

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Public Shorelines Under Threat: Armouring by Private Landowners Erodes Habitat, Culture, and Community Access**

Victoria, BC – Peninsula Streams Society is raising an alarm over a growing assault on the region's shorelines. In both Sidney and North Saanich, private homeowners are currently installing hard armouring—rock walls and similar structures—at or below the natural boundary of their properties. These actions impact shared public commons, eliminating the beaches that sustain fish, wildlife, and people alike.

Shorelines are more than property lines—they are living systems. Beaches provide critical spawning habitat for forage fish, a foundation species for salmon, seabirds, and whales. They also drive natural coastal processes like sand movement, protect communities from storms, and serve as cultural and recreational gathering spaces. For Indigenous Nations, these spaces are integral to rights, practices, and identity. “Every time a shoreline is armoured, we lose more than habitat,” says Kyle Armstrong, Executive Director at Peninsula Streams Society. “We lose a place for children to play, for Nations to harvest, for salmon to feed. We lose the natural resilience that beaches provide.”

Despite these losses, the protections in place to prevent further destruction are insufficient. Current regulations are short-sighted, poorly understood, and rarely enforced. With little oversight, alternatives like nature-based solutions are seldom considered, and there are few incentives to restore or protect the public good. Meanwhile, repercussions for damaging shared ecosystems remain minimal, with many property owners finding it easier to ask for forgiveness rather than permission.

“This is happening in our communities, right now,” says Armstrong. “It’s not just Sidney or North Saanich—it continues all around the region. In areas where these structures have already been in place for decades, we can see the loss, and it will exacerbate with Sea Level Rise and increased storm surges brought on by climate change.”

Peninsula Streams Society is calling for urgent action from municipalities, the Province, and the federal government to strengthen protections for the shoreline commons, support and incentivize nature-based alternatives, and find solutions that recognize the cultural and ecological importance of beaches.

#### **About Peninsula Streams Society:**

Peninsula Streams Society is a non-profit organization based in Greater Victoria, dedicated to restoring and protecting local watersheds and shorelines. Through science, education, and community partnerships, PSS works to build healthy habitats for fish, wildlife, and people.

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