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June 15, 2022

File No.: 5390-20-Invasive Species/Fallow Deer

Via Email: [AGR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AGR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Honourable Lana Popham  
Minister of Agriculture and Food  
PO Box 9043 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

**Re: Request for provincial action to invasive fallow deer in Southern Gulf Islands**

Dear Minister Popham:

I am writing on behalf of the Islands Trust Council to draw your attention to the serious issue of fallow deer on Mayne Island.

The issue of fallow deer in the Islands Trust Area, in particular on Mayne Island, was brought to Islands Trust Council's March 8-10, 2022, [agenda](#) (pp 759-791) via correspondence from the Mayne Island Conservancy Society (MICS) sent to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. These invasive, introduced deer were brought to the island via a fallow deer farm that operated in the 1980s and 1990s. In the early 1990s fallow deer escaped from the farm and the population has increased since that time.

Fallow deer are having a significant impact on Mayne Island, including:

- Reduction of forest understorey and suppression of forest regeneration;
- Reduction of songbird habitat, resulting in reduced songbird populations;
- Damage to local farm crops and resulting in increased farming costs due to the damage and the need for infrastructure to prevent farm damage;
- Impacts to personal property through damage to gardens and the natural habitat; and,
- Increased safety hazards due to deer/vehicle collisions.

The fallow deer farm ceased operation in 2006. Since that time the fallow deer population has grown – and current population estimates range between 1000 and 3000 – and is now spreading to other islands.

The Islands Trust mandate is to preserve and protect the Islands Trust Area for the benefit of residents and the Province generally in cooperation with other agencies - Provincial leadership is needed and overdue to address the fallow deer problem on Mayne Island to help us carry out our Provincial mandate.

This long standing issue began with a farm that was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture. Various levels of government and community organizations have attempted to find solutions; however, the deer play the long game as they continue to strip the islands of ecosystem integrity and cause problems for other agricultural programs on the island.

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Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis

There is a need for provincial commitment to address the problem of fallow deer, especially as we now see fallow deer on islands beyond Mayne and Sidney Islands. We have learned that understanding the social context of all affected communities is important to the success of deer management programs. To this end, we recommend that the Ministry:

- 1) Lead the Mayne Island community in a project to inform fallow deer management through better understanding of the social context of the introduced fallow deer issue.
- 2) Fund First Nations involvement in any project related to fallow deer on Mayne Island.

Thank-you for your consideration of this matter.

Yours truly,



Peter Luckham

Chair, Islands Trust Council  
[pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Cc:

The Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Mayne Island Conservancy Society  
MLA Adam Olsen  
Cowichan Tribes  
Halalt First Nation  
Ts'uubaa-asatx (Lake Cowichan) First Nation  
Lyackson First Nation  
MÁLEXEL (Malahat) First Nation  
BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin) First Nation  
Penelakut Tribe  
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation  
Snuneymuxw First Nation  
Stz'uminus (Chemainus) First Nation  
WJOLELP (Tsartlip) First Nation  
SĀAUTW (Tsawout) First Nation  
sc̓awaθ̓an məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nation  
WSIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation  
WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council  
Islands Trust Council  
Islands Trust website  
Islands Trust Conservancy

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