Regional Planning Committee
Agenda

Date: Friday, February 6, 2026

Time: 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Location: Electronic Zoom Meeting

6.2.2 RPC RWM 2025-02 Cancel RPC Regular Meeting on Oct. 31, 2025 27 - 27

For information

6.2.3 RPC RWM 2025-03 Adopt Fiscal Year 2026/27 Regular Meeting Dates 28 - 28

For information

6.2.4 RPC RWM 2025-04 Convene RPC Special Meeting on Jan. 13, 2026 29 - 29

For information

6.3 Follow up Action List 30 - 33

For review

7. BUSINESS - WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

7.1 Integrating Biological Information Into Land Use Decisions 34 - 36

7.2 Freshwater Strategy – Update 37 - 70

7.3 Housing Action Plan – Update 71 - 72

7.4 Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Review Project 73 - 120

1. That Regional Planning Committee endorse and refer to Trust Council:

   a. The revisions to draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.5.1 as shown in the draft attached to the Request for Decision dated January 29, 2026,

   b. The draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual, and

   c. The Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy Review and Portal Implementation Plan.

8. BUSINESS - OTHER

9. BUSINESS - NEW

10. WORK PROGRAM 121 - 125

For review and referral to Trust Council before each quarterly TC meeting

11. NEXT MEETING

The next Regional Planning Committee regular meeting is May 1, 2026 at 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

12. CLOSED MEETING

If desired:

That the meeting be closed to the public in accordance with the Community Charter, Part 4, Division 3, s.90, (quote the pertinent section here, for example, (1)(a) personal information about...) and that the recorder and staff [attend/not attend] the meeting.

13. RISE AND REPORT

If desired

14. ADJOURNMENT

*Approximate time is provided for the convenience of the public only and is subject to change without notice.

Info@friendsofthegulfislands.ca
www.friendsofthegulfislands.ca

October 13, 2025

To: Regional Planning Committee
From: Friends of the Gulf Islands Society

Re: Draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.51 and the Bylaw Compliance Enforcement Best Practices Manual

We understand that at their September Trust Council meeting, Trust Council endorsed the draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.51 and the Bylaw Compliance Enforcement Best Practices Manual.

We support many positive provisions of the new policy such as setting clear procedures for notifying both the person making the complaint and the person under investigation about the status of the complaint. However, we strongly urge you to correct major defects by amending the policy to omit sections 2.2.1 and 6.1.3 and amending section 7.1.3 and any relevant sections of the Manual.

Below are the problematic sections of this policy:

1. Section 2.2 "Where a written complaint has not been received investigations may be commenced in one or more of the following circumstances: 2.2.1 " By direction of a local trust committee;"
2. Section 6.1 "Bylaw investigation files will be closed in the following circumstances:" "6.1.3 On direction of a local trust committee;"
3. Priority of investigation 7.1 "As bylaw enforcement resources are limited investigations will be prioritized as follows:" 7.1.3 "Where adverse environmental impacts could result in irreversible damage if not prevented in a timely fashion."

Regarding policies one and two above, we urge you to amend the policy to comply with the advice of the Provincial Ombudsperson who was quoted in the staff report to Trust Council as stating that "[d]efining and maintaining separation between council and front-line enforcement staff is **essential to an administratively fair bylaw enforcement system**."

The Ombudsperson is polite. To be more specific, the separation between enforcement and elected officials is essential to prevent either the occurrence, appearance or suspicion of favouritism or outright corruption in the administration of bylaw compliance in the Trust islands.

For example, suspicions will multiply when a Local Trust Committee closes a file for some persons and not others. Trustees could even file bylaw violation complaints against people who criticize them, prompting all island residents to think twice about publicly criticizing positions held by elected trustees. Contrarily, trustees might consider closing an enforcement file against someone who gave them a substantial campaign contribution.

Current trustees might not do these things, but what about future trustees? Allowing elected officials to become directly involved in bylaw enforcement is an invitation to favouritism and corruption. We don't need policies that further damage the public's faith in good government.

The Bylaw Enforcement Manual also requires amendment. On page 7, it states "As listed in Trust Council Policy 5.5.1 Section 5.1, this system gives priority to those bylaw infractions of greatest concern to island communities: 1. When directed by a local trust committee". A sentence on this page also allows LTCs to request an investigation in a specific case. This policy should be amended to state that LTCs may determine categories of infractions or specific bylaws that should be given priority but not specific infraction cases.

Regarding item three above, many environmental harms can be corrected given sufficient expense and time. Even a forest will regrow if given sufficient time. However, in most cases the funding is not available and the time to repair the harm may be beyond the lifetime of current residents. We suggest this alternate language:
“Where adverse environmental damage if not prevented in a timely fashion, could result in harm to the natural environment”. This language leaves it up to the bylaw enforcement officer to determine under what circumstances environmental harm may occur. It would be better for such a determination to be made by someone with expertise in the natural environment, such as a biologist. But given current staffing, this may not be possible.

We hope you will take this correspondence very seriously and consider the amendments that we are suggesting. Public confidence in the Islands Trust is at stake.

Sincerely,

Maxine Leichter, Secretary
Friends of the Gulf Islands Society

From: Executive Admin
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2025 3:26 PM
To: RPC
Subject: FW: Bylaw enforcement?

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Hello Regional Planning Committee,

Please see the following email addressed to the Regional Planning Committee.

Warm regards,

Corlynn Strachan (she, her, hers)
A/ Executive Administrative Assistant
Islands Trust
250-405-5161

-----Original Message-----
From: Nancy Wigen <[redacted]>
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2025 11:11 PM
To: Executive Admin <execadmin@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Bylaw enforcement?

Attention:Islands Trust Regional Planning Committee.

I feel that it's important that the LTC.heed the advice of the Ombudsperson regarding bylaw enforcement. Failure to do this could lead to favouritism and corruption.

Sincerely

Nancy Wigen.

Regional Planning Committee
Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date:	**July 18, 2025**
Location:	**Electronic Meeting**
Members Present:	Mairead Boland, Saturna Island Local Trust Area, Chair Sam Borthwick, Denman Island Local Trust Area, Vice Chair Tobi Elliott, Gabriola Island Local Trust Area and Executive Committee Representative David Graham, Denman Island Local Trust Area Laura Patrick, Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area (ex officio) Aaron Campbell, North Pender Island Local Trust Area
Member Regrets:	none.
Staff Present:	Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager Warren Dingman, Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager William Shulba, Senior Freshwater Specialist Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder
Others Present:	Two members of the public were in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boland called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and acknowledged that participants of the meeting were attending all across the territories of the Coast Salish peoples.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Review of the Agenda

The following amendment to the agenda was presented for consideration:

- item 7.5 to be discussed first.

2.2 Approval of the Agenda

By general consent the Regional Planning Committee approved the agenda as presented.

Chair Boland reported that there was an incorrect link on the webpage preventing members of the public from joining the meeting, and item 3, Public Comment Period, would be deferred until later in the meeting when the link could be fixed by administrative staff.

4. DELEGATIONS

None.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

6.1 Draft Minutes of Previous Meeting

6.1.1 RPC Special Meeting Minutes of May 9, 2025

By general consent the Regional Planning Committee Minutes of May 9, 2025, were adopted as presented.

6.2 Resolutions Without Meeting (RWM)

None.

6.3 Follow-up Action List

Received for information.

Chair Boland indicated that the meeting link was fixed and item 3 Public Comment Period would commence.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A member of the public commented on the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy on behalf of Friends of the Gulf Islands, suggesting that the review of the project needs to be affordable and produce understandable results in clear, plain language. The strategy should include information regarding where there is enough water for more development, where there is not, and what parts of the islands need to be protected to steward existing water supplies.

7. BUSINESS – WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

7.5 Crown Tenure Application Referrals - Briefing

Director Cermak introduced the briefing. Committee discussion included:

- there are about 20 Crown lease referrals per year
- a trustee expressed interest in applications for non-domestic water use, and understanding how many of these type are applied for
- the process of referrals for aquaculture is vague and would benefit from review
- Local Trust Committees have different levels of interaction with Crown lease referrals
- referral response time is 30 days

- it is not useful to be copied for Local Trust Committee comment with meetings every 3 months
- other local governments have a screening step where staff determine if the referral is routine, and notify elected officials or refer for discussion
- many referrals are straightforward and either allowed by zoning or not, while infrastructure projects and aquaculture are more likely to see review
- one trustee suggested that trustees should be informed of each referral

Chair Boland indicated that Regional Planning Committee would resume discussion of the item later in the meeting.

7.1 Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy Review – Draft Policy 5.1.1 and Manual – Request For Decision

Regional Planning Manager Kojima introduced the Request For Decision, noting that the Office of the Ombudsperson has returned comments on the draft policy and Best Practices Manual and that these comments have been incorporated into the documents returned to the Committee. Committee discussion included:

- the Ombudsperson's office asked for the 90 day compliance deadline to be changed to "a reasonable timeframe" to incorporate flexibility
- a rough estimate of time given for compliance should still be provided in policy to give some common understanding
- anonymous complaints are treated separately than proactive investigations initiated without a complaint
- proactive investigations follow specific policy guidance regarding reasons to open a file, which includes health and safety or environmental concerns
- one trustee suggested that if a person is unwilling to put their name to a concern, then it does not meet the criteria of a formal complaint, and does not merit follow-up
- not accepting anonymous complaints encourages interaction with neighbours and assists in mitigating issues prior to bylaw enforcement involvement
- the bylaw compliance and enforcement process keeps complainant information confidential
- complainant information can only be released during legal disclosure
- Islands Trust does not need to make an allowance for anonymous complaints of any kind
- remove the Ombudsperson office's insertion about investigations without a complaint from section 2.1.2 Anonymous Complaints
- balance is sought between a fair system and robust enforcement tools

RPC 2025-018
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee request staff remove the second clause of draft policy 2.1.2 in the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Draft Policy 5.5.1 and update the Best Practices Manual accordingly.

CARRIED

Trustee Elliott left the meeting at 10:53 a.m. and returned at 10:58 a.m.

Committee discussion continued:

- bylaw enforcement file opening letters are abrupt
- the tone reads as accusatory
- an investigation may find there is an error and a contravention does not exist
- the implementation plan of the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Review project will involve review and redrafting of bylaw enforcement template letters
- a trustee requested that drafts of the template letters be returned for review by Regional Planning Committee
- this letter may be a resident's first experience with bylaw enforcement
- tone is important from a communications strategy perspective
- the Best Practices Manual and policy differ in their discussion of photographic evidence
- the manual will be reworded to reflect the gathering of information rather than prescriptive language about taking photos
- section 3.6 would benefit from another clause to state that it is at the discretion of the officers to collect evidence to substantiate a complaint
- section 3.6.4 discusses evidence gathered from a site inspection, but evidence provided by a property owner is not addressed
- staff will address this type of evidence provided outside of a site inspection context by editing section 3.6

RPC 2025-19
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee review and endorse draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.5.1 as amended.

CARRIED

RPC 2025-020
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee review and endorse draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual as amended.

CARRIED

RPC 2025-021
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee forward the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.5.1 and the draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual to Trust Council for review and comment.

CARRIED

7.2 Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas Update - Briefing

Senior Freshwater Strategist Shulba presented the update for information, noting that an operational demo of the Freshwater Atlas is prepared and the drafting of a communications plan is to follow. He expressed gratitude for the work of Landen Matechuk of Cedar Shore Consulting on this project. Committee discussion included:

- are concerns about accessibility and ease of use for freshwater data addressed?
- the provincial water atlas is difficult to get relevant information from
- this tool will encourage learning and exploration of available data
- outreach will be at Regional Planning Committee's direction
- a trustee suggested a showcase session at Trust Council, open to the public
- a demonstration could include insight about how the Freshwater Atlas could provide relevant information for a subdivision request
- integration with planning is a subsequent initiative to rolling out the Atlas
- an appendix of data sources is desired
- the educational experiences will be grouped into topics such as climate, and include interactive mapping
- information will be available as public data with no need for an account
- next steps will be introduced at the Oct. 31 Regional Planning Committee meeting in a communications plan
- a special meeting could be requested via resolution without meeting if staff become ready to present the completed Atlas
- it would be helpful for Regional Planning Committee to see the completed interface and ask questions

The committee recessed for lunch at 12:07 p.m. The meeting resumed at 12:40 p.m.

7.3 Fiscal Year 2026/27 Business Cases – Request For Decision

Director Cermak introduced the Request For Decision, noting that all business cases presented are advancing priorities of the Trust Council Strategic Plan. Committee discussion included:

- threats to eelgrass and kelp forests
- derelict vessels have affected eelgrass in locations such as Degnen Bay where zoning has permitted anchorage
- supporting reconciliation by protecting traditional Indigenous food sources
- there is an opportunity for engagement with First Nations with marine divisions that may have baseline mapping accomplished in their territories
- is this work more relevant to the expertise of Islands Trust Conservancy?
- one trustee expressed concern about sustaining and refreshing the eelgrass mapping dataset
- one trustee would like Islands Trust in a partnership or supporting role for this work
- the value of eelgrass mapping is recognized and its acquisition is supported, but there may be someone else better suited to hold this work
- this was an initiative begun by a previous Trust Council

- why is Islands Trust the appropriate organization to do this work?
- one singular and trusted dataset is sought for planning decisions
- eelgrass moves, necessitating mapping over time
- capturing areas with the potential for eelgrass
- the project is expensive and requires strong confidence to forward
- this marine work is a natural point of collaboration with First Nations
- inquiring with First Nations working on the water regarding existing data or partnering is pursuing a reconciliation lens
- a contract cannot be pursued without following the procurement process of open tender
- collaborating with other interested stakeholders and sharing costs is desired
- a broader conversation about collecting data with interested parties is warranted, and may change the scope of work
- an expanded project will increase the forecasted budget required
- marine data requires planning for continued updating and maintenance

RPC 2025-022
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee request staff amend the eelgrass mapping business case to include an option to partner with First Nations' marine divisions and other relevant organizations in the Trust Area toward completing the work.

CARRIED

Chair Boland initiated discussion on the business case regarding an independent review of the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy. Committee discussion included:

- it is a good time for an outside review to facilitate an implementation plan
- the business case can be forwarded to Financial Planning Committee as is
- the staff hours allocation in the business case addresses inconsistent staff support for the Freshwater Strategy
- partnership with other agencies is missing in this project
- the review should consider agencies with overlapping responsibilities to assess if some of the work belongs with them
- elected officials need to see and understand clearly why this project is with Islands Trust

RPC 2025-023
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee forward to Financial Planning Committee for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2026/27 the budget business case for:

- Independent Review of Freshwater Sustainability Strategy

CARRIED

Chair Boland initiated discussion on the Growth Management Framework business case. Committee discussion included:

- the decision to move forward or not with this business case is a political decision
- carrying capacity is a common discussion with constituents
- the data required to support carrying capacity would be very complex
- a growth management framework could be phased as a multi-year strategy to account for procurement, outreach and engagement
- the State of the Islands report on key indicators was valuable and could be revisited
- one trustee would put effort into key indicator reporting before a growth management strategy
- disturbance data, contiguous forests, freshwater reports, maps of kelp and eelgrass, and buildout analysis work are valued indicators
- Trust Programs Committee is considering a business case revisiting the State of the Islands report
- the Islands Trust biologist is working on ecosystem indicators and ecological carrying capacity
- suitable land analysis and build-out analysis tools are being used for Local Trust Committee major projects
- a build-out analysis applied across the Trust area has utility
- such an analysis would inform ongoing discussions about growth management and carrying capacity
- there is value in developing this framework but to be successful it needs to be broken down into stages
- a phased approach supports careful consideration of an expensive item
- thought is required about how to demonstrate an engaged approach working with communities and First Nations
- a meeting with Trust Programs Committee could coordinate work on State of the Islands indicators with this emergent growth management framework

Trustee Patrick left the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

RPC 2025-024
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee request that the business case for the Development of a Growth Management Planning Framework be revised as a multi-year strategy, and that staff assess how the biologist's work on ecosystem indicators, and build out maps and suitable land analysis tools be incorporated in that framework, before the next stages are envisioned.

CARRIED

7.4 Housing Strategic Action Plan and Housing Toolkit – Request For Decision

Director Cermak introduced the Request for Decision, noting that this recommendation will bring the Housing Strategic Action Plan into Trust Council's Strategic Plan. Committee discussion included:

- discussion workshops about clustering small homes and incentivizing housing supportive of the Islands Trust mandate are being held on Gabriola
- there is opportunity for a demonstration of housing policies and configurations of housing that utilize different zoning options
- onboarding for trustees should include some technical items such as the Housing Options Toolkit and Freshwater Atlas
- prioritizing and funding Part 2 of the Housing Options Toolkit on developing resources for providers of affordable housing
- a trustee suggested that Regional Planning Committee are the experts in housing work, and their role is to make recommendations to Trust Council
- update the Strategic Plan is important to further this work
- deferred actions will be resourced after space on the work program opens up
- one current top priority, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Review Project, is nearing completion

RPC 2025-025
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee request staff to revise the Housing Strategic Action Plan as recommended in the Request For Decision of July 18, 2025 and to forward the revised Plan to Trust Council for endorsement.
CARRIED

RPC 2025-026
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee request the following amendment to the Trust Council Strategic Action Plan:

- Replace Key Initiative 2.3.2 with: Implement the Housing Strategic Action Plan

CARRIED

Regional Planning Committee then returned to item 7.5 of the agenda.

7.5 Crown Tenure Application Referrals - Briefing

RPC 2025-027
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
That Regional Planning Committee request staff to report back on Trust Council policies, held by the Director of Planning Services, to address Trust Council’s key initiative to review, and where appropriate, amend, combine or rescind policies, and to prioritize the crown referrals procedure.
CARRIED

8. BUSINESS - OTHER

None.

9. BUSINESS – NEW

None.

10. WORK PROGRAM

The work program was approved **by general consent**.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Regional Planning Committee is October 31, 2025.

12. CLOSED MEETING

The Committee did not close the meeting.

13. RISE AND REPORT

As the Committee did not close the meeting, there was no need for the Committee to discuss this option.

14. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

____
Mairead Boland, Chair

Certified Correct:

____
Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

Minutes are not official until adopted at a subsequent meeting.

Regional Planning Committee
Minutes of a Special Meeting

Date:	**September 8, 2025**
Location:	**Electronic Meeting**
Members Present:	Mairead Boland, Saturna Island Local Trustee, Chair Sam Borthwick, Denman Island Local Trustee, Vice Chair Tobi Elliott, Gabriola Island Local Trustee, Executive Committee Representative David Graham, Denman Island Local Trustee Laura Patrick, Salt Spring Island Local Trustee (ex officio)
Member Regrets:	Aaron Campbell, North Pender Island Local Trustee
Staff Present:	Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services Clare Frater, Director, Trust Area Services Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder
Others Present:	None.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boland called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and acknowledged that participants of the meeting were attending all across the territories of the Coast Salish peoples.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Review of the Agenda

No new or late item was presented for consideration.

2.2 Approval of the Agenda

By general consent the Regional Planning Committee approved the agenda as presented.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No member of the public was present.

4. BUSINESS – WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

4.1 Revised Fiscal Year 2026/27 Business Cases – Request For Decision

Director Cermak introduced the Request For Decision. Committee discussion included:

- coordination with other government bodies on mapping has addressed concerns about a duplication of efforts with limited resources
- buying data is a solution for an organization on the scale of Islands Trust without putting more people in the field to monitor changes
- Hatfield is developing eelgrass mapping at a 10 metre resolution to be made public in May 2027
- Islands Trust is looking to further partner with Hatfield for finer resolution data of select sites

Trustee Graham joined the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

- a project bringing together indicators and mapping data is an opportunity that supports Trust Council Strategic Plan objectives
- can we create a model that is dynamic, co-created with First Nations, based on partnerships, to move forward in a new way?
- a $150,000 item will be difficult to get through the budget process this year
- pre-planning and project structuring will be critical
- a multi-year project should have projected deliverables and demonstrate how each stage of the project can be built upon
- how can First Nations interests and concerns help drive this initiative?
- growth is not inevitable
- Denman LTC is discussing removing subdivision potential in response to growth and living on an island with finite resources
- a trustee hears from their constituents that as growth occurs, community values are changing or lost
- static systems and data are not effective in a time of accelerating climate change
- human activity is what is managed
- this project is trying to understand and model fundamental information more effectively
- a better understanding of human habitation on the islands is needed
- compare current land use patterns with the vision in original Official Community Plans
- start small and targeted, and build this project in layers
- Islands Trust could coordinate a workshop with various data-collecting parties on the ground
- a workshop could discover if there is a coordinating issue; what data is missing; and what opportunities exist when thinking regionally
- a drawback of consultant involvement is in the loss of relationships when their contract is complete
- many island residents are professionals or retired professionals with technical understanding and deep observations of what occurs on island
- trust is built over time with personal connections

- a trustee advocated for the project to involve an accountable staff member in order to not deliver a static report
- a consultant can perform a needs assessment and coordinate partners
- the Puget Sound Vital Statistics Project provides an example direction
- it involves many partners including Indigenous groups and government agencies
- Islands Trust does not have baseline indicator information on private lands outside of protected areas
- biodiversity varies across protected lands
- build a strong needs assessment by convening the table and coordinating different agencies and knowledge holders
- gather key metrics with consideration of the specific needs of islands
- a governance report recommendation involved making more use of local experts in their fields
- establish a baseline of knowledge with pre-work by talking to First Nations and experts, then use the community to add value
- a trustee supports convening a technical panel or working group of experts and First Nations knowledge holders to help design a project framework
- identify agencies who would contribute to the project
- co-creating deserves serious thought towards designing a new methodology
- growth management may be an inaccurate name for the project
- new terminology to title this project could include well-being, sustainability, and human and ecosystem indicators of health
- the Puget Sound Vital Statistics project demonstrates that a healthy ecosystem is deeply interrelated with human indicators
- the three Strategic Plan initiatives involved are growth management and community resiliency, ecosystem health, and climate change
- growth must be defined with, not for, First Nations partners
- convening is a matter of bringing together partners and experts and empowering them to lead data gathering in their areas
- sound, updated data and mapping layers will contribute to strong preserve and protect decision-making
- define a minimum set of required data for land use planning decisions
- artificial intelligence could be used to analyze data, after good data is produced
- a business case for this project needs to indicate that it is going to be a novel approach and a multi-phase strategy
- detailed work plans and decision-making points are required to bring Trust Council along on the path of its development
- the Chair of Regional Planning Committee could give a verbal report at September Trust Council to introduce the project ahead of a December business case
- the appropriate holder of this project may be Regional Planning Committee, Trust Programs Committee, or a select committee
- use the terminology of ecosystem health and community resiliency indicators in a resolution to link it to Strategic Plan initiatives

- a trustee supports removing the appellation of growth management from this project

Regional Planning Committee recessed on a break at 11:39 a.m. and returned at 11:46 a.m.

RPC 2025-028
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee indicate support for Trust Programs Committee resolution *TPC-2025-063* and requests staff to develop a business case with appropriate budget for Phase 1 (initial development) of a multi year project related to ecosystem health and community resiliency indicators, scoping in relevant agencies, academics, First Nations partners, that will co-develop the project framework and methodology.

CARRIED

Committee discussion continued:

- capacity funding for First Nations partners to participate should be considered
- strategy for long-term funding of this project is required
- give an indication that other sources such as grants will be sought
- partnering agencies may have specific funding available for research or other elements contributing to the project
- a co-creation concept means that the ultimate outcome or deliverable is uncertain
- emphasis at Trust Council needs to be on the process of development

RPC 2025-029
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee request staff to develop a strategy for long-term funding, investigation of the use of reserve funds, including funding partnerships and potential grants, as indicated in resolution *TPC-2025-063*.

CARRIED

RPC 2025-030
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee proceed no further with a business case for eelgrass and kelp forest mapping due to federal mapping efforts and request staff to pursue data sharing agreements where feasible.

CARRIED

Committee discussion continued:

- does a more robust geographic information system require a wholesale change in hardware or expertise?
- new information input is limited with current tools
- data sharing across planning functions and conservancy functions is limited by lack of a coordinating platform

- an investment in a platform could integrate large amounts of data from different data sets
- the delineation between data and information systems infrastructure required is unclear
- business cases to clarify differences between the two are desired
- this supports ecosystem health and community resiliency indicator work and cuts across the work of multiple committees

RPC 2025-031
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee indicate support for Islands Trust Conservancy Board, Executive Committee, and Financial Planning Committee resolutions (*ITC-EC-2025-001, EC-2025-094, and FPC-2025-041*) prioritizing resources for a more robust geographic information system in order to advance Trust Council's Strategic Plan.

CARRIED

5. NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Regional Planning Committee is October 31, 2025 at 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

____
Mairead Boland, Chair

Certified Correct:

____
Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

Minutes are not official until adopted at a subsequent meeting.

DRAFT

Regional Planning Committee
Minutes of a Special Meeting

Date: **January 13, 2026**
Location: **Electronic Meeting**

Members Present: Mairead Boland, Saturna Island Local Trustee, Chair
Sam Borthwick, Denman Island Local Trustee, Vice Chair
Tobi Elliott, Gabriola Island Local Trustee, Executive Committee Representative
David Graham, Denman Island Local Trustee
Aaron Campbell, North Pender Island Local Trustee
Laura Patrick, Salt Spring Island Local Trustee (ex officio)

Member Regrets: None

Staff Present: Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services
Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager, Southern Islands
Renee Jamurat, Regional Planning Manager, Northern Islands
Warren Dingman, Bylaw Enforcement Manager
Sheree Rialp, A/Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

Others Present: One (1) member of the public

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boland called the meeting to order at 12:59 p.m. and acknowledged that participants of the meeting were attending all across the territories of the Coast Salish peoples.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Review of the Agenda

No new or late item was presented for consideration.

2.2 Approval of the Agenda

By general consent the Regional Planning Committee approved the agenda as presented.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The member of the public did not comment.

4. BUSINESS – WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

4.1 RPC Work Program and Resources Update - Briefing

Director Cermak restated the primary purpose of the meeting as noted in the last Resolution Without Meeting (RWM-2025-04) and gave an overview.

