Islands Trust Conservancy Board

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

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

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

Staff Present
Wendy Tyrrell, Manager, Islands Trust Conservancy
Jemma Green, Team Lead, Protected Areas Program
Kathryn Martell, Ecosystem Protection Specialist
Caroline Gicheru, Acting Administrative Assistant/Meeting Administrator
Rob Kroeker, Meeting Administrator/Host
Carly Bilney, Recorder
Clare Frater, Director, Trust Area Services
David Marlor, Director, Legislative and Information Services
Jason Youmans, Senior Policy Advisor
Joe Elliott, Senior Indigenous Relations Advisor

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Gauvreau acknowledged that the meeting was being held in the traditional territory of the Coast Salish First Nations, and acknowledged the life and work of Musqueam Elder and Knowledge Keeper Shane Pointe, who dedicated his life to promoting the cultural and spiritual health of Indigenous Peoples.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3.1 Review of Agenda and Introduction of New Items

Introductions were made, and no new items were added to the agenda.

3.2 Approval of Agenda

By general consent the agenda was approved, as presented.

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

The following amendments to the minutes were presented for consideration:

- On page 2 of the minutes (page 4 of the agenda) under Item 6 Follow Up Action List: indent the motion, then note that "Discussion ensued on the investment of all Islands Trust Conservancy funds options."

By general consent, the Islands Trust Conservancy meeting minutes of March 17, 2026 were adopted as amended.

6. FOLLOW UP ACTION LIST

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- Manager Tyrrell commented on the working group meetings between Islands Trust senior staff and the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council and Islands Trust Conservancy staff attending working group meetings with other Islands Trust staff and Indigenous Governing Bodies.
- Manager Tyrrell confirmed that $1-million of the Opportunity Fund has been invested in a high-yield savings account and clarified that any change in the investment of Islands Trust Conservancy funds must first receive ministerial approval while the allocation of funds to operations and projects and granting of funds requires a pre-Board approval notification to the Minister.

7. BUSINESS

7.1 Items for Approval

7.1.1 <u>Draft Bylaw No. 242 Referral, North Pender Island - RFD</u>

Team Lead Green reviewed the referral and commented that the proposal may lead to intensified industrial uses in the future, and that there is not enough information in documentation provided to ensure the rezoning will not negatively impact nearby protected areas. Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- A suggestion was made to add "orange lines" in the description of map in figure 2 of the Request for Decision, to identify where the proposed Doris McHardy NAPTEP Covenant is located on the map

- Concern was expressed about the type of activity proposed including a potential for gradually increasing levels of industrial activity
- The Board expressed appreciation for the work and analysis provided in the staff report
- Comments were made about adjacent properties that were protected for critical habitat for species at risk, and how the activity could be better suited in an alternative location
- Comment was made about the large number of correspondences sent to the Local Trust Committee in support of finding a different location
- Comments by the Board were made about how the proposal reveals gaps in how agencies across the Islands Trust Area cooperate together
- Manager Tyrrell commented that the Islands Trust Conservancy team and the planning team have worked closely on the referral, and the concerns of the Conservancy have been provided to the consulting firm that submitted the Environmental Impact Assessment report, and that an addendum to the report will be included in the submission to the Local Trust Committee

ITC-2026-027
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board requests 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.

CARRIED

ITC-2026-028
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board requests 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.

CARRIED

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

Team Lead Green reviewed the proposed Management Plan. Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- BC Hydro doesn't manage Scotch broom in hydro right of ways
- A question was posed to staff inquiring if they could engage with BC Hydro about the impact of invasive species in protected areas
- Staff responded that engaging with BC Hydro regarding their invasive plant management strategy would be a significant allocation of staff time
- Cultural practices, including Indigenous hunting and prescribed burning, are being added to management plans for conservation properties within the Islands Trust Area
- There are examples of stewardship practices such as cultural burning and harvesting in other organizations (e.g. Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve in Duncan) that mitigate climate change impacts.

