



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

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Islands Trust Approves Budget for 2010-2011

VICTORIA — On March 24th, the Islands Trust Council approved a new annual budget for 2010/11 that will enhance environmental preservation and protection. Trustees debated the funding challenges associated with the core work of the Islands Trust for several hours, taking into account public input about the current economic situation, public requests for services received throughout the year, and legislative changes that have created new workloads for staff and trustees.

“There are economic forces and legislative requirements creating cost increases beyond the control of all local governments,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “This budget will allow us to comply with the *Community Charter* and new provincial legislation while enhancing communications about how these changes affect communities. Since taxpayers do not want us to decrease our local planning services, bylaw enforcement or political advocacy on important issues, we could not in good conscience reduce those core costs.”

“We continue to be vigilant about preserving and protecting the Gulf Islands while minimizing pressures on taxpayers,” added Malcolmson. “We found ways to reduce spending where we can, such as Executive Committee travel, meetings, computer equipment and office renovations – all of which help our operations to become carbon-neutral. We also have several island communities that are due for reviews of their official community plans and this budget will support these important community planning initiatives. An increase in the annual operating budget is also due in part to a decrease in revenue from development application fees and decreased interest income.”

Local Trust Committees have been working hard to comply with new environmental regulations and Chair Malcolmson explained, “Last year staff focused on learning about the legislation, gathering data and developing options for each local trust area. This year the focus is to relay what we have learned to the public. Trust Council approved \$45,000 to support Trust-wide work to implement the provincial Riparian Area Regulation and to comply with Bill 27 (Green Communities). Bill 27 requires local governments to take steps aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. People expect solid information about what protecting streams and reducing greenhouse gases means to them, and that kind of communication costs money.”

Trust Council approved a budget of \$6.4 million, representing an increase in property tax of 4.6% or approximately \$2.77 per \$100,000 of assessed property value. A typical residential property assessed at \$450,000 can expect a property tax increase of approximately \$12.45 as a result of the Islands Trust’s budget decision. For a typical property owner, Islands Trust taxes only account for approximately 10-20% of total property taxes, depending upon location and other components of the tax bill.

The most significant budget additions relate to two new staff positions: a Planner for Salt Spring Island and a Legislative Services Manager. Approval of the new Planner position completes a 3-year plan to upgrade all aspects of Local Planning Services and improves land use planning and application processing services on Salt Spring Island. This is necessary to address the complexity of development applications on Salt Spring Island and the need for proactive planning related to community challenges such as affordable housing, agriculture, sensitive ecosystem protection and industrial land uses.

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Preserving **island** communities, culture and environment

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

The Legislative Services Manager position will ensure many essential tasks such as local elections, records management, annual reports, freedom of information and procedural certainty are carried out effectively. These tasks are currently managed by staff who have growing responsibilities for important 'trust area programs' such as Crown land acquisition, First Nations relations, implementation of the *Islands Trust Policy Statement* and advocacy to represent island viewpoints to other levels of government about a range of issues, including forestry, groundwater, ferries, marine conservation, aquaculture and agriculture. In approving the new position, Trust Council confirmed the continuing importance of the many 'trust area programs' in supporting island communities and achieving the Islands Trust's provincial mandate.

The Islands Trust Council is a federation of independent local governments that represents some 25,000 people living in 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 BC mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

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Attached: Approved Budget 2010-2011

CONTACT

Craig Elder
Director Administrative Services
250.405.5150

Linda Adams
Chief Administrative Officer
250.405.5160 Cell 250.882.0555

Sheila Malcolmson
Chair, Islands Trust Council
250.247.8078 Cell 250.713.1957



Annual Budget For The Year Ending March 31, 2011

	Description	Annual Budget
REVENUE		
	Fees and Sales	110,000
	Provincial Grant	50,545
	Property Tax Levy - General Trust Area	5,755,081
	Property Tax Levy - Bowen Island Municipality	224,517
	Appropriation from Surplus	181,831
	Interest Income	42,000
	Other Revenue	62,000
	Total Revenue	<u>6,425,974</u>
Expenses		
Council		
	Trust Council	249,773
	Executive Committee	82,465
	Council Sub-committees	14,000
	Trust Area Services	461,577
	Admin Support- 17% of Total Admin Expenses	220,495
	Total Trust Council	<u>1,028,310</u>
Local Planning Services		
	Local Trust Committees	704,703
	Planning Staff & Facilities	2,597,230
	Mapping Services	235,641
	Bylaw Enforcement	274,848
	Admin Support- 73% of Total Admin Expenses	946,832
	Total Local Planning Services	<u>4,759,255</u>
Trust Fund		
	Board	22,000
	Administration	414,707
	Operations	72,000
	Admin Support- 10% of Total Admin Expenses	129,703
	Total Trust Fund	<u>638,410</u>
General Administration		
	Senior Management	289,693
	Financial, HR & Admin Services	709,537
	Personnel Recruiting	5,000
	Office Operations	227,800
	Equipment & Computer Purchases	65,000
	Administrative Services Recovery	(1,297,030)
	Total General Administration	<u>-</u>
	Total Expenses	<u>6,425,974</u>
	Contribution to Surplus	<u><u>0</u></u>