The following topics were discussed:

- Lasqueti Island Official Community Plan Review
  - The review of the Lasqueti business case has been delayed last fall due to the BC Public Service strike
  - The amount of funding and resources for the project is dependent on the resources that can be made available after the completion of the Mayne Island housing options project
  - The Mayne Island public hearing on its project is scheduled for later this month
  - Director Cermak and Regional Planning Manager Jamurat will be looking into amendments to the Lasqueti Local Trust Committee business case to reflect delayed expenditure for the 2026-27 fiscal year, if funding from the 2025-26 budget can be reallocated

- Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (FWSS)
  - Trustee Patrick expressed concern over the funding cut to the freshwater implementation plan
  - Director Cermak explained his amendments were made pursuant to the decision of the Trust Council on this funding item; he will present his amendments to this business case at the next RPC meeting

- Bylaw Enforcement Portal
  - Chair Boland requested if a preview or demonstration of the Bylaw Enforcement portal, which will be added to CityView in the spring of this year, will be made available before it goes live
  - Director Cermak stated that, although a preview/demonstration is not possible due to a tight timeline required between training and implementation, he will present the draft implementation plan along with the policies at the next RPC meeting

- Freshwater Sustainability Strategy – Proof of Water
  - Chair Boland expressed approval for the proof of water at time of subdivision standards, and asked for a comparative overview between Islands Trust's standards with that of the provincial government's Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, as well as any ongoing initiatives Director Cermak stated that Senior Freshwater Specialist Shulba may be able to give a verbal summary at the next RPC meeting

- Gambier Island Final Phase of the Official Community Plan Amendment Project
  - RPM Jamurat gave an update for Gambier around the areas on:
    - The budget for the 2024 Development Permit Area language
    - Other language for the conservation area
    - Project recommendations from the Squamish Nation
    - Moving the language into bylaw readings
    - Change of scope to include public engagement

- Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (FWSS) –Impact of Implementation Plan Funding Cut
  - Trustees raised the following concerns over Trust Council's decision to cut the $10,000 funding for the implementation plan:
    - The implementation plan is critical to strategic initiatives for freshwater sustainability
    - A Risk Assessment Report by Director Cermak was requested to determine the impact of this funding cut
    - Although the FWSS never had an implementation plan, there is now an operational review recommending implementation plans for all major projects
  - The following is Director Cermak's response to these concerns:
    - There would be no time to conduct a Risk Assessment Report
    - He suggested the RPC move to a resolution for the Financial Planning Committee (FPC) to reallocate the $10,000 for the implementation plan
    - Director Cermak may present the RPC's resolution to the FPC at their meeting next week; or that Chair Boland attend the Trust Council meeting in March to present RPC's resolution
  - In addition, the following points were discussed regarding the formulation of the implementation plan:
    - Allocating funds for an implementation plan without the results of a comprehensive review in place is infeasible; a full review must be completed before conducting the implementation plan based on input from the review
    - The need to hire a third person to review the LTC projects arose due to past unsuccessful business cases that lacked a more objective review by an outside professional
    - There is a lack of clarity in the FWSS study in providing specifics of the funding request and its direction
    - Pros and cons were put forth regarding the cost efficiency of having such a high-level review conducted internally by someone who may not be as qualified, as opposed to a costly but fully qualified professional
    - When the possibility of assigning Senior Freshwater Specialist William Shulba to conduct the review was raised, concerns were expressed that the task, which requires qualifications in project management, may be beyond the scope of his job description
  - Trustees decided to postpone moving for a resolution, and further discussion on this agenda item will be continued at the next RPC meeting

4.2 Minor Project Criteria – Request for Decision

Regional Planning Manager Kojima gave a summary of the Request For Decision (RFD) on the Minor Project Criteria.

He then clarified certain questions and concerns raised by the RPC:

- The criteria of an LTC committee being resourced only one project at a time is an existing Trust Council policy, so that changing or removing it would require changing or modifying this existing policy
- In 4.2 of the criteria, a Land Use Bylaw or Official Community Plan amendment project could lead to an administrative bylaw update, particularly the Development Approval Information Bylaws
- In 4.10 of the criteria, the rationale for excluding relationship-building initiatives as minor projects is that planners do not have the training or expertise in aspects of those initiatives, such as communications work

Discussion on the Minor Project Criteria continued. The points raised were:

- The need for minor projects to have a business case
- The need for a dashboard to obtain better metrics in reviewing the progress of the projects, setting objectives and monitoring success
- The need for more restrictive guidelines around the allocation of minor projects to encourage more discipline and ownership of the process among trustees

Director Cermak expressed support for the dashboard, which he believes will be a useful screening tool for his operational review requirements.

Regional Planning Manager Kojima then stated these proposals may lead to a review of Trust Council policies 6.2.1 and 5.9.1.

Trustees agreed that more time was needed to review the existing guidelines for input. The decision can be brought forward at the next RPC meeting.

5. NEXT MEETING

The next Regional Planning Committee meeting is February 6, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

Mairead Boland, Chair

Certified Correct:

Sheree Rialp, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

Minutes are not official until adopted at a subsequent meeting.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION WITHOUT MEETING

RESOLUTION WITHOUT MEETING NO. RWM-2025-01

The following matter is considered urgent in order to establish a special meeting for Regional Planning Committee on September 8, 2025, to consider revised business cases before the October Financial Planning Committee meeting.

Trustees were notified, via email, of the call for resolution on August 5, 2025.
Trustees were notified, via email, of the call for vote on August 5, 2025.

It was Moved by Trustee Boland and Seconded by Trustee Elliott,
that Regional Planning Committee request staff to convene an electronic special business meeting on September 8, 2025, commencing at 10 a.m.

TRUSTEES CONTACTED	DATE VOTE RECEIVED	VOTE
Mairead Boland	August 5, 2025	In Favour
Tobi Elliott	August 5, 2025	In Favour
David Graham	August 5, 2025	In Favour
Aaron Campbell	August 5, 2025	In Favour

TRUSTEES VOTE NOT AVAILABLE
Sam Borthwick

FINAL VOTE COUNT	4	IN FAVOUR
	0	OPPOSED

THE CHAIR, REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, DECLARED THE ABOVE RESOLUTION CARRIED PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OF *THE ISLANDS TRUST ACT* on August 6, 2025.

______________________________ ______________________________
CORPORATE SECRETARY'S SIGNATURE RECORDER'S SIGNATURE

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION WITHOUT MEETING

RESOLUTION WITHOUT MEETING NO. RWM-2025-02

The following matter is considered urgent and necessary in order to cancel the Regional Planning Committee electronic business meeting on Friday, October 31, 2025, due to the ongoing BC General Employees' Union strike action.

Trustees were notified, via email, of the call for resolution on October 22, 2025.
Trustees were notified, via email, of the call for vote on October 22, 2025.

It was Moved by Trustee Boland and Seconded by Trustee Elliott,
that Regional Planning Committee request staff to cancel the electronic business meeting on October 31, 2025.

TRUSTEES CONTACTED	DATE VOTE RECEIVED	VOTE
Mairead Boland	October 22, 2025	In favour
Tobi Elliott	October 22, 2025	In favour
Sam Borthwick	October 22, 2025	In favour
David Graham	October 23, 2025	In favour

TRUSTEES VOTE NOT AVAILABLE
Aaron Campbell

FINAL VOTE COUNT	4	IN FAVOUR
	0	OPPOSED

THE CHAIR, REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, DECLARED THE ABOVE RESOLUTION CARRIED PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OF *THE ISLANDS TRUST ACT* on OCTOBER 23rd, 2025.

CORPORATE SECRETARY'S SIGNATURE

RECORDER'S SIGNATURE

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION WITHOUT MEETING

RESOLUTION WITHOUT MEETING NO. RWM-2025-03

The following matter is considered urgent in order to establish regular meeting dates for Regional Planning Committee for the fiscal year 2026/27.

Trustees were notified, via email, of the call for resolution on November 5, 2025.
Trustees were notified, via email, of the call for vote on November 5, 2025.

It was Moved by Trustee Graham and Seconded by Trustee Elliott,
that Regional Planning Committee adopt the meeting dates of May 1, July 24, September 25, and November 27 for the 2026 calendar year, and February 5 for the 2027 calendar year; and that the meetings be electronic.

TRUSTEES CONTACTED	DATE VOTE RECEIVED	VOTE
Mairead Boland	November 5, 2025	In Favour
Tobi Elliott	November 5, 2025	In Favour
David Graham	November 5, 2025	In Favour
Sam Borthwick	November 5, 2025	In Favour

TRUSTEES VOTE NOT AVAILABLE
Aaron Campbell

FINAL VOTE COUNT	4	IN FAVOUR
	0	OPPOSED

THE CHAIR, REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, DECLARED THE ABOVE RESOLUTION CARRIED PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OF *THE ISLANDS TRUST ACT* on NOVEMBER 5th, 2025.

CORPORATE SECRETARY’S SIGNATURE

RECORDER’S SIGNATURE

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION WITHOUT MEETING

RESOLUTION WITHOUT MEETING NO. RWM-2025-04

The following matter is considered urgent in order to establish a special meeting for Regional Planning Committee on January 13, 2026 to finalize recommendations on reports addressing next fiscal resources and priorities before the January Financial Planning Committee meeting.

Trustees were notified, via email, of the call for resolution on December 15, 2025.
Trustees were notified, via email, of the call for vote on December 16, 2025.

It was Moved by Trustee Boland and Seconded by Trustee Borthwick,
that Regional Planning Committee request staff to convene an electronic special business meeting on January 13, 2026, commencing at 1 p.m.

TRUSTEES CONTACTED	DATE VOTE RECEIVED	VOTE
Sam Borthwick	December 16, 2025	In Favour
Mairead Boland	December 16, 2025	In Favour
David Graham	December 19, 2025	In Favour

TRUSTEES VOTE NOT AVAILABLE
Aaron Campbell
Tobi Elliott

FINAL VOTE COUNT	3	IN FAVOUR
	0	OPPOSED

THE CHAIR, REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, DECLARED THE ABOVE RESOLUTION CARRIED PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OF *THE ISLANDS TRUST ACT* on December 22, 2025.

_______________________________________ _______________________________________
CORPORATE SECRETARY'S SIGNATURE RECORDER'S SIGNATURE

Follow Up Action Report

Regional Planning Committee

24-Aug-2022

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
0%	1 that Regional Planning Committee request staff to create a Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Frequently Asked Questions document.	Morgana van Niekerk William Shulba	Target: 01-Jul-2026	In Progress

16-Feb-2024

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
45%	1 Staff to develop a Freshwater Sustainability Strategy implementation plan that defines the roles and responsibilities of the Regional Planning Committee, Trust Programs Committee, Trust Council and key staff, and that is operationalized through multi-year work plans, budget requests, and program-specific implementation plans.	Stefan Cermak William Shulba	Target: 01-Jul-2026	In Progress

05-Dec-2024

Progress	Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
100%	1 **Trust Council Direction:** Staff to work with Regional Planning Committee to review their budget requests and provide any reductions for incorporation into the March budget. No business cases at time of request. Subsequent issue identifified and business case submitted.	Stefan Cermak	Target: 31-Jan-2025	Completed

Islands Trust

Follow Up Action Report

Regional Planning Committee

07-Feb-2025

Progress		Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
100%	1	Staff to include in the May RPC agenda the discussion of a mid term independent review of the 10 year Freshwater Strategic Plan and accomplishments to date.	Rob Kroeker Stefan Cermak William Shulba	Target: 09-May-2025	Completed
100%	2	Staff to report back about the status of the Freshwater Atlas at the July 2025 RPC meeting.	Stefan Cermak William Shulba	Target: 18-Jul-2025	Completed
100%	3	Staff to update the Islands Trust Housing Options Toolkit and Housing Strategic Action Plan for the May 2025 RPC meeting, and provide options for a presentation for Trustees at a later date.	Robert Kojima Stefan Cermak	Target: 09-May-2025	Completed
10%	4	RPC recommend that Trust Council request staff to revise policy 6.5.4 "Grants and Donations Administration" to develop clear guidance for staff and Trust bodies when applying for external grant funding opportunities by aligning approval limits with procurement policies and to establish clear approval and reporting processes.	David Marlor	Target: 28-Feb-2026	In Progress

Follow Up Action Report

Regional Planning Committee

09-May-2025

Progress	Activity		Responsibility	Dates	Status
100%	1	Regional Planning Committee requests staff to make amendments, as agreed at the Regional Planning Committee's May 9, 2025 meeting, to Trust Council Policy 5.5.1 and the Best Practices Manual, and to send the documents to the Ombudsperson for review.	Robert Kojima Stefan Cermak Warren Dingman	Target: 18-Jul-2025	Completed
100%	2	that Regional Planning Committee request staff make minor updates to the Housing Options Toolkit identified in the Request For Decision of May 9, 2025 and as discussed.	Robert Kojima Stefan Cermak	Target: 18-Jul-2025	Completed
100%	3	that Regional Planning Committee request staff to forward the housing needs reports to Executive Committee, but also wish to convey our lack of confidence in the data, its usefulness, and belief that it could cause harm.	Stefan Cermak	Target: 27-May-2025	Completed
100%	4	that Regional Planning Committee request staff to draft business cases to address the following Trust Council key initiatives: a. Map eelgrass and kelp forests. b. Develop a growth management planning framework that includes data on growth trends and projections, geological and hydrological capacities, infrastructure, and development rates. c. Conduct an independent review of the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy by a qualified external party and that the scope include, but not be limited to: - Assessing the effectiveness and outcomes of the strategy to date, - Identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, - Evaluating alignment with Trust Council strategic objectives and other key initiatives.	Stefan Cermak	Target: 18-Jul-2025	Completed

Follow Up Action Report

Regional Planning Committee

18-Jul-2025

Progress		Activity	Responsibility	Dates	Status
9%	1	Staff to report back to Regional Planning Committee on Trust Council policies, held by the Director of Planning Services, to address Trust Council's key initiative to review, and where appropriate, amend, combine or rescind policies, and to prioritize the crown referrals procedure.	David Marlor Stefan Cermak	Target: 31-Oct-2025	In Progress
76%	2	that Regional Planning Committee request staff amend the eelgrass mapping business case to include an option to partner with First Nations' marine divisions and other relevant organizations in the Trust Area toward completing the work. (COMPLETE) that Regional Planning Committee request that the business case for the Development of a Growth Management Planning Framework be revised as a multi-year strategy, and that staff assess how the biologist's work on ecosystem indicators, and build out maps and suitable land analysis tools be incorporated in that framework, before the next stages are envisioned.	Clare Frater Stefan Cermak	Target: 28-Feb-2026	In Progress

BRIEFING

To:	Regional Planning Committee	**For the Meeting of:**	February 6, 2026
From:	**Planning Services**	**Date Prepared:**	January 29, 2026
SUBJECT:	**Protection Of Ecosystem Health In All Land Use Planning Decisions**		

PURPOSE: To provide a summary of work completed to date by the grant funded Planning Services Biologist regarding Trust Council's strategic plan initiative 3.2.4: monitor progress of protection of ecosystem health in all land use planning decisions.

BACKGROUND:

The Islands Trust successfully received a grant from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to support the recovery of species at risk across the Islands Trust Area by improving the incorporation and integration of biological information into Islands Trust decision-making processes and projects. This funding has enabled the Islands Trust to hire a full-time biologist from February 2025 to March 2026.

The full-time biologist, Patricia Woodruff, has prepared a brief summary highlighting some of the key activities and deliverables achieved to date (below). Ms. Woodruff will also be presenting species-at-risk-related findings in partnership with her fellow biologist peer working with the Islands Trust Conservancy, Erica Wheeler, who was hired through the same grant, to the RPC and potentially to Trust Council.

The summary below is modest and brief and does not delve into the full complexity of the work, such as the relationships developed with partner agencies and other professionals, the refinement of GIS layers within the internal mapping system so they are available and applied when screening development applications, or their use when assessing suitable locations for addressing housing needs. The biologist has become an invaluable member of the team and has added professional credibility to the assessment of environmental impacts.

Under provincial legislation, only a qualified biologist may practice within their area of expertise. The loss of a biologist would return Planning Services to the previous status quo, where planners review ecological assessments without specialized training, bylaw compliance and enforcement lack support in determining environmental impacts from infractions, and projects are not assessed through a professional biologist's lens when determining whether they achieve the mandate to preserve and protect the environment. Without a permanent biologist, Planning Services will lack the professional expertise and capacity required to deliver on several of Trust Council's Strategic Plan priorities.

Summary to Date

The goal of my project was to better integrate biological information into land use decisions. Here are the results of my work over the past year:

1. As requested by the planning team, I reviewed environmental assessment reports, rezoning applications, development permit areas, and Official Community Plan updates to ensure the sensitive ecosystems and species and ecosystems at risk were being protected. I worked with the planners from all three offices. I provided reviews quickly so that planners were able to meet deadlines and made sure that the assessment reports provided met provincial standards.

2. Working with Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) and GIS staff, I helped clarify the sensitive ecosystem layers on TAPIS 3.1, to ensure that the most up-to-date and accurate data is being used by the planning team in their decisions.

3. I provided biological support to the team working on the Land Information Screening Tool (LIST; formerly the Suitable Land Analysis model), including the addition of critical habitat information for additional species at risk protection.

4. Early in my term, I provided a presentation to the planning team on the different species at risk present in the Trust Area, their habitat requirements and current threats. I will be following up with recorded presentations on those topics as a refresher topic or as training for new planners. I have also been collecting other resources for the planning team, such as policy toolkits and best management practices.

5. Working with the provincial policy analyst, I have been reviewing existing Riparian Areas Development Permit Areas (DPAs). The majority of these DPAs have not been updated to meet the 2019 regulation amendments. I will be updating these DPAs (or providing a model DPA for use) to meet the new requirements. As a representative of Islands Trust, I recently attended an information session on proposed Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR) policy changes, and provided my feedback. I have also corresponded with the RAPR reviewers to confirm the status of assessment reports submitted for proposed development within Islands Trust.

6. In my review of environmental assessment reports, I noticed a lack of consistency in the formats being provided, as well as missing information on the status of the site, mitigation measures, and the presence of sensitive and at-risk species and ecosystems. To address this issue, I have prepared a Terms of Reference for professional reports, including a report template and guideline checklist, for use by the planning team in their reviews of applications.

7. One of my first tasks was to review existing land use policies to understand gaps in biological data integration. I reviewed all the current Official Community Plans (OCPs) and associated bylaws, with a focus on the environment, sensitive ecosystems and species at risk. I also read through the OCPs of other local government jurisdictions within BC, to get an idea of other policies on species at risk protection currently proposed or in use throughout the Province. I am using this background research to develop model DPAs to improve species at risk protection in the Trust Area. The definition of protected areas and

the determination of what needs to be done in the context of species at risk is part of the reserved practice of Registered Professional Biologists (RPBios) under the *Professional Governance Act*.

8. After consultation with our Senior Indigenous Relations Advisor and the Islands Trust Conservancy, I will be engaging with the different First Nations in the Trust Area to further identify culturally significant species. I have already prepared an initial list from academic research and other regional reports.

9. I have prepared a spreadsheet listing all federally and provincially assessed species at risk, their habitat requirements, major threats, any existing land protections on these habitats, the provincial trend for the species, and any information on the localized population trends by island. This information is being used to prepare a State of the Islands report with a focus on the status of different populations of species at risk on each island.

10. To better understand what work is currently being conducted in the Trust Area, I have contacted the different local conservancies on the islands to learn about their projects, objectives, partnerships and concerns. I have also spoken with representatives in the provincial and national governments, as well as academics and other non-governmental organizations that work in throughout Islands Trust. This knowledge is being used to identify indicators that can be used to look at ecosystem health and the current status of different habitat types. I am also learning of new and updated mapping layers that could be used to supplement our existing layers, to better assist the planning team in their review of applications.

FOLLOW-UP: Both biologists are tentatively scheduled to present some of their findings at the March 2026 Trust Council. Otherwise, both positions conclude at the end of the current fiscal period unless Trust Council approves the submitted business request seeking to extend the biologist position (whether permanently or for a period of time).

The Regional Planning Committee may carry a motion recommending Trust Council to reconsider the Biologist Business Case.

Prepared By: Summary by: Patricia Woodruff, Biologist
Briefing: Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services

Islands Trust

BRIEFING

To:	**Regional Planning Committee**	**For the Meeting of:**	February 6, 2026
From:	**William Shulba, P.Geo** **Senior Freshwater Specialist**	**Date Prepared:**	February 3, 2026
SUBJECT:	Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Implementation Status		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this briefing is to provide the Regional Planning Committee a historical analysis and implementation review of the Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (FWSS). This report demonstrates that the FWSS is the result of a decade-long, evidence-based progression—from ad-hoc coordination to multi-disciplinary and integrated regulatory framework.

This briefing is intended to clarify that FWSS actions were not selected arbitrarily but were the output of a logical work plan for specialized freshwater staff capacity funded by Trust Council in 2017 to address critical data, knowledge, and regulatory gaps. This briefing details how this capacity enabled the development of the FWSS and its subsequent research and regulatory outcomes, and outlines the strategic pivot required to align future implementation of the FWSS with the provincial Watershed Security Strategy and Fund.

BACKGROUND

The Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (FWSS) is a comprehensive initiative recognizing the critical importance of freshwater to ecological health, community well-being, and the long-term sustainability of the Islands Trust Area. The current implementation of the FWSS is the result of a deliberate, multi-term progression to modernize the Islands Trust's approach to freshwater governance, moving from initial coordination and capacity building to evidence-based policy and regulation.

2014–2018 Term: Building Technical Capacity

The 2014–2018 Trust Council identified the protection of freshwater quality and quantity as a strategic priority. This period began with the operationalization of the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA), formed after Trust Council delegated specific powers to the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee in 2013 (Bylaw 154). While SSIWPA created a necessary forum for inter-agency coordination regarding St. Mary Lake and other watersheds, it exposed a critical vulnerability: the Islands Trust relied heavily on external consultants and lacked the in-house expertise to translate technical watershed data into enforceable planning policy and lacked operational assistance with land-use applications.

The introduction of the provincial Water Sustainability Act in 2016 introduced a new era of water policy in the province with the addition of groundwater protection regulation and groundwater licensing for non-domestic uses including multi-family housing. This advancement in provincial policy highlighted the need to expand the technical expertise of the Islands Trust to effectively engage with the Province and support Local Trust Committees with respect to freshwater sustainability.

In response, Trust Council approved funding in the 2017/2018 budget for a Senior Freshwater Specialist. This strategic decision allowed the organization to transition from relying primarily on external consultants to developing internal scientific capacity, enabling the Trust to better interpret hydrogeological data for land-use decision-making. The job description of the Senior Freshwater Specialist is attached.

2018–2022 Term: Strategy Consolidation and Climate Response

The 2018–2022 Council term focused on integrating freshwater sustainability into the organization's response to the climate crisis. Following the March 2019 declaration of a Climate Change Emergency, Trust Council directed staff to include a central focus on mitigation and adaptation in strategic planning. Recognizing that freshwater resources are the primary indicator of climate resilience in the Trust Area, the Senior Freshwater Specialist position was made permanent in 2020 to safeguard institutional knowledge and to continue on freshwater research and regulatory support.

Leveraging funding from the provincial Healthy Watersheds Initiative, staff consolidated years of island-specific research into the unified Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (FWSS), received by Trust Council in December 2021. Crucially, the FWSS was not just a retrospective report; it established a clear implementation roadmap for the next Council term. The strategy explicitly identified "Early Priorities" based on organizational capacity and logical sequencing, setting the agenda for 2022 and beyond.

These priorities included:

- Governance: Developing an organizational plan for implementation, including identifying options for a coordinator;
- Science: Continuing the Groundwater Sustainability Science Program, specifically recharge potential mapping and availability assessments;
- Policy: Integrating new water availability data into Official Community Plans and land use bylaws;
- Reconciliation: Continuing the Cultural Heritage Mapping Project to identify sites of cultural and spiritual significance to First Nations; and
- Outreach: Implementing a freshwater stewardship outreach plan, identified as a critical need by the Strategy Advisory Roundtable.

By establishing these specific targets, the 2018–2022 term ensured that the FWSS would transition immediately from a strategic document to an operational directive for the incoming council in the absence of a formal implementation plan.

2022–2026 Term: Implementation and Regulatory Application

The current term represents the operationalization of the strategy, where foundational data is applied to create tangible planning tools. Science developed under the FWSS is now directly informing regulatory updates, such as the Galiano Island Groundwater Protection Development Permit Area and modernized "Proof of Water" bylaws for subdivision on Salt Spring and North Pender Islands. These initiatives move beyond the historical reliance on point-in-time assessments toward standards based on the long-term carrying capacity of aquifers. Furthermore, the launch of the Freshwater Atlas has operationalized this data, providing planners with centralized decision-support tools. As this term concludes, the strategic focus is aligning the FWSS with the Province's Watershed Security Strategy and Fund to secure long-term support for watershed governance and reconciliation initiatives.

2026–2030 Term: Strategic Harmonization and Financial Stability

As the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy approaches the mid-point of its ten-year implementation window (2022–2032), the focus for the 2026–2030 term must focus on long-term financial stability, governance alignment and advancement of the tools developed in the FWSS thus far. The upcoming external review will serve as the critical business case to harmonize the Trust's technical achievements with the province's Watershed Security Strategy and Fund.

ANALYSIS

Science-to-Policy Process

The early implementation of the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (FWSS) is defined by a deliberate "Science-to-Policy" process. This strategic framework recognizes that defensible land-use regulation cannot be supported by the precautionary principle alone; it requires a robust evidentiary basis that evolves from data collation to complex modeling, and finally to decision-support tools. The FWSS was developed in consultation with the Strategic Advisory Roundtable, which identified goals and objectives resulting in actions to guide programs and projects to build the necessary knowledge base to advance evidence-based watershed governance. The Strategic Advisory Roundtable, was an ad hoc advisory body, composed of 23 individuals representing a diverse cross-section of watershed interests, including delegates from provincial government agencies, regional districts, improvement districts, community stewardship groups, Indigenous Cultural Knowledge Holders, and Islands Trust elected officials and staff. The Roundtable provided critical input throughout the FWSS development process. Members engaged in structured dialogue to identify data gaps and define roles under the Water Sustainability Act, and they collaboratively created the specific Actions contained within the final strategy.

This approach was informed by the support and coordination of the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA). While SSIWPA established a necessary forum for inter-agency coordination, it highlighted a critical internal capacity gap: the Islands Trust lacked staff capacity with technical expertise to interpret complex water resource considerations for land-use applications and sustainability in general. This realization directly supported the creation of the Senior Freshwater Specialist position, enabling the organization to transition from passive observation to active research. The early work plan of the Senior Freshwater Specialist was framed around groundwater, which is a primary water supply for most residents of the Islands Trust and plays a significant role in environmental health. The hydrogeological framework in which these projects were undertaken deeply informed the development of the FWSS, demonstrating that the goals and objectives of freshwater sustainability require a technically informed knowledge base and standardized data foundation.

FWSS Projects and Actions

The implementation of the FWSS is not a collection of isolated studies, but a cascading "Science-to-Policy" pipeline. The projects listed below were designed so that the output of one becomes the mandatory input for the next, systematically addressing the Actions defined in the Strategy to move the organization from data scarcity to regulatory readiness. Details of each project are located in the appendix.

Groundwater Sustainability Science Program:

The foundation of the FWSS was built by collating, organizing, and processing data to define a hydrogeological framework of the Islands Trust Area. The Aquifer Conceptualization and Groundwater Region Mapping projects consolidated over 20,000 well records to create standardized 3D models of the subsurface. These initiatives satisfied the need for a data inventory (Action GWSS 3) and established "Groundwater Regions" (Action GWSS 6) as a water management unit. The Groundwater Recharge Mapping project utilized these data to address Action GWSS 4 by introducing an ecosystem-based approach by linking forest cover to water supply. Simultaneously, the Seawater Intrusion Risk assessment (partnered with the Province) identified coastal zones where water quality acts as a limiting factor, addressing Action CAOA 2 (Work with Province to employ regulatory instruments).