Director Frater joined the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

ITC-2026-029
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board approves 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.

CARRIED

ITC-2026-030
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board provides the following comments with their approval of the Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve Land Management Plan dated 30 September, 2025:

a. The Islands Trust Conservancy Board acknowledges, and is supportive of, Salt Spring Island Conservancy's intentions to engage in meaningful reconciliation work with First Nations.

b. The Islands Trust Conservancy 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 Islands Trust Conservancy 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.

CARRIED

Discussion ensued about whether a motion should be made regarding engagement with BC Hydro and the management of Scotch broom. It was suggested that there were several topics noted for discussion with BC Hydro, and careful Board consideration is recommended to determine a specific request to staff.

7.1.3 Draft ITC Annual Report – RFD

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- A suggestion was made to review the Islands Trust Conservancy Reconciliation Declaration and consider changing "will strive" to a reflect active efforts being made to create opportunities for knowledge sharing once we receive feedback from First Nations through the Five-year Plan engagement process
- A suggestion was made to remove reference to the "ongoing maintenance of the house" in the management of the Ruby Alton Property Endowment Fund (page13 of the Annual Report)
- A suggestion was made to add "(Lisa Gauvreau)" after "And myself as Chair" (page 5 of Annual Report)
- Comments were made about measures being taken to decolonize policies as part of a policy renovation project
- Staff noted that a project charter on the policy renovation project will be brought to the Board at the July meeting

Trustee Georgeson joined the meeting at 11:10am.

- The Board sought clarification from staff regarding the Policy Renovation Project (page 93). Discussion ensued on whether this was a "new project".
- The Board noted that Trust Council had agreed to pause all new projects at the December 2025 meeting.
- Staff clarified that policy work, including the creation of new policies and updating out-dated policies is ongoing work, that has not been guided by a project charter to date. Presenting a project charter to the Board will clarify the scope, costs and implications of a policy review and renovation and inform the Board in order to provide guidance to staff
- Director Frater also noted that Trust Council policy updates are ongoing as well

ITC-2026-031
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) Board approves the draft 2025-26 ITC Annual Report as amended 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.

CARRIED

7.2 Items for Discussion/Direction

Director Marlor joined the meeting at 11:13 a.m.

7.2.2 Artificial Intelligence and the Islands Trust (Verbal Briefing)

Director Marlor summarized the provincial policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and considerations to be made by the Islands Trust in developing an AI policy. The summary included:

- A writer using AI must ensure their work is correct and that the tone is appropriate for the Islands Trust
- Anything put into an AI chatbot is public; confidential material or an entire letter from a member of the public should not be used in order to protect privacy
- AI should be treated as an untrustworthy assistant and information from AI must be verified to ensure accuracy

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- Concern was expressed by the Board about how AI policy could apply to staff and contractors
- Checks and balances should be included in a contract when it is written (e.g. the consultant should have an opportunity to make necessary edits before the contract ends; a contract could also include a payment schedule; a contractor is required to hold insurance for professional liability and errors and omissions)
- Some organizations require every report to identify whether or not AI was used
- AI can only use publicly available information
- There are concerns with the ethics of using AI as a generative tool
- There are negative environmental and human impacts (e.g. water use, electromagnetic radiation, noise) from AI data centres
- AI engines extract information to influence commerce and a policy should be in place to understand related concerns
- Director Marlor clarified that his recommendation to send the Board's motion through Trust Council was to ensure standardized documentation and reporting throughout the Islands Trust

ITC-2026-032
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board requests that Trust Council request staff to identify if Generative Artificial Intelligence has been used in the generation of briefings, discussion notes or requests for decisions.

CARRIED

7. BUSINESS (cont.)

7.1 Items for Approval

7.1.4 Scheduling of a Special Meeting (Verbal Briefing)

Manager Tyrrell explained the purpose for a proposed special meeting is for the Board to receive the 2026 annual financial statement and auditors report, and for staff to bring the 2027-28 preliminary budget requests overview to the Board. It was noted the anticipated duration of the special meeting will be from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Trustee Yates noted she will be unable to attend.

