

From: Tom Sones [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 2:12 PM

To: Ewout van Dishoeck [REDACTED]

Cc: northinfo <northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Susan Yates <syates@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Tobi Elliott <telliott@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Laura Patrick <lpatrick@islandstrust.bc.ca>; abarroso@gwsolutions.ca; William Shulba <wshulba@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Narissa Chadwick <nchadwick@islandstrust.bc.ca>

Subject: Re: Common water to preserve and protect

Good points.

More bureaucracy, though?

What we really need is better qualified politicians. At all levels.

Tom

On Tue, Aug 4, 2026, 1:07 p.m. Ewout van Dishoeck [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Trustees,

Please accept the attached submission as a formal contribution to the ongoing Official Community Plan review process.

A close review of the draft OCP reveals significant structural gaps across its vision, goals, and targets: an absence of quantitative baselines, missing 20-year density specifications, unstated timelines for First Nations collaboration, and open-ended growth assumptions detached from local carrying capacity. Without measurable, time-based targets, well-intentioned policy statements risk being reduced to broad discretion—lengthening development reviews, inflating administrative costs, and subjecting Trustees to intense ad-hoc political pressure.

To resolve these overarching plan deficiencies, the attached Brief proposes establishing a multi-agency co-governance body—the **Gabriola Water Stewardship Table**—adapting the proven precedent of the Cowichan Watershed Board under the *BC Water Sustainability Act*.

This Stewardship Table serves as the exact operational engine needed to resolve the OCP's broader gaps by delivering three vital benefits:

- 1.
2. **Aligning Fragmented Authorities:** It brings the LTC, Regional District of Nanaimo, Island Health, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTT) into one body—directly aligning remote provincial subdivision approvals and drainage management with local land-use policies.
3. **Eliminating Administrative Overhead & Political Friction:** It replaces open-ended debates with clear, objective, time-based metrics, providing regulatory certainty for applicants and shielding Trustees from prolonged political conflict.
4. **Operationalizing True Co-Governance & Carrying Capacity:** It embeds Snuneymuxw First Nation Treaty rights and inherent water stewardship into local planning while grounding density caps, cluster housing reviews, and forest canopy preservation in real-time hydrogeological data.

By establishing this Table, the LTC creates the necessary framework to govern Gabriola as a **single, continuous hydrogeological commons** centered on a mandatory policy of **Island-Wide Water Neutrality**.

The Brief elaborates on the above and offers a legally defensible, science-backed roadmap that supports the Islands Trust mandate to *"preserve and protect."*

Regards

Ewout van Dishoeck

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

On Monday, March 9th, 2026 at 6:25 PM, Ewout van Dishoeck <missives@proton.me> wrote:

Trustees Elliot, Patric and Yates

The recent submission of the GWSolutions study and the introduction of the Freshwater Hazard Map provide a critical "triage" tool for identifying immediate vulnerabilities in Gabriola's groundwater system. However, as the OCP review progresses, it is paramount to distinguish between **hazard mitigation** (avoiding localized failure) and **hydrological integrity** (ensuring systemic health).

The Trust is urged to view the GWS study not as the final word on carrying capacity, but as the technical baseline for a broader **Hydrological Integrity Framework**. The public discussion should benefit from the significant five-year investment in the Trust's freshwater expertise, ensuring that the insights gained are applied to the whole system rather than just its fragments.

A primary concern remains the potential for ecosystem deterioration driven by groundwater level decline and quality shifts. Gabriola's biological health is not a secondary byproduct of water management, but the **primary infrastructure** for its retention. If groundwater levels fall below the thresholds required for ecosystem survival (**Biological Retention Targets**), the island's natural "sponges"—its wetlands and forest soils—will degrade, permanently compromising the aquifer's ability to recharge. If the OCP utilizes the Freshwater Hazard Map as its sole guide, the result will be a "checkerboard" of development based on where the water hasn't run out yet. This approach ignores the **One Aquifer** reality and the cumulative impact of climate change on island-wide evapotranspiration.

The attached appendix suggests the prime pillars of a Hydrological Integrity Framework and cautions against a parochial orientation. It poses 18 questions—prompted by the GWS study—aimed at ensuring the OCP reflects a **systemic rather than fragmented understanding** of our aquifer. These inquiries seek to identify the critical gaps between "Micro-Regional" data and "Macro-Systemic" health—specifically the role of the **Big Ridge "Water Tower"** and the risks of regional segmentation.

Hopefully these inquiries will be addressed in a suitable public forum, furthering a broad community appreciation of the linchpin function of water within the OCP.

Regards

Ewout van Dishoeck