2026 Land Awards

NOMINATION KIT

Celebrating leadership in sustainable, equitable, and socially just land use and real estate across BC

REAL ESTATE Foundation OF BC

Land Awards

Tŝilhqox, Tŝilhqot'in territory. Photo: Stephen Hui

W̱SÁNEĆ School Board, 2024 Land Use and Conservation winner. Photo: Sarah Race

ABOUT THE LAND AWARDS

In 2010, the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) created the Land Awards. Presented every two years, the Land Awards celebrate big ideas and bold leadership in sustainable, equitable, and socially just land use and real estate across BC.

Specifically, the awards recognize outstanding projects and remarkable leaders that protect the lands and waters we love and create sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities. There are five categories for projects and two categories for individuals.

Winners and finalists are selected by judging committees composed of community leaders and subject–matter experts, supported by REFBC Governors and staff. The awards are presented at the Land Awards Gala, a night of camaraderie, revelry, and inspiration.

LEARN MORE: landawards.com
CONTACT: landawards@refbc.ca

HOW TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION

EACH NOMINATION SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Nomination Form (Project, Land Champion, or Emerging Leader)
2. Photos/images (3+)
3. Letter of support (1)

OPTIONAL: Nominators may include additional supporting material (e.g. reports, CVs, news articles, links to websites) to help communicate the nominee's impact. Please choose supporting material thoughtfully. Judges may not have time to review long articles and videos.

SUBMIT A NOMINATION FORM: landawards.com

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS: March 5, 2026 – 5 p.m. Pacific Time

Contact Us

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Frequently Asked Questions

Can I self-nominate?

A project may be nominated by the lead organization. Land Champion and Emerging Leader nominations must be submitted by another person (not a family member).

My organization isn't a non-profit — can we still nominate a project?

Yes, nominations are open to First Nations, non-profit organizations, universities and colleges, trade associations, governments and public agencies, and private companies.

Can I nominate someone who is deceased?

We accept posthumous Land Champion nominations, in recognition of a lifetime of work. Emerging Leader nominations are open to living individuals.

My project was nominated in a previous year — can I nominate it again?

If a project is not a past winner or finalist, it is eligible to be nominated — provided it achieved a milestone in 2024 or 2025.

AWARD CATEGORIES

FOR PROJECTS

1. Land Use and Conservation
2. Fresh Water
3. Built Environment
4. Food Sovereignty
5. Real Estate

FOR INDIVIDUALS

1. Land Champion
2. Emerging Leader

TIMELINE

1 Nominations

The nomination period opens on January 13, 2026.
The deadline for nominations is 5 p.m. on March 5, 2026.

2 Judging Criteria

Committees of judges meet in March 2026
to review all submissions.

3 Notification

The winners and finalists will be notified in April 2026.

4 Announcement

The finalists will be publicly announced in May 2026.

5 Presentation

The awards will be presented at the 2026 Land Awards Gala —
Thursday, June 4, 2026 at the Coast Coal Harbour Hotel.

PROJECT AWARDS

These awards recognize projects that raise the bar for sustainability, equity, and social justice in land use and real estate.

Eligible projects include buildings, campaigns, plans, policies, programs, publications, research, tools, and other initiatives in BC. Projects may demonstrate leadership through innovation, impact, collaboration, and engagement; by advancing Indigenous governance, knowledge, and rights; and/or by addressing the impacts of climate change.

There are five categories. Judges will select one winner and three additional finalists in each category.

ELIGIBILITY

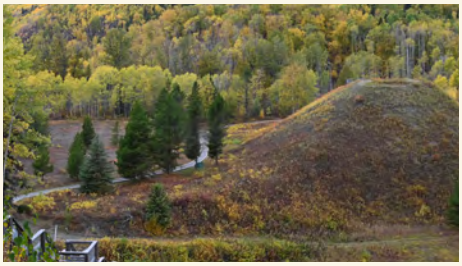
- Project is based in BC
- Project is led by organization(s) with strong ties to BC (e.g. non-profit, First Nation, public or private sector)
- Project achieved a milestone in 2024 or 2025
- Project is undertaken in collaboration with others

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Innovation
- Impact
- Collaboration
- Engagement

sxʷčisəmɬəɬ community garden, Tsleil-Waututh Nation. Photo: Grady Mitchell

PROJECT AWARDS



1 Land Use and Conservation

This award recognizes projects that strengthen relationships between people and land, as well as contribute to a healthy environment and resilient communities.

2024 WINNER

- **W̱SÁNEĆ School Board**
  T̓ET̓ÁĆES Revitalization Project

2024 FINALISTS

- **Líl̓ wat Forestry Ventures**
  Q'welq'welústen/Mount Meager Landslide Restoration
- **Nadleh Whut'en First Nation, Stellat'en First Nation & Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC**
  Yun Ghunli (Defenders of the Land)
- **Nature-Based Solutions Foundation**
  IPCA Conservation Financing for Endangered Ecosystems

2 Fresh Water

This award recognizes projects that protect, restore, or steward watersheds and ensure rivers, lakes, and wetlands are healthy and valued.

