



Islands Trust

# FACT SHEET

## RIPARIAN AREAS DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

### AREA 1

#### *What is the Riparian Areas Development Permit Area (DPA 1)?*

British Columbia's *Local Government Act* enables communities to designate parts of their planning area as Development Permit Areas (DPAs) so they can set objectives and guidelines for development within those areas. The [Galiano Island Official Community Plan](#) (OCP) designates seven DPAs generally designed to protect sensitive ecosystems or to guide development in areas with special circumstances. Depending on the particular Development Permit Area and its exemptions, the requirement to obtain a Development Permit may be triggered by any building construction, demolition, land alteration, or subdivision of land that occurs in the DPA.

The Riparian Areas DPA was adopted by the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) in order to implement the provincial [Riparian Areas Regulation](#). Riparian areas occur adjacent to lakes, streams, and wetlands where the vegetation and landscape have the potential to directly impact on fish habitat. The purpose of the Riparian Areas DPA is to guide development in a manner that prevents loss or degradation of these sensitive habitats and that protects aquatic wildlife.

#### *Why are riparian areas important?*

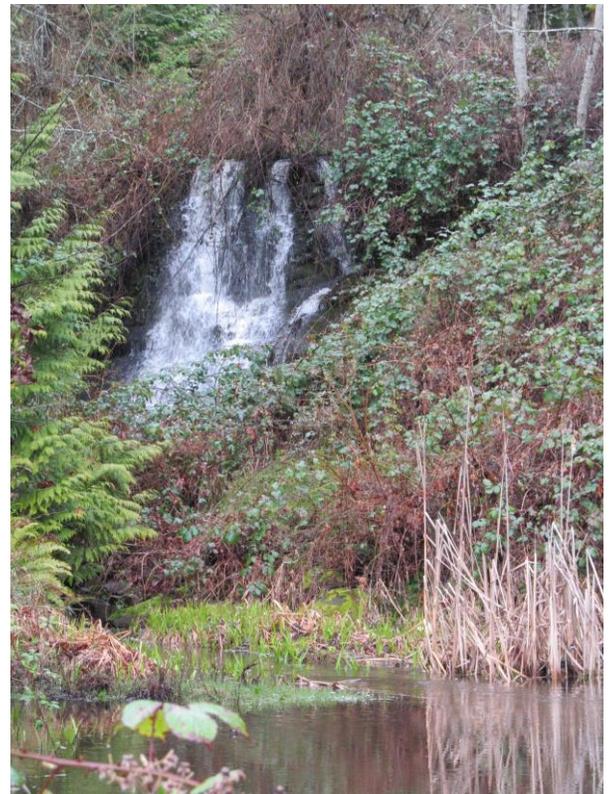
Riparian areas are distinct and unique habitats that are vital in the natural maintenance of stream health and productivity. Some of the features and functions of riparian areas include:

- Sources of large organic debris, such as fallen trees and tree roots
- Areas for stream channel migration
- Vegetative cover to help moderate water temperature
- Provision of food, nutrients and organic matter to the stream
- Stream bank stabilization
- Buffers for streams from excessive silt and surface runoff pollution

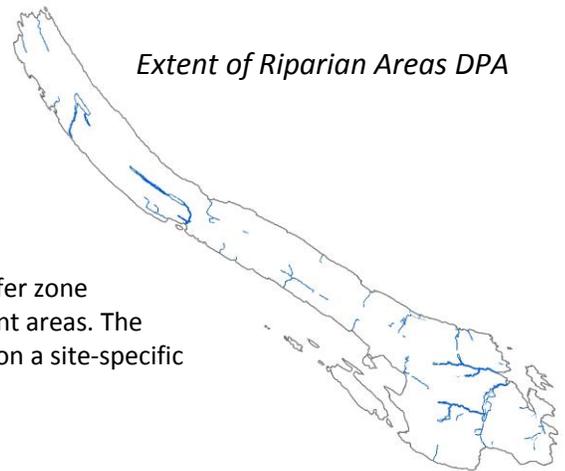
These features and functions are essential to create habitat supportive of fish life processes. Furthermore, many of the lakes, streams and wetlands on Galiano Island are an important source of drinking water for the community. Regulating development in riparian areas helps to protect biodiversity and aquatic habitat, maintains water quality, and helps to retain wildlife corridors.

#### *How do I know whether my land is affected by the DPA?*

Approximately 189 hectares of land on Galiano Island are designated within the Riparian Areas DPA, accounting for about 3.1% of the total land area.



All land designated in Schedule F of the [Official Community Plan](#) is included within the DPA. Islands Trust mapping of the DPA identifies riparian assessment areas as defined in the Riparian Areas Regulation, which includes any watercourse, stream, wetland, lake, or other water body that provides fish habitat and an associated landward “buffer zone”. In general, the buffer consists of a 30 metre strip on all sides of the water body measured from the high water mark.



The DPA also includes the surface area of the water body and a 15 metre buffer zone for those water courses and water bodies not identified as riparian assessment areas. The actual location of the streams and water bodies may need to be determined on a site-specific basis by a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) or a surveyor.

### *When do I need a development permit?*

Any landowner who has property that is located within the DPA may be required to obtain a development permit from the Local Trust Committee before undertaking any construction, demolition, alteration of land or structures, or subdivision of land.

The regular maintenance of existing buildings and landscaping does not require a development permit; other exemptions are listed in the OCP. In addition to exempted activities, a development permit is not required for buildings or development located within a DPA that were present prior to approval of the bylaw, or for development outside the boundaries of a DPA.

### *How do I obtain a development permit?*

Islands Trust planning staff can give you advice on the application process and options for developing your property. If you do need to apply for a permit, you will be required to complete an [application](#) and submit the application fee. Additionally, you may be required to hire a Qualified Environmental Professional (e.g. biologist, environmental technician) to produce an assessment report. In the assessment, the QEP provides their opinion about the potential of the development to affect fish habitat, and may recommend mitigation or enhancement measures.

Once a complete application is submitted, it typically takes 4 to 8 weeks to process an application. Staff will review your application, plans and any professional reports in relation to the DPA guidelines in the OCP, and make a recommendation to the LTC. The LTC will then consider issuance of the permit at a regular meeting. There is no public hearing or notification for a development permit application.

While a Development Permit cannot preclude permitted development, it can include conditions consistent with the DPA guidelines, such as attaching specific plans or requiring mitigation measures. Depending on the development, additional permits (e.g. a building permit) may be required as well.

General information about the development permit application process can be found on the [Islands Trust website](#).

### *How do I get more information?*

To determine whether your land is subject to the Riparian Areas DPA, consult the Galiano Island Official Community Plan. Copies of the OCP are available from Islands Trust offices in Victoria, and online at [www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/galiano](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/galiano). You can also contact planning staff directly at 250-405-5151 or toll-free through Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867.