These layers were harmonized in groundwater availability assessment utilized in the Freshwater Footprint methodology. By integrating aquifer structure, recharge inputs, and intrusion risks with human demand, a groundwater budget method was created fulfilling Action GWSS 5. To ground-truth these theoretical models, the Volunteer Observation Well Monitoring project (Salt Spring Pilot) provided essential time-series data on actual aquifer levels, satisfying Action GWSS 2 (Coordinated long-term monitoring) and this was applied in the *Lake Weston Water Availability and Climate Change Assessment*.

Watershed Sustainability Science Program

Recognizing that groundwater and surface water are a single resource, this program focuses on watershed ecosystems and hydrology. The Watershed Boundary and Watercourse Mapping project used LiDAR to correct erroneous provincial datasets, creating the accurate spatial baseline required for all surface analysis (Action WSS 1). The Watershed Resiliency project assesses ecological robustness to guide conservation planning and land analysis (Action WSS 1).

Smaller, targeted projects filled specific data gaps: Wet Areas Mapping is an isolated outcome of recharge mapping utilized satellite remote sensing to identify wetlands, while the Hydraulic Connection Assessment (Denman/Hornby) evaluated stream-aquifer interactions. These projects are underpinned by climate vulnerability assessments, a component embedded across all FWSS projects rather than a standalone study, ensuring climate metrics are integrated into all decision-support tools (Action GWSS 7). The Freshwater Footprint with Gabriola Island as a pilot represents a "capstone" of this program and integrates many of the objectives of the FWSS. It ingests all previous mapping and undertook social science analysis to approximate carrying capacity for development, fulfilling the ultimate goal of integrating science into planning (Action GWSS 7).

Planning and Reporting

This program translates technical data into enforceable tools. The FWSS itself provides the governance framework (Action GWSS 1). To operationalize the data, the Land Information Screening Tool (LIST) (previously SLA) aggregates the scientific layers into a desktop tool for planners, directly addressing Action GWSS 9 to improve availability of information for application review. Regulatory implementation has been realized through Subdivision Proof of Water LUB Updates, which use the Availability Assessments to customize water supply requirements (Action GWSS 10). Similarly, the Groundwater Recharge Protection Development Permit Area (Galiano) utilizes the Recharge Mapping to legally protect critical infiltration zones (Action GWSS 8). Stormwater Management Planning has been considered to promote rainwater harvesting as a conservation strategy (Action WSS 2).

Cultural Knowledge and Engagement Program

Recognizing that long-term sustainability depends as much on relationships as it does on data, the Cultural Knowledge and Engagement Program focuses on advancing reconciliation and building a water-literate culture by weaving together science with the "spirit of water" articulated by Indigenous Knowledge Holders and youth during the strategy's development and in the hopes to foster future connection. The Strategic Advisory Roundtable facilitated coordination with Indigenous Knowledge Holders to ensure strategic planning was informed by cultural values, while a parallel initiative engaged Indigenous youth to ground the strategy in intergenerational stewardship responsibilities. Listening and consulting with First Nations directly addresses the Islands Trust Reconciliation Declaration, which commits the organization to establishing mutually respectful relationships and recognizing that the lands and waters of the Trust Area have been home to Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. While this program has had limited progress in establishing formal co-governance frameworks to date, this integration must be the central theme of the FWSS going forward.

The Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas serves as the public interface for all FWSS data, satisfying Action GWSS 1 and Action CKE 3 relating to stewardship outreach. To build internal and external capacity, the Trust delivered the Islands Trust Area Freshwater Forum, Trust Programs Committee Continuing Education Workshops, and the Planning Services Pro-D Day Freshwater Sustainability Workshop. Public education was further delivered through Our Groundwater and Wells Workshops directly addressing Action CKE 3. High-level advocacy was achieved through Trust Council Presentations on the Water Sustainability Act and Groundwater Licensing, as well as the Salish Sea Conference Freshwater Presentation, satisfying Action CKE 4 and Action CAOA 2. Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Coordination ensures alignment with regional districts, fulfilling Action CAOA 1. This body of work sets the stage for the next phase of the strategy implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

The Groundwater Sustainability Science Program has largely achieved its primary goals and objectives, successfully establishing the "golden thread" of the science-to-planning process through logical and strategic alliance between staff, elected officials, partner agencies, and professionals. This achievement is evidenced by the adoption of regulatory bylaws and Official Community Plan amendments that are directly grounded in the hydrogeological knowledge produced by the FWSS. The organization has moved beyond reliance of the precautionary principle to a state where robust scientific evidence now underpins land-use decision-making, demonstrating that the theoretical frameworks developed in early phases have been effectively operationalized into enforceable planning tools.

Looking to the upcoming fiscal year, the top priority for the organization will be undertaking a formal external review of the FWSS. This review should be directed by an informed Regional Planning Committee and staff to ensure that the necessary political support and organizational structures are in place to successfully apply for and accept provincial Watershed Security Funding. This pivot is critical given that a previous application to the fund was not awarded, and a recent application initiative was withdrawn by management due to a lack of organizational capacity. To remedy this, the review must be led by an external water sustainability expert—possessing skills similar to the consultant who originally led the development of the FWSS to provide a clear implementation pathway. This pathway must explicitly connect the technical legacy of the FWSS to the future requirements of the Watershed Security Strategy context.

While the foundational groundwater science is complete, the Senior Freshwater Specialist will focus on the operational maintenance and refinement of these assets. This ongoing work will include the continuous support of local planning services land-use applications in addition to updating of the Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas, refinement of watercourse and wet areas mapping, and the modernization of proof of water bylaws. Additionally, ongoing coordination with regional districts and Bowen Island Municipality remains essential to ensure cross-jurisdictional alignment, ensuring that the technical capacity built during the strategy’s development continues to serve the Trust’s mandate**.**

ATTACHMENT(S):

- Senior Freshwater Specialist Job Profile
- Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Program Actions
- Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Program Fiscal Timelines
- Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Program LTC Coverage
- Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Project Details

FOLLOW-UP:

Staff will assimilate the specific direction provided by the Regional Planning Committee regarding the strategic pivot toward watershed governance and reconciliation. This guidance will be explicitly incorporated into the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the external review of the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy. The RFP will be structured to retain a qualified water sustainability expert, capable of delivering an implementation pathway that secures alignment with the provincial Watershed Security Strategy and Fund, ensuring the organization is positioned to transition from technical research to collaborative watershed governance.

Prepared By: William Shulba, Senior Freshwater Specialist

Reviewed By/Date: Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services / February 4, 2026

JOB PROFILE
Current Position #00115434

TITLE: SENIOR FRESHWATER SPECIALIST

CLASSIFICATION: LICENSED SCIENCE OFFICER
GEOSCIENTIST 3

MINISTRY: ISLANDS TRUST,
MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

WORK UNIT: LOCAL PLANNING SERVICES

SUPERVISOR TITLE: DIRECTOR, LOCAL PLANNING SERVICES

SUPERVISOR POSITION #: 00036528

PROGRAM

Located in Coast Salish territory, the Islands Trust is a special purpose government responsible for protecting the unique amenities and environment of more than 450 islands and surrounding waters in the southern Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. Created by the Province via the Islands Trust Act, Islands Trust plans and regulates local land use, coordinates with other level of government and First Nations on key issues impacting the area, and protects land through the Islands Trust Conservancy.

JOB OVERVIEW

The Senior Freshwater Specialist is a leadership position providing expertise on freshwater issues related outreach, and engagement with government agencies. The Senior Freshwater Specialist provides professional advice to the elected officials for 13 local trust committees (local governments), the Islands Trust Council Executive Committee, Trust Council, the Chief Administrative Officer, Directors, Regional Planning Managers, Island Planners, and other staff on a variety of freshwater issues and initiatives.
As the freshwater expert of the Islands Trust, the position is responsible for providing expert technical advice, education, and advocacy to elected officials, planners, program managers, ministry staff, communities, and other government agencies to ensure that the Islands Trust preserve and protect mandate is upheld. The position participates in the review of applications for water resources for re-zoning applications and provides professional services on freshwater sustainability plans and exercises statutory authority under current legislation.

The primary function of this position is to develop, lead and implement planning associated with the Islands Trust Strategic Plan priorities for freshwater management and objectives. The position functions as the Islands Trust leading technical authority as a Licensed Scientific Officer. The position advises Islands Trust staff on freshwater policy and resource requirements and initiates and facilitates partnerships with agencies, local governments and other organizations. The position leads the development of innovative freshwater management tools and technologies and supervises professional and technical contractors and staff on a variety of freshwater initiatives and programs. The position will report to the Director of Local Planning Services.

Date: May 11, 2023

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

Develops, leads and implements planning associated with the Islands Trust freshwater sustainability Initiatives and objectives by:

- Developing and/or leading the development of freshwater strategies for the Islands Trust.
- Evaluating and monitoring performance of freshwater management programs and projects.
- Developing new programs for freshwater management.
- Developing plans for the delivery of the scientific component of the program.
- Working with other provincial agencies to integrate freshwater strategies into the Islands Trust strategy.
- Recommending and/or developing proposed changes and amendments to legislation, regulations and policy.
- Providing strategic advice and recommendations to the ministry executive on Provincial water management policy and issues management.
- Working with federal and provincial agencies on water resource use allocation issues, riparian
- Management and environment protection.
- Representing the ministry on various provincial, inter provincial and national committees.

Policy Development, Inter-Agency Relations, and Freshwater Sustainability Initiatives

- Conducts research and provides liaison with other government agencies, First Nations and non-profit organizations with interest or expertise in freshwater in the Trust Area to collect and develop reference materials, tools and systems to assist local trust committees when making land use planning decisions.
- Provides professional and expert leadership, guidance, education and orientation to local trust committees, Islands Trust senior staff and island planners on all matters related to freshwater including freshwater hydrology and ecosystems.
- Provides professional expert advice to senior management and Executive Committee on advocacy opportunities regarding freshwater regulation, management and education.
- Prepares and recommends strategies and priorities for local trust committees’ consideration with respect to potential and emerging freshwater issues.
- Provides technical advice to Islands Trust Council, directors, managers, planners, and government agencies.
- Defining terms of reference for studies to resolve complex and/or controversial land-water interface and water resource applications and issues.
- Compiling, estimating and analyzing freshwater data to assess watershed protection associated with complex water applications.
- Works with regional planning managers, planners and other staff to identify and respond to freshwater issues, including providing professional expert advice to local trust committees on advocacy to other agencies in support of official community plan policies.
- Developing and/or adapting complex hydrologic computer design models,
- Consulting with research agencies, hydro-technical experts, geo-morphologists, hydro-geologists, geotechnical engineers and other specialists.
- Developing solutions and writing and presenting technical reports.
- Evaluating, analyzing and interpreting data and information.
- Designing, organizing and delivering workshops for Islands Trust staff, politicians, and communities.

- Writing procedural manuals and handbooks.
- Representing the Islands Trust on inter-governmental and other technical committees.
- Providing expert advice on the implementation of proposed freshwater data collection programs.
- Assessing the freshwater risk implications on design and operation of works associated with major projects.
- Leading and directing negotiations required to resolve complex water use problems and conflicts.
- Developing, maintaining and distributing freshwater databases.
- Issuing or supporting staff in the process of issuing complex or controversial approvals and licenses for water use under the BC Water Sustainability Act.
- Representing the Islands Trust as the regional freshwater expert in often high profile, contentious and/or politically sensitive meetings.
- Advising on the appropriate equipment, specific site conditions, collection, analysis and interpretation of freshwater data.
- Attending seminars, workshops and national/international symposia.

Participates in the review of applications for water resources for Islands Trust Area and a variety of other plans and planning exercises by:

- Ensuring water availability issues and opportunities for water use are clearly identified within the planning area.
- Preparing and updating new/existing water bylaws and policies.
- Providing water source plans to applicants, staff and other agencies to preserve and protect unique amenities, diversity, growth and opportunity.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- A degree in a related field (e.g. Physical geography, Earth Sciences, or Environmental Sciences) or equivalent as accepted by the appropriate professional association.
- Experience in watershed hydrology, geomorphology, engineering hydrology, resource management and planning, or experience in applied water resources, hydrology and/or fluvial geomorphology with specific experience in field and stream based assessments.
- Experience interpreting and analyzing maps and data related to resource and water management.
- Experience working cooperatively with agencies, other levels of government and the public.
- Experience coordinating participating in interdisciplinary projects.
- Experience coordinating or participating in complex integrated resource management plans.
- Experience conducting water investigations, including watershed and hydrology assessments and water monitoring.
- Experience producing technical reports.
- Specific experience in stream, river and lake hydraulics and assessment of impacts from development proposal and activities.
- Specific experience in riparian ecosystem and habitat assessment methodology, and potential impacts that could occur from development proposals and activities.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

- Registration or eligible for registration with a professional association in British Columbia.

- Advanced knowledge of water resource management, water quality and water use.
- Understanding of BC legislation on land use planning is desired.

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

- **Planning, Organizing and Coordinating** involves proactively planning, establishing priorities and allocating resources. It is expressed by developing and implementing increasingly complex plans. It also involves monitoring and adjusting work to accomplish goals and deliver to the organization's mandate.
- **Information Seeking** is driven by a desire to know more about things, people or issues. It implies going beyond the questions that are routine or required in the job. It may include "digging" or pressing for exact information; resolution of discrepancies by asking a series of questions; or less-focused environmental "scanning" for potential opportunities or miscellaneous information that may be of future use.
- **Concern for Order** reflects an underlying drive to reduce uncertainty in the surrounding environment. It is expressed as monitoring and checking work or information, insisting on clarity of roles and functions, etc.
- **Service Orientation** is the desire to identify and serve customers/clients, who may include the public, co-workers, other branches/divisions, other ministries/agencies, other government organizations and non-government organizations. It means focusing one's efforts on discovering and meeting the needs of the customer/client.
- **Teamwork and Co-operation** the ability to work co-operatively within diverse teams, work groups and across the organization to achieve group and organizational goals. It includes the desire and ability to understand and respond effectively to other people from diverse backgrounds with diverse views.

INDIGENOUS RELATIONS BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

- **Open Listening** is letting go of conventional means of listening. It means listening to and valuing the telling of stories, and letting pauses in conversation extend into silence rather than jumping in to dispute, agree, question, or move on. It is an awareness of personal bias or judgment and its effect on one's ability to hear. It is the desire and ability to set aside physical, mental, and emotional distractions in order to be fully focused and listening respectfully and openly. It is staying open to the message even when conversations are filled with raw emotions like sadness or anger, and believing that each person's knowledge and reality is legitimate and valuable. Finally, it requires a willingness to reflect upon a story or message and to derive meaning from it based upon the situation in which it is shared.
- **Empathy** is the ability to recognize, understand and directly experience the emotion of another. It involves listening with heart, accepting their message and staying focused on their experience rather than reacting. It means understanding that the behaviour may be connected to something outside of the immediate situation. (Sympathy is not empathy. Sympathy means feeling pity and sorrow for someone's misfortune, or the tendency to want to help them with what you see as something negative. This can send a message that you believe that others cannot arrive at their own solutions.)

FRESHWATER SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY ACTION LIST	
Groundwater Sustainability Planning Program (GWSS)	
GWSS 1	Improve data management to inform decision making
GWSS 2	Develop a coordinated long-term water monitoring program
GWSS 3	Continue groundwater data and information inventory
GWSS 4	Continue groundwater recharge potential mapping
GWSS 5	Continue groundwater availability assessments
GWSS 6	Establish groundwater regions as a focus for land use planning for all Islands
GWSS 7	Integrate water availability and vulnerability information into land-use policies and regulations
GWSS 8	Implement appropriate planning and regulatory tools to protect vulnerable aquifers and sensitive aquatic ecosystems
GWSS 9	Improve the availability of water-related information to support development application reviews
GWSS 10	Customize water supply requirements for new development to local circumstances
Watershed Sustainability Science Program (WSS)	
WSS 1	Inventory and understand the status of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems
WSS 2	Continue to explore the potential for rainwater harvesting and other alternatives to supplement water supplies and promote this as conservation and resilience strategy
Cultural Knowledge and Engagement Program (CKE)	
CKE 1	Identify freshwater sites of cultural and spiritual significance to First Nations
CKE 2	Collaborate with First Nations and Indigenous organizations to increase community awareness of water-related cultural values, interests, and inherent rights
CKE 3	Develop and implement a freshwater stewardship outreach plan
CKE 4	Develop and implement water-focussed training for new Trustees and Trust staff
CKE 5	Use market research methods to understand and monitor change in attitudes and behaviours related to water
CKE 6	Support water purveyors' adoption of sustainable water management practices
Freshwater Sustainability Reporting Program (FSR)	
FSR 1	Publish 'state of freshwater' report for the Islands Trust
Collaboration and Advocacy with Other Agencies (CAOA)	
CAOA 1	Collaborate with First Nations and Indigenous organizations to develop understanding and integrate their participation, perspectives, and interests into water related decision making by all agencies
CAOA 2	Work with the Provincial Government to employ appropriate regulatory instruments in areas with acute water challenges
CAOA 3	Work with partner regulatory agencies to harmonize approval processes and integrate Freshwater Sustainability Strategy goals and objectives into decisions
CAOA 4	Work with partner agencies to manage water use and quality impacts from existing users, particularly in areas experiencing supply constraints

PROGRAM	PROJECTS	ACTIONS																					
		GWSS										WSSS		CKE						CAOA			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4
Groundwater Sustainability Science Program	Aquifer Conceptualization																						
	Groundwater Region Mapping																						
	Groundwater Recharge Mapping																						
	Groundwater Availability Assessments																						
	Seawater Intrusion Risk																						
	Volunteer Observation Well Monitoring																						
Watershed Sustainability Science Program	Freshwater Footprint																						
	Climate Vulnerability																						
	Watershed Boundary and Watercourse Mapping																						
	Watershed Resilliency																						
	Wet Areas Mapping																						
	Hydraulic Connection Assessment																						
Planning and Reporting	Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy																						
	Land Information Screening Tool (LIST) (Previously SLA)																						
	Subdivision Proof of Water LUB Updates																						
	Groundwater Recharge Protection Development Permit Area																						
	Stormwater Management Planning																						
Cultural Knowledge and Engagement Program	Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas																						
	Islands Trust Area Freshwater Forum																						
	Trust Programs Committee Continuing Education Workshops																						
	Planning Services Pro-D Day Freshwater Sustainability Workshop																						
	Our Groundwater and Wells Workshops																						
	Salish Sea Conference Freshwater Presentation																						
	Trust Council Presentation: Water Sustainability Act																						
	Trust Council Presentation: Groundwater Licencing																						
	Freshwater Drawings and Illustrations																						
	Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Coordination																						

	Unfinished		Proposed
	Delivered		On-Going

PROGRAM	PROJECTS	FISCAL TIMELINES															
		14/15 - 17/18				18/19 - 21/22				22/23 - 25/26				26/27 - 29/30			
		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Groundwater Sustainability Science Program	Aquifer Conceptualization																
	Groundwater Region Mapping																
	Groundwater Recharge Mapping																
	Groundwater Availability Assessments																
	Seawater Intrusion Risk																
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	Trust Council Presentation: Groundwater Licencing																
	Freshwater Drawings and Illustrations																
	Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Coordination																

Unfinished	Proposed
Delivered	On-Going

PROGRAM	PROJECTS	BE	BO	DE	GB	GL	GM	HO	LA	MA	NP	SA	SP	SS	TH
Groundwater Sustainability Science Program	Aquifer Conceptualization		Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Groundwater Region Mapping		Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Groundwater Recharge Mapping		Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Groundwater Availability Assessments				Delivered										
	Seawater Intrusion Risk	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Volunteer Observation Well Monitoring				On-Going									On-Going	
Watershed Sustainability Science Program	Freshwater Footprint				Delivered										
	Climate Vulnerability				On-Going										
	Watershed Boundary and Watercourse Mapping	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going
	Watershed Resilliency			Delivered	Delivered			Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered			Delivered	
	Wet Areas Mapping		On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going
	Hydraulic Connection Assessment			Delivered				Delivered							
Planning and Reporting	Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Land Information Screening Tool (LIST) (Previously SLA)			On-Going	On-Going			On-Going		On-Going	On-Going			On-Going	
	Subdivision Proof of Water LUB Updates					On-Going					Delivered			On-Going	
	Groundwater Recharge Protection Development Permit Area					Delivered									
	Stormwater Management Planning														
Cultural Knowledge and Engagement Program	Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going	On-Going
	Islands Trust Area Freshwater Forum	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Trust Programs Committee Continuing Education Workshops	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Planning Services Pro-D Day Freshwater Sustainability Workshop	Delivered		Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Our Groundwater and Wells Workshops		Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Salish Sea Conference Freshwater Presentation	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Trust Council Presentation: Water Sustainability Act	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Trust Council Presentation: Groundwater Licencing	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Freshwater Drawings and Illustrations	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
	Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Coordination				On-Going									On-Going	On-Going

Project	**Freshwater Sustainability Strategy Development Project**
Program	Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (Foundational Governance and Integration)
Status	Completed and adopted; implementation ongoing
Fiscal Span	FY 2018/19 – FY 2021/22 (development)
Project Link	FWSS Report
Project Summary	The Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy established a Trust-wide, coordinated framework for understanding, managing, and protecting freshwater resources in support of land-use decision-making and the preserve and protect mandate. The Strategy consolidated years of fragmented freshwater initiatives into a coherent governance, science, and planning structure that now underpins freshwater-related policy, regulation, and project delivery across the Islands Trust Area.
Delivery Context	The FWSS was developed under the direction of Trust Council, with oversight from the Trust Programs Committee and coordination through the Regional Planning Committee. Technical leadership was provided by the Senior Freshwater Specialist, with substantive contributions from Planning Services, GIS and Information Services, and Local Trust Committees. A Strategic Roundtable was convened as a central mechanism for coordination, bringing together provincial agencies, regional districts, First Nations representatives, professional practitioners, academics, and community-based organizations. This forum enabled structured dialogue on roles, responsibilities, data gaps, and implementation pathways under the Water Sustainability Act and related legislation. The Strategy was informed by extensive engagement with Local Trust Committees, reflecting on-the-ground planning pressures, community priorities, and emerging climate risks. The FWSS functioned as a synthesis and alignment exercise rather than a standalone technical study.
Funding Context	Strategy development was supported through the Healthy Watersheds Initiative, which served as a provincial case study for coordinated watershed governance and directly informed the creation of the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund. Islands Trust staff time, consultant support, and in-kind contributions from partner organizations were integrated into delivery.
Challenges and Opportunities	Freshwater governance across the Islands Trust Area is characterized by jurisdictional fragmentation, uneven data availability, and limited regulatory tools at the local level. The FWSS addressed these constraints by emphasizing coordination, shared evidence bases, and incremental implementation rather than prescriptive regulation. The Strategy created a platform for aligning disparate projects, funding sources, and governance mechanisms over time.
Methods and Technical Basis	The development of the FWSS employed a collaborative governance methodology. The strategy was built through an iterative process involving a literature review of water policy and governance, semi-structured interviews with internal and external agencies, and virtual workshops with Islands Trust staff. Central to this methodology was the convening of the Strategic Advisory Roundtable, an ad hoc advisory body established in the spring of 2021 to co-create the strategy. The Roundtable was composed of 23 individuals representing a diverse cross-section of watershed interests, including delegates from provincial government agencies, regional districts, improvement districts, community stewardship groups, Indigenous Cultural Knowledge Holders, and Islands Trust elected officials and staff. The Roundtable provided critical input throughout the development process. Members engaged in structured dialogue to identify data gaps and define roles under the Water Sustainability Act, and they collaboratively created the specific Actions contained within the final strategy. This work was supported by a parallel engagement process with Indigenous Cultural Knowledge Holders, who conducted internal workshops and hosted a special session for Roundtable members to ground the strategy in Indigenous ways of knowing and the cultural values of water.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The FWSS provides the organizing framework for freshwater-related work across the Islands Trust, informing Official Community Plan updates, Development Permit Areas, development review processes, and inter-agency coordination. It establishes the rationale and structure for subsequent FWSS programs, including groundwater sustainability science, freshwater planning tools, monitoring initiatives, and policy development.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Key outcomes include formal adoption of the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy, establishment of enduring coordination mechanisms such as the Strategic Roundtable, and alignment of Trust-wide freshwater projects under a single strategic framework. The FWSS enabled subsequent implementation projects—including aquifer conceptualization, recharge mapping, freshwater footprint analysis, and regulatory initiatives—to proceed in a coordinated and cumulative manner rather than as isolated efforts.

Project	Islands Trust Area Aquifer Conceptualization Project
Program	Groundwater Sustainability Science Program
Status	Completed; foundational FWSS science
Fiscal Span	FY 2017/18 – FY 2021/22 (over three phases)
Project Link	GW Solutions (2021)
Project Link	GW Solutions (2023)
Project Summary	The project collated, cleaned, and standardized groundwater datasets across the Trust Area, including well records, geological mapping, and hydrostratigraphic information. These data were synthesized into three-dimensional aquifer conceptual models that establish a consistent structural framework for groundwater sustainability assessment, recharge analysis, and planning-scale land-use decision-making, forming the foundation for subsequent FWSS groundwater projects and tools.
Delivery Context	Initial phases of the project were delivered through Southern Gulf Islands Local Trust Committees. Subsequent phases covering the Northern Gulf Islands and Howe Sound were delivered under the direction of the Regional Planning Committee, with technical leadership provided by the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Consultant hydrogeologists supported island-specific analyses within a Trust-wide standardized framework.
Funding Context	Aquifer conceptualization was funded as an embedded component of the Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Potential Mapping Project. This structure intentionally paired conceptual understanding with recharge analysis to provide essential hydrogeological work.
Challenges and Opportunities	The project addressed inconsistent, incomplete, and non-standardized groundwater datasets across the Trust Area that limited planning-scale analysis and cumulative effects assessment. Site-specific hydrogeological studies were not transferable or scalable to Trust-wide needs. By prioritizing data collation and standardization, the project established a reusable structural framework for groundwater interpretation. The resulting aquifer conceptual models became a foundational dataset for subsequent FWSS projects, including groundwater recharge mapping, freshwater availability assessment, and the Freshwater Atlas, enabling coordinated and cumulative application of groundwater science across planning and policy contexts.
Methods and Technical Basis	Conceptual models were developed using well records, geological mapping, surface water datasets, consultant studies, and professional hydrogeological interpretation. The approach prioritized system understanding over numerical groundwater modelling, reflecting island-scale planning needs and data limitations.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The project provides the baseline groundwater system knowledge required for evidence-based freshwater planning. Outputs support interpretation of recharge mapping, groundwater availability assessments, and the application of groundwater science in OCPs, DPAs, and development review.
Deliverables and Outcomes	The project delivered the first Trust-wide, standardized aquifer conceptual framework. It established a common technical reference for groundwater conditions across Local Trust Areas and enabled consistent integration of groundwater science into FWSS implementation and planning tools.

