

October 25, 2024

2024-15-IT

Islands Trust to Begin Thetis Island Property Cleanup

Lək'wəḡən, METULIYE/Victoria, B.C. - The Islands Trust Executive Committee has approved funding to clean up a property on Thetis Island. The cleanup, which is authorized by a British Columbia Supreme Court order, is the culmination of years of seeking compliance with land use bylaws, followed by legal action about the unlawful use of the property as an automobile salvage yard and outdoor vehicle repair business. The property has been the subject of legal action by Islands Trust since 2020.

Islands Trust will be engaging a contractor to remove derelict vehicles, debris, and auto parts from the site. Islands Trust Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement staff will be present throughout the cleanup to ensure compliance.

"This cleanup is a significant step forward in addressing the long-standing concerns about this property," said Tobi Elliott, Chair of the Thetis Island Local Trust Committee. "By removing these hazards, we are ensuring the protection of the natural environment and promoting community safety."

The property owner has repeatedly failed to comply with Islands Trust bylaw enforcement actions and with British Columbia Supreme Court orders to cease unlawful activities and remove the debris by the dates specified in the court orders. Despite enforcement efforts, the site remains a safety hazard, with the risk amplified by a fire that occurred on the property in April 2023. Islands Trust intends to take additional actions to recover taxpayer funding.

Local trust committees create bylaws suitable to the local trust area and Islands Trust uses a 'complaint-based' bylaw enforcement and compliance process. Almost all bylaw enforcement investigations result from community complaints but investigations can be initiated by staff if there are concerns about damage to environmentally sensitive areas and health and safety. Islands Trust Council and local trust committees may adopt general bylaw compliance and enforcement policies to set priorities for investigations.

Local trust committees and local trustees do not get involved in specific investigations unless a bylaw compliance and enforcement officer recommends a course of action. If a local trust committee approves an action, the Islands Trust Executive Committee must then approve any related financial costs before legal counsel assistance or contractors can be requested.

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