



News Release

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ISLANDS TRUST COUNCIL APPROVES 2019/20 BUDGET

Gabriola Island—The Islands Trust Council approved a budget of \$7.94 million for 2019/20 at its March 13th meeting on Gabriola Island. Details of the approved budget are available on the Islands Trust [website](#).

"The approved budget will support the important work of preserving and protecting the Trust Area on both a local and regional level," said Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. "It enables us to maintain existing services, while meeting other strategic needs. Input that we received from trustees, staff, and, in record numbers, from the public informed the budget process. Thank you to everyone who took the time to share your insights. We truly value the thoughtful responses we received."

For this financial year, Trust Council is budgeting for a 2.3% decrease in total expenditures from the 2018/19 budget. As Trust Council will be drawing less funds from its reserve fund than it did in the previous financial year (\$156,000 as opposed to \$605,000), the 2019/20 budget is funded by a 2.0% tax increase overall for the Islands Trust Area (other than Bowen Island).

The budget results in a 12.1% increase for Bowen Island taxpayers who contribute a proportional share of the operating costs of federation-wide services, such as Trust Council and Islands Trust Conservancy meetings and programs. Each year, for Bowen Island, Islands Trust staff use the formula established by provincial legislation and Islands Trust policy to calculate the amount to requisition. To inform development of future budgets, Trust Council's Financial Planning Committee has requested staff to review the formula used to determine Bowen Island's contribution to the Islands Trust budget. Staff will provide this analysis to the Financial Planning Committee in May.

In addition to supporting the work of local trust committees, Trust Council, and Islands Trust Conservancy projects, the approved budget funds a 2.0% wage increase for all union staff, per the BCGEU Collective Agreement, a 2.3% increase to trustee remuneration (per Trust Council's policy on Trustee Remuneration). It also includes an additional amount to fund the newly legislated provincial health tax.

Other initiatives funded through the approved budget include improvements to the Islands Trust websites, increased outreach to landowners about opportunities for protecting their land, and a public engagement project about possible updates the Policy Statement, the document that underpins and guides the work of the Trust. There is also funding to support strategic projects, set to begin after Trust Council has adopted its strategic plan for the term. The budget also includes a Salt Spring Island special property tax requisition of \$98,500 to fund continued co-ordination of watershed management on Salt Spring Island.

The Islands Trust is a federation of local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and another 10,000 non-resident property-owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, co-operation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

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