

From: Diana Owens [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 4:37 PM
To: Shalini Nakai <snakai@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Cc: Diana Owens [REDACTED]
Subject: Gabriola Draft OCP

I would like to submit my feedback that will hopefully be taken into consideration for the updated Official Community Plan. I operate a busy farm and I unfortunately do not have time to scrutinize the draft OCP. I did read the previous OCP in it's entirety years ago.

I purchased my property in 1994 as an undeveloped acreage. I realized early on that the Gabriola property that I purchased and Gabriola in general was quite different than any other residential property in the lower mainland. I was pleased to discover that there was an Island's Trust that oversaw the protection of the fragile eco system in the gulf islands.

When I proceeded to develop my property I was shocked to discover that there was no limitation to how many trees I took down. I could have clear cut my land as did the neighbour across the street. The only thing I had to do was to get the logs timbermarked. I chose to selectively log and have logs milled into lumber with which I built my house. I also utilized the entire tree and there was no waste. When I started developing my property, I made a decision to leave approximately 1/3 of my property treed and intact to allow a place for nature, local wildlife and to mitigate climate change. To date, I have only taken out tree's that have fallen for firewood. I believe that there should be some process in place where properties should not be allowed to have all tree's cut down on a piece of property after purchase. I find it disgusting that buyers are allowed to purchase tracts of land for the sole purpose of making money from the logs and resale of the property. Loggers like Mike Jenks do not deserve to operate in the Gulf Islands.

I am please that Gabriola has significant land protected for public use and access trails to beaches. I understand that the transfer of land perhaps mitigated the activities of the industrial logging operations? I did not see the same amount of public access to beaches on Saltspring Island, perhaps they are well hidden?

Land Use and bylaw complaints: I believe that the name of the complainant should not be withheld unless there is a reason to believe harm could come to the person submitting the complaint. There should be total transparency in the complaint process. There should also be an added screening question, if it is not there already, what does the complainant have to gain by submitting the complaint.

Many years ago, I had a small farm stay visit operation. I ran it for 4 years and hosted no more than 2 people at a time and I screened applicants to ensure that only people who wanted a true farm experience and who were respectful would be accepted. I worked in healthcare at the time and had a moderate income so the farm stay income, was modest but helped me be able to pay my bills. One day a lady appeared at my driveway with the

request to visit my farm, I realized after the fact that she was an out of province buyer of a B&B and she had been quite vocal that she was going to shut everyone running a B&B operation that was not in compliance with bylaws. I received, soon after her false farm visit, a visit from the bylaw officer. At that time, I had decided to go onto the WWOOF program and host wwoofers and so the complaint never proceeded. I ran the operation for 4 1/2 years with no complaints from neighbours, so obviously it was the woman who came to my farm to snoop.

2 years ago, I decided to offer a B& B in the home that I built for myself in 2002. This was due to financial necessity after losing all my savings during COVID 19 due to having to become sole caregiver to my parents and having to give up my employment. My home was very modest, one bedroom and I offered farm stays to no more than 2 people and I screened for appropriateness. Again I received a bylaw complaint, because I was not in the home. Was I expected to sleep in the broom closet? No I was expected to pay the same amount that a person with a 3 bedroom vacation rental who maximizes revenue would pay. I am a small farm, I should not be categorized the same as a vacation rental, because I offer a totally different experience. It is a farm experience, and first of all, my revenue is less with one bedroom and my costs are higher than the complainant who wants to secure all the business, as I have big costs in feeding and veterinary care for animals. Farms should be allowed agritourism opportunities including farm stays, without being issued complaints by people who probably are in a higher income brackets and whose costs to maintain a vacation rental does not include farm costs to maintain the farm animals. It is a totally different experience and farms should be supported and not penalized and lumped into the typical vacation rental. Create a different classification, or don't treat everything the same. I am penalized because I chose to build a small affordable home, and instead of some variance, I am lumped into the TUP's because I don't have a separate bedroom to sleep in.

If complaints had transparency, it would be good to know where they originate. I also know a mother of a small child who was simply trying to make ends meet with a glamping experience and she told me she had to get a TUPs. This is just in my eyes, a complaint from a person who wants to have all the business, without considering what that income may mean to that individual. I shut down my vacation rental in October 2025 due to the complaint. Does anyone care, that I did not eat that winter or that I have had a very difficult time financially recovering from years of family caregiving? I wonder if the complainant has benefitted from the shut down of my farm stay small operation

My 3rd and last encounter with a complaint was after a wwoofer came to visit and I had to tell them to leave. They threatened me in my home and told me that they were going to do everything in their power to give me bad reviews. Soon after that I was given a complaint that someone got sick drinking the water at my farm. That complaint was not proceeded on after I explained that I had my environmental farm plan in place and had even upgraded my well in excess of what I needed to do and had never received a complaint from other wwoofers. I should have been given the name of the person making the complaint as I think that they should have been dealt with for trying to inflict harm to me and my farm. If

the complaint had been followed up, would I have had to bear costs to have water testing done, etc?? Maybe, I could have sued the complainant for defamation.

Island Trust needs to protect the island, but not allow practices that benefit people of means who come to live on the island to operate vacation rentals and then maliciously try to shut down operations just because they see them as competitive. If the operation is not harming anyone, and if there is a long time resident who needs the income to survive, there should be some review process. Transparency in who is submitting the complaint is important. Modify the regulations. Obviously we do not want offshore people buying up houses and using them for vacation rentals, but if long time residents are trying to recover and save their farm, they should be not penalized. Farming faces too many insurmountable problems as it is.

I appreciate the Islands Trust considering my input and sorry if I am rambling at times, but I rarely get more than 4 hour sleep per night. Operating a farm requires a great deal of work and dedication. My farm has been discriminated against because I run a small organic environmentally sound operation. Government only really support large Ag operations. Gabriola should be different and although the residents are highly supportive, if small farms are not supported through regulatory means, they are at risk of going under.

Thank you,
Diana Owens
Property owner since 1997

