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Islands Trust seeks input on its proposed 2021/22 budget

Lək'wəḡən, METULIYE/Victoria, B.C. – Islands Trust Council welcomes public comments on its proposed 2021/22 budget, through Sunday, February 7.

The proposed operating budget for 2021/22 (\$8,838,460) assumes that the Islands Trust will maintain existing service levels, implement a new species-at-risk program, develop heritage preservation overlay maps, and implement the following climate-action initiatives from [Trust Council's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan](#):

- Stewardship education program
- Islands Trust Policy Statement update with engagement from First Nations, the public, and referral agencies
- Secretariat program which gives administrative support to regional coordination groups
- Climate change indicator development, specific to the Trust Area
- Technology investments for online streaming of Islands Trust in-person public meetings to foster transparency and public engagement
- Mapping the extent of eelgrass beds throughout the Trust Area
- Completion of the first phase of a freshwater sustainability strategy
- Groundwater mapping completion and development of water budgets for groundwater aquifers in the Trust Area
- Development of model bylaws for local trust committees/Bowen Island Municipality that address groundwater use, rainwater catchment, and greywater recycling to promote freshwater sustainability
- Development of model bylaws for local trust committees/Bowen Island Municipality that exchange bonus density for affordable housing
- Development of model development permit areas for local trust committees/Bowen Island Municipality to protect Coastal Douglas-fir and associated ecosystems throughout the Trust Area

Trust Council will continue to implement its Reconciliation Action Plan.

“This past year has been difficult for everyone in B.C. and that includes Islands Trust,” said Peter Luckham, Islands Trust Council Chair. “The draft 2021/22 Budget captures what we have learned about operating during a pandemic, allows for some in-person meetings later in the year, and also reflects that we are full-steam ahead on strategic work at this mid-point of the term. We hope the public will participate in our budget consultation by completing our online survey, sending us an email, or presenting to Trust Council to let us know how they feel about what we’re proposing.”

Highlights of the proposed 2021/22 budget:

- 3.26% (\$221,130) projected tax increase overall for the Islands Trust Area (other than Bowen Island Municipality), plus 0.87% (\$59,013) in new tax funds from new development and construction
- 4.78% (\$14,496) projected tax levy increase to Bowen Island Municipality, of which 1.1% (\$3,273) will be generated from new development and construction

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

- 4.6% (\$407,000) of overall budget funded by approved grant funding
- 9.2% (\$741,890) increase in total operating expenditures (including expenditures covered by grant funding), of which:
 - 4.87% (\$394,803) represents an increase in salaries and benefits costs due mainly to four new staff positions (a full-time bylaw enforcement officer, a temporary part-time bylaw communications officer, and two grant-funded positions to support a new Conservancy species-at-risk program) and staff wage increases per union agreements/BC Public Service policies which includes a 2.0% wage increase for all union staff and an up-to 1.5% effective wage increase for excluded staff.
 - 0.1% relates an increase of 1.2% to trustee base remuneration. [Learn more.](#)
 - 2.0% (\$163,500) represents an increase in Local Trust Committee project spending mainly associated with work in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area.
 - 1.0% (\$75,000) relates to an increase in amortization expense.
 - 0.8% (\$62,350) relates to an increase in spending associated with Strategic Plan and Trust Council-directed projects.
 - 0.7% (\$53,615) relates to rising insurance and legal costs.
- 66.3% (\$65,400) reduction in spending for capital assets
- \$602,000 draw from accumulated surplus funds to pay for:
 - Climate-focused and other Strategic Plan projects (\$288,000),
 - Local trust committee projects (\$159,000),
 - Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee freshwater projects (\$80,000), and
 - A Council-directed review of Islands Trust governance, management, and operations (\$75,000)

The public is invited to complete a Budget 2021/22 online survey, send input via email, or present to Trust Council in March. The budget details and ways to comment, including a link to the online survey, are available at www.islandstrust.bc.ca/budget. Questions can be directed to budget@islandstrust.bc.ca or 250.405.5151. **This public survey is open from January 22 to February 7, 2021.** Trust Council will approve the final budget at its quarterly meeting, March 9-11 via Zoom Video Webinar.

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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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