Project	**Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Mapping Project**
Program	Groundwater Sustainability Science Program
Status	Completed; foundational FWSS science
Fiscal Span	FY 2017/18 – FY 2021/22 over three phases
Project Link	GW Solutions (2021)
Project Link	GW Solutions (2023)
Project Summary	The Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Potential Mapping Project quantified and spatially mapped relative groundwater recharge potential across the Trust Area using a GIS-based methodology. The project translated conceptual hydrogeological understanding into a consistent, planning-scale recharge framework capable of informing land-use decisions, cumulative effects analysis, and groundwater sustainability assessment.
Delivery Context	The project was delivered in coordinated phases aligned with aquifer conceptualization work. Early phases focused on the Southern Gulf Islands, followed by Northern Gulf Islands (Denman, Hornby, Gabriola), and later Howe Sound and remaining islands. Technical leadership was provided by the Senior Freshwater Specialist, with consultant support for methodology development and validation. A formal collaboration with the Province supported stream–groundwater connectivity analysis on Denman Island.
Funding Context	Project funding was embedded within FWSS groundwater science allocations and delivered through multi-year consultant contracts. Provincial contributions supplemented work related to hydraulic stream connection assessment. The project leveraged prior investments in aquifer conceptualization, reducing duplication and enabling cumulative value across FWSS initiatives.
Challenges and Opportunities	Direct measurement of groundwater recharge at Trust-wide scales was not feasible due to limited long-term hydrometric and subsurface data. Traditional numerical groundwater models required data density unavailable for most islands. The project addressed this constraint by reframing recharge estimation through landscape, soil, geology, and ecosystem function. This approach enabled Trust-wide coverage at high spatial resolution and introduced ecosystem processes—particularly precipitation interception and infiltration capacity—as central components of groundwater sustainability analysis.
Methods and Technical Basis	Recharge potential was estimated using a GIS-based multi-criteria framework integrating precipitation, surficial geology, soil permeability, slope, land cover, and ecosystem interception characteristics. A novel appraoch was to consider the role of ecosystems rather than land use/type. Outputs were generated at 20 m × 20 m resolution. Approximately 100,000 hectares across 20 islands have been assessed for recharge potential. The methodology emphasized relative recharge potential rather than absolute volumetric estimates, supporting comparative planning analysis and cumulative assessment.
Planning and Policy Relevance	Recharge mapping provided a defensible spatial basis for integrating groundwater considerations into land-use planning. Outputs directly informed Development Permit Area work, Land Information Screening Tool (LIST), freshwater vulnerability assessment, and the Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas. The project shifted groundwater planning from site-specific studies toward island-scale and Trust-wide evidence.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Key deliverables include Trust-wide groundwater recharge potential rasters, island-specific interpretation products, and documented methodology. The project established a foundational dataset used by subsequent FWSS initiatives, including freshwater footprint analysis, groundwater availability assessment, and climate vulnerability work, and remains a core scientific input to freshwater-related planning and regulatory decisions.

Project	Southern Gulf Islands Groundwater Availability Assessment
Program	Groundwater Sustainability Science Program
Status	Completed; was subject to a formal external review; applied in planning contexts
Fiscal Span	FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22
Project Link	GW Solutions (2021)
Project Summary	The Southern Gulf Islands Groundwater Availability Assessment Report evaluated groundwater availability across the Southern Gulf Islands region using a planning-scale approach. The work integrated recharge potential mapping, aquifer conceptual understanding, and estimated water demand to produce comparative indicators of groundwater availability suitable for land-use decision-making across multiple Local Trust Areas. This project was a test of methodology and the project underwent a formal external review of professionals and academics. That review facilitated changes and update to the methodology and applied in future projects.
Delivery Context	The project was endorsed and funded by five Local Trust Committees: Galiano, Mayne, North Pender, South Pender, and Saturna. Technical leadership was provided by the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Consultant hydrogeologists supported regional analysis and interpretation. The project functioned as a coordinated regional assessment initiated through LTC governance rather than RPC direction.
Funding Context	Funding was provided through Local Trust Committee project budgets. The project did not rely on direct business cases to Trust Council typical of RPC-led regional initiatives. This funding pathway represents a distinct governance pattern: regional-scale groundwater assessment delivered through joint LTC priority-setting and pooled project funding.
Challenges and Opportunities	Groundwater availability could not be expressed as fixed sustainable yield values due to data limitations, spatial heterogeneity, and uncertainty in recharge and demand estimates. Yield-threshold approaches risked false precision and inappropriate planning interpretation. The project established a scalable regional assessment model endorsed directly by multiple LTCs. This created a repeatable governance and delivery approach for other regional FWSS science initiatives requiring local political legitimacy.
Methods and Technical Basis	The assessment integrated recharge potential mapping outputs, aquifer conceptual interpretation, groundwater vulnerability indicators, and estimated demand derived from land-use patterns. Analysis was delivered through GIS-based synthesis and professional hydrogeological interpretation rather than numerical flow modeling.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The report provided a technical basis for incorporating groundwater availability into Official Community Plan updates, Development Permit Area policy development, subdivision review, and freshwater vulnerability discussions across the Southern Gulf Islands. It supported a shift from application-by-application groundwater debate to regionally consistent evidence.
Deliverables and Outcomes	The project produced regionally consistent groundwater availability indicators, mapped outputs, and interpretive guidance suitable for planning-scale application across the Southern Gulf Islands. A formal technical review identified methodological limitations and areas requiring refinement, particularly related to demand assumptions and uncertainty representation. Findings from the review were embedded into subsequent FWSS groundwater initiatives. Methodological lessons informed refinements in the methodological updates to the Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Potential Mapping Project and learnings in groundwater demand assessments were incorporated into the Freshwater Footprint Project methodology. As a result, the project delivered lasting structural value by strengthening the technical foundation, assumptions, and analytical coherence of later FWSS projects, despite recognized constraints in the original assessment approach.

Project	**Seawater Intrusion Risk to Aquifers Assessment**
Program	Groundwater Sustainability Science Program
Status	Completed (provincial report delivered); ongoing use as risk dataset
Fiscal Span	FY 2019/20 – FY 2020/21 (delivery window; ongoing use thereafter)
Project Link	Western Water Associates (2021)
Project Summary	The Seawater Intrusion Risk Mapping project assessed susceptibility of coastal aquifers to saline intrusion along the British Columbia coast, including the Southern Gulf Islands. The work produced GIS-based risk mapping intended to support water management decisions under groundwater pumping pressure and coastal hazards.
Delivery Context	The project was Province-led. Islands Trust participated as an external supporting organization through the Senior Freshwater Specialist and Planning Services. The project was described internally as work undertaken by the Province with Islands Trust support, with a planned delivery by end of FY 2019/20.
Funding Context	Islands Trust provided $10,000 toward the provincial work program through the Regional Planning Committee contribution, with funding approved and work undertaken by the Province.
Challenges and Opportunities	The project scope and methodology were defined by the Province, limiting Islands Trust control over input parameters and planning-specific outputs. The dataset provides a Trust-wide baseline for saltwater intrusion risk screening and supports prioritization of local follow-on analysis where coastal aquifers are vulnerable. An issue was resolution of the dataset and fitment to the coast. In addition, it appears that the dataset underrespresents the risk in the Islands Trust Area.
Methods and Technical Basis	GIS modelling was used to map susceptibility and reflect risk drivers including groundwater pumping and coastal hazards. The study recommends monitoring and periodic updates to maintain management value.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The dataset supports identification of coastal areas where groundwater resources are vulnerable to salinization and can inform planning discussions, best management practices, and subsequent FWSS projects that integrate hazard layers into broader freshwater sustainability analysis.
Deliverables and Outcomes	The project delivered the Provincial Water Science Series report and a comprehensive suite of GIS risk mapping products, covering Aquifer Susceptibility, Pumping Threat, and Overall Seawater Intrusion Risk. This output established a consistent, Trust-wide baseline for coastal aquifer hazards, replacing disparate localized studies with a unified provincial dataset. Functionally, the assessment identified high-priority "hotspots" vulnerable to salinization, such as the East Point of Saturna and Long Harbour on Salt Spring Island. However, a critical outcome was the determination by staff that the regional-scale methodology likely underrepresents risk in specific fractured bedrock contexts due to data gaps in the provincial wells database. Consequently, this dataset was operationalized as the screening-level "Hazard Layer" input for the Freshwater Footprint, where it is now further refined using local water quality monitoring data to define carrying capacity limits.

Project	**Volunteer Observation Well Monitoring (Salt Spring Island Case Study**
Program	Groundwater Sustainability Science Program
Status	Pilot completed; monitoring ongoing in modified form
Fiscal Span	FY 2018/19 – FY 2023/24
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Volunteer Observation Well Monitoring project established a community-based groundwater level monitoring network on Salt Spring Island to generate empirical time-series data for understanding seasonal and interannual groundwater behaviour. The project provided the first coordinated, island-scale groundwater monitoring dataset collected outside of provincial regulatory networks.
Delivery Context	The project was led by the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee, with technical leadership from the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Implementation was supported through collaboration with volunteer well owners and Planning Services. The work was coordinated alongside other Salt Spring Island freshwater initiatives and informed by emerging FWSS groundwater science.
Funding Context	Project delivery was supported through Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee project funding and staff resources. The project leveraged in-kind contributions from participating well owners and avoided reliance on external consultant contracts for data collection.
Challenges and Opportunities	Reliance on volunteer participation introduced variability in spatial coverage and monitoring continuity. Despite these limitations, the project demonstrated the feasibility and value of community-based groundwater monitoring and highlighted opportunities to integrate local datasets with professional groundwater science and planning tools.
Methods and Technical Basis	Water level data were collected using pressure transducers installed in volunteer domestic wells. Data were retrieved periodically and quality-controlled for use in trend analysis, seasonal response evaluation, and correlation with climate variables.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The monitoring data provided empirical grounding for Salt Spring Island groundwater discussions, supported interpretation of groundwater recharge and availability studies, and informed subsequent FWSS projects that required real-world validation of modelled groundwater behaviour.
Deliverables and Outcomes	The project produced a multi-year groundwater level dataset for Salt Spring Island, improved local understanding of aquifer response to climate variability, and influenced the design of later FWSS projects by reinforcing the importance of monitoring to complement modelling. Lessons learned from the pilot informed refinements in subsequent groundwater monitoring and analysis efforts across the Trust Area

Project	Islands Trust Area Groundwater Region Mapping Project
Program	Groundwater Sustainability Science Program
Status	Completed
Fiscal Span	FY 2020/21 – FY 2021/22
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Islands Trust Area Groundwater Region Mapping Project established a standardized spatial framework for delineating groundwater regions across the Trust Area. The project translated hydrogeological structure and surface water context into planning-scale groundwater regions suitable for regional analysis and integration with subsequent FWSS groundwater science projects. These regions are used as a water management unit.
Delivery Context	The project was delivered as a distinct phase embedded within the Islands Trust Area Aquifer Conceptualization Project. Technical leadership was provided by the Senior Freshwater Specialist, with consultant hydrogeologists supporting interpretation and regional delineation. Coordination occurred through Trust Area Services to ensure applicability across Local Trust Areas.
Funding Context	Project costs were embedded within Aquifer Conceptualization project funding and staff resources. No standalone business case or separate funding stream was established for this phase.
Challenges and Opportunities	Groundwater regions required simplification of complex subsurface conditions to ensure usability at the regional planning scale. The resulting framework created opportunities for consistent island-to-island comparison and supported later groundwater availability, recharge, and footprint analyses.
Methods and Technical Basis	Groundwater regions were delineated using integrated geological mapping, aquifer conceptual models, watershed boundaries, and hydrographic context. Regions were defined to reflect shared hydrogeological characteristics, recharge–discharge behaviour, and surface water connectivity.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The groundwater region framework enabled region-based groundwater assessment and reporting, supported cumulative effects analysis, and provided a consistent spatial unit for applying FWSS groundwater science in land-use planning and policy development.
Deliverables and Outcomes	The project produced Trust Area–wide groundwater region mapping used directly in groundwater recharge potential mapping, groundwater availability assessments, freshwater footprint analysis, and Freshwater Atlas development. The framework established a durable spatial reference that continues to underpin FWSS groundwater science and planning applications.

Project	**Islands Trust Area Freshwater Footprint Methodology Project (Gabriola Case Study)**
Program	Watershed Sustainability Science Program / Gabriola OCP Project
Status	Active pilot; methodology development underway
Fiscal Span	FY 2024/25 – FY 2025/26
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Islands Trust Area Freshwater Footprint Project is a planning-scale methodology project designed to characterize freshwater conditions at the island scale by integrating water availability, water quality considerations, land use, and hazard exposure. The Gabriola Island pilot represents the first application of this approach and is intended to inform future Trust-wide implementation.
Delivery Context	The project is led by Islands Trust staff under the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy implementation framework. Technical direction is provided by the Senior Freshwater Specialist, with consultant support for model development and analysis. The pilot is being delivered in parallel with Gabriola Island OCP and LUB review processes, with structured engagement involving community representatives, First Nations, and provincial agencies.
Funding Context	The pilot is funded through the Gabriola Island OCP and LUB revision project budget. The work leverages prior FWSS investments in aquifer conceptualization, groundwater recharge potential mapping, and groundwater availability analysis, without duplicating those studies.
Challenges and Opportunities	The project operates within the constraints of existing data and avoids new field data collection, requiring careful interpretation of uncertainty. The pilot creates an opportunity to test how FWSS science outputs can be translated into planning-relevant indicators and decision-support tools.
Methods and Technical Basis	The project integrates existing groundwater monitoring data, water quality information, hydrogeological mapping, recharge potential, and hazard indicators into a gridded water balance and vulnerability framework. The methodology focuses on cumulative conditions rather than parcel-level determinations and is explicitly planning-scale.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The Freshwater Footprint Project is intended to support Official Community Plan updates, land-use decision-making, and future regulatory tools by providing an integrated picture of freshwater pressures and constraints. Outputs are designed to complement Suitable Land Analysis and other FWSS-derived planning tools rather than replace them.
Deliverables and Outcomes	This project represents the operational synthesis of the FWSS science program, delivering a documented freshwater footprint methodology and island-scale analytical results for the Gabriola Island pilot. Unlike previous studies that looked at single variables, this initiative successfully integrated water quantity (water balance models), water quality (chloride and TDS trends), and hazard indicators (seawater intrusion risk) into a unified "carrying capacity" metric. Key outputs included a dashboard-style presentation of results and community-facing communication materials, designed to make complex hydrogeological constraints accessible for the parallel Official Community Plan review. Crucially, the pilot established a transferable framework. By standardizing how "footprint" inputs—such as recharge potential and development density—are calculated, this methodology can now be refined and applied to other Local Trust Areas, serving as the standard mechanism for implementing the FWSS across the Federation.

Project	**Climate Vulnerability (Integrated FWSS Component)**
Program	Watershed Sustainability Science Program
Status	Embedded and ongoing across FWSS projects
Fiscal Span	FY 2019/20 – present
Project Link	
Project Summary	Climate Vulnerability is addressed through the systematic integration of climate-sensitive variables into multiple FWSS science and planning projects. Rather than being delivered as a discrete study, climate vulnerability is operationalized through groundwater recharge analysis, freshwater footprint methodology, and public-facing atlas products to support climate-resilient land use and water management decisions.
Delivery Context	Climate vulnerability considerations were incorporated by Islands Trust staff as a response to the Trust Council climate emergency declaration and subsequent direction to integrate climate change into land-use planning and resource management. Technical leadership was provided by the Senior Freshwater Specialist, with analytical implementation occurring across consultant-delivered and in-house FWSS projects. Coordination occurred through Regional Planning Committee priorities and FWSS implementation work.
Funding Context	No stand-alone funding envelope was established for climate vulnerability. Analytical work was embedded within funded FWSS projects, including the Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Potential Mapping Project, the Freshwater Footprint Project, and development of the Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas. This approach maximized value from existing project investments while ensuring climate considerations were consistently applied.
Challenges and Opportunities	The absence of downscaled, island-specific climate projections limited direct quantification of future conditions, requiring the use of proxy indicators and sensitivity-based approaches. The embedded model created an opportunity to integrate climate risk across multiple datasets and planning tools without delaying FWSS implementation or duplicating studies.
Methods and Technical Basis	Climate vulnerability was addressed through variables and assumptions incorporated into FWSS projects, including precipitation variability, evapotranspiration sensitivity, land cover and ecosystem function, recharge resilience, drought susceptibility, saltwater intrusion risk, and cumulative demand pressures. These elements were analyzed using GIS-based spatial methods suitable for planning-scale application rather than predictive hydrodynamic modeling.
Planning and Policy Relevance	Embedding climate vulnerability across FWSS projects ensured that freshwater planning tools directly support climate adaptation objectives. Outputs inform Official Community Plan updates, development permit area considerations, suitable land analysis, and future regulatory approaches by explicitly identifying areas where freshwater systems are more sensitive to climate stressors.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Key outcomes include climate-informed groundwater recharge mapping, vulnerability-weighted freshwater footprint outputs, and climate-relevant layers and narratives within the Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas. Collectively, these deliverables operationalize the Trust's climate emergency response within freshwater planning and establish a defensible basis for climate-resilient land-use decisions. The Role of Climate in the Freshwater Atlas The Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas functions as the central knowledge mobilization platform for the FWSS, designed to transform complex climate modeling into an accessible educational web experience. Rather than simply hosting static data, the Atlas features unique "climate narratives" that guide the viewer through the technical outcomes of the climate assessments. This interactive experience allows users to visualize how specific climate stressors—such as altered precipitation patterns and increased drought severity—impact local groundwater recharge and watershed health,. By embedding these climate vulnerability indicators directly into the spatial interface, the Atlas bridges the gap between raw scientific data and public understanding. It functions similarly to the BC Drought Information Portal, enabling residents and decision-makers to navigate through "climate-informed" layers to understand how the "carrying capacity" of their specific island is projected to shift under future climate scenarios,. This narrative-driven approach ensures that climate data is not merely archived in technical reports, but is actively interpreted to support community stewardship and regulatory planning.

Project	**Watershed Boundary and Watercourse Mapping**
Program	Watershed Sustainability Science Program
Status	Ongoing application and refinement
Fiscal Span	FY 2019/20 – present
Project Link	Freshwater Atlas
Project Summary	The Watershed Boundary and Watercourse Mapping Project established consistent, high-resolution watershed and stream network datasets across the Islands Trust Area using LiDAR-derived terrain models and in-house hydrologic analysis. The project addressed long-standing inconsistencies in mapped watercourses and watershed extents that constrained land-use planning, development review, and bylaw enforcement.
Delivery Context	The project was delivered by Islands Trust Planning Services with technical leadership from the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Analysis was undertaken in-house using LiDAR, digital elevation models, and hydrologic flow modelling, allowing rapid iteration and direct alignment with FWSS projects. Outputs were coordinated with FWSS implementation priorities and applied across multiple Local Trust Areas.
Funding Context	Project delivery was supported through Planning Services staff resources and FWSS program funding. The work leveraged previously acquired LiDAR datasets and avoided reliance on consultant-led mapping, reducing costs while increasing internal analytical capacity.
Challenges and Opportunities	Historic watercourse datasets were incomplete, inconsistent, and often misaligned with on-the-ground conditions, creating uncertainty in regulatory application. The project created an opportunity to establish a defensible, Trust-wide baseline for hydrologic features that supports both planning certainty and enforcement clarity.
Methods and Technical Basis	Watershed boundaries and watercourses were delineated using LiDAR-based digital elevation models, flow direction and accumulation modelling, and hydrologic threshold analysis. Outputs were reviewed and refined to ensure suitability for planning-scale decision-making rather than fine-scale engineering design.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The project directly supports development permit area implementation, subdivision and development review, riparian and watershed protection policies, and enforcement of land-use bylaws. It provides a consistent spatial foundation for groundwater recharge analysis, freshwater footprint assessment, and climate vulnerability work.
Deliverables and Outcomes	The project directly supports development permit area implementation, subdivision and development review, riparian and watershed protection policies, and enforcement of land-use bylaws. It provides a consistent spatial foundation for groundwater recharge analysis, freshwater footprint assessment, and climate vulnerability work.

Project	**Watershed Resiliency Mapping**
Program	Watershed Sustainability Science Program
Status	Delivered; methodology applied and extended within FWSS
Fiscal Span	FY 2020/21 – FY 2024/25
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Watershed Resiliency Mapping Project adapted and applied a watershed resiliency assessment methodology originally developed by Cedar Shore Consulting for the Sooke Watershed to support community water planning within the Capital Regional District. Within the Islands Trust Area, the methodology was implemented and extended to support freshwater sustainability analysis, climate adaptation, and land-use planning.
Delivery Context	The project was delivered through Planning Services with technical leadership from the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Cedar Shore Consulting provided the original methodology framework, which was subsequently adapted for Trust Area conditions and integrated with FWSS groundwater and watershed science projects. The work was coordinated to ensure alignment with FWSS implementation priorities and climate emergency response objectives.
Funding Context	Project delivery was supported through FWSS-related project funding and Planning Services staff resources. The Islands Trust implementation leveraged prior investment in methodology development by external jurisdictions, reducing development costs while enabling adaptation to island-scale planning needs.
Challenges and Opportunities	Island watersheds face compounded pressures from climate variability, limited storage, ecological sensitivity, and development demand. The project addressed the absence of a consistent framework for assessing watershed capacity to absorb and recover from stress. It created an opportunity to integrate ecological condition, hydrologic function, and land-use pressure into a single planning-relevant assessment.
Methods and Technical Basis	The methodology integrates landscape condition indicators, hydrologic function, ecological integrity, and disturbance sensitivity to produce relative watershed resiliency scores. Inputs include terrain, land cover, hydrologic connectivity, groundwater recharge indicators, and climate exposure metrics. The approach is designed for comparative planning analysis rather than predictive hydrologic modelling.
Planning and Policy Relevance	Watershed resiliency mapping informs Official Community Plan updates, development permit area policy, freshwater footprint analysis, and climate adaptation planning. It provides a defensible framework for identifying watersheds with limited capacity to absorb additional stress, supporting precautionary land-use decisions consistent with the preserve and protect mandate.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Key deliverables include watershed resiliency maps and associated analytical layers suitable for integration with FWSS planning tools. The project strengthened the Trust's ability to consider climate impacts, cumulative effects, and ecological limits in freshwater-related decision-making and provided a transferable framework applicable across multiple Local Trust Areas.

Project	**Wet Areas Mapping**
Program	Watershed Sustainability Science Program
Status	Method developed; internally applied and evolving
Fiscal Span	FY 2021/22 – FY 2024/25
Project Link	
Project Summary	Wet Areas Mapping is an internally developed analytical method derived from the Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Potential Mapping Project. Using satellite-based remote sensing and GIS processing, the method identifies areas of persistent surface wetness and shallow saturation that are hydrologically significant for groundwater recharge, ecosystem function, and watershed resilience.
Delivery Context	The method was developed and implemented in-house by Planning Services under the technical leadership of the Senior Freshwater Specialist. It emerged as a secondary analytical product of the groundwater recharge mapping workflow, rather than as a standalone consultant-led project. The work supports ongoing FWSS research and coordination with island-based conservation organizations.
Funding Context	No dedicated project funding was allocated. Development relied on existing FWSS staff capacity, GIS infrastructure, and data products generated through prior recharge mapping investments. This approach maximized the value of earlier consultant-led projects by extending their analytical outputs.
Challenges and Opportunities	The Trust Area lacked a consistent, spatially explicit method for identifying hydrologically sensitive wet areas outside of formally mapped wetlands. The absence of such information constrained ecological protection, land-use planning, and cumulative effects assessment. The method creates an opportunity to bridge scientific analysis, conservation priorities, and future land-use regulation without requiring immediate regulatory change.
Methods and Technical Basis	Wet areas are identified through multi-temporal analysis of Sentinel satellite imagery, combined with terrain derivatives and recharge mapping outputs. The approach highlights areas of recurrent moisture expression, including seasonally saturated soils and shallow groundwater discharge zones. The method is exploratory and adaptive, intended to inform further research and validation rather than serve as a regulatory boundary.
Planning and Policy Relevance	Wet Areas Mapping supports FWSS objectives related to watershed resiliency, climate adaptation, and ecosystem protection. Outputs are suitable for informing Official Community Plan updates, development review screening, conservation planning, and potential future Development Permit Area considerations focused on hydrologically sensitive landscapes.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Deliverables include wet area spatial layers and associated analytical documentation for internal use. The work has expanded the Trust's freshwater science toolkit, strengthened collaboration with on-island conservation groups, and established a foundation for future research, policy exploration, and potential regulatory integration.

Project	**Hydraulic Connection Assessment**
Program	Watershed Sustainability Science Program
Status	Completed (Province-collaborated); methodology embedded in FWSS projects
Fiscal Span	FY 2021/22 – FY 2024/25
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Hydraulic Connection Assessment evaluated the degree of hydraulic connectivity between surface watercourses and underlying aquifers on Denman and Hornby Islands. Delivered as a Province-led initiative, the project established a defensible, island-scale approach for identifying stream–groundwater interactions that are critical to groundwater sustainability, ecological flow protection, and cumulative effects assessment.
Delivery Context	The project was led by the Province of British Columbia, with technical execution by consultant hydrogeologists. Islands Trust participated as a project partner, contributing local context, coordination support, and alignment with FWSS science objectives. The work was undertaken in collaboration with regional partners and informed subsequent Trust-led freshwater projects. The methodology was later adapted and embedded within the Islands Trust Freshwater Footprint Project.
Funding Context	Primary funding was provided by the Province. Islands Trust contributed limited financial support and staff time through Regional Planning Committee coordination. This co-funded arrangement enabled access to advanced hydrogeological analysis without requiring the Trust to independently resource a comparable standalone project.
Challenges and Opportunities	Directly assessing hydraulic connectivity at the island scale is technically complex and resource-intensive. Incorporating this work into the Freshwater Footprint Project would have exceeded that project's scope and budget. The Province-led assessment created an opportunity to address this foundational scientific question independently, allowing later FWSS projects to focus on applied planning analysis while relying on established connectivity insights.
Methods and Technical Basis	The assessment integrated hydrogeological mapping, stream network analysis, aquifer characteristics, and field-based interpretation to classify surface water–groundwater connectivity. Outputs identified areas where groundwater withdrawals have a higher likelihood of affecting streamflow and aquatic ecosystems, particularly during low-flow periods.
Planning and Policy Relevance	Hydraulic connectivity is a critical parameter in groundwater sustainability assessment and a key risk factor for cumulative freshwater impacts. Embedding this methodology into the Freshwater Footprint Project strengthened its analytical rigor, particularly in evaluating development pressure near hydrologically connected streams. The work supports land-use planning, water licensing dialogue, and ecosystem protection objectives under the FWSS.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Deliverables included island-scale hydraulic connectivity assessments for Denman and Hornby Islands. The lasting outcome was methodological rather than geographic: the approach informed FWSS analytical frameworks and was later applied within the Freshwater Footprint Project. This project demonstrates the strategic value of coordinated, multi-agency freshwater science investments that yield dividends across successive FWSS initiatives.

