



# Islands Trust

Serving the Islands Well  
Into the Future

## Our Provincial Mandate

“to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia”

– *Islands Trust Act*

# Budget 2007-2008 Responding to Change

## Some Background

In 1974, the Province of British Columbia enacted the *Islands Trust Act* to protect the islands and waters in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. The legislated mandate of the Islands Trust is to “to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of the Province generally.”

The elected Islands Trust Council is committed to ensuring that the Islands Trust has the resources necessary to fulfill that mandate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Islands Trust Council has developed a Strategic Plan to help reach this goal. This information sheet discusses the many challenges that we face today and outlines the way we plan to fund our responses to these challenges.

## New Challenges, New Complexities

The unique form of government in the Trust Area has served the islands well, and the 'preserve and protect' mandate remains as valid today as it was 33 years ago. Nevertheless, we live in an increasingly complex world, and the Islands Trust must adapt to continue to deliver its mandate. Below are some of today's challenges.

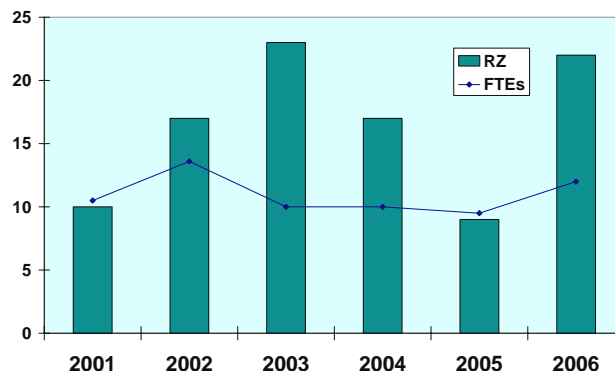
### Increasing Population and Land Values

- ◆ Population has more than doubled on every major island in the Trust Area since the Islands Trust was created—increasing from 9,500 in 1976 to 23,000 in 2001.
- ◆ The total assessed value of property in the Trust Area has nearly tripled just since 2001—from \$3.5 billion to \$9 billion—creating new issues related to community viability and housing affordability.

### Increasing Demands for Local Planning Services

- ◆ The number of development applications has increased dramatically since 2001, doubling in some categories, while the number of staff to process applications has remained virtually the same.

Islands Trust - Rezoning Applications vs Number of Planners (Full Time Equivalents) -- 2001-2006



## The Trust Area

The Trust Area encompasses the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island, including Howe Sound and as far north as Comox. This is a unique and special place composed of 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering approximately 5200 square kilometers of land and water.

In 1974, in recognition of the special nature of this area, the Government of British Columbia enacted the *Islands Trust Act* to protect this unique part of the world. About 23,000 people live on these islands.



- ◆ Local Trust Committees now make decisions at regular public meetings, with agendas and minutes posted on the Islands Trust website. The numbers of public meetings along with the number of agendas and minutes we prepare have increased more than ten-fold since the late 1990's.
- ◆ We have provided our island communities with enhanced information and digital maps about island environments—sensitive ecosystems, water availability and slope instability. We now consider this information every time we make land use decisions.

### Responding to Others

- ◆ We have built better relationships with First Nations and need to continue to improve in this important area.
- ◆ Undoubtedly, increased tourism associated with the upcoming 2010 Olympics will affect the Islands Trust Area. We need to be proactive to handle the added development pressures and impacts that the Olympics will bring.

### Updating and Enforcing Land Use Regulations

- ◆ Over the past ten years, we have worked with island communities to update their Official Community Plans and Land Use Bylaws. Many communities are now reviewing those documents again, creating extra demands for our planning staff.
- ◆ Island communities expect us to uphold and enforce their land use regulations. At the same time, legal challenges have increased in number and complexity, creating substantial additional costs.

### Growing Complexities

- ◆ Our communities expect us to advocate on many fronts, ensuring other agencies and levels of government remain aware of the special nature of the Islands Trust Area. Over the last few years, we have actively represented island communities in regard to BC Ferries fare increases, offshore drilling, cruise ship sewage, meat inspection, greenhouse gases, mining on Crown lands, and at BC Utility Commission hearings regarding a proposed Georgia Strait pipeline, a Nanaimo gas plant and a transmission line upgrade. We believe this advocacy work should continue.
- ◆ Like other local governments in North America, we face a growing shortage of professional staff in a highly competitive market. We need to focus resources on being one of the region's best employers, so that we can attract and retain the best and brightest of those available.

## Meeting the Challenge

The Islands Trust Council has worked hard to develop a Strategic Plan that will help prioritize objectives and focus resources in a cost-effective manner. The Strategic Plan identifies three areas where we will concentrate our energies during our 2005–2008 term. The primary objectives are listed below. The pages that follow outline how the 2007–2008 budget will be used to achieve each of these objectives.

