

# The Trust Area of British Columbia

Encompassing the waters and islands of the Salish Sea between southern Vancouver Island and the mainland, the Trust Area of British Columbia features spectacular beauty, vibrant communities, and some of the world's most endangered and precious ecosystems.

## Islands Trust: Preserving & Protecting the Trust Area of British Columbia

Bowen Island Municipality

Mayne Island LTA

Denman Island LTA

North Pender Island LTA

Gabriola Island LTA

Salt Spring Island LTA

Galiano Island LTA

Saturna Island LTA

Gambier Island LTA

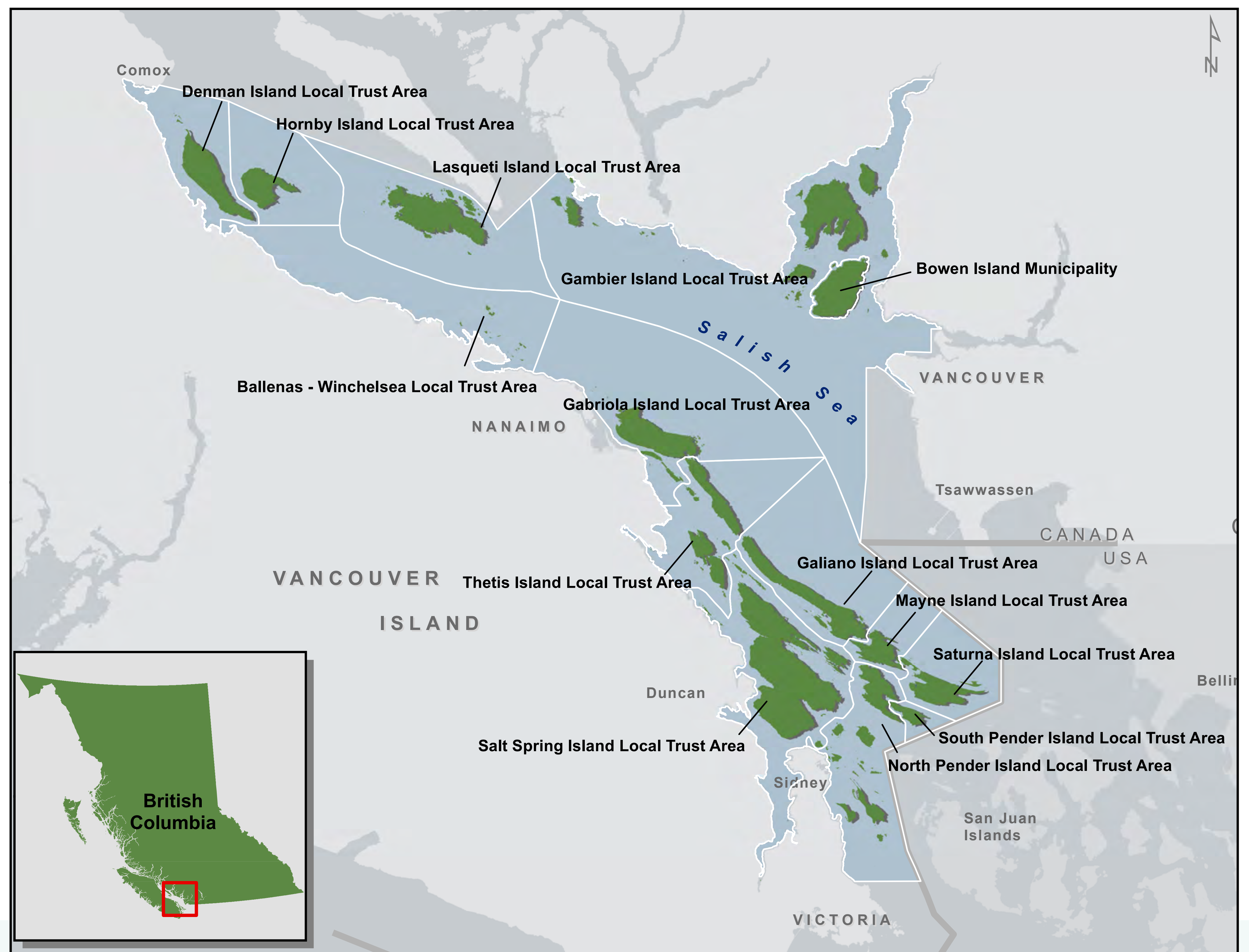
South Pender Island LTA

Hornby Island LTA

Thetis Island LTA

Lasqueti Island LTA

Local Trust Areas (LTA) are geographical areas designated by the province of British Columbia.



# Islands Trust Guiding Principles



The Islands Trust Policy Statement sets out that the following guiding principles will guide Trust Council in its day-to-day planning and decision-making:

The primary responsibility of the Islands Trust Council is to provide leadership for the preservation, protection and stewardship of the amenities, environment and resources of the Trust Area.

When making decisions and exercising judgment, Trust Council will place priority on preserving and protecting the integrity of the environment and amenities in the Trust Area.

Trust Council will seek information from a broad range of sources in its decision-making processes, recognizing the importance of local knowledge in this regard.

Trust Council believes that to achieve the Islands Trust object, the rate and scale of growth and development in the Trust Area must be carefully managed and may require limitation.

Trust Council believes that open, consultative public participation is vital to effective decision making for the Trust Area.

Trust Council will implement a plan for the advancement of the Policy Statement as part of its annual budget process, and the Executive Committee of Trust Council will report to Council on progress in achieving the goals of the Policy Statement.

## Islands Trust Object

"The object of the Trust is to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the Trust Area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia."

The object is spelled out in the *Islands Trust Act* and provides the 'purpose' or 'mandate' for all Islands Trust corporate bodies.

**Do these principles need updating or changing to reflect current values?**

# What is Islands Trust?

The Islands Trust is a special-purpose local government, created by the provincial *Islands Trust Act*. It has a mandate to **preserve and protect** the unique amenities and environment of the Trust Area on behalf of the region's residents and all British Columbians. To achieve this mandate, the Trust undertakes three inter-related activities:

## Place Protection Planning

Elected local trust committees' and Bowen Island Municipality's decisions on how land and marine areas are zoned and used must respect the **preserve and protect** mandate. This means that official community plans and land use bylaws in the Trust Area have a strong emphasis on preserving and protecting the unique amenities and environment.

## Regional Collaboration, Policy Development, and Advocacy

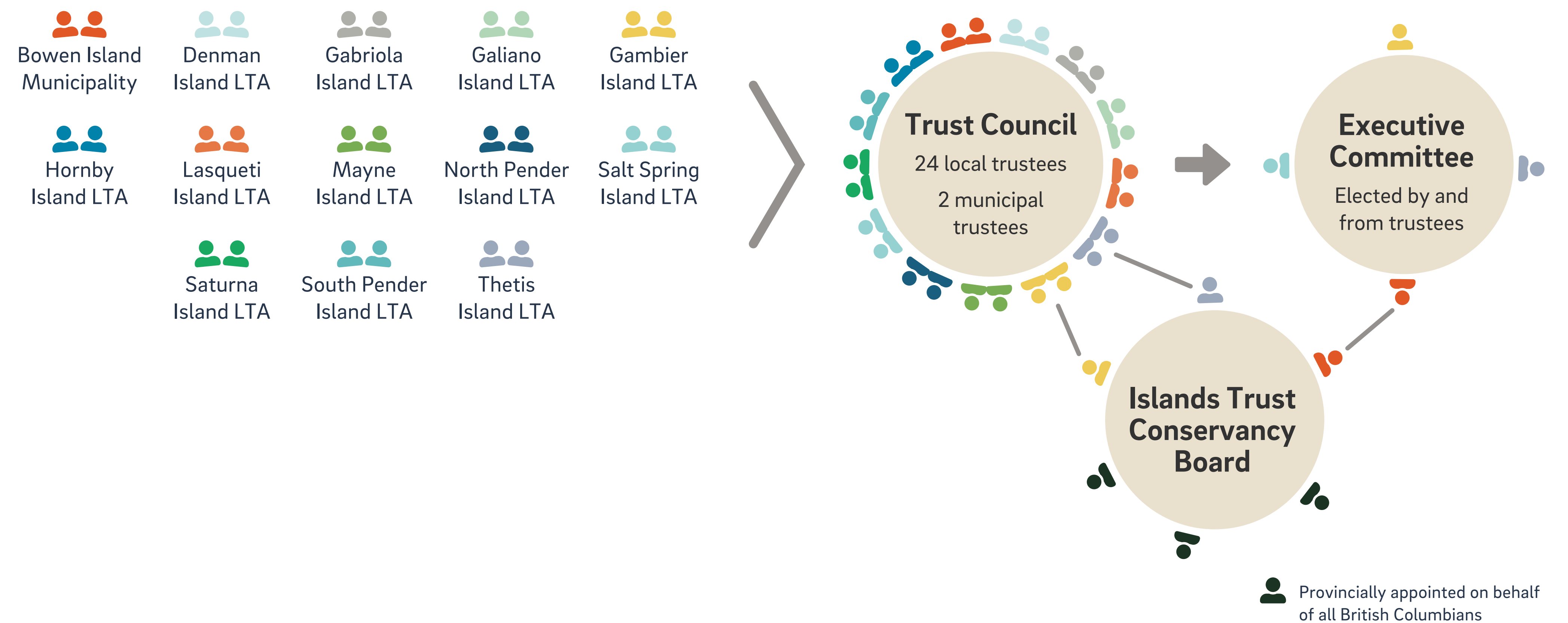
The 26-member Islands Trust Council advocates on issues important to the region and works with others in a non-regulatory way to **preserve and protect** the Trust Area for future generations.

