



Islands Trust Conservancy Board

Regular Meeting Agenda

Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026
Time: 10:00 am
Location: Electronic Zoom Meeting

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3.1 Review of Agenda and Introduction of New Items

3.2 Approval of Agenda

4. RISE AND REPORT DECISIONS FROM PREVIOUSLY CLOSED MEETING

At the March 17, 2026 Islands Trust Conservancy Board meeting, Chair Gauvreau rose and reported that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board has signed a Trail Licence Agreement with the Capital Regional District allowing the Capital Regional District to build and maintain a small section of a public trail within Island Trust Conservancy's Medicine Beach (E, HO,) Nature Sanctuary, North Pender Island along Canal Road as part of their Active Transportation Trail system.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

5.1 Draft ITC Board Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2026

3 - 10

For review and approval.

6. FOLLOW UP ACTION LIST

11 - 17

7. BUSINESS

7.1 Items for Approval

7.1.1 Draft Bylaw No. 242 Referral, North Pender Island - RFD

18 - 42

7.1.2 Management Plan for Manzanita Ridge (Nature Reserve) Covenant, Salt Spring Island - RFD

43 - 84

7.1.3 Draft ITC Annual Report – RFD

85 - 102

7.1.4 Scheduling of a Special Meeting (Verbal Briefing)

THAT the Islands Trust Conservancy Board schedule an electronic special meeting for June 2, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. to consider the 2026/27 budget request overview and receive the 2026 Auditors Report and presentation.

7.2 Items for Discussion/Direction

7.2.1 Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program - BRF 103 - 132

7.2.2 Artificial Intelligence and the Islands Trust (Verbal Briefing)

7.2.3 ITC-EC Liaison Meeting – July 28, 2026 – Agenda Topics - BRF 133 - 135

7.3 Correspondence

7.4 Updates for Information

7.4.1 Public Acquisitions Report 136 - 137

7.4.2 Public Covenants Report 138 - 144

7.4.3 ITC Five-year Plan Update (Verbal)

7.4.4 Executive Committee Update (Verbal)

7.4.5 Trust Council Update (Verbal)

7.4.6 Financial Planning Committee Update (Verbal)

7.4.7 Governance Committee Update (Verbal)

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DELEGATIONS

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, July 28, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

11. CLOSED MEETING

11.1 Motion to Close the Meeting

THAT the Islands Trust Conservancy Board meeting be closed to the public in accordance with the Community Charter, Part 4 Division 3, section 90 (1) (e) the acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, if the board considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the Islands Trust Conservancy board, and that staff be invited to remain in the meeting.

12. ADJOURNMENT



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Islands Trust Conservancy Board

Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026
Location: Islands Trust Victoria Office
200 - 1627 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8R 1H8

Board Members Present: Lisa Gauvreau, Chair
Tanner Timothy | nənqəm, Vice-Chair
Tobi Elliott, Trustee
Jeannine Georgeson, Trustee
Risa Smith, Trustee (electronic)
Susan Yates, Trustee

Staff Present: Clare Frater, Director, Trust Area Services
Wendy Tyrrell, Manager, Islands Trust Conservancy
Joe Elliott, Senior Indigenous Relations Advisor (electronic)
Jemma Green, Team Lead, Protected Areas Management
Kathryn Martell, Ecosystem Protection Specialist
Jill Marrack, Senior Policy Advisor
Mike Richards, Strategic Fund Development Specialist
Erica Wheeler, Species at Risk Program Coordinator
Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant/Recorder
Lisa Millard, Meeting Administrator/Recorder (electronic)

Members of the Public Present: There were no members of the public in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gauvreau called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Gauvreau acknowledged that the meeting was being held in the territory of several Coast Salish First Nations.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3.1 Review of Agenda and Introduction of New Items

The following additions to the agenda were presented for consideration:

- Acknowledging and Mapping the Conservancy as a Growth Model – Discussion (see 9.1)
- David Denison Letter from Salt Spring Exchange – Discussion (see 9.2)

3.2 Approval of Agenda

By general consent the agenda was approved as amended.

4. RISE AND REPORT DECISIONS FROM PREVIOUSLY CLOSED MEETING

The Islands Trust Conservancy Board Chair Gauvreau rose and reported at its January 20, 2026 in-camera meeting that it has approved spending of up to \$5,000 from the Land Securement budget to support a potential nature reserve securement in the Lasqueti Island local Trust Area.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

5.1 ITC Board Meeting Draft Minutes of January 20, 2026

The following amendments to the minutes were presented for consideration:

- Modify the listing of board members by excluding the terms appointed and elected.

By general consent the Islands Trust Conservancy meeting minutes of January 20, 2026 were adopted as amended.

5.2 ITC Board Meeting Draft Minutes of January 30, 2026

The following amendments to the minutes were presented for consideration:

- Modify the listing of board members by excluding the terms appointed and elected.
- A formatting issue on p. 2 of the minutes, was noted, starting at the word “Columbia”;

By general consent the Islands Trust Conservancy meeting minutes of January 30, 2026 were adopted as amended.

6. FOLLOW UP ACTION LIST

Discussion ensued on:

- The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the following points were noted:
 - Use of artificial intelligence without a corporate AI policy in place;
 - Issues regarding AI include the ethics of AI’s ecological impacts;
 - Gather more information about current organizational AI use;
 - Information must be controlled and stored with care for privacy;
 - Director of Legislative and Information Services Marlor could join May meeting to discuss;
 - If staff are using AI what safeguards are being implemented; and
 - Trustee Elliott will bring the concerns to Executive Committee.

ITC-2026-020

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to report on their current use of artificial intelligence and safeguards being implemented.

CARRIED

- Investment of funds options:
 - ethical requirements governing the investments of ITC funds
 - These ethical funds also have high-yield options

Manager Tyrrell noted that she will send fund information to the Board.

Director Frater introduced herself upon joining the meeting.

7. BUSINESS

7.1 Items for Approval

7.1.1 Allocation of 2025-26 Undesignated Donations - Request for Decision

Manager Tyrrell summarized the request for decision.

It was noted that there is an error in the *Purpose* section of the Request for Decision. The date range ‘...from April 1, 2026 to March 11, 2026...’ should read April 1, 2025 to March 11, 2026.

ITC-2026-021

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to allocate undesignated donations received in the 2025-26 fiscal year to the Property Management Fund to support management of Islands Trust Conservancy’s protected areas.

CARRIED

7.1.2 Referral Request - Proposed Bylaw No. 107, Lasqueti Island - Request for Decision

ITC-2026-022

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to notify the Lasqueti Island Local Trust Committee that Islands Trust Conservancy’s interests are unaffected by proposed Bylaw No. 107.

CARRIED

The Meeting Administrator joined the meeting at 10:45 a.m. and recorded the minutes from item 7.1.3 onward.

The Planning Services Administrative Assistant (recorder) left the meeting at 10:47 a.m.

7.1.3 Referral Request - Proposed Bylaws No. 256 and No. 257, Denman Island - Request for Decision

Islands Trust Conservancy Team Lead Green summarized the request for decision.

Discussion ensued.

ITC-2026-023

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) Board request staff to notify the Island Planner for Denman Island that approval of Bylaws 256 and 257 is endorsed by the ITC Board on the basis that the proposed bylaws bring the Official Community Plan and zoning into alignment with the conservation purpose of the subject properties and adds another layer of protection from development, especially for PID 023-005-424 and PID 023-005-432, which are not currently protected by a conservation covenant.

CARRIED

7.1.4 Salt Spring Island NAPTEP Covenant Proposal - Request for Decision/Staff Report

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Ecosystems Protection Specialist Martell summarized the request for decision and noted a typo on page 2, Section 3, Implications of Recommendation, that should read "...this project would likely **not** be completed withing the timeframe for NAPTEP benefits in 2027."

ITC-2026-024

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board accepts the conservation proposal submitted by Marilyn Walker, to place a Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) covenant on approximately 2.5 ha of a Salt Spring Island property, PID: 009-805-991, Lot A, Section 72, South Salt Spring Island, Cowichan District, Plan 46279, to protect a wetland, riparian areas, and mature forest, subject to review of First Nations referral responses and to Ministerial approval.

CARRIED

The meeting was recessed for a break at 10:57 a.m. and reconvened at 11:03 a.m.

7.2 Items for Discussion/Direction

7.2.1 Species at Risk Program Highlights – Presentation and Briefing

The Species at Risk (SAR) Program Coordinator Wheeler provided a presentation on the program and highlighted the following:

- Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA) and British Columbia's conservation status ranking list for Red and Blue species and ecosystems;
- The Trust Area is located in southwestern BC, which was designated by the federal government as one of eleven priority places across Canada to allocate funding of the surveying, monitoring, management and recovery for species at risk, this designation provided the funding to implement ITC's Species at Risk Program through the Priority Places grant; and
- Species at risk within the Trust Area that SAR Program focused on includes Western Screech-Owl, yellow montane violet, Zerene Fritillary butterfly, and Sharp-tailed Snake amongst others;
- The presentation provided details on the successes of the SAR Program and the purpose, goals, accomplishments, and current status in the areas of program administration, data and information, surveys and monitoring, engagement and outreach, land securement, and the s.11 conservation agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) in progress.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were noted:

- The work program and goals were developed jointly with ECCC, but not directed by ECCC;
- Goals and objectives accomplished, and those not accomplished were communicated to ECCC through quarterly updates;
- Islands Trust Conservancy focuses on ecosystem-based research, education, and management as shown in the 10-year Regional Conservation Plan;

- There is intention to look at ecosystem integrity from a stewardship management planning perspective; and
- Staff will bring a business case to the next fiscal budget for the Regional Conservation Plan update process which will include funds for identifying mapping and modelling needs necessary for the update.

7.3 Correspondence - none

7.4 Updates for Information

7.4.1 Public Securement Project Report - Acquisitions

Received for Information.

7.4.2 Public Securement Project Report - Covenants

Received for Information.

7.4.3 Five-Year Plan – Verbal Update

Senior Policy Advisor Marrack provided a verbal update and highlighted the following:

- A virtual information session about the plan was held for First Nations in February and a summary of First Nations participation and interest was provided;
- A communications and engagement log will be developed as per provincial requirements;
- The next priority is to notify local conservancies of the process and begin meeting with First Nations for Phase Two;
- Staff are in the process of identifying nature reserves where there are opportunities to work together with First Nations with the intention to develop a framework for future decision-making focusing on a practical approach.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were noted:

- There is need to refine the referral letters and preface a referral with expression of interest in developing longer term relationship;
- Suggestion to develop an online repository for information sharing.

Trustee Smith left the meeting at 12:34 p.m.

The meeting was recessed for a break at 12:34 p.m. and reconvened at 1:34 p.m.

7.4.4 Executive Committee – Verbal Update

Trustee Elliott noted the following:

- Continued discussions with Executive Committee on how they can support Trust Council's understanding of Islands Trust Conservancy's work and budget; and
- There is a joint Executive Committee / Islands Trust Conservancy Board meeting on April 15, 2026 and consideration of agenda item topics will be discussed between Chair Gauvreau and Chair Patrick.

7.4.5 Financial Planning Committee – Verbal Update

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Trustee Yates stated the Financial Planning Committee met several times prior to Trust Council with focus on budget recommendations.

7.4.6 Trust Council – Verbal Update

Trustees provided a verbal update and the following comments were noted:

- The Trust Council meeting was focussed primarily on Policy Statement and budget discussions and the budget passed by 2/3 majority vote;
- Trust Council signed on to the joint call led by West Coast Environmental Law for the province to recommit to meaningful implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

7.4.7 Governance Committee – Verbal Update

Chair Gauvreau noted the recent Governance Committee meeting focussed on a presentation and discussion of trustee remuneration.

7.4.8 ITC Budget Report

Received for information.

7.4.9 Islands Trust Conservancy 4th Quarter – Staff Report

Discussion ensued and the following comments were recorded:

- There is a standing agenda item for local trust committee (LTC) meetings for staff to provide Conservancy updates;
- Conservancy staff do not have the capacity to present at every LTC meeting;
- Board Trustees highlight quarterly reports at (LTC) meetings when time allows;
- Trustee Elliott will advise Executive Committee that a report is not included as a standing item on local trust committee agendas;
- The quarterly report is provided to Trust Council and it is presumed the Trustees have seen it;
- Decision highlights of Conservancy Board meetings can continue to be provided to local trust committees for information.

TC-2026-025

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to forward the Islands Trust Conservancy quarterly update to Trust Council, local trust committees, and Bowen Island Municipality for the Conservancy Report agenda item, following its receipt at Trust Council.

CARRIED

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DELGATIONS - none

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Acknowledging and Mapping the Conservancy as a Growth Model – Discussion

Trustee Elliott introduced her systems mapping growth model concept and explained her views as follows:

- A need to develop a strategy for long-term sustainable funding for the Conservancy that isn't primarily provided through taxes;
- A growth model would be beneficial to project the growth of Islands Trust Conservancy into the future in regards to the number and complexity of properties to be acquired and managed;
- Growth (more lands protected) is accompanied by a related management burden including additional staff, operational, and administrative costs which create the need for higher budget;
- Moving forward, Islands Trust Conservancy could better estimate the long-term costs associated with protecting and managing ecologically significant lands to make.
- Systems mapping could help with development of a fundraising strategy so when funding opportunities are available at the provincial level, there would be clear information about where additional funding would make the most difference; and
- The mapping exercise can show and demonstrate an established benefit for funding.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were noted:

- The value of conservation is not accounted for in the way it should be and models can be used to estimate and justify costs;
- Islands Trust five-year Financial Plan Bylaw No. 201 does not account for the projected growth of Islands Trust Conservancy;
- Public budget surveys consistently show support for Trust Council funding to the Islands Trust Conservancy;
- Trust Council funding requests to the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs could be considered, and would benefit from advancing strategy, including seeking support from MLAs and First Nations; and
- There is information available on previous funding requests from Trust Council to the province.

9.2 David Denison Letter from Salt Spring Exchange – Discussion

This item was deferred.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next Islands Trust Conservancy Board meeting will be held electronically on May 12, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

11. CLOSED MEETING

11.1 Motion to Close the Meeting

ITC-2026-026

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board meeting be closed to the public in accordance with the Community Charter, Part 4 Division 3, section 90 (1)(b)

DRAFT

personal information about an identifiable individual who is being considered for an award or honour from the Board, or who has offered to provide a gift to the Board on condition of anonymity; and,

90(1)(e) the acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, as the Board considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the Islands Trust Conservancy Board; and,

90(1)(k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the Board, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the Islands Trust Conservancy Board if they were held in public; and

that staff are invited to remain in the meeting.

CARRIED

The meeting was closed to the public at 2:27 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Lisa Gauvreau, Chair

Certified Correct:

Rob Kroecker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant/Recorder

Lisa Millard, Meeting Administrator/Recorder

Minutes are not official until adopted at a subsequent meeting.



Follow Up Action Report

Trust Conservancy Board

27-May-2025

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
100%	<p>1 Staff to add the following topic to a future meeting agenda: If an internal whistleblower policy exists, and if not, should they consider the establishment of a process for staff, elected officials, and Board members to report concerns.</p> <p>October 3, 2025 Update: BC enacted a Whistleblower Law in 2019, but it does not apply to the Islands Trust.</p> <p>Nov 18, 2025 Update: Staff to research whistleblower policies and bring to the Board for consideration next fiscal.</p> <p>January 20, 2026: No new updates.</p> <p>March 17, 2026 Update: A whistleblower policy would likely best be adopted as a Trust-wide policy. Staff recommend this topic to be included as a potential agenda item at the July 2026 Liaison Meeting with Executive Committee.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: CAO Bronee presented at the April 15th ITC/EC joint meeting on a whistleblower policy. Staff will archive this FUAL after this meeting.</p>	<p>Clare Frater Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 07-Oct-2025</p>	<p>Completed</p>
0%	<p>2 Staff to add the following topic to a future meeting agenda: A discussion on the use and potential harm of artificial intelligence (AI).</p> <p>Nov 18, 2025: Scheduled for the May 2026 Board meeting.</p> <p>March 17, 2026 Update: The Director of Legislative Services has developed an interim management policy for staff in regards to use of AI, based on the Provincial policy. Due to adoption of the CAO's Operational Review, work on a corporate AI policy is not a funded project for 2026-27 fiscal year.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: The Director of Legislative Services will be presenting a verbal briefing on this topic at this meeting.</p>	<p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 12-May-2026</p>	<p>In Progress</p>



Follow Up Action Report

Trust Conservancy Board

27-May-2025

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
0%	<p>3 ITC Board members to explore Board Leadership Center training opportunities through KPMG including online resources available for common terms of reference, good practices, and trend information.</p> <p>Nov 18, 2025 Update: Staff will work with Chair Gauvreau to provide a BRF at the March 2026 meeting on options for training opportunities through KPMG.</p> <p>January 20, 2026: No new updates.</p> <p>March 17, 2026: No new updates.</p> <p>May 12, 2026: No new update.</p>	<p>Clare Frater</p> <p>Lisa Gauvreau</p> <p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 31-May-2026</p>	<p>In Progress</p>
0%	<p>4 Staff to cooperate with Tsartlip First Nation and Tseycum First Nation, via the W_SÁNEC Leadership Council (WLC), to develop an agreement for Islands Trust Conservancy Board consideration.</p> <p>October 3, 2025 Update: Staff have not received a legal opinion to confirm whether ITC Board can enter into agreements with Indigenous Governing Bodies. Trust Council is currently working in cooperation with WLC to co-develop an agreement.</p> <p>Nov 18, 2025: Staff have received legal opinion and will provide a verbal update at the November IC-Meeting.</p> <p>January 20, 2026 Update: Staff will be engaging with W_SÁNEC Leadership Council (WLC) during the Five-year Plan process to discuss an cooperation agreement.</p> <p>March 17, 2026: No new updates.</p> <p>May 12, 2026: Director Frater meets with W_SÁNEC Leadership Council staff on a regular basis, providing Conservancy updates.</p>	<p>Clare Frater</p> <p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 31-Mar-2026</p>	<p>In Progress</p>



Follow Up Action Report

Trust Conservancy Board

27-May-2025

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
95%	<p>5 Staff to proceed with negotiations for a Well Access Agreement with the Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) and the two covenant holders Gabriola Land & Trails Trust and Nanaimo & Area Land Trust for maintenance and data collection of the Provincial Groundwater Observation Well 197, in S'ul-hween X'pey (Elder Cedar) Nature Reserve.</p> <p>October 3, 2025 Update: Staff are close to wrapping up the final well access agreement. It has been reviewed by legal counsel, and suggested edits are being presented to WLRS for approval. The covenant holders have agreed to the access agreement in principle. The final agreement will be sent to the covenant holders for approval.</p> <p>Nov 18, 2025 Update: The Well Access Agreement with WLRS was sent to MIABC (Municipal Insurance Agency of BC) for review, as recommended by legal counsel. The final agreement will be sent to the covenant holders, to First Nations for referral, and the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs for approval.</p> <p>January 20, 2026 Update: No new updates.</p> <p>March 17, 2026 Update: The Well Access Agreement has been fully reviewed on our end, and is with the Ministry of Environment and Parks (MEP) for review. Though the well is maintained by WLRS, the agreement is between MEP and ITC.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: Final draft of this agreement is with the Director of Legislative Services for review. The agreement is scheduled to be signed in May or June.</p>	<p>Nuala Murphy Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 30-Sep-2025</p>	<p>In Progress</p>



Follow Up Action Report

Trust Conservancy Board

18-Nov-2025

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
90%	<p>1 Staff invest one million dollars of the Opportunity Fund in a high yield fund.</p> <p>January 20, 2026 Update: Staff are in consulting with a financial advisor regarding appropriate investment options.</p> <p>March 17, 2026 Update: Staff have placed \$1,000,000 in a high-yield fund. Update, post meeting. Staff received confirmation from the Minister's office that any investing of trust fund property requires minister approval.</p> <p>May 12, 2026: No new update.</p>	<p>Clare Frater</p> <p>Mike Richards</p> <p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 20-Jan-2026</p>	<p>In Progress</p>
5%	<p>2 Islands Trust Conservancy Board will seek input from Indigenous Governing Bodies and conservation partners on the purpose, structure, and priorities of donation-supported funds as part of the Five-Year Plan engagement process .</p> <p>January 20, 2026 Update: Engagement is in progress. Letters sent to First Nations in the Trust Area on January 16, 2026.</p> <p>March 17, 2026 Update: Information Session held. Engagement process in progress.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: Staff are communicating with First Nations staff that attended the information session.</p>	<p>Jill Marrack</p> <p>Lisa Gauvreau</p> <p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 15-Dec-2027</p>	<p>In Progress</p>
75%	<p>3 Staff to review ITC's fund guidelines and provide updated draft guidelines to the Board.</p> <p>March 17, 2026 Update: Staff presenting revised Opportunity Fund Guidelines to this meeting. Revised post meeting. Staff require more time to send revised Opportunity Fund Guidelines for additional internal and legal review.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: Staff have not had capacity to work on this item.</p>	<p>Clare Frater</p> <p>Mike Richards</p> <p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 18-May-2026</p>	<p>In Progress</p>



Follow Up Action Report

Trust Conservancy Board

20-Jan-2026

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
100%	<p>1 2026-003 Carried 20-Jan-2026</p> <p><u>9.1.1 Section 11 Conservation Agreement between Islands Trust Conservancy and Environment and Climate Change Canada RFD</u> Staff to finalize the s.11 Conservation Agreement with ECCC, and to obtain the Chair or Authorized Signatory to sign on behalf of the Board.</p> <p>March 17, 2026 Update: The s.11 Conservation Agreement is in final ITC legal review and is scheduled to be signed by end of March.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: The s.11 Conservation Agreement was signed by all parties and in effect as of April 13, 2026. This FUAL will be archived after this meeting.</p>	<p>Erica Wheeler</p> <p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 10-Mar-2026</p>	<p>Completed</p>
40%	<p>2 Staff to bring policy options to the Islands Trust Conservancy Board at its next meeting to guide allocation of funds of private donations, and provide policy options regarding undirected donations.</p> <p>March 17, 2026 Update: Staff are still investigating best practices for fund management in consultation with the Municipal Financial Authority of BC, and will provide an updated Fundraising and Donations Policy to consider, and a new Fund Management Policy to a future meeting.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: Staff do not currently have the capacity to work on this item.</p>	<p>Mike Richards</p> <p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 12-May-2026</p>	<p>In Progress</p>



Follow Up Action Report

Trust Conservancy Board

17-Mar-2026

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
100%	<p>1 7.1.1 Allocation of 2025-26 Undesignated Donations - Request For Decision ITC-2026-021 that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to allocate undesignated donations received in the 2025-26 fiscal year to the Property Management Fund to support management of Islands Trust Conservancy's protected areas. NOTE: Staff received communications post-meeting from LUPRI, that ITCB must obtain pre-approval from the Minister in regards to fund investment. May 12, 2026 Update: Undesignated donations received in the 2025-26 fiscal year were allocated , to the Property Management Fund as per board resolution, to support management of Islands Trust Conservancy's protected areas.</p> <p>"></p>	<p>Clare Frater Derek Cockburn Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 12-May-2026</p>	<p>Completed</p>
0%	<p>2 Staff will bring a business case to the next fiscal budget for the Regional Conservation Plan update process which will include funds for identifying mapping and modelling needs necessary for the update. May 12, 2026 Update: Staff will be presenting a 2027-28 Budget Request Overview at the Special Meeting (to be confirmed) on June 2, 2026, which will include a budget increase to action the Regional Conservation Plan update process among other budget requests.</p>	<p>Clare Frater Wendy Tyrrell</p>	<p>Target: 28-Jul-2026</p>	<p>In Progress</p>



Follow Up Action Report

Trust Conservancy Board

17-Mar-2026

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
100%	<p>3 TC-2026-025</p> <p>that Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to forward the Islands Trust Conservancy quarterly update to Trust Council, Local Trust Committees, and Bowen Island Municipality for the Conservancy Report agenda item, following its receipt at Trust Council.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: New procedure is now in place, and the quarterly report was sent out with the March Board meeting summary to the above entities.</p>	Wendy Tyrrell	Target: 12-May-2026	Completed

18-Mar-2026

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
0%	<p>1 Staff will send Municipal Finance Authority of BC's investment fund portfolio information to the board, pertaining to ethical fund investment options.</p> <p>May 12, 2026 Update: Staff have not had the capacity to work on this item.</p>	<p>Clare Frater</p> <p>Wendy Tyrrell</p>	Target: 12-May-2026	In Progress



REQUEST FOR DECISION

To: ITC Board

For the Meeting of: May 12, 2026

From: Staff

Date Prepared: April 29, 2026

SUBJECT: Draft Bylaw No. 242 Referral, North Pender Island

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to notify the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee that approval of proposed Bylaw No. 242 is not recommended for the reason that there is insufficient information to confirm that rezoning a portion of the subject property to industrial use will not negatively impact wildlife in adjacent protected areas, including ITC's Lisa Baile Nature Reserve and the proposed Doris McHardy NAPTEP covenant.
 2. That the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to notify the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee that if draft Bylaw No. 242 is approved, it is recommended that a conservation covenant be placed on the ecologically significant portion of the property upslope of the area proposed for rezoning.
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1 PURPOSE:

To review the referral for draft Bylaw No. 242, North Pender Island and provide comment for consideration to the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee (LTC).

2 BACKGROUND:

Draft Bylaw No. 242 addresses a rezoning application for a property adjacent to ITC-owned Lisa Baile Nature Reserve and the proposed Doris McHardy NAPTEP Covenant (an accepted covenant in negotiation). The [Memorandum of Agreement](#) between the North Pender Island LTC and the ITC Board states that where the North Pender Island LTC considers a draft bylaw that may have an impact on the responsibilities of the ITC Board, the North Pender LTC will refer the draft bylaw to the ITC Board for comment by the ITC Board before any public hearing is held regarding the bylaw. The North Pender Island Local Trust Committee will consider ITC Board comments on the bylaw received before the public hearing. A requirement for referral of rezoning applications that directly affect a property adjacent to an ITC owned property or conservation covenant is also set out in [ITC Board Policy 3.1, Islands Trust Conservancy and Local Planning Services Coordination](#).

The application is to rezone a portion of the subject lot from 'Rural' to 'Industrial' to allow for the following uses:

- Contractor Yard;
- Storage, handling and wholesale of aggregates, soils and mulches up to a maximum of 460 cubic metres;
- Storage of empty propane tanks up to a maximum of 5 tanks;
- Storage of diesel fuel up to a maximum of 10,000 litres; and,

- Accessory buildings and structures.

Plan No. 1 (Figure 1) shows the area that is designated Industrial in the Official Community Plan (OCP) but is still zoned Rural in the LUB. The exact area that is designated as Industrial in the OCP is what is proposed for rezoning with this draft bylaw. The ‘Schedule 1 Zoning Map’ of the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) would also be amended to change the zoning classification of a portion of the lot from Rural to General Industrial h (GI(h)), as shown on Plan No. 1 attached to draft Bylaw No. 242 (see Figure 1 and Attachment 1). This area has been disturbed and actively used as an industrial works yard for the last 15 years. Since 2011 there have been multiple temporary use permits (TUP) granted to allow for industrial use in this area. There is no record of the ITC Board being referred to on these TUPs, though the latest may have been issued before the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve was established in 2021. Currently, the owners are operating without an active temporary use permit in place; however, bylaw enforcement has been suspended while the rezoning application is in process. Review of historical imagery shows that industrial use of this area has increased significantly since 2011 under TUPs, and although the rezoning will not increase the area of land that is currently being used for industrial purposes, additional buildings may be placed on the land and industrial uses of this area may intensify.

**NORTH PENDER ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE
BYLAW NO. 242**

Plan No. 1

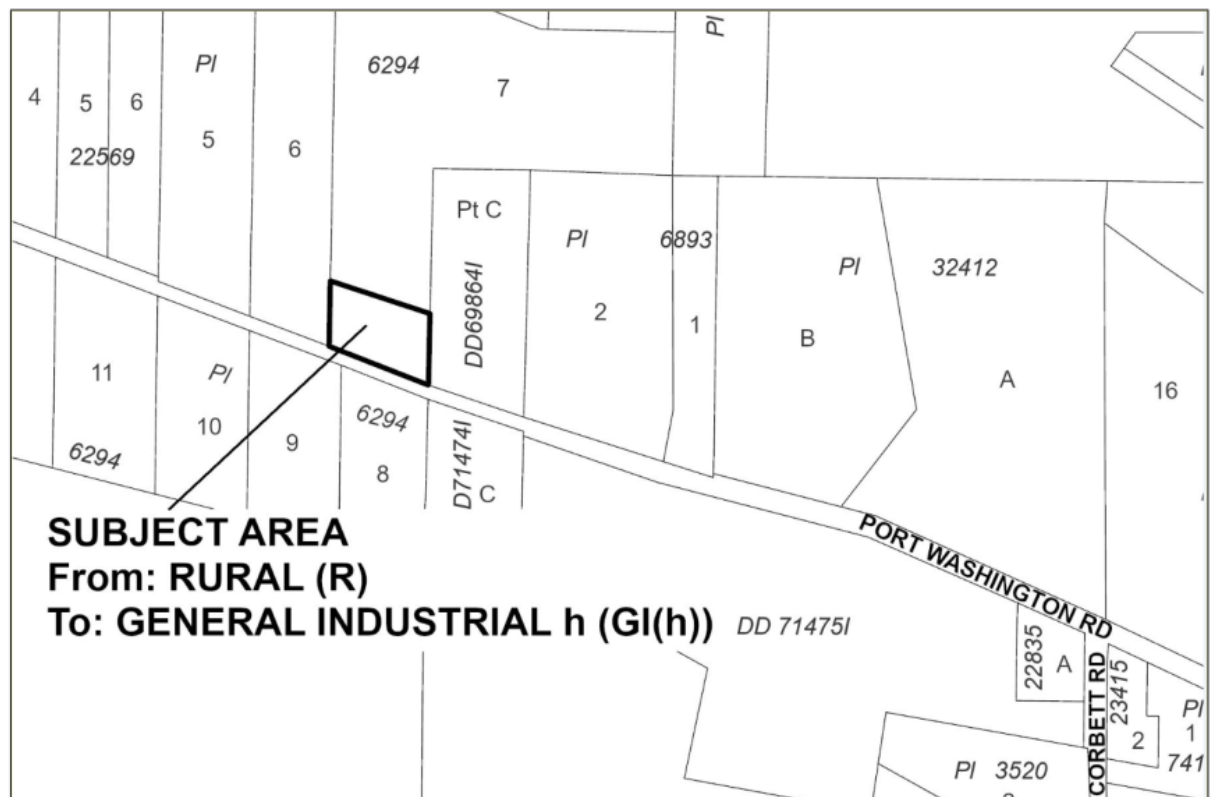


Figure 1. Plan No. 1, amendment to the ‘Schedule 1 Zoning Map’

The rest of the property is designated Rural in both the OCP and Land Use Bylaw and any expansion of the industrial zone beyond this area would require an OCP amendment. The site is not conducive to expansion; beyond the designation line it is a steep ridge up to the Rural portion above (though future plans may involve building a house). The remainder of the property contains sensitive and at-risk ecosystems, and suitable habitat for species of conservation concern--species which are

environmental impacts over the existing conditions.” The rezoning application including the report was subsequently reviewed by Islands Trust’s Registered Professional Biologist on staff, who concurred. However, ITC staff have identified several potential impacts to adjacent protected areas as well as aspects of the EIA report where more information is needed to accurately assess current and potential future impacts of industrial use on adjacent ITC protected areas.

Staff Recommendation and Analysis

At this stage, ITC staff are not able to confidently advise the ITC Board that the species at risk and other wildlife known or expected to occur in ITC’s Lisa Baile Nature Reserve and proposed Doris McHardy NAPTEP Covenant will not be negatively impacted by the proposed industrial rezoning on the subject property. Key concerns and issues that require additional information to address include:

1. Noise & Vibration Impacts:

Noise impacts are well-documented in scientific literature to have negative effects on a wide range of wildlife (e.g., [Shannon et al., 2015](#), [Madden et al. 2026](#)). The EIA does not indicate that noise measurements were conducted, nor does it provide parameters or analysis to support its conclusion that noise is not impacting wildlife in the area. As such, the conclusion in the EIA that “Other species-at-risk identified in adjacent nature reserve lands (e.g. common nighthawk) are not expected to be negatively impacted by rezoning for continued use of the industrial portion ...because no expansion of the work yard into higher-value habitat upslope is proposed and because there is an ample forested buffer to provide visual and noise barriers and maintain connectivity between adjacent habitat” appears unsubstantiated. For example, a forested buffer is unlikely to provide a noise barrier for Common Nighthawks, which nest on open ground.

According to letters submitted in response to this re-zoning application, noise occurring from industrial practices on the subject property has been a complaint from adjacent neighbours. However, noise management is outside the jurisdiction of the LTC. Noise disturbance in the Southern Gulf Islands is regulated through [CRD Bylaw No. 3378](#), “Noise Suppression Bylaw (Southern Gulf Islands) No.1, 2006,” which places no specific thresholds on disruptive sounds, does not consider impacts to wildlife (rather, “the neighbourhood or of persons at or near the source of such noise or sound”), and includes exemptions which may reasonably be applied in the case of the subject property and business operations therein (e.g. Section 4, items 2 and 4). Thus, there is both insufficient information provided in the EIA on current and future noise levels associated with the industrial activity on the subject property, and low confidence that harmful noise will be managed sufficient to protect against impacts on wildlife. For a clear understanding of whether noise produced from industrial activities will impact wildlife in ITC’s protected areas (and other protected areas in proximity), the current range of noise levels must be measured, potential increases in noise levels estimated, and these ranges of values compared against impact thresholds for the species known and/or expected to occur in the area.

Similarly, though it has received very little attention in the scientific literature ([Cross et al. 2021](#)), ground vibrations associated with industrial activity may have a negative effect on snakes, ground-nesting birds, and other wildlife on the subject property and in the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve and other nearby protected areas, but this was not discussed in the EIA report. For example, snakes lack an outer and middle ear, and are reliant on vibrations in their jawbone and skull to support hearing, a process which may be disrupted by ambient vibrations caused by industrial activity.

2. Nesting Birds:

Several bird species of conservation concern are known to occur in the area, such as Common Nighthawk, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Bald Eagle. Both the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve and the

proposed Doris McHardy NAPTEP Covenant contain suitable nesting trees for Bald Eagles and other raptors. The Pender Islands Conservation Association (PICA) has mapped and reported raptor nests in Vulture Ridge Nature Reserve. The EIA report does not discuss how potential disturbance effects on nesting birds will be mitigated against or monitored for impact. The EIA report states that since Bald Eagles are already nesting nearby, they must not be affected by the noise levels; however, no data were provided in the report on nesting success, fledgling condition, or nest fidelity to support this conclusion. Furthermore, the report does not acknowledge that disturbance from industrial activity on the subject property may deter new (non-disturbance adapted) Bald Eagles (or other bird species) from nesting in the area, diminishing the value of the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve and the broader protected area corridor.

