

Have Your Say on Islands Trust Priorities

August is a good month for eating tomatoes, gazing at the night sky, swimming in the ocean, and influencing how your tax dollars are spent.

Perhaps the latter activity isn't what most people think of, but it is true in the Islands Trust area, where the Islands Trust Council is inviting the public to help set its priorities for the 2014 - 2018 term. Each term, Council adopts a Strategic Plan -- a blueprint to guide Council's work over the coming years. Over the next few weeks, we are soliciting public input into the plan, which currently is in a draft form that reflects many hours of spirited discussion between the 26 Trustees from all the Trust islands.

What makes this discussion so interesting is the difficult but unavoidable fact that we can't do everything. Time and money are limited, and we have to make tough choices. Many people say they want Trust Council to protect the natural environment – on land and sea – and they want sustainable economies and healthy communities. Others want an emphasis on transparent and cost-effective governance. Some want a major focus on advocacy with other levels of government, while others say the Trust should work on better engaging local communities. All good goals, but we can't do it all.

Trust Council's work is grounded in the three primary goals of the Islands Trust Policy Statement: 1) Ecosystem preservation and protection; 2) stewardship of Island resources; 3) sustain island character and healthy communities. This year we've added the overarching goal of "effective, efficient and collaborative governance."

Based on these three goals, council has developed 11 objectives:

- Protect the natural environment of islands
- Preserve and protect coastal shorelines and marine areas
- Reduce our ecological footprint
- Protect quality and quantity of water resources
- Enhance, protect and restore community socio-economic sustainability
- Strengthen relations with First Nations
- Improve organizational cost-effectiveness and resilience
- Improve cooperation and integration with other levels of government
- Improve community and agency understanding and support of the Islands Trust
- Improve community and agency understanding and support of the Islands Trust
- Improve community engagement and participation in Islands Trust work
- Create a vision for the Islands Trust area

Which of these do you think should be top priorities? Are there any you don't agree with? Would you like to suggest other objectives that don't appear on the list?

The information portal to all things strategic-plan-related is

www.islandstrust.bc.ca/strategicplan. Here you'll find a draft of the plan that shows examples of how the above objectives would translate into actual activities. There's also a link to an on-line survey, an FAQ, and a glossary of related terms.

How to share your thoughts:

- Email: strategicplan@islandstrust.bc.ca
- Send a letter to Islands Trust, 200-1627 Fort St, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8.
- Attend the September Trust Council meeting and address Trust Council in person (you can set this up in advance on the website or by calling the Victoria office (250-405-5151))
- Complete a survey that you will find on the website.
- Ideally, meet a deadline of August 10 to be most effective. However, all input will be considered, no matter when it comes in.

Also, feel free to chat with me (lbusheikin@islandstrust.bc.ca | 250-218-3216) or Trustee David Critchley (dcritchley@islandstrust.bc.ca | 250-335-3244) and/or attend meetings of the Denman Island Local Trust Committee (see website or the Grapevine calendar for dates and times) about this or anything else Trust-related. And enjoy the tomatoes, the stars, the ocean and all the other glories of the season!