Project	**Land Information Screening Tool (LIST)**
Program	Freshwater Planning and Decision Support
Status	Operational; iterative refinement ongoing
Fiscal Span	FY 2021/22 – present
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Land Information Screening Tool (LIST) provides an integrated spatial screening framework to support early-stage land-use planning and development review across the Islands Trust Area. The tool consolidates freshwater, ecological, and hazard-related datasets into a single analytical interface to support consistent, evidence-informed planning decisions.
Delivery Context	The project was delivered through Trust Area Services with technical leadership from the Senior Freshwater Specialist and GIS Services. Development was coordinated with Planning Services to ensure usability for Local Trust Committees and staff. LIST evolved from earlier Site-Level Analysis work and was progressively expanded as FWSS science outputs became available.
Funding Context	Development was supported through internal staff resources and incremental project funding. The tool leveraged prior FWSS investments, including aquifer conceptualization, groundwater recharge mapping, freshwater footprint analysis, and watershed mapping, minimizing the need for standalone funding. The Senior Freshwater Specialist managed a small contract for Cedar Shore Consulting to bridge a staffing gap in information services.
Challenges and Opportunities	Early iterations were constrained by uneven data coverage and evolving groundwater science. As FWSS projects matured, LIST became an effective mechanism for translating complex freshwater datasets into planning-relevant information, creating a scalable platform for future regulatory and policy applications
Methods and Technical Basis	LIST integrates multiple GIS-based datasets, including aquifer extents, recharge potential, freshwater footprint indicators, watercourse and watershed mapping, and environmental sensitivity layers. The tool functions as a screening and flagging system rather than a deterministic model, supporting professional judgment in planning review.
Planning and Policy Relevance	LIST supports Official Community Plan implementation, Development Permit Area screening, suitable land analysis, and development application review. The tool operationalizes FWSS science within day-to-day planning workflows, strengthening alignment between freshwater sustainability objectives and land-use decision-making.
Deliverables and Outcomes	The project delivered a Trust-wide spatial screening tool used by planners and decision-makers to assess freshwater and environmental considerations early in the planning process. LIST has improved consistency, transparency, and efficiency in planning review and provides a foundation for future regulatory integration as FWSS implementation advances.

Project	**Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas**
Program	Planning and Reporting / Information Systems and Public Access
Status	Active and evolving implementation platform
Fiscal Span	FY 2020/21 – ongoing
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas is a centralized spatial information platform that consolidates FWSS groundwater, surface water, and watershed datasets into an accessible, planning-scale reference tool. The Atlas translates technical freshwater science into a form usable by planners, decision-makers, applicants, and the public, supporting consistent and transparent land-use decision-making across the Trust Area.
Delivery Context	The Freshwater Atlas was developed under the direction of Trust Area Services with technical leadership from the Senior Freshwater Specialist and Information Services. It draws directly from FWSS science projects delivered through Regional Planning Committee initiatives and Local Trust Committee–supported studies. Development emphasized consistency, reproducibility, and alignment with planning workflows rather than standalone scientific analysis.
Funding Context	Atlas development leveraged FWSS project funding and internal staff resources rather than a standalone capital project. The platform aggregates outputs from multiple externally funded FWSS science projects, maximizing return on prior investments in groundwater and watershed research.
Challenges and Opportunities	The primary challenge has been balancing scientific complexity with usability for non-technical audiences. At the same time, the Atlas provides a durable opportunity to institutionalize FWSS knowledge, reduce reliance on ad hoc technical interpretation, and support equitable access to freshwater information for applicants, trustees, and communities.
Methods and Technical Basis	The Atlas integrates aquifer conceptual models, groundwater recharge potential mapping, groundwater availability assessments, watershed and watercourse mapping, wet areas mapping, and climate-related indicators using GIS-based web services. Data are standardized, versioned, and documented to support consistent interpretation at multiple scales.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The Freshwater Atlas underpins FWSS implementation by providing a common evidentiary base for OCP policy development, Development Permit Area designation, suitable land analysis, subdivision review, and housing-related planning initiatives. It supports defensible decision-making and reduces information asymmetry between applicants, staff, and elected officials.
Deliverables and Outcomes	The Atlas has become the primary freshwater information reference for the Islands Trust, supporting both strategic planning and day-to-day regulatory work. It enables cross-project integration, supports cumulative-effects thinking, and provides a scalable platform for incorporating future FWSS outputs, including freshwater footprint analysis and climate vulnerability indicators.

Project	**Subdivision Proof of Water – Land Use Bylaw Updates**
Program	Freshwater Planning and Regulatory Implementation
Status	Adopted and implemented (island-specific application)
Fiscal Span	FY 2022/23 – FY 2024/25
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Subdivision Proof of Water LUB Updates project strengthened subdivision approval requirements by embedding freshwater sustainability considerations directly into land-use regulation. The project translated FWSS groundwater science into enforceable bylaw provisions requiring applicants to demonstrate water availability at the time of subdivision.
Delivery Context	The project was led by Local Trust Committees, with Salt Spring Island serving as the primary case study, and supported by Planning Services and the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Technical inputs were derived from FWSS groundwater projects, including aquifer conceptualization, groundwater recharge mapping, monitoring data, and freshwater footprint analysis. Coordination occurred through Trust Area Services to ensure consistency with FWSS objectives and provincial regulatory frameworks.
Funding Context	Project delivery was supported through Local Trust Committee project funding and Planning Services staff resources. The work leveraged existing FWSS science investments and monitoring programs, avoiding the need for new regional-scale business cases.
Challenges and Opportunities	Concerns were raised regarding jurisdictional overlap with provincial groundwater regulation and potential impacts on housing supply. The project created an opportunity to clarify the role of land-use planning in freshwater sustainability, emphasizing risk-informed decision-making rather than duplicating provincial permitting.
Methods and Technical Basis	The bylaw updates rely on hydrogeological assessment, groundwater monitoring data, recharge potential mapping, and established freshwater quality thresholds. Proof of water requirements are structured to allow multiple supply options, including groundwater and rainwater catchment, subject to demonstrated suitability.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The project operationalizes FWSS objectives within subdivision regulation, supporting the Islands Trust preserve and protect mandate. It provides a defensible framework for integrating freshwater capacity into subdivision decisions and aligns with Official Community Plan water policies
Deliverables and Outcomes	The project resulted in amended subdivision approval requirements requiring proof of water at the time of subdivision. It established a precedent for evidence-based freshwater regulation, improved applicant clarity, and strengthened the linkage between FWSS science and land-use decision-making.

Project	Groundwater Recharge Protection Development Permit Area (DPA)
Program	Planning and Reporting / Regulatory Implementation
Status	Adopted and implemented (Galiano Island); transferable framework
Fiscal Span	FY 2020/21 – FY 2024/25
Project Link	Groundwater Sustainability Project - Bylaw Nos. 283 and 284 – Bylaw Adoption Report
Project Summary	The Groundwater Recharge Protection Development Permit Area project translated FWSS groundwater recharge science into land-use regulation through the establishment of a recharge-focused DPA on Galiano Island. The project provides a planning and regulatory mechanism to protect areas critical to groundwater recharge from adverse development impacts.
Delivery Context	The project was led by the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee, with technical leadership from Planning Services and the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Scientific inputs were drawn directly from the Islands Trust Area Groundwater Recharge Potential Mapping Project and the Aquifer Conceptualization Project. Planning support ensured alignment with Official Community Plan policy and Development Permit Area authorities.
Funding Context	Project development was funded through Galiano Island Local Trust Committee project budgets and Planning Services staff resources. The project relied heavily on existing FWSS groundwater science outputs, minimizing additional consultant requirements.
Challenges and Opportunities	Advancement of recharge protection through a DPA occurred only on Galiano Island, reflecting varying levels of readiness, political support, and planning priorities across Local Trust Areas. The project demonstrates a viable regulatory pathway that may be adapted to other islands, either as a groundwater recharge protection DPA, a watershed protection DPA, or through integrated watershed management planning tools.
Methods and Technical Basis	The DPA is underpinned by GIS-based groundwater recharge potential mapping, hydrogeological interpretation, and watershed analysis. Recharge areas were identified using standardized FWSS methodologies, providing a defensible spatial basis for development permit triggers and guidelines.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The project represents a direct implementation of FWSS objectives within land-use regulation. It operationalizes the preserve and protect mandate by explicitly recognizing groundwater recharge as a planning constraint and aligns with climate adaptation and freshwater sustainability policy directions.
Deliverables and Outcomes	This project translated the theoretical data from the Groundwater Recharge Potential Mapping into enforceable land-use regulation, resulting in the adoption of a Groundwater Recharge Protection DPA on Galiano Island. By overlaying the high-resolution recharge data with parcel boundaries, staff identified critical infiltration zones where development density or impervious surfaces could threaten the aquifer's long-term sustainability. The primary outcome was the establishment of specific development guidelines that require the retention of natural vegetation and the implementation of rainwater management plans to maintain pre-development infiltration rates. Crucially, this work produced a transferable regulatory model. The methodology used to define "Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas"—based on specific geological and ecological metrics—provides a standardized framework that can now be adapted to establish similar protections or watershed planning initiatives in other Local Trust Areas.

Project	**Stormwater Management Planning (Foundational / Future Program)**
Program	Planning and Reporting / Climate Adaptation and Hydrologic Integration
Status	Potential FWSS implementation
Fiscal Span	
Project Link	
Project Summary	Stormwater management planning has not been implemented as a Trust-wide program and has been addressed only indirectly through site-specific development applications and limited planning exercises. Despite this absence, the FWSS has established much of the scientific and spatial foundation required to support integrated stormwater management planning at both island and watershed scales.
Delivery Context	To date, stormwater considerations have arisen primarily through development review, subdivision applications, and ad hoc planning discussions rather than through a coordinated program. No dedicated Trust Council or Regional Planning Committee stormwater initiative has been undertaken. However, existing FWSS groundwater, watershed, and climate-related projects provide the technical basis for future program development.
Funding Context	No dedicated funding has been allocated to stormwater management planning. Future work could leverage existing FWSS datasets and methodologies, reducing startup costs and allowing incremental implementation through pilot projects, Local Trust Committee initiatives, or external grant programs.
Challenges and Opportunities	The absence of a coordinated stormwater framework represents a gap in freshwater sustainability and climate adaptation. At the same time, the Trust Area now possesses recharge mapping, watershed boundaries, aquifer conceptual models, wet areas mapping, and climate vulnerability indicators that collectively reduce the technical barriers to initiating stormwater planning. This presents an opportunity to move from reactive, application-based consideration toward proactive watershed-scale stormwater management.
Methods and Technical Basis	Potential stormwater planning could draw directly from existing FWSS outputs, including groundwater recharge potential mapping, aquifer conceptualization, watershed and watercourse mapping derived from LiDAR and hydrologic modelling, wet areas mapping, and climate vulnerability analyses. These datasets are suitable for supporting infiltration-based design, runoff attenuation strategies, and cumulative hydrologic effects assessment without requiring full hydrodynamic modelling at the outset.
Planning and Policy Relevance	Stormwater management planning would strengthen implementation of the preserve and protect mandate by addressing land-based hydrologic alteration, a key driver of both groundwater and surface water impacts. It would support climate adaptation objectives, inform OCP policy development, and provide a consistent framework for development permit areas, subdivision review, and infrastructure planning.
Deliverables and Outcomes	No formal deliverables have been produced to date. The FWSS has, however, created a mature technical foundation that enables future stormwater management planning to be advanced efficiently through pilot studies, watershed-based planning, or integration with groundwater recharge protection and watershed protection DPAs.

Project	**Islands Trust Area Freshwater Advocacy and Capacity-Building Initative**
Program	Trust Programs / Education, Advocacy, and Organizational Capacity
Status	Delivered and ongoing through discrete initiatives
Fiscal Span	FY 2016/17 – ongoing
Project Link	
Project Summary	The Islands Trust Area Freshwater Advocacy and Capacity-Building Program consolidates a series of coordinated education, outreach, and professional development initiatives that supported the development, adoption, and implementation of the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy. The program focused on building shared understanding of groundwater governance, freshwater science, and planning implications across trustees, staff, partner agencies, and island communities.
Delivery Context	The program was delivered through Trust Programs Committee leadership in coordination with Trust Area Services and Planning Services, with substantive technical contributions from the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Activities were designed to support Trust Council, Local Trust Committees, and staff by improving institutional literacy on freshwater sustainability and aligning emerging FWSS science with governance and planning practice.
Funding Context	Program delivery relied on Trust Programs Committee project budgets, staff time, and targeted contracts rather than standalone Trust Council business cases. Several activities were integrated into existing conferences, professional development days, or externally hosted forums to maximize reach and minimize duplication.
Challenges and Opportunities	A persistent challenge was sustaining continuity between episodic workshops and long-term institutional change. The program nevertheless created durable opportunities by embedding freshwater literacy within trustee education, staff practice, and inter-agency relationships, directly supporting FWSS development and later implementation.
Methods and Technical Basis	Program activities combined facilitated workshops, formal presentations, panel discussions, and technical briefings grounded in FWSS science outputs. Content drew from aquifer conceptualization, groundwater recharge mapping, groundwater availability assessment, and regulatory interpretation under the Water Sustainability Act.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The program supported informed decision-making at Trust Council, Trust Programs Committee, Regional Planning Committee, and Local Trust Committee tables. It helped normalize freshwater sustainability as a core planning consideration and reduced barriers to advancing FWSS-aligned policies, bylaws, and implementation tools.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Key initiatives delivered under this program include the Islands Trust Area Freshwater Forum (World Water Day 2018), Trust Programs Committee continuing education sessions, Planning Services professional development workshops, the Our Groundwater and Wells community workshop series, and freshwater presentations at regional forums such as the Salish Sea Conference. Collectively, these efforts strengthened institutional readiness, informed FWSS design, and supported coordinated implementation across governance levels.

Project	**Trustee Orientation and Education on Groundwater Governance**
Program	Trust Programs / Governance Education and Capacity Building
Status	Delivered (with ongoing relevance)
Fiscal Span	FY 2017/18 – FY 2021/22
Project Link	
Project Summary	This project delivered targeted trustee education on groundwater governance, focusing on the Water Sustainability Act and the provincial groundwater licensing framework. The presentations were designed to improve Trust Council's understanding of jurisdictional roles, regulatory boundaries, and the implications of provincial groundwater regulation for Islands Trust land-use decision-making.
Delivery Context	The project was delivered through Trust Council presentations coordinated by Trust Programs Committee and Trust Area Services, with technical leadership from the Senior Freshwater Specialist. Content was developed in response to trustee requests for clarity on groundwater regulation following enactment of the Water Sustainability Act and increasing freshwater-related planning pressures across the Trust Area.
Funding Context	The project was delivered using internal staff resources and did not require a standalone budget request. Preparation and delivery were embedded within Trust Council meeting agendas and ongoing FWSS-related staff work.
Challenges and Opportunities	A key challenge was translating complex provincial groundwater regulation into planning-relevant concepts without overstating Islands Trust authority. The project created an opportunity to clearly delineate jurisdictional responsibilities, reducing governance risk and supporting more defensible planning decisions aligned with FWSS objectives.
Methods and Technical Basis	The project relied on structured presentations interpreting the Water Sustainability Act, the provincial groundwater licensing regime, and associated regulatory guidance. Emphasis was placed on practical implications for land-use planning, subdivision review, water availability considerations, and inter-agency coordination.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The presentations strengthened Trust Council's understanding of how groundwater licensing, regulation, and enforcement intersect with Islands Trust planning authority. This literacy directly informed subsequent FWSS development, policy discussions on proof of water, rainwater catchment, and groundwater protection, and coordination with provincial agencies.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Key deliverables included Trust Council presentations on the Water Sustainability Act and on provincial groundwater licensing. Outcomes included improved trustee confidence in navigating groundwater-related planning decisions, clearer articulation of Islands Trust's role relative to the Province, and stronger institutional alignment during FWSS development and early implementation.

Project	**Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Coordination (Regional District Partnerships)**
Program	Trust Programs / Inter-Agency Coordination and Watershed Governance
Status	Ongoing
Fiscal Span	FY 2017/18 – Present
Project Link	
Project Summary	This project formalized coordination between Islands Trust freshwater work and regional district drinking water and watershed protection programs, with a focus on the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) and the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD). The coordination ensured alignment between FWSS science, regional watershed planning, and drinking water protection initiatives operating beyond Islands Trust jurisdiction.
Delivery Context	Coordination occurred through participation in regional technical advisory committees, including the RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) Technical Advisory Committee, and engagement with CVRD watershed and drinking water staff. The Senior Freshwater Specialist represented Islands Trust interests and integrated FWSS priorities into inter-regional discussions. This work operated outside formal Islands Trust project charters but directly informed FWSS development and implementation.
Funding Context	The project was delivered using staff time and did not rely on dedicated Islands Trust project funding. Regional district programs were funded independently through parcel taxes, service fees, and regional budgets. Islands Trust participation leveraged these external investments to inform FWSS science and planning.
Challenges and Opportunities	A key challenge was aligning regional-scale drinking water and watershed initiatives with the Islands Trust preserve and protect mandate, given differing governance structures and service boundaries. The coordination created opportunities to share methods, avoid duplication, and import applied watershed and groundwater science into FWSS projects without requiring Islands Trust to independently fund equivalent work.
Methods and Technical Basis	Engagement included technical committee participation, review of watershed assessments, exposure to GIS-based recharge and hydrologic analysis, and knowledge exchange on monitoring, demand management, and watershed vulnerability. Presentations and discussions within these forums directly influenced FWSS approaches to recharge mapping, cumulative effects assessment, and climate vulnerability.
Planning and Policy Relevance	The coordination strengthened FWSS alignment with regional drinking water protection programs and improved Islands Trust understanding of watershed-scale governance beyond its regulatory authority. It supported defensible planning by ensuring FWSS outputs were compatible with regional water planning frameworks and provincial expectations.
Deliverables and Outcomes	Outcomes included strengthened inter-agency relationships, early exposure to recharge-focused GIS methodologies later adapted for FWSS projects, and improved institutional capacity to coordinate groundwater and watershed planning across jurisdictions. This work contributed indirectly to the development of the Aquifer Conceptualization Project, Groundwater Recharge Potential Mapping Project, and subsequent FWSS implementation tools.

Islands Trust

BRIEFING

To:	Regional Planning Committee	**For the Meeting of:**	February 6, 2026
From:	Robert Kojima Regional Planning Manager	**Date Prepared:**	January 22, 2026
SUBJECT:	**Housing Options Toolkit Updates**		

PURPOSE: To update Regional Planning Committee on updates to the Housing Options Toolkit requested by RPC at the meeting of May 9, 2025 and to provide RPC with an update on the status of the Land Information Screening Tool (LIST), formerly known as the Suitable Land Analysis.

BACKGROUND:

At the May meeting RPC adopted the following resolution:

> **RPC 2025-013**
> **It was MOVED and SECONDED**,
> that Regional Planning Committee request staff make minor updates to the Housing Options Toolkit identified in the Request For Decision of May 9, 2025 and as discussed.

The minor updates were as follows:

- Remove references to 'Part 2' of the Toolkit from the Introduction.
- Update Work Plan templates (Tools 1.1 and 1.2) based on experience with LTC projects – timelines and Gantt charts have been revised.
- Update Tool 3 (the Zoning and Policy Options Table) by expanding references to Tiny Homes on Wheels and including reference to STVRs. Wording on suites, residential uses in industrial and commercial zones, worker housing, and policies affordable housing have also been revised.
- Draft the methodology for the Suitable Land Analysis [now Land Information Screening Tool] (Tool 4). This is described in more detail below.
- Update references to Housing Needs Reports in Tool 6 (Housing Action Plan), Tool 7 (Bibliography), Tool 8 (Baseline Report).

These revisions have been completed and an updated draft of the Housing Options Toolkit along with the revised tools have been posted: https://islandstrust.bc.ca/programs/housing-affordability/

Second, the Suitable Land Analysis mapping tool has been completed for 5 Local Trust Areas undertaking Comprehensive Bylaw reviews or housing initiatives. The tool has also been renamed the 'Land Information Screening Tool' (LIST). This mapping tool incorporates nine primary existing mapping datasets to create a model classifying the landscape into areas more or less suitable for additional residential use. These nine 'Type I' layers consist of the following existing datasets:

- Sensitive Ecosystems
- At Risk Ecological Communities
- Dominant Age [of vegetation]
- Water Recharge Potential
- Watershed Resiliency

- Groundwater Well Density
- Risk of Saltwater Intrusion
- Road Adjacency
- Steep Slopes

These Type I layers are weighted equally; however, weighting can be altered at the direction LTCs or other users depending on priorities.

In addition, the model includes maps that can be overlain to show key features such as ALR, Parks and Protected areas, shoreline types, critical habitat, archaeological sites, Young Forest, and other information datasets. Island-specific data, such as local conservancy mapping, can be readily integrated as Type II layers. A more detailed description of the LIST tool has been included in the updated Housing Options Toolkit.

Planners have been briefed on the mapping tool and will be implementing it for the LTAs where it has been completed.

Currently this phase of the project is considered complete; however future phases could include extending the mapping to other LTAs with relevant projects, and developing a public facing version. These subsequent phases would be dependent upon funding.

FOLLOW-UP: none

Prepared By: **Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager**

Reviewed By/Date: **Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services / January 28, 2026**

REQUEST FOR DECISION

To:	Regional Planning Committee	**For the Meeting of:**	February 6, 2026
From:	Planning Services	**Date Prepared:**	January 29, 2026
SUBJECT:	Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy Review – Draft Policy 5.5.1 and Manual		

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That Regional Planning Committee endorse and refer to Trust Council:**
   a. **The revisions to draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.5.1 as shown in the draft attached to the Request for Decision dated January 29, 2026,**
   b. **The draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual, and**
   c. **The Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy Review and Portal Implementation Plan.**

DIRECTORS COMMENTS: The Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Best Practices Manual have been revised several times and are recommended for forwarding to Trust Council for adoption. The Implementation Plan ensures early training and communications and develops a process of regular reporting to Trust Council allowing for future adaptations and improvement.

1. PURPOSE

To bring back draft Trust Council Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy (Policy 5.5.1) and the draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual (‘Manual’) for consideration of revisions and referral to Trust Council for adoption.

To review an Implementation Plan that integrates two key initiatives: the comprehensive review and update of Islands Trust’s Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Manual, and the implementation of the Bylaw Enforcement Portal using Cityview software.

2. BACKGROUND

In September 2023, Trust Council directed that “the recommendations from the Office of Ombudsperson Report titled: ‘Voluntary Consultation on Bylaw Enforcement Policies and Practices within the Islands Trust’, dated August 2023, be implemented, and that staff develop an associated work plan and project charter and refer to the Regional Planning Committee.”

In September 2024, Trust Council received an update regarding the project so that Council may comment on the direction that Regional Planning Committee (RPC) was taking. Trust Council approved the project charter amendments which added the LTC Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Template, and endorsed “the continuation of drafting amendments to Trust Council Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy (Policy 5.5.1) and provide Regional

Planning Committee direction to create a plain language version of the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices manual."

Trust Council Policy 5.5.1 (Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement) provides direction to staff on bylaw enforcement processes, procedures, and communications. The Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual is intended to be a public facing document that will describe enforcement policies and practices in plain language.

As directed, the Regional Planning Committee has been reviewing and updating both the policy and the Manual. At meetings in January, February, May, and July Regional Planning Committee worked through revisions to Policy 5.5.1 (attachment 1) and the draft Manual (attachment 2), with both referred to the Office of the Ombudsperson for comment following the May meeting.

At the July 18, 2025 meeting, RPC reviewed feedback from the Office of Ombudsperson, and made some revisions based on suggestions from the Office of the Ombudsperson. The Office of the Ombudsperson staff did raise the involvement of local trust committees in the draft policy, specifically in the policies stating that LTCs can direct the closing of investigations and the prioritization of investigations. Staff recommended that these policies could be supported based on the unique nature of the Islands Trust and that the policies establish a framework for how LTCs may be involved. RPC agreed and Draft Policy 5.5.1 was endorsed by RPC at the July meeting and forwarded to Trust Council.

At the Trust Council meeting in September 2025, Council reviewed the Policy and the Manual and endorsed both documents, along with a resolution referring the "health and safety issues" wording in Policy 5.5.1 back to the Regional Planning Committee for discussion for potential wording amendments based on the Ombudsperson's recommendations.

Staff have reviewed the policy wording and have attached a marked-up version which:

- Provides alternate wording for the policies related to health and safety (specifics discussed below)
- Adds references to the "BC Public Service Standards of Conduct" in two sections which address officers' approach to conduct and review of conduct.
- Adds a policy (6.1.6) authorizing officers to close files where a mediated solution addresses concerns.

There are six occurrences in the draft policy that reference "health and safety issues":

- 2.2.3: Commencing investigations ["appear to cause health and safety issues"]
- 3.13: Issuing a ticket immediately ["an immediate threat to health or safety or the natural environment"]
- 5.1: Other potential contraventions observed during site inspection ["an immediate risk to public health, safety, or the environment"}
- 5.2: Entry Without Notice ["address urgent concerns about health, safety, or the environment"]
- 5.3: Legal Compliance and Fairness ["issues that pose a risk to health, safety or the environment."]
- 7.1.2: Prioritizing investigations ["where there are health and safety concerns"]

All instances in the current draft use slightly different wording and relate to different stages of the investigation or enforcement process. In reviewing the current wording and implications, staff are recommending revisions to use wording based on legal and policy principles derived from legislation and case law:

- "Immediate threat" sets a higher, stricter bar for action (particularly entry without notice). This implies a high degree of urgency and imminence; harm is occurring now, or will happen very soon, and delay is likely to make the harm worse or irreversible. This term is used to justify the actions, such as no-notice entry onto a property under the legal doctrine of "exigent circumstances."

- “Significant risk" is a broader term that suggests a high potential for substantial harm, but the harm itself may not be occurring *right now*. It can encompass both immediate threats and situations where a serious potential for future harm exists if the underlying issue is not addressed in a timely manner. This term is recommended to justify initiating an investigation or requiring corrective actions more quickly than routine matters. It provides more flexibility for officers to prioritize and investigate serious matters, but they would generally still be expected to follow standard procedures, such as providing notice.

- Decisions related to these policies should be based on “reasonable grounds”; “reasonable grounds” is an objective standard, meaning a reasonable person, fully informed of the circumstances, would conclude that the action is warranted based on credible facts and information, not mere suspicion.

Based on these principles, staff are recommending the following changes (shown in track changes in the attached draft):

1. 2.2.3 - this policy provides grounds to proactively open files without a complaint. Staff are recommending that this be based on “reasonable grounds” that there is “significant risk” as there is not necessarily an immediate and urgent threat. This allows a file to be opened, but notice would still be provided for an inspection.
2. 3.13 – this policy relates to issuance of tickets without progressive enforcement. While circumstances may vary, staff recommend that issuance of a ticket without pursuing the steps of voluntary compliance should be reserved for urgent situations and thus based on “immediate threat”.
3. 5.1 – this policy relates to other contraventions observed during an unrelated site visit. As this could be more or less urgent, staff are recommending that the standard applied be “significant risk”.
4. 5.2 – as this policy relates to entry without notice, staff are recommending the higher standard of “immediate threat”. Where the threat is not immediate, notice should be provided.
5. 5.3 – this policy repeats the standard for a contravention observed during an unrelated investigation and the same wording is recommended.
6. 7.1.2 – this policy establishes grounds for prioritizing investigations. Staff are recommending that, like in policy 2.2.3, this be based on the more flexible “significant risk” grounds.