In a [November 2025 letter](#) submitted to the LTC, PICA raised several concerns about potential impacts on nesting birds. They referenced research in the field of 'fear ecology,' which is increasingly demonstrating that elevated stress hormones, such as in response to anthropogenic disturbance, drive reduction in reproductive investment in songbirds and other wildlife species. They also reference the established concept of an 'ecological trap,' wherein species can be attracted to a habitat due to specific physical or biotic characteristics that outwardly indicate its quality (e.g. nesting trees), but other factors--such as predator presence, lack of food, or disturbance during critical times in the reproductive cycle--can result in those species being unable to reproduce or at higher risk of mortality. PICA points out that while species at risk such as Common Nighthawks and Olive-sided Flycatchers occur in upland areas of the subject property, as well as adjacent protected lands, their reproductive success in these areas is not yet known, and it is entirely possible that they have not successfully fledged young as long as the industrial activity has been taking place (in the absence of appropriate zoning or prior impact assessments). As a consequence, these areas could be functioning as population sinks (areas where reproduction is insufficient to balance local mortality) under current levels of disturbance.

3. Invasive Species:

The EIA report recommends that there be an invasive species management plan in place to prevent Himalayan blackberry and Scotch broom from spreading to the northern parts of the property with high conservation value and beyond. There was no timeframe recommended for this plan, nor is it clear who will be writing, implementing and monitoring the land over time to ensure that the industrial activity does not spread invasive species into ITC (and other) protected areas.

4. Wildfire Risk:

More information on future site monitoring is needed, with attention to how industrial activities will be monitored and managed to minimize fire risk.

5. Other Concerns about the Environmental Impact Assessment Process:

First, the EIA report did not consider the most updated information on sensitive ecosystems present on the subject property; consequently, listed Ecological Communities appear to have been overlooked in EIA. The EIA included a review of Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory mapping; however, the 2004 SEI map is what is referenced, not the updated Sensitive Ecosystem Mapping from 2017, which could be obtained from Islands Trust (now available on MapIT). The Red-listed Ecological Communities identified in 2017 maps as occurring throughout the northern part of the subject property, but which are not referenced in the EIA include:

- Douglas-fir- Alaska oniongrass (S1, Red-listed), Woodland Sensitive Ecosystem
- Douglas-fir - Arbutus (S2, Red-listed), Terrestrial Herbaceous Sensitive Ecosystem

- Douglas-fir – salal (S1, Red-listed) – identified by the BC Conservation Data Centre as CDFmm01, (Douglas-fir/ dull Oregon-grape) – Mature or Older Forest Sensitive Ecosystem

Second, The EIA report did not incorporate the most recent species at risk data that was available and offered to them. PICA had conducted systematic point counts for species on the adjacent properties for several years, and contracted species at risk biologists to conduct biological inventories. According to PICA, despite their offer to do a joint site visit and share this inventory data with the Qualified Environmental Professional who prepared the EIA, they did not receive any requests for that data, nor a response for a joint site visit.

3 IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

ORGANIZATIONAL: Staff time will be required to communicate the decision to the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee. Additional staff time may also be required to discuss the decision with adjacent property owners, donors of the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve, Pender Islands Conservation Association, other conservation partners, Pender Island residents, and ITC supporters.

FINANCIAL: None.

POLICY: None.

IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATIONS: Staff will provide the ITC Board response to the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee as instructed in the referral request.

FIRST NATIONS: The following First Nations received a referral request for draft Bylaw No. 242 from the Islands Trust: Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Malahat First Nation, Pauquachin First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Semiahmoo First Nation, Snuneymuxw First Nation, Stz’uminus First Nation, Ts’uubaa-asatx Nation (Lake Cowichan), Tsartlip First Nation, Tsawout First Nation, Tsawwassen First Nation, Tseycum First Nation, and WSANEC Leadership Council.

ITC staff have not seen referral responses from First Nations, and have not discussed the application with any First Nations.

CLIMATE CHANGE: With climate change, North Pender Island is predicted to experience hotter and drier conditions during the growing season. The threat of a high-intensity wildfire is predicted to continue to increase due to the hotter and drier conditions, and industrial use in the area may increase the risk of fire, which may lead to wildfire that spreads upslope into Lisa Baile Nature Reserve.

OTHER:

Reputational risk

PICA, landholders, and donors of adjacent ITC protected land have submitted written responses in opposition to this draft bylaw to the Pender Island LTC (available in Public Correspondence on the application [webpage](#)). If ITC Board recommends approval of this draft bylaw, the Board may wish to request that staff provide its rationale to North Pender Island conservation partners and Conservancy supporters.

Wildlife Corridor for Species at Risk

The subject property is adjacent to protected areas and within high-value habitat that provides a wildlife corridor--particularly the slope and ridge to the north, east and west. Included in this corridor is the CRD’s mapped suitable habitat for Common Sharp-tailed Snake. Expansion of industrial zoning in this area of the island, and the cumulative impacts of

expanded and sustained industrial activity associated with it, will further fragment this wildlife corridor and negatively impact the species at risk that rely on it. This will undermine the efforts of many in the community to secure critical habitats for species at risk, and biodiversity more generally, and the momentum that has been gained through the permanent conservation of adjacent and nearby properties by PICA and ITC.

4 RELEVANT POLICY(S):

[ITC Board Policy 3.1 - Islands Trust Conservancy and Local Planning Services Coordination](#)

5 ATTACHMENTS:

1. Referral package for draft Bylaw No. 242
2. Letters submitted by Pender Island Conservation Association
3. Letter submitted by Lisa Baile (donor of the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve)

RESPONSE OPTIONS

Recommendation:

1. That the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to notify the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee that approval of proposed Bylaw No. 242 is not recommended for the reason that there is insufficient information to confirm that rezoning a portion of the subject property to industrial use will not negatively impact wildlife in adjacent protected areas, including ITC's Lisa Baile Nature Reserve and the proposed Doris McHardy NAPTEP covenant.
2. That the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to notify the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee that if draft Bylaw No. 242 is approved, it is recommended that a conservation covenant be placed on the ecologically significant portion of the property upslope of the area proposed for rezoning.

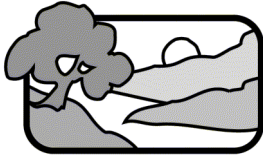
Alternatives:

1. That the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to notify the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee that there is insufficient information to determine if rezoning a portion of the subject property to industrial use will impact wildlife in adjacent protected areas, including ITC's Lisa Baile Nature Reserve and the proposed Doris McHardy NAPTEP covenant; therefore, the ITC Board cannot confirm that its interests are unaffected by draft Bylaw No. 242.
2. That the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to notify the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee that if draft Bylaw No. 242 is approved, it is recommended that a conservation covenant is placed on the ecologically significant portion of the property upslope of the area proposed for rezoning.

Prepared By: Nuala Murphy, Property Management Specialist
Jemma Green, Team Lead, Protected Area Management

Reviewed By: Kathryn Martell (R.P.Bio), Ecosystem Protection Specialist

Reviewed By / Date: Wendy Tyrrell, Manager / May 4, 2026



Islands Trust

BYLAW REFERRAL FORM

Suite 200, 1627 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8R 1H8
Ph: (250) 405-5151
Fax: (250) 405-5155
information@islandstrust.bc.ca
www.islandstrust.bc.ca

Island: North Pender Island Local Trust Area Bylaw No.: 242 Date: February 20, 2026

You are requested to comment on the attached Bylaw for potential effect on your agency's interests. We would appreciate your response within 30 days. If no response is received within that time, it will be assumed that your agency's interests are unaffected.

APPLICANTS NAME / ADDRESS:

Braedon Bigham, 3334 Port Washington Road, Pender Island, BC

PURPOSE OF BYLAW:

If adopted, draft Bylaw No. 242 would result in the following uses to be permitted through a site specific zoning amendment in the portion of the subject lot designated as Industrial:

- a) Contractor Yard;
- b) Storage, handling and wholesale of aggregates, soils and mulches up to a maximum of 460 cubic metres;
- c) Storage of empty propane tanks up to a maximum of 5 tanks;
- d) Storage of diesel fuel up to a maximum of 10,000 litres; and,
- e) Accessory buildings and structures.

The 'Schedule 1 Zoning Map' of the LUB would also be amended to change the zoning classification of a portion of the lot from Rural to General Industrial h (GI(h)), as shown on Plan No. 1 attached to draft Bylaw No. 242.

Professional reports and staff reports are available on the North Pender Island application webpage: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/north-pender/current-applications/>

GENERAL LOCATION:

North Pender Island Local Trust Area

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Lot 7, Sections 18 and 22, Pender Island, Cowichan District, Plan 6294

SIZE OF PROPERTY AFFECTED:

6.08 ha

ALR STATUS:

N/A

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN DESIGNATION:

Rural and Industrial

OTHER INFORMATION:

Additional information, including the current bylaws, is available at: www.islandstrust.bc.ca

Please fill out the Response Summary on the back of this form. If your agency's interests are "Unaffected", no further information is necessary. In all other cases, we would appreciate receiving additional information to substantiate your position and, if necessary, outline any conditions related to your position. Please note any legislation or official government policy which would affect our consideration of this Bylaw.

BSmith

(Signature)

Name:

Brad Smith

Title:

Island Planner

Contact Info

Tel: 250-405-5194

Email: bsmith@islandstrust.bc.ca

PLEASE TURN OVER

This referral has been sent to the following agencies:

Federal Agencies

N/A

Provincial Agencies

Min. of Transportation & Transit – via portal
Min. of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship - Ecosystems
Branch

Non-Agency Referrals

Islands Trust Conservancy
Pender Island Conservancy

Regional Agencies

Capital Regional District – Building Inspection
Capital Regional District – Environmental Resource
Management
Island Health
Pender Island Fire Rescue

Adjacent Local Trust Committees and Municipalities

Mayne Island Local Trust Committee
Saturna Island Local Trust Committee
South Pender Island Local Trust Committee
Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee

First Nations

Cowichan Tribes
Halalt First Nation
Lyackson First Nation
Malahat First Nation
Pauquachin First Nation – via portal
Penelakut Tribe – via portal
Semiahmoo First Nation
Snuneymuxw First Nation – via portal
Stz'uminus First Nation
Ts'uubaa-asatx Nation (Lake Cowichan) – via portal
Tsartlip First Nation
Tsawout First Nation - via portal and email
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tseycum First Nation
WSANEC Leadership Council

BYLAW REFERRAL FORM RESPONSE SUMMARY

Approval Recommended for Reasons Outlined Below

Approval Recommended Subject to Conditions Outlined Below

Interests Unaffected by Bylaw

Approval Not Recommended Due to Reason Outlined Below

North Pender Island Local Trust Area

(Island)

(Signature)

(Date)

242

(Bylaw Number)

(Name and Title)

(Agency)

DRAFT

NORTH PENDER ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE BYLAW NO. 242

A BYLAW TO AMEND NORTH PENDER ISLAND LAND USE BYLAW NO. 224, 2022

The North Pender Island Local Trust Committee, being the Local Trust Committee having jurisdiction in respect of the North Pender Island Local Trust Area under the *Islands Trust Act*, enacts as follows:

1. Citation

This bylaw may be cited for all purposes as “North Pender Island Land Use Bylaw No. 224, 2022, Amendment No. 2, 2025”.

2. North Pender Island Local Trust Committee Bylaw No. 224, cited as “North Pender Island Land Use Bylaw No. 224, 2022,” is amended as follows:

2.1. A new site-specific regulation is added to Table 5.10 in Subsection 5.10(12) following site-specific zone GI(g) that reads:

	Table 5.10		
	1	2	3
	Site-Specific Zone	Location Description	Site-Specific Regulations
7	GI(h)	Lot 7, Sections 18 And 22, Pender Island, Cowichan District, Plan 6294	Despite Subsection 5.10(1), the only uses permitted in this location are: a) <i>Contractor Yard</i> ; b) Storage, handling and wholesale of aggregates, soils and mulches up to a maximum of 460 cubic metres; c) Storage of empty propane tanks up to a maximum of 5 tanks; d) Storage of diesel fuel up to a maximum of 10,000 litres; and, e) <i>Accessory buildings and structures</i>

2.2. Schedule “1” – Zoning Map, is amended by changing the zoning classification of a portion of Lot 7, Sections 18 And 22, Pender Island, Cowichan District, Plan 6294 from Rural to General Industrial h (GI(h)), as shown on Plan No. 1 attached to and forming part of this bylaw, and by making such alterations to Schedule “1” of Bylaw No. 224 as are required to effect this change.

3. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Bylaw is for any reason held to be invalid by a decision of any Court of competent jurisdiction, the invalid provision must be severed from the Bylaw and the decision that such provision is invalid must not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of the Bylaw.

READ A FIRST TIME THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 20____

PUBLIC HEARING HELD THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 20____

READ A SECOND TIME THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 20____

READ A THIRD TIME THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 20____

APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ISLANDS TRUST THIS
_____ DAY OF _____ 20____

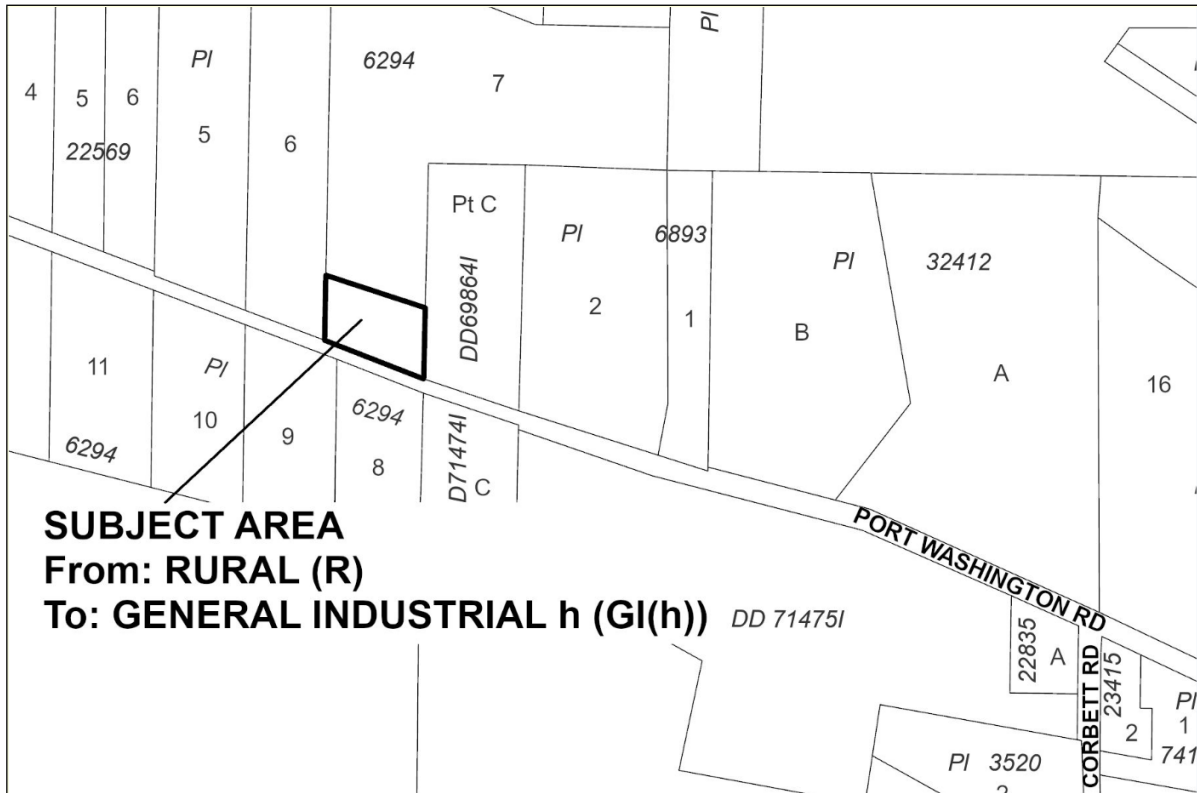
ADOPTED THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 20____

CHAIR

SECRETARY

NORTH PENDER ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE
BYLAW NO. 242

Plan No. 1





Pender Islands
Conservancy

#1-4301 Bedwell Harbour Road
Pender Island BC V0N 2M1

25 Nov 2024

Dear North Pender Island Trustees Maude, Campbell and Morrison:

We are writing on behalf of the Pender Islands Conservancy Board of Directors, with respect to file No. PLRZ20240110 (Bigham). As the owner of a Nature Reserve bordering the Subject Property (see Figure 1 below), we believe rezoning to allow continued and expanded industrial activity on the lower portion of the Subject Property has a high potential to adversely impact ecological integrity and habitat quality for species at risk on adjacent properties, including our Nature Reserve for which we have a duty of care. According to the North Pender OCP (Section 2.5.1), “industrial development and activity which may have a deleterious impact on adjacent land uses will not be permitted”. We therefore request that Trustees do not advance this application for Industrial zoning, but rather explore more appropriate locations for the proposed industrial activity.

Comments on the Staff Report

The list of existing uses of land on *adjacent properties* (P. 134) curiously excludes the adjacent Nature Reserve *owned by the Islands Trust itself* (Lisa Baile Nature Reserve, held by Islands Trust Conservancy), though this property is peripherally acknowledged on P. 139 (“Site Influences”). The additional 10-acre Forest Wetland Nature Reserve is currently being established as a result of a generous land donation by community donors and is now owned by the Pender Islands Conservancy; this Nature Reserve also borders the Subject Property to the north. Vulture Ridge Nature Reserve (36 acres), secured by the Pender Islands Conservancy in 2024 with the support of community donors, the Province of BC, and Environment and Climate Change Canada, is located ~85m from the eastern border of the subject property. All three of these properties (shown in Figure 1) have been secured in part to protect critical habitat for species at risk such as sharp-tailed snakes, common nighthawks and olive-sided flycatchers.

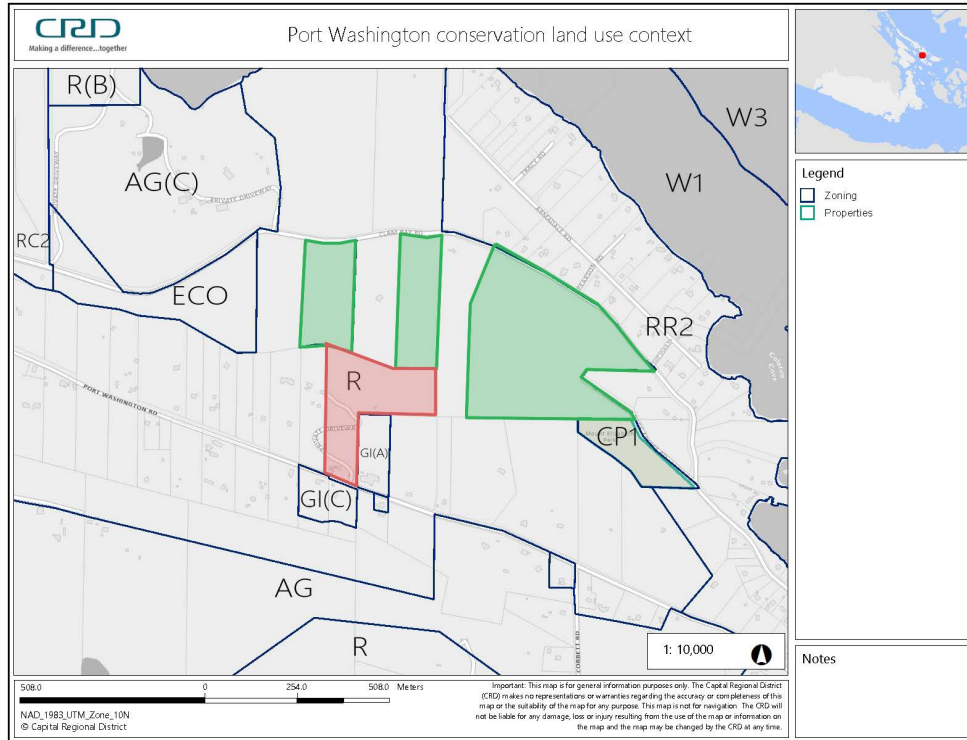


Figure 1. Subject Property (red) with adjacent Nature Reserves (green). From west to east: Lisa Baile Nature Reserve (10 acres; owned by Islands Trust Conservancy), Forest Wetland Nature Reserve (10 acres; Pender Islands Conservancy) and Vulture Ridge Nature Reserve (36 acres; Pender Islands Conservancy).

The statement on P. 139 of the Staff Report that no species at risk are present on the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve (LINR) is misleading. Sharp-tailed snakes have been visually detected on 3330 Port Washington Road, immediately adjacent to both the Subject Property and LINR, and hence there is a very high likelihood that they similarly occupy the Nature Reserve and even the Subject Property itself. Moreover, olive-sided flycatchers and common nighthawks are regularly detected using the adjacent properties, including the Nature Reserves; both are also species at risk, listed provincially and federally. Threaded vertigo (*Nearctula* sp.), a federally listed species of terrestrial snail, was identified on Vulture Ridge Nature Reserve in 2024 and is highly likely to be present on LINR as well. The LINR Management Plan identified a high likelihood of the presence of at-risk vascular plants, birds, amphibians and reptiles on LINR, and recommended ongoing monitoring to document species at risk (Lisa Baile Nature Reserve Management Plan 2022; P. 42).

We request that staff include the two Nature Reserves that border the subject property in the list of *existing uses of land on adjacent properties* (uses: conservation) and acknowledge that species at risk are, or are highly likely to be, present on these adjacent properties. We further request an assessment by Islands Trust Conservancy ecologists with respect to the potential impacts of the proposed permanent and expanded industrial activity associated with the Subject Property on the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve, which the Islands Trust has a responsibility to steward and protect as the recipient of this generous donation of ecologically valuable land.

The staff report states that the applicant's business "*provides an important community service*"; we note that Nature Reserves similarly provide important community services, by protecting groundwater quality and recharge capacity, buffering extreme weather events and associated impacts (flooding, drought, wildfire - becoming increasingly common in the context of climate change), enhancing surrounding property value and aesthetics, and maintaining biodiversity that in turn enhances recreational experiences and supports agriculture (pollination services) and hence local food security.

We do not dispute that the service provided by the applicant is important to the community; however, given the Industrial Land Use Objectives in the OCP, "*to ensure any industry is sited to minimize adverse effects upon neighbouring properties*", we argue the Subject Property is not an appropriate location for the ongoing and intended future industrial use, as it has a high probability of adversely affecting ecological integrity, habitat quality and ecosystem services on adjacent Nature Reserves.

Potential ecological impacts

Raptor nests

Two newly identified bald eagle nest trees are located east of the Subject Property, with one potentially located within 200 m of the proposed rezoning area (see P.168 of Staff Report – distance estimated from map scale). According to Provincial "Breeding Season Quiet Buffer Requirements" in rural areas and depending on the outcome of the reassessment of the Heron and Raptor Nest DPA currently underway by the North Pender Island LTC to align this DPA with Provincial standards (which have already been widely adopted by local governments across BC), no industrial activity, including heavy equipment operation, may ultimately be permitted on the Subject Property between Feb 5 – August 31 (see P. 165 of Staff Report). We suspect this would negatively impact the applicant's business. We again suggest that the proposed location is inappropriate for current and future intended industrial activity, given adjacent land uses – in this case, by nesting bald eagles.

Groundwater

The Subject Property and adjacent Nature Reserves have been identified by the Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Mapping Project (2022) as high groundwater recharge areas (Appendix A). This ecosystem service is one of the reasons the adjacent Pender Conservancy Nature Reserves were assessed as high priority for securement. We welcome the attention given to the significant impacts to groundwater supply of the anticipated commercial and residential groundwater use on the Subject Property in the Staff Report; however, application of standards for domestic use only (2000 L/day, P. 135) is inappropriate for an industrial rezoning application, and we trust this application would be held to a higher standard. Rainwater catchment can be a reasonable offset to reduce groundwater use; however, given that precipitation inputs were by far the most sensitive input parameter in the Southern Gulf Islands Water Balance Model sensitivity analysis (Islands Trust Area Groundwater Availability Assessment, 2021; P. 19, Figure 9), intercepting rainwater in our region can in fact reduce local groundwater recharge and hence indirectly still reduce groundwater availability.

Species at risk

Sharp-tailed snakes are known to be present on adjacent properties. Recent studies have shown that this species moves over relatively long distances into forests from the open bluff habitats that

they are typically associated with (up to 80 m; Christian Engelstoft, pers. comm.). Hence, undisturbed forest habitat adjacent to bluffs is of potentially high value for this species at risk. Continued and expanded industrial activity within the lower portion of the Subject Property may therefore limit movement of this species across the landscape. As noted in the Lisa Baile Nature Reserve Management Plan (2022), the ridge and adjoining forest provides habitat suitable for many other species at risk, including vascular and nonvascular plants, birds (e.g. olive-sided flycatcher, common nighthawk, purple martins), and amphibians such as red-legged frogs. Our knowledge of the distribution and abundance of species at risk on Pender Island is extremely deficient, and so in the absence of appropriate survey efforts, it cannot be responsibly stated that species at risk are not present and will not be adversely affected by continued and expanded heavy industrial activity on the Subject Property. Indeed, similar habitat suitable for these species at risk occurs on the Subject Property itself.

OCP policy

*2.5.1 Industrial development which **may have** a deleterious impact on adjacent land uses **will not** be permitted.*

We argue that a TUP should not have been issued according to the above OCP policy, and in doing so the LTC is in violation of the North Pender Island OCP. Constant, daily heavy equipment operation and aggregate hauling *along the length of Port Washington Road*, adjacent to land used for residential and agricultural purposes, as well as the acoustic and physical habitat disturbance caused by the industrial operation on the Subject Property which directly borders two Nature Reserves, most certainly has a deleterious impact on these adjacent land uses, and so the application to rezone for *permanent* industrial operation on the subject property cannot be advanced, as it directly violates the above OCP policy. We understand that directing staff to proceed with the application will enable public consultation and input, to “identify any issues or concerns with the proposed rezoning”. However, if the application clearly violates an OCP policy, public input to that effect should not be required for you to make the assessment that the application should not be advanced.

We are aware that in recent LTC meetings, Trustees have discussed that other possible locations for the applicant’s operation are being explored which would require some imagination and cooperation with other land holders. We urge you to work with the applicant and broader community to identify an alternate location for this operation that appropriately balances the community benefit provided by the applicant’s business with maintenance of ecological integrity and ‘rural character and lifestyle’, as our North Pender Island OCP and the Islands Trust mandate require.

Respectfully signed,



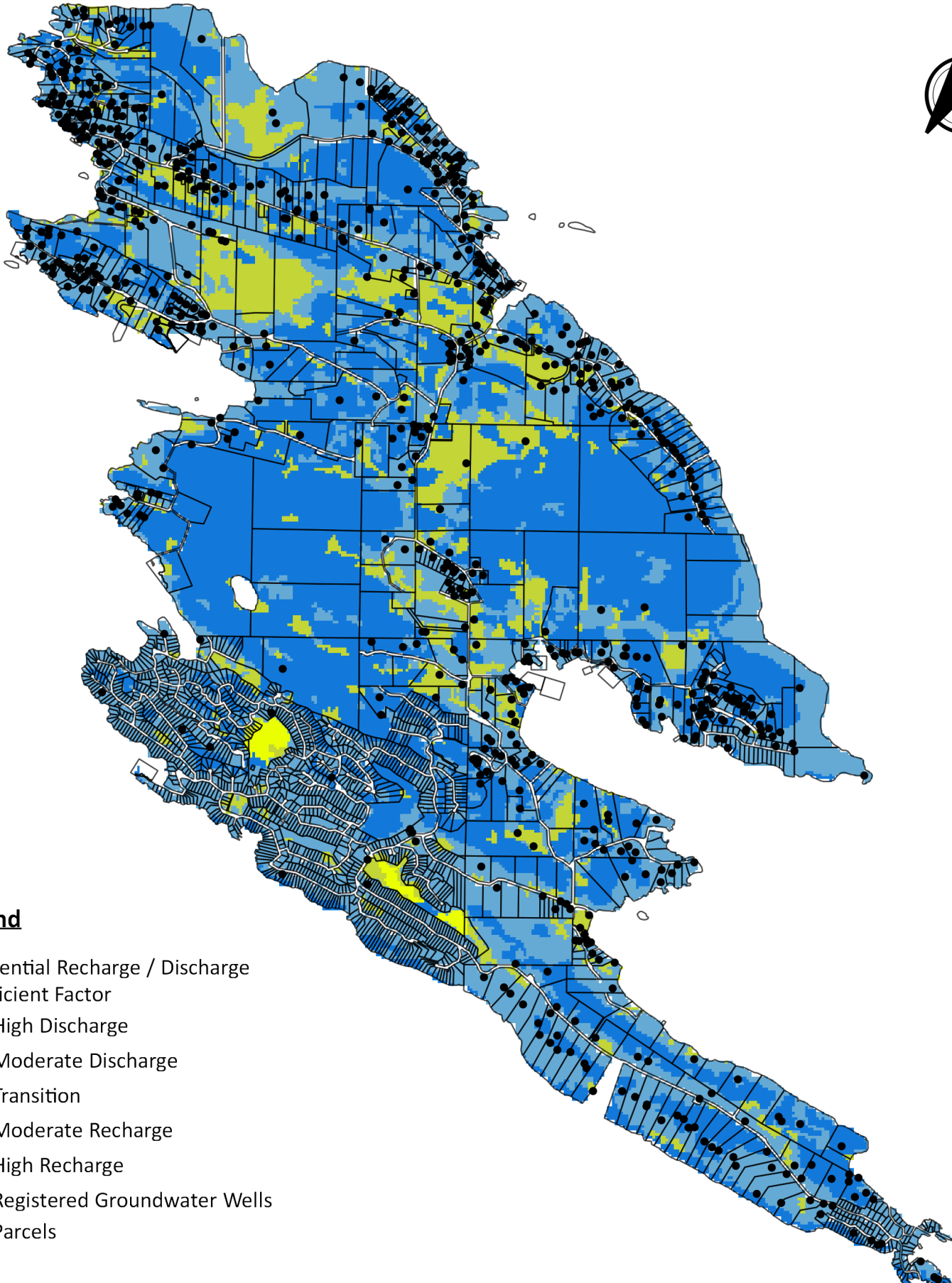
Elizabeth Miles
Board President
Pender Islands Conservancy










Dr. Pamela Wright
Stewardship Committee Chair
Pender Islands Conservancy

Appendix A

North Pender Island Groundwater Recharge and Discharge Zones

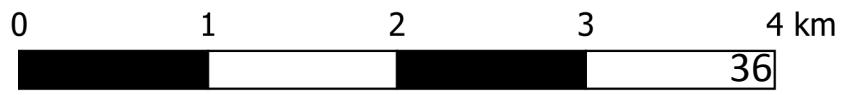


Legend

- Preferential Recharge / Discharge
Co-Efficient Factor
-  High Discharge
 -  Moderate Discharge
 -  Transition
 -  Moderate Recharge
 -  High Recharge
 -  Registered Groundwater Wells
 -  Parcels

Groundwater Sustainability Science Program
North Pender - Preferential Recharge and Discharge Zones

Notes:
Drawn by: William Shulba, P.Geo
Drawn on: October 2022
Data Source: Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Mapping Project





30 Nov 2024

Dear North Pender Island trustees and staff:

In the Nov 29 North Pender Island LTC meeting, trustees requested an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed industrial rezoning on Port Washington Road. We assume that the standard expected of this EIA is that dictated by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA, 2012). As part of that process, the QEP that is retained to complete this EIA will be expected to document species present, consider recommendations of recovery strategies for all species at risk on the Subject Property and adjacent properties, examine cumulative impacts, and incorporate public comments into their assessment. As time is of the essence, we assume the site assessment will be conducted in the coming winter months, outside of the breeding season for migratory songbirds, and during the dormant period for at-risk sharp-tailed snakes, most meadow plants that occur in the DPA on the Subject Property and surrounding Nature Reserves, and their associated at-risk pollinators. The Pender Conservancy has some inventory and mapping data for our protected properties in the area, and we would be happy to share this information with the QEP to ensure the EIA that is produced is comprehensive and can be accepted by our community.

To this end, it would be helpful if the trustees or Trust staff can provide some guidance on what EIA standard they require. If the Islands Trust indeed follows CEAA standards (as is the industry standard throughout British Columbia), the public must be invited to comment on the identified environmental impacts and mitigation measures. The assessment report should also identify “alternative means of carrying out the project” (i.e. alternative locations), so the QEP will need to be fully aware of these potential alternatives and have the opportunity to discuss them with relevant landholders.

Please let us know if we can be of assistance in this process.

Best wishes,



Dr. Pamela Wright
Stewardship Committee Chair
Pender Islands Conservancy Association



17 Nov 2025

Dear North Pender Island Trustees Maude, Campbell and Morrison:

We are writing on behalf of the Pender Islands Conservancy Board of Directors, with respect to rezoning application NP-PLR20240110 (Bigham). We have previously expressed our concern for cumulative impacts of expanded and sustained industrial activity on adjacent conservation lands and inhabitant wildlife – lands which collectively represent the efforts of many in the community to secure critical habitats for species at risk, and biodiversity more generally, in this ecologically unique area of North Pender Island. We have several comments and concerns with respect to the Ecological Assessment Report that we wish to draw your attention to, which we hope may inform your deliberations regarding this application.

First, the Assessment Report states that the Conservancy did not provide data on species presence and suggests the information we noted in our initial letter was “anecdotal” (P. 126). In fact, we have conducted systematic point counts on the adjacent properties for several years and have additionally contracted species at risk biologists to conduct biological inventories; despite our offer to share these inventory data with the QEP, we did not receive any requests for that information.

The Assessment Report repeatedly states that, because particular species are *present* on adjacent lands, they must therefore be *tolerant* of the existing level of industrial activity (and apparently will also be perfectly fine with *increased* activity following rezoning). For example: “*Eagles are well known to adapt to regular activities and sounds within their chosen nest tree locations...the eagles are apparently adapted to local land uses.*” (P. 127 – note the lack of literature citations to support this statement). Inferring tolerance from species presence (particularly in the absence of cited research to support this) is incredibly dangerous and does a huge disservice to the wildlife that occupy the upland areas and protected lands around the Subject Property.

The concept of an ecological trap (Hale & Swearer 2016) appears to have been entirely missed in the Assessment Report. There is increasing evidence that species can be attracted to a habitat due to specific physical or biotic characteristics that outwardly indicate its quality, but other factors such as predator presence or lack of food during critical times in the reproductive cycle can result in those species being unable to reproduce or to experience increased mortality due to predation. The research field of ‘fear ecology’ is also increasingly demonstrating that elevated stress hormones in response to predation pressure or anthropogenic disturbance drive reduction in reproductive investment in songbirds and other wildlife species (Frid & Dill 2002; Fardell et al. 2020; Zanette & Clinchy 2020). While species at risk such as common nighthawks and olive-sided flycatchers occur in upland areas of the Subject Property as well as adjacent protected lands, their reproductive success in these areas is not yet known, and it is entirely possible that they have not successfully fledged young as long as the industrial activity has been taking place (in the absence of appropriate zoning or prior impact assessments). These areas could therefore be functioning as population sinks (Pulliam 1988; areas where reproduction is insufficient to balance local mortality) under current levels of disturbance.