## The Islands Trust Council

The Islands Trust Council is composed of the 26 locally elected officials from the Trust Area who are responsible for land use decisions in their island communities.

There are two local trustees for each group of islands designated as a local trust area or island municipality.

The Islands Trust Area includes the Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Hornby, Lasqueti, Mayne, North Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, South Pender and Thetis Local Trust Areas, and Bowen Island Municipality.

The Islands Trust Council has a unique mandate from the Province to preserve and protect the environment and amenities of the islands.

Trust Council meets quarterly to make decisions about overall policy, staff resources and budget. The current Council was elected for a three-year term during BC Local General Elections in November 2005.

## Our Strategic Objectives

### Part 1 Sustainable Environment

We can create a legacy for the future by protecting our natural environment.

- ◆ We will identify areas in greatest need of protection and use the information to protect these areas through covenants, acquisitions and other tools.
- ◆ We will consider regulatory tools to protect the most sensitive environments.
- ◆ We will find ways to encourage environmental sustainability and stewardship through education and incentives.

### Part 2 Healthy Communities

Our island communities need effective and efficient government services.

- ◆ We will foster healthy, complete and livable island communities.
- ◆ We will manage growth in the Trust Area in a manner that respects our provincial mandate and the wishes of island communities.
- ◆ We work to strengthen citizen participation in local government.

### Part 3 Excellence in Governance

We will strive for excellence in governing the Islands Trust Area.

- ◆ We will provide leadership in seeking sustainable and fair forms of political representation for the Islands Trust Area.
- ◆ We will provide good value, implement fair taxes and fees and seek new and diversified funding sources to support special initiatives.
- ◆ We will strive for excellence in public service and work to attract and retain a strong and skilled workforce.

## A Strategic Budget

The following sections describe the new work that we will take on this year, in addition to our normal operations. Some of this work requires new resources. In particular, \$224,000 of the proposed budget increase has been dedicated to projects that are central to our Strategic Plan.

### A Sustainable Environment

- ◆ We will comply with the provincial *Riparian Area Regulations*, by mapping the streams on three islands (North Pender, Mayne and Salt Spring) and by beginning development of the regulations necessary for their protection. These regulations need to be implemented on all islands in the Islands Trust Area, as required by the Province. This process will take a number of years to complete.
- ◆ We will ensure that the islands have the best possible information about **sensitive ecosystems** by continuing to update the Islands Trust Ecosystem Mapping. This year, we will focus on Galiano, Thetis, Gabriola, Denman, Hornby and Lasqueti Islands, where we can achieve the benefits of partnerships with other agencies that will share in the mapping costs.

## The Executive Committee

At the start of each term, members of the Islands Trust Council elect a Chair and three Vice-chairs. These four trustees make up the Executive Committee.

The responsibilities of Executive Committee members are set out in the *Islands Trust Act*.

The **four Executive Committee** members for 2005 to 2008 are:

**Kim Benson**  
Chair and  
Gambier Island Local Trustee

**Gisele Rudischer**  
Vice-Chair and  
Gabriola Island Local Trustee

**Gary Steeves**  
Vice-Chair and  
North Pender Island Local Trustee

**Rose Willow**  
Vice-Chair and  
Lasqueti Island Local Trustee

All Executive Committee members are part of the Financial Planning Committee.

- ◆ We will respond to the growing concern about impacts of **climate change** by undertaking an initial study to define the potential problems, to better understand our vulnerability and to identify a strategy to minimize the anticipated problems. We hope to undertake this work in partnership with others and share costs.
- ◆ We will address concerns on Salt Spring Island about **soil deposit and removal**; we will finalize the public process and find a regulatory solution that works. We have also allowed for increased public education and bylaw enforcement related to this topic.
- ◆ We hope to increase the percentage of **protected areas** in at least six Local Trust Areas and on Bowen Island.
- ◆ We will ensure the safety and integrity of the **protected areas** owned by the Trust Fund Board by developing new measures for risk management.
- ◆ We will develop model bylaws for **tree and water resource protection**.
- ◆ We will distribute our new publication, **A Place in the Islands** to new property owners in the Islands Trust Area.
- ◆ We will continue to **Measure our Progress** by reporting on several indicators of economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- ◆ We will complete in-depth profiles of each **Crown land parcel** in the Islands Trust Area, so that we have good information for planning purposes.
- ◆ We will integrate new planning tools for **environmental sustainability** through the review of Official Community Plans and Land Use Bylaws in four local trust areas: Salt Spring, Mayne, North Pender and the Gambier Associated Islands.

