



Islands Trust

FACT SHEET

ELEVATED GROUNDWATER CATCHMENT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA 4

What is the Elevated Groundwater Catchment Development Permit Area (DPA 4)?

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.

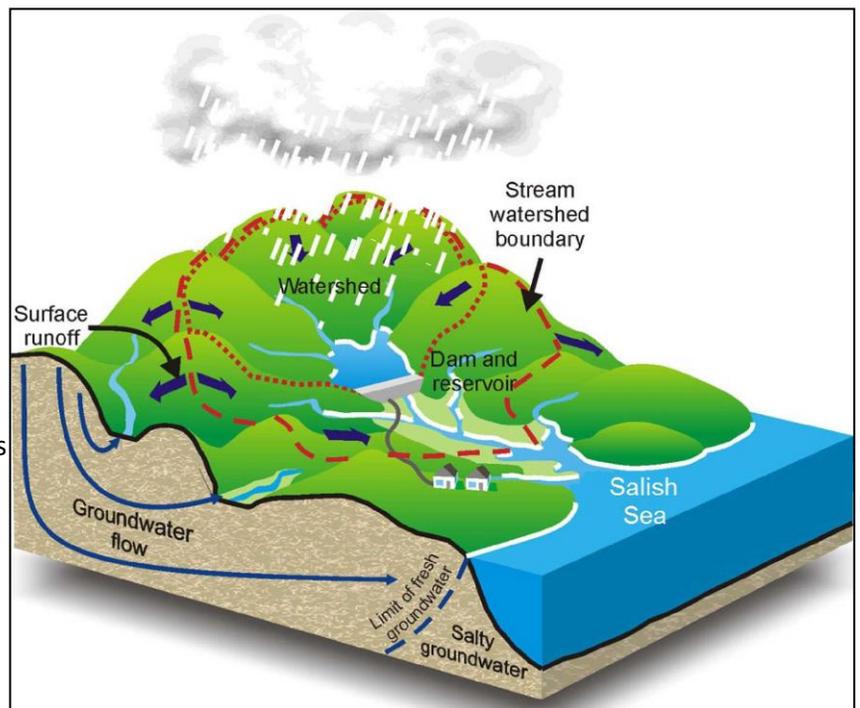
The Elevated Groundwater Catchment DPA was adopted by the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) in 2000 in order to guide development within areas identified as groundwater recharge areas for downslope groundwater regions. Only those portions of the catchment areas having shallow soils and being particularly sensitive to development for that reason are included in the development permit area.

Why are groundwater recharge areas important?

In addition to providing potable water for Island residents through private wells and a water supply for local farms and businesses, groundwater plays an important role in maintaining base flows in streams, which are critical in providing wildlife habitat and maintaining fish spawning areas and wetlands. There are a number of issues that impact the quality and quantity of groundwater such as:

- saline intrusion
- land use impacts (i.e. types and amount of uses)
- well interference
- surface contamination
- liquid waste (i.e. septic system)
- natural conditions such as topography, recharge rates, soils, vegetation cover, and geology
- seasonal water shortages
- climate change

The protection of existing groundwater supplies is significantly easier than finding alternative water sources on the island. As the island continues to develop, the protection of a safe adequate water source will become increasingly important.



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

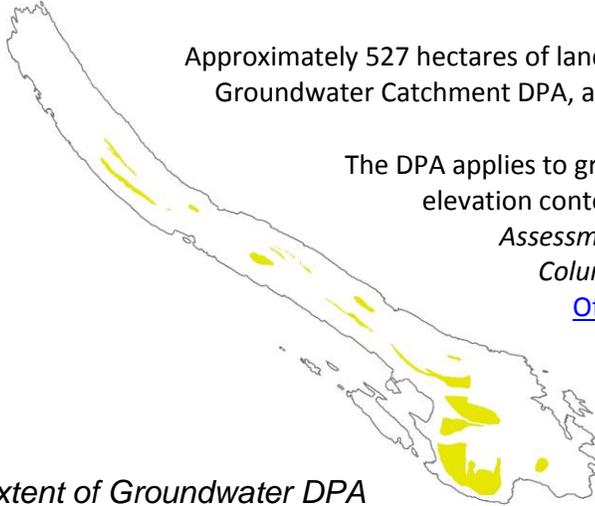
Approximately 527 hectares of land on Galiano Island are designated within the Elevated Groundwater Catchment DPA, accounting for about 8.8% of the total land area.

The DPA applies to groundwater catchment areas on Galiano Island above the 140 meter elevation contours as identified and mapped in a 1998 B.C. Environment Study, *Assessment of Groundwater Availability and Quality, Galiano Island, British Columbia*. The affected properties are shown in Schedule G of the [Official Community Plan](#).

When do I need a development permit?

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

Extent of Groundwater DPA



The regular maintenance of existing buildings and landscaping, as well as any development that takes place outside of the boundaries of the DPA, does not require a Development Permit. Other exemptions allow a range of land uses or modifications that are unlikely to impact groundwater recharge, that are required for reasons of health and safety, or that are subject to other land use regulations (e.g. farms, forest management, conservation covenants).

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 hydro-geologist or engineer to produce a professional report. In the report, the qualified professional provides their opinion about the potential of the development to affect the quality or quantity of groundwater in the local groundwater region, and may recommend mitigation or monitoring 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 Elevated Groundwater Catchment 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. You can also contact planning staff directly at 250-405-5151 or toll-free through Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867.