

NEWS RELEASE

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Islands Trust Seeks Input on its Draft 2020/21 Budget Islands Trust focused on funding climate action

Lekwungen, METULIYE/Victoria, BC - The Islands Trust Council welcomes public comments on its draft 2020/21 budget, until February 9.

The proposed budget for 2020/21 of \$8,180,478 is based on the assumption the Islands Trust will maintain existing service levels and implement the following Islands Trust Council Strategic Plan climate-action initiatives:

- map the extent of eelgrass throughout the Trust Area
- develop a regional freshwater strategy
- review foreshore policies and bylaws, and develop a model policy
- develop climate change, demographic, and environmental indicator data sets
- test and develop the potential to broadcast public meetings
- develop and implement a climate change-focused stewardship education program
- continue the Policy Statement Amendment Project, which includes consideration of climate change related policies
- continue Coastal Douglas-fir protection by some local trust committees as part of their climate action mitigation work

“For the past 45 years, the Islands Trust’s day-to-day work has been about preserving and protecting the fragile ecosystems of the Islands Trust Area,” said Peter Luckham, Chair, Islands Trust Council. “Last year, we joined governments around the world in declaring a climate emergency. With this budget, the intention is to expand our climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. 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.”

Compared to last year, the budget takes into account:

- 3% increase in total expenditures from the 2019/20 budget
- 1.5% projected overall tax increase for the Islands Trust Area (other than Bowen Island Municipality)

- 2.7% projected increase in Bowen Island Municipal tax levy
- \$383,650 draw from the surplus funds to balance the budget
- climate actions funded through regular operations and program funding
- Trust Council's Reconciliation Action Plan, funded through regular operations and program funding, in support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- wage increases per union agreements and Public Service policies:
 - 2.0% wage increase for all union staff per the British Columbia Government Employees Union (BCGEU) Collective Agreement and a \$62,000 increase to the staff overtime budget to reflect changes in the Collective Agreement
 - an estimated up to 3.75% wage increase for excluded staff per the Public Service Agency Management Classification and Compensation Framework Rules
 - 2.0% increase to trustee base remuneration

The public is invited to complete a Budget 2020/21 online survey, send input by email or present to Trust Council. The details about the budget proposal and methods for providing input, including a link to the online survey, are available at www.islandstrust.bc.ca/budget.

The deadline for Budget 2020/21 surveys and public comments is February 9, 2020. Trust Council will approve the final budget at its quarterly meeting, March 10-12, on Salt Spring Island.

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The Islands Trust is a federation of 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 unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, co-operation 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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