



**Salt Spring Island
Referendum**

Vote November 15



Oct. 29, 2008

ArtSpring Theatre

Session Outline

Your hosts:

Linda Adams, Chief Administrative Officer

Lisa Dunn, Trust Area Services Director

Topics:

- Mandate of Trust Council and Local Trust Committees
- Events leading up to the referendum
- What happens after a no vote or a yes vote
- Questions

The Islands Trust Today



There are 26 trustees, including 2 municipal trustees from Bowen Island Municipality. Together these trustees form the Islands Trust Council, responsible for area-wide decisions about overall policy, staff resources and budget for the Islands Trust. Trust Council is also responsible to uphold the Islands Trust's mandate and represent island interests to other levels of government.



Islands Trust Mandate

The Islands Trust was established:

“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, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the Government of British Columbia.”

This mandate underlies the work of the Islands Trust, including the development of official community plans, zoning and other land use bylaws in each of the local trust areas or island municipalities.



Local Trust Committee Role

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Area



There are two local trustees elected for each group of islands designated as a **local trust area** or **island municipality**. Each of the twelve **local trust areas** are governed by a **local trust committee**.



Local Trust Committee Role

Each **local trust committee** has land use jurisdiction over a major island, plus smaller islands and surrounding waters. This ensures that land use decisions are made by the locally elected people who are part of each island community. **Land use bylaws** must be consistent with the **Islands Trust Policy Statement**.

Local trust committees are responsible for land use decisions within their respective **local trust area**, excluding First Nation reserves.



Examples of land use decisions

Creating and adopting an **Official Community Plan**

Creating, adopting, administering and enforcing a **Land Use Bylaw**

- **Zoning** (i.e. commercial vs residential land)
- **Subdivision** (size, shape and location of new lots)
- **Parking** and **signage** regulations

Considering applications to **change zoning**

Other types of **special land use regulations** and studies

- Environmental protection (water bodies, groundwater, sensitive ecosystems)
- **Archaeological site** protection
- Addressing **natural hazard areas**
- Addressing **climate change** and greenhouse gases

Cooperation with other government agencies, First Nations and community groups regarding land use topics



Islands Trust

Events leading to the referendum 2006

March, 2006

- Trust Council creates a Governance Task Force. 13 of 26 trustees volunteer to be members.

June, 2006

- Government Task Force identifies political representation as first priority as this is the topic that is most likely to require change to the *Islands Trust Act*. Changes to provincial Acts require considerable lead time.

August, 2006

- Provincial Government recommends independent governance review before it will consider legislative change.

September – December, 2006

- On-going liaison with Province and Capital Regional District.
- Terms of Reference created & consultant Alan Neilson-Welch hired to conduct independent governance review.



Islands Trust

Events leading to the referendum 2007

January – April, 2007

- Independent review of Islands Trust governance options for political representation, resulting in a range of options.
- Report recommends enlarging Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee, but not adding new members to Trust Council

May, 2007

- Public consultation on options identified by consultant.

June, 2007

- Trust Council reviews public input and decides to proceed with request for legislative changes to the *Islands Trust Act* and to work on better coordination with the Capital Regional District.



Islands Trust

Events leading to the referendum 2007

July, 2007

- Islands Trust writes to the Minister of Community Development to provide background information and rationale for requesting legislative changes to the *Islands Trust Act*.
 - a) Two additional trustees for Salt Spring Island
 - b) Powers to expand size of Islands Trust Executive Committee
 - c) Other miscellaneous changes to streamline processes

November, 2007

- Islands Trust consults with other elected officials (MLAs and Electoral Area Directors), as per suggestion from the (then) Minister of Community Services. Broad support is received.

December, 2007

- Islands Trust meets with the Minister of Community Development to outline the requested legislative changes to the *Islands Trust Act*.



Islands Trust

Events leading to the referendum 2008

May, 2008

- Islands Trust receives suggestion from the Minister of Community Development to hold a referendum to assess the level of electoral support for additional local trustees on the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee.

June, 2008

- Trust Council unanimously supports referendum and begins arrangements for it to coincide with local elections in November.

The Minister's Response

On May 23 2008, then Minister of Community Services Ida Chong wrote to Trust Council about its request for legislative change to allow for more Salt Spring Trustees. She listed the following “merits” of the idea:

“Additional members may”:

- reduce reliance on off-island executive members to break a tie
- increase the diversity of perspectives at committee meetings
- increase the quorum, enabling two LTC members to informally exchange ideas or meet with constituents without being perceived as improperly convening a meeting of the ITC; and
- ensure that decision making is still possible if a member must remove themselves in the event of a conflict of interest

In September 2008, the Order in Council was issued to conduct the referendum.



Summary: Why a referendum?

Neilson-Welch report favours increasing the number of trustees on the **Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee** (but not at Trust Council).

Public consultation demonstrates broad support for seeking legislative change to address governance concerns on Salt Spring Island.

Trust Council asks the Ministry of Community Development to amend the *Islands Trust Act* to increase representation on the Local Trust Committee from Salt Spring Island and on **Trust Council**.

The Minister of Community Development suggested a referendum would help determine whether there is public support for increasing the size of the **Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee**.

Trust Council agrees to hold a referendum.



Islands Trust

The Referendum Question

“Are you in favour of increasing the number of locally-elected trustees that sit on the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee from two trustees to four trustees?”



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Trust Council Today (and after a “No” Vote)

- Each of the 12 local trust areas elects two local trustees

- The electors of Bowen Island Municipality elect seven Council members, and elect two of them to sit on Trust Council as Municipal Trustees

- All 26 local and municipal trustees sit on Trust Council

- Each local trust area has a three-person local trust committee that consists of two local trustees and a Chair from the Executive Committee



Trust Council After a “Yes” Vote



- The Salt Spring Island LTC would be a 5-member body, consisting of 4 locally-elected trustees and a chairperson appointed from the Islands Trust Executive Committee
- All 5 members of the Salt Spring Island LTC would have the same powers and authority to vote on the committee
- The 2 additional trustees would be able to sit as members of Trust Council committees and to participate in discussions at Trust Council, providing Salt Spring Island with more input into Trust Council decisions.

The Minister's Role

If there is a YES vote, the province has indicated it would make the necessary changes to provincial legislation to increase the size of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee from three members to five.

This requires the sponsorship of Minister of Community Development Blair Lekstrom, and subsequent approval by the BC Cabinet.



The By-Election

Assuming the legislation changes, there would be a by-election in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area to elect two people to serve on the Salt Spring Island LTC.

Thereafter, elections for all four Salt Spring Island local trustees would occur every three years along with other BC local government elections.

Voters would determine which two trustees would be members of Trust Council.

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What would a “Yes” vote cost?

A by-election to elect two additional trustees in 2009 would cost about **\$12,000**, which would be shared by provincial and trust area taxpayers. Thereafter, regular elections for 4 trustees would cost the same as elections for 2 trustees.

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If there are two additional trustees, the Islands Trust’s **annual** costs for its Salt Spring operation would increase by **1.8%** or **\$33,000**.

This cost would be covered by the entire trust area and amounts to about 35 cents per \$100,000 assessment or **\$1.65** for a property assessed at \$450,000.

More Salt Spring Island governance initiatives



1) Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee approved draft protocol agreement with the Capital Regional District to establish regular coordination meetings.

2) Trust Council is working towards a closer balance between taxation and planning resources for Salt Spring.

Questions?



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