



WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT CANADA'S ISLANDS IN THE SALISH SEA

THE ISLANDS TRUST CONSERVANCY'S
PLAN FOR CONSERVATION 2018-2027





ISLANDS IN THE SALISH SEA

The Islands Trust Area includes an archipelago of more than 450 islands and islets (shown in blue). These “islands in the Salish Sea” are home to more than 26,000 people. Residents and visitors alike enjoy the region’s calm waters and gentle climate, which also provide sanctuary to a rich diversity of wildlife.

The **Islands Trust Conservancy** was established in 1990 to help preserve and protect lands and waters in this area. Our vision for this area is a vibrant tapestry of human history and ecology, where people live and work in harmony with the natural world and join together to ensure the protection of large natural areas and important wildlife habitat.

The Islands Trust Conservancy recognizes that our work takes place within the asserted traditional territories of numerous First Nations.

A PLACE OF NOURISHMENT AND KNOWLEDGE

First Nations have lived along the Pacific Northwest Coast since time immemorial.

For local First Nations, the earth is a place of nourishment and knowledge, providing gifts of food, shelter, clothing and medicine. The islands' abundance of plants and animals—such as ducks, shellfish, salmon, herring, berries and cedar—made it an excellent place to hunt, fish and gather plants. Local First Nations peoples also cultivated the land and waters, using sophisticated techniques to create food-producing clam gardens and fire to create open Garry oak meadows with abundant camas bulbs.

Many different First Nations peoples stayed on the islands for some or all of the year, and this was a place of great linguistic diversity.

The impacts of European settlement - intended and unintended - devastated the way of life for local First Nations people. Epidemics of diseases wiped out a significant percent of the Indigenous population, and the impacts of the 1876 *Indian Act* further segregated those who survived from their lands, culture and traditions.

Today, steps are being taken towards greater awareness and respect of First Nations interests in the island region—both past and present. The Islands Trust Conservancy, like many other agencies, is working to better engage with local First Nations and is seeking opportunities to integrate traditional knowledge, identify and protect culturally significant species, improve stewardship of cultural and natural heritage, and appropriately recognize Aboriginal Rights and Title, and Treaty rights.



Above Camas flowers

Below A clam garden, created by terracing a rocky beach to create new clam habitat

Photo: John Harper, SFU

Bottom A Garry oak meadow



RARE AND SPECIAL PLACES...

The Islands Trust Area is a special place, in part because of its rich—and globally significant—biodiversity.

Towering Douglas-fir forests shield understorey plants such as salal and huckleberry. Open areas feature delicate Garry oak meadows, awash with colour in early spring. Rocky outcrops harbour fragile mosses, lichens and habitat for butterflies.

Iconic species such as Blue Grouse, River Otter, Northern Pacific Tree Frog, Bald Eagles and Black-tailed Deer make their homes here. Two million migrating waterfowl from more than 20 countries find shelter in the islands. Over 180 species of fish inhabit the waters of the region, providing food for whales, porpoises, seals and sea lions.

Island beaches are spawning grounds for small forage fish such as smelt and sand lance that form an essential part of the diet of whales, seals, salmon and marine birds. Mussels, clams and crabs thrive in the intertidal zone. In the water, eelgrass beds provide food and shelter for a myriad of marine species, while the antics of Humpback, Killer Whales and Pacific White-sided Dolphins hint at their world below.

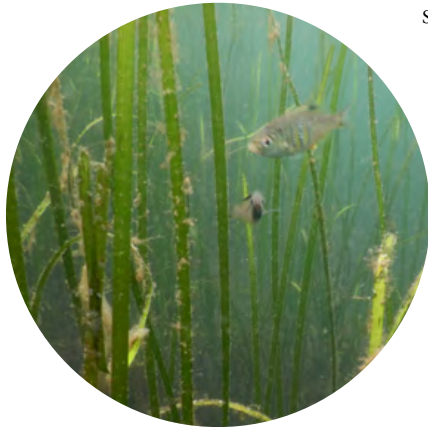


Above In Canada, the only remaining breeding population of the Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly is found on Denman Island

Photo: J Balke

Below Over 80 percent of commercial fish and shellfish species depend on eelgrass habitat at some point in their lifecycle

Bottom Steller Sea Lions, South Winchelsea Island Conservation Covenant



...AT RISK OF DISAPPEARING

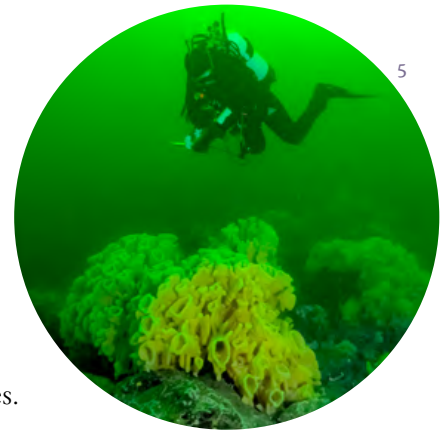
This beauty is fragile.

