



Islands Trust

Community Plan

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Community Plan Project Update

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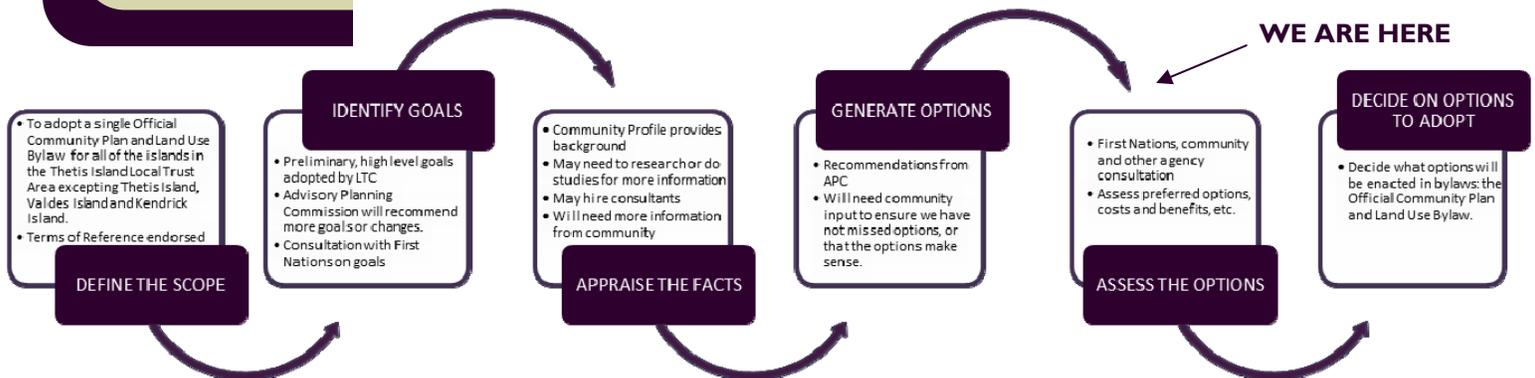
We now have a draft of the Associated Islands Land Use Bylaw ready for public feedback. The Land Use Bylaw and the latest version of the draft Official Community Plan (*it's been updated since it was first passed around last summer*) are available on the Community Plan project page: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/thetis/projects-initiatives>. The Land Use Bylaw (LUB) builds upon the policy directions set out in the draft Official Community Plan (OCP) and is where the detailed regulations are laid out. The intention has been to reflect the uses and development characteristics that already exist on the Associated Islands, while at the same time balancing the considerations required by

the *Islands Trust Policy Statement*. As a result, the LUB will likely be where you see changes that may directly affect the use of your property. So far, we have already incorporated changes based on some initial input on the LUB, but we would still like to know what you think. **Please read over the draft Land Use Bylaw and give us your feedback.** Have a read through the italicized notes in the margins of the draft as well, they provide information explaining the policies and regulations presented.

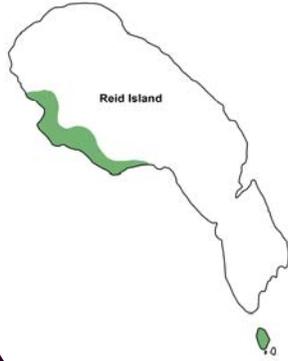
What's next? The draft OCP and draft LUB have had a preliminary revision, so the plan is to give both bylaws First Reading in April. Once First Reading is given, the

proposed bylaws are sent to a variety of government ministries, agencies and First Nations for their comments. Changes will be made to the bylaws after First Reading based on the feedback received.

Can you give input on the bylaws after First Reading? Yes! The Thetis Island Local Trust Committee is happy to accept comments from the public up until the end of the Public Hearing, which will happen at least two months after First Reading. The plan is to schedule the Public Hearing for some time in the summer; you will be notified again when Community Information Meetings and Public Hearings are set. Comments can be submitted in writing, by email or regular mail, to the Islands Trust office or to your local trustees, at the contact information on the last page.



Become a Woodland Steward

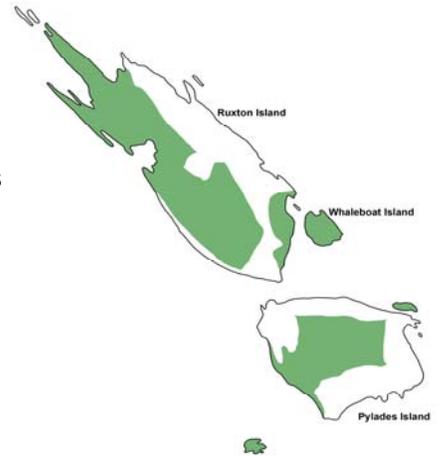


Your property may host a woodland ecosystem. Woodlands are dry, open forests characterized by arbutus, Douglas-fir and Garry oaks. Garry oak woodlands support the highest diversity of plant species of any terrestrial ecosystem in B.C. With most of the province's Garry oak woodlands found in the islands, we play an important role stewarding

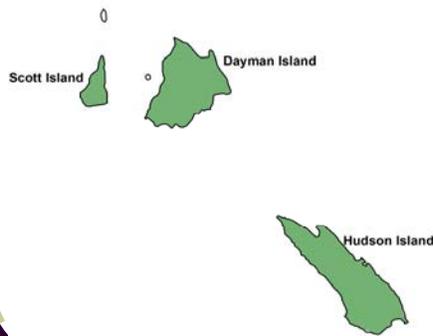
these sensitive ecosystems for the future.

