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Islands Trust Releases *What We Heard Islands 2050: The Future of the Trust Area* report

Lekwungen, METULIYE/Victoria, BC— In fall 2019, Islands Trust launched an extensive public engagement process to inform planning and policy for the next 30 years.

The Trust has released the *What We Heard Islands 2050: The Future of the Trust Area* report as a summary of the public's input. The report captures the ideas and thoughts of more than a thousand people from across the islands and their responses to the questions:

- What do you value about the Trust Area?
- In the context of a changing climate, what concerns do you have for the next 30 years?
- What opportunities do you see to preserve and protect the Trust Area?

Several strong themes emerged through the engagement process. Most participants expressed that they value having a connection to nature on the islands and support the Islands Trust's preserve and protect mandate. Participants shared that their strongest climate change concerns are related to ecosystem change and related impacts to freshwater and the ocean. Participants consistently expressed concern that government agencies and communities are not doing enough to protect the islands. Participants' responses to the question about opportunities to preserve and protect revealed a broad range of ideas that are summarized into 17 themes in the report. Top opportunities included a focus on policy and planning; alternative lifestyles; economics and employment; and culture heritage, and reconciliation.

The Islands 2050 public engagement involved:

- 24 events across the Trust Area
- 557 people in attendance at open houses and information booths
- 789 participants providing input online
- 132 discussions with people viewing the Islands 2050 display on the ferries

Islands Trust has also been engaging with First Nation governments in a parallel consultation process.

Findings of the Islands 2050 engagement process will help the Islands Trust update the Policy Statement, the foundational document that guides the preserve and protect mandate of this special-purpose government. The document guides policy decisions about island lands and the waters surrounding them. It includes recommendations to other levels of government and informs how local official community plans (OCPs) and land use bylaws are created.

"In the 26 years since the Policy Statement was last reviewed, the world has changed and our priorities have shifted," shared Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. "As we consider updating and strengthening the Islands Trust's policies that guide and limit development in the Gulf and Howe Sound Islands it is invaluable that so many community members told us about their values and concerns, and provided us with thoughtful advice. We heard clearly that what mattered 26 years ago still matters, but we need to adjust our Policy Statement to reflect our new reality and to ensure that decisions are made in a manner that respects the United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples. We are currently in the process of engaging with First Nations in the Trust Area and will be seeking further public input in fall 2020 on policy options to strengthen and broaden how the Islands Trust preserves and protects the islands and waters of the Salish Sea".

To read the *What We Heard Islands 2050: The Future of the Trust Area* report, visit the Islands Trust [website](#).

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The Islands Trust works to preserve and protect over 450 islands in the Salish Sea through land use planning, the Islands Trust Conservancy, and Trust Council programs and services. The Trust Area, located within Coast Salish territory, is the homeland of over 28,000 Coast Salish Peoples who have called this area home since time immemorial. Covering 5,200 square kilometres between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island, the Trust Area has 26,000 residents and 10,000 non-resident property owners. The region features many archaeological and culturally significant sites, and some of the world's most endangered ecosystems.

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