

**From:** Den Perch [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 12, 2026 10:41 AM  
**To:** South Pender Island Local Trust Committee <SouthPenderLTC@islandstrust.bc.ca>  
**CC:** Islands2050 <Islands2050@islandstrust.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** Comment on Draft Policy Statement  
**Attachments:** Trust.pdf

Attached are my comments on the proposed draft Islands Trust Policy Statement.

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There is a continuing active interest within the Islands Trust to be forerunners in the process of Reconciliation with Indigenous people. In 2021, a proposal was launched on little South Pender Island to turn over to First Nations natural resources (trees, sea life, etc.) existing on and adjacent to private properties. Once established, of course, this precedent could be spread to the other islands until activity on private lands would be subject to the participation and approval of First Nations. Clearly this was seen by the Trust as a way to remove land use from the hands of irresponsible property owners and return it to the careful stewardship displayed by First Nations. Sheerly by coincidence, it would also accomplish another task and that would be to remove a huge impediment the Trust has in controlling tree cutting. If owners are subject to First Nation approval in order to trim or remove trees it would correct the current situation where this is a Provincial jurisdiction that is denied to but long coveted by the Trust.

Incidentally, this proposed amendment to South Pender bylaws was approved by the Local Trust Committee despite overwhelming opposition by residents. It then went to Trust Executive who, despite the same public opposition, rubber stamped it. But, finally reason was established by the Provincial Government, when presented with the same opposing arguments, refused to approve the Trust bylaw. But this should give you an idea about the attitude within the Trust – blind adherence to unsound feel-good plans regardless of their lack of reason, consideration of consequences or respect for over-riding authority.

And now, we have a court decision in Richmond granting Aboriginal Title precedence over the property titles owners hold under our Provincial land tenure system. What that means, no one knows. Premier Eby acknowledges the misstep of the NDP's DRIP Act and is now backtracking.

Despite this, we now have the Islands Trust blindly pursuing a new Policy Statement based on seven guiding principles where its first two most important principles are:

1. Acknowledge and Respect Indigenous Rights, and
2. Prioritize Environmental and Indigenous Cultural Heritage Protection.

Notably, neither of these two principles deal directly with land but with human populations – Indigenous people. However, nowhere within the remaining guiding principles is there any acknowledgement of the rights or needs of the non-indigenous residents of the islands.

This Trust formula for decision-making is taken straight from the NDP mother ship: grand feel-good conscience-relieving statements to show how culturally sensitive they are without consideration of the downstream consequences or impact of their decisions on others. To continue down this path is to marginalize the residents of the islands and also possibly to run afoul of the Provincial government needing no further trouble while in damage control mode.

So what does all this stem from? The source is UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. (Incidentally, I am one). The problem arises where the well-meaning UN statement is being abused by those attempting to extract more out of it than it provides. UNDRIP is purely a 'guidance document'. It offers direction and covers a lot of worthy ground dealing with Indigenous people such as rights to education and health care and respect for traditional values, etc. In the South Pender fiasco, it was evident that the LTC and later the Trust Executive had not bothered to first read enough of the Declaration to understand its intent and limitations.

One key aspect of the Declaration is that the Indigenous Community must be a part of the process in establishing a relationship with non-Indigenous communities through mutual consultation and negotiation. On South Pender, the attempt was to 'gift' First Nations with unrequested rights determined by a couple members of the (and I hate this word) 'Settler' community and a Trust staff member who 'identified' as Indigenous. In attempting to make reparations and pat itself on the back for correcting perceived colonial wrongs, the Trust was applying the same colonial practices that its claiming to correct. You can't make this stuff up.

And here we are again. Same old blind path and the Trust once again likely to have its pee pee slapped by the Province for attempting to be the first proclaiming solutions to Indigenous rights while the Province is in very serious trouble over exactly the same issue.

For a very informative and unbiased professional analysis of the current issue of Indigenous rights in B.C. I recommend that everyone watch an interview with a well-respected law professor who is also an expert on Indigenous issues. It will be 34 minutes of well-spent time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtoSFE3X078>

Dennis Perch  
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