



# ISLANDS TRUST FRESHWATER SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

**Webinar**  
24 January 2024



*Islands Trust*

**William Shulba, P.Geo.**  
Senior Freshwater Specialist  
[freshwater@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:freshwater@islandstrust.bc.ca)

***To preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the Trust Area and of British Columbia in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, First Nations, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.***



**Islands Trust**

# Water

it's more than a symbol or a metaphor.

This is 10,000 YEARS of KNOWING.

our CREEKS and RIVERS allow us to HAVE SPIRITUAL BATHS...

TO HEAL OURSELVES.



IT TEACHES ABOUT PATIENCE, RESPECT, DEATH AND BIRTH

WE ARE INTERCONNECTED WITH LAND, AIR & WATER.



WE COME FROM THE WATER...

WE NEED A BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING THAT INCLUDES OUR SACRED RELATIONSHIP.



WE HEAR IT IN THE WORDS and STORIES of our GRANDPARENTS



WE GET TO REST, BUT THE WATER IS ALWAYS at WORK.

EDUCATING ABOUT THE PAST AND PRESENT... FOR THE FUTURE!  
PRESERVE & PROTECT

it is ALIVE. & HAS A SPIRIT.



IT IS OUR GROCERY STORE, our PHARMACY, our SCHOOLS and our TRANSPORT and our SACRED PLACES.

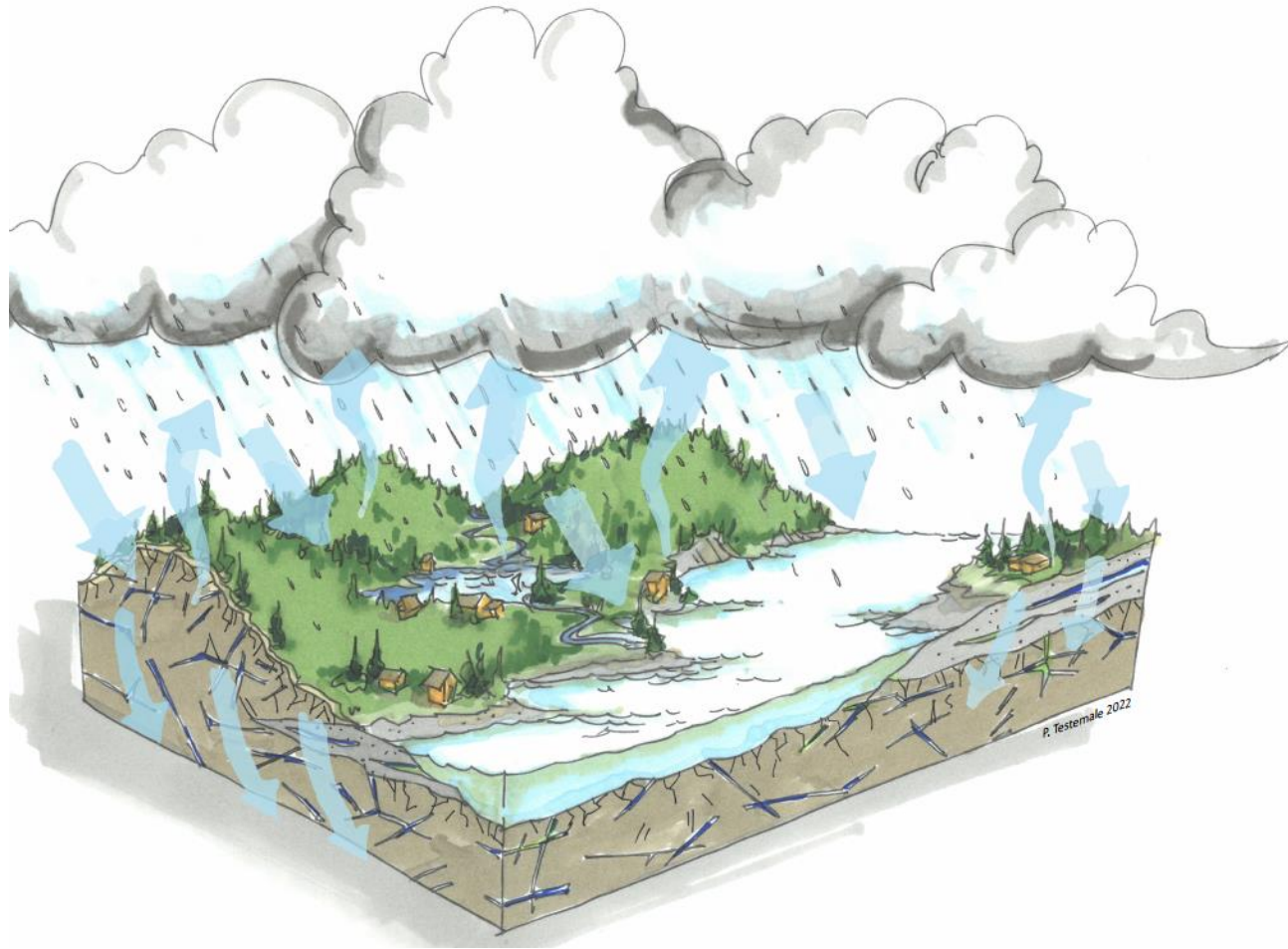
it's NOT A RESOURCE... IT IS a RELATIONSHIP.