You can be a friend to woodland species on your property by:

- Limiting development and access to a small area of your property to maintain the largest possible patches of woodland
- Controlling invasive species such as Scotch broom to reduce competition with rare native species
- Preventing disturbance of bird nesting areas by



- humans or pets
- Retain features such as logs and downed trees for bird habitat
- Allow natural succession, natural disturbance and plant decay to occur



Most of the province's Garry oak woodlands are found in the Gulf Islands

"...meadows of green grasses swaying in the gentle rise and fall of the tide."

Become an Eelgrass Steward

If you've ever floated slowly over the calm waters around your island by kayak or boat, you might have looked down to see meadows of green grasses swaying in the gentle rise and fall of the tide. These elegant eelgrass meadows surround the islands, offering nursery habitat to an astounding number of fish and shellfish species that sustain our commercial fisheries. Eelgrass habitat sequesters carbon at a much faster rate than an equivalent

area of forest, making these meadows an important carbon sink.

You can help maintain eelgrass meadows around your island by:

- Avoiding development along shorelines. Hardened shorelines (less shoreline vegetation) can increase wave activity, uprooting eelgrass
- Restore natural vegetation along shorelines
- Avoid constructing docks in eelgrass beds. Docks

block sunlight needed by eelgrass to grow

- Avoid anchoring mooring buoys in eelgrass beds. For mooring buoys already anchored, use line floats to keep chains and lines off the sea floor where they can drag and scour the bottom

To see where eelgrass grows in the waters off your island's shoreline, visit <http://mapit.islandstrust.bc.ca/shorelines.html>



Legal Non-Conforming Status



Buildings that met the regulations of the day when constructed are protected

changes to these regulations for islands that have existing bylaws (Ruxton, Woods, Bute and

Dunsmuir). To the greatest extent possible these regulations have been drafted to be consistent with existing uses, however, some property owners may find that their buildings do not meet the draft

regulations. In these cases, legal non-conforming status (colloquially known as “grandfathering”) protects the continued existence and use of the property and buildings that properly met the regulations of the day when the buildings were constructed or the use began. Further, the building or structure may be maintained, extended or altered to the extent that the repair, extension or alteration would not further contravene the current bylaw.

The draft OCP and LUB will introduce regulations like setbacks, height and permitted uses to islands that have not had bylaws previously (such as Reid, Hudson, Scott and Dayman), and will make some

“NAPTEP provides me with a way to do my part in protecting this space. The tax exemption is an added bonus that helps lower the costs of protecting this land”

*Tom Knott,
NAPTEP
Covenant Donor*

Tax Exemption Program Could Help you Preserve Habitat

The natural habitat on your land provides many benefits to island communities – storing carbon, filtering and retaining water, and contributing to the beautiful aesthetic that draws so many of us to the islands. The Islands Trust Fund offers a tax incentive to island property owners willing to protect natural habitat on their land. It’s our way of thanking landowners who are helping preserve and protect the unique environment of the islands.

The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) provides landowners who protect natural areas on their land with an annual 65% exemption in property taxes on the portion of their land protected with a conservation covenant. The covenant is a written agreement between the landowner and the Islands Trust

Fund where the landowner commits themselves and future property owners to leaving the natural features on a property alone. A covenant can be placed on all or just part of your land, leaving the remainder of the property available to use as you did before. With a covenant, you would continue to own the entire property and have the ability to sell it or pass it on when the time comes. The covenant is registered on the land title, binding future landowners, meaning you can protect the natural habitat on your property forever.

The NAPTEP tax exemption lets you save money annually in exchange for leaving the natural features on your land alone for native species to enjoy. These tax savings can add up quickly depending on the size of land you’re able to protect. NAPTEP is more

beneficial for larger properties where landowners are able to protect two hectares or more of natural habitat. The Islands Trust Fund has created a guide to calculating NAPTEP benefits and costs to help you determine how NAPTEP could be financially beneficial to you. To learn more, visit the Islands Trust Fund at www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/naptep

If you own a property less than two hectares in size and wish to learn how you can conserve the habitat on your land, please contact Island Planner Aleksandra Brzozowski to discuss more options.



ISLANDS TRUST FUND

Ruxton Marine Policies Update

Over the last year, the Local Trust Committee took an in-depth look at the topic of docks on Ruxton Island. The possibility of community docks emerged as a question and the *Community Dock Options Study* was completed last summer. The report concluded that a number of locations were feasible, but there was not one “best” location. Two subsequent staff reports then focused on the regulatory options available to best enable a community dock in the future should a proposal from the community come forward.

The result of this work so far is a revised set of marine policies in the OCP and a water zone created just for Ruxton. The OCP policies give clear direction that while the

current zoning would not allow for docks, a community dock rezoning would be considered should an application come forward. In this scenario, a site-specific zone would be drafted for review and input by the community, other agencies, and First Nations before the Local Trust Committee makes a decision.

The draft water zoning does allow for basic apparatuses to be placed in the water to help with loading and



unloading from boats, with the caveat that they not impact access along the shoreline. The draft water zoning for Ruxton does not allow docks outright; if someone wants to build a dock, they will need to apply to amend the bylaw.

The Local Trust Committee hopes the regulations finalized in the bylaws will balance the current and future needs for water access to and from Ruxton Island.

Thank you to all who have given your comments over the last year, either in writing or in person at the community meetings, and a special thank you to the Ruxtonites who sat on the Ruxton Advisory Planning Commission. Your commitment to the project and thoughtful feedback is greatly appreciated.

Contact Us

The Islands Trust is a unique federation of independent local governments, which plans land use and regulates development in the trust area. Like other communities in British Columbia, island communities elect their local representatives every three years.



Preserving island communities, culture and environment

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