Based on common principles, the above changes would establish consistent wording, appropriate approaches, and objective standards.

Minor corrections have also been made to the Manual.

Previous versions of the policy and associated RFDs may be found on the project webpage at: https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/general-resources/bylaw-compliance-and-enforcement/bylaw-enforcement-review-project/.

Implementation Plan

Staff have drafted an Implementation Plan (attachment 4) that integrates two key initiatives: the comprehensive review and update of Islands Trust's Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Manual, and the implementation of the Bylaw Portal using Cityview software. Together, these initiatives modernize how bylaw compliance is managed, improving consistency, transparency, efficiency, and public understanding.

The implementation will be phased across communication, training, go-live, and monitoring to ensure successful adoption.

Internal communications (all drafted, scheduled, or complete) include:

- A summary of key policy and manual changes and Bylaw Portal functions
- Brief senior leadership and managers to support staff
- Distribute internal communications (emails, memos, FAQs)
- Introduce changes at a Planning Services professional development day

Staff training (all drafted or scheduled):

- Develop and deliver updated training materials
- Provide hands-on practice using new CityView tools
- Deliver training sessions for all staff involved in enforcement
    - Note that that all Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement staff have recently completed the "Building a Respectful and Inclusive Workplace" training program which includes developing self-awareness, promoting trust, developing inclusive language and creating an intentional culture.

External Communication (mostly drafted except "cheat sheets" and standard site inspection reports):

- Prepare website updates, social media content, and public FAQs
- Coordinate timing with Trust Council adoption and CityView rollout
- Prepare trustee communication tools, including decision "cheat sheets" and standard site inspection reports

Measuring the projects effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, and communication outcomes over time includes (forms and tracking sheets drafted):

- Tracking metrics such as complaint resolution time, percentage of voluntary compliance, percent of appeals or reversals, volume of standards of conduct complaints, frequency of repeat or vexatious complaints, volume of public enquiries and web engagement, and staff workload
- Report semi-annually to Trust Council (Fall and Spring – with other enforcement updates). Adjust as needed based on lessons learned

Draft communications are attached and include a "project at a glance" to assist with social media, a project summary to assist with website content and broader communications, and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

3. NEXT STEPS

- March 2026: Trust Council consider adoption of the Policy and Manual
- September 2026: Trust Council receive report on monitoring and evaluation
- Semi-annual reporting on approved metrics

- Draft:
    - LTC specific decision making “cheat sheets”
    - Review and standardize site inspection forms for standard reporting to LTCs

4. ALTERNATIVES

1. That RPC not accept the recommended changes and refer the Draft Policy to Trust Council without changes.
2. That RPC request further revisions to the ‘health and safety issues’ wording and refer the Draft Policy back to staff.
3. That RPC request revisions to the policies authorizing LTCs to direct the commencing, prioritizing, or closing of investigations to remove or reduce the involvement of LTCs in bylaw enforcement.
4. That RPC request revisions to the Implementation Plan.

5. ATTACHMENT(S):

1) Draft TC Policy 5.5.1 - Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy – Blacklined Version
2) Draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual
3) Project Charter v.3
4) Implementation Plan
5) Draft Communications Material (Project Summary; Project At A Glance; FAQ)

Prepared By: **Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager**

Stefan Cermak, Director of Planning Services

Policy:	5.5.1
Approved By:	Trust Council
Approval Date:	March 11, 1995
Amendment Date(s):	June 6, 1997; June 6, 1998; June 13, 2003; December 5, 2003; December 10, 2004; June 17, 2005; March 10, 2006; March 13, 2019, December 2, 2021: XXXX, 2026
Policy Holder:	Director of Planning Services

BYLAW COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Purpose

The purpose of the bylaw compliance and enforcement program is to support the object of the Islands Trust to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of residents of the Trust Area and of the province generally by ensuring compliance with local trust committee bylaws.

Guiding Principles

The following principles are intended to align with the mandate of the Islands Trust, adhere to the best practices outlined by the BC Office of the Ombudsperson, and ensure procedural fairness in all enforcement actions:

1. **Fairness and Impartiality**: Apply bylaws consistently, ensuring decisions are unbiased and equitable for diverse island communities.
2. **Transparency and Communication**: Provide clear, accessible information about enforcement policies, processes, and outcomes with understandable and meaningful reasons for the decision(s) made throughout the bylaw investigation and enforcement process to foster trust and understanding.
3. **Focus on Education and Compliance**: Emphasize public education and voluntary compliance with bylaws.
4. **Procedural Fairness**: Ensure timely notification of alleged infractions, offer opportunities to Respondents to be heard throughout the process, and guarantee unbiased decision-making.
5. **Proportionality and Discretion**: Tailor enforcement actions to the severity and context of the infraction, with a focus on voluntary compliance.
6. **Efficiency**: Prioritize significant violations that impact environmental sustainability or community safety, while streamlining processes for minor cases.
7. **Engagement and Inclusivity**: Collaborate with island communities to ensure enforcement practices reflect local values and consider marginalized populations.
8. **Accountability and Oversight**: Regularly review enforcement activities and maintain oversight to uphold public confidence and encourage local trust committees to update and align bylaws and to identify opportunities to make bylaws clear and coherent.
9. **Respect for Privacy**: Safeguard the confidentiality of Complainants and individuals involved in enforcement actions, in compliance with privacy laws.
10. **Administrative Fairness**: Ensure that standards of conduct complaints are addressed in a fair, equitable, and timely manner in accordance with the principles of administrative fairness.
11. **Cultural Safety**: Demonstrate a commitment to cultural safety for all those involved in bylaw compliance and enforcement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Islands Trust Council provides overall policy direction, approves budgets, and reviews performance through regular reporting.

Executive Committee provides oversight of enforcement across all local trust areas, and approving funding for litigation when requested by local trust committees.

Local trust committees (LTC) adopt and amend bylaws and are authorized to direct enforcement of their bylaws, ensuring that bylaws reflect community values through adoption of specific LTC enforcement policies and direction to staff on significant cases and potential litigation.

Local Trustees represent the interests and concerns of their constituents and may be asked to provide information to Complainants or Respondents, but are not directly involved in bylaw enforcement investigations.

Members of the public and Complainants are encouraged to submit accurate complaints in good faith, engage respectfully with staff, and uphold the confidentiality of enforcement processes.

Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers (Officers) are responsible for investigating complaints, communicating clearly with Respondents, determining if there is a contravention, and applying progressive enforcement actions proportionally, with an emphasis on education and compliance.

The Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement (Manager) is responsible for the overall administration of the bylaw enforcement program, including supervising bylaw compliance and enforcement officers, ensuring adherence to policies and procedures, and providing expertise on complex or sensitive cases. The Manager coordinates with other departments, ensures alignment with legal and regulatory requirements, and reports on enforcement activities to senior management and elected officials.

Senior Management ensures staff have the resources and training needed for effective enforcement, facilitates communication among interested and affected parties, oversees adherence to policy, and reviews complaints regarding the conduct of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers.

Planners and **Regional Planning Managers** assist in the interpretation of bylaws and ensuring consistency with planning objectives. They support enforcement officers by providing information on the intent and application of bylaws, and contribute to resolving compliance issues by providing compliance options to Respondents and local trust committees.

Legal Counsel supports local trust committees and staff by providing legal opinions on interpretation, advice on potential litigation, and representation in cases of litigation.

A. Definitions

1. *Bylaw Notice* means a ticket, with penalty, issued under the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act.*
2. *Determination Letter* means written decision provided to respondents on the outcome of an investigation summarizing supporting evidence, actions to achieve voluntary compliance, consequences of non-compliance, and information on the Respondent's rights to respond or dispute the determination.
3. *Discretion in Administrative Decision-making* means the application of the power to choose between two or more possible courses of action using professional judgment and expertise
4. *Frivolous complaint* means a complaint not having any serious purpose or value, often lacking in merit.
5. *Long-form information* means a complaint sworn before a Provincial Court judge by a bylaw

compliance and enforcement officer.

6. *Notice Letter* means a written document sent to a Respondent once an investigation file is opened summarizing the potential violation and providing contact information for the assigned officer.
7. *Respondent* means those responding to allegations of bylaw contraventions.
8. *Vexatious complaint* means a complaint made for retaliatory reasons or in bad faith and intended to cause harassment, or otherwise forms part of a pattern of conduct by the Complainant that amounts to an abuse of the complaint process.

B. Policy

1. OBJECTIVE

1.1 The objective of this policy is to establish clear procedures, expectations and standards for Islands Trust's bylaw compliance and enforcement program. The goal of the bylaw compliance and enforcement program is to achieve bylaw compliance through a combination of education, mediation and enforcement techniques. Bylaw compliance is primarily sought through an attempt to achieve voluntary compliance by a commitment to corrective action as soon as reasonably possible, and the cessation of bylaw contravention.

2. COMMENCING INVESTIGATIONS

2.1 Complaint-based investigations are commenced as follows:

2.1.1 Complaints must be made in writing, by email, through an on-line complaint form or portal, by mail, or delivered in-person. Staff can assist individuals who may need assistance with writing a complaint.

2.1.2 Anonymous complaints are not accepted.

2.1.3 Complaints meeting the definition of a frivolous, repeat, or vexatious complaint are not accepted.

2.1.4 All written complaints will be acknowledged in writing by the administrative assistant within 2 to 10 business days and recorded.

2.2 ~~Where a written complaint has not been received, i~~Investigations may be commenced proactively, where a written complaint has not been received, in one or more of the following circumstances:

2.2.1 By direction of a local trust committee;

2.2.2 Bylaw contraventions appear to occur in setbacks from water bodies or in development permit areas;

2.2.3 There are reasonable grounds to consider that ~~B~~bylaw contraventions appear to cause a significant risk to health ~~and~~ or safety ~~issues~~;

2.2.4 Bylaw contraventions appear to occur as part of a building permit process or other permitting process administered by a local government or Islands Trust siting and use permit applications;

2.2.5 A referral is received from a permitting agency that identifies alleged bylaw contraventions; or

2.2.6 Advertising of unlawful uses.

3. INVESTIGATION AND PROGRESSIVE ENFORCEMENT

3.1 After receiving a complaint, it will be reviewed to determine whether or not it potentially falls within the local trust committee's jurisdiction.

3.2 A complaint that does not fall within the jurisdiction of a local trust committee may be referred to another agency with jurisdiction or the Complainant may be directed to the agency with jurisdiction.

3.3 If a complaint involves potential impacts to cultural heritage, all First Nations with rights and title in the consultative areas database will be notified.

3.4 If the Manager determines that there is no potential violation, the Complainant will be informed and given the opportunity to provide more information.

3.5 If the Manager determines that there is a potential violation, a file is opened, and the Respondent will receive a Notice Letter, providing a summary of the issue, contact details of the assigned officer, and encouraging the Respondent to contact the officer. The Complainant will be notified that a file has been opened.

3.6 The Officer will investigate the potential violation, including:

- 3.6.1 Reviewing all relevant bylaws, policies, and procedures.
- 3.6.2 Arranging a site inspection. Site inspections will be conducted in accordance with the policies in Section 4 below.
- 3.6.3 Hearing from the Respondent and potentially from the Complainant.
- 3.6.4 Reviewing evidence, including evidence gathered from a site inspection, the Respondent, relevant bylaws, or other sources.
- 3.6.5 Reviewing all relevant infraction and legal history.
- 3.6.6 Consulting with the Manager, planners, and Regional Planning Manager.
- 3.6.7 Reporting potentially problematic, inconsistent or contentious issues to the LTC.
- 3.6.8 Seeking legal advice where required.

3.7 Based on the outcome of the investigation, the officer will make a determination if there is a contravention.

3.8 Respondents will be notified in writing of the determination of an investigation. A Determination letter will include:

- 3.8.1 The purpose of the letter, referencing any relevant investigations or prior communications.
- 3.8.2 The Respondent's name, address, and the property address involved.
- 3.8.3 Specific bylaw regulation(s) violated and summarize supporting evidence, including facts and documentation.
- 3.8.4 Outline actions to achieve voluntary compliance, along with reasonable deadlines and monitoring processes.
- 3.8.5 Potential consequences of non-compliance and information on the Respondent's rights to respond or dispute the determination.
- 3.8.6 The Officer's contact details and any resources to assist with compliance.
- 3.8.7 Copies of supporting evidence.

3.9 A Respondent may request that a determination of a contravention be reviewed by the Manager.

3.10 Complainants may request a review of a file by the Manager where the investigation has determined that there is no contravention.

3.11 If either a Respondent or Complainant is not satisfied with the review of a determination by the Manager, a written complaint may be submitted to the Director of Planning Services. The Director may make a determination singly or in consultation with the relevant Regional Planning Manager and planner.

3.12 Voluntary compliance may involve a Respondent requesting time to comply; or requesting that enforcement be paused, subject to local trust committee policies, while proceeding with an application that would have a reasonable likelihood of success in legalizing the contravention.

3.13 Where a local trust committee has adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw, an officer may issue a Bylaw Warning Notice or a Bylaw Violation Notice where:

3.13.1 ~~and v~~Voluntarily compliance is not forthcoming within a reasonable time.~~, or~~

3.13.2 There are reasonable grounds to believe there is an immediate threat to health, ~~or~~ safety, or the natural environment.~~,~~

3.13.3 ~~or a~~An LTC has adopted a relevant enforcement policy~~,~~. ~~an officer may issue a Bylaw Warning Notice or a Bylaw Violation Notice.~~

~~3.13~~3.14 Where Bylaw Enforcement Notices have proven ineffective in achieving compliance, or where a local trust committee has not adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw, or where a contravention is considered sufficiently egregious, an officer may recommend that a local trust committee undertake legal action to achieve compliance.

~~3.14~~3.15 Complainants can request information about an open bylaw enforcement file at any time. The Complainant will be updated by the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer if:

~~3.14.1~~3.15.1 The file is put on hold, along with the reason for this action.

~~3.14.2~~3.15.2 The local trust committee has made a decision regarding the file.

~~3.14.3~~3.15.3 The file has moved to litigation at which time the identity of the Complainant may become public information.

~~3.14.4~~3.15.4 The file is closed.

4. INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH AND CONDUCT

4.1 Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers, staff, and managers will uphold the BC Public Service Standards of Conduct~~principles of accountability, impartiality, integrity, protection, respectfulness and service~~, to complement the required skills, education, and behavioral competencies listed in job profiles and within the Oath of Employment.

4.2 Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers, staff, and managers shall develop, maintain, and apply skills such as control of non-verbal communications, active listening, and building rapport with constituents.

4.3 When determining the appropriate and fair investigative approach and enforcement actions, the Officer should consider each person's unique circumstances. This includes:

4.3.1 Conducting investigations with an understanding of the specific context and circumstances of the individual or property owner involved.

4.3.2 Respecting cultural differences, demonstrate cultural humility, provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and ensure accessibility for those facing language barriers during the investigative process.

4.3.3 Ensuring investigations are proportionate to the nature of the complaint and violation, considering factors such as the person's ability to comply, any hardships they may face, and their willingness to cooperate.

4.3.4 Exercising discretion when determining the scope and approach to an investigation, providing flexibility such as extended timelines or alternative solutions when warranted by an individual's circumstances.

4.3.5 Ensuring investigations will be free from bias or discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, socio-economic status, or other protected characteristics.

5. SITE INSPECTIONS

5.1 **Entry with Notice:** When entry onto private property is required to investigate a bylaw complaint, officers will provide prior written notice to the property owner or occupier, except in cases described below. Notice will include the purpose of the visit, applicable authority under provincial legislation, bylaws and policies, and proposed timing consistent with legislation, bylaws, and policies adopted by the local trust committee.

Entry will occur only during reasonable hours, with efforts to minimize disruption and ensure respect for the property and its occupants. Investigations will focus exclusively on the specific alleged bylaw contraventions outlined in the complaint unless ~~other~~ observations provide the officer with reasonable grounds to believe that the situation may pose a~~n~~ ~~immediate~~ significant risk to ~~public~~ health, safety, or the environment. Officers should answer reasonable questions related to the purpose of the visit and the bylaw complaint investigation process.

5.2 **Entry without Notice:** In exceptional circumstances, where prior notice is not feasible or where immediate entry is required as there are reasonable grounds to believe that the failure to enter may result in immediate threat to ~~to address urgent concerns about~~ health, safety, or the environment, officers may enter property as authorized under the *Local Government Act*. Officers will document the justification for entry without notice, specifying the urgency and applicable legal authority, and will notify the property owner or occupier as soon as practicable following the visit.

5.3 **Legal Compliance and Fairness:** Property entries will comply with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, applicable provincial legislation, and local trust committee bylaws and policies. To ensure fairness, investigations will be limited to the specific subject matter of the complaint except where the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the situation may ~~observes issues that~~ pose a significant risk to health, safety or the environment.

5.4 **Documentation:** Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers will maintain records of all property entries, including notice provided (or reasons for its omission), observations made, and actions taken.

5.5 **Reasonableness and Accountability:** Property entry practices will aim to balance enforcement needs with respect for individual privacy and property rights. Officers will act reasonably and proportionately, prioritizing voluntary compliance and education wherever possible.

6. CLOSING INVESTIGATIONS

6.1 Bylaw investigation files will be closed in the following circumstances:

- 6.1.1 It is determined that no contravention exists;
- 6.1.2 Compliance has been achieved;
- 6.1.3 On direction of a local trust committee; or
- 6.1.4 If the Director of Planning Services concurs with the Manager that the contravention is of a minor nature, impacts are minimal, or it is not in the public interest to enforce.
- 6.1.5 Complainants may request that the closing of a file be reviewed by another Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer or the Manager.
- 6.1.6 If the Officer has facilitated a mediated solution between the parties that satisfactorily addresses the concerns, even if a contravention may remain, except in cases where the contravention ~~poses a risk to~~involves health, safety, or the environment.

6.2 Respondents, Complainants and the local trust committee will be notified in writing when a file has been closed and the reason for closing the file.

6.3 Bylaw investigation files will not be reopened once closed. If a similar complaint is made a new investigation will be commenced.

7. PRIORITY OF INVESTIGATION

7.1 As bylaw enforcement resources are limited, investigations will be prioritized as follows:

7.1.1 By specific direction of a local trust committee;

7.1.2 Where there are reasonable grounds to consider there is a significant risk to ~~are~~ health ~~and~~ or safety ~~concerns~~;

7.1.3 Where adverse environmental impact ~~that~~ could result in irreversible damage if not prevented in a timely fashion; and

7.1.4 Other contraventions of land use bylaws and other bylaws.

8. VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE AND MEDIATION

8.1 Efforts to gain compliance should be conducted using the principles and techniques employed in mediation in a process to:

8.1.1 Provide full information and exchange of information;

8.1.2 Confirm facts;

8.1.3 Explore opportunities for compliance;

8.1.4 Negotiate a timeline for compliance;

8.1.5 Reach compliance solutions.

9. REVIEWING THE CONDUCT OF BYLAW COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

9.1 A person concerned about the conduct of a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer, who is unable to resolve the concern with the officer or informally with the Manager, may submit a written complaint to the Manager.

9.2 If the person is not satisfied with the response of the Manager, or the complaint involves the Manager, a review may be requested by submitting a request in writing to the Director of Planning Services.

9.3 Complaints may be submitted by email or mail, setting out the issue or concern, providing any evidence, and any remedies requested. Complaints will be recorded, and confidentiality and privacy protected.

9.4 Written complaints will be acknowledged within 10 business days, and acknowledgements will include information about who will be reviewing the complaint, contact information, a summary of the review process, and an estimated timeline.

9.5 Complaints will receive a preliminary assessment, the reviewing staff person will contact the Complainant to obtain any additional information, and seek early resolution where possible.

9.6 Assessment of complaints will be guided by principles of administrative fairness, as outlined in Policy 7.1.1 (Administrative Fairness Principles), and the BC Public Service Standards of Conduct, -and be conducted in a fair, timely and impartial manner.

9.7 Investigation of complaints should: define the issue or concern, gather evidence, maintain confidentiality, notify all affected persons, hear from all relevant persons, adhere to a timeline, and include an assessment of any risks. All steps in the investigation shall be documented, including all evidence gathered and considered.

9.8 The staff member conducting the investigation shall provide a written summary of the issues raised by the Complainant, how the investigation was conducted, the evidence considered, analysis in the context of standards and policies, the conclusion, reasons for the conclusion, and any actions taken or proposed to be taken.

9.9 The Complainant should be given an opportunity to comment on preliminary conclusions, and be given any information about appeal of the conclusions.

9.10 The written summary and conclusions shall be provided to the Complainant, affected staff member(s), and shall be filed.

9.11 Resolution of complaints may include:
- 9.11.1 A more detailed explanation of the officer's actions;
- 9.11.2 Reconsideration of a decision, cancellation of a penalty, or closing of a file;
- 9.11.3 Recommended changes to policies and procedures;
- 9.11.4 Acknowledgement of an error and an apology; and
- 9.11.5 A conclusion that the officer's conduct was proper.

9.12 If the Respondent is not satisfied with the Director's response, a formal administrative fairness complaint may be submitted under the Islands Trust 'Handling of Administrative Fairness Complaints' policy.

9.13 The Director may determine that a person who makes repeated, unfounded and vexatious complaints about the conduct of an officer or Manager be notified that no further submissions will be accepted from them on the subject of a specific investigation, and will be directed to other avenues, including but not limited to, the Office of the Ombudsperson.

10. BYLAW ENFORCEMENT NOTICES AND DISPUTE ADJUDICATION

10.1 Local trust committees wishing to establish a Bylaw Enforcement Notice and Dispute Adjudication system must adopt a Bylaw Enforcement Notification (BEN) Bylaw which:
- 10.1.1 Designates the bylaw contraventions that may be dealt with by a bylaw notice;
- 10.1.2 Establishes the amount of the administrative penalty for each contravention;
- 10.1.3 Sets the period within which a recipient may pay the administrative penalty or dispute a bylaw notice/request a review;
- 10.1.4 Establishes a bylaw notice dispute adjudication system; and
- 10.1.5 Establishes and designates screening officers.

11. LEGAL ACTION

11.1 If a bylaw contravention does not cease or if compliance is not achieved, a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer may make recommendations to the local trust committee, including taking civil action or closing the investigation without compliance.

11.2 Immediate legal action may be recommended to local trust committees if impacts of a bylaw contravention pose serious risk to persons or the environment.

11.3 *Offence Act* prosecutions may be recommended to a local trust committee under the following conditions:

- 11.3.1 Offence Act prosecutions are to be used only for serious land use permit contraventions;
- 11.3.2 A long-form information may be sworn only after approval by a local trust committee;
- 11.3.3 Executive Committee has approved legal funding for the prosecution; and
- 11.3.4 The long-form information has been reviewed and prepared by legal counsel.

12. LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE ENFORCEMENT POLICIES

12.1 Local trust committees may adopt discretionary enforcement policies or procedures applying within a Local Trust Area. LTC policies should be consistent with Trust Council Policy and the legislated authority of the LTC. In adopting an enforcement policy, an LTC should consider the following:

- 12.1.1 Prioritizing or deferring enforcement based on scarce resources, the impacts of certain types of contraventions, and community priorities;
- 12.1.2 Establishing procedures and timing for property inspections, with LTCs defining the notice period;
- 12.1.3 Enforcement of types of contraventions without complaint;
- 12.1.4 The length of time for Respondents to comply, timing for issuing of Bylaw Warning Notices, and timing for issuance of Bylaw Violation Notices;
- 12.1.5 Discretion in closing files, including the nature and urgency of the complaint or alleged contravention, the circumstances of the Respondent, and the impact of the contravention on the Complainant and community;
- 12.1.6 Regular reporting to the LTC on open files; and
- 12.1.7 Communications between trustees and the Manager.

13. BYLAW NOTICE DEBT

13.1 Debts incurred as the result of default on bylaw notices are payable to Trust Council and they may be cancelled if the Director of Planning Services and the Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement concur that contraventions on the subject property no longer exist, and/or it is not in the interest of Islands Trust to pursue the debt.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY

14.1 Information in regards to a Complainant is kept confidential. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed should litigation proceed or where a request for information is received under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

15. FRIVOLOUS, REPEAT, OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

15.1 A complaint that is made in bad faith or for vexatious and retaliatory purposes may not be acted upon if the Director of Planning Services and the Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement concur that it meets the definition of a vexatious complaint.

15.2 Complaints that form a pattern of conduct by a Complainant that amounts to an abuse of the complaint process may not be acted upon.

15.3 The Manager may refuse to open a file for a complaint considered to be frivolous or repeat complaint about the same issue.

15.4 In any of the above instances, the Complainant will be notified that no further submissions will be accepted from them on the subject of the complaint, the reason for it, may be advised of the circumstances under which it may be reconsidered, and that this does not prevent the Complainant from making complaints on different matters.

16. LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEES, TRUST COUNCIL, AND TRUSTEES ROLES

16.1 The local trust committee will be notified when a bylaw investigation file is opened, the notification will include the type of contravention and the street name where it is alleged to be occurring, but the name and address of the Complainant and alleged violator will not be included in the notification.

16.2 Local trust committees will be notified when a bylaw investigation file has been closed.

16.3 Trustees may make a written complaint alleging a bylaw contravention.

16.4 Local trust committees and trustees will not be involved in the investigation of a complaint, the preparation of bylaw enforcement reports, the issuance of Bylaw Notices, or in the adjudication process.

16.5 Local trust committees may request reports about specific investigations or about general enforcement activity in the Local Trust Area.

16.6 Trust Council will be informed of the volume and type of bylaw enforcement files bi-annually.

17. BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

17.1 The Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement will maintain a public Best Practices Manual that outlines practices, processes and procedures in accordance with the administrative fairness principles outlined in the BC Ombudsperson's report "Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments", March, 2016 or in subsequent updated versions of the same reference material.

