

Joe Bernardo, Trustee  
Islands Trust - Gambier, Keats & Associated Islands

Northern Staff Office | 700 North Road | Gabriola Island, BC | V0R 1X3

T 1-250-247-2063 | [www.islandstrust.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca)

To Islands Trust Policy Review Members

I am a seasonal resident of Keats Island in the Gambier Island Trust Area. My family has owned a leased lot on [REDACTED] since 1946.

I have read the draft policy statement and participated in the Sept. 10 Zoom meeting.

I support the goal statement of the Trust and the acknowledgement that seeking cooperation with the many layers of governance that affect the islands is in the best interest of protecting the special nature of the islands.

“The object of the trust is to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the Trust Area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, First Nations, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.” (Section 3, Islands Trust Act)

I believe that the reconciliation of Indigenous Rights is not specifically the mandate of the Islands Trust. This is a provincial government of BC issue. Our provincial government has recently filed to appeal the landmark Aboriginal title ruling over Fraser River land in Metro Vancouver. The Musqueam First Nation has also appealed the ruling of awarding the land to the Cowichan First Nation. The directive policy proposed in 3.1.1, and the advisory policies 3.1.2, 3.1.3 could become barriers to decision making until the B.C. government has settled the matter.

An example of a troubling stalemate occurred in the rebuilding of homes in the town of Lytton after it was destroyed by fire in 2021. A document entitled the Heritage Conservation Act mandated that cultural and heritage sites needed to be examined by an archeological review team before burned out houses could be removed and new houses erected for owners. In 2023 The Village of Lytton paid out more than \$12 million for excavation and debris cleanup to Matcon Environmental Ltd., \$1.6 million to AEW for archeological work and more than \$1 million to Teranis Consulting Ltd., which specializes in providing First Nations with environmental consulting services related to contaminated land investigation and remediation. Collier's Project Leaders were paid more than \$300,000 that year to help oversee recovery. The layers of bureaucracy

resulted in most money going into consulting fees and very few homes being built for four years.

The Islands Trust is not in a position to take on costly legal challenges therefore until the land issues are settled at the Provincial level I am opposed to including the Directive Policy in 3.1.1, and the advisory statements as noted.3.1.2, and 3.1.3.

Also the Directive Policies 3.3.2 to 3.3.8 would best be listed as Advisory Policies so that the diverse communities within the Islands Trust have scope to respond to the unique local needs of the various Island Trust Communities.

I believe that the spirit of cooperation stated in the goal statement invites respectful conversation and input from all persons in the Islands Trust area and has served well to date.

Thanks to the 26 local trustees for their work on this important document.

Joanne Leatherdale

[REDACTED]

Salmon Arm, BC V1E 2T8