

A.5 THE ISLAND ENVIRONMENT

A.5.1 OBJECTIVES

- A.5.1.1 To recognize the intrinsic value of our ecosystems and that the health of our ecosystems is inextricably linked to human health.
- A.5.1.2 To maintain and improve the quality of the island's natural environment. To give particular attention to the quality of fresh water to sustain healthy fish and wildlife habitat and for human supplies.
- A.5.1.3 To identify and encourage protection of those parts of the island that are especially sensitive to development, including those *Environmentally Sensitive Areas* shown on Maps 9 through 12.
- A.5.1.4 To protect areas of high biodiversity. To recognize and protect the island's native plant, animal and bird life. To give particular attention to the streams, wetlands and shorelines of Salt Spring Island.
- A.5.1.5 To identify and encourage the creation of a network of protected areas that preserve representative ecosystems.
- A.5.1.6 To encourage *sustainable* land use practices and adopt best management practices.
- A.5.1.7 To secure at least 30% of the island land base for *conservation*. To develop a Community Greenways system of private and public greenways, some of which may also be associated with the island's trail network.
- A.5.1.8 To integrate the spirit and intent of federal and provincial environmental legislation and the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and the *Farm Practices Protection ("Right to Farm") Act* into local environmental policies and bylaws.
- A.5.1.9 To support and participate in the implementation of the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy prepared by the Capital Regional District.

A.5.2 POLICIES

- A.5.2.1 The Local Trust Committee will promote public education and the encouragement of private stewardship to achieve the objectives of this section. The Committee should make information about the natural environment widely available and continue to provide assistance and encouragement to those who protect it through mechanisms such as private covenants.
- A.5.2.2 The Local Trust Committee should consider rezoning applications from property owners who wish to transfer their development potential from areas identified as *Environmentally Sensitive Areas* or *High Biodiversity Areas* on Maps 9 through 12. Additional *Environmentally Sensitive Areas* or *High Biodiversity Areas* could be identified by further study. Such specific areas should be considered "Development Potential Donor Areas", even if they are in a Designation that is identified as a Development Potential Receiving Area. Applications should meet the guidelines in Appendix 4.

Background Note: Transfer of development potential from community water supply watersheds is also encouraged in Section B.8.1.
- A.5.2.3 The protection of *Environmentally Sensitive Areas* or *High Biodiversity Areas* is an eligible community amenity, which could be exchanged for a higher density of development as outlined in Appendix 3.

- A.5.2.4 Maps 9 through 12 are intended to encourage environmental stewardship. These maps show general areas that could be considered Environmentally Sensitive and *High Biodiversity Areas*. If the Local Trust Committee receives a rezoning application to transfer development or to protect an *Environmentally Sensitive Area* or a *High Biodiversity Area* in exchange for additional density, further study could more clearly identify boundaries.
- A.5.2.5 The Local Trust Committee should not make zoning changes that would result in more development or greater impacts on areas identified as Environmentally Sensitive.
- A.5.2.6 The Local Trust Committee may work with the Capital Regional District to develop property tax exemptions as an incentive for the protection of riparian habitat should this be considered feasible.
- A.5.2.7 The Local Trust Committee should continue to enter into agreements with the Trust Fund Board outlining the ways in which the parties will cooperate and consult about *conservation* land acquisitions on Salt Spring Island.
- A.5.2.8 The Local Trust Committee will encourage protection of Crown foreshore, wetland, stream and riparian corridor habitats, other sensitive ecosystems, and wildlife habitat through the development permit process:
- a. The Local Trust Committee will update watercourse mapping and development permit area designations and guidelines to comply with provincial Riparian Area Regulations-
 - b. The Local Trust Committee will undertake updated sensitive ecosystem mapping and should designate sensitive areas as development permit areas for protection of the natural environment.
 - c. The Local Trust Committee will support efforts to map the locations of heron and raptor nests and will review regulations and standards for a protective buffer. The Local Trust Committee should designate development permit areas for the protection of sensitive nest trees.
 - d. The Local Trust Committee will support efforts to map the habitat of threatened or endangered species and will consider designating development permit areas for the protection of such habitat.
- A.5.2.9 The Local Trust Committee will continue to use Development Permit Area designations for protection of the natural environment to protect watersheds used for community surface water supplies or within the capture zone of community water supply wells. Zoning changes should not be made so that more development would be located in these areas. Development permit area guidelines should encourage subdivision layouts that avoid impacts on these areas. Stewardship on the part of property owners and other agencies will also be encouraged.
- A.5.2.10 The Local Trust Committee should develop improved methods of determining and assessing environmental impacts and encouraging protection of the natural environment when it is processing land use applications and referrals. The Local Trust Committee should obtain comprehensive development approval information as designated and specified in s. G.1.4.
- A.5.2.11 The Local Trust Committee should provide advice and education to the public about environmental issues and should continue to encourage and promote private stewardship. The Committee should retain the Environmental Advisory Committee to provide assistance in these initiatives. The Local Trust Committee should also support and seek advice and input from other non-governmental organizations which support the Object of the Islands Trust and the objectives of this Plan.
- A.5.2.12 The Local Trust Committee encourages landowners and others to avoid the use of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides. If used, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides should be applied in a manner that avoids damage to adjoining lands and drainage areas.

