



Islands Trust

FACT SHEET

TREE CUTTING & REMOVAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA 3

What is the Tree Cutting and Removal Development Permit Area (DPA 3)?

British Columbia's *Local Government Act* enables communities to designate parts of their planning area as Development Permit Areas (DPAs) so they can set objectives and guidelines for development within those areas. The [Galiano Island Official Community Plan](#) (OCP) designates seven DPAs generally designed to protect sensitive ecosystems or to guide development in areas with special circumstances.

The Tree Cutting and Removal DPA was adopted by the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) in order to protect the natural environment, ecosystems and biodiversity of the island. The purpose of the DPA is to ensure that tree removal on the island is limited, sustainable, and strictly necessary for the intended use of the land.

Why are forests and other treed areas important?

Forests are an important aspect of the rural character of Galiano Island, and provide a key aesthetic and recreational resource for residents and tourists alike. In areas of the island that have been settled, remaining forests and groves are important features of the landscape that provide habitat for wildlife and local access to green space. In addition, the forests' role in capturing and storing carbon is important in supporting the Local Trust Committee's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

The forests of Galiano Island are part of the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone, a biotic community unique in the world. Most such forests in southwestern British Columbia have been heavily modified by logging and land clearing, with the result that the remaining forests on Galiano are important for conserving biodiversity. In particular, species such as Garry Oak thrive on the island but are increasingly rare elsewhere.



Finally, maintaining forest cover is closely related to the continued productivity of groundwater recharge areas. In addition to providing potable water for Island residents and a water supply for local farms and businesses, groundwater plays an important role in maintaining base flows in rivers and streams, which are critical in providing wildlife habitat and maintaining fish spawning areas and wetlands. The indiscriminate removal of trees impairs groundwater supplies by reducing the groundwater retention capabilities of the land, and increasing the velocity of runoff.

How do I know whether my land is affected by the DPA?

The DPA applies to the entire Galiano Island local trust area, but many tree removal activities are exempt from the development permit requirement.

When do I need a development permit?

Unlike most of the other DPAs on Galiano Island, a development permit is **not** required for the subdivision of land, for the construction or alteration of a building or structure, or for the alteration of land, except where the alteration is the cutting or removal of trees.

In addition, many tree removal activities are exempt. The cutting or removal from any lot in any 3 year period of less than 12 cubic metres of timber (approximately 3 large trees) per hectare is exempt, as are tree removal activities within the Agricultural Land Reserve, lands with Private Managed Forest status, and certain kinds of covenanted areas. These exemptions generally do not apply to Garry Oak trees.

Any landowner who has property that is located within the DPA may be required to obtain a development permit from the Local Trust Committee before undertaking any other tree cutting or removal activities.

How do I obtain a development permit?

Islands Trust planning staff can give you advice on the application process and options for developing your property. If you do need to apply for a permit, you will be required to complete an [application](#) and submit the application fee. If you are proposing tree cutting on Forest Zoned lands, you will need to show that the cutting and any proposed silviculture and reforestation program are elements of a sustainable forest management strategy, and that they will not impair the quality or quantity of groundwater. Proposals for other developments will need to show that tree removal is necessary for the permitted use, and that the development has been sited to minimize tree removal.

Once a complete application is submitted, it typically takes 4 to 8 weeks to process an application. Staff will review your application, plans and any professional reports in relation to the DPA guidelines in the OCP, and make a recommendation to the LTC. The LTC will then consider issuance of the permit at a regular meeting. There is no public hearing or notification for a development permit application.

While a Development Permit cannot preclude permitted development, it can include conditions consistent with the DPA guidelines, such as attaching specific plans or requiring mitigation measures. Depending on the development, additional permits (e.g. a building permit) may be required as well.

General information about the development permit application process can be found on the [Islands Trust website](#).

How do I get more information?

To determine whether your tree removal activities are subject to the guidelines of the DPA, consult the Galiano Island Official Community Plan. Copies of the OCP are available from Islands Trust offices in Victoria, and online at www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/galiano. You can also contact planning staff directly at 250-405-5151 or toll-free through Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867.