The concepts of fear ecology and population sinks underlie recommended buffers around raptor nests, which have informed the trustees’ hard work updating DPA 7: Equipment operation and other loud noises can increase wildlife stress and disrupt nesting, incubation or feeding behaviour (Frid & Dill 2002). In a

specific local example, dwelling construction within 100 m of a bald eagle nest on North Pender (which is not included in DPA 7 at present) has been ongoing for several years, during which time the landholder noted that the eagle pair was “perched and calling” while construction activity was underway – implying they must have therefore been perfectly tolerant of the activity. However, nest observation data showed the pair in that territory *did not successfully fledge any young* in any of the years in which construction took place (D. Manning, pers. comm.). Rather than perching and calling, they should perhaps have been incubating eggs or feeding young. The year after that construction activity ended, the pair of bald eagles in the same territory fledged two young.

Simply stating that if species are present, they must be tolerant of anthropogenic disturbance further ignores the fact that there may be limited habitat options available to them: bald eagles require veteran Douglas-fir with specific branch characteristics for nesting – a resource that is increasingly being lost and takes centuries to replace. Common nighthawks require open herbaceous ecosystems that are increasingly being lost to residential development for ocean views. Olive-sided flycatchers require open forests adjacent to riparian habitats for foraging, and wetlands continue to be lost to residential development, road construction and commercial forest harvesting throughout the region, including on North Pender Island.

Resolution NP-2024-062, states **“that North Pender Island Local Trust Committee directs applicant to provide an ecological assessment report in respect to the rezoning application NP-PLR20240110 (Bigham) for impact on adjacent properties.”** The Assessment Report states that *“the conservation lands are located over 300 m away...and two of the three parcels are on the opposite side of the ridge from the subject parcel.”* The relevance of this spatial description in justifying the Assessment Report’s disregard for potential impacts on adjacent properties (as required by Resolution NP-2024-062) is unclear as no citations are provided that would support the apparent assumption that this spatial scale is irrelevant to any species or ecological processes occurring on the conservation lands. The Assessment Report further states, with respect to upland areas of the Subject Property, *“Because no development is proposed in these areas at this time, a detailed species survey is beyond the scope of this application and further studies may be required if development plans are proposed in the future.”* In fact, assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on adjacent sensitive ecosystems (both adjacent parcels and on the Subject Property itself) is precisely within the scope of the application, based on the above resolution, and ignoring the species present on adjacent lands therefore does not appear to adequately address the requirements of resolution NP-2024-062.

The Assessment Report states that *“concentrating similar industrial operations to one small area of the island is preferable to spreading industrial uses throughout the island or to other areas that may cause habitat fragmentation or have existing sensitive environmental attributes that may be lost to new development.”* (P.140). There has been discussion about alternative sites that are already zoned appropriately and support industrial uses, and which are potentially sited more appropriately from the perspective of both ecological impacts and the impact of high-volume industrial traffic on the rural character of Port Washington and residents’ enjoyment of their properties. Certainly, if the only alternative were *de novo* development of a new industrial-zoned site elsewhere on the island, the potential ecological impact of that may well be at least as high as impacts to the ecologically sensitive areas adjacent to the current proposed development on the Subject Property. However, it remains unclear (to us, at least) whether other, lower impact site alternatives have been adequately explored.

Finally, the Assessment Report is very carefully worded to state that the proposed rezoning “is not expected to result in *further* environmental impacts *over existing conditions*” (our emphasis). However, repeated issuance of TUPs by the North Pender LTC has allowed industrial activity and potential

disturbance to be sustained on the site in *the complete absence of an impact assessment*, and the baseline condition against which this rezoning and expansion of industrial use ought to be assessed is the condition that *excludes any industrial activity occurring at all*. Unfortunately, this is never acknowledged in the Assessment Report – and indeed, given the fact that past LTCs have repeatedly issued TUPs for the otherwise unpermitted industrial activity on the Subject Property without requiring any *a priori* ecological impact assessments, this original baseline condition has already been altered.

We encourage trustees to ensure their resolutions regarding impact assessment requirements have been adequately addressed, and that the professional assessments provided are clearly grounded in rigorous scientific evidence. At minimum, if no alternative location can be secured, the staff suggestion to require a s.219 conservation covenant to be registered on the Subject Property would help to promote habitat protection, impact buffering and connectivity with adjacent conservation lands in perpetuity.

Thank you for your balanced consideration of the potential impacts of the rezoning application NP-PLR20240110 and sustained, expanded industrial activity it will permit, including the potential precedent of your decision on this matter. The community is working very hard to preserve and protect the ecological amenities and rural character of North Pender Island, and we appreciate your diligence in upholding these values, in balance with the needs of local businesses, as elected representatives of this community.

Respectfully signed,



Julie Szabo
Board President
Pender Islands Conservancy



Dr. Pamela Wright
Stewardship Committee Chair
Pender Islands Conservancy

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From: Lisa Baile [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 14, 2025 11:01 AM
To: SouthInfo <SouthInfo@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Deb Morrison <dmorrison@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Aaron Campbell <acampbell@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Rezoning Application PLRZ20240110 (Bigham) – Port Washington Road,

Subject: Rezoning Application PLRZ20240110 (Bigham) – Port Washington Road, North Pender Island

Dear Trustees,

As a resident of North Pender Island for 45 years I am opposed to the application **PLRZ20240110 (Bigham)**, to rezone rural land on Port Washington Road for industrial use.

The Islands Trust mandate is to “preserve and protect” the unique rural character and ecological health of the Gulf Islands. Rezoning this parcel now zoned rural to industrial use would set a dangerous precedent and directly undermine our community’s efforts to protect our shared natural environment.

Reasons to oppose Rezoning from Rural to Industrial:

1-Conflict with the Official Community Plan (OCP): This rezoning appears to conflict with the OCP’s stated goals of maintaining the rural, residential, and natural character of North Pender Island. It also contradicts the community vision of sustainable and low-impact development.

2-Environmental Risks: The proposed industrial use could pose serious threats to the surrounding ecosystems, including increased noise, runoff, contamination, and disruption of wildlife habitat. Port Washington Road is a rural area not suited to the impacts associated with industrial activity.

The nearby George Hill Regional Park and Mount Elizabeth form a unique corridor for wildlife consisting of protected land as covenants, nature reserves and extensive parkland. The Port Washington/Clam Bay area is one of the few loops on N Pender where residents and visitors may hike, bike, jog, bird, and walk dogs. There are two connecting trails that also give access to a longer beach walk.

3-Groundwater and Water Supply: Industrial operations typically consume more water and carry higher risks of contamination. Rural properties in this area often rely on groundwater, and the aquifers are already under stress in many parts of the island.

4-Traffic and Safety: Increased industrial traffic, especially heavy trucks, would not only degrade the rural road network but also pose safety concerns for residents, pedestrians, and cyclists who use Port Washington Road daily.

5-Precedent for Further Development: Allowing this rezoning would open the door to additional industrial rezoning applications across rural North Pender, effectively eroding the zoning protections meant to preserve the Island's character.

There are solutions: Relocation of the proponent's operation to an area zoned industrial is the optimal solution. It is likely that the industrial yard located at 3418 South Otter Bay Road will become available for lease/purchase sometime in the near future. Extending the proponents' tenure till that occurs is the best option.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue

Lisa Baile, N. Pender



REQUEST FOR DECISION

To: Islands Trust Conservancy Board
For the Meeting of: May 12, 2026

From: Staff
Date Prepared: April 9, 2026

SUBJECT: New Management Plan for Manzanita Ridge (Nature Reserve) Covenant, Salt Spring Island

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) Board approve Salt Spring Island Conservancy's proposed Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan dated 30 September, 2025, provided that proposed activities which are inconsistent with the covenant agreement are subject to prior covenant holder approval of specific workplans, with approval not to be unreasonably withheld.
 2. That the ITC Board provide the following comments with their approval of the Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan dated 30 September, 2025:
 - a. The ITC Board acknowledges, and is supportive of, Salt Spring Island Conservancy's intentions to engage in meaningful reconciliation work with First Nations.
 - b. The ITC Board encourages Salt Spring Island Conservancy to request BC Hydro to manage Scotch broom in their Right of Way, for the protection of the arbutus / hairy manzanita provincially red-listed ecosystem.
 - c. The ITC Board should be notified of any changes to the management plan arising from review of monitoring data, in accordance with section 4.1 of the covenant agreement.
-

1 PURPOSE: To review the new Management Plan for Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve, submitted to the Covenant Holders for approval of its consistency with the Covenant Agreement.

2 BACKGROUND:

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) is situated within a network of protected areas on Mt. Erskine, Salt Spring Island that includes ITC's Lower Mt. Erskine Nature Reserve. MRNR protects 20.5 hectares of mature and second-growth coniferous and mixed forests, as well as rocky bluff ecosystems within the Coastal Western Hemlock dry maritime (formerly CWHxm) biogeoclimatic zone. Notable natural values include three rare, provincially red-listed ecological communities, including the arbutus / hairy manzanita (*Arbutus menziesii* / *Arctostaphylos columbiana*) plant community, for which the nature reserve is named; six confirmed species of provincial or federal conservation concern; three small wetlands; and high rocky escarpments with views to the south, west, and north. Notable infrastructure within the nature reserve includes a public trail, which enters from Mt Erskine Provincial Park to the northwest, and a wide BC Hydro powerline Right of Way, which cuts through the middle of the nature reserve and covers 4 hectares (9.8 acres) roughly 20% of the reserve.

The primary management objective of the owner, Salt Spring Island Conservancy (SSIC), is to protect the ecological integrity of Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve. Thus, the land is further protected by an Ecological Gift (EcoGift) covenant registered in 2003 and held by ITC and the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee. The general intent of the covenant agreement is:

- (a) to prevent any subdivision of the Land by any means;
- (b) to protect and preserve the Land and the Amenities in a natural state;
- (c) to prevent any occupation or use of the Land that will impair or interfere with the natural state of the Land or the Amenities; and
- (d) to preserve the Land and the Amenities as a nature reserve in perpetuity...

The covenant agreement requires SSIC to prepare, and revise at least every 10 years, a Management Plan for the Land and submit the Management Plan to the Covenant Holders for approval of its consistency with this Agreement. Previous management plans were approved by Islands Trust Conservancy (then Islands Trust Fund) in 2004 and 2015. After a 10-year interval, SSIC has prepared a new management plan for Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve. The management plan was prepared by a SSIC contractor, has been reviewed by SSIC’s Land Management and Acquisition Committee and approved by the SSIC Board on March 6, 2026. The management plan was subsequently submitted to the ITC Board for review and approval on March 9, 2026.

Staff have reviewed the management plan for consistency with the covenant agreement, and have identified a number of inconsistencies which are listed in Table 1. Any activities that are expressly restricted by the covenant agreement but which have otherwise been approved in previous versions of the MRNR management plan or that are standard practice in ITC’s own nature reserves are considered reasonable for the ITC Board to approve for the current management plan. The proposed activities that are expressly restricted by the covenant agreement that have not been approved in a previous version of the MRNR management plan, and which are not accepted practices for ITC’s own nature reserves (to date) include Indigenous hunting, and ecological thinning and ladder fuel reduction for wildfire risk mitigation.

Table 1.

Inconsistent element	Covenant agreement restricted use	ITC Board approved in previous MRNR management plans?	Standard practice in ITC-owned nature reserves?	Commitment to obtain covenant holder approval prior to undertaking management activity
Proposed Short-Term Management Actions				
Construction of deer exclosures, planting of native vegetation (p. 24)	3.2(a) (vii) soil disturbance 3.2 (c) construct fixtures	No	Yes	N/A
Reduction of ladder fuels to mitigate wildfire risk (p. 25)	3.2(a)(i) tamper with Indigenous flora Note: 7.2(b) Mitigation of risks of damage to property is allowed with 30 days’ notice	No	No	Yes
Establishing educational signage (p. 26)	3.2 (c) affix improvements of any kind	Yes (2015 MP)	Yes	N/A
Proposed Long-term “Restoration Pathways”				

Indigenous hunting of deer, as a long-term goal (p. 27)	3.2 (b) hunting	No	No	Yes
Ecological thinning of degraded, second- and third-growth forests (p. 28)	3.2(a)(i) tamper with Indigenous flora	No	No	Yes
Revitalizing of cultural burning to support fire-adapted ecological communities (p. 28)	3.2(a)(i) tamper with Indigenous flora	Yes (prescribed burning, 2004 MP)	No	Yes

The covenant agreement does not allow the Owner to use, or permit the use of, the land for restricted activities except with *prior written approval of the Covenant Holders...or in accordance with an approved Management Plan (s. 3.2). Any activity identified in the Management Plan for the land may be undertaken without further consultation with approval of the Covenant Holders (s. 4.2).*

Because there is inherent uncertainty in the proposed long-term “Restoration Pathways,” and because the level of technical detail required to give the covenant holders confidence in providing blanket approval for other activities (e.g. ladder fuel reduction, cultural burning) is beyond the scope of the management plan, ITC staff provided feedback to SSIC on the first draft management plan to add language that requires them to consult further with the covenant holders prior to engaging in any activities that are generally restricted by the covenant agreement and which are not standard practice. This requirement for prior covenant holder approval enables the covenant holders to uphold their responsibility to *prevent any use of the Land that will impair the natural state of the Land or the Amenities* while supporting these proactive, culturally and ecologically beneficial activities.

Along with communicating their decision regarding approval of the management plan, the ITC Board may wish to add the following comments in their response to SSIC:

- The ITC Board acknowledges and is supportive of SSIC’s intentions to engage in meaningful reconciliation work.
- The ITC Board encourages SSIC to renew its attempts to engage BC Hydro in collaboration to manage Scotch broom in the BC Hydro ROW, for the protection of arbutus / hairy manzanita, because this may boost capacity for this important ecosystem protection measure.
- The management plan recommends that “SSIC review monitoring data on a regular basis and the management plan and recommended actions be updated accordingly. It is advised that monitoring data be reviewed annually and that the management approach be revised immediately should the data indicate this to be necessary.” The ITC Board should be notified of any such changes to the management plan in accordance with section 4.1 of the covenant agreement.

3 IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

ORGANIZATIONAL: The 2025 management plan will replace the 2015 management plan as a key reference (alongside the covenant agreement) for ITC staff and contractors when conducting annual compliance monitoring inspections of MRNR.

Staff time will be required to review specific project workplans for any proposed activities that are specifically addressed in the plan, including ladder fuel reduction, forest thinning, Indigenous

hunting, and cultural burning activities, and to prepare staff reports for the ITC Board's consideration. If these activities receive covenant holder approval, additional time will be required to monitor for impacts.

FINANCIAL: None

POLICY: None

IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATIONS: Staff will communicate the Board's decision to SSIC and the covenant co-holder, the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee.

FIRST NATIONS: In the management plan, SSIC recognizes exclusion of Indigenous stewardship as being part of the cumulative legacy effects of colonialism that have contributed to the many stressors acting on the ecological communities of the nature reserve (p. 17). While Indigenous hunting and cultural burning are proposed as potential long-term restoration pathways, SSIC stresses in the management plan that such actions are "only suggested as potential opportunities for tangible actions that might grow from and should be guided by the process of relationship-building, and that this work must occur at the speed of trust – not on a colonially-imposed timeline. Suggestions of specific potential actions are offered only in an effort to recognize the responsibility of non-Indigenous people and organizations, like the SSIC, to proactively reflect on opportunities for meaningful reconciliation action and bring these to the table for exploration through the process of relationship-building with Indigenous communities" (p. 27). This suggests that the organization is in the early stages of relationship-building and re-introduction of Indigenous hunting and cultural burning may be beyond the temporal scope of this management plan; however, through approval of the management plan by the covenant holders, including these activities (in principle), will allow SSIC to enter into meaningful discussions and long-range planning with Indigenous groups, and it will be important for the covenant holders to remain consistent in their support for these activities, if given, to avoid negatively impacting the trust-building process.

CLIMATE CHANGE: The proposed management plan identifies climate change as a key stressor for MRNR, describes the ways in which climate change is anticipated to impact MRNR, and recognizes the need to mitigate these impacts by "address[ing] stressors which stand to be exacerbated by climate change in order to lower the cumulative stress and build more resilient ecological communities." Proposed actions to respond to climate change include managing fine fuel accumulations and ladder fuels, promoting native plants, and establishing soil moisture meters to monitor long-term changes in soil moisture and temperature and resultant moisture stress on the ecosystems of MRNR.

OTHER: This management plan will help normalize management activities that are supported by Indigenous ways of knowing and/or academic research as ecologically beneficial but which have been slow to be adopted by conservation agencies and organizations in the region (e.g. Indigenous-led hunting, cultural burning, and ecosystem forest thinning in nature reserves).

4 RELEVANT POLICY(S): [ITC Policy 3.2.4 Conservation Covenants](#)

5 ATTACHMENT:

1. Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) Land Management Plan, dated 30 September, 2025

RESPONSE OPTIONS

Recommendation(s):

1. That the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) Board approve Salt Spring Island Conservancy's proposed Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan dated 30 September, 2025, provided that proposed activities which are inconsistent with the covenant agreement are subject to prior covenant holder approval of specific workplans, with approval not to be unreasonably withheld.
2. That the ITC Board provide the following comments with their approval of the Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan dated 30 September, 2025:
 - a. The ITC Board acknowledges, and is supportive of, Salt Spring Island Conservancy's intentions to engage in meaningful reconciliation work with First Nations.
 - b. The ITC Board encourages Salt Spring Island Conservancy to request BC Hydro to manage Scotch broom in their Right of Way, for the protection of the arbutus / hairy manzanita provincially red-listed ecosystem.
 - c. The ITC Board should be notified of any changes to the management plan arising from review of monitoring data, in accordance with section 4.1 of the covenant agreement.

Alternatives:

1. That the ITC Board approve the proposed Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan dated 30 September, 2025, subject to the following amendment(s):
 - i.
2. That the ITC Board decline to approve the proposed Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan dated 30 September, 2025, for the following reasons:
 - i.

Prepared By: Jemma Green, Team Lead, Protected Area Management

Reviewed By / Date: Wendy Tyrrell, Manager/ May 6, 2026



Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) Land Management Plan

Revised and written by Madeline Woodley

(B.Sc., UBC Conservation Decisions Lab)

With content drawn from the 2015-2025 LMP

30 September, 2025

[Insert approval date and organizations]

Table of Contents

List of Figures	3
List of Tables	3
Acknowledgements	5
Executive Summary	6
1.0 Background	8
1.1 Parcel Information	8
1.2 Land Development History	9
1.3 Land Protection History	9
1.4 Land Management History	10
1.5 Right of Way (ROW) Access	10
1.5.1 BC Hydro ROW.....	10
1.5.2 SSIC-Williams ROW.....	11
2.0 Ecological Description.....	11
2.1 Geology and Terrain.....	11
2.2 Soils	11
2.3 Climate	12
2.4 Vegetation Communities	12
2.5 Species at Risk (SAR)	13
2.6 Invasive Species	14
3.0 Ecological Stressors and Management Issues.....	15
3.1 Identified Stressors in MRNR	15
3.1.1 Overbrowsing	15
3.1.2 Invasive Species.....	15
3.1.3 Legacy Effects of Change in Land Use and Land Cover (LULC)	16
3.1.4 Climate Change	17
3.1.5 Public Access and Recreational Use	18
3.1.6 Surrounding Activity.....	18
3.2 Summary of Threats to MRNR	18
4.0 Management Objectives	19
4.1 Management Objectives Pertaining to the Stewardship of MRNR.....	19
4.1.1 Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity.....	19
4.1.2 Support Ecologically-Conscious Recreation	19
4.1.3 Promote Public Education and Engagement.....	20
4.1.4 Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work	20
4.1.5 Evidence-Based, Reflexive Decision-Making	20
4.2 Summary of Management Objectives and Targets	20
5.0 Management Actions and Restoration Pathways	21
5.1 Short-Term Management Actions	22
5.1.1 Manage Invasive Species.....	22
5.1.2 Promote Native and Culturally-Significant Species.....	23
5.1.3 Reduce Fine Fuel Accumulation	24
5.1.4 Establish Educational Signage	25
5.1.5 Maintain Trail Networks.....	25
5.1.6 Conduct Monitoring and Research	25
5.1.7 Review and Revise LMP.....	26
5.2 Long-Term Restoration Pathways.....	26

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan

5.2.1	Build Meaningful, Trusting, and Respectful Relationships with Local Nations and Address Colonially-Imposed Barriers to Reconciliation	26
5.2.2	Promote Deer Stewardship	26
5.2.3	Thin Overly-Dense Forest Stands	27
5.2.4	Support Revitalization of Cultural Burning.....	27
5.2.5	Consider Opportunities for Co-Stewardship Strategies	27
5.2.6	Conduct Priority Threat Management (PTM) Assessment for SSIC Nature Reserves.	28
5.3	Summary of Management Recommendations.....	28
6.0	Long-Term Ecological Monitoring	30
6.1	Ecological Health Assessments by Volunteer Wardens.....	30
6.2	Passive Long-Term Ecological Monitoring	31
6.3	Contracted Monitoring	32
7.0	Insurance and Indemnification.....	32
8.0	Land Management Plan Approval (Internal and External).....	32
	References	32
	Supplementary Materials	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix A. Avian Species Observed in MRNR	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix B. 2015 MRNR Species at Risk Survey	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix C. Conservation Covenant and 2002 Baseline Report.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix D. Initial MRNR Management Plan (2004)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix E. SSIC-Williams Right of Way & Easement Agreement....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix F. SSIC-Martin ROW Access Clarification	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix G. BC Hydro Right of Way.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix H. Summary of Restoration and Survey Work Completed within MRNR ..	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix I. SSIC Exclosure Monitoring Sampling (drawn from Woodley, 2024a)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix J. SSIC Ecological Baseline Assessment Sampling (drawn from Woodley, 2024b)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Appendix K. Acknowledgement of Operational Requirements for Trail Development or Maintenance, Capri Insurance Policy	Error! Bookmark not defined.

List of Figures

Figure 1. Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) boundaries and features (map re-used from 2015 LMP).	9
Figure 2. Oceanspray demonstrating umbrella architecture in response to overbrowsing by hyperabundant deer. Photo credit Liljana Martin (2023).	31

List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of ecological and legal attributes of Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR), adapted from 2015 LMP.	8
Table 2. Summary of Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) plant communities identified by Robin Annschild (2004).	12
Table 3. Summary of species of conservation concern observed in Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) by surveys conducted in 2015-2016. These include species listed federally under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) and/or species listed provincially under the BC Conservation Data Centre (CDC).	14
Table 4. Summary of key stressors in Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) and notable associated causes, threats, and impacts.	18
Table 5. Summary of management objectives and associated targets within the context of Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR).	20
Table 6. Summary of short-term (green) and long-term (orange) management recommendations for Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR), with management objectives and stressors addressed by management actions also shown.	28

Acknowledgements

The Salt Spring Island Conservancy (SSIC) acknowledges that the lands it stewards are the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the SENĆOŦEN- and Hul'q'umi'num'-speaking Peoples, who have lived since time immemorial in the Salish Sea and continue to live and have an ongoing relationship with Salt Spring and surrounding islands. The SSIC is actively working to address legacies of colonial harm and build meaningful relationships and partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations within the Salish Sea. The SSIC acknowledges that Indigenous Peoples of these lands, and their relational, reciprocal and respectful stewardship, have shaped and maintained, over millennia, the ecosystems which the SSIC has the privilege of caring for today.

In addition, the SSIC would like to thank all those involved with the acquisition and management of the lands and waters known to the SSIC as Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR):

- SSIC members, the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club and its members, the Salt Spring Island Foundation, the Royal Canadian Legion (local Branch 92), the Islands Trust Fund, the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, the EJLB Foundation, The Land Conservancy of BC, TD Friends of the Environment, an anonymous local donor and other local private donors whose generous financial support made the purchase of this land possible;
- BC Hydro and SSIC contractors for their efforts to remove Scotch Broom along the BC Hydro Right of Way (ROW);
- Rick Laing, volunteer warden of MRNR, for being the SSIC's feet on the ground in MRNR over the last decade;
- Ren Ferguson, SSIC contractor and avian specialist, for conducting avian surveys within MRNR, and beyond (Appendix A);
- Hans Roemer, Ryan Batten, Laura Matthias, Carrina Maslovat, and Tony MacLeod for conducting plant and gastropod Species at Risk (SAR) surveys within MRNR (Appendix B);
- Marc Johnson for preparing the baseline report that accompanied the MRNR conservation covenant (Appendix C);
- Robin Annschild, former senior biologist with and consultant for the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, for preparing the initial management plan in 2004 (Appendix D);
- Chris Drake (Coast Alive Ecological Services), consultant for the SSIC, for preparing the earlier draft that formed the foundation for the 2015-2025 management plan;
- Carrina Maslovat, former biologist with and consultant for the SSIC, for authoring the previous land management plan in 2015;
- Penny Barnes, former Executive Director of the SSIC, for providing thoughtful, detailed feedback and background to the author in the preparation of this management plan;
- Clare Cullen, current Executive Director of the SSIC, for providing valuable feedback to the drafted 2025 management plan;
- Members of the SSIC's Land Management and Acquisition Committee (LMAC) – Tara Martin, Julie Thomson, and Pierre Mineau – for reviewing and providing their valuable expertise and feedback on this management plan; and
- In memory of the former landowner, Martin Williams, for his support for the Salt Spring Island Conservancy and willingness to sell the land for the creation of the nature reserve. The SSIC would also like to thank Martin's son, Nick Williams, for continuing to work with and support the SSIC in their stewardship of MRNR.

Executive Summary

Purchased from former landowner, Mr. Martin Williams, in 2003, Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) is a 20.5-hectare (49.5 acre) protected area located in the western portion of central Salt Spring Island (Figure 1). The nature reserve was named in honour of the large number of hairy manzanita (*Arctostaphylos columbiana*) trees which occur along the ridge and is protected in perpetuity by a conservation covenant held by the Islands Trust Conservancy and the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (Appendix C).

Approximately half of MRNR was logged in the 1950s, concentrated on the lower sections of the property with deeper soil and larger trees (Johnson, 2002). In addition, BC Hydro installed a power line through the property in the 1950s (Figure 1; Appendix G), which involved clearing an area for the lines, as well as an access road which runs parallel to the bluffs (Figure 1) (Johnson, 2002). A BC Hydro Right of Way (ROW) now cuts through the middle third of MRNR (Figure 1; Appendix G).

MRNR supports a diversity of mature and second-growth coniferous and mixed forests, as well as rocky bluff ecosystems. The BC Hydro ROW supports an arbutus / hairy manzanita community, with extensive Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) and some salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) in pockets of deeper soil. The surrounding forest is dominated by young coast Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *menziesii*) with some patches of mature trees, while arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*) and shore pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *contorta*) occur in areas of thinner soil. The shore pine trees in MRNR have been estimated to be >150 years old, approaching their average maximum lifespan of 200 years. Small occurrences of endangered Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*) ecosystem [GOE]-associated plant communities occur in exposed, thin-soil areas throughout MRNR, extending into adjacent protected areas. Below the ridgeline is second-growth Douglas-fir forest, mixed with patches of older coniferous and mixed forest. There are three wetlands on the property; two on the summit of the ridge close to the northern border and a third on the lower reaches of the property, close to the western border (Figure 1). The nature reserve has been confirmed to support at least three rare (provincially red-listed) plant communities (Table 2), as well as numerous species of conservation concern, including six federally-listed species-at-risk (SAR) (Table 3).

Management of non-native invasive plants species and SAR monitoring have been the primary management activities undertaken by SSIC within MRNR to date. MRNR is open for low-impact recreational use (i.e., hiking) on maintained trail networks and can be accessed by the public via trail systems through adjacent protected areas (Figure 1).

Key stressors identified for MRNR (Section 3 and Table 4) include:

- Overbrowsing by hyperabundant browsers, namely native Columbian black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus* ssp. *columbianus*), and the associated impacts on vegetation;
- Invasive species, notably the impact of Scotch broom on hairy manzanita populations;
- Legacy effects of change in land use and land cover (LULC), notably the impacts of logging and fire suppression on ecosystem structure, habitat connectivity, and wildfire risk;
- Climate change, namely climate-driven stressors such as drought stress and phenological mismatch, as well as climate-exacerbated stressors such as disease and pathogens;
- Public access and recreational use, notably high-impact recreational activities and associated impacts such as soil erosion, pollution, and trampling; and
- Surrounding activities which might pose a threat to the ecological health of MRNR's lands and waters, including logging and development activity on neighbouring private properties.

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan

Key objectives identified for MRNR (Section 4 and Table 5) include:

- Protecting and restoring ecological health of lands and waters within MRNR by addressing key stressors, outlined above;
- Supporting ecologically-conscious recreational activity within MRNR;
- Promoting public education and engagement within MRNR;
- Engaging in meaningful reconciliation and relationship-building with local Nations; and
- Employing evidence-based, reflexive decision-making.

Short-term management recommendations identified for MRNR (Section 5 and Table 6) to address more immediate symptoms of ecological stressors, include:

- Managing invasive species (employing caution around effective use of limited resources);
- Promoting native species, with special emphasis on palatable, culturally-significant plant species, vegetation composition and structure, and cost-effectiveness;
- Reducing fine fuel build-up to mitigate wildfire risk;
- Establishing educational signage about the history of and ecosystems within MRNR;
- Maintaining trail networks to discourage off-trail use;
- Conducting monitoring and research to inform evidence-based decision-making; and
- Regularly reviewing the LMP and updating as necessary in accordance with results of monitoring efforts and scientific best practices.

Long-term restoration pathways identified for MRNR (Section 5 and Table 6) to address root causes of ecological stressors, include:

- Building meaningful relationships with local Nations as a first step in reconciliation efforts;
- Promoting deer stewardship by supporting hunting (namely Indigenous-led hunting) in nature reserves and promoting re-introduction of and co-existence with large predators;
- Thinning dense forest stands;
- Supporting the revitalization of cultural burning;
- Considering opportunities for co-stewardship strategies; and
- Conducting a prioritization exercise to identify cost-effective restoration actions.

Importantly, it is recommended that before undertaking further stewardship action within MRNR, the SSIC assess the cost-effectiveness of action alternatives to identify priority stewardship actions.

Finally, monitoring will play a key role in adaptive management and evidence-based decision-making by collecting informative data on stressors and implemented actions. Recommendations for future, standardized monitoring (Section 6) – note that these are not mutually-exclusive – include:

- Training volunteer wardens to conduct regular, simple ecological monitoring, such as photo-monitoring, shrub architecture assessments, stand density assessments, and standardized monitoring walks;
- Conducting passive, long-term ecological monitoring through the use of tools such as camera traps, autonomous recording units (ARUs), or soil moisture meters; and
- Employing SSIC staff or contractors to conduct scientifically-rigorous ecological monitoring.

1.0 Background

1.1 Parcel Information

Below is a summary of ecological and legal attributes associated with the parcel known as Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of ecological and legal attributes of Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR), adapted from 2015 LMP.

Information Type	Description
Province	British Columbia
NCC Natural Area	Salish Sea Natural Area
Ecoregional Assessment	Willamette Valley-Puget Trough-Georgia Basin Ecoregional Assessment
Ecoregion	Georgia Basin Ecoregion
Ecodistrict	Southern Gulf Islands Ecoregion
BEC Zone	Coastal Western Hemlock xeric maritime (CWHxm)
Focal Area	Northern Salt Spring
Watershed Zone	Zone 1: Northend
Jurisdiction	Capital Regional District – Islands Trust, Trust Area: Salt Spring Island
Nearest Major Centre(s)	Ganges, Salt Spring Island
Parcel Name	District Lot 40, North Salt Spring Island, Cowichan District, LTSA Plan VIP75431
PID	025-681-427
Parcel Size	49.5 acres (20.5 hectares)
Property Name	Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR)
Zoning	R-Rural
Ownership	Salt Spring Island Conservancy (SSIC)
Year Acquired	2003
Parcel Donor	Martin David Williams
Covenant Holder	Trust Fund Board (now the Islands Trust Conservancy Board, or ITC)
Covenant Holder (Secondary)	Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee
Access Directions	<p>From the south, MRNR can be accessed only by SSIC personnel and covenant co-holders via an easement off Toynbee Road (see Appendix E-F). There is a small pull-out on the north (right) side of the road, just past the five-rail gate at 181 Toynbee Road. The easement trail entrance is marked with a short wooden post featuring the SSIC hummingbird logo and the word “Trail”. The easement trail is approximately 0.9km long, at which point the trail enters MRNR in the southeastern portion of the reserve (Figure 1).</p> <p>From the north, MRNR can be legally accessed by the public via the trail systems in the SSIC’s Mt. Erskine Nature Reserve and ITC’s Lower Mt. Erskine Nature Reserve (Figure 1). There are two accesses to this protected area network; one via Collins Road, and one via Trustees Trail (Figure 1).</p>

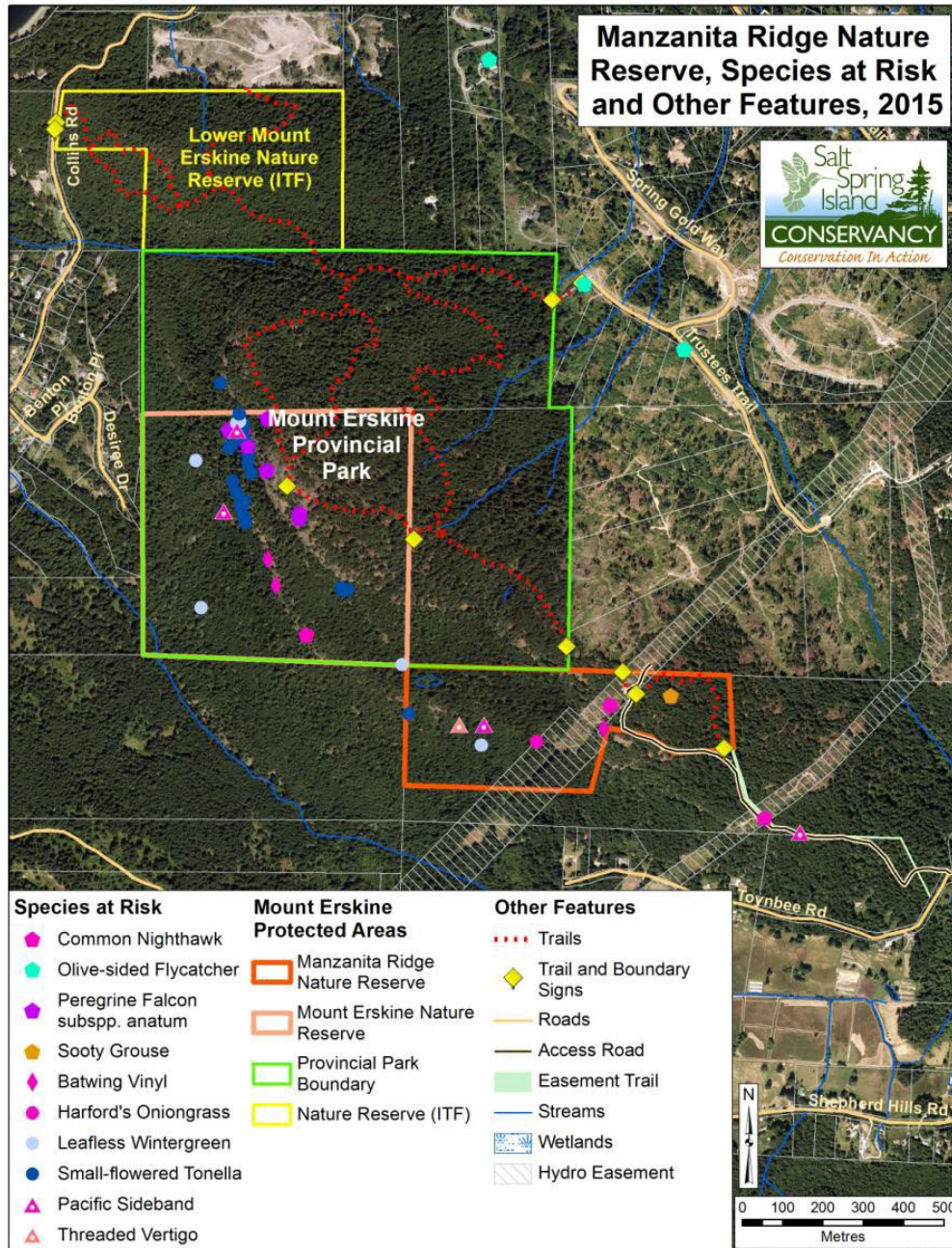


Figure 1. Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) boundaries and features (map re-used from 2015 LMP).