## Land Conservation

The Islands Trust Conservancy works with landowners and donors to **preserve and protect** landscapes across the Trust Area. Through conservation covenants and nature reserves, the Conservancy protects more than 100 properties totalling 1,300 hectares of land.

As an agency with a preserve and protect mandate *and* the ability to regulate and conserve land, Islands Trust is unique in the world.

## Islands Trust Governance Structure



# The Policy Statement

If you love the Trust Area, the Policy Statement is important.

The Policy Statement is the document that guides the work of the Islands Trust. It influences how decisions about island landscapes and marine protection are made. It informs how individual official community plans and land use bylaws are created. It includes recommendations to other levels of government.

The current Policy Statement has the following goals:

- Ecosystem protection
- Stewardship of resources
- Sustainable and healthy communities

## The Policy Statement has a role similar to Regional Growth Strategies

Islands Trust Area



Regional Districts



## Why now?

It's been 25 years since the Islands Trust last reviewed the Policy Statement. In that time, the world has changed dramatically:

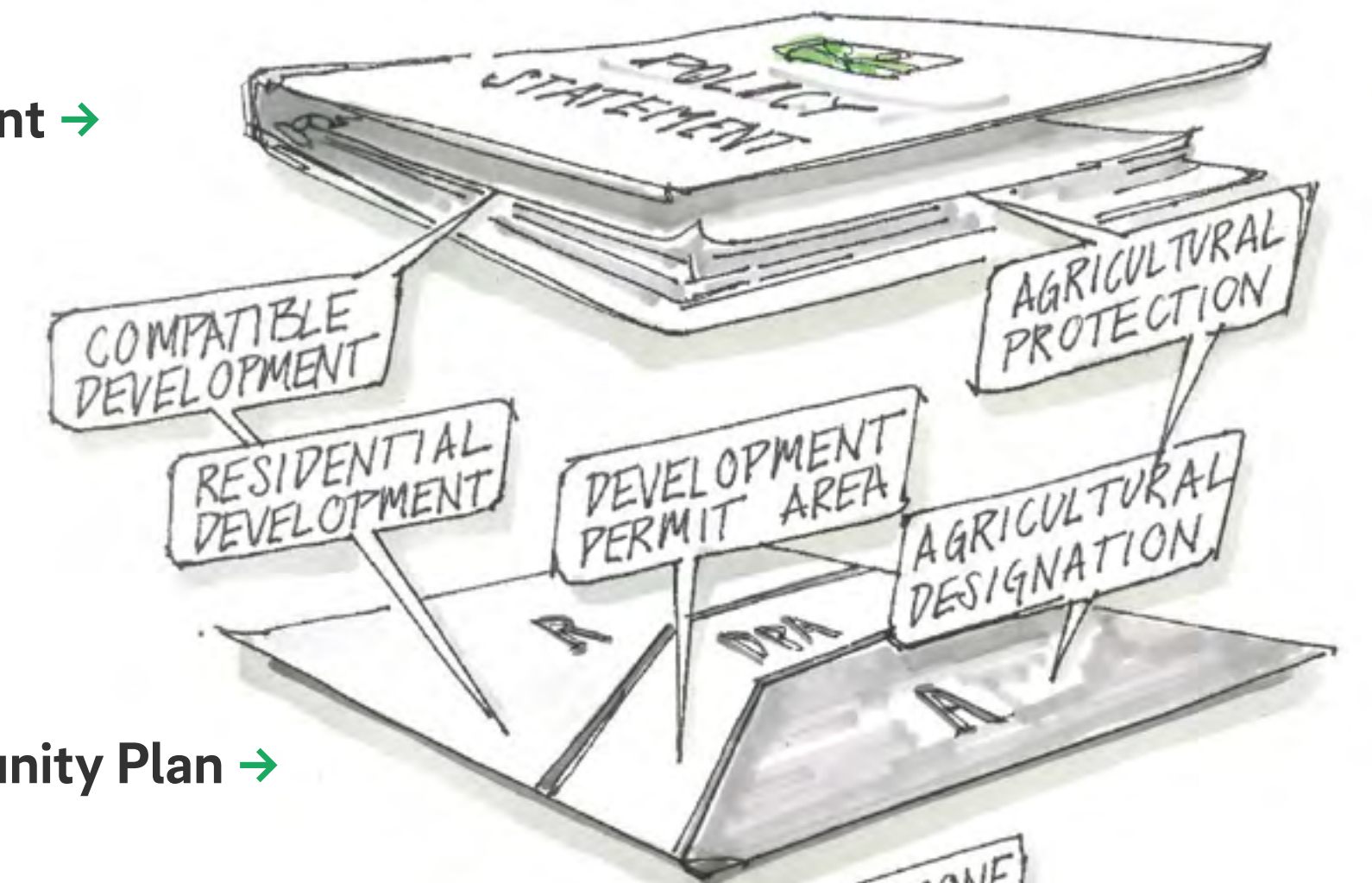
- The climate crisis is impacting the environment and our lives.
- Island demographics have changed.
- Development pressures are more complex.
- The marine environment is increasingly at risk from oil tanker traffic, plastic pollution, and industrial uses.

Crucially, the Policy Statement has not appropriately acknowledged First Nations and Reconciliation.

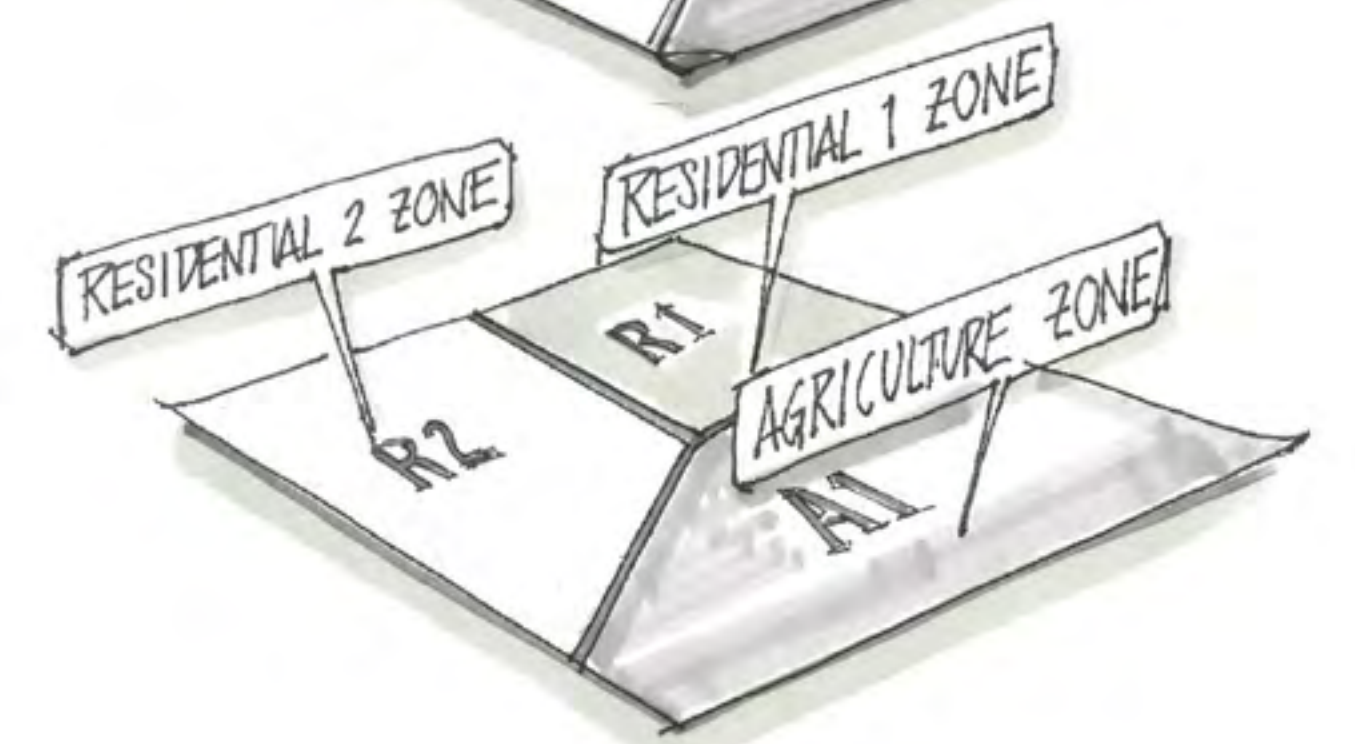
The world has changed. How can the Policy Statement change too?