A.5.2.13 The Local Trust Committee encourages landowners and others to utilize current best practices and guidelines in undertaking an ecosystem-based approach to site planning and development. An example is the guidelines in the manual *Develop With Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia, 2006*, prepared by the B.C Ministry of Environment. Landowners and developers are encouraged to utilize the following principles in new development:

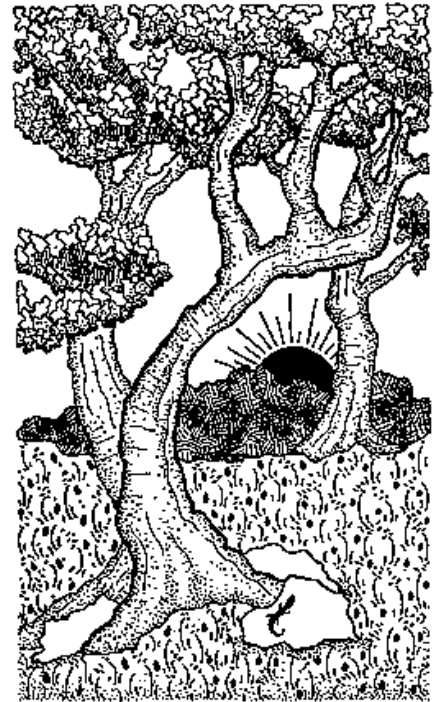
- a. identify environmental values prior to site clearing and design.
- b. locate development away from areas with high environmental values, and place natural buffers between the development site and sensitive features.
- c. concentrate development in areas with low environmental values.
- d. develop and implement site plans that protect biodiversity, clean air, and clean water.
- e. locate developments away from areas that may be subject to erosion, flooding, wildfires, and wildlife conflicts.
- f. locate developments away from areas of agricultural potential and establish buffers between the development site and farmland.
- g. minimize impacts of roads and driveways and reduce fragmentation of habitat.
- h. maintain water quality.
- i. maintain air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- j. design energy- and water-efficient developments that conserve natural resources.
- k. minimize wastes, and manage wastes in an environmentally sound manner.
- l. work with the local community to maximize the benefits of good environmental planning at the community and site level.

The Local Trust Committee should continue to ensure that these principles are reflected in its regulations and development permit area guidelines.

A.5.2.14 The Local Trust Committee should retain existing regulations to control, surface run-off and to manage stormwater. The LTC should consider adopting regulations to manage soil removal and deposit in order to protect productive or sensitive soils, wetlands, *environmentally sensitive areas*, and residential neighbourhoods.

A.5.2.15 The Local Trust Committee should develop ways to encourage *sustainable building* techniques through support for implementation of energy efficient *building* design and *building* practices as demonstrated through recognized *building* certification programs such as R-2000, BuiltGreen Platinum, and LEED.

A.5.2.16 The Local Trust Committee should develop policies and strategies, in cooperation with the Trust Fund Board, to link the community's parklands, *conservation* lands and other open space into a network of protected areas. The development of community greenways that serve both a recreational and *conservation* function should be encouraged.



GARRY OAK MEADOW artwork: B. Curran

- A.5.2.17 The Local Trust Committee will recognize the needs of the local farming community, the *Farm Practices Protection ("Right to Farm") Act*, the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and regulations, and the recommendations of the Area Farm Plan when developing policies or bylaws about environmental protection. The Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Ministry of Environment will be consulted as part of this process to develop mutually acceptable management solutions which protect sensitive environments but do not prohibit or unreasonably restrict farming.
- A.5.2.18 The Local Trust Committee should support efforts to restore and enhance *environmentally sensitive areas* and habitat, including the restoration of streams and other watercourses that have been modified (culverted, ditched, diverted, etc.).
- A.5.2.19 When the Local Trust Committee considers rezoning applications, particularly those in the Ganges Village Area, it should discuss with the Capital Regional District what measures could be taken, or local infrastructure required, to maximize the potential environmental benefits that might result from the project, such as the use of reclaimed waste water or waste energy.

Others are encouraged to help achieve the objectives this Section as follows:

- A.5.2.20 Members of the local community are encouraged to continue individual actions that protect and sustain the natural environment and rural character. Protection of *Environmentally Sensitive Areas* such as those shown on Maps 9 through 12 is particularly encouraged.
- A.5.2.21 Owners and occupiers of property are encouraged to maintain an undisturbed buffer around any tree that bears the nest of a bald eagle, osprey, peregrine falcon or great blue heron. Maintenance of an undisturbed buffer between such trees and the sea is also encouraged. The community is also encouraged to respect seasonal buffers around all native nesting birds. With the assistance of the Environmental Advisory Committee and other non-governmental organizations, the Local Trust Committee will distribute information about the appropriate extent of buffers for different species and during different seasons and will support efforts to map the location of nest trees.

Background Note: Under the B.C. Wildlife Act, it is an offence to disturb or destroy the nest of an eagle, peregrine falcon, gyrfalcon, osprey, heron or burrowing owl, or the nest of any bird when the nest is occupied by a bird or its egg.
- A.5.2.22 Landowners are encouraged to participate in tax incentive programs for the protection of sensitive parts of the environment.
- A.5.2.23 The Capital Regional District is supported in the ongoing development of its regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy.
- A.5.2.24 The Capital Regional District and other agencies are urged to continue supporting and encouraging alternate *building* construction and waste management techniques that conserve water and energy or sustain the environment.
- A.5.2.25 The Local Trust Committee should identify ways of monitoring community *sustainability* (for example by identifying "*sustainability* indicators"). Results could be used when amending this Plan or other policies and bylaws.
- A.5.2.26 Senior levels of government are encouraged to develop policies to protect the island from all types of petroleum and chemical pollution of ground and surface water and from air pollution from local and off-island sources.
- A.5.2.27 All levels of government and other agencies are encouraged to take stronger action to protect our parks, roadsides and utility corridors from invasive plant species.