1.2 Land Development History

Approximately half of MRNR was logged in the 1950s, wherein logging focused on the lower sections of the property with deeper soil and larger trees, while the thin-soil rocky bluffs were mostly spared (Johnson, 2002). Logging history prior to 1950 is not known by the SSIC. In addition, BC Hydro installed a power line through the property in the 1950s (Figure 1; Appendix G), which involved clearing an area for the lines, as well as clearing an access road which runs parallel to the bluffs (Figure 1) (Johnson, 2002).

1.3 Land Protection History

The former owner, Mr. Martin Williams, first offered to sell the land to the Islands Trust Fund Board (now the Islands Trust Conservancy, or ITC) in 1990 to ensure that the land's unique ecological features would be protected. Initiatives at that time were not successful, and the project lay

dormant until contact was re-established with Martin Williams through the Salt Spring Island Conservancy (SSIC) Stewardship Project in 2000. The property was later subdivided and in 2003 a portion of the original parcel was purchased by SSIC with the help of other conservation groups. SSIC named this newest acquisition the Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) in honour of the large number of hairy manzanita (*Arctostaphylos columbiana*) trees which occur along the ridge. At this time, a covenant was placed on MRNR to protect the land in perpetuity, according to guidelines set out in an agreement between the landowner (SSIC) and the covenant holders (the Trust Fund Board – now ITC – and the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee) (Appendix C). MRNR also holds a federal Ecological Gifts designation which, along with the covenant agreement, requires SSIC to protect the ecological integrity of MRNR and manage land use (e.g., public access) in alignment with this primary objective.

1.4 Land Management History

Management of non-native invasive plants species and monitoring of Species At Risk (SAR) have been the primary management activities undertaken by SSIC within the reserve to date.

Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) removal has been conducted since 2012, at varying levels of intensity depending on funding availability. These efforts have been focused on the area below the BC Hydro power lines, where Scotch broom has thrived and is outcompeting the hairy manzanita. In the past, this work has been conducted in collaboration with BC Hydro as part of their own vegetation maintenance program (Appendix H). In 2013, there were discussions between SSIC and BC Hydro to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to control Scotch broom in the BC Hydro Right of Way (ROW), however this agreement was never finalized. In addition to Scotch broom removal efforts, the MRNR volunteer warden, Rick Laing, has been working to control the spread of the recently identified shiny geranium (*Geranium lucidum*) which is steadily making its way along the hydro access road from Toynbee Road.

Experts contracted by the SSIC conducted SAR surveys for birds, gastropods, and plants in 2015-2016 (Figure 1; Appendix A-B, H). Since then, MRNR has been part of surveys for the federally threatened Western Screech-Owl (*Megascops kennicottii*), as well as annual monitoring for Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) nests.

1.5 Right of Way (ROW) Access

1.5.1 BC Hydro ROW

As a result of the BC Hydro power lines established in the 1950s (Johnson, 2002), a BC Hydro ROW currently cuts through the middle third of MRNR and runs northeast/southwest (Figure 1; Appendix G). The easement and restrictive covenant in favour of the BC Hydro and Power Authority has been in place since 1973 (Annschild, 2004). The ROW makes up 20% of the reserve and covers 4 hectares (9.8 acres).

As part of their power line maintenance program, BC Hydro conducts periodic vegetation management and pole testing. This work is typically carried out by contractors who are required by BC Hydro to give landholders a minimum of 1 week notice before undertaking work on their land (Annschild, 2004).

BC Hydro vegetation management within the ROW currently occurs on a 4-year maintenance cycle (Maslovat, 2015), though the cycle is primarily determined by the type of vegetation growing beneath the powerlines and is therefore subject to change (BC Hydro, 2023). Vegetation maintenance includes pruning tree branches, as well as removing brush and hazard trees from the areas next to the power lines (Maslovat, 2015). The BC Hydro easement stipulates that vegetation

not reach a height, nor proximity, which could impede the flow of electricity. The limit of approach for the power lines is 4.5 meters. As such, trees along the ROW may have to be removed as they mature, in spite of considerable clearance from the lines to account for potential drooping of the lines of up to five meters in the summer heat. Hazard trees can be of any species and can be removed outside of the regular maintenance cycle if a deemed an immediate risk to the power lines (Maslovat, 2015). While broadcast herbicide spraying has been eliminated from BC Hydro's management program, they retain the right to occasionally apply herbicides by hand for specific control of individual plants (BC Hydro, 2023).

The "Test and Treat" program occurs on an 8-year maintenance cycle to test wood poles for strength and condition and to apply wood preservatives to prevent or stop wood decay and insect attack in the poles. The wood preservative is applied as a fumigant in drill holes of standing poles; the holes are capped and the liquid preservative mixes with the moisture inside and evaporates into the pole. Alternatively, the preservative is applied to a bandage which is wrapped around the base of the pole. Test and treatment maintenance is known to have been done in MRNR in 2014-2015 (Maslovat, 2015).

1.5.2 SSIC-Williams ROW

As part of the purchase agreement between Mr. Martin Williams and the SSIC, a ROW was granted by Mr. Williams across his property (LTSA Lot 3, PID 028-368-371) for use by the SSIC (staff, contractors, volunteers and MRNR covenant holders) to access MRNR from the south side via Toynbee Road (see Appendix E-F). This ROW is not a legal public access, and the public should access MRNR from the north side, through Mount Erskine Provincial Park (Figure 1).

2.0 Ecological Description

MRNR is located in the western portion of central Salt Spring Island (Figure 1). The nature reserve is a 20.5-hectare (49.5 acre) parcel which is part of a larger, contiguous network of protected areas which covers 237 hectares (585 acres). Covering all sides of Mt. Erskine and reaching almost to the ocean on the west side of the mountain, this includes the SSIC's Mount Erskine Provincial Park (leased and managed by BC Parks), and the ITC's Lower Mount Erskine Nature Reserve (Figure 1).

2.1 Geology and Terrain

Mt. Erskine is an outcrop of hard, erosion-resistant sedimentary rock, primarily composed of conglomerates and sandstone. The terrain is generally steep and rugged with slopes ranging from 6 degrees to >80 degrees along a steep escarpment in the northwest quadrant. Surficial materials consist of a mosaic of sandy, silty glacial till and rubbly eroded bedrock occurring as thin veneers (10 cm to 1 m deep) over bedrock. There are localized deposits of silts-clay glaciomarine materials, which are found in small, relatively level depressions above and below the escarpment. No terrain-related hazards have been identified in MRNR, although areas where glaciomarine sediments are found have no bearing strength and the escarpment face is subject to some erosion with occasional falling rocks (Johnson, 2002).

2.2 Soils

The soils that have developed on the property are generally very shallow, with depths of less than 50 cm to bedrock. These soils are moderately to rapidly drained, gravelly, sandy loams overlying glacial till, colluvium, and gravels. They may be moist in the winter but are dry in the summer with a water table below 90–100 cm of the surface. Small depression areas found throughout the property contain soils of considerably different character than those described above. The

underlying glaciomarine sediments have contributed to the development of silty and clayey loams. They are poorly drained, being wet for long periods throughout the year (Johnson, 2002).

2.3 Climate

In the rainshadow of the Coast Mountains, aka the coastal dry belt, the southern gulf islands of British Columbia are known for their relatively dry climate. Most of Salt Spring Island falls within the Coastal Douglas-fir moist maritime (CDFmm) biogeoclimatic (BEC) zone. However, as with other high-elevation sites on Salt Spring (i.e., tops of Mts. Tuam, Sullivan, Maxwell and Erskine), Manzanita Ridge is slightly cooler and moister than lower portions of the island, falling into the driest subzone of the Coastal Western Hemlock xeric maritime (CWHxm) BEC zone (Pojar et al., 1987).

2.4 Vegetation Communities

MRNR is a diverse mix of mature coniferous and mixed forest, second-growth coniferous and mixed forest, and rocky bluff ecosystems. The high rocky escarpments offer spectacular views to the south, west, and north. There are three wetlands on the property; two on the summit of the ridge close to the northern border and a third on the lower reaches of the property, close to the western border (Figure 1). The wetlands are 50m², 700m², and 500m² in size, respectively (Annschild, 2004).

Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) of Salt Spring Island, based on air photo analysis, identified seven plant communities within MRNR (Maslovat, 2015). Five of these seven plant communities were considered sensitive ecosystems, falling within three primary ecosystems:

- Douglas-fir – lodgepole pine / clad lichens (1 sensitive ecosystem present; blue-listed)
- Douglas-fir – [varying] / salal (3 sensitive ecosystems present)
- Arbutus / hairy manzanita (1 sensitive ecosystem present; red-listed)

The original management plan (Annschild, 2004) and baseline report (Johnson, 2002) identified four plant communities (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) plant communities identified by Robin Annschild (2004).

Ecosystem Name	BEC Site Unit	Provincial Rank (Year Assessed)	Provincial List
Arbutus / hairy manzanita	CWHxm1/00	S1S2 (2021) Critically Imperiled/Imperiled	Red
Douglas-fir – arbutus	CDFmm/02	S2 (2021) Imperiled	Red
Douglas-fir – lodgepole pine – grey rock-moss	CWHxm1/02	S3S4 (2019) Special Concern/Apparently Secure	Yellow

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan

Douglas-fir – western hemlock – salal Dry Maritime	CWHdm/03 CWHxm1/03 CWHxm2/03	S2 (2019) Imperiled	Red
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Although there is some overlap with the TEM data in how these plant communities are classified, there are also some discrepancies, and ground-truthing is required to delineate ecosystem boundaries. Regardless, MRNR has been confirmed to support three rare, provincially-listed plant communities, with the arbutus / hairy manzanita community being the most conspicuous and rarely encountered on Salt Spring Island.

East of the BC Hydro ROW, the forest is dominated by young coast Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *menziesii*) with some patches of mature trees, while arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*) and shore pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *contorta*) occur in areas with thinner soil and rocky outcrops. Note that shore pine and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*) are different subspecies of the same species (*Pinus contorta*), primarily distinguished by their growth habit, bark, and natural habitat. Shore pine is found along the coast, is typically smaller than lodgepole pine and has dark, corky bark. The BC Hydro ROW occurs on a rock ridge that has been cleared of trees and supports an arbutus / hairy manzanita community with extensive Scotch broom and some salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) in the deeper soil pockets. The area to the west of this ROW is divided in half, laterally, by an impressive escarpment of conglomerate bedrock. Along the ridge top, there is a mix of young Douglas-fir - western hemlock / salal forest with areas that contain older forest of the same type. As on the east side of the ROW, there are scattered arbutus trees and shore pine in the drier, rockier areas west of the ROW. The shore pine in MRNR was assessed in 1988 by Macmillan and Bloedel foresters who estimated the trees to be approximately 150 years old at the time of assessment (Johnson, 2002), indicating these are old growth trees approaching their average maximum lifespan of 200 years. Below the higher reaches of the bluff is second growth Douglas-fir forest, mixed with patches of older coniferous and mixed forest. Small occurrences of endangered Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*) ecosystem [GOE]-associated plant communities – including plants such as gold star (*Crocidium multicaule*), great camas (*Camassia leichtlinii*), and fool’s onion (*Triteleia hyacinthina*) – occur throughout MRNR, extending into adjacent protected areas; these communities are mainly limited to exposed, thin-soil areas within the nature reserve.

While a comprehensive plant species list for the reserve has not been compiled, a survey of dominant species within each of the identified vegetation communities was done in 2004 (Annschild, 2004; see also Appendix D). Furthermore, a survey of plant and gastropod SAR was conducted in 2004 (Appendix B), and a preliminary list of bird species observed in MRNR was conducted in 2015 (Appendix A).

2.5 Species at Risk (SAR)

During SAR surveys in 2015 and 2016 (Appendix A-B), a total of nine listed species were found to be present within MRNR. An additional SAR is noted in the 2015-2025 management plan (Maslovat, 2015) and two additional SAR have been observed since the original SAR surveys were conducted. Four of these species have since had their at-risk designations removed, though they are still considered rare on Salt Spring Island. Current statuses for species identified as SAR in the original survey reports (Appendix A-B) are summarized below, with the addition of SAR identified since the original surveys (Table 3).

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan

Table 3. Summary of species of conservation concern observed in Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) by surveys conducted in 2015-2016. These include species listed federally under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) and/or species listed provincially under the BC Conservation Data Centre (CDC).

Common Name	Latin Name	Provincial Status (Year Assessed)	Federal Status (Year Assessed)
Common Nighthawk*	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>	Blue List, S3S5B Special Concern (2022)	Special Concern (2018)
Band-tailed Pigeon*	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>	Blue List, S3S4 Special Concern (2022)	Special Concern (2011)
Olive-sided Flycatcher*	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	Yellow List, S4B (2022)	Special Concern (2023)
Small-flowered tonella*	<i>Tonella tenella</i>	Blue List, S3 Special Concern (2019)	Endangered (2005)
Threaded vertigo*	<i>Nearctula rowellii</i>	Blue List, S3S4 Special Concern (2024)	Special Concern (2012)
Batwing vinyl lichen*	<i>Leptogium platynum</i>	Yellow List, S3S4 Special Concern Designation (2018)	Endangered (2017)
Carbuncular rock-shield lichen*	<i>Xanthoparmelia verruculifera</i>	Yellow List, S3S4 Special Concern Designation (2018)	NA
Harford's melic**	<i>Melica harfordii</i>	Yellow list, S4 Apparently Secure (2019)	
Leafless wintergreen**	<i>Pyrola aphylla</i>	Yellow List, S4 Apparently Secure (2025)	NA
Pacific sideband**	<i>Monadenia fidelis</i>	Yellow List, S4 Apparently Secure (2015)	NA
Ozette coralroot**	<i>Corallorhiza maculata</i> var. <i>ozettensis</i>	NA	NA
Sooty Grouse**	<i>Dendragapus fuliginosus</i>	Yellow List, S4 Apparently Secure (2015)	NA

* indicates species currently holding SAR status

** indicates species no longer holding conservation status – either SAR status and/or provincial list

The 2015 land management plan also notes that there are several additional SAR which are known to occur in surrounding areas and are therefore likely to also occur within MRNR, including Northern red-legged frogs (*Rana aurora*) (see Appendix B), as well as Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) which nest in the cliffs of Mt. Erskine (Maslovat, 2015).

2.6 Invasive Species

There is extensive Scotch broom within the open BC Hydro ROW and along the forest edge on both sides of the ROW (see also Appendix H). Numerous species of invasive, non-native grasses (e.g., sweet vernalgrass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), hedgehog dog's-tail (*Cynosurus echinatus*)) are found within the ROW and in open, thin-soil areas of MRNR (e.g., mossy bluffs). Furthermore, shiny geranium has recently been observed just outside the southeast corner of the nature reserve, travelling along the access road which leads to and crosses through MRNR (Figure 1).

3.0 Ecological Stressors and Management Issues

The following list of stressors were identified by drawing on several sources, including place-based academic research, SSIC research and reports, and professional experience. These sources were also used to inform any discussion of relative significance amongst individual stressors, because no data exists to directly support relative magnitude of impact associated with different stressors within MRNR. However, the monitoring recommendations outlined later in this land management plan aim to address this data gap by ensuring data is collected on different stressors moving forward.

3.1 Identified Stressors in MRNR

3.1.1 Overbrowsing

Conservation areas throughout the southern gulf islands, including Salt Spring, are under extreme pressure from overbrowsing by hyperabundant native Columbian black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus ssp. columbianus*) (Arcese et al., 2014; Martin et al. 2011). Multiple drivers have contributed to deer hyperabundance – including the loss of Indigenous deer stewardship (hunting), declining settler hunting over time, and extirpation of large predators such as cougars (*Puma concolor*) and wolves (*Canus lupus*). Overbrowsing due to deer hyperabundance is a key ecological stressor throughout the southern gulf islands, causing significant alterations to ecosystem structure and function and contributing to declines in biodiversity. Species most impacted include palatable native shrubs and forbs, whose loss has been shown to lead to declines in bumblebees and understory-dependent songbirds (Arcese et al., 2014; Beckett, et al., 2022; Gonzales & Arcese, 2008; Martin et al., 2011).

There are many indications of overbrowsing within MRNR which have been and can be visually observed. Examples include the lack of palatable native vegetation within browse height (i.e., below 2 meters, aka the understory), as well as the umbrella-like architecture of native shrubs such as oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) and club-like architecture of native trees (Figure 2) (see Martin et al., 2011). These alterations to ecosystem structure are a serious concern for the overall ecological integrity of MRNR, particularly with respect to the loss and degradation of wildlife habitat and plant communities. Overbrowsing has significantly altered the ecological landscape on the island and may eventually lead to the complete loss or permanent alteration of numerous ecological communities if deer hyperabundance is not addressed.

The introduced eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) is another browser which is known to contribute to overbrowsing of native vegetation in many areas of the island, though their presence and influence within MRNR has not been assessed to date.

3.1.2 Invasive Species

While MRNR has been recognized for its relative lack of non-native invasive species compared to other SSIC nature reserves (Annschild, 2004; Johnson, 2002; Maslovat, 2015), there are a few areas of notable concern within MRNR.

The primary area of concern is the BC Hydro ROW, which is heavily dominated by Scotch broom. This area also supports the provincially red-listed arbutus / hairy manzanita plant community and is one of the only areas within MRNR where hairy manzanita still persists (Annschild, 2004). Unfortunately, the Scotch broom is outcompeting the hairy manzanita, posing a threat to both the presence of hairy manzanita within MRNR as well as the integrity and persistence of the red-listed plant community as a whole. An aggressive colonizer, Scotch broom is known to lower native plant diversity through a variety of mechanisms, including altering ecosystem structure and soil chemistry (Lysgaard, 2018; Shaben & Myers, 2010). While limited from invading the surrounding forested

ecosystems by its shade-intolerance, if allowed to persist uncontrolled the Scotch broom will eventually become a monoculture and completely overtake the open habitat within the BC Hydro ROW. This area would then continue to act as a seed source for invasions in other open habitats within the MRNR and beyond. Scotch broom is also known to increase fire risk by contributing dense build-ups of dry fuel containing flammable volatile oils (Nikpey, 2024), thereby posing a safety risk due to their proximity to the hydro lines as well as the surrounding forests which have large amounts of flammable woody debris on the ground due to fire suppression and legacy effects of post-logging stand density (See Section 3.1.3).

Another area of concern regarding invasive species spread is the access road leading from Toynbee Road to the BC Hydro ROW which appears to be facilitating the spread of introduced grasses (e.g., *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and *Cynosurus echinatus*), as well as a recently identified noxious weed, shiny geranium (R. Laing, personal communication, 16 July 2025). Introduced, invasive grasses are also present throughout the dry, thin-soil bluffs and open forests north of the BC Hydro ROW.

Finally, it is known that numerous properties in the area have free-roaming domestic cats which pose a serious threat to birds and herpetofauna. Feral cats are also a widespread problem on the island and likely have a presence within MRNR. Both free-roaming and feral cats are considered an invasive species by the IUCN and COSEWIC (J. Thomson, personal communication, 4 November 2025). A nearby property, situated on the other side of the Cranberry Valley (south-west of Manzanita Ridge), documented a domestic cat responsible for the predation of a female nighthawk in 2024 and an unsuccessful attack in 2025 (R. Ferguson, personal communication, 8 July 2025). The abundance and presence of free-roaming and feral cats is not something that has been formally monitored by the SSIC to date. However, given that free-roaming and feral cats kill more than 100 million birds in Canada, annually (Environment and Climate Change Canada [ECCC] & Birds Canada, 2024), assessing the presence of cats and their impact on local bird populations should be a priority for MRNR, especially with common nighthawks nesting near (and likely within) MRNR (R. Ferguson, personal communication, 31 October 2025).

3.1.3 Legacy Effects of Change in Land Use and Land Cover (LULC)

While there are many active stressors acting on the landscape, ecological communities continue to face legacy effects of colonialism and the associated history of change in land use and land cover (LULC) (e.g., resource extraction, exclusion of Indigenous stewardship, agricultural and urban development).

Logging is a key example of change in LULC, with much of Salt Spring Island having been commercially logged one or more times since colonial settlement. MRNR is known to have been logged at least once, around 75 years ago (Johnson, 2002). Logging practices in coastal British Columbia have significantly changed the composition and structure of coastal forest ecosystems, and have altered successional pathways (Trofymow et al., 2003). The result is second (or third) growth forests which are significantly less diverse in age, species, and structure than their unlogged equivalents (Trofymow et al., 2003).

Reconstructions of regional vegetation cover during the period of early settlement (mid-late 19th century) highlight that Salt Spring Island and surrounding areas (southern gulf islands and southern Vancouver Island) were less densely forested, historically (Bjorkman, 2008; Lea, 2006). Today, the higher density of trees is due in part to logging and increased stand densities post-harvest but is also attributable to the suppression of cultural burning which was historically common before widespread exclusion of Indigenous stewardship practices (Bjorkman, 2008). In south coastal BC,

cultural burning was used regularly by Coast Salish Peoples, in part to maintain open structural conditions suitable for the cultivation of root gardens such as camas meadows or “Garry oak and associated ecosystems [GOAEs]” (McCune et al., 2013; Pellatt & Gedalof, 2014). Under a colonial regime of fire suppression, conifer encroachment has become a key threat to ecosystems associated with open structural conditions maintained by cultural burning (Gedalof et al., 2006). There is growing evidence that the interaction between logging and fire suppression has resulted in increased fire risk through the accumulation of high fuel loads (Daniels et al., 2025).

In MRNR, the effects of logging and fire suppression can be visually observed. While a large portion of MRNR escaped logging (Johnson, 2002), the higher productivity, lower-elevation sections of MRNR south and west of the BC Hydro ROW, which were logged, support some pockets of dense stands with low diversity. Additionally, the forests throughout MRNR have areas with high accumulations of ground fuel which contribute to increased risk of wildfire. Finally, while hyperabundant deer are an effective control for conifer encroachment by limiting tree and shrub recruitment, the observed decline in hairy manzanita is known to in part be due to the encroachment of woody shrubs (specifically Scotch broom) and it is possible that conifer encroachment has played a role over a longer time scale. Deer are also known to contribute directly to the decline of hairy manzanita through preferential browsing.

3.1.4 Climate Change

Climate change is happening in the Salish Sea. Analyzing climate data from 20 climate stations throughout the Salish Sea, research by Flower et al. (2025) reveals that mean annual temperature has increased from 1901-2022, with an average increase of 1.14°C. Using specialized software, ClimateNA (Wang et al., 2016), the authors extracted future climate projections for the period 2071-2100 and statistically interpolated historical climate data from 1990-2020 over the entire Salish Sea region (Flower et al., 2025). They then applied a “middle of the road” scenario called Shared Socioeconomic Pathway 2-4.5 to predict future climate change. Flower et al. (2025) found that mean, minimum, and maximum temperatures are projected to increase in all seasons across the region. Average annual mean temperature across the region is projected to increase by 2.28°C between the 1991-2020 and 2071-2100 time periods (Flower et al., 2025). Averaged across the Salish Sea, minimum winter temperature is projected to increase by 1.44°C from 1991-2020 to 2071-2100. Average summer maximum temperature is projected to increase by 3.53°C between 1991-2020 and 2071-2100 (Flower et al., 2025).

Warmer, drier summers will bring extended drought periods, along with other extreme weather events, resulting in significant stress on plant communities and the wildlife which depend upon them, as well as increased wildfire risk (see McComb et al., 2023). Furthermore, projected shifts in climate will and already are causing changes in phenology and interruptions to important species interactions (aka “phenological mismatch”). It is generally thought that drought-tolerant ecological communities (e.g., arbutus/hairy manzanita) may fare better under future climatic conditions, while moisture-limited ecosystems (e.g., wetlands) will feel the effects of climate change more acutely. In conjunction with efforts to mitigate climate change, it will therefore be important to address stressors which stand to be exacerbated by climate change in order to lower the cumulative stress and build more resilient ecological communities. For example, McComb et al. (2023) suggest that overbrowsing may exacerbate climate-driven drought stress by lowering soil moisture retention through understory loss and soil compaction. Climate-driven drought and increased wildfire risk may also interact with the increased wildfire risk introduced by high fuel loads attributable to fire suppression, invasion of Scotch broom and legacy effects of logging (see Sections 3.1.2-3.1.3). In addition, it is known that the abundance of arbutus is declining in the Salish Sea due to cumulative

effects of interacting stressors, including disease and pathogen infections exacerbated by climate change (see Puri, 2024).

3.1.5 Public Access and Recreational Use

Supporting recreational public access is one of the SSIC’s key objectives (see Section 4.1.2) in managing their nature reserves, so long as the manner of access does not contradict their primary objective of protecting ecological integrity. The SSIC does not wish to uphold a dichotomous view of nature by restricting access to their nature reserves, however it is important to acknowledge that certain uses can pose a threat to ecological communities. By identifying the risks associated with such activities and monitoring the extent to which they might be occurring and negatively impacting ecosystems, the SSIC is able to educate the public and encourage ecologically responsible etiquette within their nature reserves and beyond.

Within MRNR, activities of concern include off-leash dogs (potential impacts include soil erosion, disturbance to ground-nesting birds), off-trail access (potential impacts include trampling of sensitive vegetation, disturbance to ground-nesting birds, spread of invasive species, soil erosion), mountain biking (potential impacts include soil erosion, disturbance to movement patterns of wildlife), and littering (potential impacts include microplastic accumulation, altered soil or water chemistry).

3.1.6 Surrounding Activity

While difficult to address directly, it is important to be aware of activities taking place on properties adjacent or proximal to MRNR that might pose a threat to the ecological health of ecosystems within MRNR.

Notably, land use on properties immediately adjacent to MRNR are important to monitor and assess for potential negative impacts. An extreme example of this is the logging on the “Rainbow Grove” lot (see Annschild, 2004) which took place in the early 2000s and would have negatively impacted MRNR by contributing to windthrow, habitat loss and fragmentation, and invasion of disturbance-adapted species (e.g., purple foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)).

3.2 Summary of Threats to MRNR

While each of above-mentioned stressors are important to consider, assess, and address individually, it will also be important to consider the cumulative impact of these stressors which collectively act and interact on the ecological communities within and in proximity to MRNR. A few examples of these interactions are highlighted in the discussion of the individual stressors identified in Section 3.1.

Below is a summary of key stressors threatening the ecological integrity of MRNR, and associated causes, threats and impacts (Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of key stressors in Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR) and notable associated causes, threats, and impacts.

Stressor	Notable Underlying Causes and Associated Threats	Notable Ecological Impacts
Overbrowsing	Hyperabundant deer, hyperabundant rabbits, exclusion of Indigenous stewardship, exclusion of large predators	Understory loss and simplification, trophic cascades, limited forest regeneration, moisture stress, habitat loss

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan

Invasive Species	Introduction of non-native animal and plant species through colonization	Altered ecosystem structure and function, loss of native species cover/abundance and diversity, increased wildfire risk
Legacy Effects of Change in Land Use and Land Cover (LULC)	Colonization, exclusion of Indigenous stewardship, resource extraction (e.g., logging)	Altered ecosystem structure and function, habitat loss and fragmentation, loss of native species cover/abundance and diversity
Climate Change	Many	Phenological shifts and mismatch, drought stress, loss of native species cover/abundance and diversity, increased wildfire risk
Public Access and Recreational Use	Off-trail access, off-leash dogs, mountain biking, off-road vehicles (ORVs), horseback riding	Soil erosion, invasive species spread, trampling of sensitive vegetation and disruption to ground-nesting birds, pollution, increased wildfire risk
Surrounding Activity	Resource extraction, land development, invasive and introduced species, lack of stewardship	Altered ecosystem structure and function, habitat loss and fragmentation, loss of native species cover/abundance and diversity

4.0 Management Objectives

The following management objectives have been collated based on conversations with SSIC staff and board members, as well as reviewing objectives outlined in past land management plans and similar documentation of management objectives.

4.1 Management Objectives Pertaining to the Stewardship of MRNR

4.1.1 Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity

The SSIC’s primary objective in managing their nature reserves is to protect the ecological integrity of the lands and waters they steward. The SSIC aims to achieve this through a variety of pathways, including land acquisition, legislative protection (e.g., covenants), and active land stewardship. While there are additional objectives which are fundamental to the SSIC’s stewardship approach, listed below, actions to achieve these secondary objectives must not inhibit achieving the principal objective of protecting ecological integrity.

Within the context of MRNR, achieving this principal objective entails addressing the cumulative stressors discussed in Section 3 to restore and maintain the compositional and structural diversity and promote climate resilience of the ecosystems within MRNR.

4.1.2 Support Ecologically-Conscious Recreation

As was touched on earlier in this management plan, supporting public access and recreation within the SSIC’s nature reserves is a key management objective for the SSIC. Creating and maintaining trail networks for hikers, dog-walkers, and runners is the primary way in which the SSIC supports

recreation within their nature reserves. In order to remain aligned with their principal objective of protecting ecological integrity, the SSIC aims to provide public access while placing limits on the types of activities allowed within their nature reserves. Within the context of MRNR, this means requiring dogs to be on-leash and prohibiting trail use by modes of transport other than foot (i.e., no horses, ORVs, mountain bikes). The SSIC aims to communicate permitted and prohibited activities to visitors in an effort to encourage ecologically-appropriate use (see also Section 4.1.3), maintain good condition of trail networks to mitigate any need for visitors to go off-trail, and monitor reserve use on a regular basis to ensure public access is not causing ecological degradation.

4.1.3 Promote Public Education and Engagement

Educating the public on the ecosystems with which they interact when visiting nature reserves such as MRNR, as well as how to be on the land in an ecologically-conscious manner, is another fundamental management objective for the SSIC. The SSIC aims to do this primarily through signage, as well as through public-facing events, media, and community engagement programs.

With MRNR being a less easily-accessible nature reserve, public education to date has occurred primarily through signage. However, there is great potential for further public education and engagement events – particularly given the unique character of the ecosystems within MRNR.

4.1.4 Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work

As an environmental organization managing lands and waters which have been shaped and stewarded by Coast Salish Peoples for millennia, the SSIC understands the social and ecological harm perpetuated by conducting this work without meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples. At this point in time, the SSIC is focused on building relationships with Nations on whose lands they conduct their work, as well as engaging in a process of learning (and unlearning) to build our own cultural competency within the organization. Over time, the SSIC aims to work in relationship with Coast Salish Peoples, as opportunities arise through the process of relationship-building, and support the resurgence of Indigenous stewardship through avenues such as co-management, Indigenous-led stewardship programs and landback strategies.

4.1.5 Evidence-Based, Reflexive Decision-Making

Another important objective for the SSIC is ensuring their decision-making is grounded in up-to-date scientific evidence and current best-practice. Building reflexivity into decision-making processes is an essential component to this, in order to allow for conservation efforts to adapt in response to changes in scientific understanding. It is also important that the SSIC collect scientifically-robust monitoring data that can be used to inform stewardship decisions on their reserves.

In the context of MRNR, this might involve collecting scientifically-robust monitoring data on stressors and implemented restoration actions in order to document the effectiveness of restoration actions and impacts of cumulative stressors to date.

4.2 Summary of Management Objectives and Targets

Below is a summary of management objectives and associated, specific targets informing SSIC’s stewardship approach in MRNR (Table 5).

Table 5. Summary of management objectives and associated targets within the context of Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR).

Objective	Specific Targets
Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce deer browsing pressure - Address legacy effects of logging

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revitalize stewardship practices and ecological processes involved in shaping and maintaining healthy ecosystems
Support Ecologically-Conscious Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide infrastructure for permitted forms of access - Mitigate negative impacts of recreation - Communicate permitted and prohibited types of recreation to visitors
Promote Public Education and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educate the public on the ecological communities within MRNR - Raise awareness around the cumulative impacts of interacting stressors on the landscape, both within and outside of MRNR - Educate the public on how to engage with lands and waters in a respectful and ecologically-conscious manner - Educate the public on how stewardship decisions are made in the context of MRNR
Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and work in relationship on stewarding nature reserves including MRNR, as opportunities arise - Support cultural revitalization within MRNR, as opportunities arise, and address barriers to doing so - Educate the public on the cultural history and significance of MRNR, as well as the surrounding lands and waters, guided by relationships as they are built - Restore ecological condition of MRNR with specific attention to culturally-significant components, guided by relationships as they are built
Evidence-Based, Reflexive Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish cost-effective, data-driven monitoring programs to inform decision-making - Engage with experts to ensure management approach reflects current science and best practice (and revise accordingly)

5.0 Management Actions and Restoration Pathways

The following section discusses potential management actions that the SSIC might consider in their stewardship of MRNR moving forward. These action alternatives are differentiated by temporal

scale; first, management actions which might be employed in the short-term to address more immediate impacts are suggested (Section 5.1), followed by a discussion of potential future restoration pathways that might be considered on a longer time scale to address the root causes of ecological stressors in MRNR and other SSIC nature reserves (Section 5.2). Note that many of these suggestions reflect actions that are important for both the health of ecological communities in MRNR as well as decolonizing the stewardship of these places but are suggested with the understanding that there may be barriers associated with these courses of action (e.g., public opinion, funding, covenants, relationships). Further, while potential opportunities regarding Indigenous engagement are explored in several action alternatives, it is important to reiterate that the first step for the SSIC is to build meaningful, trusting, and respectful relationships with local Nations (see Section 5.2.1) and for further action to grow from and be guided by these relationships, at the speed of trust.