The Islands Trust Area has many sensitive ecosystems that are easily affected by human activities but essential for the survival of many of the island species. More than 300 species at risk are found here, including the Sharp-tailed Snake, fragrant popcorn flower, phantom orchid and Peregrine Falcon. “At risk” means at risk of losing them forever, at least from this region.

Marine species such as the Southern Resident Killer Whale (with a population reduced to just 76 individuals in 2017) and rockfish are also at historically low levels of abundance.

The pressure to develop and change the natural landscape for housing, agriculture and roads is high. Less than 1% of old growth forests remain in the Islands Trust Area. Changing climates add further pressure—longer summer droughts stress and weaken trees while warmer oceans impact salmon survival.

Despite this, more than 84% of the Islands Trust Area remains natural. With careful planning, restoration of damaged areas and conservation, we can care for the natural beauty and diversity of these special islands.



Top Glass Sponges are living animals which were thought to be extinct. In 2001, they were found in the Islands Trust Area

Photo: Province of British Columbia

Above The ghostly phantom orchid gets its nutrients from a fungus rather than through sunlight and photosynthesis

Photo: Wikipedia CC

Below Less than 10% of island wetlands are protected. Strand-Dohan Covenant, Saturna Island





Above Biologist Jenny Balke in Morrison Marsh Nature Reserve, Denman Island

Photo: Carrina Maslovat

Below Clams are important to coastal First Nations for food and ceremony

Photo: Dan Claxton



REGIONAL CONSERVATION GOALS

To protect and restore these endangered species and ecosystems, the Islands Trust Conservancy has prepared a science-based Regional Conservation Plan that sets out our strategies for the next ten years. The full Plan is available at www.islandstrustconservancy.ca.

Goal 1: Science-based Conservation Planning

Identify, investigate and communicate about important natural areas to generate action on conservation priorities.

It is important to stay up to date on the status of the islands' special ecosystems and species, and to continually review and refine our priorities for conservation.

The Islands Trust Conservancy will continue to research and analyze data to support careful decisions on how to manage and steward these lands. We will share this information with our partners and landholders to encourage additional conservation initiatives.

Goal 2: Collaboration with First Nations

Strengthen relationships with First Nations to identify and collaborate on shared conservation goals.

The Islands Trust Area overlaps with the traditional territories of many First Nations. We are on a journey of building relationships with First Nations and will seek opportunities to collaborate on conservation projects of mutual interest.

The Islands Trust Conservancy will share information and engage with local First Nations about the stewardship of natural lands, cultural sites and culturally important species. We are seeking ways to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Indigenous place names, and the protection of culturally significant species into existing programs, as well as to find resources to support this collaboration.

Goal 3: Protection of Core Conservation Areas

Continue to secure and manage Islands Trust Conservancy lands and conservation covenants to maximize ecological integrity.

The Islands Trust Conservancy works to create and support a network of protected areas that will preserve ecosystem function and biodiversity on the islands. We have developed systematic approaches to help determine which areas are most in need of protection and will focus efforts in these areas.

We will continue to work with other conservation organizations, island municipalities, First Nations and landholders to protect, manage and restore these special places.

Goal 4: A Strong Voice for Nature Conservation

Continue to build internal and shared organizational strength and resilience to ensure long term nature conservation in the Islands Trust Area.

The Islands Trust Conservancy has been a consistent presence in the conservation of species and ecosystems for almost 30 years. We want to remain a long-lasting, stable agency and continue to 'preserve and protect' this area in collaboration with others, while continually adapting to changing circumstances.

We will work to expand our partnerships, supporters and fundraising beyond the Island Trust Area. We are seeking new ways and new technologies to share our successes and challenges, and above all, to continue protecting and preserving the land and its biodiversity.



Above, right Douglas-Fir standing tall over
Valens Brook Nature Reserve, Denman Island
Photo: N Murphy
Below, right Interpretive sign at Medicine Beach
Nature Sanctuary, North Pender Island

HELP THE ISLANDS TRUST CONSERVANCY SAVE ISLAND ECOSYSTEMS

There are many generous people who contribute to the protection and preservation of the Islands Trust Area. These individuals are making a difference—and you can too.

Conservation Covenants: For our future generations...

A conservation covenant is a legal agreement in which part or all of the property is protected from development, forever. Covenant holders in the Islands Trust Area can qualify for a reduction of up to 65% on their property taxes through the Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP).

Arthur Kikuchi moved to North Pender Island because the landscape reminded him of Japan where he grew up. His passion for the natural environment was nurtured from a young age by his father, a lifelong naturalist specializing in the protection of wetlands and forests. After Arthur received an inheritance from his parents, he chose to continue his father's vision by purchasing a forested lot on North Pender with the intent to protect it in its natural state. Arthur and his family have now permanently protected this Frog Song Forest with a conservation covenant.

“People can't own the land. We're only borrowing it from the future. When we die, we can't take what we own with us. Therefore, our legacies are what we leave behind. I want to leave this protected place behind for my children, their children and the next generations in my community.”