THERE ARE IMPACTS AT EVERY SCALE.

RIVERS ARE THE VEINS of MOTHER EARTH.

# Freshwater is a unique amenity in the Islands Trust Area





Establishing the *Freshwater Footprint* of the Islands Trust Area is a leap in evidence-based sustainability planning.

Historically, precautionary principles aided planning through a lack of knowledge of freshwater availability and vulnerability.

*We cannot use the past to plan for the future.*

# Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy

Released December 2021



*Islands Trust*

Freshwater Sustainability Strategy

DECEMBER 2021

The Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy was supported through the Healthy Watersheds Initiative a program delivered by the Real Estate Foundation of BC and Watersheds BC with financial support from the Province of British Columbia as part of its \$10-billion COVID-19 response plan. The strategy development was conducted under contract by Econics and Compass Resource Management.





**Freshwater  
sustainability is a key  
lens through which  
Islands Trust land use  
decisions are made**



**Islands Trust continues to support research, advocate for water literacy, and provide open public access to knowledge about freshwater**





## Protect ecosystems and the overall health of watersheds and groundwater in the Islands Trust Area



**Preserve or enhance quantity and quality of drinking water sources for current and future residents**



Collaborate with First Nations and Indigenous organizations to create understanding of cultural and spiritual values of water and how they interrelate to ecosystems and community well-being

*Blue Ecology water cycle and principles, designed by Michael D. Blackstock as a companion to the conventional science-based Water Cycle*

**Enable British Columbians to enjoy the islands' water for recreation, aesthetic, and spiritual purposes**



Understand and respect Indigenous ways of knowing and community knowledge about water resources; weave together different ways of understanding to improve water management



What the water Tells us (2023)

4:34 / 8:51





**Use the best available information to protect watersheds and water resources in land use planning and development decisions**

Photo: W. Shaliba



**Improve information and knowledge about the quality and quantity of water resources**

Photo: W.Shulba

Increase public awareness of water efficiency, stewardship of watersheds, groundwater, and drinking water resources

Improve the coordination efforts among the various governments and agencies with authority over water resources

Enable integrated decision-making that considers the cumulative effects of human activities and climate change impacts on the region's water resources



Graphic by Erica Sloniker

**Groundwater Sustainability Science Program**

**Watershed Sustainability Science Program**

**Cultural Knowledge and Engagement Program**

**Freshwater Sustainability Reporting Program**

## Groundwater Sustainability Planning Program (GWSS)

<b>GWSS 1</b>	Improve data management to inform decision making
<b>GWSS 2</b>	Develop a coordinated long-term water monitoring program
<b>GWSS 3</b>	Continue groundwater data and information inventory
<b>GWSS 4</b>	Continue groundwater recharge potential mapping
<b>GWSS 5</b>	Continue groundwater availability assessments
<b>GWSS 6</b>	Establish groundwater regions as a focus for land use planning for all Islands
<b>GWSS 7</b>	Integrate water availability and vulnerability information into land use policies and regulations
<b>GWSS 8</b>	Implement appropriate planning and regulatory tools to protect vulnerable aquifers and sensitive aquatic ecosystems
<b>GWSS 9</b>	Improve the availability of water-related information to support development application reviews
<b>GWSS 10</b>	Customize water supply requirements for new development to local circumstances