## Influence of Policy Statement on Island Landscapes

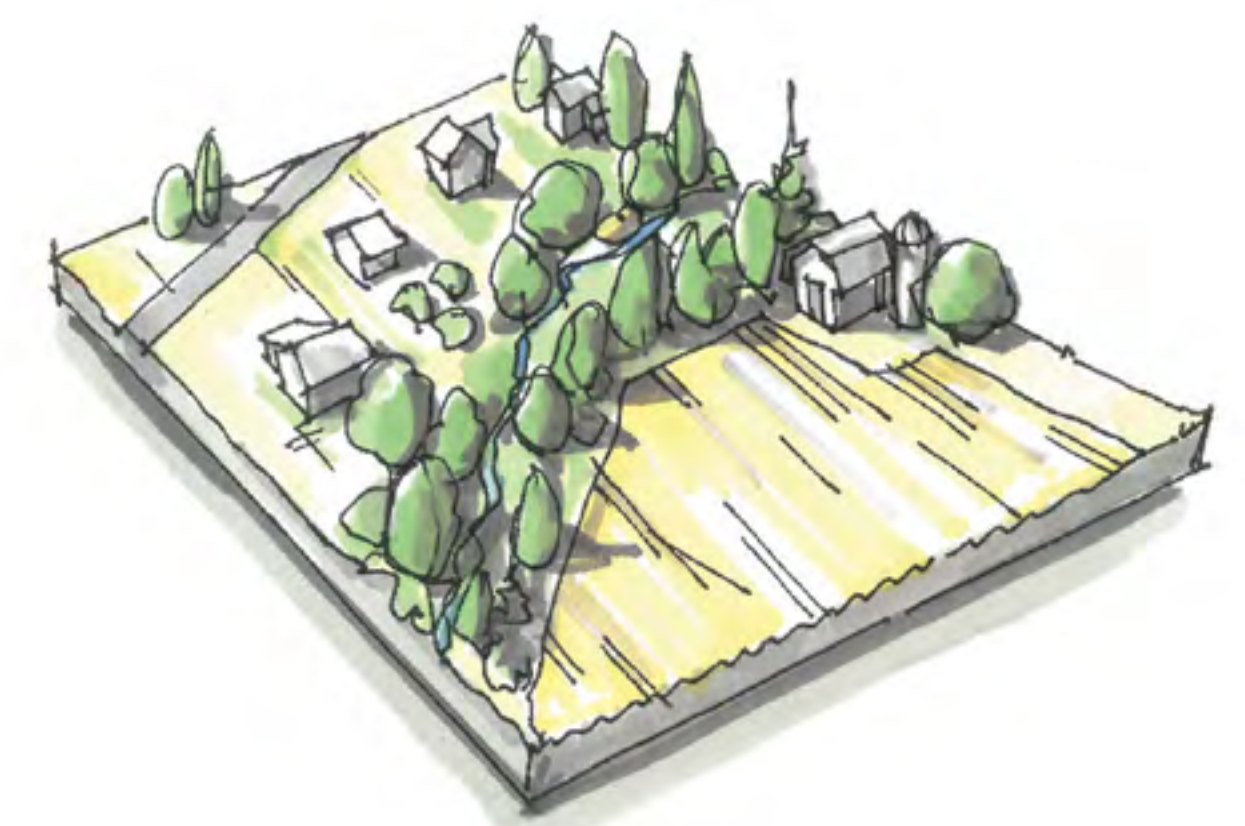
Policy Statement →



Official Community Plan →



Land Use Bylaw →



Island landscape →

# Islands 2050



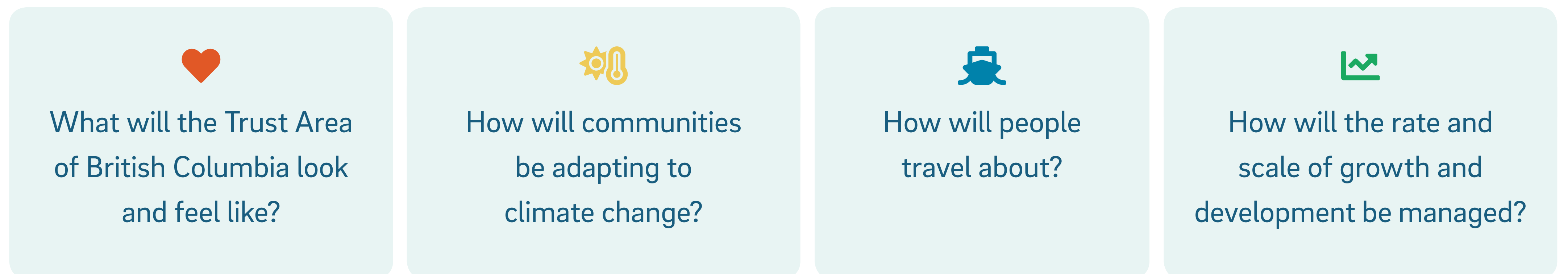
A generation ago, we asked the public what they felt the Islands Trust's priorities should be to **preserve and protect** the Trust Area. We used that input to update the Policy Statement document.

Now, a generation later, Trust Council is going to update the guiding document again to reflect current issues and concerns.

We are asking for renewed visions and ideas:

- What do you value about the Trust Area?
- What concerns do you have about the future of the Trust Area?
- What opportunities do you see to preserve and protect the Trust Area?

## In 30 years:



## Tell us what matters to you about the Trust Area of British Columbia

### Islands 2050 Timeline

The purpose of this project is to review the Introduction, Part 1, Part 2 and the definitions of the Policy Statement, as well as climate change policies in Parts 3, 4 and 5. This timeline represents the seven stages of the Islands 2050 engagement process from initial discussion through to the adoption of changes into bylaws.



### First Nations Engagement



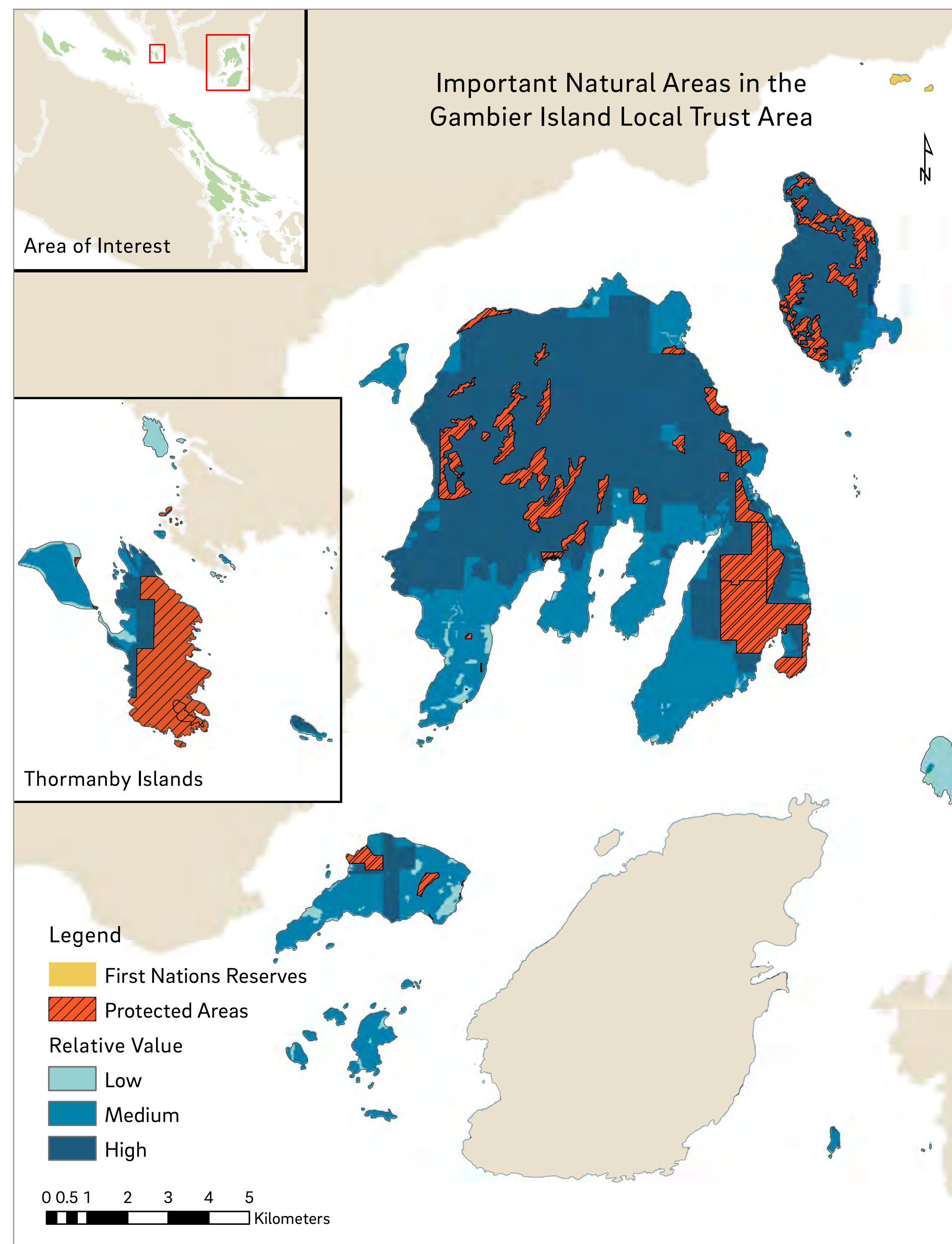
\* Timeline is subject to change based on First Nations engagement

# Local Context — Gambier LTA

The Gambier Local Trust Area (LTA) is one of 13 local trust areas and island municipalities that make up the Islands Trust Area of British Columbia. The Gambier LTA is located within the treaty and traditional territory of Coast Salish Peoples who have cared for these lands and waters since time immemorial. The Gambier LTA is home to some of the rarest ecosystems in the world that are under threat from development, climate change, and habitat degradation.

