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March 19, 2019

Re: Proposed Changes to Gambier Island Riparian Areas Regulations

Dear Gambier Island Resident/Property Owner,

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Gambier Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) regarding proposed changes to the Riparian Areas Regulations for Gambier Island. We would like to invite you to attend an upcoming community information meeting on **Saturday April 27th, 2019** at 1:30 p.m. on Gambier Island or participate in a live webinar on **Monday April 29th, 2019** at 7:00 p.m. to learn more about proposed changes to the protection of streams on Gambier Island. Please review the enclosed information package for details.

The LTC adopted bylaws in 2017 to protect critical fish habitat on Gambier Island, as required by the Provincial *Riparian Areas Regulation* (RAR). The intent was to ensure that residential and other development was adequately set back from watercourses that provide critical fish habitat, as determined by a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP).

Over the past year, the LTC has been advised by planning staff of implementation issues with the recently adopted bylaws. The principle challenge has been a lack of clear policy and regulations for development adjacent to watercourses that are not potential fish habitat but have other important functions such as potable water sources and ecological diversity. The LTC requested staff to prepare bylaw amendments to correct Development Permit Area No. 3 – Riparian Areas (DPA-3), which was intended to apply to all watercourses on Gambier Island regardless of potential to support fish habitat. Proposed Bylaw Nos. 148 and 149 have been drafted to address these issues and are available for review on our website.

Our current step in this land use planning process is to explain the proposed changes to residents and property owners on Gambier Island. We encourage you to review the attached documents and participate in either event. The webinar will be recorded and posted to our website for future reference. Questions and comments can be submitted to the LTC at northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

Sue-Ellen Fast, Chair
Gambier Island Local Trust Committee



Gambier Island Local Trust Committee

www.islandstrust.bc.ca
northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca
Tel. 250 247-2063

Community Information Meeting

**Regarding Amendments to the Gambier Development
Permit Area No. 3 – Riparian Areas**

Saturday April 27, 2019

1:30 – 3:00 pm

Gambier Community Hall, 721 Andy's Bay Road, Gambier Island

OR

LIVE WEBINAR on Monday April 29, 2019

7:00pm -8:30 pm

Please register online at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4001464059629646860>

The webinar will be recorded and posted to our website.

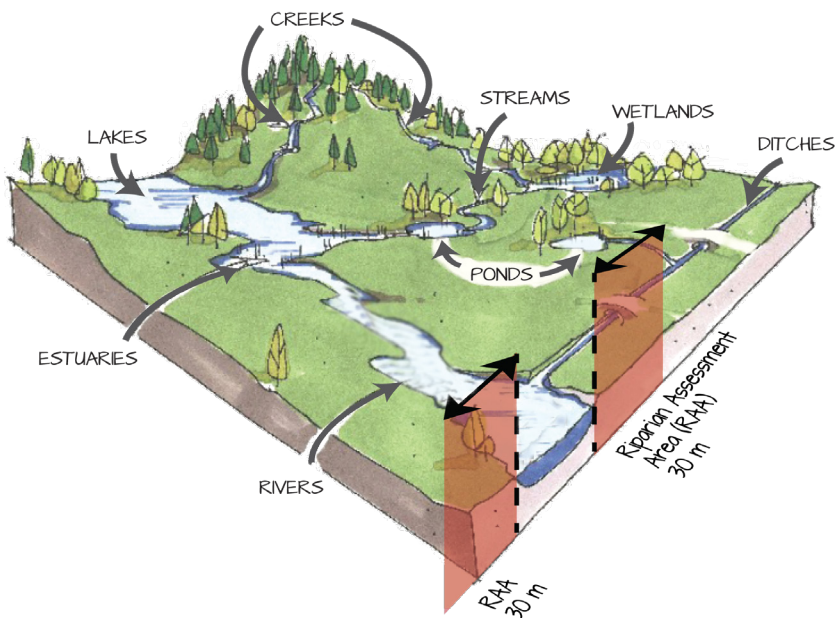
There will be a presentation and facilitated Q + A session on Proposed Bylaws 148 (OCP) and 149 (LUB) which, if adopted, would amend the Gambier Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw respectively.

For more information please contact northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca

Open to the Public – Everyone Welcome

RIPARIAN PROTECTION ON GAMBIER ISLAND

March 2019
update



Islands Trust

Northern Office

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THIS GUIDE

...is provided to inform residents and land owners about proposed updates to the Gambier Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw. These changes are intended to update and strengthen the existing riparian area protections that are technically compliant with the provincial Riparian Area Regulation (RAR), but lack protection for non-RAR water courses. The intent of the proposed changes is to protect ecological diversity and potable water sources and address the challenges of a changing climate. Please review the enclosed information and contact the Islands Trust Northern Office if you have any questions or comments.

WHAT ARE RIPARIAN AREAS?

Riparian areas are the areas bordering streams, lakes and wetlands that connect water to land. These areas support a diversity of plants and animals, provide important refuges and migration routes for birds and wildlife, and support fish life processes. In addition, riparian areas play a key role in maintaining the natural hydrologic cycle of a watershed by stabilizing stream channels, reducing erosion, filtering impurities and sediment, capturing and storing runoff water and precipitation and recharging aquifers that store groundwater. The Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR) is provincial legislation to protect fish habitat and requires local governments to enact bylaws that protect riparian areas during development. In 2015 the Local Trust Committee conducted an assessment of Gambier Island and identified several RAR watercourses that require protection and many non-RAR watercourses that, despite not being critical fish habitat, are significant freshwater habitats.