While some detail is provided in the discussion of management alternatives, these are only broad suggestions and would require more detailed planning which is outside the scope of this land management plan given the unpredictability of resources available for restoration efforts. Following internal discussion within the SSIC, any planning for restoration work based on these recommendations will require the time of SSIC staff and/or contractors and should entail a prioritization exercise to ensure cost-effective stewardship action in the face of limited resources (see Section 5.2.6).

5.1 Short-Term Management Actions

5.1.1 Manage Invasive Species

Given the growing dominance of Scotch broom in the BC Hydro ROW, which has been observed as contributing to the decline of provincially red-listed hairy manzanita, reducing the cover and mitigating the spread of Scotch broom is a key management priority in MRNR. It is important to note that Scotch broom is an exceedingly difficult species to eradicate and the SSIC may therefore need to be cautious so as not to expend the entirety of the limited resources allocated to stewardship in MRNR on this issue. However, pairing broom eradication efforts with aligned objectives such as localized restoration of hairy manzanita habitat may be a more cost-effective approach (see Section 5.1.2).

If broom management is undertaken, manual removal will be necessary as a primary method of control (see also Section 5.1.2). Where manual removal is conducted, broom plants should be cut below the soil, broken down into smaller pieces, and piled below a deciduous tree (e.g., big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)) (C. Drake, personal communication, 20 June 2025). Where broom is removed, it is advisable that the area be seeded and/or planted with native plants to limit broom regeneration and tip the scales towards dominance by native species (see also Section 5.1.2). Broom control efforts occurring within the BC Hydro ROW will require communication with BC Hydro to ensure broom removal is conducted in a way that is aligned with the requirements of the ROW. There may also be an opportunity to conduct this work in collaboration with and with support from BC Hydro, as has been discussed previously (see Maslovat, 2015).

Invasive species removal will also be required outside of the BC Hydro ROW and could involve collaboration and cooperation with neighbouring property owners to mitigate surrounding seed sources. Within the boundaries of MRNR, efforts outside the Hydro ROW should focus on mapping presence of invasive species within the reserve and conducting manual removal of Scotch broom, shiny geranium, and any additional species of concern throughout the reserve. Invasives removal should take place on an annual basis and could involve volunteers, volunteer wardens and/or contractors (see Section 6).

5.1.2 Promote Native and Culturally-Significant Species

Given the observed impact of deer browsing on native plant cover and diversity in MRNR, it will become increasingly important to curb the loss of native understory diversity in the face of hyperabundant deer. While directly reducing population size in hyperabundant deer is the most effective course of action and is a long-term goal the SSIC is working toward, conserving native plant species will require short-term action in order for passive recovery of native vegetation to be a viable restoration pathway in the future.

Establishing exclosures to allow for passive recovery of vegetation is one method which has proven to be effective for species with browse-resistant attributes which have allowed them to persist in the face of hyperabundant browsers (Knauer, 2023). However, browse-sensitive species may not recover passively if they have been locally extirpated or reduced to low enough densities that they are not protected by the exclosures. To address this, the SSIC might consider establishing planted exclosures in MRNR, with a focus on planting browse-sensitive species which are associated with the ecosystem in question but not present or abundant within MRNR. While not a direct, nor long-term solution, this can help prevent local extirpations and provide a seed source for future passive recovery in anticipation of future deer management action.

If pursuing planted exclosures as a restoration approach, plantings should consider not only species composition, but also structure and succession. For example, hyperabundant deer are known to limit forest regeneration by browsing seedlings and saplings, effectively preventing recruitment of younger age classes and altering or inhibiting forest succession (Knauer, 2023). This phenomenon can be observed in MRNR by the lack of tree seedlings and saplings in the forest understories throughout the reserve. The SSIC might therefore consider caging any existing seedlings and saplings (cage to a height of at least 2m) and/or contracting a forest restoration expert to space caged plantings of trees and shrubs to secure the future of the forested ecosystems in MRNR.

In addition, it is known that highly palatable species are often also species of high cultural significance and that as such, culturally-significant plants suffer great declines under high deer pressure (see Arcese et al., 2014) – alongside the cumulative impact of multiple stressors and the broader threat of the exclusion of stewardship practices which maintained these species for millennia. As an act of reconciliation as well as an important conservation measure, the SSIC might therefore consider working with Indigenous professionals and knowledge-holders, through the process of building relationships with local Nations (see Section 5.2.1), to develop a place-based, culturally-informed planting list focused on recovering and conserving species of cultural significance.

Finally, planting native species is commonly known to be an effective companion action to invasive species removal, particularly in contexts where natural recovery of native plants is hindered – such as overbrowsing by hyperabundant deer (see Section 3.1.1). As touched on in the previous section (Section 5.1.1), it is advisable that when invasive species are manually removed, the SSIC plant these areas with native species to tip the scales of competitive interaction. The SSIC could employ this tactic to reduce invasive species cover in the BC Hydro ROW:

- First, the SSIC might consider restoring the arbutus / hairy manzanita plant community in this area and promoting other GOAE species in this area. Pollinator meadows are listed as a permissible land use within BC Hydro ROWs (BC Hydro, 2025), as most understory species (grasses, forbs, shrubs) are not at risk of exceeding the vegetation height limit (see BC Hydro, 2025). This could look like removing broom from a large area and establishing one or more exclosures planted with native grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs – though

permission for the enclosure would have to be obtained from BC Hydro. This phenomenon has been observed to occur naturally below the second set of hydro lines (south of the lines through MRNR) on the opposite side of the Cranberry Valley, where there are sections of that ROW dominated by large expanses of the browse-resistant death camas (*Toxicoscordion venenosum*), with smaller occurrences of great camas (*Camassia leichtlinii*), Roemer's fescue (*Festuca roemerii*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), and chocolate lily (*Fritillaria affinis*). Death camas may be a species to consider planting should BC Hydro not permit fencing to be established below the power lines, and has been anecdotally observed to offer some protection to other more palatable species by discouraging deer from browsing within closer proximity to death camas plants – a phenomenon known as associational refuge, for which there has been evidence found elsewhere in the world (Moser & Greet, 2018; Pfister & Hay, 1988).

- Another way in which the SSIC might use native species plantings for invasives management is by planting shrubs which can outcompete Scotch broom by shading resprouting seedlings following manual removal of mature plants (Coastal Invasive Species Committee [Coastal ISC], 2025; Islands Trust, 2025). While it is important to restore some open habitat, such as the wildflower meadow suggested above, using shrub plantings would both soften potential negative impacts with large scale broom removal for species which have adapted to the presence of dense shrub cover in the hydro ROW, as well as lower the need to rely on ongoing manual removal and offer a buffer to future invasion from surrounding properties where broom is not managed. Dense thickets of oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) below the same hydro lines on the other side of the Cranberry Valley (west of Manzanita Ridge) have been observed to effectively control broom invasions along the hydro lines and could therefore be mimicked as a low-maintenance method of control. While young plantings would have to be caged given the high palatability of oceanspray, once mature, oceanspray is able to provide the function of shade while being browsed. Further, it has been anecdotally observed by the author and colleagues that where oceanspray and salal co-occur at high enough densities, deer are often dissuaded from wading through thick shrubbery.

Should planted enclosures be established in MRNR, it is important that funding be allocated or a volunteer base be available to ensure the enclosures are monitored and cared for on a regular basis – particularly in the first few years as plantings can have low rates of success if not given the care they require (see Woodley, 2024a).

5.1.3 Reduce Fine Fuel Accumulation

As discussed in earlier sections of this management plan, changes in land cover and land use (e.g., logging, exclusion of cultural burning) have led to the accumulation of woody fuels, particularly in the forested ecosystems of MRNR. This, paired with drier forests due to loss of understory vegetation and warming temperatures, greatly increases wildfire risk within the nature reserve. While restoring the understory, thinning forests, revitalizing cultural burning, and mitigating climate change are all important long-term goals to work toward, reducing the presence of ladder and fine fuels is a priority action which can be achieved on a more immediate timeline. The SSIC might therefore consider working with volunteers and contractors to remove fuel loads throughout MRNR and using this material to create substitutes for missing habitat features, such as Assembled Nurse Logs (ASNLs) (Doll et al., 2023; Raincoast Conservation Foundation, 2023). This would likely entail a couple of SSIC contractors surveying MRNR for occurrences of vertically-stacked downed trees (specifically highly-flammable shore pine on either side of the BC Hydro ROW) and breaking down piled fuels into smaller components to be left on the reserve in ASNLs (or some ecologically-

appropriate equivalent) for moisture-retention and habitat provision. However, given the potential for violation of section 3.2 of the covenant agreement (i.e., tampering with Indigenous flora), a workplan outlining operational details (i.e., who, what, when, where) will be submitted to the covenant holders for review and approval before any fuel reduction takes place within MRNR, with the expectation that approval from the covenant holders will not be unreasonably withheld.

5.1.4 Establish Educational Signage

Given the unique nature and rare ecosystems supported within MRNR, the reserve holds great potential for public education efforts. Being one of the SSIC's less easily accessible nature reserves, MRNR may not stand out as an ideal candidate for bringing large in-person groups, however establishing educational signage on the ecosystems in MRNR, the cumulative impacts of interacting stressors co-occurring on the landscape, the cultural history and significance of MRNR and surrounding lands and waters, as well as the SSIC's restoration efforts would be an excellent way to educate visitors and promote ecologically-conscious habits. It is advisable that signage be accessible to diverse audiences (e.g., age, language background, ecological awareness).

Furthermore, the SSIC might consider working to add culturally-informed signage in their nature reserves, through the process of relationship-building with local Nations. While this is a longer-term action (see Section 5.2.1 for more), a first step might be to ensure an acknowledgement of the Peoples on whose lands MRNR exists is added in the more immediate future, with the potential for adding further signage as relationships with local Nations grow.

5.1.5 Maintain Trail Networks

In order to mitigate the need or incentive for visitors to stray from the established trail network, it is recommended that trails be monitored and maintained on a regular basis by the volunteer warden. This would include clearing fallen trees and branches, maintaining signage and fencing, and deactivating unsanctioned trails. Monitoring and maintenance should also include surveying for and reporting any evidence of ecologically-damaging activities in order for the SSIC to stay informed and take action if necessary to protect sensitive species or ecological communities.

5.1.6 Conduct Monitoring and Research

Establishing standardized monitoring of MRNR to understand the influence of various stressors and the effectiveness of implemented restoration actions will be required to inform evidence-based decision-making in the stewardship of MRNR moving forward. A section outlining how this might be achieved has been outlined in Section 6, however this will require a small contract following discussion with the SSIC on resources for monitoring to determine scope and a sampling plan, as well as to provide training to whoever will be conducting the monitoring. Volunteer wardens present an excellent and cost-effective option that would ensure monitoring can be conducted without the constraint of funding limitations, however if their time, capacity, or abilities pose an issue, SSIC staff and/or contractors are another option (see Section 6 for more).

In addition to establishing a standardized plan for long-term annual monitoring, the SSIC might consider conducting further research into stressors for which there is relatively little knowledge, such as the presence and impact of feral and free-roaming domestic cats, the types and impacts of public recreational activity in MRNR, or long-term changes in soil moisture and temperature. Ongoing SAR monitoring should also be conducted, particularly for ground-nesting nighthawks, in order to determine whether trails require seasonal closure to humans and/or dogs, as is done in Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve (AVNR). There may also be an opportunity to engage the public in monitoring efforts by promoting the use of iNaturalist in nature reserves such as MRNR and employ this data to monitor species presence data, such as SAR occurrences. Including information

pertaining to the use and importance of iNaturalist (e.g., iNat QR code, instructions, explanation of how data can be used by the SSIC) could be included in potential signage established in MRNR (see Section 5.1.4).

5.1.7 Review and Revise LMP

Reflexivity is another other key component in ensuring decision-making regarding the stewardship of MRNR remains up-to-date and rooted in current science and best-practice. It is therefore recommended that the SSIC review monitoring data on a regular basis and the management plan and recommended actions be updated accordingly. It is advised that monitoring data be reviewed annually and that the management approach be revised immediately should the data indicate this to be necessary. Should the data not indicate that immediate revisions are required, it is recommended that the management plan be reviewed no less frequently than every 4 years in order to keep up with current research and best practice.

5.2 Long-Term Restoration Pathways

5.2.1 Build Meaningful, Trusting, and Respectful Relationships with Local Nations and Address Colonially-Imposed Barriers to Reconciliation

Building meaningful relationships with local Nations, founded on trust and respect, is a priority for the SSIC and an important first step in their reconciliation efforts. While more specific actions related to reconciliation and Indigenous engagement are explored in other sections of this management plan (from co-developing planting lists, to adding culturally-informed signage, to supporting cultural revitalization in the gulf islands), the SSIC feels it important to reiterate that these are only suggested as potential opportunities for tangible actions that might grow from and should be guided by the process of relationship-building, and that this work must occur at the speed of trust – not on a colonially-imposed timeline. Suggestions of specific potential actions are offered only in an effort to recognize the responsibility of non-Indigenous people and organizations, like the SSIC, to proactively reflect on opportunities for meaningful reconciliation action and bring these to the table for exploration through the process of relationship-building with Indigenous communities.

In addition, the SSIC recognizes their responsibility to address barriers to reconciliation efforts, such as misconceptions around Indigenous history in the gulf islands, negative public sentiments toward and conservation policies which might restrict potential cultural revitalization efforts (e.g., hunting, burning – see Sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.4), as well as cost and access barriers related to travel and accommodations. It is the SSIC's intention to work towards addressing these barriers alongside, and informed by, relationship building with Indigenous neighbours.

5.2.2 Promote Deer Stewardship

While short-term efforts to address the impacts of deer hyperabundance have been discussed in earlier sections of this plan, it remains true that deer management is urgently needed throughout the southern gulf islands. Recent research by McComb et al. (2025) assessed the cost-effectiveness of different action alternatives to manage hyperabundant deer in the gulf islands. Their research found hunting, and Indigenous-led hunting in particular, to be the most cost-effective course of action (McComb et al., 2025). Opening SSIC nature reserves to Indigenous hunters, establishing a deer harvesting program, and promoting public support for hunting by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons on Salt Spring is a long-term goal that the SSIC is actively working towards and will greatly benefit the ecological health of nature reserves such as MRNR. This will require meaningful relationship-building with Indigenous hunters (see Section 5.2.1), as well as a significant educational campaign focused on building public understanding and awareness. It will be important

to minimize negative public sentiment, educate the public on how to be safe during hunting season, as well as create culturally-safe and culturally-informed spaces for Indigenous hunters in revitalizing stewardship of deer as a food system. Given this strategy involves hunting, an activity that is restricted by the covenant agreement, the SSIC will submit a detailed plan to covenant holders for approval before moving forward with any hunting strategies within MRNR, with the expectation that approval from the covenant holders will not be unreasonably withheld.

Further, while admittedly not deemed the most cost-effective approach by McComb et al. (2025) due to low feasibility largely attributable to negative public sentiment, the SSIC might consider the potential for predator re-introduction strategies as a long-term goal which would contribute to deer stewardship, along with a host of additional ecological co-benefits. This would also require a significant educational campaign around co-existence with predators to address the low feasibility highlighted by the McComb et al. (2025) study, as well as potential multi-stakeholder collaborations to address concerns such as threats to livestock.

5.2.3 Thin Overly-Dense Forest Stands

As touched on earlier, overly dense, single-aged forest stands are a principal legacy effect of commercial logging. Ecological thinning practices are becoming a primary restoration practice in degraded, second- and third-growth forests and are being trialed in the southern gulf islands by organizations such as Transition Salt Spring Society (Doll et al., 2023), Parks Canada (Parks Canada, 2025), and the Galiano Conservancy Association (Galiano Conservancy Association [GCA], 2025). It is recommended that the SSIC assess stand density in forested ecosystems throughout MRNR and explore the potential to work with contracted professionals to thin forests and reintroduce missing habitat features (e.g., assembled nurse logs, snags) to restore the structural complexity associated with a healthy forest ecosystem. Given that this activity is technically restricted by section 3.2 of the covenant agreement (i.e., tampering with Indigenous flora), the SSIC will submit a detailed plan to covenant holders for approval before moving forward with any forest thinning strategies within MRNR, with the expectation that approval from the covenant holders will not be unreasonably withheld.

5.2.4 Support Revitalization of Cultural Burning

The presence of fire-adapted species such as shore pine and hairy manzanita, as well as GOAEs such as the arbutus/hairy manzanita plant community, indicates that cultural burning was almost certainly a part of the localized disturbance regime prior to colonization. While mechanical proxies, such as tree girdling for reducing fir encroachment and associated fuels loads – one function of frequent, low-intensity burning – have been suggested as short-term actions, these are not a substitute for the ecological and cultural value of fire. Supporting the revitalizing of cultural burning carries similar barriers as supporting Indigenous hunting, but might be a long-term goal for the SSIC to explore in MRNR and other nature reserves supporting fire-adapted ecological communities, in the process of building relationships with local Nations (see Section 5.2.1). Given that this activity is technically restricted by section 3.2 of the covenant agreement (i.e., tampering with Indigenous flora), the SSIC will submit a detailed plan to covenant holders for approval before moving forward with any cultural burning strategies within MRNR, with the expectation that approval from the covenant holders will not be unreasonably withheld.

5.2.5 Consider Opportunities for Co-Stewardship Strategies

While supporting the revitalization of Indigenous stewardship can take many forms and will have to occur in stages as relationships are built and cultural awareness grows, co-stewardship strategies is another long-term goal for the SSIC. This might be a consideration for the future of MRNR, upon examination of factors such as cultural safety, accessibility, and value. Again, relationship-building

with Indigenous Peoples (see Section 5.2.1) and addressing barriers (e.g., housing, negative public sentiment, covenant restrictions) are important first steps in working toward this goal.

5.2.6 Conduct Priority Threat Management (PTM) Assessment for SSIC Nature Reserves
 Decision science is being increasingly applied in conservation and environmental management contexts as a way of prioritizing conservation actions in the face of competing demands on limited resources (see Hemming et al., 2022). Priority Threat Management (PTM) is an example of a conservation decision science framework which is gaining popularity in Canada as a way of identifying and prioritizing action alternatives based on an inclusive, multi-stakeholder, multi-objective assessment of cost-effectiveness (see Camaclang et al., 2025; Carwardine et al., 2018).

Given the limited resources available for active stewardship of SSIC nature reserves, it is important that the SSIC allocates funds and labour in an efficient manner. In light of this, it is strongly recommended that the SSIC consider working with conservation decision science experts to conduct a PTM-like prioritization exercise to identify stressors, objectives, and action alternatives across all SSIC nature reserves, and undertake a decision analysis to identify priority actions for each nature reserve, including MRNR, based on the cost-effectiveness of action alternatives. It is advised that this be done before the SSIC implements any actions suggested in this management plan for the sake of conserving limited resources.

5.3 Summary of Management Recommendations

Recommendations of short-term management actions and long-term restoration pathways were informed by and aim to address both the stressors impacting MRNR (Section 3) as well as the SSIC’s management objectives (Section 4). A summary of management recommendations, and the different objectives and stressors addressed by each recommended action, has been included below (Table 6).

Again, it is strongly recommended that in considering potential stewardship actions, the SSIC undertake an action prioritization exercise (see Carwardine et al., 2018; Hemming et al., 2022) (see Section 5.2.6) to assess the cost-effectiveness of different stewardship strategies and ensure that limited resources are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Table 6. Summary of short-term (green) and long-term (orange) management recommendations for Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve (MRNR), with management objectives and stressors addressed by management actions also shown.

Recommended Action	Objectives Addressed by Action	Stressors Addressed by Action
Manage Invasive Species*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity ○ Promote Public Education and Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invasive Species ○ Legacy Effects of Change in LULC ○ Surrounding Activity
Promote Native and Culturally-Significant Species**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity ○ Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work ○ Promote Public Education and Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legacy Effects of Change in LULC ○ Overbrowsing ○ Invasive Species ○ Climate Change ○ Public Access and Recreational Use ○ Surrounding Activity
Reduce Fine Fuel Accumulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climate Change

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote Public Education and Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legacy Effects of Change in LULC ○ Invasive Species ○ Overbrowsing ○ Public Access and Recreational Use
Establish Educational Signage**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote Public Education and Engagement ○ Support Ecologically-Conscious Recreation ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity ○ Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Access and Recreational Use
Maintain Trail Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity ○ Support Ecologically-Conscious Recreation ○ Promote Public Education and Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Access and Recreational Use
Conduct Monitoring and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence-Based, Reflexive Decision-Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All
Review and Revise LMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence-Based, Reflexive Decision-Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All
Build Meaningful, Trusting, and Respectful Relationships with Local Nations and Address Colonially-Imposed Barriers to Reconciliation**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legacy Effects of Change in LULC
Promote Deer Stewardship**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity ○ Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overbrowsing ○ Legacy Effects of Change in LULC
Thin Overly-Dense Forest Stands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legacy Effects of Change in LULC
Support Revitalization of Cultural Burning**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity ○ Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legacy Effects of Change in LULC
Consider Opportunities for Co-Stewardship Strategies**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity ○ Engage in Meaningful Reconciliation Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legacy Effects of Change in LULC
Conduct Priority Threat Management (PTM) Assessment for SSIC Nature Reserves*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect and Restore Ecological Integrity ○ Evidence-Based, Reflexive Decision-Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All

*Employing caution around use of limited resources; see Section 5.2.6 as well as discussions in Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2

**See Section 5.2.1 for important discussion around the SSIC's approach to reconciliation work

6.0 Long-Term Ecological Monitoring

Conducting standardized ecological monitoring of nature reserves is a key component in making evidence-based stewardship decisions. With the understanding that monitoring is a large expense and acquiring consistent funding for this type of long-term maintenance work can be extremely difficult, the following section aims to suggest different approaches to monitoring which vary in their cost-effectiveness for the SSIC's consideration. These alternative monitoring approaches are not mutually exclusive; for example, the SSIC might consider establishing a less costly though less comprehensive monitoring program to ensure long-term monitoring consistency, with the option to periodically contract more comprehensive monitoring when funds allow. Note that once the SSIC has determined the resources available to support monitoring in MRNR, a contract will be required to finalize a monitoring plan regardless of the approach selected (see also discussion in Section 5.2.6).

6.1 Ecological Health Assessments by Volunteer Wardens

The least costly approach to undertaking long-term monitoring of nature reserves such as MRNR would be to train volunteer wardens to conduct annual (or seasonal) surveys of the reserve using approachable methods for data on ecological health. This can help the SSIC to understand how stressors might be negatively impacting ecological communities as well as whether restoration efforts are proving effective in recovering ecological health. Suggestions on the types of data that might be considered for this type of monitoring are listed below. However, it is important to note that undertaking this would require SSIC staff and/or contractors to train volunteer wardens and establish a sampling plan to ensure the same locations are surveyed each time.

❖ Photo Monitoring

- A qualitative, but very approachable and cost-effective way of monitoring change over time, with the ability to provide a breadth of ecological information. Volunteer wardens might be asked to conduct this on an annual or seasonal basis, wherein they would visit the same locations and capture photos in all cardinal directions from each location.
- Sampling of photo monitoring points should capture the full diversity of ecosystems and environmental variation within MRNR (e.g., stratified random sampling, stratified by ecosystem type), as well as any areas where restoration is occurring (e.g., invasive species removal, planting)
- Photo monitoring points should be permanently marked to assist volunteer wardens in locating them and a GPS with location coordinates should be provided

❖ Shrub Architecture Assessment

- Martin et al. (2011) developed a method of assessing deer pressure by measuring the architecture of oceanspray. Their work found that as deer density and overbrowsing increases, shrubs (like oceanspray) experience reductions in foliage below 1.5-2m – resulting in an umbrella-like growth form (Figure 2). By comparing the diameter of foliage at a height of 1m versus that at 2m, we can obtain an understanding of the level of deer pressure ecosystems are experiencing (see Arcese et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2011).
- Volunteer wardens might be asked to periodically visit the same individual plants and take measure foliage diameter at 1m and 2m. Monitored plants should be

marked to assist wardens in locating the same plants each time and a GPS with location coordinates should be provided.



Figure 2. Oceanspray demonstrating umbrella architecture in response to overbrowsing by hyperabundant deer. Photo credit Liljana Martin (2023).

❖ **Assessing Forest Stand Density**

- The SSIC might also consider having volunteer wardens assess forest stand density. An approachable measurement is known as the Bitterlich method (Bitterlich, 1948), used by foresters to assess basal area. This is a point-sampling method wherein the volunteer warden would stand at a point (e.g., photo monitoring points) and use a Bitterlich stick (dimensions vary by choice of basal area factor) to count the number of surrounding trees whose DBH is greater than the crosspiece at the end of the stick and using this count to calculate the basal area (see Elledge & Barlow, 2018; Mulyana et al., 2018; Penttinen, 1988; Wilson, 2011).
- While Bitterlich stick sampling is commonly used as an easy, cost-effective method, there are other ways to assess stand density and crowding that the SSIC might consider (see Wilson, 2011; Zeide, 2004).

❖ **Monitoring Walks**

- To monitor factors relating to human activity, volunteer wardens could periodically conduct standardized walks of the reserve (e.g., along trail networks, property boundaries) and record variables such as the number of people encountered, the types of activity observed, and evidence of damage or disturbance.

6.2 Passive Long-Term Ecological Monitoring

Passive monitoring provides a valuable, non-invasive and cost-effective approach for long-term monitoring and research. The SSIC is familiar with the value of such tools through their use of Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) for monitoring avian SAR, but there are many additional tools that might be employed for long-term ecological monitoring of nature reserves such as MRNR. While these would require an upfront cost to purchase tools and potentially a small contract to establish a monitoring plan (i.e., training, deployment, data management), the SSIC could ultimately manage such tools and data in-house.

Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan

For example, the SSIC might consider employing camera traps to gather data on factors influencing MRNR such as deer pressure, presence of invasive mesopredators such as feral and free-roaming cats, human visitation (e.g., visitation quantity and frequency, types of activity), and/or SAR monitoring. Additionally, soil moisture meters have been deployed by researchers on multiple SSIC nature reserves to monitor long-term changes in soil moisture and temperature (see McComb et al., 2024) and could be useful in monitoring moisture stress throughout the reserve in the face of factors such as climate change, understory loss, trampling.

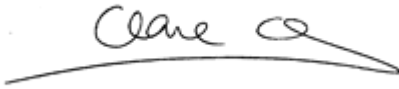

6.3 Contracted Monitoring

Though more costly, having ecological monitoring be conducted by paid staff and/or contractors allows the SSIC to obtain data of a higher quality, both with respect to scope and scientific rigour. While it is unlikely that the SSIC will be able to fund extensive annual monitoring, they might consider having staff or contractors conduct monitoring for specific variables which require a higher level of expertise. This might include monitoring the wetlands in MRNR (e.g., herpetofauna surveys, water monitoring) or establishing monitoring surveys for implemented restoration actions (see Appendix I for example of exclosure monitoring study). Furthermore, the SSIC might consider establishing a more comprehensive assessment of ecological health that could be conducted on a semi-regular basis (e.g., every 2-3 years); this could provide useful data on change through time, and/or could be used as a baseline for assessing the effectiveness of future restoration efforts. See Appendix I-J for examples of recent ecological baseline and restoration monitoring surveys that might be useful in informing more comprehensive ecological assessments.

7.0 Insurance and Indemnification

Public liability insurance is recommended in an amount of no less than \$2,000,000 that shall include SSIC and other covenant holders as an additional insured with respect to the Land. SSIC currently has \$5,000,000 coverage for injury and property damage for SSIC and the additional insured. Limits for insurance coverage should be periodically reviewed.

8.0 Land Management Plan Approval (Internal and External)

Name of Approver	Title	Signature	Date of Approval
Clare Cullen	Executive Director, SSIC		March 4, 2026
	President, SSIC Board of Directors		March 6, 2026
	Chair, SSI Local Trust Committee		
	Chair, Islands Trust Conservancy		

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REQUEST FOR DECISION

To: Islands Trust Conservancy
Board

For the Meeting of: May 12, 2026

From: Staff

Date Prepared: May 4, 2026

SUBJECT: Islands Trust Conservancy Submission for 2025-26 Annual Report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) Board approve the draft 2025-26 ITC Annual Report for inclusion in the Islands Trust 2025/26 Annual Report for approval by Islands Trust Council at its June 2026 quarterly meeting and submission to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

- PURPOSE:** To approve the 2025-26 Islands Trust Conservancy Annual Report final draft to be included in the Islands Trust 2025/26 Annual Report.
- BACKGROUND:** : Preparation of an Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) Annual Report is required under Section 46 of the [Islands Trust Act](#). Staff have prepared a draft of the Islands Trust Conservancy 2025/26 Annual Report text for the ITC Board review and approval. Graphics and images as well as pull quotes and callout boxes will be added to the final report by a graphic design contractor.

3 IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

ORGANIZATIONAL: Timely approval of the Annual Report text will ensure smooth delivery of the Islands Trust Annual Report, in compliance with the *Islands Trust Act*, Section 19 and the annual reporting obligations of ITC under section 46 of the *Islands Trust Act*.

FINANCIAL: None.

POLICY: None.

IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATIONS: Once each agency of the Islands Trust has approved its section, staff will create a draft 2025-26 Islands Trust Annual Report, that includes the Conservancy's Annual Report, for review by the Executive Committee and consideration of Islands Trust Council at their June quarterly meeting. Upon approval by Trust Council, staff will send the Annual Report to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs and circulate it as indicated in Islands Trust Council's Annual Report policy.

The ITC section of the Islands Trust Annual Report will be inserted after the Islands Trust Annual Report. The Islands Trust Conservancy will then extract its section of the Islands Trust Annual Report to create its own stand-alone 2025-26 Annual Report and added to the annual

report page of the Islands Trust website at <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/about-us/accountability/annual-report/>.

FIRST NATIONS: The ITC sections of the Annual Report have been reviewed by staff for consistency with the ITC Reconciliation Declaration. Effort has been made to highlight ITC's work with First Nations.

CLIMATE CHANGE: None.

4 RELEVANT POLICY(S): Trust Council [Annual Report Policy 6.10.1](#)

5 ATTACHMENT(S): Islands Trust Conservancy 2025-2026 Annual Report Draft

RESPONSE OPTIONS

Recommendation(s):

That the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) Board approve the attached text for inclusion in the Islands Trust 2025/26 Annual Report for approval by Trust Council at their June 2026 quarterly meeting and submission to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

Alternatives:

The Islands Trust Conservancy Board approve the attached text for inclusion in the 2025/26 Annual Report for approval by Trust Council at their June 2026 quarterly meeting and submission to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs with the following amendment(s):

- *[insert amendment]*
-

Prepared By: Wendy Tyrrell, Manager, Islands Trust Conservancy

Reviewed By/Date: Clare Frater, Director, Trust Area Services / May 8, 2026

ITC Annual Report

[Cover Image] Representing ecology on the islands

COPY

[Logo; Islands Trust Conservancy, color; with tagline]

[Header] Reconciliation Declaration

Islands Trust Conservancy acknowledges that the lands and waters that encompass the Salish Sea have been home to Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. We recognize that we are all intertwined in the ecosystems that are the lands, waters, culture, and ecology that embody this place.

Islands Trust Conservancy will strive to create opportunities for knowledge-sharing, understanding, and collaboration as people come together to preserve and protect the special nature of the islands in the Salish Sea.

Islands Trust Conservancy is committed to the protection and preservation of this place through processes that respect and honour Reconciliation and mutually respectful relationships with Coast Salish Indigenous Peoples. We express our recognition for the past, present, and future stewardship and knowledge that has been shared by Indigenous Peoples and are humbled and grateful.

[Image] [Species at Risk.]

[next page](#)

[Header] About the Islands Trust Conservancy

The Islands Trust Conservancy was established by the Government of British Columbia in 1990 as the conservation arm of Islands Trust. For the purposes of carrying out the preserve and protect mandate of Islands Trust, under a trust fund plan approved by the Minister, Islands Trust Conservancy is responsible for receiving money, grants and other property and acquiring, holding and, if necessary, disposing of land and other property.

As a land trust, the Islands Trust Conservancy is dedicated to preserving and protecting the fragile ecosystems throughout the Salish Sea within the Islands Trust Area - which lies between the mainland of British Columbia and Vancouver Island and includes the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound area. This region covers over 450 islands and inlets and supports ecologically rich landscapes, archeological and culturally sites of significance, and a high diversity of ecosystems and species, many of which are endangered, or at risk of becoming endangered.

The mission of the Islands Trust Conservancy is to protect these landscapes by encouraging, undertaking, and supporting voluntary conservation initiatives across the region. Conservation is advanced through collaboration with private landholders and donors, local conservancies, environmental organizations, charitable foundations, academic institutions, businesses, First Nations, and all levels of government.

[Pull quote] The United Nations and governments of Canada and British Columbia have set a target of protecting 30% of lands, waters and oceans by 2030. Scientific consensus indicates that achieving this target is critical to slowing biodiversity loss and addressing the climate change crisis.

[Add link icon and text]; [Learn more about the Islands Trust Conservancy.](#)

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[Header] Islands Trust Conservancy – Approach to Conservation

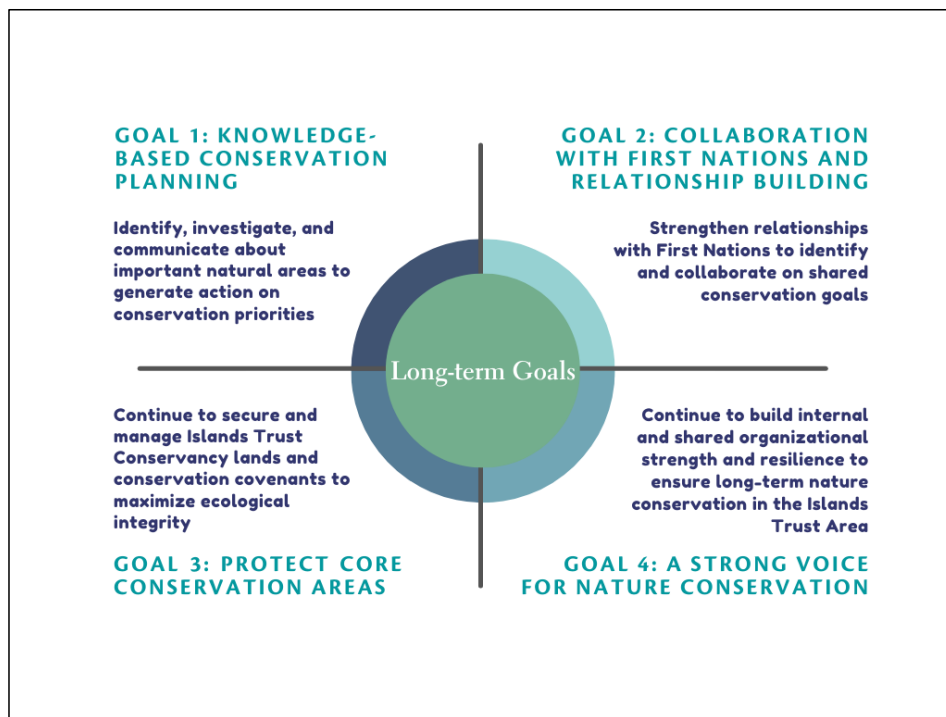
The Islands Trust Conservancy’s mission is to protect and preserve. Conservation across the Islands Trust Area is advanced through the following actions:

- **Voluntary land protection:** Collaboration with landholders supports the protection of ecologically significant lands through generous donations, acquisition campaigns and conservation covenants. Lands acquired or donated are established and managed as nature reserves. Conservation covenants on privately held lands are registered on title, protecting ecological values in perpetuity while remaining in private ownership.
- **Stewardship and restoration:** Sensitive ecosystems, and habitat for species at risk are monitored and restored in collaboration with conservation partners, island communities, scientific experts and Indigenous knowledge holders, supporting ecosystem resilience and recovery.
- **Strategic conservation funding:** Financial support is available to conservation-related projects in the Islands Trust Area through the Opportunity Fund granting program, providing opportunities to support and enhance land conservation across the islands in the Salish Sea. The Opportunity Fund is sustained by generous donors.
- **Priority areas identification:** The use of available data and conservation planning tools informs the identification of priority areas to protect, maximizing efforts in addressing biodiversity loss and climate change impacts.
- **Commitment to Reconciliation:** Capacity is being developed to support meaningful relationships with First Nations, with a focus on conservation approaches that respect Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural and spiritual practices and align with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [Calls to Action](#).

