

News Release



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SALT SPRING LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE SEEKING INPUT ON GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION – CLIMATE ACTION WORKSHOP FEBRUARY 6

The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee is reaching out to the community for help in crafting greenhouse gas reduction targets and policies for the Official Community Plan (OCP). This is part of a Trust-wide effort to meet provincial requirements for BC communities to reduce their carbon footprint.

On Saturday, February 6, the Local Trust Committee, in cooperation with the Capital Regional District and others, will host a community workshop at 1 pm in the multi-purpose room at Gulf Islands Secondary School. This is the first phase of a community process to involve individuals, community groups and organizations in developing goals and actions. The workshop is also intended to identify partnerships and resources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Subsequent initiatives will include newspaper articles, additional public meetings or workshops, emission reduction targets and ongoing monitoring to determine if targets are being met. Future amendments to the Official Community Plan will also be part of the process to provide further leadership and direction in achieving community goals.

"Climate change is a global challenge that demands creative solutions at the local level," said Sheila Malcolmson, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. "Because the Islands Trust's primary responsibility is land use planning, we are uniquely positioned to take leadership on reducing greenhouse gas emissions with land use planning tools. Trust Council has always wanted to be part of the solution, but the province's Bill 27, the Local Government (Green Communities) Statutes Amendment Act, gives us a deadline of May 2010 to get this part of the job done."

"We are tremendously fortunate to already have significant sectors of our community working to mobilize people around climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions," commented Christine Torgrimson, a Salt Spring Island local trustee. "The trustees are pleased to be working hand in hand with those who led the initial Salt Spring Energy Strategy—the Earth Festival Society and the Institute for Sustainability Action and Education—as well as with the CRD director and other community leaders. This process gives the Trust an opportunity to support the updating of the Energy Strategy, as well as to identify some of the positive impacts that local agriculture can have on carbon reduction."

"It's very important for us, as individuals and as a community, to take meaningful steps to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions – but we cannot allow our personal actions to displace continued efforts to get senior levels of government and corporations to address what is perhaps the most important crisis we face today," stated Salt Spring Island local trustee George Ehring.

"By establishing relationships with the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee, the Earth Festival Society, the Institute for Sustainability, Education and Action, the Agricultural Alliance and other community leaders, the Climate Action Workshop for Salt Spring Island will help our community achieve meaningful greenhouse gas reductions" added Garth Hendren, CRD Area Director.

These initiatives are part of a new Islands Trust program launched in September 2009 – Climate Wise Islands. The current focus on amending OCPs is based on awareness that changes to land use and development patterns are critical in reducing GHG emissions. The design and physical arrangement of roads, buildings, and land use patterns directly influence transportation emissions and building energy use. The Climate Wise initiative reflects the Trust's commitment to work with other levels of government and local community groups to build sustainable and low carbon island communities through innovative land use planning and advocacy.

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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

climate action workshop...2

To provide information to island communities on climate change actions, the Islands Trust has published *Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Islands Trust Area*. The document is also intended to assist local trustees in meeting the Islands Trust's goal of sustainable and low-carbon communities through innovative land use planning.

The Climate Wise Program further supports the BC Climate Action Charter, which the Islands Trust endorsed in 2007, joining 175 other BC local governments in a collective commitment to:

- Achieve carbon neutral operations for the organization by 2012 by reducing paper use and travel for meetings, and by buying carbon offsets for any remaining emissions;
- Measure and report community GHG emissions; and
- Promote compact, complete, and energy efficient communities.

Detailed information on this initiative is available on a new climate change section of the Islands Trust website at <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/climatechange>. The webpage includes key decisions and other resources about climate change relevant to island communities. Subscribers to "Climate Change News" can receive e-mail alerts of significant project updates.

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. It is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year.

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