ITC-2026-033
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board schedule an electronic special meeting for June 2, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. to consider the 2027/28 budget request overview and receive the 2026 Auditors Report and presentation.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned for a break at 11:51 a.m. and reconvened at 12:25 p.m.

7.2 Items for Discussion/Direction (cont.)

7.2.1 Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program - BRF

Senior Policy Advisor Jason Youmans summarized the briefing and the following comments were made:

- When a property receives an exemption under the Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP), the tax that property owner would otherwise pay is recouped by the relevant taxing authority (Province, regional district, Islands Trust, etc) from other taxpayers
- The report was provided to the Ministry of Finance for preliminary review,
- A primary concern for the Province is what impact an increased NAPTEP tax exemption would be on other taxpayers
- The report findings show that if a minimal number of new NAPTEP covenants were incentivized by an increased tax exemption rate, the impact on other tax payers would be minor
- There is no fixed deadline for the Board to respond to Trust Council

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- Support was expressed by trustees for increasing the tax exemption to 100%
- Staff noted there would be an impact to staff workload, as NAPTEP applications require a great deal of work

- The report highlights that NAPTEP is a very cost-effective approach to land conservation
- It is encouraging to know the Minister of Finance is supportive of the report's methodology
- Trustees noted that while the report is an excellent analysis for proposed cost-shifting, it does not include the full-cost accounting to the Province for landowners protecting a resilient forest (e.g. what are the financial benefits to protecting healthy ecosystems and private lands with intact stands forest, replenishing the groundwater, maintaining a less fire-prone forest, etc)
- It was noted that NAPTEP is a valuable tax incentive, given the high percentage of privately held lands in the Trust Area and that covenants allow landowners to see the benefit of conservation as they continue to live on the land
- Concern was expressed by trustees about whether there is capacity for the Islands Trust Conservancy to take on additional covenant applications
- If the Province changed the regulation, it could result in a need for additional Conservancy staff, as applications for NAPTEP covenants could increase
- Staff noted that some First Nations have asked staff to consider how covenants have been seen by Indigenous Peoples as a colonial construct that adds an additional encumbrance on the land, and suggested a more detailed analysis of the potential impacts of an increased NAPTEP exemption be put together for consideration to the Board
- Staff noted that land holders who currently have a non-NAPTEP covenant with the Islands Trust Conservancy may want to convert their covenant to a NAPTEP covenant
- Staff noted that an increased incentive through NAPTEP may result in a reduction in the number of lands being protected by local islands conservancies
- Those landowners with existing covenants held by local island conservancies may consider shifting their covenants to Islands Trust Conservancy to benefit from the increased NAPTEP tax incentive

ITC-2026-034
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board request staff to review the Hypothetical Tax Shift Analysis report referred by Trust Council, and return to the Board with an analysis of considerations and implications of the Trust Council proposal to advocate for an increase in the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program tax exemption, to inform the Board's recommendations to Trust Council.

