



# News Release

200 -1627 Fort Street Victoria BC V8R 1H8

Telephone **250.405.5151** FAX: 250.405.5155

Toll Free via Enquiry BC in Vancouver 604.660.2421. Elsewhere in BC **1.800.663.7867**

information@islandstrust.bc.ca www.islandstrust.bc.ca

January 24, 2011

2011-02-IT

## Islands Trust Seeks Input About 2011-2012 Budget

VICTORIA — The Islands Trust is seeking public input on its proposed budget for 2011-2012. Islands Trust Council will make a final budget decision at its March 8-10 meeting on Galiano 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 2011-2012. This budget represents an increase of \$470,000 in expenditures this year, offset by increased non-tax revenues of \$212,000, which would result in a 4.4 per cent increase in Islands Trust property taxes for 2011-2012.

Last year, the owner of a property assessed at \$450,000 paid about \$287.00 in Islands Trust taxes. If approved by Trust Council, the proposed Islands Trust budget for 2011-2012 would mean a tax increase of approximately \$12.60 for a property of that value.

“After some necessary budget increases last term, we are now stabilizing our operations,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “This term we have been able to keep budget increases fairly low, while still delivering some new programs and improvements that respond to our constituents’ requests. 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 taxes in line.”

The proposed budget responds to comments and suggestions the Islands Trust has received from island communities about:

- the need to improve the accessibility of information for the public, including improving the Islands Trust website and the accuracy and availability of Islands Trust digital mapping;
- expanding the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) throughout the Trust Area;
- proactive community planning through review of Official Community Plans and Land Use Bylaws;
- increasing the diversity of trustees so they are more representative of the communities they serve; and,
- continuing to build relationships with First Nations groups that have interests in the Islands Trust Area.

“We have heard that our constituents believe it’s important for trustees to come from many walks of life, so that their decisions accurately reflect their community’s diversity,” said Malcolmson. “Trust Council members believe that the present levels of remuneration prevent the participation of significant sectors of the population, particularly the young and those who need to work to provide for themselves and their families.”

To enable a greater range of candidates to come forward, Trust Council is proposing a new remuneration policy that would come into force after the next local government election. Since the last review of remuneration in 2004, the complexity of trustees’ work and the amount of time that trustees are expected to spend on behalf of their constituents has increased significantly. The new policy recognizes the need for remuneration to keep up with the cost of living, to be comparable to similar roles and work loads in other local and regional governments and to make it possible for all members of the community to serve as trustees.

“We hope that more realistic levels of remuneration will encourage a greater diversity of trustee candidates during the upcoming local elections in November,” said Malcolmson.

The proposed budget also supports several programs that are important to individual island communities such as:

- affordable housing, climate change mitigation, and conservation on Salt Spring Island with enhanced levels of community engagement;
- finalizing a farm plan for Denman Island;

– more –

Preserving **island** communities, culture and environment

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

upcoming budget...2

- mapping sensitive ecosystems on two islands in the Northern Region;
- addressing riparian area protection on Hornby and Saturna Islands;
- providing information and supporting community discussions about groundwater on Galiano and Saturna Islands; and,
- expanding the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) program to Bowen Island.

“It will be a great success to finally have the NAPTEP program available throughout the entire Islands Trust Area,” said Malcolmson.

The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) is a property tax incentive program designed to encourage landowners to protect the natural features of their land. It provides a 65% exemption on the land value of property taxes for the protected portion of a property.

“Islanders expect us to carry out our provincial mandate and to do so in a cost-effective manner that minimizes pressures on taxpayers,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “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 islanders’ requests for more service while keeping cost increases as low as possible, we have examined our budget carefully and reduced spending in other areas wherever possible.”

“Two years ago we established a grants administrator position as a pilot project”, said Malcolmson, “and due to the remarkable success in obtaining grant funds, we are proposing to make this a permanent part-time position. We have been able to fund several new programs wholly or partially through grants rather than through property taxes. For the 2011-2012 fiscal year, we expect to receive \$115,000 in grant revenue which will support some important projects, the most significant being the Green Shores for Homes project.”

“Before proposing this budget, our Financial Planning Committee met several times and carefully considered the options for providing the many services our communities ask for throughout the year as well as meeting our 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.”

Budget details are available from the Islands Trust website at the following [link](#) 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 Friday, March 4, will be considered by Trust Council before it adopts a final budget for fiscal year 2011-2012. 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 11.

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: [budget2011@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:budget2011@islandstrust.bc.ca).

The Islands Trust Council is a federation of independent local governments that represents some 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.

– 30 –

## CONTACT

Linda Adams  
Chief Administrative Officer  
250.405.5160

Sheila Malcolmson  
Chair, Islands Trust Council  
250.247.8078