The Trust has categorized island ecosystems into low, medium and high biodiversity areas. The Islands Trust has responsibility for conservation through place protection planning and land use regulation. The Islands Trust can also encourage voluntary and cooperative actions that nurture the long-term integrity of the environment and amenities of the Trust Area.

Island population growth is influenced by land use decisions about zoning, dwelling sizes, and permitted land uses, along with owners' decisions about whether to live in/rent their homes full-time.

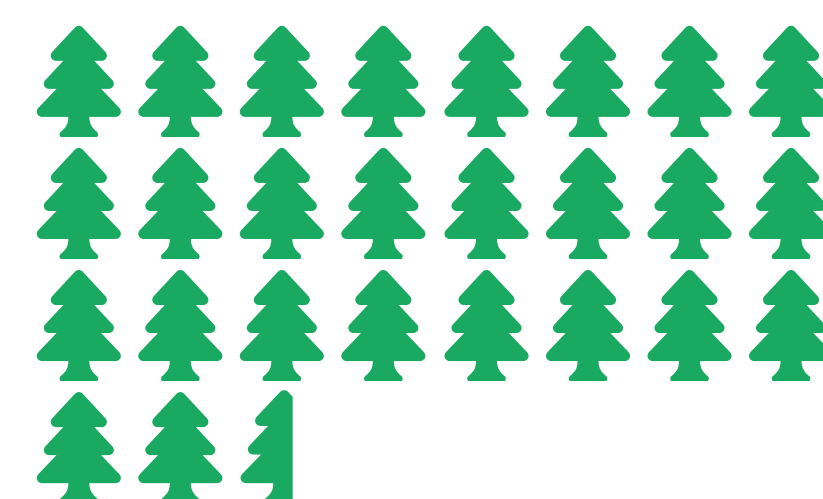


# Local Context — Gambier LTA

The Islands Trust is responsible to the present and future residents of both the Trust Area and the Province of British Columbia. Their needs can only be met and sustained within the limitations of the natural environment and the island communities of the Trust Area.

By 2050, many properties on the islands will have been sold or bequeathed. This presents both opportunities and challenges for place protection planning and land conservation.

Carbon emissions absorbed by Gambier forests annually



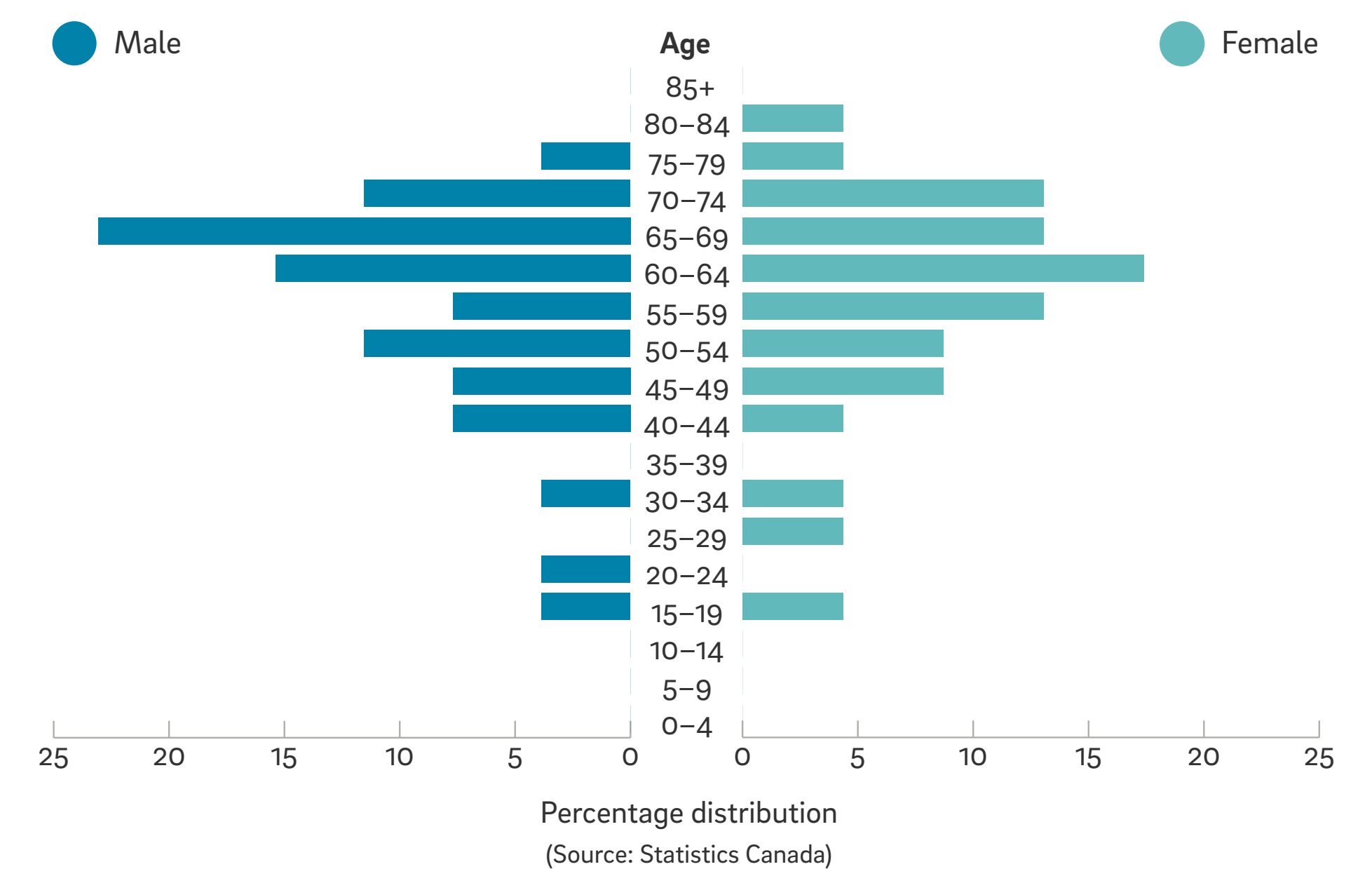
🌲 = 1,000 tonnes of carbon

Equivalent carbon emissions emitted by passenger vehicles annually



🚗 = 500 vehicles

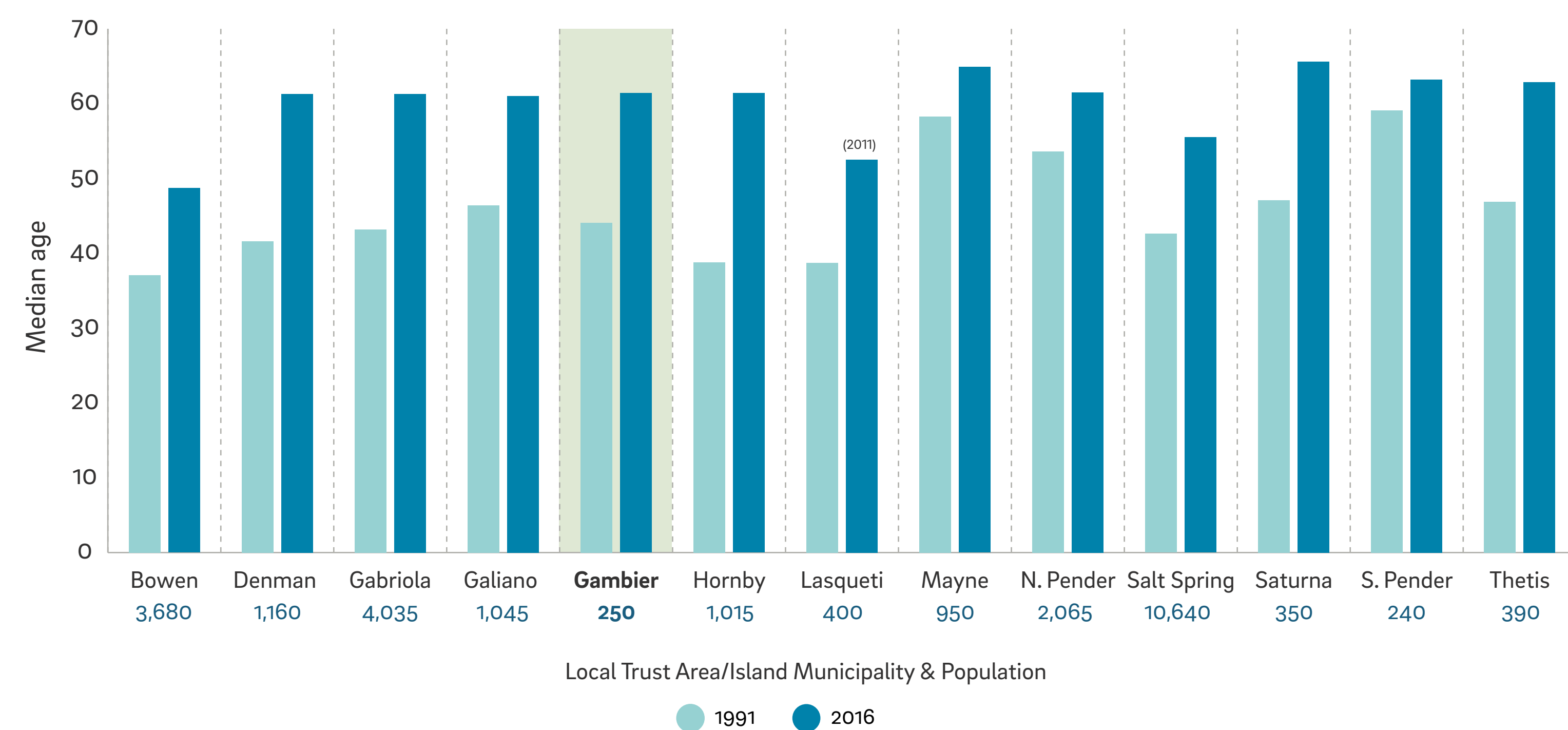
Population and gender pyramid of Gambier LTA