[Add link icon and text]; [Read more about Islands Trust Conservancy's Regional Conservation Plan.](#)

[Image; Long-term goals of the Regional Conservation Plan guide the work of Islands Trust Conservancy]

Commented [WT1]: Goal Numbers will be removed so that there isn't a hierarchy to the goals. They are all equal in importance.



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[Header] Governance – Islands Trust Conservancy Board of Directors

The Islands Trust Conservancy Board is composed of six trustees: three members are elected from within Islands Trust (two elected by Islands Trust Council from its membership and one elected from the Executive Committee), and three members are appointed by the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

2026/27 Islands Trust Conservancy Board Members:

Lisa Gauvreau: Islands Trust Council Elected Board Member

- Chair (January 2025 – current)
- Vice-Chair (January 2024 – December 2024)
- Board Member (July 2023 – December 2023)

Tanner Timothy | nəŋqəm: Provincially Appointed Board Member

- Vice-Chair (January 2025 – current)
- Board Member (August 2024 – current)

Susan Yates: Islands Trust Council Elected Board Member

- Board Member (January 2024 – current)
- Vice-Chair (August 2023 – January 2024)
- Board Member (December 2022 - July 2023)

Tobi Elliott: Islands Trust Council Elected Board Member

- Executive Committee Representative
- Board Member (December 2022 – current)

Dr. Risa Smith: Provincially Appointed Board Member

- Board Member (January 2025 – current)
- Chair (July 2023 – December 2024)
- Vice Chair (April 2022 – July 2023)
- Board Member (August 2021 - March 2022)

Jeannine Georgeson: Provincially Appointed Board Member

- Board Member (July 2025 – current)

[next page](#)

[Header]; Message from the Islands Trust Conservancy Board Chair

This past year, Islands Trust Conservancy celebrated its 35th anniversary in collaboration with the landholders, donors, board members, partners, and community members that make our work possible. Islands Trust Conservancy highlighted this momentous year through various methods, including the Heron newsletter, a celebration at the Islands Trust Council quarterly meeting on Salt Spring Island in June, and the launch of a new blog on the ITC website, titled the *Islands Trust Conservancy Journal*. In June, 2025, ITC received a significant donation of more than \$1.16 million from an anonymous donor, provided through the ShorePeakGEN Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation. ITC was honoured to receive such a generous donation and anniversary gift to support the continued protection of the islands.

Conservation highlights for 2025 include:

- Continued work to register active NAPTEP applications with landholders with Environment and Climate Change Canada's Ecological Gifts Program
- Received two new NAPTEP covenants conservation proposal applications

Land stewardship highlights:

- Development of a spatial database of over 1,500 species at risk observations at ITC protected areas, from the 1970's to today

- Initiated new restoration projects for ecosystem enhancement in conservation covenants on North Pender and Saturna islands
- Maintained and monitored established restoration projects, including wetlands on Lasqueti Island and a Garry oak meadow on Salt Spring Island
- Collaborating with First Nations to conduct archeological assessments for Link Island Nature Reserve and Saturnina Island Nature Reserve in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area
- Rare plant surveys on an island protected under a conservation covenant in the North Pender Local Trust Area that identified two species at risk, one of which was a new observation on that island

This year also marked the sixth year of the Species at Risk (SAR) Program, initiated and supported by the Priority Places funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) since 2020. Although this foundational funding stream concluded at the end of March 2026, the SAR Program will continue to implement priority actions to support the protection and recovery of the most vulnerable species in the Islands Trust Area. This year, the SAR Program continued surveying, monitoring, and restoring habitat for species at risk with a focus on Sharp-tailed Snake, Western Screech-Owl *kennicottii* subspecies, Coastal Tailed Frog and coastal Scouler's catchfly.

A significant accomplishment for ITC was finalization of a section 11 Conservation Agreement with ECCC under the *Species at Risk Act* of Canada. This voluntary agreement, to be signed in early 2026/27 will strengthen the support for species at risk and their habitats, and provide ITC the opportunity to continue collaborating with ECCC and complements other conservation tools, such as conservation covenants, by supporting coordinated and adaptive approaches to species recovery.

The Islands Trust Conservancy delivered education presentations on species at risk through a Stewardship Education webinar for Islands Trust Area residents. We also hosted informational sessions for Islands Trust Council, ITC Board members, and the Regional Planning Committee focused on species at risk and critical habitat in the Islands Trust Area.

Changes to the ITC Board occurred in 2025. Charles Kahn stepped down from his role as provincially appointed board member. Jeannine Georgeson was welcomed in July 2025 as the new provincially appointed board member. Returning board members include Vice-Chair, Tanner Timothy | nəŋqəm, Dr. Risa Smith, Tobi Elliott, Susan Yates, and myself as Chair.

Our Board is passionate and committed to the Islands Trust Conservancy mandate through thoughtful discussions and decisions that further our mission and community and we will continue to draw on the dedication of staff and the strength of communities across the Islands Trust Area to advance the mission of preserving and protecting these unique islands.

I'm looking forward to continuing to witness, and be a part of, the deep care and community-mindedness that drives conservation in the Islands Trust Area.

Sincerely,

Lisa Gauvreau

ITC Board Chair



[Text] Lisa Gauvreau, ITC Board Chair



[Image – Lisa Gauvreau]

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[Map]

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[Map]

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[Header] Program Highlights 2025/2026

[Sub header] Islands Trust Conservancy's Five-year Plan

[Text] Under the *Islands Trust Act*, Islands Trust Conservancy is required to submit a new Conservation Plan every five years to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs for approval. The overall objective of the Five-year Plan is to set policies respecting:

- (a) the acquisition, management and disposal of property of the Conservancy
- (b) the investment of money of the Conservancy
- (c) Goals for major acquisitions of property by the Conservancy

Currently, the Islands Trust Conservancy is working without an active Five-year Plan. The interim plan submitted to the Minister in 2022 was not approved. The Minister requested that the Conservancy focus taking the time necessary to engage with First Nations to develop a new five-year plan.

The next Five-year Plan (2028-2032) is scheduled to be submitted to the Minister for approval in December 2027. Based on the requirement under the *Islands Trust Act* to submit a plan at least every five years, Ministerial direction, and the commitments of the Board, there is a need to undertake development of the 2028-2032 Plan through cooperative engagement with First Nations. Based off previous input from First Nations, the project design is designed to be implemented in three phases:

Phase One: Preparation Phase (Early 2026)

- Process Set Up and Information Exchange

Phase Two: Engagement Phase (mid 2026-mid 2027)

- Draft and Review the Five-Year Plan

Phase Three-Post Engagement (late 2027-2028)

- Submission and Approval

This year, ITC launched Phase 1, which involved sending letters to all of the First Nations in the region and hosting an information session to provide an overview of the proposed plan process. All First Nations in the Islands Trust Area were invited to the virtual information session to inform them about Conservancy's 5-year workplan, answer questions and enquire as to how they would like to participate in the development of the next plan. The Conservancy received positive feedback from the First Nations that attended the session. The willingness of the First Nations representatives to share their time and expertise was sincerely appreciated.

A Five-year Plan logic model and work plan were developed to ensure the engagement processes with First Nations was strategically and respectfully organized. In addition, the project charter was updated to reflect a more innovative and respectful approach to engagement. Islands Trust Conservancy is currently reviewing policies and is planning to launch a policy renovation project in 2026-27 to ensure that the colonial roots of conservation within older policies are re-envisioned in collaboration with First Nations.

Phase 2 is set to be launched in the beginning of next fiscal year, including staff-staff meetings with First Nations and developing principled guidelines in cooperation with interested First Nations. The Conservancy is also looking at opportunities for collaboration with First Nations on the land.

The Conservancy will continue to provide updates to all the First Nations in the Islands Trust Area as it progresses through the development of the Plan.

[Add link icon and text]; [Read more about our Islands Trust Conservancy Plan.](#)

[next page](#)

[Sub header] Land Conservation – Nature's Future

[Text] Islands Trust Conservancy is committed to increasing the number and extent of protected areas in the Islands Trust Area for the benefit of all species living in the Salish Sea. The Conservancy does this through the establishment of nature reserves and conservation covenants.

[Sub header] 2025/26 Islands Trust Conservancy’s Nature Reserves

Nature Reserves are established through voluntary conservation actions such donations of land or financial gifts. Each property is protected in perpetuity to ensure the ecological integrity of the protected area is never lost. Islands Trust Conservancy nature reserves have detailed management plans that strive to maintain or enhance the natural features special to the property. The priority is to preserve and protect the natural ecosystems and the cultural and natural values of each site. Typical management activities include species at risk monitoring and protection, invasive species removal, and restoration of disturbed areas. Islands Trust Conservancy has partnerships with local island conservancies to help carry out management activities in each nature reserve.

No new nature reserves were acquired in 2025/26.

[Sub header] 2025/26 NAPTEP Conservation Covenants

Conservation Covenants are voluntary legal agreements with landholders to protect ecological significant values on privately held lands that are designed to last in perpetuity. Protected areas are important for safeguarding areas of cultural and biological richness, and for creating corridors that allow for the movement of wildlife and the conservation of unique ecosystems. Species and ecosystems living in protected areas benefit people as well by providing clean water and air, offering resilience against the effects of climate change, and improving social, spiritual, and mental wellbeing.

Islands Trust Conservancy manages the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) on behalf of Islands Trust Council. NAPTEP provides qualified island landholders with an annual 65% property tax reduction on the portion of their land that is protected by a conservation covenant. This incentive is unique to the Islands Trust Area.

This year, Islands Trust Conservancy continued working with landholders on North Pender Island and Salt Spring Island with active NAPTEP applications to register for additional protection through Environment and Climate Change Canada’s Ecological Gifts Program. ITC staff spoke with interested landholders on Salt Spring Island, Mayne Island, North Pender Island, Galiano Island, and Saturna Island about conservation options. Two of those landholders have already submitted conservation proposals for NAPTEP covenants. In addition, ITC updated its NAPTEP applications forms and procedures to incorporate engagement with First Nations. No new covenants were registered in the 2025/26 fiscal year.

As Canada and British Columbia work towards protecting 30% of habitat by 2030, Islands Trust Conservancy is committed to the protection and preservation of biodiversity in the Islands Trust

Area through processes that respect and honour Reconciliation and mutually respectful relationships with First Nations.

The Conservancy was pleased to hold a celebration for the registration of the Koontz Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) Covenant on Gabriola Island.

[Add link icon and text]; [Read more about placing conservation covenants with us.](#)

[Image; Koontz NAPTEP Covenant (2.68 ha), Gabriola Island Local Trust Area]

[Text box; Celebrating the registration of the Koontz NAPTEP Covenant, Gabriola Island. Photo by Islands Trust Conservancy.]

[next page](#)

[Sub header] Caring for the Land –A Shared Responsibility

[Text] Islands Trust Conservancy oversees the management of the 34 nature reserves, and supports the stewardship of the 81 private properties on which it holds conservation covenants. This commitment involves regular monitoring and land stewardship activities in accordance with management plans and conservation covenant agreements that identify long-term conservation and restoration goals. Monitoring is completed in nature reserves and conservation covenants on an annual basis for compliance, recreational issues, and ecological stewardship. Stewardship needs and opportunities are evaluated annually for habitat enhancement for species at risk and improving and maintaining the ecosystem health of the protected area.

In 2025/26, Islands Trust Conservancy engaged in the following land management activities in partnership with local conservancies, First Nations, contractors, landholders and volunteers:

- Annual monitoring visits to all 34 nature reserves to collaborate with management partners and evaluate management needs into the future
- Annual monitoring of all 81 Islands Trust Conservancy-held conservation covenants to maintain relationships with landholders and covenant co-holders, to ensure compliance with the terms of covenant agreements, and to assess priority stewardship needs
- Began archeological assessments for Link Island Nature Reserve and Saturnina Island Nature Reserve in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area
- Habitat restoration and management including working with community and conservation partners on:
 - Managing a variety of invasive species across Islands Trust Conservancy nature reserves and conservation covenants

- Initiating new restoration projects for ecosystem enhancement in conservation covenants on North Pender and Saturna Islands
 - Maintaining and monitoring established restoration projects, including wetlands on Lasqueti Island and a Garry oak meadow on Mt. Tuam on Salt Spring Island
 - Installing additional artificial cover objects on conservation covenant lands to expand the area of suitable habitat that ITC monitors for the federally threatened Sharp-tailed Snake
 - Advocating for the expansion of species at risk habitat protections in a regional park protected by an Islands Trust Conservancy conservation covenant
 - Rare plant surveys on a small, covenanted island in the North Pender Local Trust Area
- Creation of signage for education, management, and safety at nature reserves

[Image]: Restoration project on North Pender Island]

[Text box; ITC’s Team Lead, Protected Areas Management Program, with Habitat Acquisition Trust’s Restoration Crew enhancing habitat at a conservation covenant on North Pender Island. Photo by Islands Trust Conservancy]

[next page](#)

[Sub header] Species at Risk Program – Protecting and Supporting the Recovery of Species at Risk

[Text] The goal of Islands Trust Conservancy’s Species at Risk Program is to facilitate research and action for the protection and recovery of species and ecosystems at risk in the Islands Trust Area, and to ensure that species at risk maintain healthy populations. ITC works toward this goal by implementing species-specific recommended management activities, published in federal and provincial recovery documents, in compliance with the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Recovery actions can include research (surveys, monitoring and mapping), habitat protection (establishment of protected areas), habitat restoration (e.g., invasive species control, nest box installation, planting) and community engagement (e.g. webinars, publications, and community-based conservation activities).

Highlights this year include:

- Completing the sixth year of the Species at Risk Program, supported by Priority Places funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). Although this funding stream has now concluded, the Protected Areas Management team will continue to

implement priority actions to support the protection and recovery of the most vulnerable species in the Islands Trust Area

- Finalizing a five-year Conservation Agreement between ITC and ECCC under the *Species at Risk Act* of Canada, a collaborative framework for ongoing work
- Developing a spatial database of over 1,500 species at risk observations at ITC Protected Areas, from the 1970's to today
- Conducting surveys and monitoring at 12 Islands Trust Conservancy protected areas for three focal species at risk:
 - Sharp-tailed Snake Pacific Coast population (under review)
 - Western Screech-Owl *kennicottii* subspecies (threatened)
 - Coastal Tailed Frog (special concern)
- Delivering three presentations focused on species at risk including informational sessions for trustees and staff including Trust Council, Islands Trust Conservancy Board, and the Regional Planning Committee
- Presenting in a Stewardship Education webinar for Islands Trust Area residents hosted by Trust Programs Committee
- Propagating Coastal Scouler's Catchfly (endangered) plants from seed, for augmentation of a population at Mount Tuam Protected Area, on Salt Spring Island
- Supporting and collaborating with nine local island conservancies to conduct species at risk monitoring and habitat restoration activities on ITC protected areas

[Add link icon and text]; [Read more about our Species at Risk Program.](#)

[TEXT BOX WITH ECCC FUNDING LOGO IN BOTTOM CORNER]

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

[next page](#)

[Sub header] Partnerships, Collaborations, and Supporters – Working with Others

[Text] The Islands Trust Conservancy cannot accomplish its mission alone. Working with others helps Islands Trust Conservancy effectively achieve its goals. ITC is grateful to be able to collaborate with so many trustees, community members, First Nations, agencies, and conservation groups.

In 2025/26, collaborations included:

- Collaborating with federal and provincial agencies on management of species at risk and habitat in the Mt. Tuam Special Management Area
- Updating protected-area mapping for the region, which contributes to the British Columbia Non-Governmental Organization Conservation Areas Database
- Sharing spatial and other data including mapping of eelgrass beds, bull kelp beds, sensitive ecosystems, species at risk, and protected areas with First Nations, local conservancies, community organizations, researchers, and all levels of government
- Ongoing participation in the:
 - Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership (CDFCP) to prioritize high biodiversity areas and develop resources to support conservation
 - Capital Regional District’s Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) to contribute and keep up-to-date on priority invasive species and best management practices for our protected areas
 - Biodiversity Forum for Local Governments (BFF), a collaborative initiative in British Columbia that brings together local governments, Indigenous representatives, and conservation partners to advance biodiversity conservation at the local level
 - ŁENENITEL¹ Community of Practice (CCP) to actively support ŁENENITEL and WSÁNEĆ-led projects by providing skills, expertise, resources, and capacity in an ethical space of collaboration and cross-validation in those areas that interact and align with CCP member organizations’ purposes
- Membership with the Canadian Association of Gift Planners “Will Power” national campaign, providing potential donors with information and opportunities to leave a legacy gift for land conservation in the Islands Trust Area
- Supporting the Galiano Conservation Association in the delivery of the Salish Sea Conservation Forum

[next page](#)

[Sub header] Islands Trust Conservancy Fund Campaigns

[Text] Islands Trust Conservancy is a qualified donee through Canada Revenue Agency and can accept cash donations, gifts of stock, RRSPs, bequests, and other forms of gifts.

Land protection on the islands in the Salish Sea is thanks to the vision and generosity of Islands Trust Conservancy donors and partners. Islands Trust Conservancy is grateful for the generous support of donors who make Islands Trust Conservancy’s mission of protecting land across the Islands Trust Area possible.

In 2025/26, an anonymous donation was made to Islands Trust Conservancy to support conservation efforts on the islands in the Salish Sea. The donor allocated \$1 million to Islands

¹ In the SENĆOŦEN language, ŁENENITEL means working together to restore our lands and culture (ŁENENITEL Community of Practice Terms of Reference)

Trust Conservancy's Opportunity Fund. In addition, the donor allocated \$157,300 to Islands Trust Conservancy's Property Management Fund.

[Sub header] Donations

[Text] Directed donations are donations that are allocated to specific funds and/or initiatives, while undirected donations are allocated to those programs and projects in greatest need, as directed by the ITC Board. ITC has different types of funds, most fall in the category of geographically restricted funds and purpose-based funds.

[Add link icon and text]; [Read more about donating to the Islands Trust Conservancy](#)

Geographically Restricted Funds:

[Text] The Conservancy manages restricted funds primarily to acquire, manage, and protect ecologically significant land within the Islands Trust Area. These funds are legally designated for specific purposes or geographic areas and cannot be used for operational costs or development-related acquisitions.

The following geographically restricted funds are managed by the Conservancy:

- Gambier Island Acquisition Fund
- Lasqueti Island Acquisition Fund
- Thetis Island Acquisition Fund
- McFadden Creek Nature Reserve Fund – Salt Spring Island
- Morrison-Waxler Biodiversity Fund – Pender Island

Purpose-based Funds:

[Text] Purpose-based funds are funds that are set up for a particular purpose, such as supporting property management on ITC Protected Areas.

The following purpose-based funds are managed by the Conservancy:

- Opportunity Fund
- Property Management Fund
- Covenant Management and Defence Fund

The Conservancy also manages an endowment fund called the Ruby Alton Property Endowment Fund. This endowment is a permanent fund established to support the ongoing maintenance of the house and management of the Ruby Alton Nature Reserve on Salt Spring Island.

Unlike general restricted funds that cover multiple properties, this endowment is specifically tied to the legacy and physical upkeep of the four-acre estate bequeathed by Ruby Alton in 2002.

[Add link icon and text]; [Read more about Islands Trust Conservancy Fund Campaigns](#)

[Sub header] Islands Trust Conservancy Opportunity Fund Granting Program

[Text] The Opportunity Fund Granting Program allows Islands Trust Conservancy to provide small sums of supportive funding to groups working on land protection projects when new conservation opportunities arise. The Opportunity Fund Granting Program's purpose is to support opportunities to protect biodiversity in the Islands Trust Area in a timely way.

Opportunity Fund

[Text] The Opportunity Fund provides support for hard-to-fundraise costs associated with land protection and leverages donations through matching funds for land acquisition campaigns. The ITC Regional Conservation Plan guides decisions around disbursement of Opportunity Fund applications. The Islands Trust Conservancy Board considers applications twice per year.

Islands Trust Conservancy Board approved two Opportunity Fund grants in 2025/26:

- \$12,000 to the Mayne Island Conservancy to support costs for legal fees on a new conservation covenant proposal on Mayne Island
- \$10,000 to the British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF) towards costs of supporting seed collection in Garry oak ecosystems, with a focus on rare and culturally significant plant species to contribute to the new BC Seedbank Network

The \$12,000 granted to the Mayne Island Conservancy was disbursed in full in 2025/26.

The \$10,000 granted to the BCCF is scheduled to be disbursed in 2026-27.

During 2025/26, Islands Trust Conservancy received \$1,001,845 in donations directed to the Opportunity Fund, including one-million dollars from the generous anonymous donation received in May 2025 through the ShorePeakGEN Fund (see details below).

As of March 31, 2025, the Opportunity Fund had a balance of \$1,065,281 and the Tempest Bequest/Hornby Islands Opportunity Fund (restricted for use only in the Hornby Island Local Trust Area) had a March 31 balance of \$47,962.

The Islands Trust Conservancy Board has placed the Opportunity Fund in a high-yield account while the growing Opportunity Fund granting program is re-evaluated.

[Add link icon and text];

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[Header] Financial Statements (in draft)

[Text] Islands Trust Conservancy prepares Financial Statements annually, in compliance with the requirements under section 46 of the *Islands Trust Act*. Under the *Islands Trust Act*, Islands Trust Conservancy may receive money, land, and other property as donations or through grants in order to further the object of Islands Trust. Islands Trust Conservancy uses Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards, including standards for government non-profit organizations, to manage its funds and land assets.

Of note for the 2025/26 fiscal year, are the following:

- There were no new accounting standards implemented
- There were no acquisitions or disposals of any property
- There was one significant anonymous donation made to ITC (\$1,157,304.30) from ShorePeak GEN, held by the Vancouver Foundation. Of this donation, one million was directed to the Opportunity Fund to support conservation in our region, and \$157,304.30 was directed to the Property Management Fund to support vital management activities on protected areas, as per the donor's request
- Note 1(g) of the Financial Statements (natural assets). The monetary value of natural assets from ITC lands is not quantified or shown in the financial statements. The Conservancy acknowledges the importance of these assets and the need to manage them in conjunction with engineered infrastructure that is managed by other government agencies (no change from prior year)
- Grant revenue of \$220,000 from Environment and Climate Change Canada to support the Islands Trust Conservancy Species at Risk Program activities
- A total of \$1,191,361 in cash donations was received in 2025/26 fiscal year

While Islands Trust Conservancy manages land and funds as noted in its Financial Statements, operational costs of Islands Trust Conservancy are the responsibility of Islands Trust Council. Details on these costs are available in the 2025/26 Islands Trust Financial Statements.

[next page](#)

[Insert audited Financial Statement once available]

[next page](#)

[Header] Looking Ahead to 2026/27

[Text] In 2026/27, Islands Trust Conservancy will continue to collaborate in partnership with landholders, donors, organizations, community members, local island conservancies, local governments and First Nations in protecting and preserving species and ecosystems across the islands in the Salish Sea, guided by respect for the stewardship of Indigenous Peoples who have cared for these lands and waters since time immemorial.

[Text box] Thank you to all the donors, partners, landowners and community members who make conservation possible.



BRIEFING

To: Islands Trust Conservancy Board **For the Meeting of:** May 12, 2026
From: Trust Area Services **Date Prepared:** April 21, 2026
SUBJECT: Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this briefing is to provide the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) board with a report about the tax shift implications of increasing the tax exemption available to participating land owners through the Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP).

This report is being referred to the Islands Trust Conservancy by Islands Trust Council, seeking advice about whether to pursue advocacy to the provincial government for an increase in the NAPTEP exemption.

The impetus to consider increasing the NAPTEP tax exemption is based on the assumption that more land owners may then be incentivized to participate, leading to more protected land in the Islands Trust Area. ITC should consider how that aligns with its current and futures plans, capacity and resources.

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting of March 10, 2026 Trust Council passed the following resolution:

2026-042

that Islands Trust Council refer the report 'Hypothetical Tax Shift Analysis: Projected Impacts of an Increased Property Tax Exemption Through the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)' to the Islands Trust Conservancy Board to consider recommendations to Trust Council.

Background on the origins of this project is available in Appendix 2 of this briefing, in the form of the request for decision that was provided to Trust Council at its last meeting.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1) Hypothetical Tax Shift Analysis: Projected Impacts of an Increased Property Tax Exemption Through the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)
- 2) Trust Council Request for Decision, March 10, 2026

FOLLOW-UP: ITC board should provide recommendations to Trust Council for consideration at a future Trust Council meeting.

Prepared By: Jason Youmans, Trust Area Services

Reviewed By/Date: Wendy Tyrrell, Manager, Islands Trust Conservancy/ May 4, 2026



Islands Trust

Islands Trust

Hypothetical Tax Shift Analysis: Projected Impacts of an Increased Property Tax Exemption Through the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)

August 14, 2025



The recommendations contained within this memo are developed using findings from consultations, input from interview sessions and surveys, appropriate benchmarking, research, and analysis within the scope of the engagement, and was supported by the Brentwood Advisory Group's experience working with other local governments.

Any final decisions with respect to the recommendations contained in this report rest with elected representatives and management. The Islands Trust should conduct its own due diligence and verification to ensure optimal outcomes in adopting and implementing any of the report's recommendations.

The Assignment

“Develop estimates of hypothetical tax exemption and tax shift implications resulting from an increase in the Islands Trust Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) exemption from the current level of 65% up to 100% with activity-based sensitivity analysis”.

The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) is a joint program between Islands Trust and Islands Trust Conservancy that provides financial incentive to choose land protection over development. When a landowner registers a conservation covenant through NAPTEP, they receive an annual property tax exemption of 65% on the protected portion of their land in accordance with the Islands Trust Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Regulation [includes amendments up to B.C. Reg. 117/2018, June 15, 2018].

Generally, land in the Islands Trust Area eligible for a NAPTEP covenant must be at least 2 hectares (5 acres) in size. Currently there are 29 NAPTEP Covenants in place, protecting 144 hectares of land on seven of the Gulf Islands.

While all natural areas are important, NAPTEP focuses on properties with specific natural values, including sensitive ecosystems, key habitats for rare or at-risk native plant species or plant communities, habitat critical to native wildlife for breeding, rearing, feeding or important life-stage activities and special geological features (e.g. caves, springs, tombolos). This means the landowner saves money annually in exchange for leaving the natural areas on their land alone for native species to enjoy. These tax savings can add up quickly, depending on the size of the land that is protected.

When property tax exemptions are issued through NAPTEP, the government does not forego the tax revenue. Rather, exempted taxes are shifted to other taxpayers in each tax jurisdiction. This practice is the same for other tax exemption programs (e.g. Agricultural Land Reserve Exemptions, Heritage Property Exemptions, Alternative Energy Power projects Exemption etc.)

This report was created to help inform a potential future request by Islands Trust Council to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs to increase the property tax exemption authorized under NAPTEP.

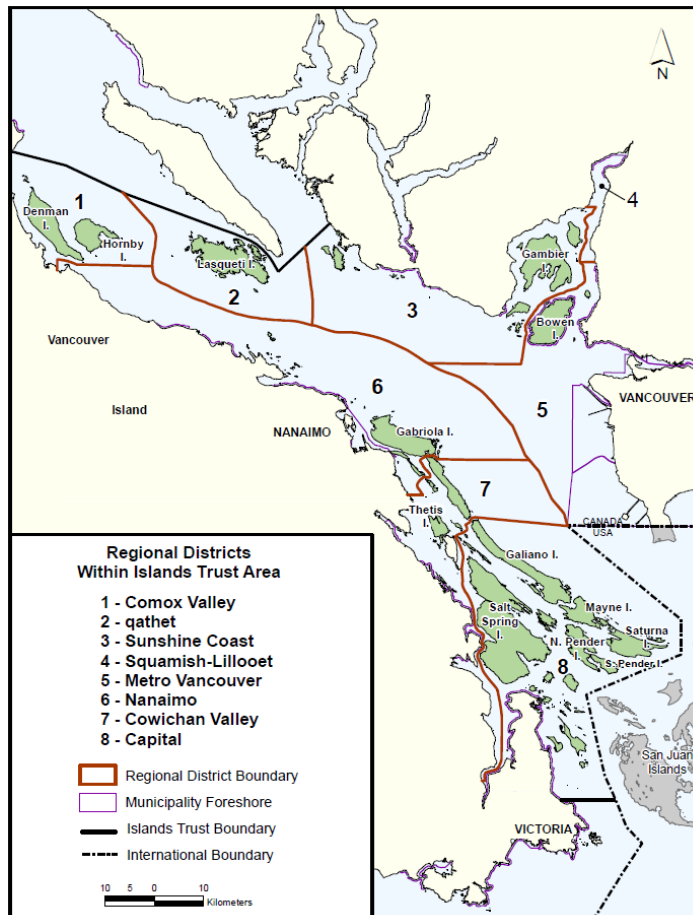
It summarizes the potential Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) tax exemption benefit to participating property owners and corresponding property tax shift to

taxpayers in British Columbia, applicable Regional Districts, and in the Islands Trust Area that would result from increasing the current property tax exemption of 65% applied to protected natural area to as much as 100% on land protected through NAPTEP.

The analysis is not an exact representation of the effects of NAPTEP on taxpayers but rather provides a rough approximation of the potential property tax shift across British Columbia, within the seven participating Regional Districts and Bowen Island Municipality in the Islands Trust Area, and within the Islands Trust Area as a whole.

Executive Summary

The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) is available to landowners in the Islands Trust Area of British Columbia, which takes in portions of seven regional districts and includes Bowen Island Municipality.



Landowners who permanently protect natural and cultural features of their land through a conservation covenant can receive a 65% exemption in property taxes on the protected portion of their land. Improvements such as buildings are not eligible for exemption.

This report was commissioned to provide the following information:

- To estimate the hypothetical tax savings to an average participating landowner from an increased NAPTEP exemption level of up to 100% on their eligible protected land;
- To determine the tax exemption that results from a new NAPTEP covenant for a broadly defined average taxpayer and the amount of tax shifted within each tax authority (provincial, regional, school and local governments) at the current 65% exemption level;
- To model the estimated tax exemption and tax shifts at the 75%, 90% and 100% property tax exemption levels; and
- To provide a sensitivity analysis modelling the tax exemption and resulting shift impact at varying levels of program uptake from 1% to 100% of potentially eligible properties.

In broad terms, the total tax exemption impact is estimated using 80% of 2025 land assessment values for all eligible Islands Trust properties and 2024 property tax rates for each jurisdiction. The impact is then distributed or shifted across jurisdictions using average property assessments in each area and total assessment values, tax requisitions and property counts for each of the jurisdictions impacted.

Note that for property owners in the Municipality of Bowen Island, their municipal and regional district taxes would not be impacted by a non-Bowen Island NAPTEP covenant and tax exemption. Only covenant approvals and exemptions on Bowen Island properties affect the municipal and regional district taxation portion of property taxes for Bowen Island property owners.

Findings

- 1. The average annual property tax savings that results from each additional NAPTEP exemption (and that will be offset by shifting it to other taxpayers) at the current 65% level is estimated to be \$1,409 for rural property owners and \$3,042 on Bowen Island.**

The estimated annual property tax savings incentive for a rural landowner participating in NAPTEP is quite substantial at \$1,409 and even more so on Bowen Island Municipality (\$3,042) at today's 65% exemption rate. This is consistent with the original incentive estimates from 2004 when this analysis was last run. At that time, the benefit was estimated to be about \$1,125 per exemption, recognizing that since then there has been inflation, property tax system changes (Bowen Island) and a significantly increased number of property owners across the province. It is also important to recognise that the value of this exemption will likely increase over time as property taxes are increased each year and assessed values climb.

- 2. Increasing the exemption level to 100% per NAPTEP participating property is estimated to provide an additional annual incentive per rural property owner of about \$758, to about \$2,167 for an average participating property.**

Taxes that must be shifted to offset the exemption are broken down as follows¹:

- \$852 (between \$535 and \$1,790) for Provincial School Tax
- \$244 (between \$87 and \$589) for Provincial General Tax
- \$49 (between \$35 and \$112 for Provincial Police Tax.
- \$490 (between (\$210 and \$1,133) for Regional District Electoral Area Tax
- \$306 (between \$154 and \$434) for Islands Trust Tax

- 3. For NAPTEP-participating property owners on Bowen Island, increasing the exemption level to 100% increases the average tax incentive there from \$3,042 to \$4,680.**

¹ The tax redistribution and amount spread among taxpayers not participating in NAPTEP will vary depending on the Regional District Electoral Area, Municipality and School District Area in which the property is located.

4. At the 100% exemption level, and on a broadly average basis, the approval of a single NAPTEP covenant on an island other than Bowen Island and resultant tax exemption leads to negligible average annual tax increases per taxpayer of:

- **less than one tenth of one cent (\$0.001) impact for rural and police taxes for each residential property owner throughout the province.**
- **about 1 cent (\$0.01) impact to each residential property owner in a School District and 1 cent (\$0.01) in a Regional District Electoral Area in the Islands Trust Area.**
- **With an additional 1 cent (\$0.01) for Island Trust taxes this totals about 3 cents (\$0.03) impact for Islands Trust Area taxpayers, including Bowen Island.**

Applying a range of program uptake, the total exempted taxes that must be shifted can range between \$34,300 at 1% of potentially eligible properties participating (15 new covenants), to \$343,000 at the 10% participation level (146 new covenants) and up to \$3,430,200 at the 100% participation rate (1458 new covenants). Because the impact is spread over a substantial assessment base, the average impact over time even at the 100% level is modest:

- 1% participation of potentially eligible properties (about 15 new covenants, \$34,302 total tax exemption) results in a 1 cent (\$0.01) impact for each Provincial taxpayer, 29 cents (\$0.29) for a participating Regional District and School District taxpayer, and 46 cents (\$0.46) for an Islands Trust taxpayer. 1% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (1 new covenant) results in a tax shift of \$1.61 to each residential property on that Island.
- 5% participation (about 75 new covenants, \$171,511 total tax exemption) results in a total 6 cent (\$0.06) impact for each Provincial taxpayer, \$1.46 for a participating Regional District and School District taxpayer, and \$2.32 for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer. 5% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (4 new covenants) results in a tax shift of \$8.03 to each residential property on that Island.
- 10% Participation (about 150 new covenants, \$343,023 total tax exemption) results in a total 11 cent (\$0.11) impact for the average Provincial taxpayer, \$2.92 for participating Regional and School District taxpayer, and \$4.65 for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer. 10% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (8 new covenants) results in a tax shift of \$16.07 to each residential property on that Island.

