



Gisele Rudischer and Sheila Malcolmson
Gabriola Island Local Trustees
Islands Trust
700 North Road
Gabriola Island, BC VOR 1X3

October 23, 2008

Dear Chairperson Stanhope:
Regional District of Nanaimo

RE: Letter of Support - Action for Water

Thank you for your leadership on the Action for Water initiative. The Gabriola Local Trust Committee recognizes the importance of this new program and understands that Electoral Area residents will be asked to support the establishment of a new service on November 15th.

The Action for Water program includes a number of activities designed to manage and protect our water resources. As a community that is reliant on our watersheds, we understand and support the Regional District of Nanaimo in its goal of establishing this electoral area service. The program's goals align with many of the goals and objectives of the Islands Trust Policy Statement, and the Official Community Plans adopted for Gabriola, Mudge, and DeCourcey Islands respectively (excerpts attached).

Watershed and land use planning options that arise from *Action for Water* would be up to the Local Trust Committee to consider implementing. However, this approach would allow the Local Trust Committee to focus its planning resources on other island issues while the RDN coordinates region-wide *Action for Water* activities. There are a variety of water issues in the Gabriola Local Trust Area that could be addressed in a cost-effective manner under *Action for Water* - for example, education and incentives for water conservation, and programs to identify failing septage systems and promote best management practices for maintaining these systems.

Our Committee supports the RDN's efforts to implement the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Action Plan through the establishment of this function, and we are grateful for your invitation to participate in its design. We congratulate you on the development of this important program and we look forward to working with you on future opportunities for partnership on watershed protection.

Sincerely,

Gisele Rudischer and Sheila Malcolmson
Local Trustees, Gabriola Local Trust Committee

cc: RDN Area B Director Berni Sperling

The service established by this bylaw [Proposed RDN Bylaw 1556] is the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service (the “Service”) for the following purposes in the Service Area:

- (a) increase the level of knowledge regarding drinking water sources to support the longterm sustainability of the water resource;*
- (b) coordinate efforts of provincial and local governments and non-governmental organizations with respect to drinking water source protection;*
- (c) increase the level of public awareness regarding drinking water and watershed protection requirements and strategies.*

This aligns with many objectives of the legislated Policy documents governing the Gabriola Local Trust Area (RDN Area B) and adopted as a result of broad community input. Only policies directly relevant to the RDN Action For Water proposal have been excerpted here:

Islands Trust Policy Statement (Islands Trust Council Bylaw 17, 1994)

3.3.3 Trust Council encourages government agencies, non-government organizations, property owners and occupiers to protect freshwater bodies, watercourses, wetlands, riparian zones and aquatic wildlife habitats through voluntary donation, acquisition, conservation covenants and careful management.

4.4.2 Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address measures that ensure:

- neither the density nor intensity of land use is increased in areas which are known to have a problem with the quality or quantity of the supply of freshwater,
- water quality is maintained, and
- existing, anticipated and seasonal demands for water are considered and allowed for.

4.4.3 Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address measures that ensure water use is not to the detriment of in-stream uses (Instream uses include water uses such as fish and habitat uses, aesthetic uses, recreational opportunities and the maintenance of water quality in lakes and streams and wetlands.)

4.4.4 Trust Council encourages island property owners, residents and visitors to adopt conservation practices in their use of freshwater.

4.4.7 Trust Council encourages government agencies, corporations, property owners and residents to use innovative technologies that promote efficient use of freshwater resources, including cisterns, alternative sewage disposal systems, reuse of water, the treatment and use of grey water, and the use of water saving devices.

Mudge Planning Area Official Community Plan (Bylaw 227, 2008)

Policy 9 Potable water from ground and surface water sources should be supplemented by collection and storage of rainwater through cisterns and ponds.

Policy 10 Water conservation equipment and practices shall be utilized.

Advocacy Policy 9 Effective technologies for water collection are encouraged.

Policy 13 The use of alternative technology to the traditional septic field and the safe recycling of grey water are supported if methods provide effective non-polluting and energy efficient means to treat and dispose of effluent.

Advocacy Policy 10 Effective technologies for sewage disposal and drainage that protects groundwater, surface water and marine environments from contamination, sedimentation and degradation is encouraged.

Advocacy Policy 11 Sewage disposal systems require routine maintenance in order to prevent contamination of potable water supplies; residents and land owners are responsible for the maintenance of their systems;

Advocacy Policy 12 The Vancouver Island Health Authority and the Regional District of Nanaimo are encouraged to:

- permit newly developed waste water treatment systems of demonstrated efficacy, composting toilets, constructed wetlands and reuse of grey water as alternatives to conventional septic disposal systems;
- implement pilot studies on alternate systems for waste water treatment;
- develop a regular septic system maintenance program requirement; and,
- develop a program to detect and correct failing septic systems.

Gabriola Island Official Community Plan (Bylaw 177, 1997)

Water Supply Policies

- a) Methods of water conservation such as low water use fixtures, retention of rainwater and runoff in cisterns and ponds and other means shall be encouraged.
- b) The use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides shall be discouraged in order to protect water sources.
- e) Abandoned wells should be properly capped so as to avoid contamination of the aquifer.
- f) Industrial or recreational uses which are consumptive of large quantities of water shall be discouraged.
- g) The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Environment, Lands and Parks shall be requested to:
 - i) assess the quality and quantity of groundwater on Gabriola;
 - ii) identify, map and monitor the quality of water catchment areas and watersheds on Gabriola;
 - iii) ensure that drilled wells with high salt content be capped or grouted to protect against the intrusion of salt into the fresh water table.
- h) Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks shall be requested to implement groundwater licensing regulations.
- i) The Regional District of Nanaimo shall be requested to study the feasibility of creating water storage reservoirs on Crown land for improving the overall retention of rainwater.

Liquid Waste Management Advocacy Policies

- c) The Ministry of Health and Ministry of the Environment, Lands and Parks shall be encouraged to consider alternative methods of sewage disposal and the beneficial reuse of treated domestic waste water.
- e) All existing septic disposal systems in the planning area should be maintained in proper working order so as to prevent pollution of the fresh, marine and groundwaters.

DeCourcey Island Official Community Plan (GBLTC Bylaw 16, 1982)

- 2) Septic fields should be situated to minimize impact on groundwater supplies.
- 4) Alternate sewage disposal methods should be encouraged.
- 5) Groundwater should be monitored to determine the effects of septic tank fields.