



# News Release

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January 24, 2013

2013-03-IT

## Islands Trust Seeks Input On Draft 2013-2014 Budget

VICTORIA — The Islands Trust is seeking public input on its draft budget for 2013-2014. The Islands Trust Council will make a final budget decision at its March 5-7, 2013 meeting on Thetis Island.

Islands Trust taxes account for between 10-20% of the total property tax bill for property owners in the Islands Trust Area, depending on other property taxes charged on each island. The Financial Planning Committee is recommending that the Islands Trust Council adopt a budget of \$6.9 million for 2013-2014. This figure is comprised of an increase of \$133,517 in expenditures, which would result in a 1.3% increase in Islands Trust property taxes for 2013-2014.

Last year, the owner of a property assessed at \$450,000 paid about \$343 in Islands Trust taxes. If approved by Trust Council, the proposed Islands Trust budget for 2013-2014 would mean a tax increase of approximately \$4 for a \$450,000 property.

“We are trying to keep budget increases low, while responding to our constituents’ requests for improvements and new programs to address issues that are important to islanders.” said Sheila Malcolmson, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “We want to know what people think of this year’s budget proposal, and whether we have struck the right balance.”

The proposed budget will enable the Islands Trust to continue its work on the following strategic priorities, in addition to its core functions:

- Compliance with provincial requirements under the *Riparian Areas Regulation*. This provincial regulation requires local governments to ensure that potential fish habitat within their jurisdiction is protected to specific standards. Funding to continue the work to bring the Islands Trust Area into compliance includes public consultation to develop necessary bylaws and mapping streams where the regulation would apply.
- Improved public communication and streamlining information sharing tools, in response to increased community demand for access to information.
- A modest increase in bylaw enforcement capacity, responding to constituent requests to uphold local bylaws.

The proposed increase will also fund several other strategic projects, some with significance throughout the Islands Trust Area, and some of importance to individual island communities. The proposed 2013-2014 budget would complete or advance community work in addressing local planning issues in all local trust areas. In addition to public consultation, specific work would be related to a variety of strategic initiatives such as groundwater and shoreline protection.

The proposed budget also addresses a reduction in the provincial grant revenues in 2013-14 and BCGEU collective agreement wage increases negotiated by the Government of British Columbia for 2012-13 and 2013-14.

“We work hard to meet islanders’ expectations to carry out our provincial mandate in a cost-effective manner that minimizes pressures on taxpayers,” said Malcolmson. “At the same time, as a local government we must also undertake a number of mandatory tasks and are faced with cost increases beyond our control.”

“Before proposing this budget, Trust Council’s Financial Planning Committee carefully considered the options for providing the many projects islanders asked for as well as meeting legal obligations as a local government,” Malcolmson said. “The proposed budget represents many hours of discussion, debate and difficult decisions. Now we need to hear from islanders.”

- More -

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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

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Budget details are available from the Islands Trust website at <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/news/budget.cfm> or directly from the following Islands Trust offices:

1-500 Lower Ganges Road  
Salt Spring Island, BC  
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The Islands Trust welcomes comments from the public on the proposed budget. If you want your submission to be considered as part of the Financial Planning Committee's budget recommendation to Trust Council, your submission must be received by **NOON Friday, February 8, 2013**. After that, if you get your input to us by **February 13, 2013** it can still be in the public Trust Council meeting agenda package and posted to the website. Later submissions will be accepted until **NOON Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup>** and be delivered to Trust Council at its March 6, 2013 meeting on Thetis Island.

Comments can be sent to: Islands Trust Council, Attention: Treasurer at #200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8R 1H8; by fax: 250.405.5155 or by e-mail to: [budget2013@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:budget2013@islandstrust.bc.ca).

The Islands Trust Council is a federation of local government bodies representing 25,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

#### **CONTACT**

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