Gambier Parcel Sizes (September, 2017)

Parcel Size (hectares)	# of Parcels	Percent of Landbase
Less than 0.5	994	2.2
0.5-2	289	3.6
2-10	360	12.6
10-20	36	5.3
20-50	34	11.4
More than 50	22	63.5

Median age trend



# Climate change

The Islands Trust is committed to responding to the climate crisis. Updating policies in the Islands Trust Policy Statement is an important part of our response.

Trust Council believes that efforts to transition away from fossil fuels should prioritize:

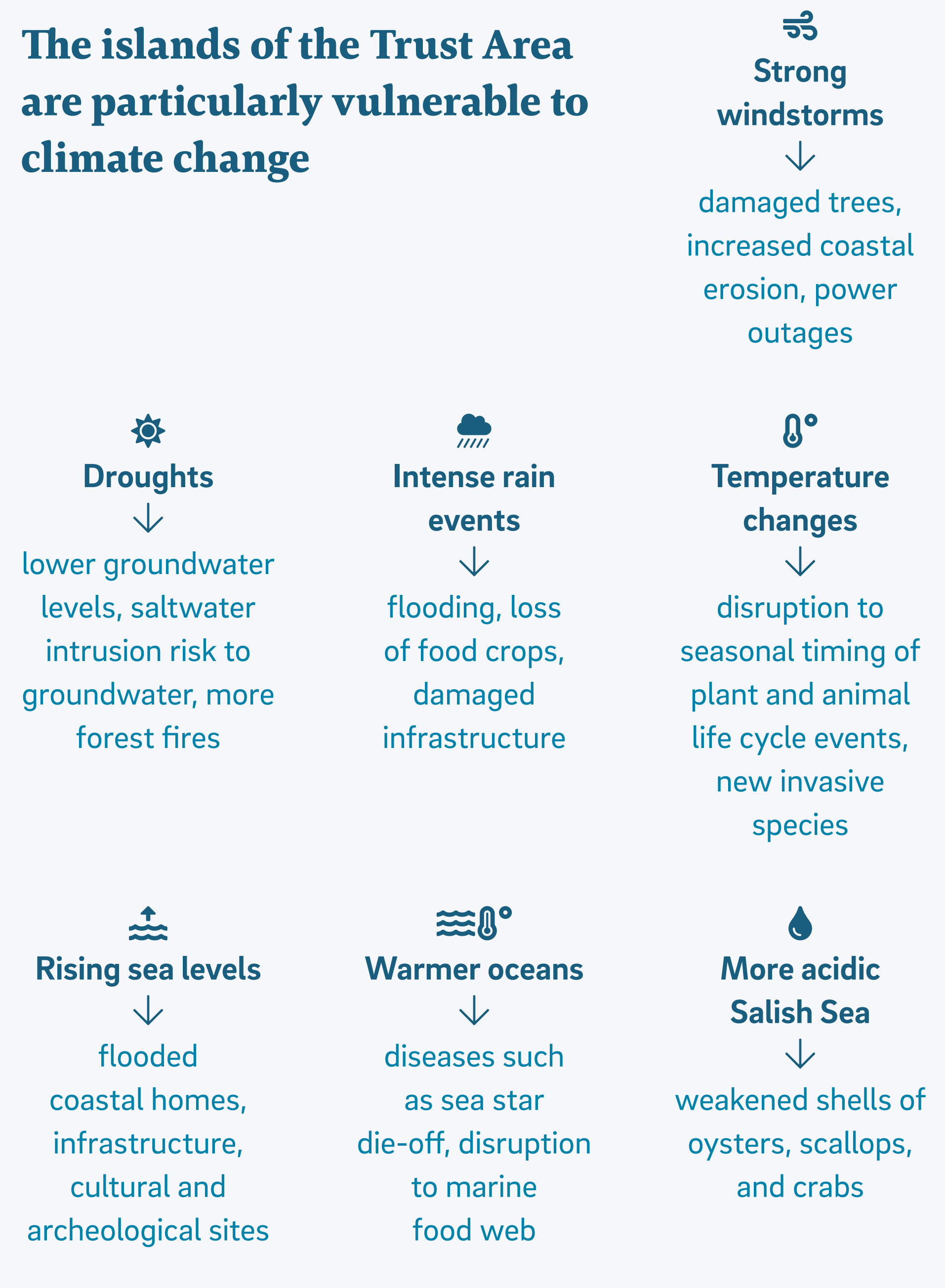
- people most vulnerable to climate impacts, and
- people most in need of support in transitioning to renewable energy.

**Did you know?** Official Community Plans contain targets and policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



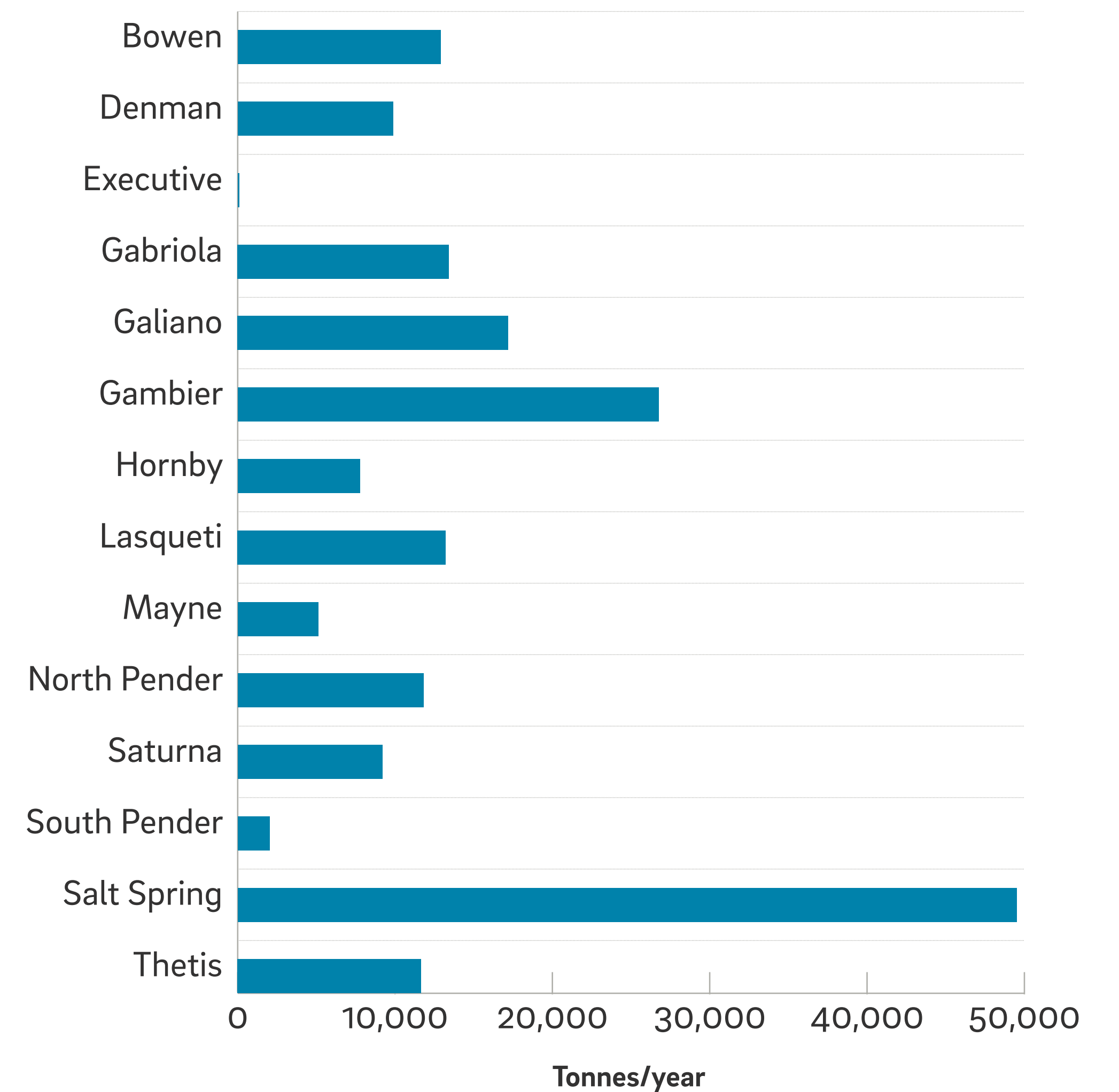
◀ A particular concern for islands is reduced biodiversity. Some island species cannot migrate the way species on continents can.

