



# News Release

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## Islands Trust 2012-2013 Budget Now Available Online For Public Input

VICTORIA — The Islands Trust is seeking public input on its proposed budget for 2012-2013 available from the Islands Trust website at [www.islandstrust.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca). The Trust Council will make a final budget decision at its March 6-8 meeting on Gabriola 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 2012-2013. This proposed budget represents increased expenditures of \$63,000 offset by increased revenues of \$2,000, which would result in a 1 per cent increase in Islands Trust property taxes for 2012-2013.

Last year, the owner of a property assessed at \$450,000 paid about \$291 in Islands Trust taxes. If approved by Trust Council, the proposed Islands Trust budget for 2012-2013 would mean a tax increase of approximately \$3 for a property of that value. However, the change in taxes on a particular property is also dependent on the relative changes to property assessment values throughout the entire Trust area.

“Our goal is to keep budget increases low, while still delivering some new programs and improvements that respond to our constituents’ requests,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “We want to know what people think of this year’s budget proposal, especially whether we have struck the right balance between the need for services and keeping tax increases low.”

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

- Review and update of the Islands Trust Policy Statement, adopted in 1994. The Policy Statement lays the foundation for the principles, policies and decisions of the Islands Trust. The Islands Trust has applied for a grant for the extensive community consultation that would be required for this project. If a grant is offered and Trust Council decides to proceed with the review at its March quarterly meeting, the grant would minimize the impact on property taxes.
- Compliance with provincial requirements under the *Riparian Areas Regulation*. This regulation requires local governments to ensure that 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.
- Increases to the remuneration for trustees elected in 2011. Since trustee remuneration is important in enabling individuals to provide this type of public service, the previous Trust Council adopted a revised remuneration bylaw to encourage more diversity in the candidates who ran for office last November.
- Significant improvements to the management and accessibility of our records. In 2011 a new system replaced a thirty-year-old system to ensure efficient tracking and retrieval of documents required by the public, trustees, staff and other parties. The two-year implementation plan for the new system will be completed in 2012-2013.

The proposed budget could also fund several other strategic programs, some with significance throughout the Islands Trust Area, and some of importance to individual island communities. The proposed 2012-2013 budget could:

- support completion or significant advancement of community work in reviewing Official Community Plans and Land Use bylaws in seven Local Trust Areas. In addition to public consultation, specific work would be related to affordable housing, groundwater and shoreline protection, and food security.
- implement community planning projects on Salt Spring Island related to the Official Community Plan
- consult with the community about shoreline protection on North and South Pender islands
- improve groundwater protection on Galiano Island

Preserving **island** communities, culture and environment

Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis

- o finalize updated bylaws for islands in the Ballenas-Winchelsea archipelago
- o improve the accuracy and availability of Islands Trust mapping products
- o enable office renovations in the Salt Spring Island office
- o provide additional laptop computers for trustees, to transition to 'paperless' meetings.

"Islanders expect us to carry out our provincial mandate in a cost-effective manner that minimizes pressures on taxpayers," said Malcolmson. "As a local government we must also undertake a number of mandatory tasks and are faced with cost increases beyond our control. To respond to islander's requests for more programs and services while keeping cost increases as low as possible, we have examined our budget carefully and reduced spending in other areas wherever possible."

"Before proposing this budget, our Financial Planning Committee met several times and carefully considered the options for providing the programs and services our communities ask for, as well as meeting our legal obligations as a local government," Malcolmson said. "The proposed budget represents many hours of discussion and debate. Now we need to hear from islanders."

Budget details are available from the Islands Trust website at [www.islandstrust.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca) or directly from the following Islands Trust offices:

1-500 Lower Ganges Road  
Salt Spring Island, BC  
Phone: 250.537.9144

700 North Road  
Gabriola Island, BC  
250.247.2063

200-1627 Fort Street  
Victoria, BC  
250.405.5151

The Islands Trust welcomes submissions from the public on the proposed budget. All written input provided by the public, and received by noon Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup> will be considered by Trust Council before it adopts a final budget for fiscal year 2012-2013. If people wish to have their feedback considered by the Financial Planning Committee before it finalizes its budget recommendation to Trust Council, written submissions should be sent by noon Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>.

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 [Budget2012@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:Budget2012@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 and amenities 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.

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**CONTACT**

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