C. Legislated References

1. *Islands Trust Act*
2. *Local Government Act*
3. *Offence Act*

D. Attachments/Links to Supporting Forms, Documents, Websites, Related Policies and Procedures

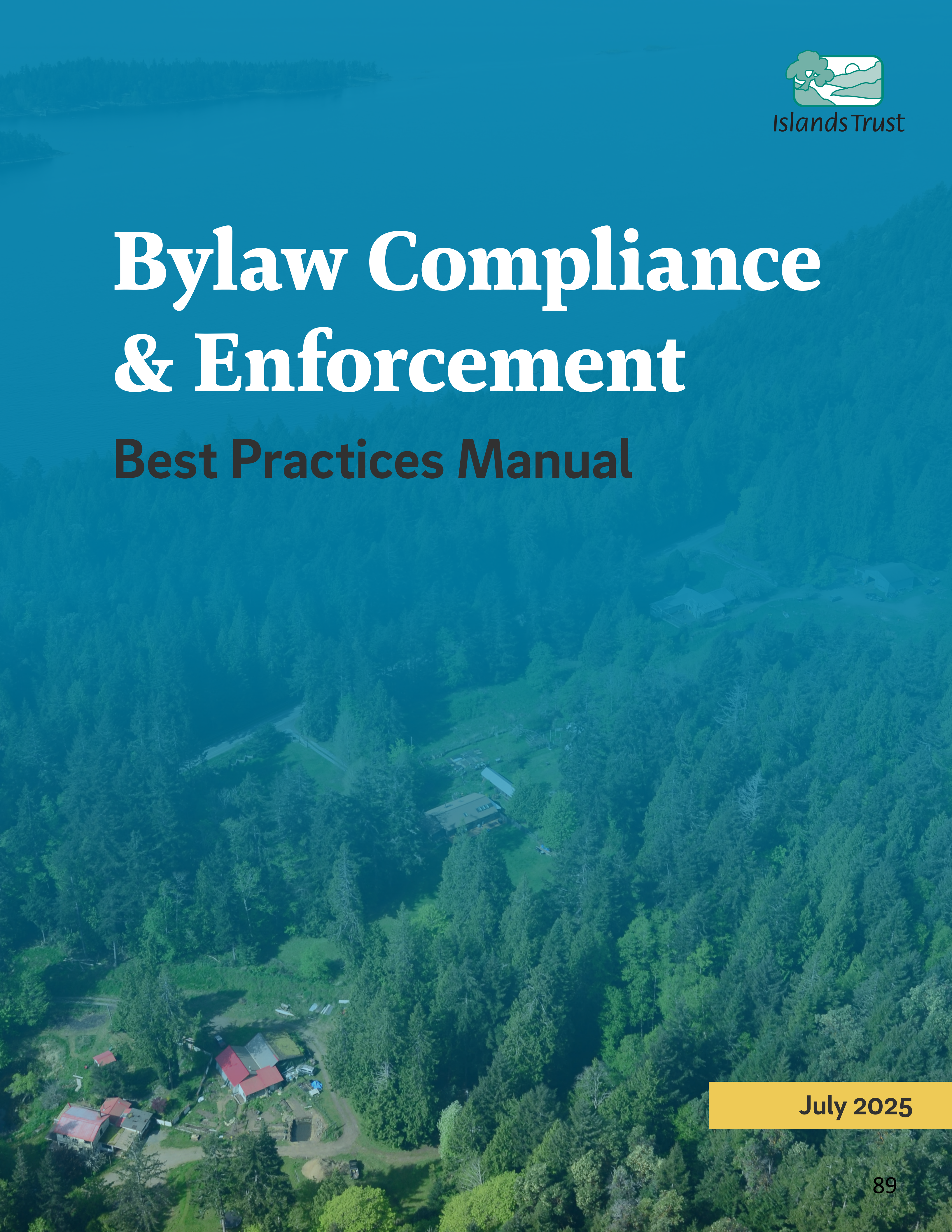
- Local Trust Committee Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy Template (attached)
- BC Ombudsperson's report "Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments",

March, 2016

- Best Practices Manual
- BC Local Government Bylaws>Bylaw Enforcement
- Local Trust Committee Compliance and Enforcement Policy Template

Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement

Best Practices Manual



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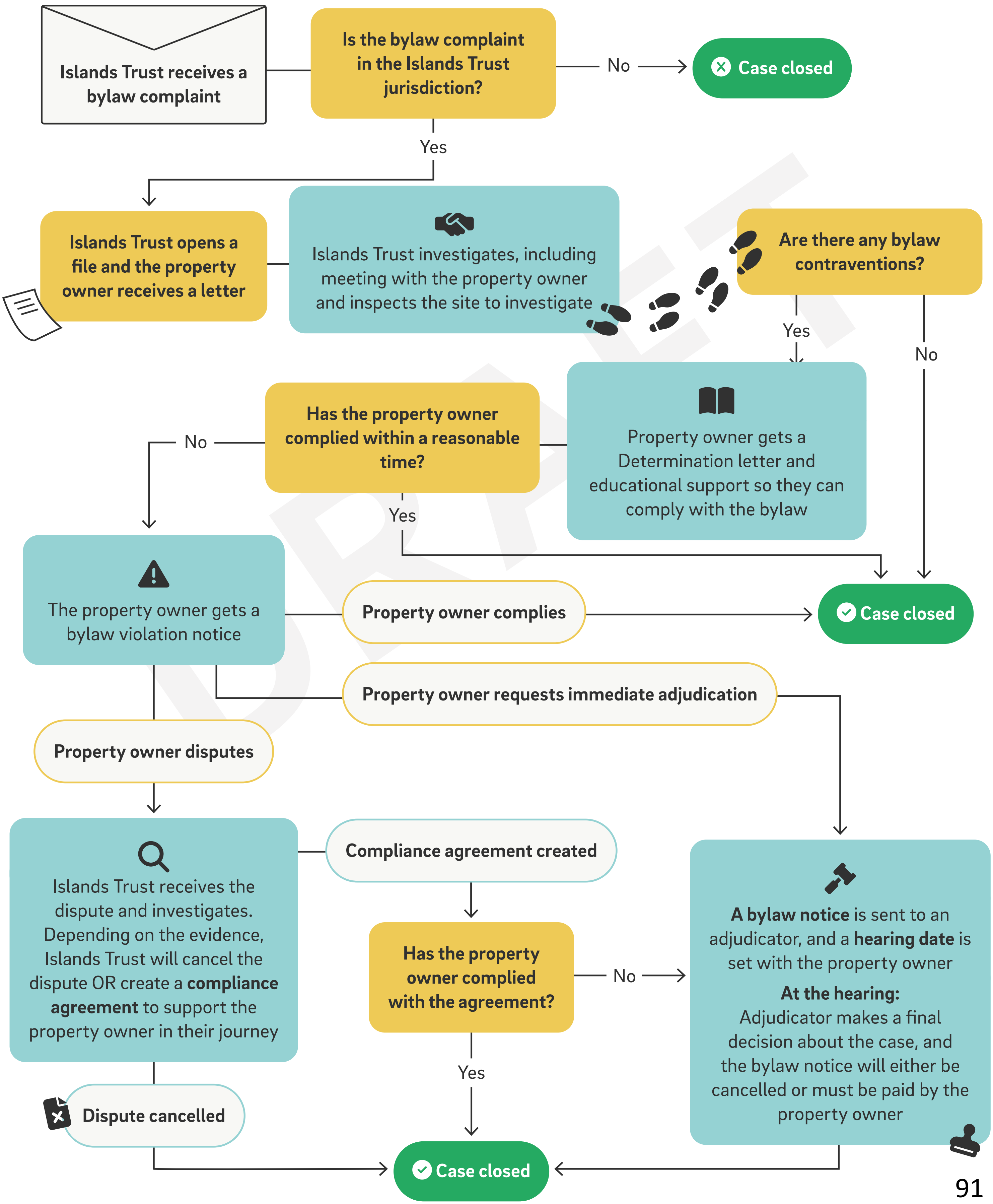

Definitions

Adjudicator means an independent party whom the Province of British Columbia appoints to decide if a Bylaw Violation Notice will be upheld or cancelled.

Bylaw Notice means a ticket, with penalty, issued under the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act*.

Complaints a report of an alleged contravention made by any person.

Complainant a person who has made an official complaint.

Disputant means a respondent who has been given a Bylaw Violation Notice, and disputed it.

Local government refers to municipalities and regional districts which provide services to local communities. In this document, the local government referred to is Islands Trust.

Ombudsperson Office is an independent, impartial office of the provincial legislature that investigates complaints about unfair administrative actions by public authorities. It is meant to uphold transparency and accountability within public institutions by offering a free, accessible service for individuals who feel they have been treated unjustly by public agencies. The office does not have the power to enforce decisions but can recommend corrective actions.

Respondent means those responding to allegations of bylaw contraventions.

Screening Officer is an Islands Trust staff member appointed to review a disputed Bylaw Violation Notice.

Vexatious Complaints is a complaint made for retaliatory reasons or in bad faith and intended to cause harassment, or otherwise forms part of a pattern of conduct by the Complainant that amounts to an abuse of the complaint processare

What is the purpose of the Islands Trust Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement program?

The Islands Trust works to preserve and protect the special environment and qualities of the Trust Area for the benefit of its residents and the province. The Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement program exists to support this goal and ensure public safety. This guide helps residents understand how the Islands Trust ensures people follow local bylaws. The goal is to encourage voluntary compliance with bylaws through education, mediation, and enforcement when necessary.

The Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement team looks into potential violations of land use rules set by local trust committees. The regulations are found in local trust committees' Land Use Bylaws; in Development Permit Areas within Official Community Plans; and in the Salt Spring Island Soil

Deposit and Removal Bylaw. Islands Trust has the legal authority to enforce these rules under laws like the *Islands Trust Act* and the *Local Government Act of BC*.

The Islands Trust has a policy, Policy 5.5.1 Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement, that guides how bylaw investigations are handled. It explains how complaints are processed, prioritized, and resolved, aiming to do so fairly and effectively. Local trust committees adopt bylaws authorizing enforcement and may adopt bylaw enforcement policies specific to their communities.

The Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement follows best practices based on principles of fairness, as outlined in the report: BC Ombudsperson's report "Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments", March, 2016.

Guiding Principles

- Fairness and Impartiality: Apply bylaws consistently, ensuring decisions are unbiased and equitable for diverse island communities.
- Transparency and Communication: Provide clear, accessible information about enforcement policies, processes, and outcomes with understandable and meaningful reasons for the decision(s) made throughout the bylaw investigation and enforcement process to foster trust and understanding.
- Focus on Education and Compliance: Emphasize public education and voluntary compliance with bylaws.
- Procedural Fairness: Ensure timely notification of alleged infractions, offer opportunities to Respondents to be heard throughout the process, and guarantee unbiased decision-making.
- Proportionality and Discretion: Tailor enforcement actions to the severity and context of the infraction, with a focus on voluntary compliance.
- Efficiency: Prioritize significant violations that impact environmental sustainability or community safety, while streamlining processes for minor cases.
- Engagement and Inclusivity: Collaborate with island communities to ensure enforcement practices reflect local values and consider marginalized populations.
- Accountability and Oversight: Regularly review enforcement activities and maintain oversight to uphold public confidence and encourage local trust committees to update and align bylaws and to identify opportunities to make bylaws clear and coherent.
- Respect for Privacy: Safeguard the confidentiality of Complainants and individuals involved in enforcement actions, in compliance with privacy laws.
- Administrative Fairness: Ensure that standards of conduct complaints are addressed in a fair, equitable, and timely manner in accordance with the principles of administrative fairness.
- Cultural Safety: Demonstrate a commitment to cultural safety for all those involved in bylaw compliance and enforcement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Effective bylaw enforcement within Islands Trust requires ongoing communication and cooperation between trustees and staff. While trustees provide the legislative framework and policy direction, staff members carry out these policies through direct enforcement and support roles.

Trustees

- Policy Development and Approval: Trustees are primarily involved in governance, including setting policies that guide bylaw enforcement. Local trust committees approve bylaws that regulate land use and community planning within the Islands Trust Area and are authorized to enforce those bylaws.
- Strategic Oversight: Trustees oversee the general strategic direction of Islands Trust, ensuring that bylaw enforcement aligns with the broader goals of conservation and sustainable community development.
- Community Representation: Trustees represent the interests and concerns of their constituents in matters related to bylaws and their enforcement, acting as a liaison between the community and enforcement officers.

Staff

- Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers: These are specialized staff responsible for the practical aspects of enforcing the bylaws approved by trustees. Their duties include investigating complaints, gathering evidence, and ensuring compliance through education and regulation.
- The Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement: leads the overall administration of the bylaw enforcement program, including supervising bylaw compliance and enforcement officers, ensuring adherence to policies and procedures, and providing expertise on complex or sensitive cases. The Manager coordinates with other departments, ensures alignment with legal and regulatory requirements, and reports on enforcement activities to senior management and elected officials.
- Planning Staff are not directly involved in enforcement, but play a critical role in interpreting the bylaws and providing recommendations to both the public and enforcement officers. They ensure that the enforcement practices align with the planning objectives set by trustees.
- Administrative Support: This includes staff members who assist in the administration of bylaw enforcement, such as processing complaints, maintaining records, and supporting communication between the public, trustees, and enforcement officers.

Are you concerned about something on your property and want to get more information? Your Trustee can be a first point of contact in this conversation, without starting enforcement.

What initiates a Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement case file?

Like all local governments in British Columbia, Islands Trust uses a complaint-based Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement process. This means that almost all case files result from complaints made by individuals in the community. Anyone can submit a complaint — you don't have to live in the area or be a resident.

As listed in Trust Council Policy 5.5.1 Section 5.1, this system gives priority to those bylaw infractions of greatest concern to island communities:

1. When directed by a local trust committee
2. Health and safety issues
3. Environmental impacts that could cause irreversible harm if not addressed quickly
4. Other contraventions of land use bylaws and other bylaws

Once a complaint has been made, Islands Trust cannot decline to open a case file or decline to conduct an investigation because a complainant has changed their mind. Complainants are not victims of the offence and cannot "withdraw" their complaint.

In some cases, a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer can start an investigation even without a complaint. This happens when:

- Contraventions may cause health or safety risks
- Contraventions occur near water bodies
- Contraventions happen in development permit areas
- Contraventions are found during the building permit process
- Another agency refers a case involving land use issues
- Unlawful uses are advertised
- A local trust committee requests an investigation

How can complaints be sent to Islands Trust?

Anyone who wants to make a complaint can:

- Fill out the Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Complaint form on the Islands Trust website: https://islandstrust.bc.ca/mapping-resources/report-a-concern/
- Send an email to bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca

- Mail or drop off a letter to any Islands Trust office
- Complete a complaint form at any Islands Trust office

Complaints must be in writing, but staff can help by writing down the information for anyone who needs assistance.

Confidentiality

Anyone making a complaint must provide their name to the Islands Trust. Anonymous complaints are not accepted.

Islands Trust will try to keep the complainant's information confidential, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed during legal proceedings or if a Freedom of Information request is made. Islands Trust also receives referrals from other agencies (like regional districts) when they get a complaint that falls under Islands Trust's responsibility.

What is not a complaint?

Sometimes, people reach out to Islands Trust with questions about the Land Use Bylaw or Official Community Plan, not to report illegal activity. They may be planning something on their property and want to know if it is allowed. In these cases, a case file is not opened.

If a complaint is determined to be "vexatious", Islands Trust will send a written notice explaining any limits on communication, why those limits are in place, and when they might be reconsidered. These limits don't stop necessary contact with staff on other unrelated matters.

Questions regarding bylaw infractions can be sent to bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca

When are Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement case files closed?

Case files are closed if:

- If no contravention exists
- On direction of a local trust committee
- If the Director of Planning Services concurs with the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager that the contravention is minor and does not suit the public interest to enforce
- If compliance has been achieved

How is compliance achieved?

Ideally, bylaw compliance is voluntary, and primarily sought through a combination of education, mediation, and enforcement techniques. If voluntary compliance does not occur, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer may proceed with a bylaw compliance and enforcement process.

Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Process

The compliance and enforcement process at Islands Trust has several steps. Staff work with people involved (Respondents) and encourage them to follow the rules before deciding if there is a bylaw contravention. The process starts with discussions and education about the bylaws. If necessary, it moves to a verbal warning, then a written warning, and penalties are only applied if the person still does not comply.

First, staff review the complaint to see if it falls under the local trust area's bylaws. If no contravention is found, the complainant will be asked to provide more information, or informed that no contravention exists.

Some complaints are more urgent than others are, so not all will receive the same level of attention.

If a complaint falls outside of Islands Trust's authority, it may be referred to another agency. The goal is to handle referrals quickly, with a "no wrong door" approach, meaning everyone is here to help, no matter which agency is involved.

If there is a possible contravention, a new case file is opened.

A New File Has Been Opened

After a new file is opened, both the Complainant and the person involved (Respondent) will be notified in writing. The Respondent will receive a Notice Letter with the contact details of the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer (the Officer) and will be asked to get in touch. The Officer will also follow up with the Complainant to confirm details and ask more questions.

The Officer will then investigate the extent of the apparent or potential contravention and what may be required to achieve compliance with the bylaw. These are the steps the Officer takes when investigating:

1. The Officer will review all relevant compliance and enforcement policies that have been adopted by the local trust committees or Trust Council.
2. Typically, the Officer will conduct a site inspection of the property to meet with the Respondent, and gain an awareness and visual understanding of the property and the neighbourhood.
3. The Officer will gather details and relevant evidence about what has been built or what is happening on the property that might have led to a complaint by asking questions and

investigating. Bylaw Officers have the legal right to inspect, and local trust committees set policies on how much notice must be given to the Respondent before an inspection. The Officer is there to gather information only, not to make a decision, and Respondents will receive a written response regarding the case.

4. Based on evidence collected and a review of the relevant bylaws, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer will determine if there is, or has been, a contravention. If there is no contravention of the local trust committee bylaws then the Respondent and the Complainant will be notified and the case file will be closed. If a contravention exists, the Respondent will be sent a Determination letter, explaining the contravention and requesting voluntary cessation of the activity, land use, or construction.
5. If a Respondent disagrees with the determination make by the Officer, a review by senior staff can be requested.
6. If a Respondent needs more time to bring the property into compliance, a request can be made for more time to comply. If an administrative application such as a land use permit application has been submitted by the Respondent and there is a reasonable likelihood of success, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer will refrain from enforcement during the application process.
7. Where voluntary compliance has not been achieved in a reasonable time, the Officer may issue a Bylaw Violation Warning Notice or a Bylaw Violation Notice in local trust areas where a Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw has been adopted by the local trust committee. This Notice clearly explains what the contravention is, and the timeline for compliance. The Officer is available to provide more information to the Respondent so they can achieve compliance without penalties.
8. Voluntary compliance is always the goal. The Officer will attempt to support the Respondent to achieve voluntary compliance with educational resources, and negotiations.

Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers are committed to a professional and respectful approach. Here is what they do:

- Interact with the public in a respectful and non-confrontational way
- Approach investigations with an understanding of the specific circumstances of individuals involved
- Work within their authority; while they cannot issue stop work orders or tell property owners what they can do, they can request a pause on work while they review the regulations and investigate.
- Take time to carefully review all evidence before making a determination. They do not make on-the-spot decisions to ensure fairness and avoid any perception of bias.

Demonstrate cultural humility by reflecting on the cultures of themselves and those they work with in order to create and maintain relationships and trust.

Site Inspections

For most case files, an Officer will conduct a site inspection as part of an investigation. This is both to gain an understanding of the potential contravention and also to meet and hear from the Respondent. Except in rare and exceptional circumstances laid out in policy, Officers will contact the Respondent to give written notice and proposing timing of the site inspection. Inspections will only occur during reasonable hours, and focus exclusively on the alleged bylaw contravention, unless other observations pose an immediate risk to public health, safety, or the environment. During the inspection, Officers are there to gather evidence, and can answer reasonable questions about the process but are not there to make a final determination.

Communications with Complainants

When a Complainant completes an online complaint form, they receive an automatic response, which thanks them for their complaint and advises them that they will be contacted shortly with an update.

Once the complaint has been received and reviewed by the Manager, Complainants are advised if a new bylaw file is opened. If a file already exists for the property and contravention, they will be advised that their information has been added to the file. Contact information for the investigating Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer is shared.

If the Complainant has provided an email address, they will be notified of a new file being opened by email. If they have only provided a mailing address, they will be notified by mail.

Complainants can request information about an open bylaw enforcement file at any time. They will be updated by the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer if:

a. A file is put on hold, along with the reason for this action

b. A Local Trust Committee makes a decision regarding the file

c. A file has moved to litigation at which time the identity of the complainant may become public information

d. A file is closed

Communications with Respondents

When a file is opened, a **notice letter** will be sent to the Respondent.

Once a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer has confirmed that a contravention of a bylaw has occurred or is occurring, the Officer will send **a determination letter** to the Respondent. The letter must be clear and easy to read and must include:

- A **reason** the letter is being sent that outline the problem, using a statement of what has been observed

- An **explanation** of how the bylaw has been contravened by quoting the bylaw and the sections that are being violated, and the definitions of words from the bylaw
- Outline of the **solutions** available to comply with the bylaw
- Explanation of the possible **consequences** of not complying
- A reasonable **deadline** that has been negotiated with the Respondent for taking next step or fully complying

Communications with Trustees

A local trust committee or any individual local trustee will not be involved in any aspect of the investigation of a complaint or the preparation of any Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement report. When a file is opened:

- Local trustees are advised of the general nature of the complaint, the name of the street (not the complete address), and the case file number.
- Local trust committees will only be kept informed about the status of an investigation if updates are requested.
- Local trust committees may request Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement staff report on specific issues. The reports will be presented to the local trust committee at a subsequent meeting

While local trustees can't be involved in any investigations, they are able to file a bylaw contravention complaint just as any member of the public.

Communications with Potential Property Buyers and Real Estate Agents

Potential property buyers, Real Estate Agents, or the public can contact the Islands Trust Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement office to ask if there are any Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement issues associated with a specific property. Staff can share limited information regarding whether an open bylaw file exists for the subject property.

Islands Trust does not provide information about previous complaints or investigations. That information would require a Freedom of Information request, which can be made here.

When Compliance is not achieved

If bylaw compliance isn't achieved, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer will take the appropriate next steps which could include issuing a Bylaw Violation Notice, sending a Notice of Debt letter, sending a demand letter via lawyers, or recommending legal action to the local trust committee.

If legal action is necessary, the Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement will present a staff report to the local trust committee and Executive Committee, who then decide whether or not legal proceedings should occur.

Appealing Decisions Made by a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer

For determination made by a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer, appeals may be considered by the Director, Planning Services. In considering appeals of interpretation of regulations, the Director may consult with Planners and Regional Planning Managers. Such requests must be made in writing, outlining reasons for the appeal such as error of fact, omissions, or new evidence.

Reviewing the Conduct of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers

Respondents can request a review of the conduct of a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer by submitting a request in writing to the Director of Planning Services. If the Respondent is not satisfied with the Director's response, a formal administrative fairness complaint may be submitted.

WHAT IS BIAS?

Bias in decision making is generally understood as a pre-existing leaning or predisposition toward one side or another or a particular result.

Bias can creep into complaint resolution and investigations when decision makers rely on their personal belief systems, prior knowledge of a person, or personal relationship with a party or service user, rather than focusing exclusively on the information and evidence related to the complaint. It is important that staff who are handling complaints be aware of any personal biases that may be affecting how they respond to concerns from service users, and take steps to address any biases that have an impact upon their decision-making so that decisions are made impartially.

From the Ombudsperson Complaints Handling Guide

Public access to records

As Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement files contain confidential information and pertain to law enforcement, a member of the public is required to submit a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy request in order to obtain any information from a file.

Freedom of Information requests are an important mechanism of transparency that ensures public access to Islands Trust records. Islands Trust staff will assist members of the public to refine their request and procure relevant documents to their request.

Exercising discretion

One of the guiding principles of bylaw enforcement in the Trust Area is that enforcement actions should be consistent with the severity and context of the infraction. In law, local trust committees are not obliged to enforce all contraventions. This results in the exercise of discretion in enforcement at several levels by choosing between courses of action. Discretion in enforcement may be exercised by staff during investigations by providing flexibility such as extended timelines or alternative solutions when warranted by individual circumstances. Senior staff may prioritize or defer enforcement of certain types of contraventions based on scarce resources, impacts, or community priorities. Discretion may also be used to close certain files, where staff have determined that the contravention is of a minor nature, impacts are minimal, or it is not in the public interest to enforce. Local trust committees can also exercise discretion by resolution to prioritize enforcement of certain types of contraventions or to close specific files.

Bylaw Enforcement Notices and Dispute Adjudication System

Overview of the Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act

In October 2003, the Province of British Columbia enacted legislation providing an alternative approach for processing and resolving minor bylaw contraventions: the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act*. The *Act* also provides direction, with the Bylaw Notice Enforcement Regulation. Under the *Act,* local governments may establish a Bylaw Enforcement Notice and Dispute Adjudication system, which replaces the provincial court as the venue for resolving disputes of bylaw contraventions.

This legislation aims to create a straightforward, affordable system to enforce bylaw contraventions. It features a simple ticket process for enforcement and a way for an independent adjudicator to handle ticket disputes.

EXAMPLE:
The Galiano Island Local Trust Committee Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw No. 228, 2011.

This bylaw lists the administrative penalties that apply to bylaw contraventions in the Galiano Local Trust Area, as well as policies for disputing Bylaw Violation Notices, Screening Officers, and other features of the adjudication process described below in detail.

Implementation

When establishing a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw, local governments, including Islands Trust, should consider the following:

- Appointment of a Screening Officer: Define their powers, duties, and functions.
- Compliance Agreements: Allow the Screening Officer to enter into agreements and reduce penalties if warranted.
- Adjudication Process: Set a fee for filing adjudication requests and establish grounds for canceling penalty notices.
- Response Periods: Determine timelines for responses to Screening Officer decisions.

Records Management

Islands Trust administers and preserves all records related to the Bylaw Enforcement Notification system in compliance with provincial legislation. These records include:

- Bylaw Violation Notices and Warning Notices.
- Records of paid administrative penalties.
- Adjudicator decisions and documents related to collection efforts for unpaid penalties

Islands Trust Areas that have adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw:

Ballenas-Winchelsea Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 34 (adopted 2019)
Denman Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 232 (adopted 2019)
Gabriola Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 263 (adopted 2012)
Galiano Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 228 (adopted 2012)
Gambier Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 116 (adopted 2013)
Hornby Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 159 (adopted 2020)
Mayne Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 156 (adopted 2016)
North Pender Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 188 (adopted 2011)
Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 446 (adopted 2012)
South Pender Island Local Trust Area (adopted 2019)
Thetis Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 90 (adopted 2011)

Islands Trust Areas that have not adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw:

Lasqueti Island Local Trust Area
Saturna Island Local Trust Area

Bylaw Violation Notices

Bylaw Violation Notices

A violation notice is a formal enforcement tool. This type of notice assigns an administrative penalty, the amount of the penalty is listed in the Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw of the Local Trust Area.

In local trust areas where Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw have been adopted, a Bylaw Violation Notice may be issued after any of the following:

- A verbal warning
- A demand letter
- A warning notice
- Exceptional circumstances as outlined by the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager

Notices must include the respondent's name, contravention details, penalty amounts, and dispute options.

The penalty notice may be delivered by personal delivery or by mailing it to the person responsible for the contravention. If mailed, the local government may presume that the person received it on the seventh day after mailing. In the event that the intended recipient claims not to have received the notice, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer must verify the address and reissue a copy of the Bylaw Violation Notice.

The penalty notice informs the respondent of the bylaw contravention, the penalty for the contravention; and how to pay the penalty or dispute the notice.

A Bylaw Violation Notice must contain the:

- Name of the Respondent
- Specific bylaw contravention alleged to have occurred and the location
- Amount of the penalty
- Amount of a discount for early payment
- Amount of a surcharge for late payment
- Consequences of failing to respond to the notice
- Payment options
- Dispute options

Bylaw Violation Notices must be written within six months of the occurrence of a contravention.

Although the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act* requires that the above information is included on a penalty notice, local governments may organize or supplement this information as they see fit. The penalty notice may also be electronically generated or hand written on a pre-printed form.

The following is considered when issuing a Bylaw Violation Notice:

- Will the notice encourage the person to follow the bylaw? The goal is to get compliance. If the officer believes issuing the notice will help, it may be the right step.
- The notice cannot be issued more than six months after the violation is said to have happened.
- The officer should be able to explain why the notice was considered an effective way to enforce the rules in each case.

