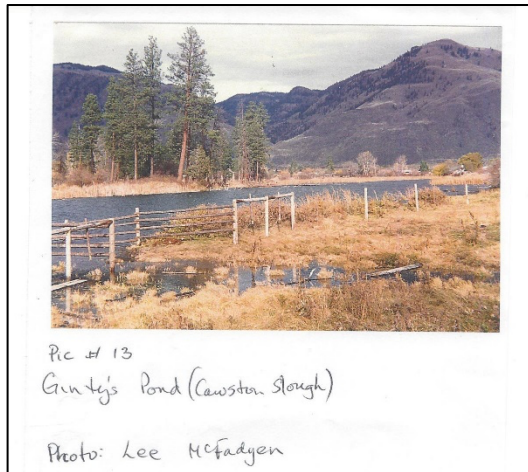
Funders & Donors

SILT thanks and appreciates the support of:

- BC Wildlife Federation (Watershed Security Fund)
- BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (Together for Wildlife Fund)
- Lower Similkameen Indian Band
- Gorman Bros Lumber Ltd.
- Weyerhaeuser Canada Ltd.
- T.L. Timber Ltd.
- Keremeos Septic Service
- South Okanagan Naturalists Club
- SILT's nʔaʕṣ̓ ʷt - Ginty's Pond neighbours
- Community and other interested volunteers.

Project Photos

Phase 2 nʔaʕšw̓t - Ginty's Pond Wetland Restoration, 2024



Phase 2 area in 1991 (for context)



Phase 2 area in 2022 (at high water)



Phase 2 area in 2024 (post-excitation)



Phase 2 excavation in progress



Imported wood debris



Example placement of wood debris



Phase 2 excavation near complete



Moving plants to the opposite side



Volunteer planters, November 2024



Mowing cattail in Phase 1 area, October 2024



LSIB community members harvesting cattail



Portion of new SILT boundary fence



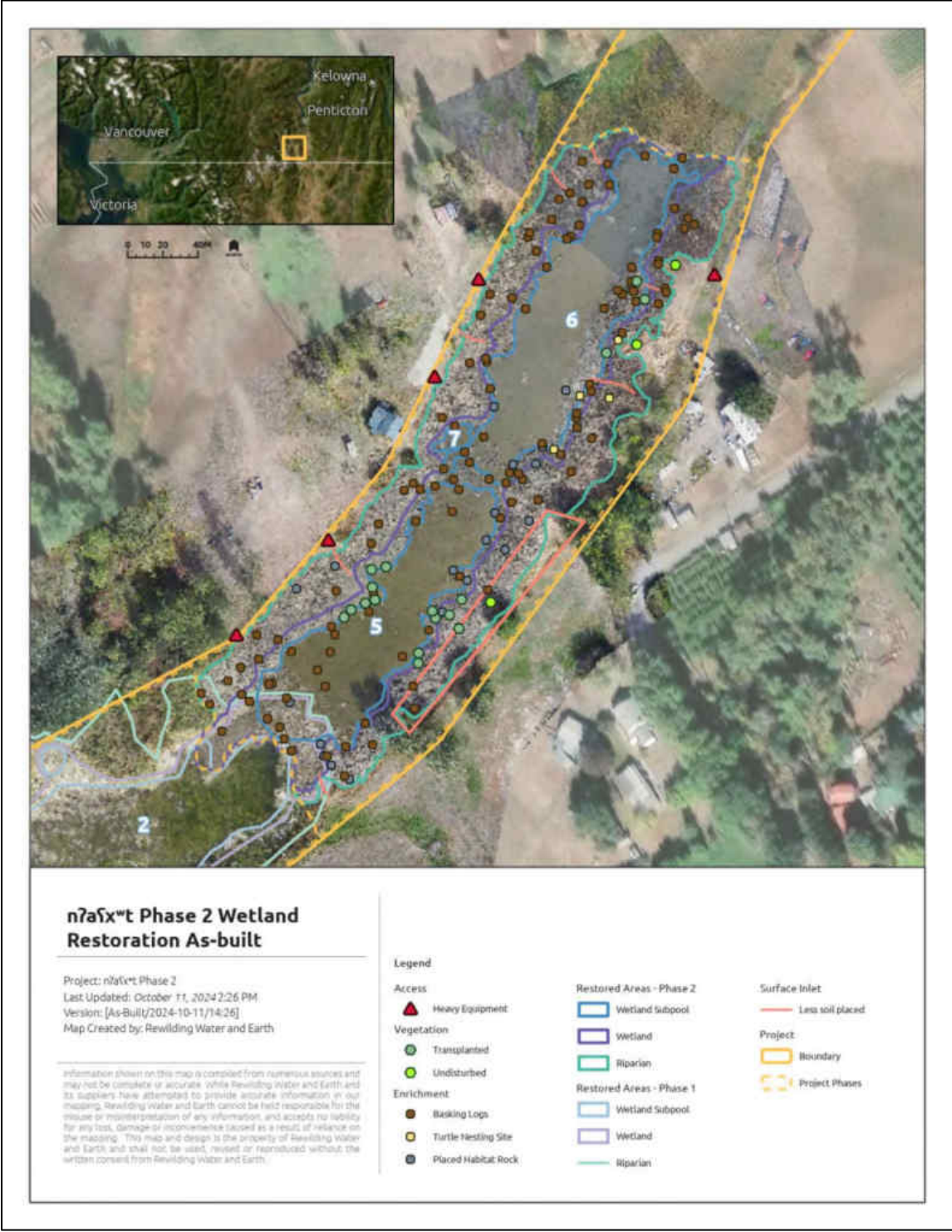
Phases 2 looking west over Phase 1



Planted Cottonwood in Phase 1, 2024



Local youth shinney, Feb 2025



Phase 2 pond condition “As Built” post-restoration, October 2024