CHALLENGES WITH EXISTING REGULATIONS

Planning staff advised the LTC of implementation challenges with the new bylaws after reviewing several development applications. Three main issues were identified with the DPA as well as recommended solutions. The LTC directed staff to prepare draft bylaws to correct and address the following issues:

Issue 1

No guidelines for development within 30 metres of a non-RAR watercourse.

Solution - introduce specific guidelines for those watercourses that are not under RAR but still have habitat values worth protecting...

Issue 2

The 'designated area' of applicability is only identified in the OCP and not indicated in the LUB

Solution – Include a designated area of applicability for the entire island in the LUB...

Issue 3

There is no methodology to determine whether a watercourse is subject to RAR

Solution – Include requirement for a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to make the determination.

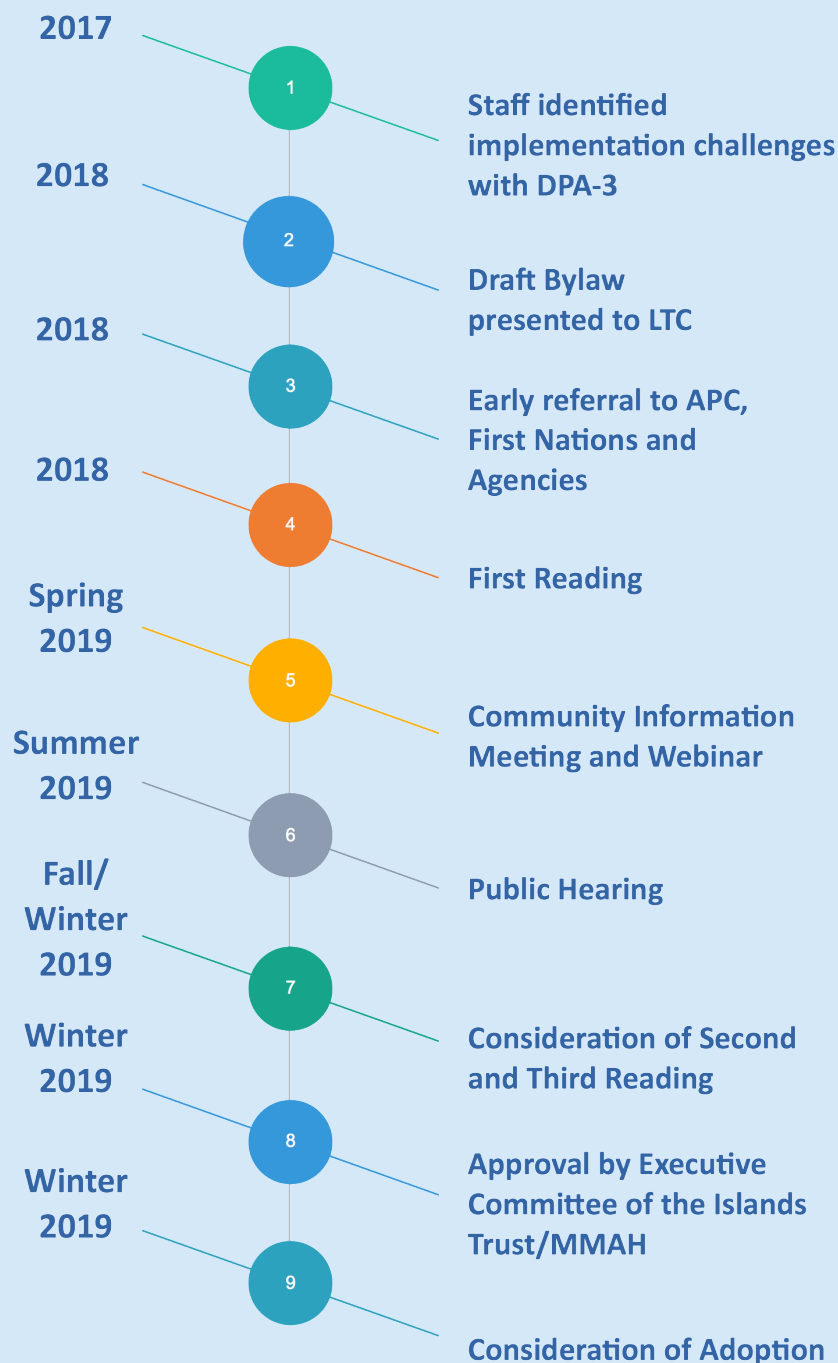
CURRENT PROTECTION

The Gambier Island Local Trust Committee amended the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) in 2017 to introduce new policies and regulations to protect RAR watercourses on Gambier Island. A new Development Permit Area (DPA 3 Riparian Areas) was established and is applicable to any development or land alterations within 30 metres of a Riparian Area Regulation (RAR) watercourse. Property owners intending to build, excavate or remove trees or vegetation within the 30 metres riparian assessment area need to apply to the Local Trust Committee for a Development Permit and hire a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to conduct a science based assessment of the proposed activities. The QEP's assessment will determine the Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA) on your property and determine where development may take place or be restricted if it has potential to damage vegetation and/or fish habitat. The QEP recommendations form part of the Development Permit issued by the Local Trust Committee.

PROPOSED CHANGES

Proposed Bylaws 148 (to amend the OCP) and 149 (to amend the LUB) have been drafted to address the three key issues with the current approach to protecting riparian areas on Gambier Island. This includes expanding protection to non-RAR watercourses on Gambier island, clearer mapping, stronger guidelines and policies. The Local Trust Committee is seeking public input on both bylaws which were given First Reading in 2018. A community information meeting and webinar will be held in the spring of 2019 and a public hearing is anticipated in the early summer of 2019.

TIMELINE + NEXT STEPS



For more information on Riparian Area Regulations in the Gambier Local Trust Area please visit

www.islandstrust.bc.ca