



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*



Fact Sheet Governance Task Force

Excellence in Governance

The Province of British Columbia enacted the *Islands Trust Act* more than 30 years ago to protect the islands and waters in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. The significance and sensitivity of this special area is internationally recognized. Today, more than ever, increasing pressures from development and tourism are creating significant impacts on the environment, economies and communities within the Islands Trust Area.

The Islands Trust Council is developing a Strategic Plan to address the challenges of the 21st century as effectively as possible. “Excellence in governance” is a top priority of the currently elected Islands Trust Council.

We want to ensure that the islands have the most effective political structure necessary to sustain the Islands Trust Area well into the future. The work of the Islands Trust Governance Task Force is one of five Strategic Initiatives designed to adapt and to improve governance and the services provided by the Islands Trust in response to what islanders have been telling us - that there’s a need for evolutionary change so that the Islands Trust can meet new challenges and can better represent the issues and concerns of island communities.

A Unique Environmental Mandate

There is only one Islands Trust. It has its own specially created legislation, the *Islands Trust Act*, which includes a specific environmental mandate from the Province: “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.”

Created in 1974, the Islands Trust is a federation of independent local island governments, whose object is to fulfil that mandate.

The Islands Trust plans land use, regulates development, and conserves land within the Trust Area. Like other communities in British Columbia, island communities within the Islands Trust Area elect their local representatives every three years. The *Islands Trust Act* governance structure has served islanders well, but carefully considered changes may now be needed.



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 5,200 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.

The Governance Task Force

In March, 2006 the Islands Trust Council voted to create a Governance Task Force to address a number of governance issues of concern to Salt Spring Island and some of the larger island communities. Trust Council asked the Governance Task Force to focus on improvements that can be achieved during the 2005-2008 term of office.

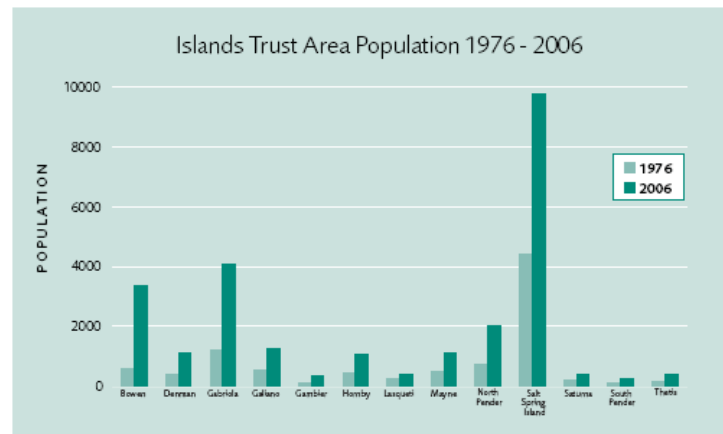
The Governance Task Force includes 13 of the 26 trustees elected from across the Islands Trust Area.

Background – Task Force Research

The Governance Task Force began its work by acquiring a better understanding of some of the changes that had taken place since the Islands Trust was established.

For example, between 1976 and 2006 the permanent population in the Islands Trust Area increased by 163%, from 9,490 to 25,000.

Growth in both permanent and non-resident population on the islands is one of the factors that has led to current interest in reviewing governance within the Islands Trust Area. Increased development has created additional governance issues and pressures within the Islands Trust Area.



As shown in Figure 1, the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area more than doubled its permanent population over this period, while that in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area tripled, and that in Bowen Island Municipality increased by five times.

Figure 1

Another factor that has stimulated interest in a governance review is the relative tax contribution amongst the Local Trust Areas. The Islands Trust Council believes that more attention should be given to the balance, for each Local Trust Area, between taxes generated and services provided by the Islands Trust.

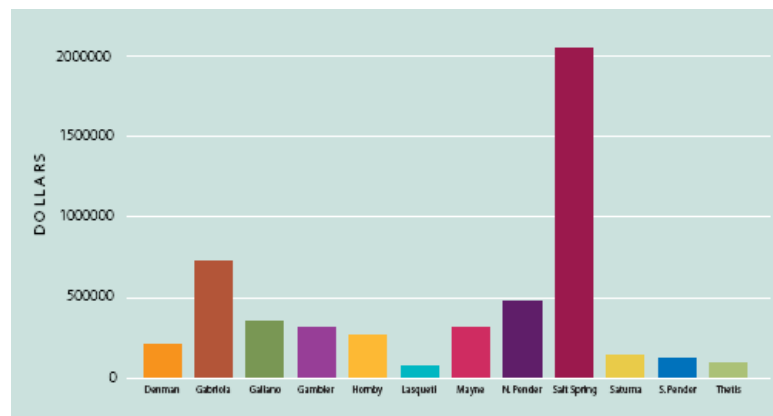


Figure 2 shows the proportion of Islands Trust revenue (taxes and fees) that is contributed from each of the unincorporated parts of the Islands Trust Area for the 2007-8 fiscal year.

Figure 2

Our 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, Thetis Local Trust Areas, and Bowen Island Municipality.

The Islands Trust Council has a unique mandate from the province to 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.