- 25% Participation (about 390 new covenants, \$857,557 total tax exemption) results in a total 28 cent (\$0.28) impact for the average Provincial taxpayer, \$7.30 for participating Regional and School District taxpayers, and \$11.62 for an Islands Trust Area. 25% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (20 new covenants) results in a tax shift of \$40.16 to each residential property on that Island.
- 100% Participation (about 1,548 new covenants, \$3,430,227 total tax exemption) results in a total \$1.12 impact for the average Provincial taxpayer, \$29.21 for participating Regional and School District taxpayers, and \$46.50 for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer. 100% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (81 new covenants) results in a tax shift of \$160.65 to each residential property on that Island.

Historical approval of conservation covenants under NAPTEP has averaged about one every other year and there are now 29 registered. At that rate of approval an additional five covenants, or 0.3% of potentially eligible properties, could be expected at the end of ten years with an additional tax exemption of \$1,029 per year in each year.² This equates to an annual additional cost from that shift of:

- Less than one tenth of 1 (\$0.001) cent impact on each taxpayer in the Province;
- about 9 cents (\$0.09) impact to each taxpayer in a Regional District and School District which includes an Islands Trust Area;
- about 14 cents (\$0.14) impact to each Islands Trust Area taxpayer; and
- about a 48 cent (\$0.48) impact to each Bowen Island taxpayer.

Reaching the 5% of eligible property level would require uptake by an additional 0.5% of potentially eligible properties (about 8 covenants) applied for and approved each year. This increased approval uptake would create a total tax exemption of \$17,151 per year and impact taxpayers each year from that shift as follows:

- about 1 cent (\$0.01) impact to each taxpayer in the Province;
- about 14 cents (\$0.14) impact to each taxpayer in a School and Regional District which includes an Islands Trust Area;
- about 23 cents (\$0.23) impact to each Islands Trust Area taxpayer; and
- about an 80 cent (\$0.80) impact to each Bowen Island taxpayer from Bowen exemptions.

² Assuming property values and tax rates held constant

These tax shifts result in no net increase in overall property taxes; they slightly redistribute the individual amount of tax payable from those who protect their land by conservation covenant to those who do not. **When compared to the cost of buying land with public funds, NAPTEP at either the 65% or the 100% level continues to be a very cost-effective approach to land conservation.**

Background

Islands Trust Conservancy negotiates and holds conservation covenants registered through NAPTEP.

Based on current NAPTEP uptake and the number of regular conservation covenants processed by Islands Trust Conservancy annually, this analysis focuses on the tax shift implications of five new NAPTEP covenants processed each year, and the impact summary focused on an example at the 5% uptake or a ten-year 75 covenant level.

Property Tax in British Columbia

Property tax in British Columbia continues to be calculated using a two-step process. First, property values are assessed each year by the BC Assessment Authority: land and buildings are assessed, and exemptions are deducted. Second, tax authorities apply various tax rates to the value of the property to determine the amount of taxes payable. In simple terms: **Market Value x Tax Rate = Property Tax**

BC Assessment provides all taxation authorities in British Columbia with an assessment roll that indicates market value, classification and applicable tax exemptions for every property in British Columbia. For 2025 property tax purposes, there are three assessment categories (General, School, Hospital) and eight taxation classes:

- Class 01. Residential,
- Class 02. Utilities,
- Class 04. Major Industry,
- Class 05. Light Industry,
- Class 06. Business and Other,
- Class 07. Managed Forest Land,
- Class 08. Recreational Property / Non-profit Organization, and
- Class 09. Farm.

Under the Province's Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program Regulation, Only Class 01 Residential properties are permitted to apply to NAPTEP. Residential properties make up at least 80% to 90% of property assessment in Regional District areas that overlap the Islands Trust Area. We have further simplified the calculation by only using Net General Assessments for Class 01 residential properties in this analysis as School and Hospital assessments are usually quite similar to General assessments for residential purposes.

Taxation authorities, upon receiving the revised assessment roll, apply tax rates to each property class to create the tax roll. Taxes fall into three categories in the Islands Trust Area: Provincial, Regional and Local. These taxes include:

- Provincial Rural Tax (including Hospital, BC Assessment, etc.), which impacts all rural properties across the Province.
- Provincial School Tax which is set for each School District separately and impacts only those rural and municipal properties within each School District.
- Provincial Police Tax which impacts rural properties within each individual regional District.
- Regional District taxes, which are set by each Regional District, which impacts only properties within each individual Regional District.
- Municipal Taxes, which are set by Bowen Island Municipality which impacts all Bowen Island Municipal properties.
- Islands Trust Taxes which are set for the Islands Trust Area collectively and impacts all Islands Trust properties.
- Island Local Services Taxes (Improvement Districts, etc.) which are set specific to each participating area within each Regional District and will affect only the small number of properties depending on the service – such as Street Lighting, a Medical Clinic, Parks and Recreation or Fire Protection for example. **Note - for simplification, we have excluded Service Taxes from this analysis as each individual service area can be quite different and be requisitioned on different bases in each case.**

Bowen Island Municipality is unique within the Islands Trust and therefore is not subject to Provincial Rural Taxation.

In place of that, the Municipality levies its own property taxes annually and in 2024 the annual requisition was \$8,245,350 and average home was assessed at \$1,585,350.

These properties are also subject to regional district taxation.

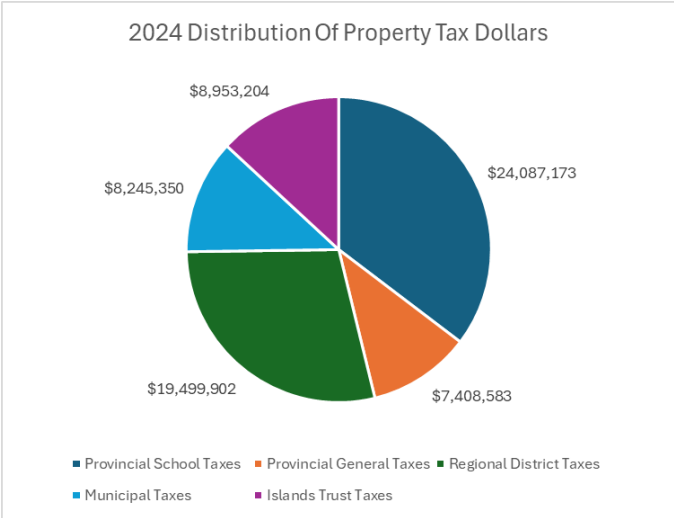


Figure 1: Distribution of Islands Trust Area property tax revenues by taxation authority

When property tax exemptions are issued through NAPTEP, the government does not forego the tax revenue. Rather, exempted taxes are shifted to other taxpayers in each tax jurisdiction. This practice is the same for other tax exemption programs (e.g. Agricultural Land Reserve Exemptions, Heritage Property Exemptions, Alternative Energy Power projects Exemption etc.) Additionally, not all lands eligible for NAPTEP will qualify for the program. To participate in NAPTEP landowners must have natural areas that are considered valuable under the NAPTEP Regulations. The decision to accept land for a NAPTEP covenant is made by the Islands Trust Conservancy Board based on a number of factors.

Determining the tax exemption and resulting tax shift implications of NAPTEP in the Islands Trust Area is a speculative and hypothetical exercise due to the complexity of three different assessment bases, differing revenue requirements, Regional District functions, presence of a Municipality, and property tax levy rates in every taxing authority changing from year to year.

See Appendix 5 of this report for the methodology used to identify properties that would most likely be eligible for NAPTEP covenants. Islands Trust staff identified 1,458 such properties.

Island Trust Area	2024		Eligible Properties	Net General Land Assessment	Average net Land Assessment
	Number of Properties				
				80%	80%
				\$\$	\$\$
Bowen	2636	Muni	81	120,812,800	1,491,516
Denmen	1001	771 Area A	108	65,968,000	610,815
Gabriola	4366	768 Area B	111	76,204,080	686,523
Galiano	1624	763 Area G	117	74,138,720	633,664
Gambier	1772	746 Area F	170	156,041,600	917,892
Hornby	1206	771 Area A	65	38,608,720	593,980
Lasqueti	506	769 Area E	164	73,461,520	447,936
Mayne	1721	763 Area G	101	77,427,200	766,606
North Pender	2197	763 Area G	118	78,359,040	664,060
Saturna	713	764 Area F	25	14,203,200	568,128
South Pender	361	763 Area G	8	6,037,600	754,700
Saltspring	6789	764 Area F	326	217,307,600	666,588
Thetis	866	765 Area G	64	39,544,000	617,875
Executive	29				
TOTAL	25,787		1,458	\$ 1,038,114,080	\$ 712,012

Table 1: Assessed value of potentially NAPTEP-eligible properties.

Table 1 above shows the breakdown of eligible properties by Island Trust Area together with the Net General Land Assessment and Average Assessment per property. The properties collectively represent \$1.3 Billion in assessed value with an average eligible (80%) land assessment of just over \$712,000.³

Taxing Authority	2024 Total Tax Revenue Derived From ITA Properties										Total \$\$\$	%
	Tax Jurisdiction Number for Island Trust Area											
	745	746	763	764	765	768	769	771	n/a			
	Lower Mainland Rural	Sechelt Rural	Gulf Islands Rural	Gulf Island Saltspring	Duncan Rural	Nanaimo Rural	Alberni Rural	Courtney Rural	Bowen Municipal			
Provincial School Tax	26,841	1,270,771	467,547	15,318,901	475,035	3,853,719	301,598	2,372,762	3,945,282	28,032,454	38%	
Provincial General Tax	13,096	401,880	137,159	4,787,632	140,728	1,127,835	94,498	705,755	-	7,408,583	10%	
Regional District Tax	2,124	1,466,015	3,876,213	8,152,823 ³	1,985,175 ³	2,250,406 ³	535,214	1,234,057	570,711	20,072,737	27%	
Municipal Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,245,350	8,245,350	11%	
Island Trust Tax	17,185	518,800	169,232	5,716,834	169,715	1,375,658	118,233	867,547	364,860	9,318,064	13%	
Total	\$ 59,246	\$ 3,657,464	\$ 4,650,152	\$ 33,976,190	\$ 2,770,653	\$ 8,607,618	\$ 1,049,543	\$ 5,180,120	\$ 13,126,202	\$ 73,077,189	100%	
Avg Assessment	\$ 1,342,462	\$ 931,629	\$ 1,010,380	\$ 862,835	\$ 823,469	\$ 698,440	\$ 915,698	\$ 839,146	\$ 1,585,350	\$ 928,007		

Table 2: Property tax revenues and average assessed property values in the Islands Trust Area by assessment area.

Table 2 above shows the breakdown of revenues and assessment by assessment area. Revenues collected from each of these areas totalled just over \$73 million dollars in 2024. This will be used to estimate the impact of the tax shift impact on an average home in each area.

Island Trust Area	Number of Properties	Eligible Properties	Net General Land Assessment	Average net Land Assessment	Maximum Potential Tax Shift (\$) of Property Tax Created by 100% of all Eligible Properties at 100% Property Tax Exemption								
					Islands				Provincial				
					Electoral	General	Trust	Police	Rural	School Tax	Municipal	Total	
Bowen	2636	Muni	81	120,812,800	1,491,516	-	-	12,507	7,756	-	89,160	270,374	379,797
Denmen	1001	771 Area A	108	65,968,000	610,815	25,028	19,311	31,171	5,330	23,748	84,182	-	188,770
Gabriola	4366	768 Area B	111	76,204,080	686,523	23,296	56,103	36,007	12,421	27,433	198,725	-	353,986
Galiano	1624	763 Area G	117	74,138,720	633,664	58,891	11,810	35,031	4,092	26,690	76,615	-	213,130
Gambier	1772	746 Area F	170	156,041,600	917,892	192,599	15,749	73,731	10,018	56,175	175,578	-	523,850
Hornby	1206	771 Area A	65	38,608,720	593,980	14,648	11,302	18,243	3,120	13,899	49,269	-	110,480
Lasqueti	506	769 Area E	164	73,461,520	447,936	98,618	58,512	34,711	11,409	26,446	87,787	-	317,482
Mayne	1721	763 Area G	101	77,427,200	766,606	61,504	12,333	36,585	4,274	27,874	80,013	-	222,583
North Pender	2197	763 Area G	118	78,359,040	664,060	62,244	12,482	37,025	4,325	28,209	80,976	-	225,262
Saturna	713	764 Area F	25	14,203,200	568,128	14,714	14,714	6,711	1,106	5,113	16,179	-	58,538
South Pender	361	763 Area G	8	6,037,600	754,700	4,796	962	2,853	333	2,174	6,239	-	17,357
Saltspring	6789	764 Area F	326	217,307,600	666,588	118,435	118,435	102,680	11,995	78,231	247,535	-	677,311
Thetis	866	765 Area G	64	39,544,000	617,875	39,550	15,873	18,685	3,183	14,236	50,154	-	141,681
Executive	29												
TOTAL	25,787		1,458	\$ 1,038,114,080	\$ 712,012	\$ 714,322	\$ 347,586	\$ 445,941	\$ 79,364	\$ 330,228	\$ 1,242,411	\$ 270,374	\$ 3,430,227

Table 3: Total tax exemption savings and shifting that would be required in each Local Trust Area assuming a 100% NAPTEP exemption.

³ 80% of assessed value was selected as it is assumed that 20% (0.5 ha.) of a 2.5 ha. property would not be included in a NAPTEP covenant as it would be disturbed homesite area with minimal ecological value. This assumption does not reflect the fact that most NAPTEP-protected properties will be significantly larger than 2.5 ha. and therefore the disturbed homesite will likely make up less than 20% of the property area.

Table 3 above shows a breakdown of taxes derived from Islands Trust Area properties including the maximum potential tax exemption and resulting shift of \$3.4 million due to NAPTEP at 100% participation by potentially eligible properties and a 100% property tax exemption level (in bold). This includes School Taxes of \$1.2 million, Municipal Taxes of \$270,000 and Islands Trust Taxes of \$446,000 for example.

The maximum potential total tax exemption and resulting shift is used to determine the impact of NAPTEP on an average NAPTEP participating property and then to provide a range of impacts at three different exemption levels where the average participating property benefits from an estimated annual tax exemption savings of about \$1,409 (\$3,042 on Bowen Island) at the current 65% level, rising to just over \$2,167 (\$4,680 on Bowen Island) at the 100% exemption level.

The total tax that would be shifted if *all* eligible properties were exempted ranges from \$2.2 million at the current 65% level, to \$2.6 Million at the 75% level, \$3.1 Million at the 90% level and \$3.4 Million at the 100% exemption level. While these numbers may appear high, it is important to note that they are based on program participation by all potentially eligible 1,458 properties and assumes that 80% of each property is covenanted. This level of participation is not practical or achievable for several reasons,⁴ and so, for illustration purposes, we have used the 5% uptake level as an example of plausible potential impact over ten years.

The expected annual tax shift impact from each additional exemption at the current 65% level is estimated to be \$1,409. Increasing the exemption level to 100% provides an additional annual incentive per property owner of about \$758 or about \$2,167. This is higher for those on Bowen Island or by \$1,638 from \$3,042 to \$4,680:

⁴ The most significant being the administrative limitations of the Islands Trust Conservancy itself.

Island Trust Area	Number of Properties	Eligible Properties	Potential Tax Shift (\$) Created by Average NAPTEP Participant Property at 100% Property Tax Exemption.								Total \$\$
			Islands			Provincial					
			Electoral	General	Trust	Police	Rural	School Tax	Municipal		
Bowen	2636	Muni	81	-	87	154	-	-	1,101	3,338	4,680
Denmen	1001	771 Area A	108	232	179	289	49	220	779	-	1,748
Gabriola	4366	768 Area B	111	210	505	324	112	247	1,790	-	3,189
Galiano	1624	763 Area G	117	503	101	299	35	228	655	-	1,822
Gambier	1772	746 Area F	170	1,133	93	434	59	330	1,033	-	3,081
Hornby	1206	771 Area A	65	225	174	281	48	214	758	-	1,700
Lasqueti	506	769 Area E	164	601	357	212	70	161	535	-	1,936
Mayne	1721	763 Area G	101	609	122	362	42	276	792	-	2,204
North Pender	2197	763 Area G	118	527	106	314	37	239	686	-	1,909
Saturna	713	764 Area F	25	589	589	268	44	205	647	-	2,342
South Pender	361	763 Area G	8	599	120	357	42	272	780	-	2,170
Saltspring	6789	764 Area F	326	363	363	315	37	240	759	-	2,078
Thetis	866	765 Area G	64	618	248	292	50	222	784	-	2,214
Executive	29										
TOTAL	25,787		1,458	\$ 490	\$ 244	\$ 306	\$ 49	\$ 226	\$ 852	\$ -	\$ 2,167
										\$ 3,338	\$ 4,680

Table 4: Tax savings for each participating property (and shifting that would be required) in each Local Trust Area assuming a 100% NAPTEP exemption.

This impact would be spread among taxpayers not participating in NAPTEP and the amount will vary depending on the Electoral Area, School District Area and Municipality (Bowen Island) the property is located within.

At the 100% exemption level, and on a broadly average basis, the approval of a single NAPTEP covenant (on an island other than Bowen Island) and resultant tax exemption leads to negligible average annual tax increases per taxpayer from that shift of:

- **less than one tenth of one cent (\$0.001) impact for rural and police taxes for each residential property owner throughout the province.**
- **about 1 cent (\$0.01) impact to each residential property owner in a School District and 1 cent (\$0.01) in a Regional District Electoral Area in the Islands Trust Area.**
- **With an additional 1 cent (\$0.01) for Island Trust taxes this totals about 3 cents (\$0.03) impact for Islands Trust Area taxpayers, including Bowen Island.**

Program Participation

There are a variety of factors that affect uptake of the program such as:

- The number of NAPTEP covenants is limited to the number of properties containing eligible features. Many properties will not have eligible natural features. 1,458 potentially eligible properties in the Islands Trust Area have been identified from mapping data for the purposes of this analysis.
- The size of NAPTEP covenants may be less than the property's land base. For purposes of this analysis we have conservatively assumed 80% of each property land base would be protected and eligible for exemption (assuming 20% of a 2.5 ha. property would be homesite area ineligible for NAPTEP).
- NAPTEP covenants limit the activities of landowners on their property in perpetuity, making the program unattractive to those wishing to cultivate or use their land unencumbered. Property restrictions will limit applicant potential.
- Entering into NAPTEP requires a significant amount of effort and cost by the landowner. Not all property owners will be willing to go through the application process and up front cost placing a covenant on their land.
- The NAPTEP covenant is registered on the Land Title and landowners may have concerns about the impact that such a covenant may have on the market price and resale potential of their land.
- A cost benefit analysis comparing the costs of entering the program with the tax exemption received may also limit the number of applicants. Cost recovery timeframes may be too long for some property owners.
- The Islands Trust Conservancy does not have the capacity to administer 1,500 covenants within its current budget and at its current staffing levels.
- **No additional administrative costs have been factored into this analysis.**

To provide a range of estimates for context, Table 5 below shows the total tax exemption and resulting shift based on varying degrees of NAPTEP participation at the 100% exemption level.

Assuming the program can reach 5% of potentially eligible property uptake in ten years by increasing the incentive exemption to 100% this would require an additional 5 covenants to be attracted and approved each year and create a total tax exemption and shift of about \$10,291 per year or an additional 45 cents (\$0.45) for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer each year. Other exemption level examples are provided in the appendices.

Island Trust Area	Number of Properties	Eligible Properties	Potential Tax Shift (\$) by Eligible Property Participation Level at 100% Property Tax Exemption Rate					
			1%	5%	10%	25%	50%	100%
Bowen	2636	81	3,798	18,990	37,980	94,949	189,899	379,797
Denmen	1001	108	1,888	9,439	18,877	47,193	94,385	188,770
Gabriola	4366	111	3,540	17,699	35,399	88,496	176,993	353,986
Galiano	1624	117	2,131	10,656	21,313	53,282	106,565	213,130
Gambier	1772	170	5,239	26,193	52,385	130,963	261,925	523,850
Hornby	1206	65	1,105	5,524	11,048	27,620	55,240	110,480
Lasqueti	506	164	3,175	15,874	31,748	79,371	158,741	317,482
Mayne	1721	101	2,226	11,129	22,258	55,646	111,292	222,583
North Pender	2197	118	2,253	11,263	22,526	56,315	112,631	225,262
Saturna	713	25	585	2,927	5,854	14,634	29,269	58,538
South Pender	361	8	174	868	1,736	4,339	8,678	17,357
Saltspring	6789	326	6,773	33,866	67,731	169,328	338,655	677,311
Thetis	866	64	1,417	7,084	14,168	35,420	70,841	141,681
Executive	29							
TOTAL	25,787	1,458	\$ 34,302	\$ 171,511	\$ 343,023	\$ 857,557	\$ 1,715,114	\$ 3,430,227

Table 5: Value of taxes that would be shifted at a range of program uptake levels assuming a 100% exemption for participating properties.

If we apply a range of program uptake we can see that the total tax exemption and resulting shift required can range between \$34,300 at the 1% (15 properties) level to \$343,000 at the 10% (146 properties) level and right up to \$3,430,000 at the 100% or 1458 properties level.

Because the impact is spread over a substantial assessment base, the average impact is modest and would gradually increase to that level depending on how many years it takes to reach that level of participation:

- 1% participation of potentially eligible properties (about 15 new covenants, \$34,302 tax shift) results in a 1 cent (\$0.01) annual impact for each provincial taxpayer, 13 cents (\$0.13) for a participating Regional and School District taxpayer, and 47 cents (\$0.47) for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer. 1% percent participation by eligible properties on

Bowen Island (1 new covenant) results in a tax shift of \$1.61 to each residential property on that Island.

- 5% participation (about 75 new covenants, \$171,511 tax shift) results in a total 6 cent (\$0.06) annual impact for each Provincial taxpayer, 96 cents (\$0.96) for a participating Regional and School District taxpayer, and \$2.59 for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer. 5% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (4 new covenants) results in a tax shift of \$8.03 to each residential property on that Island.
- 10% Participation (about 150 new covenants, \$343,023 tax shift) results in a total 13 cent (\$0.13) annual impact for the average Provincial taxpayer, \$1.92 for participating Regional and School District taxpayer, and \$5.18 for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer. 10% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (8 new covenants) results in a tax shift of \$16.07 to each residential property on that Island.
- 25% Participation (about 390 new covenants, \$857,557 tax shift) results in a total 32 cent annual impact for the average Provincial taxpayer, \$4.80 for participating Regional and School District taxpayers, and \$12.96 for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer. 25% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (20 new covenants) results in a tax shift of \$40.16 to each residential property on that Island.
- 100% Participation (about 1,548 new covenants, \$3,430,227 tax shift) results in a total \$1.29 annual impact for the average Provincial taxpayer, \$19.22 for participating Regional and School District taxpayers, and \$51.83 for an Islands Trust Area taxpayer. 100% percent participation by eligible properties on Bowen Island (81 new covenants) results in a tax shift of \$160.65 to each residential property on that Island.

Appendix 1 – Data Sources

The Tax Exemption and Resulting Tax Shift Impact was calculated using data from:

- Rural School, General, Police tax revenue and tax rate information provided by the Real Property Taxation Branch of the Ministry of Provincial Revenue and Bowen Island Municipality.
- Information on the number of folios in the Province and in Regional Districts containing Islands Trust Areas, 2025 Net General and Net School Property Assessments in each Regional District Electoral Area provided by the British Columbia Assessment Authority.
- Electoral Area Budgets and tax requisitions from 2024 Regional District Approved Financial Plans.
- The Bowen Island Municipal Budget and Tax requisition for 2024.
- The number of eligible properties and their individual land assessments in the Islands Trust Area provided by Islands Trust staff.
- Background information provided by Islands Trust staff.

Appendix 2 – Calculation Methodology

1. To calculate the tax exemption and tax shift for NAPTEP the following assumptions were made:
 - The tax exemptions are distributed evenly among all property assessment/tax classes (01-09) and the complicated and impact-minimizing effect of the property tax assessment tax rate multiples system was ignored for purposes of this exercise.
 - Island Local Services Taxes (Improvement Districts, etc.) which are set specific to each participating area within each Regional District and will affect only the small number of properties depending on the service – such as Street Lighting, a Medical Clinic, Parks and Recreation or Fire Protection for example, have been excluded from this analysis as each individual service area can be quite different and be requisitioned on different bases in each case.
 - The eligible residential properties sample of a minimum 2.5 hectare size were determined by Island Trust staff. See Appendix 5.
 - Taxes on improvements to land (e.g. buildings) are not used to calculate NAPTEP property tax exemptions. According to the *Islands Trust Act*, NAPTEP exemptions only apply to taxes on the land.
 - Most lands applying to NAPTEP would have a residential component which would not be included in the covenant area and would therefore reduce the amount of property qualifying for a tax exemption. For the purposes of this tax shift calculation we assumed that the protected covenant area of qualifying island properties to be 80% of the property.
2. Tax Shift Impact on a Provincial property owner:
$$\frac{\text{Total Provincial Rural Tax for Eligible Islands Trust Properties (Eligible assessment * 80% * provincial rural tax rate and Provincial Police tax rate)}}{\text{Total Net Property Assessment for the Province}} * \text{Average Property Assessment for an Islands Trust Property.}$$
3. Tax Shift Impact on a property owner within an Islands Trust Area School District:
$$\frac{\text{Total School Tax for Eligible Islands Trust Properties (Eligible assessment * 80% * school tax rate)}}{\text{Total Net Property Assessment for Islands Trust School Districts}} * \text{Average property assessment for an Islands Trust Property.}$$
4. Tax Shift Impact on a property owner within an Islands Trust Area Regional District:

Total Regional District Electoral Area Tax for Eligible Islands Trust Properties (Eligible assessment * 80% * Regional District Electoral Area and General tax rates) / Total Net Property Assessment for Islands Trust * Average property assessment for an Islands Trust Property.

5. Tax Shift Impact on an Islands Trust Property Owner:

Total Islands Trust Tax for Eligible Islands Trust Properties (Eligible assessment * 80% * Islands trust tax rate) / Total Net Property Assessment for Islands Trust * Average property assessment for an Islands Trust Property.

6. Tax Shift Impact on a Bowen Island Property Owner:

Total Municipal Tax for eligible Bowen Island properties (eligible assessment *80%* Bowen Island Municipal tax rate)/ Total Net Property Assessment for Bowen Island * Average property assessment for a Bowen Island property, plus
Total Regional District Tax for Eligible Bowen Island Properties (Eligible assessment * 80% * Regional District General tax rate) / Total Net Property Assessment for Bowen Island * Average property assessment for a Bowen Island property.

Appendix 3 – Tax Shift Total Impact % Scenarios

Island Trust Area	Number of Properties	Eligible Properties	Potential Tax Shift (\$) by Eligible Property Participation Level at 65% Property Tax Exemption Rate					
			1%	5%	10%	25%	50%	100%
Bowen	2636	81	2,469	12,343	24,687	61,717	123,434	246,868
Denmen	1001	108	1,227	6,135	12,270	30,675	61,350	122,701
Gabriola	4366	111	2,301	11,505	23,009	57,523	115,045	230,091
Galiano	1624	117	1,385	6,927	13,853	34,634	69,267	138,534
Gambier	1772	170	3,405	17,025	34,050	85,126	170,251	340,503
Hornby	1206	65	718	3,591	7,181	17,953	35,906	71,812
Lasqueti	506	164	2,064	10,318	20,636	51,591	103,182	206,364
Mayne	1721	101	1,447	7,234	14,468	36,170	72,339	144,679
North Pender	2197	118	1,464	7,321	14,642	36,605	73,210	146,420
Saturna	713	25	380	1,902	3,805	9,512	19,025	38,050
South Pender	361	8	113	564	1,128	2,820	5,641	11,282
Saltspring	6789	326	4,403	22,013	44,025	110,063	220,126	440,252
Thetis	866	64	921	4,605	9,209	23,023	46,046	92,093
Executive	29							
TOTAL	25,787	1,458	\$ 22,296	\$ 111,482	\$ 222,965	\$ 557,412	\$ 1,114,824	\$ 2,229,648

Island Trust Area	Number of Properties	Eligible Properties	Potential Tax Shift (\$) by Eligible Property Participation Level at 75% Property Tax Exemption Rate					
			1%	5%	10%	25%	50%	100%
Bowen	2636	81	2,848	14,242	28,485	71,212	142,424	284,848
Denmen	1001	108	1,416	7,079	14,158	35,394	70,789	141,578
Gabriola	4366	111	2,655	13,274	26,549	66,372	132,745	265,489
Galiano	1624	117	1,598	7,992	15,985	39,962	79,924	159,847
Gambier	1772	170	3,929	19,644	39,289	98,222	196,444	392,888
Hornby	1206	65	829	4,143	8,286	20,715	41,430	82,860
Lasqueti	506	164	2,381	11,906	23,811	59,528	119,056	238,112
Mayne	1721	101	1,669	8,347	16,694	41,734	83,469	166,937
North Pender	2197	118	1,689	8,447	16,895	42,237	84,473	168,946
Saturna	713	25	439	2,195	4,390	10,976	21,952	43,903
South Pender	361	8	130	651	1,302	3,254	6,509	13,017
Saltspring	6789	326	5,080	25,399	50,798	126,996	253,992	507,983
Thetis	866	64	1,063	5,313	10,626	26,565	53,130	106,261
Executive	29							
TOTAL	25,787	1,458	\$ 25,727	\$ 128,634	\$ 257,267	\$ 643,168	\$ 1,286,335	\$ 2,572,670

Appendix 3 – Tax Shift Total Impact % Scenarios Cont.

Island Trust Area	Number of Properties	Eligible Properties	Potential Tax Shift (\$) by Eligible Property Participation Level at 90% Property Tax Exemption Rate					
			1%	5%	10%	25%	50%	100%
Bowen	2636	81	3,418	17,091	34,182	85,454	170,909	341,818
Denmen	1001	108	1,699	8,495	16,989	42,473	84,947	169,893
Gabriola	4366	111	3,186	15,929	31,859	79,647	159,294	318,587
Galiano	1624	117	1,918	9,591	19,182	47,954	95,908	191,817
Gambier	1772	170	4,715	23,573	47,147	117,866	235,733	471,465
Hornby	1206	65	994	4,972	9,943	24,858	49,716	99,432
Lasqueti	506	164	2,857	14,287	28,573	71,434	142,867	285,734
Mayne	1721	101	2,003	10,016	20,032	50,081	100,162	200,325
North Pender	2197	118	2,027	10,137	20,274	50,684	101,368	202,736
Saturna	713	25	527	2,634	5,268	13,171	26,342	52,684
South Pender	361	8	156	781	1,562	3,905	7,810	15,621
Saltspring	6789	326	6,096	30,479	60,958	152,395	304,790	609,580
Thetis	866	64	1,275	6,376	12,751	31,878	63,756	127,513
Executive	29							
TOTAL	25,787	1,458	\$ 30,872	\$ 154,360	\$ 308,720	\$ 771,801	\$ 1,543,602	\$ 3,087,204

Island Trust Area	Number of Properties	Eligible Properties	Potential Tax Shift (\$) by Eligible Property Participation Level at 100% Property Tax Exemption Rate					
			1%	5%	10%	25%	50%	100%
Bowen	2636	81	3,798	18,990	37,980	94,949	189,899	379,797
Denmen	1001	108	1,888	9,439	18,877	47,193	94,385	188,770
Gabriola	4366	111	3,540	17,699	35,399	88,496	176,993	353,986
Galiano	1624	117	2,131	10,656	21,313	53,282	106,565	213,130
Gambier	1772	170	5,239	26,193	52,385	130,963	261,925	523,850
Hornby	1206	65	1,105	5,524	11,048	27,620	55,240	110,480
Lasqueti	506	164	3,175	15,874	31,748	79,371	158,741	317,482
Mayne	1721	101	2,226	11,129	22,258	55,646	111,292	222,583
North Pender	2197	118	2,253	11,263	22,526	56,315	112,631	225,262
Saturna	713	25	585	2,927	5,854	14,634	29,269	58,538
South Pender	361	8	174	868	1,736	4,339	8,678	17,357
Saltspring	6789	326	6,773	33,866	67,731	169,328	338,655	677,311
Thetis	866	64	1,417	7,084	14,168	35,420	70,841	141,681
Executive	29							
TOTAL	25,787	1,458	\$ 34,302	\$ 171,511	\$ 343,023	\$ 857,557	\$ 1,715,114	\$ 3,430,227

Appendix 4 – Tax Shift Cost Per Property Examples

Tax Shift Impact Per Property with **5% Participation** by Potentially Eligible Properties:

Tax Base	General	School	Regional District	Islands Trust	Municipal	Total
Total Tax Shift	\$ 20,480	\$ 62,121	\$ 53,095	\$ 22,297	\$ 13,519	\$ 171,511
Per BC Taxpayer	\$ 0.06	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.06
Per School District Property	\$ 0.06	\$ 0.76	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.81
Per Regional District Electoral Area Property	\$ 0.06	\$ -	\$ 0.65	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.70
Per Islands Trust Property	\$ 0.06	\$ 0.76	\$ 0.65	\$ 0.86	\$ -	\$ 2.32
Per Bowen Island Municipality Property	\$ 0.06	\$ 0.76	\$ -	\$ 0.86	\$ 5.76	\$ 7.43

Tax Shift Impact Per Property with **10% Participation** by Potentially Eligible Properties:

Tax Base	General	School	Regional District	Islands Trust	Municipal	Total
Total Tax Shift	\$ 40,959	\$ 124,241	\$ 106,191	\$ 44,594	\$ 27,037	\$ 343,023
Per BC Taxpayer	\$ 0.11	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.11
Per School District Property	\$ 0.11	\$ 1.51	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.62
Per Regional District Electoral Area Property	\$ 0.11	\$ -	\$ 1.30	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.41
Per Islands Trust Property	\$ 0.11	\$ 1.51	\$ 1.30	\$ 1.73	\$ -	\$ 4.65
Per Bowen Island Municipality Property	\$ 0.11	\$ 1.51	\$ -	\$ 1.73	\$ 11.52	\$ 14.87

Tax Shift Impact Per Property with **100% Participation** by Potentially Eligible Properties

Tax Base	General	School	Regional District	Islands Trust	Municipal	Total
Total Tax Shift	\$ 409,592	\$ 1,242,411	\$ 1,061,908	\$ 445,941	\$ 270,374	\$ 3,430,227
Per BC Taxpayer	\$ 1.12	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.12
Per School District Property	\$ 1.12	\$ 15.11	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16.23
Per Regional District Electoral Area Property	\$ 1.12	\$ -	\$ 12.98	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14.10
Per Islands Trust Property	\$ 1.12	\$ 15.11	\$ 12.98	\$ 17.29	\$ -	\$ 46.50
Per Bowen Island Municipality Property	\$ 1.12	\$ 15.11	\$ -	\$ 17.29	\$ 115.18	\$ 148.70

Note: Bowen Island is the only island in the Islands Trust Area that is a municipality with a municipal tax regime. As such, municipal and regional district taxes are only shifted for a Bowen Island property when a NAPTEP covenant is secured on Bowen Island. The “Per Bowen Island Municipality Property” tax shift shown in this table reflects what would happen if 5 percent of the 81 potentially eligible properties on Bowen Island entered NAPTEP covenants. The tax shift experienced by Bowen Island landowners would be significantly less if the calculation was made assuming 5 percent of the 1,458 potentially eligible properties entering NAPTEP were equitably spread across the whole Islands Trust Area, in which case some might be on Bowen Island, but most would not.

