



700 North Road, Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X3
Telephone **250-247-2063** Fax 250-247-7514

Toll Free via Enquiry BC in Vancouver 660-2421. Elsewhere in BC **1.800.663.7867**

Email northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca

Web www.islandstrust.bc.ca

Stephen Foster
Howe Sound Campaign Lead
David Suzuki Foundation
219-2211 West 4th Ave
Vancouver, BC V6K 4S2

Dear Stephen,

This letter is to provide background and policy support for a protected area on Gambier Island.

The Gambier Island Local Trust Area includes all the islands in the Howe Sound apart from Bowen Island Municipality. Both Anvil and Gambier Islands have significant wilderness areas that feature prominently in the viewscape along the Sea to Sky Highway to Whistler.

Given its size and proximity to Vancouver, Gambier Island has a surprisingly small population. There are approximately 100 full-time residents and 800 recreational owners scattered in isolated communities around the perimeter of the island. The low population is because there is no car-ferry access and only the south western third of the island is on the electrical grid.

Gambier Island has the largest single parcel of Crown land in the Islands Trust federation. This area, primarily consisting of mature forest cover in rugged terrain, also has four lakes and several wetland areas. It covers 60% of the central portion of the island (approximately 3500 hectares). To the southeast of the Crown land there are protected areas that have been purchased and are managed by the Islands Trust Fund, one of our region's land conservancy organizations, in recognition of the significant ecosystems present on the island.

The Crown land on Gambier Island has been counted as part of the Sunshine Coast timber supply for many years. In 2012, two woodlot licences covering half the Crown land were put up for bid, igniting significant concern and opposition in the community. This threat has been a wake-up call to islanders and visitors alike about the vulnerabilities of this valued recreation area.

The Gambier Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) has begun the consultation process for a targeted Official Community Plan review which includes reviewing the policies regarding the Wilderness Conservation zone on Gambier Island. Results from the initial survey indicate continued support for some type of protection and recreational opportunities for the zone with the caveat that more information and consultation is required.

Currently, the Crown land area is zoned "Wilderness Conservation" in the Gambier Island Land Use Bylaw and permitted uses include parks, trails, wilderness camping, water recharge and timber harvesting. The Gambier Island Official Community Plan provides overarching policies about the Wilderness Conservation zone that speak to park development specifically with an overall support for protected areas. Here are some highlights:

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

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis

Objective 6.9 to place the highest priority on securing park sites which contain unique natural features or prime recreational attributes through land dedication, acquisition, lease or community land stewardship programs.

Objective 6.11 to support the acquisition and/or designation of additional park sites by the Province, Sunshine Coast Regional District or other agencies.

Objective 6.12 to designate, where appropriate, upland sites and foreshore areas with good recreational and conservation attributes for park, greenbelt or conservation purposes and to ensure the provision of reasonable access (by land and water) is provided to such sites so they may be enjoyed by area residents and visitors alike.

Objective 6.17 to work co-operatively with provincial ministries and other agencies in acquiring and managing park lands and lands requiring conservation or protection in the Gambier Island Planning Area.

Objective 6.18 to support the designation of a significant portion of the crown lands in the Gambier Island Planning Area for park status for recreational use by residents of British Columbia and to retain the land's ecological purposes;
Objective 6.20 to develop additional marine parks where appropriate in the Gambier Island Planning Area as part of an overall marine recreational plan for Howe Sound.

The Islands Trust recognizes the First Nations' rights and title to the Crown land on all the Islands and the LTC continues to develop a collaborative working relationship with the Skwxwu7mesh and Tseil-Waututh Nations to respect their specific priorities for the Wilderness Conservation zone as well as foreshore areas.

The overarching mandate of the Islands Trust is to preserve and protect the environment and unique amenities of the islands in the Salish Sea for the enjoyment of British Columbians as a whole. With 90% of the land on these islands in private ownership, opportunities to provide real protection for large intact forest areas such as found on Gambier Island would be met with strong interest especially given the right community consultation.

Best Regards



Kate-Louise Stamford
Trustee, Gambier Island Local Trust Committee