## The islands of the Trust Area are particularly vulnerable to climate change



**Did you know?** Islands Trust Area forests sequester more than 190,000 tonnes of carbon per year. This equates to emissions from more than 40,000 passenger vehicles per year.

Annual carbon sequestration in forests per Local Trust Area





# Regional context — Trust Area of British Columbia

We all have a part to play in protecting these fragile islands in the Salish Sea for future generations.

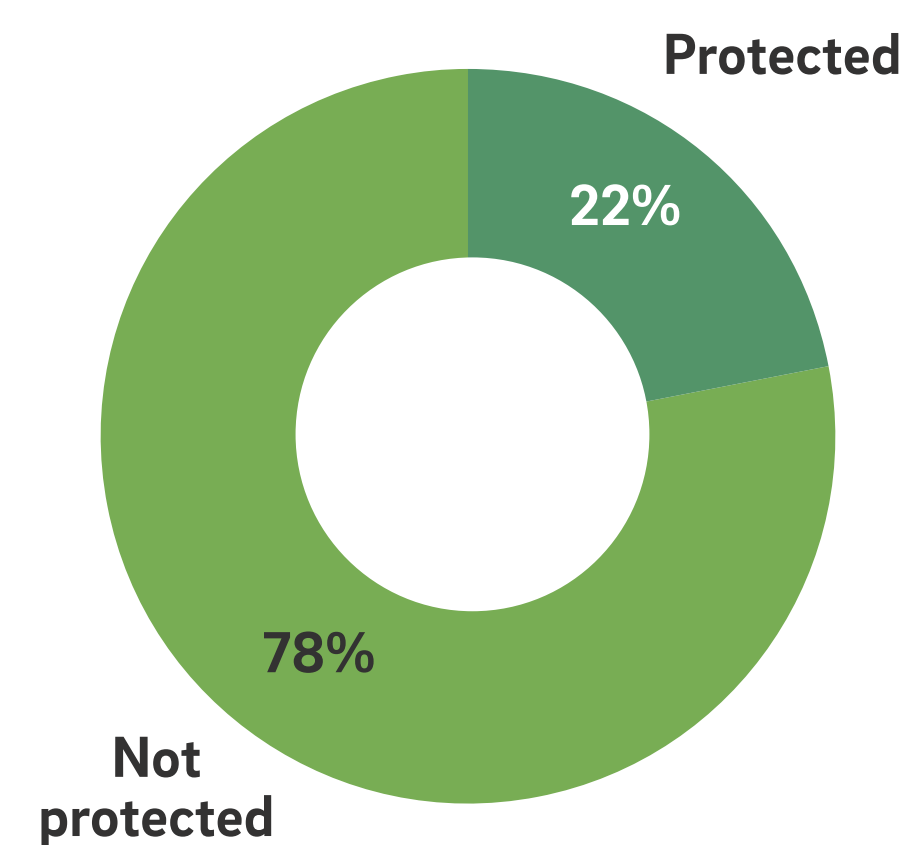
## Species and Ecosystems

The Douglas-fir ecosystems of the Islands Trust Area are globally rare. The Douglas-fir ecosystems have the highest density of species of conservation concern of any of the biogeoclimatic zones in British Columbia.

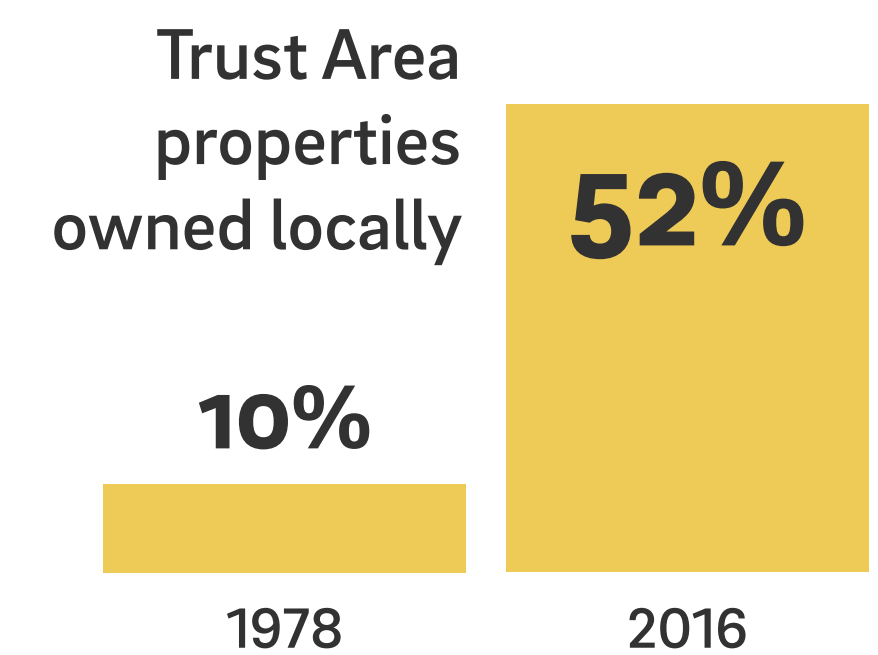
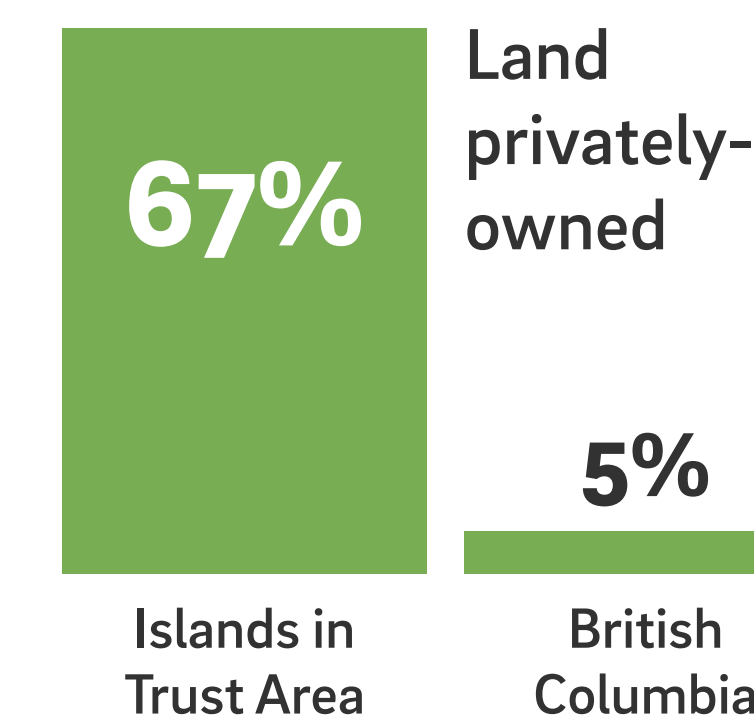
## In the region:

- **100+** federally-listed species at risk
- **300+** provincially-listed species at risk
- At-risk species have a better chance of survival if their ecosystems are intact and connected

