

What We Heard

Islands 2050: The Future of the Trust Area

Public Engagement
Fall 2019



Territorial Acknowledgement

Islands Trust trustees and staff are humbly thankful to live and work in the traditional and treaty territories of the BOKÉCEN, Cowichan, Halalt, Homalco, K'ómoks, Klahoose, Ts'uubaa-asatx, *Lək̓ʷəŋən* (SXIMEŁŁ, Songhees, T'Sou-ke), Lyackson, MÁLEXEL, Penelakut, Qualicum, Scia'new, *səl̓ilwətaʔəl̓sel̓il̓witulh*, SEMYOME, Shíshálh, Snaw-naw-as, Snuneymuxw, Skw̓xwú7mesh, STÁUTW, Stz'uminus, Tla'amin, Tsawwassen, We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, WJOŁŁP, WSIKEM, and x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm.

Amending the Islands Trust Policy Statement is what Islands 2050: the Future of the Trust Area engagement process is all about. This is one action among many that Islands Trust is taking towards reconciliation.

Islands 2050: The Future of the Trust Area

We are planning for the future and initiated the Islands 2050 public engagement process to seek input and better understand the opportunities and challenges facing the Islands Trust Area. This multi-year project, kicked off in September 2019 with community and First Nation engagement processes.

Over five months, we hosted Islands 2050 events, rode the ferries with our information booth, and invited people to visit us online as we gathered input to revise the Islands Trust Policy Statement.

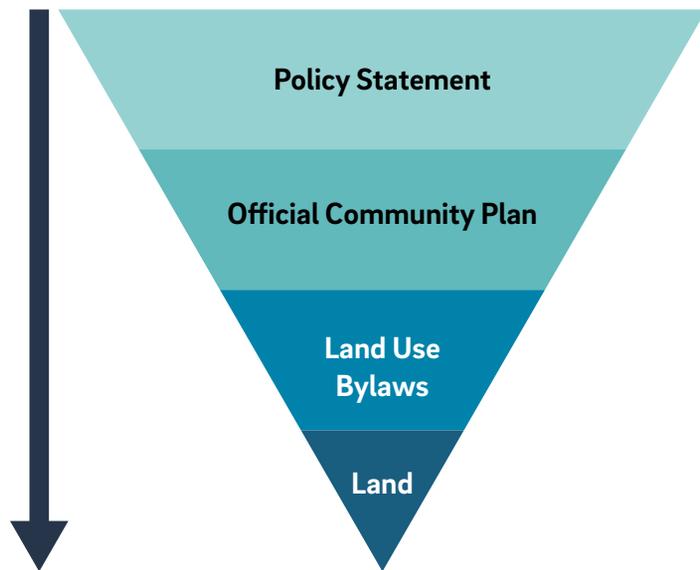


Diagram: Influence of Policy Statement on Land

What is the Policy Statement?

The Policy Statement provides direction for regulating the development and use of land and water. The document guides the preserve and protect mandate of Islands Trust, but the last version of the Policy Statement was written in 1994, and a lot has changed in the last 26 years:

- We made a commitment to reconciliation with First Nations.
- The population got older.
- We declared a climate emergency.
- Development pressures in the neighbouring cities of Vancouver, Victoria and Seattle, caused land prices to go up and reduced housing options.
- Trade increased so more cargo ships are travelling and anchoring in the Trust Area.
- Technology rapidly evolved.

We are updating the Policy Statement to be current, to be able to adapt to future challenges, and to take advantage of new and evolving opportunities.

The Policy Statement Guides Everything We Do

The Policy Statement helps shape our 20 official community plans – documents providing direction for community growth and change – plus associated bylaws, policies and regulations.

It is used to guide:

- Local trust committee special projects
- Decisions on rezoning applications and associated proposed bylaw amendments
- Advocacy to other levels of government about things that matter locally

Islands 2050 Timeline

Islands 2050, which is all about updating the Islands Trust Policy Statement, involves seven stages.

It started with stage one, public engagement. Over five months we met with the public and gathered their input face-to-face and online.

In stage two, which involved producing this report, we reported back on what we heard.

In stage three, after analysing data, we will share information about what we learned.

At stage four, we will apply what we learned and draft a revised Policy Statement Bylaw.

