

From: michael gooblar [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 1, 2026 1:36 PM
To: Islands2050
Subject: Trust Mandate Review comment
Attachments: ISLANDS TRUST MANDATE REVIEW.docx

Hello you very hard working folks. Thanks for all you do! Here's yet someone else's opinion. Thanks for considering. See attached.

--

Is you Is, or Is you Ain't,
Michael Gooblar

[REDACTED]
Salt Spring Island

IF IT AIN'T BROKE.....

By Michael Gooblar, Salt Spring Island January, 2026

In an April 2025 Driftwood article Saanich North and the Islands MLA Rob Botterell opined that the Islands Trust Mandate with respect to 'unique amenities' should not be reinterpreted from its original meaning. The Mandate, he said, should not include housing, livelihoods, infrastructure and tourism as aspects of the unique amenities of the Gulf Islands. Agreed. Salt Houses of Bolivia are unique housing worthy of preservation. Rickshaw driving is a livelihood in China that contributes to its unique culture. Roman aqueducts of Italy are unique infrastructure worthy of preservation. None of these have comparables in the Gulf Islands.

What comes to mind when we consider the uniqueness of the Gulf Islands? Undoubtedly we think about the natural environment; the sea, the trees, the land mass, the rock, the birds, the mammals. This is what the Trust Mandate directs us to preserve and protect.

There are very real human consequences to choosing this unique environment as worthy. Humans inhabiting these islands may suffer. Not all of us will be able to live here, and not with urban conveniences. There may be insufficient livelihoods available, infrastructure and housing may lack. Limited medical care may place individuals at risk. Roads may not be sufficiently wide or extensive. There may be high priced and limited consumer goods. We may not be able to age in place, tourists may not be able to access some protected areas, accommodation may be limited and highly priced. And on.

Let us not delude ourselves about the consequences of choosing to maintain this place as unique. Needs, comforts and conveniences may have to play second fiddle to the ultimate goal. Preservation for the future may require sacrifices today and always.

In return for our sacrifice of protecting (from ourselves) and preserving these lands, we have a place that more closely resembles how it has always been and will be for the next generations and for all others as it is for us. Think World Heritage Site. And that is priceless.

The one area of the mandate that deserves attention, reflection and action is as it pertains to the First Nations of these lands. Invoking the authority of First Nations is essential to adhering to what is unique to these lands and seas and I look to those knowledge keepers to lead us along the path to preservation.

MLA Botterell continues in his article to comment on the pressures on the Trust to reconcile various interests; Pressures from environmentalists, developers, working people, business people etc. His recommendation is 'taking the time to build consensus'.

Consensus building is an admirable project. Certainly we have a good example of consensus building in the public meetings designed by the Trust to enable various parties to express their opinions and attempt to influence the outcome of the Trust's review of the Mandate.

Unfortunately this very process is inevitably contrary to the maintenance of the Mandate. Each interested party has contemporary concerns regarding their particular situation... a little tweak here and there to the Mandate will be hardly noticeable they argue. Today the discussion is about increasing available potable water, tomorrow the height of the Ganges Parkade. Death by a thousand cuts.

Government and institutions develop action plans that in part justify their existence. Can we try Inaction as a solution? It is just not possible to have it all. It is not possible to satisfy developers, the needy, and the aged AND preserve the Islands. Do we bend to preserve the islands? Or do we 'bend' the islands to meet our needs? It's just not one of those situations where compromise is a solution. In this instance consensus means destruction of the ideal.

In the case of the Trust Mandate the answers to builders, environmentalists, workers and business owners are already contained in the mandate. It is not the Mandate that needs to change. It is not the Gulf Islands that need to change. It is the people and institutions on these land masses that need to ask themselves; how can we more closely align with the Mandate, what do I need to do, to sacrifice, to contribute to preserve and protect this unique land to keep it unique? John A. Kennedy once said; "ask not what the Gulf Islands can do for you....."

After their lengthy and full consultation process will the Islands Trust have the courage to say; 'we've heard all of your various concerns, and you know, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.'