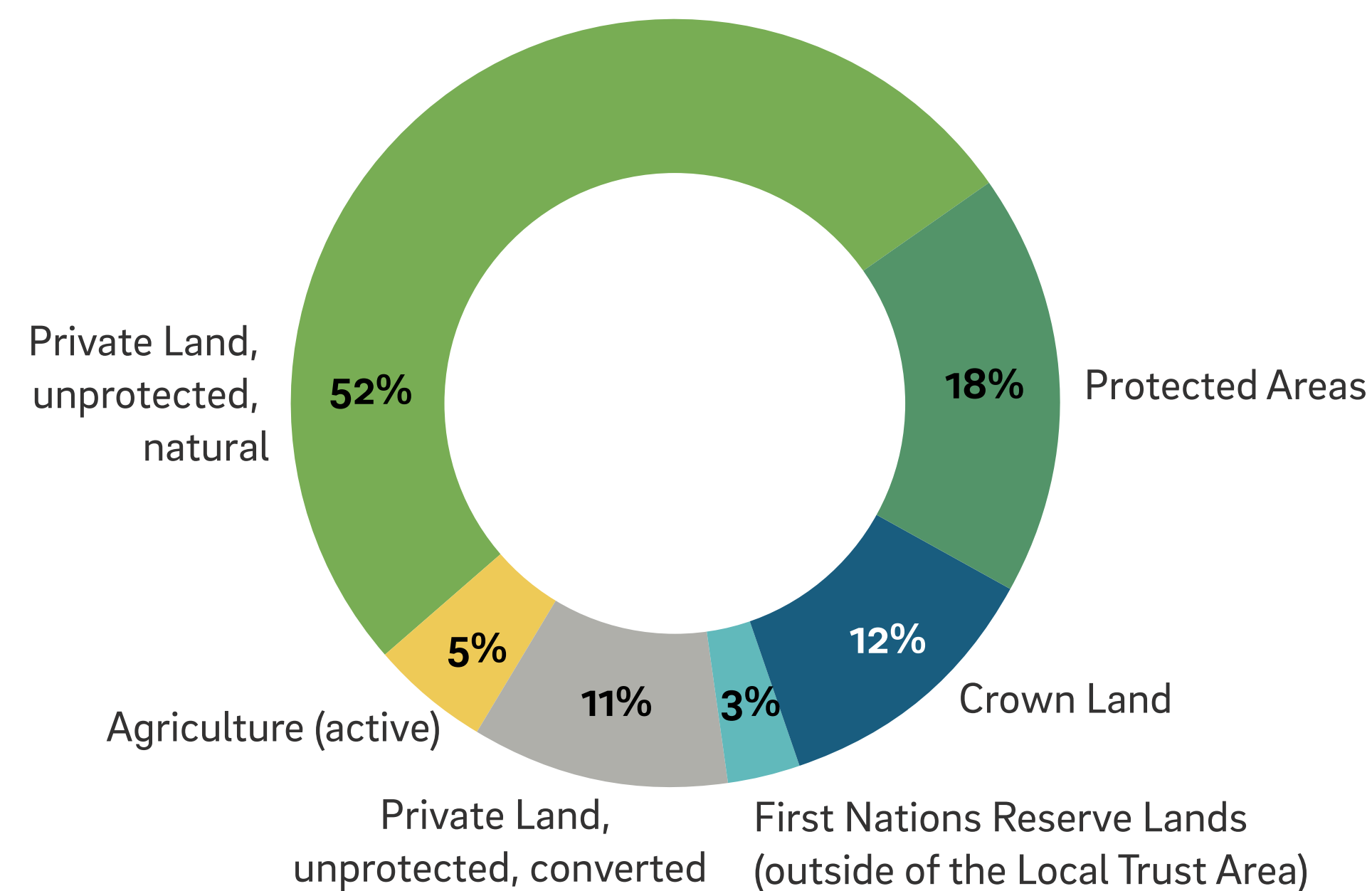
## High Biodiversity Area Protection in the Islands Trust Area



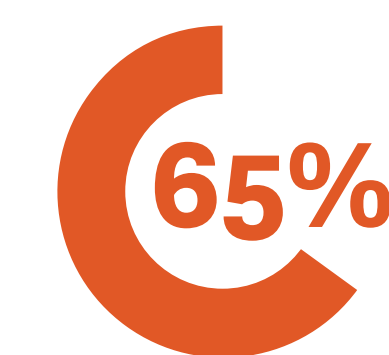
## Did you know?



## Management of Lands in the Islands Trust Area (2018)



**22** landowners in the Trust Area are receiving up to

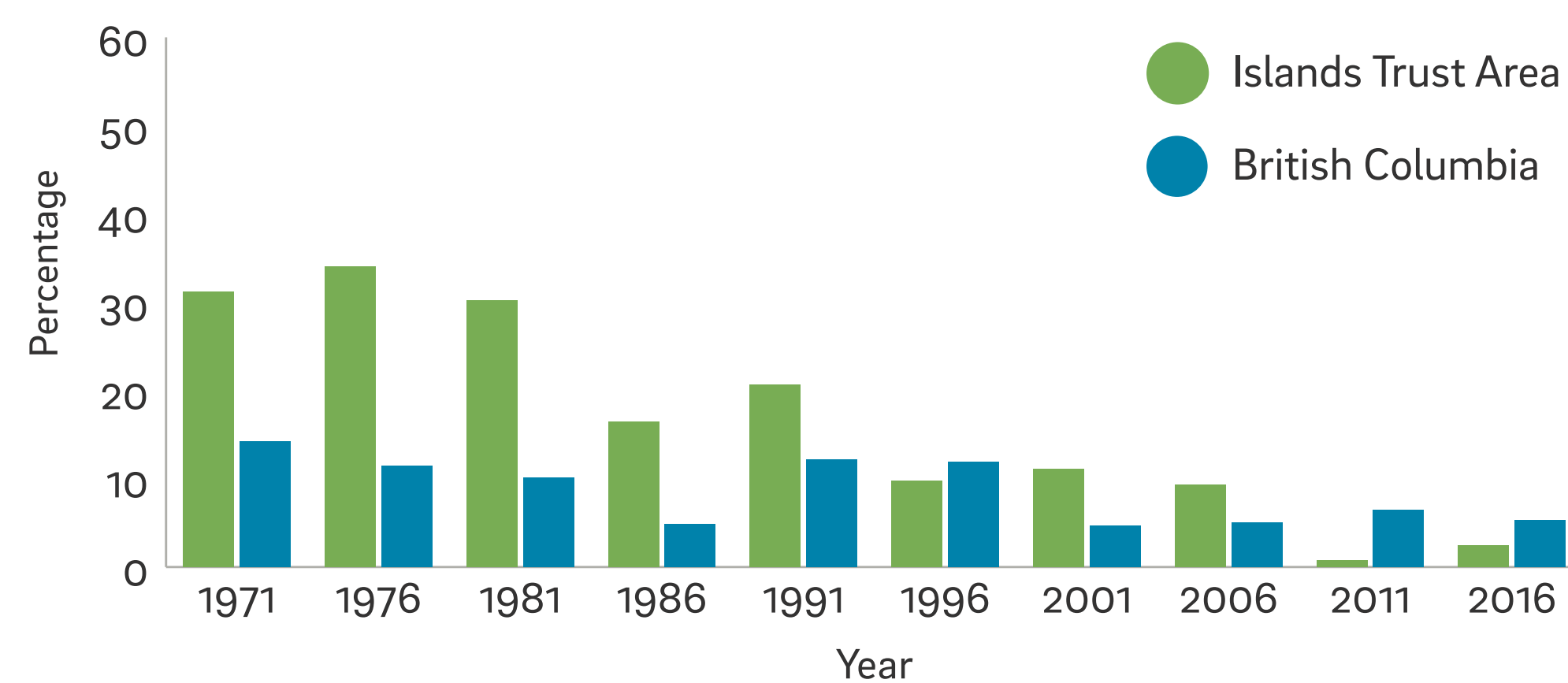


off their property taxes through Islands Trust's Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program

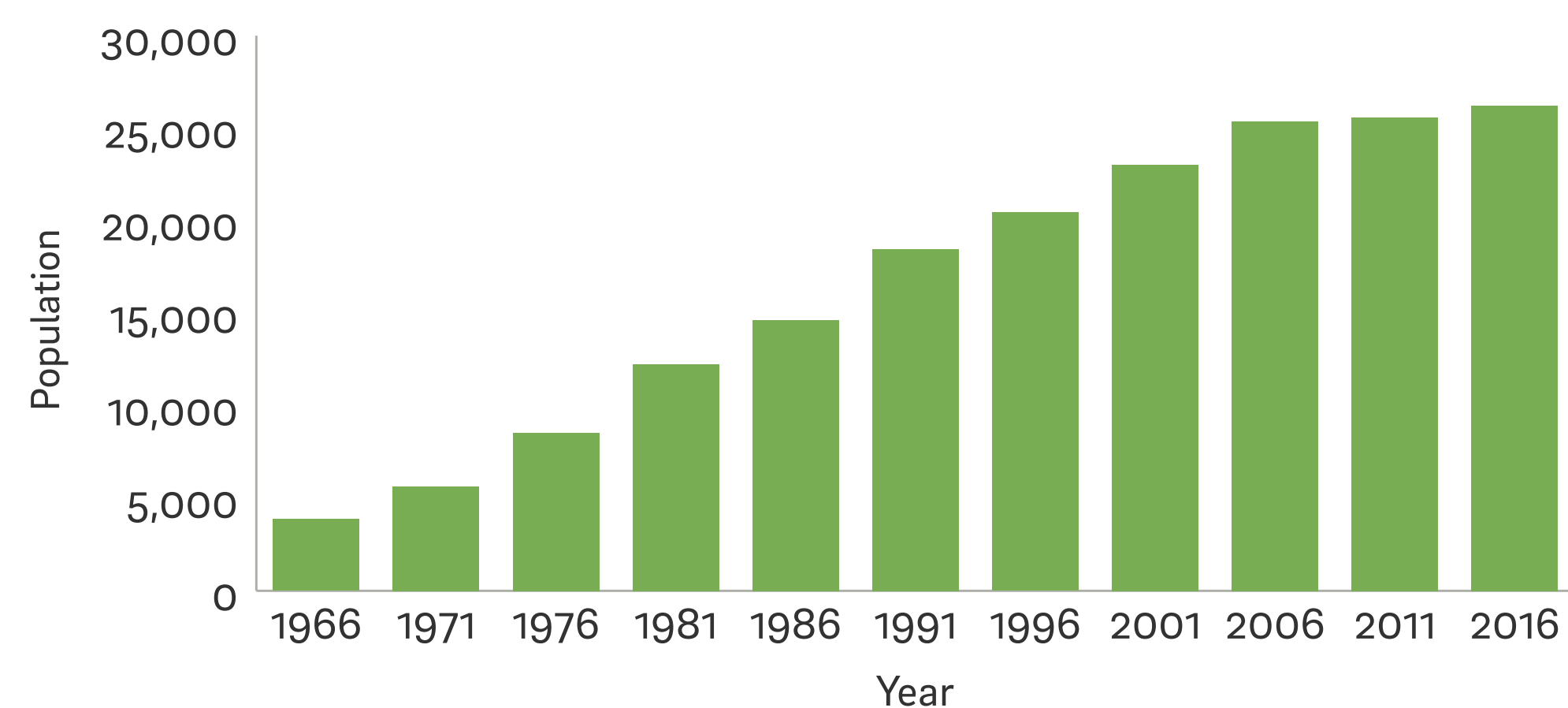
# Regional context — Trust Area of British Columbia