In stage five, the revised bylaw will go to Trust Council and will be introduced for first reading.

At stage six, second reading will involve Council discussing the bylaw and possibly making amendments. Then, during the third reading, there will be a final discussion about the bylaw before it is approved.

Finally, in stage seven, the bylaw will be approved and adopted by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Islands Trust will be meaningfully engaging with First Nation governments and communities at each stage of the Island 2050 process.



* Timeline is subject to change based on First Nations engagement

What We Asked You

In person and online we asked:

- What do you value about the Trust Area?
- What opportunities do you see to protect and preserve the Trust Area?
- In the context of a changing climate, what concerns do you have for the next 30 years?



Pictured: Islands 2050 booth at the Salt Spring Island Fall Fair in September 2019.

How We Engaged

In Fall 2019, we hosted 24 events across the Trust Area. We:

- Held evening open houses
- Set up booths at key community locations
- Sailed BC Ferries with information displays
- Welcomed ideas online through a comment forum called Thought Exchange.

During that time:

557 people
attended open houses
and information booths

789 people
participated on Thought
Exchange providing
1,269 comments

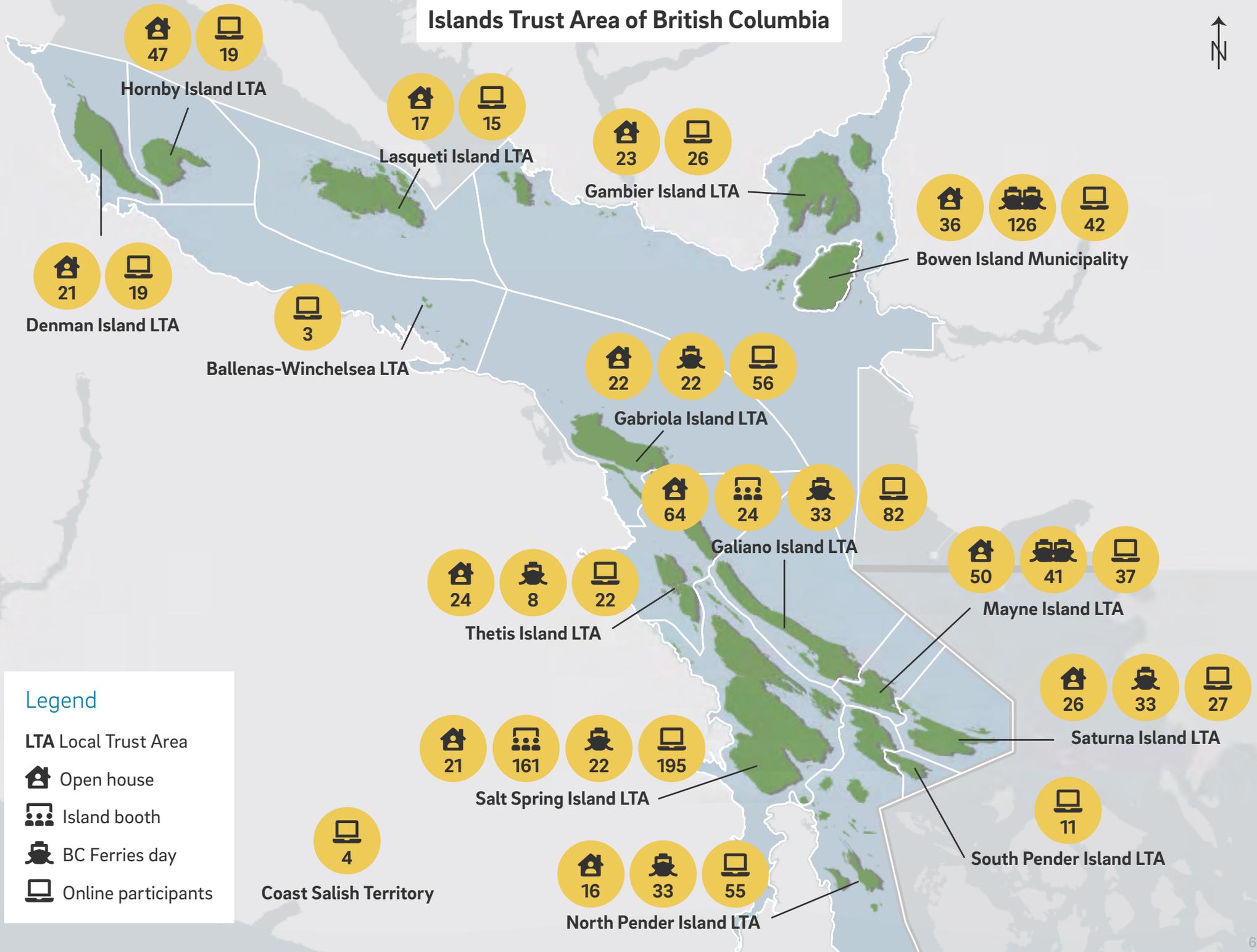
132 people
spoke with us on
the ferries

24,257 ratings
on comments in
Thought Exchange

149 people
browsed our display
and materials

The map of the Trust Area (next page) shows the 13 local trust areas and Bowen Island Municipality along with some results from the engagement process.

Islands Trust Area of British Columbia



Legend

- LTA Local Trust Area
- Open house
- Island booth
- BC Ferries day
- Online participants

What we heard

When we asked “What do you value about the Trust Area?”, twelve main themes emerged from the 933 comments we received.

Below there is a star representing the most common theme in each Local Trust Committee or Island Municipality. There is also a legend showing the abbreviations of each area.



- BI** Bowen **GL** Galiano **LA** Lasqueti **SS** Salt Spring **TH** Thetis
- DI** Denman **GM** Gambier **MA** Mayne **SA** Saturna
- GB** Gabriola **HI** Hornby **NP** North Pender **SP** South Pender

What do you value about the Trust Area?

* Online and in person

Key Themes	Common words used in comments to describe the theme	Total # of comments*	Example Comments
Connection to Nature	Solitude, natural beauty, water, ocean, love, quiet, peaceful, community	207	"The trust area is peaceful, beautiful, and clean, and is a spirit filled place. [It was] my home as a young adult. I'm blessed to live here fulltime once again. Not everyone can earn a livelihood in such a place! Let's be generous."
