



News Release

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BYLAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY INCREASES

VICTORIA — The Islands Trust's quarterly report on the number of bylaw enforcement investigations underway within the Islands Trust Area indicates that activity is up by nearly 25% since this time last year.

The report was presented to the Islands Trust Council at its quarterly meeting on Gabriola Island March 27 – 29.

Currently, there are 166 investigations underway, compared to 135 active files as of early spring last year.

“Considerable community effort goes into development and adoption of land use bylaws in local trust areas and there is an expectation by communities that those bylaws will be enforced,” said Kim Benson, Islands Trust Council Chair.

The majority of the bylaw infractions involve land use zoning contraventions, such as operating a business not allowed in a residential area. Other infractions include siting, density, short-term vacation rentals and development permits. The Islands Trust has three bylaw enforcement officers, each working three days per week.

“Our first priority is to achieve voluntary compliance through consultation with the property owner,” said Kim Benson. “If that fails, we have our lawyers send a letter regarding the violation of the bylaw and provide a reasonable time to comply. Finally, if that fails, we go to litigation, which is always a last resort given the financial implications.”

In the past four years the Islands Trust has seen the annual number of active bylaw enforcement cases almost double - growing from 85 files to more than 160 files.

Within the Islands Trust Area a bylaw enforcement investigation can be triggered by a written complaint from a member of the public or a bylaw enforcement officer can initiate an investigation if the officer observes a violation associated with a permitting process, such as a development permit, or sees an advertisement for illegal uses.

“Fundamentally, the Islands Trust bylaw enforcement policies are built around a complaint-driven process,” Benson said. “Proactive enforcement applies particularly to situations with potential for ecological damage, zoning violations associated with permitting processes and advertising of illegal land uses.”

Individuals who believe there may be a violation can file a complaint, either electronically by going to the Islands Trust web site at www.islandstrust.bc.ca or by letter to the Islands Trust at #200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8R 1H8, 700 North Road, Gabriola Island BC V0R 1X3 or 1 – 500 Lower Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2N8.

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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

The Islands Trust Council is a federation of independent local government that represents some 25,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area. The Islands Trust is responsible for land use planning while preserving and protecting the unique environment of the Islands Trust area. 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.

Note: Statistics chart attached.

CONTACT

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Islands Trust Bylaw Enforcement Summary Report – March 2007					
Numbers represent the number of active bylaw enforcement files during the time period indicated					
Local Trust Area	Active February 2006	Active May 2006	Active August 2006	Active November 2006	Active March 2007
Salt Spring	45	49	56	45	67
Thetis	4	5	4	5	5
Galiano	17	19	18	21	22
Mayne	12	10	8	10	8
North Pender	9	12	15	18	19
Saturna	5	5	6	6	6
South Pender				1	
Denman	17	16	15	6	10
Gabriola	11	13	12	11	15
Gambier	3	3	3	3	3
Hornby	12	12	10	9	11
TOTAL	135	144	147	135	166