## Watershed Sustainability Science Program (WSS)

<b>WSS 1</b>	Inventory and understand the status of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems
<b>WSS 2</b>	Continue to explore the potential for rainwater harvesting and other alternatives to supplement water supplies and promote this as conservation and resilience strategy

Cultural Knowledge and Engagement Program (CKE)	
<b>CKE 1</b>	Identify freshwater sites of cultural and spiritual significance to First Nations
<b>CKE 2</b>	Collaborate with First Nations and Indigenous organizations to increase community awareness of water-related cultural values, interests, and inherent rights
<b>CKE 3</b>	Develop and implement a freshwater stewardship outreach plan
<b>CKE 4</b>	Develop and implement water-focussed training for new Trustees and Trust staff
<b>CKE 5</b>	Use market research methods to understand and monitor change in attitudes and behaviours related to water
<b>CKE 6</b>	Support water purveyors' adoption of sustainable water management practices

<b>Collaboration and Advocacy with Other Agencies (CAOA)</b>	
<b>CAOA 1</b>	Collaborate with First Nations and Indigenous organizations to develop understanding and integrate their participation, perspectives, and interests into water-related decision making by all agencies
<b>CAOA 2</b>	Work with the Provincial Government to employ appropriate regulatory instruments in areas with acute water challenges
<b>CAOA 3</b>	Work with partner regulatory agencies to harmonize approval processes and integrate Freshwater Sustainability Strategy goals and objectives into decisions
<b>CAOA 4</b>	Work with partner agencies to manage water use and quality impacts from existing users, particularly in areas experiencing supply constraints

# Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Implementation Planning

The Regional Planning Committee will be considering the strategy's implementation and resourcing recommendations for developing a plan for future years

## Trust-wide Commitment

Given that the sustainability of freshwater in all the Islands Trust Areas is central to ecosystem and community health, freshwater vulnerability must be considered in all Islands Trust policy and land use decisions at both the Trust-wide and local trust committee level.

## Development of a plan for implementation includes recommendations that:

- Identifies responsibilities of Regional Planning Committee Trust Programs Committee, Trust Council, and Islands Trust staff
- Identifies options for enlisting a Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Coordinator

- Continues groundwater science programs including data inventory, groundwater recharge potential mapping and groundwater availability assessments
- Integrating new water availability and vulnerability information becomes available into land-use policies and regulations through minor and major updates to official community plans and land use bylaws

- Implementing new land use planning tools through local trust areas; island municipalities; and Regional Planning Committee projects.
- Identifying sites of cultural and spiritual significance to First Nations through a Cultural Heritage Mapping Project.
- Developing a freshwater stewardship outreach plan.
- Publishing the first 'state of freshwater report' for the Islands Trust.



# Water

it's more than a symbol or a metaphor.

WE ARE INTERCONNECTED WITH LAND, AIR & WATER.

WE HEAR IT IN THE WORDS AND STORIES OF OUR GRANDPARENTS

IT IS OUR GROCERY STORE, OUR PHARMACY, OUR SCHOOLS AND OUR TRANSPORT AND OUR SACRED PLACES.

OUR CREEKS AND RIVERS ALLOW US TO HAVE SPIRITUAL BATHS...

TO HEAL OURSELVES.

WE COME FROM THE WATER...

WE NEED A BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING THAT INCLUDES OUR SACRED RELATIONSHIP.

WE GET TO REST, BUT THE WATER IS ALWAYS AT WORK.

IT'S NOT A RESOURCE... IT IS A RELATIONSHIP.



IT TEACHES ABOUT PATIENCE, RESPECT, DEATH AND BIRTH

RIVERS ARE THE VEINS OF MOTHER EARTH.

EDUCATING ABOUT THE PAST AND PRESENT... FOR THE FUTURE!  
IT IS ALIVE. & HAS A SPIRIT.

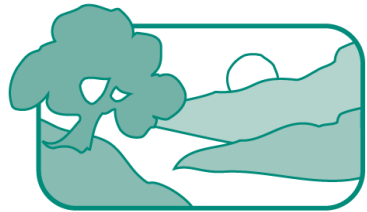


THERE ARE IMPACTS AT EVERY SCALE.

CORINNA KEELING-ILLIUM FOR EVERBODY

# THANK YOU

## Question and Answer Session



**Islands Trust**

**Contact:**

**William Shulba, P.Geo.**

Senior Freshwater Specialist

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