



Snuneymuxw First Nation



December 9, 2008

2008-29-IT

## **ISLANDS TRUST SIGNS PROTOCOL AGREEMENT WITH SNUNEYMUXW FIRST NATION**

VICTORIA — The Snuneymuxw First Nation and the Islands Trust signed a protocol agreement on December 4 in the Snuneymuxw Council Chambers in Nanaimo.

The Snuneymuxw First Nation has legal and cultural interests, including Douglas Treaty rights and asserted aboriginal rights, relating to lands and resources which include reserves and territory in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area. The Islands Trust has land use, planning and management authority in the region under the *Islands Trust Act*.

The high-level agreement, modelled on the protocol between Snuneymuxw and the City of Nanaimo, is intended to establish a government-to-government relationship of mutual respect and cooperation with respect to planning, land use management and heritage conservation in the areas within the authority of the Islands Trust. The agreement sets the stage for a joint working group to develop specific procedures for protecting Snuneymuxw's interests in the Gabriola Local Trust Area and to identify topics on which the parties wish to develop further agreements.

"To commemorate this occasion we gave the Islands Trust a canoe paddle, which symbolizes our intention of paddling in the same direction," said Chief Viola Wyse, Snuneymuxw First Nations Chief. Gabriola Island Trustee Sheila Malcolmson gave the Snuneymuxw Chief and Council a carved maple bowl, saying that she hoped "it would contain our shared hopes and dreams."

"This agreement will improve planning, land use management and heritage conservation in the Gabriola Local Trust Area," said Kim Benson, Chair of the committee and of the Islands Trust Council. "The Islands Trust intends to pursue additional protocol agreements in order to protect archaeological and heritage sites in the Islands Trust Area," added Benson. "Our mandate to preserve and protect this area includes cultural and heritage values. These agreements take us from good intentions to action."

Snuneymuxw's protocol agreement with the City of Nanaimo is now in its fourth year of implementation. A similar agreement with the Regional District of Nanaimo is currently under discussion. This is also the second protocol agreement the Islands Trust has signed with a first nation. The first was established in 2000 between the Lyackson First Nation and the Thetis Island Local Trust Committee. A more detailed agreement between the Islands Trust and the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group is also near completion.

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### **CONTACT**

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Editors/News Directors please note: Photo and web-link to Protocol Agreement on page 2



Displaying the gifts just exchanged in honour of the protocol agreement are: (from left to right) Deborah Ferens, Gisele Rudischer and Sheila Malcolmson (Gabriola Local Trust Committee) and Councillor Geraldine Manson, Councillor Jeff Thomas, and Chief Viola Wyse (Snuneymuxw First Nation).

Protocol Agreement web-link: <http://islandstrust.bc.ca/tc/pdf/orgagrdec042008oth.pdf>