Appendix 5 – Identification of NAPTEP Candidate Properties

GIS steps to find out how many properties fit Islands Trust Conservancy parameters of:

- Privately owned properties ≥ 3 ha
- Property class code 1 (residential)⁵
- Does not overlap with any existing protected areas⁶
- Does not overlap with Agricultural Land reserve (ALR) or include split zoned properties
- Does not overlap with Privately Managed Forest Land (PMFL)
- Sensitive ecosystems are present on at least 2 ha of the property.

General Process

1. Filter out candidate properties using criteria defined above
2. Remove any properties that have PMFL, ALR, or Protected Areas
3. Identify suitable natural areas for conservation, by selecting polygons from ITC's Sensitive Ecosystems Mapping where the polygons are greater than 50% sensitive ecosystems⁷ and cover >2 ha of a given property.
4. The selected sensitive ecosystem polygons were overlaid with parcels of interest to identify properties that meet the conservation suitability criteria.

⁵ Taken from Property Codes assigned by BC Assessment, not Islands Trust zoning

⁶ From the Parks & Protected Areas Layer in Islands Trust's database; note that this includes all types of parks as well as properties owned by conservation organizations (nature reserves) or with an existing covenant.

⁷ ITC's Sensitive Ecosystem Mapping identifies up to 3 ecosystem types in any given polygon



REQUEST FOR DECISION

To: Trust Council **For the Meeting of:** March 10, 2026

From: Trust Area Services **Date Prepared:** February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) – Hypothetical Tax Shift Analysis

RECOMMENDATION:

That Trust Council refer the report “Hypothetical Tax Shift Analysis: Projected Impacts of an Increased Property Tax Exemption Through the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)” to the Islands Trust Conservancy Board to consider recommendations to Trust Council.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER COMMENTS: The attached report can be used to help advance key initiative 4.2.4 in Trust Council’s [2025-2028 Strategic Plan](#). The report shows that increasing the Natural Area Property Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) property tax exemption beyond the current 65 percent rate results in a minimal tax shift to other ratepayers assuming modest increased uptake resulting from the higher exemption. Trust Council can use the tax shift report to support a request to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs to increase the exemption rate by amending the [Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Regulation](#). Before doing so, however, Trust Council should consult with the Islands Trust Conservancy Board to understand the potential administrative and operational implications that increased NAPTEP uptake – incentivized by a larger tax exemption – could have on that body. Such a referral is consistent with Section 4 of the Islands Trust Council/Trust Fund Board [Memorandum of Agreement](#).

- 1 PURPOSE:** The purpose of this request for decision (RFD) is to present Trust Council with a report analyzing the tax shift implications of increasing the NAPTEP property tax exemption beyond its current 65 percent. It recommends referring the report to the Islands Trust Conservancy Board for review and comment.
- 2 BACKGROUND:** At its meeting of August 6, 2025, Executive Committee (EC) endorsed a project charter to commission a report analyzing tax shift scenarios for the Islands Trust Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP). The project charter is attached as Appendix 2.

Endorsement of the project charter followed on previous (EC) direction to pursue a one-time grant from the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) for local governments to advance biodiversity conservation on private lands. In May 2024, FBC approved a grant of \$8,250 for Islands Trust to undertake this work.

Pursuing a potential increase to the NAPTEP tax exemption level was identified in Islands Trust Council’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan: “Amend legislation to increase the percentage of

the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) to act as an incentive for the protection of forest cover for climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Islands Trust Area.” Trust Council included this action in its [2025-2028 Strategic Plan](#) as 4.2.4, a climate mitigation measure and a priority for the term of office ending in 2026.

Increasing the annual tax exemption requires the Province to amend the [Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Regulation](#). Provincial staff have previously indicated that Islands Trust needs to provide a tax shift analysis to support a business case to the Province to increase the NAPTEP exemption.

The headline finding of the tax shift analysis is as follows:

At the 100% exemption level, and on a broadly average basis, the approval of a single NAPTEP covenant on an island other than Bowen Island and resultant tax exemption leads to negligible average annual tax increases per taxpayer of:

- *less than one tenth of one cent (\$0.001) impact for rural and police taxes for each residential property owner throughout the province.*
- *about 1 cent (\$0.01) impact to each residential property owner in a School District and 1 cent (\$0.01) in a Regional District Electoral Area in the Islands Trust Area.*
- *With an additional 1 cent (\$0.01) for Island Trust taxes this totals about 3 cents (\$0.03) impact for Islands Trust Area taxpayers, including Bowen Island.*

Because of the greater range of services provided by Bowen Island Municipality, and by extension the higher property taxes paid by landowners there to fund those services, the impact of a single NAPTEP covenant on that island at a 100% exemption rate would have a more pronounced tax shift effect on Bowen Island ratepayers, adding approximately \$1.61 to the tax paid on each Bowen Island residential property.

Staff sent the NAPTEP tax shift report to the BC Ministry of Finance for a preliminary review. Finance ministry staff provided the following observations:

- The methodology used in the report appears sound
- Even with an increased tax exemption, the financial impact to other taxpayers will likely be minimal given historic uptake

Provincial staff noted that the report does not factor in the Additional School Tax that is levied on properties valued at more than \$3 million, and if the Province were to consider increasing the NAPTEP exemption, it would likely run its own calculation of potential lost School Tax revenue, which is not redistributed to other taxpayers.

The day-to-day work of approving and administering covenants secured through NAPTEP falls to the Islands Trust Conservancy, and decisions about whether to expand the NAPTEP program should consider the financial, administrative and operational implications for that body. For this reason, staff recommend referral to the Conservancy Board.

If Islands Trust Conservancy indicates support for increasing the NAPTEP exemption rate, Trust Council should refer the proposal to Bowen Island Municipality under the Islands Trust Council/Bowen Island Municipality NAPTEP Letter of Understanding, which says:

4.1 - Both parties will use their best efforts to achieve interagency co-operation with mutually agreeable terms and periods

If Trust Council resolves to approach the Minister to request an increased NAPTEP exemption rate, it may also wish to seek feedback of all regional districts that overlap the Islands Trust Area and which have previously agreed to participate in NAPTEP. Section 49.2 of the Islands Trust Act says:

Designation of eligible areas

49.2 (1) The trust council may, by bylaw, designate all or part of a local trust area or a municipality as an area for which tax exemptions may be provided under this Part.

(2) Before adopting a bylaw under subsection (1), the trust council must obtain the consent of the regional district and, if applicable, the municipality in which the designated area is located.

The regional districts have already consented to participate in NAPTEP, but if Trust Council plans to change the terms under which that approval was initially sought, it warrants providing them a chance to provide comment, even if the underlying bylaw does not change.

3 IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION

ORGANIZATIONAL: None. However, referral of the report to the Trust Conservancy board will likely result in direction to that body's staff to provide analysis on the potential administrative and operational implications of increasing the NAPTEP exemption.

FINANCIAL: None

POLICY: None

IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATIONS: No anticipated communications considerations until Trust Council is prepared to approach the minister with a request for amendment to the [NAPTEP regulation](#).

FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS: If Islands Trust Conservancy Board signals potential support for an increased NAPTEP exemption rate, staff will recommend that the Conservancy Board include this topic in its upcoming engagement with Indigenous Governing Bodies about the Conservancy's 2028-2032 plan.

The Islands Trust Conservancy refers all NAPTEP covenant applications to First Nations for comment prior to any final approval of a covenant by the Islands Trust Conservancy Board, and the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs is approving all covenants and land acquisitions until a new Conservancy Five Year Plan is approved.

OTHER: None

4 RELEVANT POLICY(S):

[Grants and Donations Administration Policy](#)

[Islands Trust Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Regulation](#)

[Islands Trust Council Bylaw No. 86, MOA between EC and ITC Board](#)

[Islands Trust Council Bylaw No. 80, designating the Gambier Island LTC as NAPTEP eligible](#)

[Islands Trust Council Bylaw No. 99, designating the Southern Gulf Islands LTAs as NAPTEP eligible](#)

[Islands Trust Council Bylaw No. 126, designating Gabriola, Thetis and Ballenas-Winchelsea LTAs as NAPTEP eligible](#)

[Islands Trust Council Bylaw No. 136, designating Hornby and Denman LTAs as NAPTEP eligible](#)

[Islands Trust Council Bylaw No. 140, designating Lasqueti LTA as NAPTEP eligible](#)

[Islands Trust Council Bylaw No. 162, LOU between TC and BIM concerning NAPTEP Trust Council Policy 2.1.10 Administration of Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program](#)

[LOU between TC and SCRD re. NAPTEP in the Gambier Island LTA](#)

5 ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1) Hypothetical Tax Shift Analysis: Projected Impacts of an Increased Property Tax Exemption Through the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)
- 2) NAPTEP Tax Shift Evaluation – Project Charter

RESPONSE OPTIONS

Recommendation:

That Trust Council refer the report “Hypothetical Tax Shift Analysis: Projected Impacts of an Increased Property Tax Exemption Through the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)” to the Islands Trust Conservancy Board to consider recommendations to Trust Council.

Alternative:

- 1) Receive the report for information
- 2) Refer the report to other additional bodies

Prepared By: Jason Youmans, Senior Policy Advisor

Reviewed By/Date:

Clare Frater, Director, Trust Area Services/February 16, 2026
Rueben Bronee, CAO/**DATE**



BRIEFING

To: Islands Trust Conservancy Board **For the Meeting of:** May 12, 2026

From: Staff **Date Prepared:** May 7, 2026

SUBJECT: Agenda Topics – ITC/EC 2026 Liaison Meeting

PURPOSE:

- To provide the list of agenda topics discussed at previous ITC/EC joint meetings
- To provide a list of agenda topics that have been highlighted for discussion for future ITC/EC joint meetings

BACKGROUND:

2025 ITC/EC Joint Meeting Dates

At the October 1, 2024 Islands Trust Conservancy Board meeting, the Islands Trust Conservancy Board passed the following resolution:

ITC-2024-051

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the Island Trust Conservancy Board direct staff to request meetings with the Executive Committee three times per year for focused discussion on topics of mutual interest, with the option of maintaining the joint liaison meeting in July, if needed.

At the October 9, 2024 ITC/EC joint meeting, Executive Committee and ITC Board members agreed to meet three times per year, including one face-to-face meeting.

For 2026/27, due to the elections in October, the ITC Board and EC decided to have one joint meeting, hosted by EC and one liaison meeting hosted by ITC Board.

ITC/EC Meeting Dates for 2026-27:

- ✓ April 15, 2026 (ITC/EC Joint Meeting from 1-2 pm)
- July 28, 2026 (ITC/EC in-person liaison meeting 1-3pm, lunch 12-1pm)

Previous Topics for Discussion prioritized by ITC Board:

2024-25 Joint and Liaison meetings topics of discussion:

1. Co-operation on spatial mapping support for Islands Trust Conservancy and Land Use Planning

EC-2024-020

It was MOVED and SECONDED that Executive Committee request staff to provide the Executive Committee and Islands Trust Conservancy with options for sharing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) resources.

2. Provincial Funding Request re: Islands Trust Conservancy
3. Geographic Information System (GIS) Funding and the Property Management Team Lead
4. Islands Trust Conservancy Presentation to June 2025 Trust Council
 - *Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)*
 - *Climate change*
 - *Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)*
 - *Island Trust Conservancy 5 Year Plan, next steps and opportunities*
 - *Enhance presentation with visuals to segue into a topic/issue.*
 - *Highlight big ITC successes i.e. connecting ecosystems celebrating the 50th Anniversary*
5. Addressing the Climate Change Emergency Together, including but not limited to FireSmart and fire risk management - Discussion
6. First Nations Engagement and Coordination - Discussion

2025-26 Joint and Liaison meetings topics of discussion:

1. Funding our Future Workshop: conservation on private lands – Discussion

EC-2025-050

*It was **MOVED and SECONDED** that Islands Trust Conservancy Board and Executive Committee agree to strike an informal working group with members from each respective body to start developing a vision for a conservation fund, with the intent to expand the working group to interested First Nations and others.*

2. Mapping – exploring opportunities, gaps and funding strategies

ITC-EC-2025-032

*It was **MOVED and SECONDED** that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board indicate its strong support for a robust geographic information system, supported with long-term sustained funding and strategic direction by Islands Trust Council, to assist analysis of trends and development of indicators of ecosystem health, to support sound decision making in planning, conservation, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.*

3. Islands Trust Conservancy 5-year Plan – Update
4. Annual Conservancy-hosted workshop at Trust Council meeting per Policy 6.10.4
5. Whistleblower Policy
6. Islands Trust Conservancy Growth - What it Means Going Forward

Potential Topics for July 28, 2026 Joint Meeting

Potential topics identified by the ITC Board that have not yet been addressed to date in joint meetings with EC include:

1. Cultural heritage protection
2. Reconciliation and engagement with First Nations
3. Provincial Funding Request for ITC work; (Dec 2, 2025 Trust Council voted to remove advocacy to request increased Provincial funding from its work program.)

Additional potential topics identified by staff:

4. Ecological integrity across the islands – tools, trends and data gaps

5. Updating the next Regional Conservancy Plan
6. What does Trust Council need from the Conservancy to feel informed at budget request time?

ATTACHMENT(S): None

FOLLOW-UP: Following discussion, and potential topic selection by the Board, Staff will advise the Executive Coordinator of preferred discussion topics for the July 28, 2026 ITC/EC joint meeting agenda.

Prepared By: Wendy Tyrrell/Manager, Islands Trust Conservancy

Reviewed By/Date: Clare Frater/Director, Trust Area Services/May 7, 2026



Public Acquisitions Update For the Meeting of May 12, 2026

Property Name and Island	Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	Notes
PUBLICLY CONSIDERED PRIVATE LAND ACQUISITIONS		
Crystal Mountain (Galiano) 18.3 ha.	2017/11/21	ITC previously considered a conservation covenant proposal and land transfer proposal for this property.
	2017/11/21	<p>TFB-2017-031: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Trust Fund Board accept the updated Conservation Proposal from the Crystal Mountain Society, agreeing to accept transfer of approximately 18.3 hectares of Lot 9, District Lot 90, Galiano Island, Cowichan District, Plan 31200, (PID 000-851-035) and part of Lot A, District Lots 88 and 89, Galiano Island, Cowichan District, Plan VIP68079, (PID 024-351-041), subject to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The release of the rent charge and related easements on the title of Lot A and any other charges determined, through legal review, to be problematic for the Trust Fund Board; 2. Establishing legal access for the Trust Fund Board to the most eastern part of Lot A; 3. Receipt of \$30,000 upon transfer of the land, with at least \$15,000 to be held in a pooled Nature Reserve Management Fund, and \$10,000 to \$15,000 to be put towards the development of a management plan and management activities for the nature reserve; 4. Staff reaching mutual agreement with the water license holders to limit the impact of accessing and maintaining the permitted water works; 5. Agreement with the Society that the portion of the proposed Emergency Access over the nature reserve would be used only in the case of emergency; 6. Written agreement with the Society about the use and maintenance of the pagoda; 7. Installation of boundary and corner pin markers at the time of survey at the expense of the applicant (locations to be determined in consultation with ITF staff); and 8. Final approval of the Trust Fund Board of the final survey plan, transfer agreement and all other associated agreements.
	2019/07/24	Received subdivision proposal plan from the planning department.
	2020/09/08	Applicant provided a revised proposal to the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee.
	2020/12/10	File transferred to TAS Director Frater due to declared conflict of interest by ITC Manager, Kate Emmings.
	2021/01/28	ITC Staff met with applicant. An application update is anticipated for the May ITC Meeting.
	2021/05/25	Update provided to ITC Board.
	2021/05/25	<p>ITC-2021-019: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board accept the updated approximate lot configuration proposed by the Crystal Mountain Society, subject to staff assessment that adjusted lot boundaries meet ITC conservation goals and policies, based upon a site visit and review of any necessary additional ecological information from the applicant.</p>



Public Acquisitions Update For the Meeting of May 12, 2026

Crystal Mountain (Galiano) 18.3 ha.	2021/05/25	<p>ITC-2021-020: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board accept the Crystal Mountain Society proposal to register a Statutory Right of Way across Lot A on the upper ridge, in favour of Islands Trust Conservancy, to provide legal access to the eastern part of Lot A via the legal easement across neighbouring Lots B and C.</p> <p>ITC-2021-021: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board express support for the Crystal Mountain Society proposal to alter the lot boundaries of Lot 9 and Lot 10, prior to land transfer to Islands Trust Conservancy, to remove the pagoda from the proposed nature reserve, subject to staff assessment that adjusted lot boundaries meet ITC conservation goals and policies, based upon a site visit and review of any necessary additional ecological information from the applicant</p> <p>ITC-2021-022: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request that the Crystal Mountain Society update the Ecological Inventory report and other relevant documents to reflect the proposed boundary changes, prior to transfer of the land.</p> <p>ITC-2021-023: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board accept the Crystal Mountain Society proposal to register a Statutory Right of Way for emergency access on Lot A in favour of the Capital Regional District prior to subdivision, subject to Crystal Mountain Society’s working with ITC staff to develop an appropriate agreement.</p>
	2021/07/07	Staff site visit scheduled.
	2021/07/21	Follow-up staff visit to discuss lot boundary options.
	2022/02/09	Applicant and staff discuss coordinating a visit from a Cultural Knowledge Holder.
	2022/08/16	Meeting with applicant to discuss their meeting with Penelakut Elders and leadership.
	2022/11/24	Meeting with applicant’s agent to discuss potential co-management relationship with Penelakut.
	2023/02/01	Applicant’s agent provided update on process of fulfilling ITC Board’s requirements; continuing discussion with staff about engagement with Penelakut Tribe and other Indigenous community members.
	2023/05/06	Penelakut Tribe has requested greater consultation around subdivision and bylaw. ITC work on hold.
	2025/07/22	ITC Board received, for information, letter sent to IT Planning Team that the CMS Rezoning Committee has dissolved and the CMS Board will be considering next steps with the ongoing rezoning application.
	2026/05/12	No new updates.
Current Total ITC Acquisitions:		34



ISLANDS TRUST CONSERVANCY

PUBLIC COVENANTS UPDATE For the Meeting of May 12, 2026

NAPTEP COVENANTS		
<i>29 NAPTEP Covenants on title, 3 NAPTEP covenants in progress, Ecological Gifts application in progress for 1 completed NAPTEP covenant</i>		
<i>2 NAPTEP enquiries since last Board meeting (1 Denman LTA, 1 Gambier LTA)</i>		
Property	Date	Notes
Walker NAPTEP Covenant (Salt Spring Is., ~2.5 ha)	2025/11/15	Application received. Applicant had had previous discussions with ITC staff prior to submitting the application.
	2025/12/16	Staff site visit.
	2026/03/17	Staff report and RFD in this package.
	2026/05/12	Preparing to send First Nations referrals with response window to June 20, 2026
Martin NAPTEP Covenant (Salt Spring Is., ~1 ha)	2024/08/25	Application received.
	2024/10/28	Staff site visit.
	2024/10/29	Applicant submitted request for fee sponsorship. Staff will send to Executive Committee for review and approval at an upcoming meeting.
	2024/11/19	ITC-2024-061: It was MOVED and SECONDED that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board approve the conservation proposal submitted by Tara Martin, to place a NAPTEP covenant on approximately 1 ha of Salt Spring Island, PID: 000-363-740, Lot A, Section 39, South Salt Spring Island, Cowichan District, Plan 35768, subject to review of First Nations responses and to Ministerial approval, to protect woodlands and herbaceous habitats, maturing dry Douglas-fir forest, and connectivity with adjacent protected areas.
	2024/12/05	Staff is preparing application for referral to First Nations.
	2025/01/09	Referrals sent to affected First Nations, with input requested by 10 March.
	2025/02/14	Sent for information to Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee. No comments received.
	2025/02/19	Site visit with landholder and SƆÁUTW (Tsawout) to discuss the covenant project. Discussion ongoing.
	2025/03/10	Referral reminder sent to First Nations, and to offer referral window extension.
	2025/03/11	Application for tax exemption reviewed and approved by Trust Council. TC-2-25-035: It was MOVED by Trustee Gauvreau, and SECONDED by Trustee Peterson, that the Islands Trust Council request the Secretary to issue a Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption (NAPTEP) Certificate for the covenanted portion of the property described as PID: 000-363-740, Lot A, Section 39, South Salt Spring Island, Cowichan District, Plan 35768, subject to registration of a conservation covenant and completion of a baseline inventory report consistent with the standards developed for Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption (NAPTEP).
2025/04/15	Referral reminder sent to three First Nations who had requested referral window extension.	



PUBLIC COVENANTS UPDATE For the Meeting of May 12, 2026

Martin NAPTEP Covenant (cont'd)	2025/05/23	Staff discussed mortgage holder consent and priority agreement for the covenant, and sent follow-up information for applicant to use in discussions with mortgage holder.
	2025/05/27	No new updates.
	2025/06/09	Referral reminder sent to three First Nations who had requested referral window extension. Ongoing discussion with Tsawout First Nation about how to address their access and cultural stewardship concerns in the covenant draft.
	2025/07/17	Referral reminder sent to three First Nations who had requested referral window extension.
	2025/07/22	No new updates
	2025/07/24	Application sent for Ministerial approval.
	2025/07/28	Applicant submitted application for Executive Committee sponsorship of NAPTEP application fees. Application will be reviewed by Trust Council at their December quarterly meeting.
	2025/07/31	Response from Ministry of Housing & Municipal Affairs that application is under review, and they are unable to provide a timeline for response due to recent appointment of new Minister.
	2025/10/03	Covenant approved by Minister.
	2025/11/18	Update: Landholder is arranging preliminary approval for Priority Agreement with mortgage holder, with ITC staff support. Ongoing. All work related to the negotiating and drafting of the covenant is on hold pending agreement from mortgage holder.
	2025/12/08	Application for fee sponsorship reviewed and approved by Trust Council. THAT Trust Council approve financial sponsorship of \$450 for Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) application PLNAP-20240358, Martin NAPTEP, Salt Spring Island. TC-2025-141: It was MOVED by Trustee Evans, and SECONDED by Trustee Yates, that Trust Council approve financial sponsorship of \$450 for Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) application PLNAP-20240358, Martin NAPTEP, Salt Spring Island.
	2026/01/20	No updates.
	2026/05/12	No updates.
Doris McHardy NAPTEP Covenant (North Pender Is, ~1 ha)	2024/02/04	Application received.
	2024/02/14	Application sent for Ministerial approval.
	2024/03/19	ITC-2024-13: It was MOVED and SECONDED that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board approve the conservation proposal submitted by Sara Miles, Mike Timmins, and Vivian Mitchell, to place a NAPTEP covenant on approximately 0.6 ha of North Pender Island, PID: 005-837-651, Lot 6, Sections 18 and 22, Pender Island, Cowichan District, Plan 6294, subject to review of First Nations responses and to Ministerial approval, to protect woodlands and herbaceous habitats, maturing dry Douglas-fir forest, and adjacent protected areas.



PUBLIC COVENANTS UPDATE For the Meeting of May 12, 2026

Doris McHardy NAPTEP (cont'd)	2024/04/18	Staff updated the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, who replied that they will wait for results of First Nations referral before reviewing the application.
	2024/04/29	Application referred to First Nations. Response window of 90 days ends on July 25 th , 2024.
	2024/07/08	Referral reminder sent to First Nations.
	2024/07/25	First Nations referral response window closes. Responses compiled and submitted to Minister's office for review and approval of the covenant application.
	2024/08/28	Covenant approved by the Minister. Application will be sent to Trust Council for tax exemption approval at December 2024 meeting, and for information to North Pender LTC.
	2024/10/28	Applicant submitted request for fee sponsorship.
	2024/10/30	Applicant requested ITC support in arranging preliminary approval for Priority Agreement with mortgage holder. Ongoing. Any work negotiating and drafting covenant is on hold pending agreement from mortgage holder.
	2024/11/20	Executive Committee approved sponsorship of NAPTEP Application: <i>EC-2024-146: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Executive Committee approve financial sponsorship of \$450 for Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) application NP-NAP-2024.1 (Doris McHardy), North Pender Island.</i> Staff will process Ph 1 fee refund and Ph 2 fee waiver.
	2024/11/29	Referred for information to North Pender Island Local Trust Committee. No comments received.
	2024/12/04	Application for tax exemption reviewed and approved by Trust Council. TC-2024-111: It was MOVED by Trustee Elliott, and SECONDED by Trustee Morrison, that the Islands Trust Council requests the Secretary to issue a Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program Certificate for the covenanted portion of the property described as PID: 005-837-651, Lot 6, Sections 18 and 22, Pender Island, Cowichan District, Plan 6294, subject to registration of a conservation covenant and completion of a baseline inventory report consistent with the standards developed for NAPTEP.
	2025/01/10	Staff informed applicant of TC decision and next steps.
	2025/01/19	Staff provided the ITC Board with a summary of First Nations responses. Deferred to next meeting
	2025/03/18	Staff provided the ITC Board with a summary of First Nations responses.
	2025/05/27	No new updates.
2025/06/09	Applicant informed staff that they will continue work on priority agreement in the autumn when negotiating mortgage renewal.	
2026/03/17	Staff contacted applicant to discuss status and proposed next steps. Applicant is considering withdrawing the application.	



**PUBLIC COVENANTS UPDATE
For the Meeting of May 12, 2026**

	2026/04/08	Brief discussion with applicant to discuss the application. Next steps still under discussion.
	2026/05/12	North Pender Island LTC has referred a bylaw / rezoning for the property adjacent to this proposed NAPTEP covenant. RFD in this package.
Koontz NAPTEP Covenant Gabriola Island (~2.5 ha)	2023/02/08	Application received.
	2023/05/30	ITC-2023-017: It was MOVED and SECONDED , that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board approve the conservation proposal submitted by Yarrow Koontz, to place a NAPTEP covenant on approximately 2.5 ha of Gabriola Island, PID: 005-788-447, That Part of Lot 3, Section 5, Gabriola Island, Nanaimo District, Plan 6986, Lying to the North West of a Road Dedication by Plan 17829, Except those parts in Plans 21783 and 26145, to protect wetlands, maturing forest, and sensitive riparian and cliff habitats.
	2023/06/12	Staff informed applicant of Board decision.
	2023/07/07	Application referred to First Nations.
	2023/08/18	First Nations referral window ended. Only one response has been received, indicating no comments regarding this application.
	2023/09/14	Referred for information to Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee. No comments received.
	2023/09/27	Application for tax exemption approved by Trust Council (resolution number pending)
	2023/10/05	Phase II next steps correspondence sent to landholder.
	2023/10/19	Site visit to determine covenant area boundaries.
	2023/10/23	Applicant submitted request to have NAPTEP fees sponsored by EC. Staff working to add to November EC meeting
	2023/10/26	Submitted expression of interest for funding support from Ecological Gifts Program.
	2023/11/22	Executive Committee approved sponsorship of NAPTEP Application: EC-2023-120: It was MOVED and SECONDED , that Executive Committee approve financial sponsorship of \$450 for Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) application GB-NAP-2023.1 (Koontz), Gabriola Island.
	2023/12/08	Applicant requested ITC support in arranging Priority Agreement with mortgage holder. Ongoing. Further work negotiating and drafting covenant is on hold pending agreement from mortgage holder.
	2023/12/15	NAPTEP Phase I fee refund cheque mailed to applicant.
	2023/12/22	ITC staff worked with GaLLT to secure Ecological Gifts Program funding for covenant area survey; procurement process underway (contract will be directly with Environment & Climate Change Canada). Survey work planned for January.
2024/02/14	Application sent for Ministerial approval.	



**PUBLIC COVENANTS UPDATE
For the Meeting of May 12, 2026**

**Koontz NAPTEP
Covenant (cont'd)**

2024/02/29	Contract signed for land survey (with ECCC).
2024/03/27	Covenant area survey complete.
2024/03/27	Ministerial approval received for covenant.
2024/05/13	Applicant connected with mortgage provider about Priority Agreement.
2024/06/21	Mortgage holder provided approval in principle for a Priority Agreement for the covenant and SRW over the mortgage.
2024/08/23	Draft covenant reviewed by ITC legal.
2024/08/28	Draft baseline inventory report submitted by contractor. Reviewed by ITC.
2024/09/16	Final draft covenant sent to landholder and GaLLT for final agreement on language.
2024/09/17	ITC staff site visit to complete field surveys for baseline inventory report.
2024/10/01	ITC-2024-048: It was MOVED and SECONDED , that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board authorizes the Chair to sign a covenant with Yarrow Koontz, over a portion of the Land described as That Part of Lot 3, Section 5, Gabriola Island, Nanaimo District, Plan 6986, Lying to the North West of a Road Dedication by Plan 17829, Except those parts in Plans 21783 and 26145, PID: 005-788-447, and directs staff to register the covenant through the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP).
2024/10/12	Application to register covenant submitted to Land Titles and Survey Authority.
2024/10/24	Covenant registered on title. Natural Area Exemption Certificate submitted to Land Titles.
2024/11/07	Natural Area Exemption Certificate registered on title. Staff has prepared and sent all necessary notifications and copies.
2024/11/07	NAPTEP application process complete. Application file closed.
2024/11/19	The Islands Trust Conservancy Board authorized a rise and report relating to the approval of spending up to \$2,000 from existing budgets towards the cost of an Ecological Gifts Program appraisal for a NAPTEP covenant on Gabriola Island.
2024/12/05	GaLLT and landholder are coordinating covenant appraisal for Ecological Gift Program application.
2025/03/27	Staff noticed oversight in baseline report. Amended baseline in progress.
2025/05/27	No new updates.



**PUBLIC COVENANTS UPDATE
For the Meeting of May 12, 2026**

Koontz NAPTEP Covenant (cont'd)	2025/07/22	<p>ITC-2025-025: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board authorize the Chair or any available ITC Authorized Signatory to sign the Modification Agreement to amend covenant CB1650359 registered on the land described as PID 005-788-447, That Part of Lot 3, Section 5, Gabriola Island, Nanaimo District, Plan 6986, Lying To The North West Of A Road Dedicated By Plan 17829, Except Those Parts In Plans 21783 And 26145.</p> <p>ITC-2025-026: It was MOVED and SECONDED, that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board authorize expenditure of up to \$300 to support the landholder and GaLTT in obtaining notarized signatures for registering the Modification Agreement</p>
	2025/10/29	Modification agreement submitted to Land Titles Office for registration. Expected examination date November 5 th .
	2025/11/12	Modification agreement registered on title. Updated copies of baseline report, covenant, title sent to all parties.
	2025/12/22	Service contract in process for appraisal for Ecological Gifts Program application. Appraisal work underway, deadline for submission 15 March, 2026.
	2026/03/17	Verbal update provided at this meeting regarding appraisal.
	2026/05/12	Staff is working with the applicant to prepare and submit EcoGifts application.

REGULAR COVENANTS

52 regular covenants on title, 0 public regular covenants in progress, 0 in camera covenants in progress.

Property	Date	Notes
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ITC NATURE RESERVES WITH COVENANTS OUTSTANDING

9 ITC Nature Reserves are without covenants, 1 ITC Nature Reserve covenant in progress.

Property	Date	Notes
Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserve Thetis Island (16.6 ha)	2018/03/20	ThINC Board approves resolution to hold a covenant on Fairyslipper Forest.
	2018/03/21	CCLT Board approves resolution to hold a covenant on Fairyslipper Forest.
	2018/04/03	TFB approves negotiation of conservation covenant in favour of ThINC and CCLT.
	2018/04/06	ITC template covenant sent to partners. Trail relocation is needed before finalizing baseline report.
	2018/10/13	Hosted Management Plan Open House on Thetis Island.
	2019/02/22	Draft management plan and baseline report sent to ThINC and CCLT staff for review.
	2019/05/21	ITC Board approves management plan with minor revisions.



**PUBLIC COVENANTS UPDATE
For the Meeting of May 12, 2026**

FFNR (cont'd)	2019/06/12	ThINC Board approves revised management plan.
	2019/09/26	CCLT Board approves revised management plan. Management Plan posted to the ITC website.
	2020/02/03	Trail relocation completed by contracted trail builder, Penelakut youth and volunteer labour. A Statutory Right of Way is required from the adjacent property where the trailhead and parking area are planned.
	2020/03/19	ThINC is working with the Thetis Island Residents and Ratepayers Association to obtain a trail license over adjacent private lands for access and parking for the Fairyslipper Forest Nature Reserve.
	2020/07/14	Adjacent landowner signs Trail Licence Agreement with TIRRA (Thetis Island Residents and Ratepayers Association). Staff continues to work with owner to develop permanent legal access.
	2022/04/25	Adjacent landowner extends Trail Licence Agreement with TIRRA.
	2022/06/06	Staff discussed proposed conservation covenant with ThINC, agreement to defer. Staff will reengage with adjacent landowner to discuss more formal access arrangement.
	2022/07/27	Adjacent landowner wishes to continue with informal access agreement. Staff will continue with current access and will consider varied trail options as part of the covenant negotiations.
	2022/10/04	ITC Board rescinds resolution directing staff to negotiate a statutory right of way and related section 219 covenant with adjacent landowner.
	2023/05/30	Staff re-initiated discussion about access arrangement with adjacent landowner. Numerous efforts to set up phone call or (preferred) site visit to discuss options; unable to set meeting.
	2023/11/20	TIRRA agrees to continue holding trail licence for access through adjacent private lands
	2024/01/24	Neighbour on eastern side establishes trail that connects into FFNR from Mt Burchell trail, in a trail licence with TIRRA, as an alternate access.
	2024/03/01	TIRRA and adjacent landholder sign renewed trail licence for existing informal access, to last until April 30, 2026, with automatic renewal for an additional 2 years unless either or both parties desires otherwise.
	2026/03/17	No new updates. Covenant negotiation has been deferred since 06 2022.
2026/05/12	No new updates.	
Total	81 covenants registered	