



News Release

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Islands Trust urges islanders and visitors to follow BC Public Health Officer guidance Let's respect travel advisories and look forward to a brighter 2021

Lək'wəḡən, METULIYE/Victoria, B.C. – With British Columbia, and the world, facing alarming growth in COVID-19 cases, provincial leaders have once again advised against non-essential travel and required everyone to minimize community interactions, even close to home.

As we draw near to December celebrations, the Islands Trust Executive Committee reminds people to be as thoughtful and mindful of the safety of others as they were in early spring, to continue physical distancing, and to resist the temptation to invite or respond to invitations from friends and family.

"We need to work together and avoid non-essential travel. No one should be hosting gatherings with people outside of their core bubble or household," said Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. "On the Gulf and Howe Sound islands, medical resources are non-existent or limited. Often it is volunteers who offer first response. As we know, the majority of our island residents are elderly and more vulnerable to the risks of this terrible virus."

By order and direction of the Provincial Health Officer, all events and social gatherings are suspended to significantly reduce COVID-19 transmission related to social interactions and travel. The order is in effect until January 8, 2021 at midnight. BC Ferries is also advising the public to avoid all non-essential travel. For those who think they may have 'essential travel' needs, kindly review the definition of essential travel and the safety precautions listed here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/restrictions#travel-precautions>

"Thank you for staying close to home, and encouraging your loved ones to do the same," offered Chair Luckham. "It's hard to make this choice during the holiday season when we long to be close to others, but with consideration for community safety front and centre we can come out the other side of this winter healthy and whole. The day will soon come when island communities can again warmly welcome visitors to the Gulf and Howe Sound Islands. Today is not that day."

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Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea

Bowen, Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Hornby, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis

The Islands Trust is a federation of special-purpose local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and another 10,000 non-resident property owners. The Islands Trust Area is located within Coast Salish territory and is the homeland to over 28,000 Coast Salish Peoples who have called this place home since time immemorial. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the Islands Trust Area's unique environment and amenities by planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5,200 square kilometres.

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