While the numbers of residents and visitors are growing, the capacities of the Trust Area's resources and systems are limited.

Population Growth Rate Islands Trust Area vs. British Columbia



Islands Trust Area Population



## People

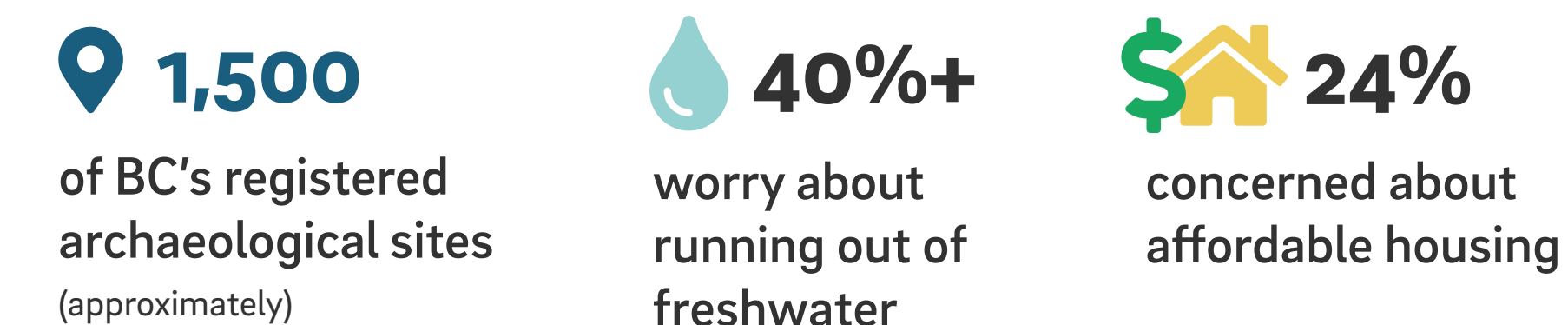


## Governance

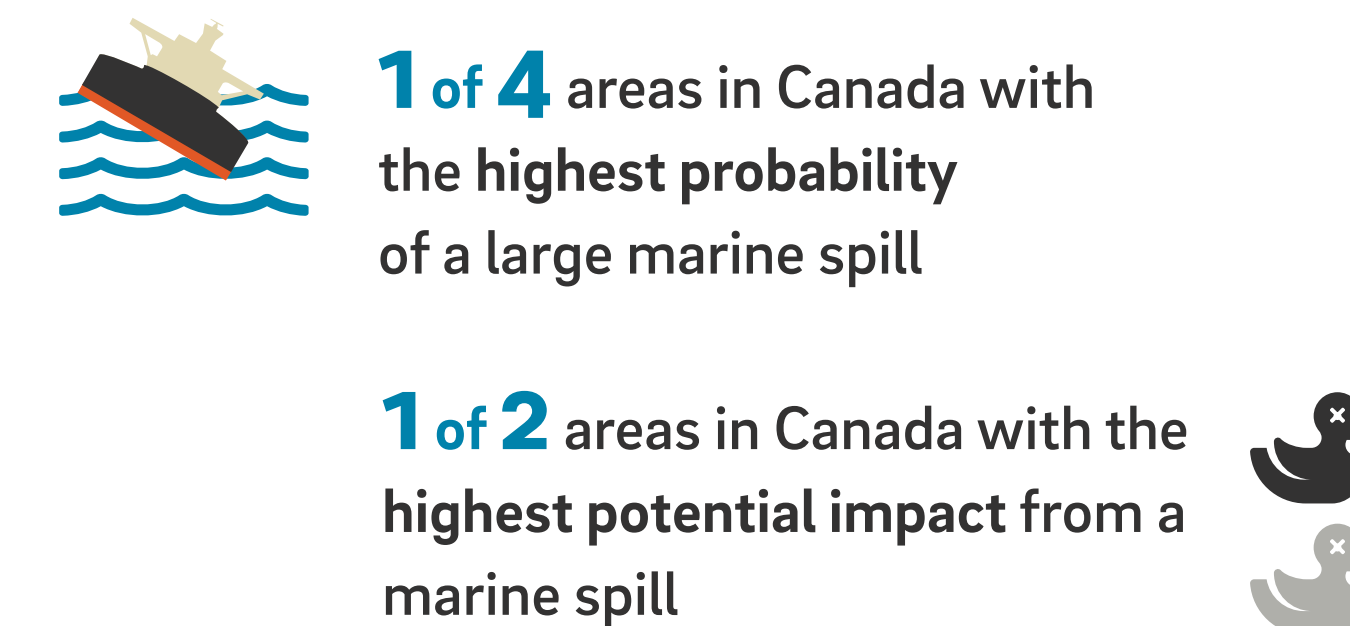


## Did you know?

2016 phone survey



## The Salish Sea



# Reconciliation Declaration

The Islands Trust Council acknowledges that the lands and waters that encompass the Islands Trust Area have been home to Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial and honours the rich history, stewardship, and cultural heritage that embody this place we all call home.

The Islands Trust Council is committed to establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Islands Trust states a commitment to Reconciliation with the understanding that this commitment is a long-term relationship-building and healing process.

The Islands Trust Council will strive to create opportunities for knowledge-sharing and understanding as people come together to preserve and protect the special nature of the islands within the Salish Sea.

*Adopted: March 14, 2019 Trust Council on Gabriola Island*

# Coast Salish Territory

The Islands Trust Area is located within Coast Salish territory, home to the Coast Salish Peoples of BOKEĆEN, Cowichan, Halalt, Homalco, K'ómok, Klahoose, Lake Cowichan, Lekwungen, Lyackson, MÁLEXEĒ, Penelakut, Qualicum, Scia'new, sel'íl'witulh, SEMYOME, Shishálh, Snaw-naw-as, Snuneymuxw, Skwxwú7mesh, STÁUTW, Stz'uminus, SXIMEĒĒ, T'Sou-ke, Tla'amin, Tsawwassen, We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, WJOLEĒP, WSIKEM, and x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm since time immemorial.

For over 10,000 years, Indigenous Peoples of these lands and waters have passed down wisdom, laws, teachings, and governance systems through their kinship ties and cultural ways.

Coast Salish Peoples have protected the lands, waters, culture, and health of their treaty and traditional territories.

First Nations within the Islands Trust Area have modern and historic treaties or traditional territories that define their village sites, cultural areas, resource and gathering areas, trade routes, and sacred sites. Protection and preservation of these places is vital to their cultural heritage. First Nations governments work with all levels of government to preserve and protect their inherent rights for future generations.



Coast Salish Peoples have a rich and vibrant economic, social, cultural, and spiritual life that is intricately connected to the islands and waters of the Trust Area. The history of Coast Salish Peoples is sustained in the language, place names, village sites, cultural and sacred sites that encompass the whole of the Islands Trust Area.

More than 28,000 Coast Salish people call the Islands Trust Area their homeland.



# What is a midden?

Middens are places of cultural and archaeological heritage for the First Peoples of the Salish Sea and Coast Salish territory. A midden is found by or within a village site or resource gathering area and defines an area that has been utilized for thousands of years. Middens tell us about how vital resources were sustained over time. They also provide scientific understanding of the past that is key to understanding climate change impacts, and human activity.

Sites within the Islands Trust Area can be over 8,000 years old, and any archaeological site on private or public land is protected under the Heritage Conservation Act. Middens can contain archaeological artifacts, tools, and ancestral remains. Removal of items or impacts to middens contributes to the destruction of cultural heritage, language, and knowledge, and has long-term impacts for reconciliation with First Nations.

Preservation and protection of middens, cultural heritage, and archaeological sites is essential. If you find an artifact, ancestral remains, or discover a midden on public or private property, contact the Islands Trust or the Archaeology Branch of the provincial government. We all have a role to play in preserving and protecting the cultural heritage of the Islands Trust Area now and into the future.

