

# Water Sustainability: Groundwater Sustainability Strategy - Charter v10

Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee

Date: December 14, 2023

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to continue groundwater monitoring of volunteer observation wells and lake monitoring stations on Salt Spring Island. Stable long-term monitoring partnerships yield information and data that enhance freshwater management decisions. Lake and groundwater levels provide a scientific view of the unique elements of watershed and aquifer health in a changing climate on Salt Spring Island. Long-term lake and groundwater monitoring data is a primary input for regional water budgets used to inform land use policy, water allocation planning, and climate adaptation.

**Background:** Since 2013, the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee (LTC) has advanced water sustainability as a top priority, including coordinating the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA). Since 2017 the LTC has been the lead agency in a SSIWPA-coordinated pilot project supported by a Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia (REFBC) Freshwater Sustainability grant and contributions from SSIWPA member agencies to establish 14 groundwater observation wells and 5 lake monitoring stations on Salt Spring Island. Final reporting to REFBC took place in 2020, The pilot continues to successfully collect monitoring data and is managing over 2 million data events. Efficiencies were developed through the pilot project including data management, collection methodology, and sample frequency. Monitoring partnerships were established through the generosity of Salt Spring Island community volunteers. The pilot project will be formally brought to a close in fiscal 2023/24, although monitoring is planned to continue subject to land owner agreement.

## Objectives

- Collect data from groundwater and lake monitoring stations established during Real Estate Foundation of BC Pilot Project. Data collection to occur every 6 months.
- Manage data collected from groundwater and lake monitoring stations.
- Annual report to LTC

## In Scope

- Coordination among Islands Trust staff, FLNRO staff and SSIWPA coordinator.
- Map project results; cross reference well data to GWELLS database and enter new records.
- Investigation of long-term monitoring strategy
- Development of methodology for the Volunteer Observation Wells Logger (VOWL) Tool for management of observations data.
- Communicate with Volunteer Observation Well (VOW) owners
- Decommissioning of VOW at request of owners

## Out of Scope

- Increasing the number of groundwater and lake monitoring stations established during Real Estate Foundation of BC Pilot Project in 2020.
- Quantification of groundwater balance, use or demand studies
- Consumption metering
- Policy creation

## Workplan Overview

Deliverable/Milestone	Date
Data Collection	January 2024
Data Report to LTC	March 2024
Community Information Session	April/May 2024
Discussions with agencies to transfer monitoring program	2024/25
Land Owner Relations	Ongoing
Ongoing Monitoring	2024/25+

## Project Team

Island Planner	Project Manager
<i>William Shulba</i> , IT Freshwater Specialist	Technical Coordinator
Planning Team Assistant	Administrative Assistance

## Budget

<b>Budget Sources:</b> Unspent Special Property Tax Requisition Funds		
Fiscal	Item	Cost
2023/24	Data downloads; data cleaning	\$0

<b>RPM Approval:</b> <i>Chris Hutton</i> <b>Date:</b> December 7, 2023	<b>LTC Endorsement:</b> Resolution #: SS-2023-159 <b>Date:</b> December 14, 2023

2024/25	Community Information Session for presentation of data and analysis	\$1,500
2024/25	Contingency for data loggers that cannot be manually removed/routine maintenance of existing data loggers	\$15,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,500</b>