



News Release

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FIRST OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN ADOPTED FOR BALLENAS-WINCHELSEA ISLANDS

GABRIOLA – The first Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) will provide better protection for sensitive ecosystems and important habitats on the Ballenas-Winchelsea Islands - a group of islands east of the Nanoose Peninsula on Vancouver Island. All major islands within the Islands Trust Area now have an OCP.

“As the organization entrusted with preserving island communities, culture and environment in the Salish Sea, we are pleased to adopt a vision that recognizes an area rich in ecological diversity and home to numerous sensitive ecosystems,” said Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Executive Committee acting as the Local Trust Committee for Ballenas-Winchelsea Islands. “The new OCP and LUB give us the land use planning tools to protect the unique ecosystems of this area and set a high standard for decisions of governments, non-profit organizations and individuals.”

The Ballenas-Winchelsea area covers 48 islands over 4.67 square kilometers. Four of the islands are privately owned, while the others are under Crown jurisdiction. Many of the islands are nationally recognized for significant biological diversity, important habitats and rare plant species.

The OCP development for the Ballenas-Winchelsea Islands began in 2009 and involved extensive consultations with First Nations and different levels of governments before receiving final approval from the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development in February 2016.

“We undertook a process to ensure specific interests on the islands spread over a large area were considered and reflected in the vision for these islands of ecological, archeological and First Nations significance,” said Luckham. “We are confident that the thorough process we undertook has resulted in a vision that balances the needs of the environment and the islanders, now and in the future.”

The new OCP and LUB include a Shoreline Development Permit Area to protect environmentally sensitive areas within 30 metres of the natural boundary of the sea; a ‘Nature Protection’ zone for all Crown lands, and regulations around home-based guest accommodations for privately owned lands. A copy of the Official Community Plan Bylaw 27 and Land Use Bylaw 28 is available through the Islands Trust website at www.islandstrust.bc.ca/ballenas.

The Islands Trust is a federation of local government bodies representing 25,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and another 10,000 non-resident property-owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres

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*Preserving **Island** communities, culture and environment*

Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis
