

# Trustee Notebook *By Laura Busheikin*

## Tell Us How to Spend your Tax Dollars

The Islands Trust, your local land-use authority mandated with preserving and protecting the islands of the Salish Sea, is inviting public input into its 2016/2017 budget.

As a Local Trustee, I hear a lot of comments about the Trust, ranging from angry complaints to innovative suggestions to heartfelt wishes to constructive criticism. I do my best to listen to all of it, but I'm just one person. Here's a chance to connect to a much bigger audience of decision-makers (26 trustees) with a focused message that will give your voice more power.

The Trust is reaching out through various media to islanders from all 13 local trust areas, from Saturna and the Penders in the south to Hornby and Denman in the north, offering a variety of ways to share your thoughts on the budget, as well as on the Islands Trust generally. I'm writing this to encourage you to take part. It doesn't have to be time-consuming or complicated, and in fact it might be fun.

The Trust has some of your property tax dollars, and can spend them in a variety of ways – protecting the natural environment; advocating for coastal shorelines and marine areas; reducing community ecological footprints; enhancing community character, socio-economic diversity and economic sustainability; strengthening relationships with First Nations; making the Islands Trust more cost-effective and resilient as an organization, and more (there's a list of objectives in the budget consultation package; see below for more info).

Like most organizations or individuals making a budget, Trust Council (the decision-making body for the whole Trust area) can't do everything it wants to. Resources are limited. Hard choices have to be made. How do we prioritize? Which goals and activities best reflect our community's current values and needs? We welcome public input into these questions.

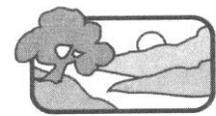
### How to participate

The Trust is offering a consultation process that we hope is accessible and engaging. Here are your options: Visit the Islands Trust website ([Islandstrust.bc.ca/budget](http://Islandstrust.bc.ca/budget)) to find...

- highlights of the budget proposal
- projects proposed on your island
- ways to get involved and give feedback on the proposed budget
- a link to a short, anonymous survey

Send an **email** to [budget@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:budget@islandstrust.bc.ca)

**Not on the Internet?** Call the Victoria office (250-405-5151)



Islands Trust

to get printed copies of the budget consultation package and/or send a letter to The Islands Trust, 200-1627 Fort St, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8.

**In a hurry?** Just go straight to the short, anonymous on-line survey at [islandstrust.bc.ca/budget](http://islandstrust.bc.ca/budget).

And feel free to talk to myself and/or Local Trustee David Critchley about the proposed budget (or anything else Trust-related).

**Deadline for comments** is Wednesday, February 17, 2016. Trust Council will consider your views during budget deliberations before finalizing the budget at its quarterly meeting March 22-24, 2016, on Hornby Island.

## Update on Local Projects

On a similar note, last month I described several possible projects the Denman Island Local Trust Committee (DILTC) could choose to focus on in 2016. As I mention above, we can't do everything, at least not all at once, and so we need to prioritize.

I'm pleased to report that the DILTC chose Farm Plan Implementation as its next project. The Farm Plan was created by a volunteer steering committee, based on research, a series of community discussions, input from agrologists and other professionals, and consultation with other agencies (such as the Agricultural Land Commission and the Regional District).

The Plan contains lots of information about farms, farming, and food security initiatives and issues on Denman, and it also contains lists of recommendations. Now that the DILTC has taken this on as a project, we will be considering the recommendations aimed at the DILTC. There will certainly be opportunities for public involvement in this discussion. Stay tuned!

The Farm Plan is available in the Trust office at the Old School (drop by during Trustee Office House, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, 10:00 a.m. to noon), in the Denman library, and on the Trust website (visit [islandstrust.bc.ca](http://islandstrust.bc.ca), click on Denman Island on the map, then scroll down to Denman Island Local Trust Committee Projects and click on Implementation of Denman Island Farm Plan).

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