2024 WINNER

- **Comox Valley Project Watershed Society**
  Kus-kus-sum: Unpave Paradise

2024 FINALISTS

- **Kingfisher Interpretive Centre Society**
  Conservation Through Education
- **Living Lakes Canada**
  Columbia Basin Water Monitoring Framework
- **Nature Trust of BC**
  Enhancing Estuary Resilience:
  An Innovative Approach to Sustaining Fish and Fish Habitat in a Changing Climate
- **Watershed Watch Salmon Society**
  Connected Waters: Working Together for a Resilient Floodplain

PROJECT AWARDS

3 Built Environment

This award recognizes projects that advance affordable housing, climate resilient buildings, inclusive spaces, or sustainable communities.

2024 WINNER

- **First Nations Home EnergySave**
  (Fraser Basin Council)

2024 FINALISTS

- **BC Transit**
  Victoria handyDART Centre
- **Climate Caucus**
  Managing Natural Assets: Handbook for Local Governments
- **Kambo Energy Group**
  Empower Me
- **Pembina Institute, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, City of Vancouver & Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation**
  Reframed Initiative and Lab

4 Food Sovereignty

This award recognizes projects that increase food security, improve access to culturally important food lands, and build resilient local food systems.

2024 WINNER

- **Nawalakw**
  Nawalakw Community Farm

2024 FINALISTS

- **Rivershed Society of BC**
  sc̓e:ɬxʷəy̓əm/Salmon River — Foodlands Corridor Restoration Program
- **Salish Sea Regenerative Farm Society**
  Salish Sea Regenerative Farm

5 Real Estate

This award recognizes projects led by real estate organizations, professionals, or developers that advance sustainability and inclusion, contribute to reconciliation, or address climate change.

2024 WINNER

- **Musqueam Indian Band & Musqueam Capital Corporation**
  Iləm̓

2024 FINALISTS

- **BC Northern Real Estate Board**
  Water and Land Sustainability Issues Webinar Series
- **Greater Vancouver Realtors**
  Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Campaign
- **Real Estate Institute of BC**
  Advancing Excellence Initiative

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

These awards recognize people who are leading the way with respect to sustainability, equity, and social justice in land use and real estate.

There are two categories. Judges will select one winner in each category.

1 Land Champion

This award recognizes a person who has made exemplary and lasting contributions to land use, conservation, freshwater or food systems, community planning, or real estate practices in BC.

The Land Champion has a clear vision, brings communities together, inspires action, and is certain to leave a remarkable legacy for future generations.

ELIGIBILITY

- Nominee is a BC resident

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Leadership
- Impact
- Legacy
- Capacity-Building

2024 WINNER

Xtli'li'ye Lydia Hwitsum

Lydia Hwitsum has advocated for Indigenous and human rights locally, nationally, and internationally. Lydia is from the Quw'utsun Nation and served 10 years as elected chief of the Cowichan Tribes on Vancouver Island. She has 30 years of experience in Indigenous leadership positions and has served the community in many capacities. Currently, Lydia is Co-chair of the BC-First Nations Water Table, Co-commissioner of the First Nations Water Caucus, a member of the Watershed Security Fund Joint Executive, a BC Treaty Commissioner, and a Director for the BC First Nations Justice Council. A bridge-builder, she previously co-chaired the Cowichan Watershed Board, a unique partnership between First Nations and local governments that promotes collaborative stewardship of the Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds. Lydia also sat on the Indigenous Leaders Advisory Circle for the Healthy Watersheds Initiative. She speaks the Hul'q'umi'num' language and is guided by Cowichan values and teachings.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

2 Emerging Leader

This award recognizes a person or small group (age 35 or younger) who is having a positive impact on land use, conservation, freshwater or food systems, community planning, or real estate practices in BC.

The Emerging Leader inspires and empowers others and has demonstrated early successes and the capacity to make wider change.

ELIGIBILITY

- Nominee is a BC resident
- Nominee is 35 years old or younger (as of June 4, 2026)

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Leadership
- Initiative
- Collaboration
- Community-Building

2024 WINNER

Sulatiye' Maiya Modeste

Maiya Modeste is the P'hwulhp (Garry Oak) Restoration Project Coordinator for the Stqeeye' Learning Society. Stqeeye' is an Indigenous-led organization undertaking land restoration and education around Xwaaqw'um, a Quw'utsun village site on Saltspring Island. Maiya's work to revitalize once-thriving Indigenous food systems is guided by traditional teachings and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. A gifted speaker, she is passionate about educating Indigenous youth about traditional foods, such as Speenhw (camas), and hopes to feed Elders traditional meals. Maiya also sits on the Board of Directors for the Quw'utsun' Cultural Connections Society.

REAL ESTATE Foundation OF BC

Land Awards

2026 Land Awards

The Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) is a philanthropic organization working to advance sustainable, equitable, and socially just land use and real estate practices across BC. We fund projects, connect people, and share knowledge.

We recognize and acknowledge the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, as well as First Nations across BC, on whose territories we live, work, and learn.

REAL ESTATE FOUNDATION OF BC

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LAND AWARDS

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Front cover: Pitt Meadows, BC.
Photo: James Wheeler