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### Groundwater Licensing Program Information February 3, 2022 Webinar

*Lək̓ʷəŋən*, METULIYE/Victoria, B.C. – In partnership with Islands Trust, provincial staff will be offering a free online information webinar on British Columbia's groundwater licensing program on Thursday, February 3, at 7:00 p.m.

This session will be moderated by Islands Trust's senior freshwater specialist, William Shulba. The webinar comes ahead of the March 1, 2022, deadline date to apply for a water licence with the Provincial Government for those who started using groundwater from a well or dugout before March 1, 2016, for non-domestic uses like irrigation, commercial, waterworks, or industrial use, or home businesses that increase intensity of water use. After this date, the Province requires that those affected by the legislation stop using groundwater until they have a licence. Non-compliance could result in losing priority access to the groundwater.

Domestic well owners are also urged to register their well for free, so their water use is known and considered by provincial decision-makers when dealing with other licence applications.

"The sustainability of freshwater resources is crucial across the Islands Trust Area," said Peter Luckham, Islands Trust Council Chair. "Licensing water helps protect aquifers and streams, along with the businesses and livelihoods that depend on reliable access to water. Join us as provincial staff from the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy present about the legislation and what it could mean to you and the islands."

In the *Water Sustainability Act*, non-domestic groundwater is now included in the same regulatory structure that has existed for surface water for over 100 years. The *Act* recognizes that groundwater and surface water should be managed together amidst increasing pressures on freshwater resources.

The webinar will take place on Zoom Videoconferencing. To register and receive the invitation link, visit <https://bit.ly/3KLDKrk>. Participants are encouraged to submit questions ahead of the presentation to make the most of the evening webinar. Questions can be submitted to [programs@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:programs@islandstrust.bc.ca).

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#### About Islands Trust

Islands Trust is a special-purpose government representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and 10,000 non-resident property owners. The Islands Trust Area is located within Coast Salish territory and is the homeland to over 28,000 Coast Salish Peoples who have called this place home since time immemorial. Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the Islands Trust Area's unique environment and amenities through conservation-oriented land use planning and regulation, education, advocacy, and cooperation with First Nations and other agencies. The area covers

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***Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea***

Bowen, Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Hornby, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis

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the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5,200 square kilometres.

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