CARRIED

7.2.3 <u>ITC-EC Liaison Meeting – July 28, 2026 – Agenda Topics - BRF</u>

Manager Tyrrell provided an overview of the briefing, and which asks what topics the Board would like to be included in the upcoming ITC/EC liaison meeting.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- Support was expressed for discussing how the Islands Trust can do better to embed consideration of biology and ecological integrity into land use decision making
- Mixed opinions were expressed about discussing the use of artificial intelligence in the upcoming meeting
- The Caring for Nature Initiative by the Bowen Island Conservancy was referred to as a positive example of assessing biodiversity values across the islands
- A suggestion was made to discuss these topics:
    - ecological integrity across the islands – tools, trends and data gaps
    - undertaking cultural heritage protection, and
    - Reconciliation and engagement with First Nations
- There is more work to be done about the long-term sustainability of the Island Trust Conservancy's operations
- Assessing whether the objective of the Trust is being upheld with regards to ecological integrity in land use planning
- There is a need to assess what steps the Islands Trust should take to transition from primarily conventional land-use planning toward a more integrated conservation and ecosystem-informed planning model that better reflects current ecological realities, Reconciliation commitments, and long-term community well-being
- Support was expressed for a discussion topic about priorities for preserving ecological integrity across the Trust Area
- A trustee noted that it would be helpful for the ITC Board to have an update on the state of the environment for each island
- The Regional Conservation Plan highlights areas to be prioritized for protection in the Islands Trust Area and has been available to land use planners for years. It expires in 2029, and is scheduled to begin the update process in 2027-28, to be re-published in 2030
- It was noted by a trustee that the current Regional Conservation Plan is static and does not allow for changes on that ground to be fed back into the plan to encourage ecosystem-informed decision making in the long-term
- Could the Regional Conservation Plan be imagined differently for more integrated for use by the public, planners and staff
- A suggestion was made to refer to Draft Bylaw No. 242 on North Pender Island as an example of the need to improve internal communications in regards to the planning processes

Chair Gauvreau summarized the topics to be included in the July 28, 2026 ITC-EC liaison meeting as:

- Reconciliation and engagement with First Nations
- Updating the Regional Conservation Plan
- Discussion of artificial intelligence

Staff agreed to add these topics of discussion to the ITC/EC liaison meeting agenda.

7.3 Correspondence – None

7.4 Updates for Information

7.4.1 Public Acquisitions Report

The Islands Trust Conservancy Board reviewed the Public Acquisitions Report for information.

7.4.2 Public Covenants Report

The Islands Trust Conservancy Board reviewed the Public Covenants Report for information.

7.4.3 ITC Five-year Plan Update (Verbal)

Manager Tyrrell provided an update on the development of the draft 2028-2032 Five-year Plan. The following comments were made:

- There have been increasingly fulsome Conservancy staff-to-First Nations staff discussions.
- There is interest from other First Nations who are actively seeking information about what is involved in Phase 2 of the project.
- Next steps include the preparation of guiding principles and meeting with interested Nations on how to best work together on overlapping interests and policy renovation

Manager Tyrrell commented on the high number of referrals received by First Nations on a daily basis and that the Five-year Plan may not be a high priority, and added that Board members can provide her contact information to First Nations that have an interest in participating in the process of updating the plan.

7.4.4 Executive Committee Update (Verbal)

Trustee Elliott noted the following:

- The Executive Committee is developing strategic priorities and a related public engagement survey will be delivered where people can rank issues that matter most to them

- Executive Committee members attended the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Community Convention in April and produced reports on what they learned

7.4.5 Trust Council Update (Verbal)

None.

7.4.6 Financial Planning Committee Update (Verbal)

Trustee Yates commented that there are Trustees who do not realize how important the Islands Trust Conservancy is to the entire Trust Area.

Trustee Elliott commented that the next Financial Planning Committee meeting will include discussion led by Director of Financial and Employee Services Derek Cockburn about the Budget Assumptions and Principles document, and may be of interest to Board members.

7.4.7 Governance Committee Update (Verbal)

Chair Gauvreau reviewed activities undertaken by the Governance Committee including:

- Discussion of ways to improve Trust Council committee structure
- Review of the Table of Delegated Authorities and Governance Structure
- Recommendations made related to resolutions-without-meeting bylaw procedures, and
- Approval of the Committee’s annual report

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DELEGATIONS – None.

9. NEW BUSINESS – None.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next Islands Trust Conservancy Board meetings are scheduled for:

- Special Meeting on June 2, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., and
- Regular Meeting on July 28, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. followed by the ITC-EC Liaison Meeting from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

11. CLOSED MEETING

11.1 Motion to Close the Meeting

ITC-2026-035
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) (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.

CARRIED

The meeting was closed to the public at 1:40 p.m. and reconvened in open meeting at 2:15 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent, the meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

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Lisa Gauvreau, Chair

Certified Correct:

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Carly Bilney, Recorder