There are four possible scenarios once a Bylaw Violation Notice has been received::

1. No response: if the Respondent doesn't respond within 28 days, a late fee is added. The total penalty, including the late fee, is due immediately and can be collected by Islands Trust
2. Not received: if, within 21 days, the Respondent claims they have not received the Bylaw Violation Notice, a copy of the original notice will be reissued
3. Payment made: if the penalty is paid within 14 days of receiving the notice, a discount may be applied. After 14 days, the full penalty amount is due. A late fee is added after 28 days. Payment can be made by cash, cheque, or money order to Islands Trust, with instructions provided on the Bylaw Violation Notice
4. Dispute: the Respondent disputes the Bylaw Violation Notice

Dispute Process for Bylaw Violation Notices

The person named (Disputant) in the notice has 14 days to request a hearing. After 14 days, they can only dispute it if the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager grants an exception. The process starts when the Respondent asks to dispute the notice, and the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager will then arrange for adjudication. If the due date falls on a weekend or public holiday, it will be extended to the next business day.

The Dispute Adjudication system is used to resolve disputes about whether a bylaw violation occurred as stated in the notice or whether the terms of a compliance agreement were followed. A challenge to the validity of the local government bylaw, or a claim that enforcement of the bylaw infringed on the Charter Rights of the disputant, is not within the jurisdiction of the adjudicator. This must be initiated as a separate matter in the Supreme Court of British Columbia.

> More information about detailed information regarding the local government dispute adjudication system can be found in the Local Government Toolkit for Bylaw Dispute Adjudication. The Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act and the Bylaw Notice Enforcement Regulation govern this process.

Parties involved in the process of disputing a notice include:

1. **The Disputant:** the individual disputing the notice.
2. **The Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Officer:** the Islands Trust employee authorized to issue the notice.
3. **The Adjudicator:** the independent adjudicator with authority to determine if the notice is dismissed or upheld.
4. **The Screening Officer:** is an employee of Islands Trust designated as a Screening Officer under the relevant Local Trust Committee's Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw. Screening Officers provide a first opportunity to respond to a Bylaw Violation Notice dispute in an informal setting. A Screening Officer may conduct the review based on discussion or correspondence with the disputant, and can explain the process and potential consequences of formal dispute adjudication. Each Local Trust Committee that has adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw has also developed a Screening Officer policy in order to provide guidelines during the Bylaw Violation Notice screening process. Screening Officers are required to provide recipients with a fair opportunity to be heard.

1 Step One in the Dispute Procedure

A recipient of a Bylaw Violation Notice notifies Islands Trust in writing that they are disputing the Bylaw Violation Notice by:

- Completing and submitting the Adjudication Request Form that is on the bottom of the Bylaw Violation Notice. Forms can be delivered or mailed to any of the Islands Trust offices on Salt Spring Island, Gabriola Island or Victoria.
- Online at disputing a bylaw violation notice.
- A letter or email indicating that they wish to dispute the Bylaw Violation Notice can be sent to bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca, or mailed to any Islands Trust office:
  - Victoria Office: 200 – 1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8
  - Salt Spring Office: 121 McPhillips Ave, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2T6
  - Northern Office: 700 North Road, Gabriola Island, BC, V0R 1X3

2 Step Two in the Dispute Procedure

The Screening Officer will review the Bylaw Violation Notice, including possible discussions with the issuing Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer. The Screening Officer will review the dispute request and may:

- **Cancel** the notice; or
- **Confirm** the notice and either:
  - refer it to an **adjudicator** unless the request for dispute adjudication is withdrawn; or
  - enter into a **compliance agreement** ⤵ with the person.

❸ Step Three in the Dispute Procedure

The Bylaw Violation Notice has now been cancelled or confirmed by the Screening Officer. If the Bylaw Violation Notice is confirmed, Screening Officer will discuss their decision with the disputant by phone, in person, or in writing, and may offer a Compliance Agreement with the recipient to subsequently reduce or cancel the penalty when the terms of the agreement are fulfilled.

❹ Step Four in the Dispute Procedure

If the Bylaw Violation Notice has been confirmed, and the disputant wants a formal dispute adjudication, the Screening Officer will request an Issuing Officer Report and create a Screening Officer Report. The dispute process will now move to a Formal Dispute Adjudication, where evidence is presented and the adjudicator decides if an offence did or did not occur.

A Compliance Agreement includes:

- Acknowledgment of the bylaw contravention and acceptance of responsibility
- Remedies or future actions to be taken within a certain timeframe
- A way to verify compliance with the agreement
- Possible penalty reduction or waiver if the terms of the agreement are met
- The duration of the compliance agreement

If a recipient of a Bylaw Violation Notice fulfills all terms of a compliance agreement, their penalty is considered fully paid.

If the Screening Officer believes that the terms have not been fulfilled, they can cancel the compliance agreement and must notify the recipient of that fact by regular mail. The recipient then has 14 days of receiving that notice to either pay the penalty or ask an adjudicator to determine compliance. If neither action is taken within that time, the full penalty plus a late fee is immediately due to Islands Trust.

Dispute Adjudication

In accordance with local the *Local Government Act*, Islands Trust runs its own Dispute Adjudication System by working with the Ministry of Attorney General, which provides adjudicators experienced in local government land use bylaws. Once a Disputant confirms they want a formal hearing, the Manager will coordinate with all parties to set a date. Islands Trust will submit a package to support its case, which usually includes the Bylaw Violation Notice, the request to dispute, and reports from the Issuing and Screening Officers. This package, along with any evidence from the disputant, must be sent to both the disputant and the adjudicator at least one week before the hearing.

Adjudicators

The Adjudicator must proceed on the basis that the bylaw is legally valid. The Adjudicator has no discretion to reduce or waive the penalty amount. The Adjudicator also has no jurisdiction to deal with challenges to the bylaw or claims of infringements of rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

An Adjudicator may not be an employee or an elected official of a municipality and may not hear a matter if they are reasonably thought to have a bias or an interest in relation to the outcome of that matter.

Adjudication Procedures

Section 18 of the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act* provides direction in regards to Adjudication Procedures.

The Adjudicator must provide the parties to the dispute with an opportunity to be heard:

- In person or by an agent
- In writing (including by fax or email)
- By video conference, audio conference, telephone or other electronic means

Section 19 of the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act* states that "Hearings must be open to the public". Islands Trust provides a space for members of the public to watch adjudication proceedings at the Islands Trust Southern Office, 200–1627 Fort St, Victoria. Members of the public can request this information by contacting Islands Trust: information@islandstrust.bc.ca.

Evidence

The technical and legal rules of evidence do not apply and an Adjudicator may accept any evidence they consider credible, trustworthy and relevant to the dispute, including the evidence of any person. The Adjudicator may accept evidence in any manner, such as orally, in writing or electronically.

Determination

The Adjudicator will determine if:

1. The contravention identified in the Bylaw Violation Notice occurred as alleged, the notice is confirmed, and the penalty set out in the notice is immediately due and payable.
2. The contravention identified in the Bylaw Violation Notice did not occur as alleged, the notice is cancelled.

If the Disputant fails to appear, the Adjudicator must order that the Bylaw Violation Notice be upheld. The penalty is immediately due and payable to the local trust committee. The full amount of the penalty is due, not the reduced amount that would be available to those paying within 14 days of the original bylaw violation notice.

Notice of Adjudication Outcomes

An Adjudicator resolving a dispute about a Bylaw Violation Notice or a compliance agreement must send their written decision to Islands Trust:

- Within one business day for in-person or telephone hearings.
- Within five business days after receiving the dispute materials for written hearings.

The adjudicator's decision must be in writing and should include:

- The name of the Disputant
- The facts relating to the penalty notice
- A summary of the Screening Officer's decision
- The issues raised by the parties
- A summary of the evidence provided by each party in support of each issue
- The Adjudicator's assessment of each issue
- The Adjudicator's final decision

The decision is sent from the Adjudicator to Islands Trust. The disputant will receive the decision of the Adjudicator when Islands Trust receives it.

Cost

Islands Trust is responsible for the administrative work and costs of the dispute adjudication system. Islands Trust charges an administrative fee of $25, payable by a disputant who is unsuccessful in a dispute adjudication. The fee is added to the debt only when and if the disputant is unsuccessful. If the disputant is successful, no fee is charged.

Judicial Review

The determination of an adjudicator is final and conclusive and is not open to review in a court except on a question of law or lack of jurisdiction. If a failed disputant or the Islands Trust believes that the adjudicator exceeded their authority, or made an error at law, disputant person or Islands Trust may seek relief in the Supreme Court of British Columbia under the *Judicial Review Procedure Act*. An application for judicial review must be made within 30 days of the adjudication decision.

Referenced Documents & Resources

- BC Ombudsperson's report "Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments", March, 2016
https://bcombudsperson.ca/guide/bylaw-enforcement-best-practices-guide-for-local-governments/
- Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Complaint form
https://islandstrust.bc.ca/mapping-resources/report-a-concern/
- Dispute a bylaw violation notice
https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/general-resources/bylaw-compliance-and-enforcement/dispute-adjudication-form/
- Policy 5.5.1 Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement
https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/policy-5-5-1-bylaw-compliance-and-enforcement/
- Freedom of Information request
https://islandstrust.bc.ca/about-us/accountability/freedom-of-information-requests/
- Trust Council Policy 5.5.1 Section 5.1
https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/policy-5-5-1-bylaw-compliance-and-enforcement/
- Bylaw Violation Notice can be sent to bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca, or mailed to any Islands Trust office:
- Victoria Office: 200 – 1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8
- Salt Spring Office: 121 McPhillips Ave, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2T6
- Northern Office: 700 North Road, Gabriola Island, BC, V0R 1X3

Bylaw Enforcement Review - **Charter** v3

Regional Planning Committee (RPC) RPC Endorsement Date: 05-24-2024

Purpose: *To resolve bylaw enforcement matters efficiently and with minimal conflict by reviewing and amending Islands Trust Bylaw Enforcement policies and procedures to be administratively fair, reasonable and transparent with the aim of restoring public confidence.*

Background: *Islands Trust Council requested that the Office of the Ombudsperson undertake a review of enforcement policies and practices and provide recommendations at the March 2023 Trust Council meeting. In August 2023 the Office of the Ombudsperson's Consultation and Training Team submitted the 'Voluntary Consultation on Bylaw Enforcement Policies and Practices within the Islands Trust' report. At the September 2023 Trust Council meeting directed that the recommendations of the report be implemented, that staff develop a work and project charter and was referred to the Regional Planning Committee.*

Deliverables

- *Revisions to Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.5.1*
- *Revisions to the Handling of Administrative Fairness Complaints Policy 7.1.2*
- *Revisions to Bylaw and Enforcement Best Practices and Procedures Manual ('the Manual')*
- *A public Bylaw Complaints and Enforcement document*
- *Updates and revisions to Bylaw Enforcement forms, templates and documents*
- *Training and information for Bylaw Enforcement Officers and other relevant staff*
- *Communications team work with planning staff to post regular Bylaw Compliance Review project updates to Islands Trust website.*
- *Development and review of an LTC Bylaw Enforcement Policy*

In Scope

- *Review the Report, compile recommendations*
- *Review current Trust Council policies*
- *Review the Manual*
- *Compile and review all LTC bylaw enforcement standing resolutions and policies*
- *Review selected policies of other relevant local governments*
- *Report to RPC with proposed revisions for direction*
- *Provide regular updates and recommended revisions to Trust Council*
- *Implement changes to policies and practices*
- *A legal review of draft documents*

Out of Scope

- *Amendments to bylaws*
- *Public consultation*
- *Referrals to LTCs*
- *External consultants*

IAP2 Public Engagement Level:

☒ **Inform**
☐ **Consult**
☐ **Involve**
☐ **Collaborate**

Workplan Overview

Deliverable/Milestone	**Target Date**
Draft Project Charter to RPC for review and endorsement	Feb 2024
RFD to Trust Council	Mar 2024

RPC review of preliminary policy revisions	May 2024
Briefing to Trust Council	June 2024
Draft policies and manual to RPC for review and changes	Sept 2024
Referral of draft revisions to Ombudsperson's office for comment	Sept 2024
Briefing to Trust Council	Sept 2024
Final RPC review and referral to Trust Council	Nov 2024
Endorsement by Trust Council	Dec 2024
Implementation	Jan – Mar 2025

Project Team	
Stefan Cermak, DPS	Project Champion
Robert Kojima, RPM	Project Manager
Warren Dingman, Manager C & E	Project Manager
	RPC Planner
David Marlor, DLS	Advisor
Director Approval: *Stefan Cermak* **Date:** 05-17-2024	**RPC Endorsement:** Resolution #: 2024-001 **Date:** 05-24-2024

Budget		
Budget Sources: N/A – no budget has been assigned ***legal review included in scope by RPC 02-16-2024**		
Fiscal	Item	Est. Staff hours*
2023-24	Project initiation	20
2024-25	- Preliminary analysis and review	40
	- Drafting of policy revisions	50
	- Final policy	20
	- Updates to manuals and templates	40
	- Implementation	40
	- Contingency	40
	Total	250

*excludes any admin support, attendance at RPC/TC meetings, staff receiving training

Bylaw Enforcement "Modernization" Project
(Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy Review & Portal)

Implementation Plan

Communication & Training

Objective:
Ensure all partners (internal and external) understand the changes, why they're happening, and how to apply them effectively.

Key Steps:
Internal Communication

- Prepare a clear summary of key changes
    - both of the policy changes and best practices manual, and
    - Portal
- Brief senior leadership team and managers so they can support their teams
- Distribute internal memo or email communications to staff
- Introduce at a PS Pro-D day to walk through the changes and allow questions
- Follow up at subsequent PS Pro-D day to confirm understanding

Staff Training

- Deliver training sessions (in-person or virtual) to all staff involved in bylaw enforcement and related roles (BCEOs, manager, admin support, RPMs, planners)
- Provide an opportunity for staff to practice using new forms, checklists, or software in a safe setting.
- Develop or update training materials, such as:
    - Checklists & flowcharts for day-to-day reference

External Communication

- Public communication plan includes:
    - Website updates explaining the changes
    - Social media posts and press release (following TC adoption)
    - FAQs for the public explaining how the new procedures will affect them
- Trustee Communication Plan includes: (outstanding)
    - "cheat sheet" – decision points for LTCs (note differences based on LTC Enforcement policies)
    - Site inspection forms for standard reporting to LTCs

Documentation

- Archive all training materials and communications for future reference and onboarding of new staff.
- Template for documenting staff conduct investigations.

Implementation & Monitoring

Objective:
Put the new policies & procedures into practice consistently and measure their effectiveness over time.

Key Steps:
Go-Live

- Official “effective date” for the new policies will be when Trust Council adopts them. Aiming for March 2026 Trust Council
- Director of Planning Services and Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement to be point persons to help staff and answer questions during the transition
- Ensure all updated forms, templates, software configurations, and signage are in place before the go-live.
- Assess effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, and communication outcomes. Track metrics such as complaint resolution time, staff workload, voluntary compliance, and public inquiries.

Review & Adjust

- Review metrics after 6 months (RPC – July 2026)
- Gather feedback from staff, the public, and committee/council.
- Adjust policies or procedures as needed based on lessons learned.
- Report back to Trust Council (TC Sept. 2026 – before new term)

Draft Metrics:

- Volume of complaints filed, (how) resolved or appealed
- Resolution timelines and case type
- Frequency of repeat or vexatious complaints
- Frequency of standards of conduct complaints
- Staff workload and hours per case
- Number of public inquiries and web engagement
- Feedback from staff, public, and Trust Council

Metrics Based on Questions:

Effectiveness

- Are the updated policies achieving their intended goals (e.g., faster resolution, higher compliance, building “trust”)?
- Have complaint volumes changed? In what way?
- Has voluntary compliance improved?

Efficiency

- Are cases being resolved faster without sacrificing fairness?
- Are staff spending an appropriate amount of time per case?

Fairness & Transparency

- Do staff and the public perceive the process as fair and clear?
- Are there patterns in complaints about the enforcement process itself?
- Are there patterns in complaints about enforcement personnel? Are behaviours contrary to policy? Have staff had fair and effective processes to address personnel complaints?

Capacity

- Do staff feel adequately trained and resourced?
- Is workload sustainable?

Communication

- Do the public and stakeholders understand the rules and procedures?
- Have public inquiries or misunderstandings decreased?

Improvement

- What feedback have we received from staff, the public, or council/LTCs?
- Are there unforeseen issues or unintended consequences?

Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project Summary

The Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project integrates two key initiatives: the comprehensive review and update of Islands Trust’s Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Manual, and the implementation of the Cityview Bylaw Enforcement Portal software. Together, these initiatives modernize how bylaw compliance is managed, improving consistency, transparency, efficiency, and public understanding.

Purpose

The project aims to ensure that bylaw compliance and enforcement are carried out in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner, aligning with Trust Council’s policy direction and improving service to both the public and staff. The introduction of CityView will streamline workflows, enhance reporting, and support better data-driven decision-making.

Key Components

1. *Policy and Manual Updates* – The updated Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and accompanying Best Practices Manual clarify procedures, define enforcement priorities, and improve fairness and accountability.
2. *Bylaw Enforcement Portal* – Implements digital case tracking, public self-service functions, and real-time reporting capabilities to enhance efficiency and transparency.

Implementation Plan

The implementation will be phased across communication, training, go-live, and monitoring to ensure successful adoption.

Communication & Training

Objective: Ensure all interested parties (internal and external) understand the changes, why they’re happening, and how to apply them effectively.

Internal Communication:

- Prepare a summary of key policy and manual changes and Bylaw Enforcement Portal functions.
- Brief senior leadership and managers to support staff.
- Distribute internal communications (emails, memos, FAQs).
- Introduce changes at a Planning Services professional development day.

Staff Training:

- Develop and deliver updated training materials.
- Provide hands-on practice using new software tools.

External Communication:

- Prepare website updates, social media content, and public FAQs.
- Prepare trustee communication tools, including decision “cheat sheets” and standard site inspection reports.

- Coordinate timing with Trust Council adoption and portal rollout.

Documentation:

- Archive training and communication materials.

Implementation & Monitoring

Objective: Put the new policies and procedures into practice consistently and measure their effectiveness over time.

Go-Live:

- Trust Council Policy Adoption (target: March 2026).
- Bylaw Enforcement Portal go-live (target: April 2026).
- Director of Planning Services and Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement will act as transition leads.
- Ensure updated forms, templates, and software are ready before launch.

Monitoring & Evaluation:

- Assess effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, and communication outcomes.
- Track metrics such as complaint resolution time, staff workload, voluntary compliance, and public inquiries.
- Review after six months and report back to Trust Council (target: September 2026).

Timeline Summary

- September–March 2026 – Policy finalization, internal communication, Bylaw Enforcement Portal configuration.
- January–April 2026 – Staff training and go-live preparation.
- April 2026 – Bylaw Enforcement Portal go-live.
- April–September 2026 – Monitor and report.
- September 2026 onwards – Report semi-annually to Trust Council.

Evaluation Metrics

Key performance measures may include:

- Volume of complaints filed, (how) resolved or appealed.
- Resolution timelines and case types.
- Frequency of repeat or vexatious complaints.
- Frequency of standards of conduct complaints.
- Staff workload and hours per case.
- Travel and enforcement costs.
- Number of public inquiries and web engagement.
- Feedback from staff, public, and Trust Council.

Bylaw Enforcement "Modernization" Project – At a Glance

- Integrates new Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy and Bylaw Portal (Cityview).
- Improves fairness, efficiency, and transparency in enforcement.
- Supports digital transformation and public accessibility.
- Provides training, communication, and monitoring framework.
- Launches in phases through 2025–2026 with Trust Council oversight.
- Evaluation and reporting back to Trust Council in September 2026 and semi-annual therafter.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project

About the Project

Q1. What is the Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project?

The Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project is a Trust Council initiative to improve how Islands Trust handles bylaw complaints, investigations, and enforcement. It updates our Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Manual and introduces a new online Bylaw Enforcement Portal to make the process more efficient, transparent, and accessible for the public.

Q2. Why is Islands Trust changing its bylaw enforcement process?

The previous system relied heavily on manual, paper-based processes and policies that had not been comprehensively updated in many years. The new policy and tools are designed to ensure greater consistency and fairness, clarify enforcement priorities, make it easier for the public to understand and track bylaw issues, and improve timeliness and communication with complainants and property owners.

Changes to Policy and Procedures

Q3. What are the main changes to the bylaw enforcement policy?

The updated policy focuses on voluntary compliance first, clear enforcement criteria, transparency, and fairness and accountability. These principles ensure that enforcement actions are consistent and grounded in procedural fairness.

Q4. How does the new Best Practices Manual fit in?

The Manual provides practical guidance to staff on how to apply the policy in daily work. It includes standardized forms, checklists, flowcharts, templates, and updated procedures to ensure consistency and clarity across all islands.

Online Bylaw Portal

Q5. What is the new Bylaw Enforcement Portal?

The Bylaw Enforcement Portal is a secure online tool that allows the public to submit bylaw complaints, check on case status, and access information more easily. It replaces email- and paper-based submissions.

Q6. What can I do through the online portal?

Through the portal, you can submit complaints online, attach documents or photos, receive confirmation, check complaint status, and access public information about enforcement activities.

Q7. Do I still need to submit a written complaint form?

No. Once the portal is live, the online submission form will replace the paper or email process. Staff will continue to assist anyone who prefers to submit by phone or in writing.

Q8. How will my privacy be protected?

Personal information submitted through the portal will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Complaint details will not be shared publicly or with the property owner except as required by law.

How the Changes Affect You

Q9. Will this change how quickly my complaint is resolved?

The goal is to resolve complaints more efficiently through improved tracking, communication, and consistency. The policy emphasizes early voluntary compliance and clearer follow-up timelines.

Q10. What if I receive a bylaw complaint about my property?

If your property is the subject of a complaint, staff will contact you directly to discuss the issue. The focus will be on working collaboratively to resolve issues before considering enforcement actions.

Q11. Will the process be the same on all islands?

Yes. The updated policy and manual ensure consistent procedures across all local trust areas, with flexibility for local policies where applicable.

Q12. When will these changes take effect?

The new policy and manual are expected to take effect once adopted by Trust Council (target: March 2026). The portal will go live in late April 2026 after staff training.

Transparency and Accountability

Q13. How will Islands Trust measure success?

The Trust will track metrics such as resolution times, number of complaints, levels of voluntary compliance, feedback, and staff workload. Findings will be reported to Trust Council at future meetings and be available to the public.

Q14. Where can I learn more?

Updates and resources will be posted on the Islands Trust website, including policy and manual summaries, a guide for using the Bylaw Enforcement Portal, and contact information for planning services offices.

Last updated: January 5, 2026

Contact: bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca | www.islandstrust.bc.ca

Active Projects Report

Regional Planning Committee

1. *Improve bylaw enforcement policies and procedures to be administratively fair, reasonable and transparent with the aim of restoring public confidence (Strategic Plan Initiative 1.2.3)*	Responsible	Dates
Activity: a. Review and amend Trust Council Policies 5.5.1 & 7.1.2 b. Create a plain language Best Practices Manual	Robert Kojima Stefan Cermak Warren Dingman	Rec'd: 13-Mar-2024 Target: 05-Mar-2026

2. *Update and Implement Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (2022-2032)(Strategic Plan Initiative 2.1.3)*	Responsible	Dates
Activity: a. Independent review and update b. Draft an Implementation Plan c. Freshwater Atlas Update	Stefan Cermak William Shulba	Rec'd: 12-Feb-2020 Target: 10-Sep-2026

3. *Monitor progress of protection of ecosystem health in all land use planning decisions (Strategic Plan Initiative 3.2.4)*	Responsible	Dates
Activity: a. Research and data collection b. Data analysis and integration c. Collaboration	Patricia Woodruff Stefan Cermak	Rec'd: 31-Mar-2025 Target: 31-Mar-2026

Regional Planning Committee

d. Apply/implement pilot monitoring

e. Build capacity and training

Staff Biologist drafting recommendations of how to integrate biological information into planning related decisions - emphasis on species at risk as per grant funding

Future Projects Report

Regional Planning Committee

1. *Review all Trust Council policies, and where appropriate, amend, combine, or rescind (all committees) (Strategic Plan Initiative 1.2.5)*	Responsible	Date Received
Review and report to RPC. All Trust Council policies held by the Director of Planning Services: ·Policy 4.1.4; 4.1.9; 4.1.13; 4.1.14; 4.1.15 (General LTC policies) ·Policy 4.2.2 (APC Operating Policy)* ·Policy 5.3.1; 5.3.2; 5.3.3; 5.3.5 (Community Planning) ·Policy 5.4.1; 5.4.2; 5.4.3; 5.4.4 (Land Use Regulation) ·Policy 5.5.1 (Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement) ·Policy 5.6.1 (Application Processing) ·Policy 5.7.1 (Policy Statement Checklist) ·Policy 5.9.1; 5.9.2 (Best Management Practices and Outer Islands) ·Policy 6.1.1 (First Nations Engagement Principles) * Being lead by Director of Legislative and Information Services while reporting to Governance Committee	Stefan Cermak	31-Mar-2025

2. *Improve processes for prioritizing funding for ongoing OCP reviews (Strategic Plan Initiative 2.2.1)*	Responsible	Date Received
RPC continue to refine prioritization matrix. Matrix reviewed numerous times. Minor project prioritization criteria reviewed by RPC Jan. 2026.	Stefan Cermak	31-Mar-2025

Future Projects Report

Regional Planning Committee

3. *Map Eelgrass and kelp forests (Strategic Plan Initiative 3.3.1)*	Responsible	Date Received
Partner with First Nations' marine divisions and other relevant organizations in the Trust Area toward completing the work. Maintain contact and retrieve data from with consultants (Hatfield) funded by the Canada Space Agency Hatfield to lead the design and development of the Eelgrass Explorer (E2) system for mapping eelgrass in the intertidal areas across the entire British Columbia coast. Expected 10m resolution data available target date: May 2027.	Stefan Cermak	03-Feb-2020

4. *Update OCPs and LUBs to incorporate new Policy Statement polices (Strategic Plan Initiative 2.2.2)*	Responsible	Date Received
	Stefan Cermak	31-Mar-2025

5. *Develop a growth management planning framework that includes data on growth trends and projections, geological and hydrological capacities, infrastructure, and development rates (Strategic Plan Initiative*	Responsible	Date Received
Draft a business case, for phase 1 (initial development), of a multi-year project. Co develop with partners. Develop with a funding strategy (grants, reserve funds, partnerships, etc). Trust Council approved Operational Review. No new projects. Business Case declined.	Stefan Cermak	31-Mar-2025

6. *Update OCPs and LUBs to foster climate change resilience (considering topics such as Coastal Douglas-fir protection, foreshore and nearshore environments, and groundwater) (Strategic Plan Initiative 4.2.3)*	Responsible	Date Received

Regional Planning Committee

Strategic Plan assigned key initiative to: LTCs Biologist drafting materials in relation to issue.	Stefan Cermak	31-Mar-2025