First Priority – Political Representation

The Governance Task Force presented its initial research and recommendations to Trust Council in June, 2006. The following four focus areas were identified:

- ◆ political representation
- ◆ regulatory authority and coordination
- ◆ financial arrangements; and
- ◆ mandate and policy statement

The priority for the Task Force's initial phase is "political representation", particularly in regard to the most populous Local Trust Area(s), such as Salt Spring Island. Three reasons for selecting political representation as a priority were as follows:

- ◆ Any changes to political representation within local governments such as the Islands Trust can only be made by the province (in this case, through legislative change to the *Islands Trust Act*).
- ◆ To achieve legislative change before 2008, our request must be made by the summer of 2007.
- ◆ Political representation issues are significant, particularly in more populous Local Trust Area(s), such as Salt Spring Island.

The Governance Task Force further recommended that the first phase would focus on:

- ◆ achieving legislative changes to the *Islands Trust Act* that would retain a minimum of two trustees from each Local Trust Area and island municipality, and create the potential for additional trustees from the more populous Local Trust Area(s);
- ◆ exploring integration of local trust committee and Regional District decision making; and
- ◆ increasing Trust Council's authority to alter the number of members on the Islands Trust Executive Committee without first receiving Provincial approval.

These recommendations for the Governance Task Force's Initial Strategy were approved by the Islands Trust Council in June 2006.

Working with the Province

From the start, the Governance Task Force has worked in consultation with senior staff from the Ministry of Community Services to identify the best process to follow to maximize the possibility of achieving legislative changes to the *Islands Trust Act*.

The Minister of Community Services has indicated that changes to the *Islands Trust Act* that would alter the number of trustees comprising either a local trust committee or Trust Council would be considered significant. The Minister also indicated that her ministry would require a thorough analysis of the key governance issues and options for addressing these issues, as well as public consultation regarding these options before it would consider such legislative changes. In September 2006, Trust Council approved the Governance Task Force's recommendations to:

- ◆ contract for an independent governance review;
- ◆ confirm cost-sharing with the Ministry and Capital Regional District; and,
- ◆ undertake this work in consultation with the Ministry of Community Services and the Capital Regional District. (While the Islands Trust area overlaps with seven regional districts, the Governance Task Force will initially focus on the Capital Regional District in regard to governance changes.)

Interested in Finding Out More About the Governance Task Force?

All Governance Task Force meeting are open to the public. More information on the task force, including meeting agendas, minutes and presentations to Trust Council, as well as relevant correspondence, background studies and links, is posted at:

www.islandstrust.bc.ca/tc/gtf.cfm

Members of the Islands Trust Governance Task Force include 13 of the 26 elected trustees from across the Islands Trust Area:

Kim Benson

Gambier Island Local Trustee
(Trust Council Chair)

Louise Bell

Denman Island Local Trustee

George Ehring

Salt Spring Island Local Trustee

Peter Frinton

Bowen Island Municipal Trustee

Ken Hancock

North Pender Island Local Trustee

Brian Hollingshead

Saturna Island Local Trustee

Peter Lamb

Salt Spring Island Local Trustee

Sheila Malcolmson

Gabriola Island Local Trustee

Alison Morse

Bowen Island Municipal Trustee

Gisele Rudischer

Gabriola Island Local Trustee

Roy Smith

Galiano Island Local Trustee

Gary Steeves

North Island Pender Trustee

Rose Willow

Lasqueti Island Local Trustee

Next Priority – Financial Arrangements

In addition to its work on political representation, the Governance Task Force has begun work on its second priority area - financial arrangements.

The Governance Task Force has created a Financial Subcommittee that is exploring options that will address the financial topics identified to date.

The Islands Trust Council recognizes that all Local Trust Areas should receive a basic standardized level of local planning services from the Islands Trust. But those Local Trust Areas which contribute proportionately more in taxes towards the local planning service function might expect to receive more services and resources beyond the basic level.

As a first step in looking at financial arrangements within the Islands Trust governance structure, the Financial Subcommittee will review and make recommendations to the Governance Task Force regarding what types of local planning services might be considered “core services” and what types of local planning services might be considered “extraordinary services”.

Where We Are Now– Public Consultation

A formal independent review of Islands Trust governance options for political representation has now been completed and we are seeking input on options.

A report by governance consultant Allan Neilson-Welch examines options for improving Islands Trust governance to address the following three factors:

- the size of local trust committees;
- the allocation of decision-making power at the Islands Trust Council table; and,
- coordination with regional districts (with an initial focus on the Capital Regional District).

Both the Ministry and the Islands Trust Council want to hear from the public about the options before advancing any potential changes. We want to hear the ideas of those who live and/or own property in the Islands Trust Area.

Eleven meetings have been scheduled in late April and early May throughout the islands and in the Lower Mainland so that we can hear the views of islanders and non-resident property owners. People can also provide input by completing a survey on the options or suggest your own options on our website (go to www.islandstrust.bc.ca and click on Governance Consultation in the Highlights Box to find more information and a survey.) You can also send us an e-mail at: information@islandstrust.bc.ca or you can write to us.

We want to emphasize that the Islands Trust Council does not consider the Governance Review report to be the final word on governance. The purpose of the report and of our public consultation meetings is to encourage thinking, discussion and input, not to pre-empt or limit anyone’s ideas.

The deadline for input is midnight, **Monday, May 21, 2007**

What’s Next

In June, after considering public input, Trust Council will decide if it wishes to recommend that the province make amendments to the *Act*. The province will then decide what, if any changes it is willing to make. Any changes would be reflected in the 2008 local elections.