## Healthy Communities

- ◆ We will respond to islanders' desires to **manage growth**, work to include new strategies for **affordable housing** and address **tourism** as we review Official Community Plans and Land Use Bylaws on Salt Spring, Mayne, North Pender and the Gambier Associated Islands. *Other reviews will begin next year.*
- ◆ We will reinstate the senior staff position in the Trust Area Services unit, expanding our capacity to **advocate on behalf of island communities** and influence the policies of other agencies and levels of government.
- ◆ We will strengthen and encourage **citizen participation** in local government by reviewing the way that we administer our local elections.
- ◆ We will use housing agreements to achieve on-going **affordability in new housing** projects on Salt Spring Island.
- ◆ We will coordinate our planning efforts with the **Gulf Islands National Park Reserve**.
- ◆ We will continue to develop our relationships with **First Nations**.
- ◆ We will use funding from BC Healthy Communities to explore ways that we can be even more **inclusive** when we make decisions.
- ◆ We will continue our **Community Stewardship Awards** program to recognize the contributions that islanders make towards community sustainability.

## The Operational Structure of the Islands Trust

Most of the administrative and planning work of the Islands Trust is done in our three offices.

**The Northern Office**, on Gabriola Island, provides the planning services for five local trust areas: Denman, Gabriola, Gambier, Hornby and Lasqueti.

**The Central Office**, on Salt Spring Island, provides the planning services for two local trust areas: Salt Spring and Thetis.

**The Southern Office**, in Victoria provides the local planning services for five local trust areas: Galiano, Mayne, North Pender, South Pender and Saturna.

The Southern Office also supports the work of the Islands Trust Council and the Executive Committee. This office provides technical support (for example, mapping and information systems) and administrative services (for example, financial services, human resources and communications) across the Islands Trust Area. The Islands Trust Fund—the land conservation agency within the Islands Trust—also operates from the Southern Office.

## Excellence in Governance

We will continue our efforts to achieve significant changes to strengthen the Islands Trust. Look for the following changes in 2007-2008:

- ◆ In cooperation with the Ministry of Community Services and the Capital Regional District, we have contracted for a professional review of options to **improve governance** in the Islands Trust Area. In May 2007 we will consult with the public, and we will develop final recommendations by the summer.
- ◆ Following this review, we have earmarked funds to help better integrate our services with one regional district. For the upcoming fiscal year, we are focusing on **better integration** with the Capital Regional District on Salt Spring Island.
- ◆ We will engage a part-time funding specialist to help us access new sources of **provincial and federal funds**. While the days of unconditional grants are over, we are hearing about new funding opportunities through conditional grants and want to make sure we don't miss these opportunities.
- ◆ We will continue to review the **balance between taxation and services** for each part of the Islands Trust Area. We have set aside funds to implement any necessary changes after our review is complete.
- ◆ We will put funds towards implementing the recommendations of the **Corporate Services Review** recently undertaken by the Islands Trust Council. The review was designed to identify ways to optimize our organization at the senior level. The recommendations include reinstatement of the senior staff position in the Trust Area Services unit.
- ◆ We will complete the current review of the way we deliver **land use planning services** to ensure that we are making the best use of our resources. We anticipate that the review will identify a need for new planning staff or other changes. We have earmarked significant funds so we can implement changes.
- ◆ We will use a number of initiatives to help us attract and retain **well-qualified professional staff** in a highly competitive employment environment. These initiatives include implementing new performance management tools, enhancing teamwork, recognizing and training staff, and planning for upcoming retirements and succession.
- ◆ We will take the first step towards development of a more **effective** records management system to enhance our efficiency.



### To Sum It Up

We are proposing an increased budget to respond to our island communities. We have high expectations of ourselves. By identifying goals and remaining focused on them, we are confident we can make significant improvements in achieving **sustainable environments**, **healthier communities** and **excellence in governance** in the Islands Trust Area.

### Strategic Plan Items Requiring Incremental Funding in 2007-2008

#### Sustainable Environment

Implement Riparian Area Regulations	<b>\$37,000</b>
Update Islands Trust Ecosystem mapping	<b>\$26,000</b>
Administer, enforce and educate regarding soil removal and deposit bylaws	<b>\$3,000</b>
Begin adaptive planning to mitigate the effects of climate change	<b>\$5,000</b>

#### Healthy Communities

Review election administration	<b>\$8,000</b>
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#### Excellence in Governance

Review local political representation, consult with public, and develop recommendations	<b>\$25,000</b>
Add new resources for inter-governmental coordination on Salt Spring Island	<b>\$10,000</b>
Review taxation/service delivery balance	<b>\$15,000</b>
Improve records management system	<b>\$10,000</b>
Fund-raising specialist to seek new funding sources	<b>\$40,000</b>
Implement Human Resources Strategy	<b>\$45,000</b>

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$224,000</b>
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