—Arthur Kikuchi

“In a time when many of us feel that forces which affect us deeply are beyond our control, I'm grateful to the Islands Trust Conservancy for providing a mechanism to protect the land that I love. The NAPTEP covenant, now in place, allows me as owner, but most importantly as steward and caretaker, to make a difference and chart a future for my land. Two acres of maturing second growth Coastal Douglas-fir forest now has the time and therefore the potential to attain the status of old growth forest.”

—Larry Appleby



Above The Kikuchi family
at Frog Song Forest

Below Kate Emmings, Island
Trust Conservancy's Ecosystem
Protection Specialist, presents
Larry Appleby with a
Conservation Covenant sign
for his property



Nature Reserves: A Place Loved in Life, and After...

Some people choose to donate property to the Islands Trust Conservancy as a nature reserve, either during their lifetime or as a legacy in their will. “Ecological Gifts” such as these can provide significant tax benefits to landholders or their estates.

John Osland lived on his Lasqueti Island property for 62 years. He loved walking among his big firs and cared deeply for the nature that surrounded him. But he worried about what would happen to his land when he was gone. In his will, he donated his property to the Islands Trust Conservancy to be protected as a nature reserve. Today, it is a permanently protected place where the forest can continue to grow and visitors can immerse themselves in nature. In addition, his donation qualified as an Ecological Gift, resulting in significant tax benefits for his estate.

“John got immense pleasure walking among his big firs. He wanted his land to be a place where nature could be left mostly undisturbed except for visits and walks. He hoped that those people seeking the delights of nature would enjoy it, and care for it with as much love as he did.”

—John’s friend Donald Gordon



Above John Osland Nature Reserve, Lasqueti Island
Below Volunteers from the Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy clean up garbage from Kwel Nature Reserve

Caring for Protected Areas

The Islands Trust Conservancy partners with local conservation groups and stewards to care for its protected areas. Local volunteers are at the heart of island conservation.

Sisters Briony and Caroline Penn protected their Salt Spring Island property with a conservation covenant. Briony enlisted the help of her sons and nephew to help clear invasive plants.

“Restoring the land is great to do with kids and family. Instead of being stuck inside with electronics, segregated and depressed, you’re outside working together, talking, laughing.” —Briony Penn



Invest in the Future: Support Island Conservation

www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/donate

The Islands Trust Conservancy welcomes donations of cash and securities, and these qualify for a tax-deductible receipt. You can also ask your legal advisor about making a donation of cash, land or securities in your will.

If you would like to learn more about donating to the Islands Trust Conservancy, please call us at 250-405-5186 or email itemail@islandstrust.bc.ca. Donations of all sizes can make a difference, and we are thankful to those who choose to partner with us to conserve island ecosystems. Seven-year old Matthias Bannister contributed his birthday money to the Islands Trust Conservancy towards the first publicly accessible nature reserve on Thetis Island.

When Louise Bell retired from her role as a Denman Island trustee, colleagues and friends honoured her fifteen year career as a local politician with donations to the Islands Trust Conservancy - a cause close to her heart. Louise is a long-time supporter of the Islands Trust Conservancy.

“Even as a child I was concerned about the devastating impact people were having on the earth. I appreciate the wonderful work being done by the Islands Trust Conservancy and I am pleased my family could assist with the acquisition of 52 forested acres on Thetis Island. While I have always been awed by the beauty of the south coast, I have only recently become aware of just how rare and special this landscape is as the tiniest and most imperiled biogeoclimatic zone in the province.”

—Laurel March, Thetis Island



Top Matthias Bannister
Above Louise Bell
Below Laurel March at Moore Hill beach, Thetis Island
Facing page Basil Franey speaks with Gulf Islands Driftwood reporter Elizabeth Nolan at Isabella Point, Salt Spring Island



“I LOVE LIVING HERE [ON ISABELLA POINT],
I COUNT MY BLESSINGS EVERY DAY.

WHILE I OWN THE LAND LEGALLY, I JUST
REGARD MYSELF AS A CUSTODIAN OF IT
DURING MY LIFETIME.”

— Basil Franey, Isabella Point Covenant, Salt Spring Island



The **Islands Trust Conservancy** envisions an island region where vibrant natural ecosystems flourish alongside healthy human communities. We believe our island communities can serve as examples to the world, demonstrating that people can live and work in harmony with nature. Please join us in achieving that vision.

“Let us find a way to belong to this time and place together. Our future, and the well-being of all our children rests in the kind of relationships we build today.”

-CHIEF DR. ROBERT JOSEPH, O.B.C.

Chief Joseph is currently the Ambassador for Reconciliation Canada and a member of the National Assembly of First Nations Elders Council. He was formerly the Executive Director of the Indian Residential School Survivors Society and is an honorary witness to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).



“It is seen as a sacred trust to care for the earth and all its inhabitants, as they all care for us.”

-NANCY J. TURNER

Ancient Pathways, Ancestral Knowledge Volume 2, page 310

Nancy J. Turner is an ethnobotanist whose research integrates the fields of botany and ecology with anthropology, geography and linguistics, among others.



ISLANDS TRUST CONSERVANCY

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