



Islands Trust

## **Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee Supports Bridge-Free Salish Sea**

April 10, 2015

GABRIOLA ISLAND - The Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee supports the efforts of the Bridge-Free Salish Sea Collective to uphold the policy of the Islands Trust in regard to fixed links, and to advocate for fair and affordable ferry service on behalf of all Gulf Islanders.

The Islands Trust was established in 1974 by an Act of the provincial government, with the Object of preserving and protecting the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of local residents and all British Columbians. The Islands Trust Policy Statement and the Official Community Plans of individual islands in the Trust Area were developed in response to the legislated requirements of the Act to safeguard these unique and special places for present and future generations.

The Bridge-Free Salish Sea Collective is calling on the provincial government to recognize the leadership role the Islands Trust plays in stewardship of the Trust Area, and to abide by Islands Trust Policy, which clearly states that no island in the Trust Area should be connected to Vancouver Island or the mainland by means of a bridge or tunnel. Bridge-Free Salish Sea is also calling upon the Province to uphold the co-operative spirit of existing protocol agreements between the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Islands Trust, whereby the Ministry commits to respect the jurisdiction of the Islands Trust “to protect and conserve the environment for use by present and future generations.”

Fixed links destroy the very essence of islands; something that, once lost, can never be restored. While it is true that the Islands Trust is concerned about community sustainability and the impacts of rising ferry fares and drastic service cuts, we believe the solution lies in broad consultation between governments and all coastal communities. We ask the provincial government to heed the call of the Bridge-Free Salish Sea to “fix the ferries and ban the bridges” and to respect the authority of locally-elected governments and other stakeholders in these vital matters.

The Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee congratulates the Bridge-Free Salish Sea Collective for their work. We are encouraged by their energy and commitment, and grateful for their efforts on behalf of all islanders. We are also grateful to the more than 2,000 British Columbians, including 1,600 residents of Gabriola or Mudge Island who have formally expressed their support for the mandate of the Islands Trust and for a bridge-free Salish Sea. Thank you.

### **CONTACT:**

Heather Nicholas  
Gabriola Island Local Trustee  
250.247.9574

Attachment: Excerpts from Islands Trust Documents

cc: Bridge-Free Salish Sea  
Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee

**Excerpts from Islands Trust Documents approved by the BC Minister responsible for the Islands Trust (currently the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development)**

**Gabriola Island Official Community Plan** - Adopted in 1997, Consolidated: November, 2011

**Land Transportation Objectives**

Policy 7.1.1

- *To oppose any fixed link or bridge to Vancouver Island or ferry connection to the BC Lower Mainland.*

**Land Transportation Policies**

Policy 7.1.n

- *The development of a bridge or other form of fixed transportation link of any kind connecting Gabriola to Vancouver Island or any other island or the B.C. Lower Mainland is not supported and is contrary to the provisions of this Plan.*

**Mudge Island Official Community Plan** - Adopted in 1997, Consolidated: September 2014

**Community Goal #4**

- *To keep the islands as a refuge from the pressures of urban life, as partially facilitated by the absence of ferry service and bridges between these and other islands.*

**Transportation Policy 4**

- *No island in the Plan Area shall be connected to any other island by a bridge.*

**Islands Trust Policy Statement, Approved by Minister on June 9, 1994** - Consolidated April 2003

Policy Statement 5.3.1:

*Trust Council holds that local trust committees and island municipalities should be consulted and involved in the decision-making process regarding provision of utilities, transportation services or facilities that might affect land use in their local planning areas.*

Policy Statement 5.3.2:

*It is Trust Council's policy that no island in the Trust Area should be connected to Vancouver Island, the mainland or another island by a bridge or tunnel, notwithstanding the existing bridge between North and South Pender Islands.*

**Excerpt from Protocol Agreement between the Ministry of Transportation and Highways (currently the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure) and the Islands Trust dated July 18, 1996**

**Principles**

Environmental Protection

- *The parties are committed to respond to environmental matters arising from road system design and other construction activities within their exclusive areas of jurisdiction, while respecting the jurisdiction of the other, to protect, and conserve the environment for use by present and future generations.*