Preserve & Protect Mandate	Role of Islands Trust, special, environment	139	"I value that it is a special entity with a mandate to preserve and protect the nature."
Planning, Policy & Governance	Community, democracy, development, land and water use decisions, mandate	135	"It has a special authority to manage land use only through provincial legislation. It is not pressured to balance land use with the delivery of community services, unlike a municipality."
Rural Island Culture	Landscape, unique, simpler, living, environment, community, maritime, nature	126	"Peace and serenity. There is a getaway feeling, not the maximized development that occurs elsewhere. Islands by their nature pull one away from the trappings of capitalism, commodifying, commercialization, and congestion."
Community Resilience	Connectivity, self sufficient, supportive, strong, adaptable	117	"These islands are sacred, peaceful, and perfectly preserved. We have a variety of friendly people who support each other. We know who one another are. It's important to feel connected with where one lives and who the people around them are."
Infrastructure, Transportation & Services	Low carbon, community, footprint, internet, connectedness, active transportation, proximity	56	<p>"I want to reduce carbon intensive transportation methods. I want to invest in electric charging stations, and community bus systems, and improve hitch hiking advertisement."</p> <p>"Can the existing infrastructure support the islands capacity? What does these trends tell us? What is the cost of living on an island? Can we be more self-sufficient?"</p>

Biodiversity & Species Protection	Protect, diversification, dying, trees, marine	54	"An ecologically important area, the Georgia Basin contains unique plants and animals that need to be protected. I value the rural lifestyle with opportunities to limit unchecked development."
Food & Water Security	Production, rainwater harvesting, local, farming, access	31	"Rainwater harvesting should be allowed for potable water use as technology allows. Solar panels. There needs to be better enforcement of short term vacation rentals to protect the water."
Local Economy & Tourism	Negative, positive, real estate, businesses, thrive, hinder	17	"Tourism is negatively impacting the island as it is making housing hard to find. Tourism/Airbnb is lowering the rental market availability."
Affordable Housing	Income housing, limited development, population pressures, low impact rural solutions	13	"Low impact rural solutions to affordable housing like land sharing, co-op housing, tiny home village, retirement communities can be accomplished. Creative and ecological small foot print solutions are out there and can be obtained when there is a will."
Cultural Heritage & Reconciliation	History, justice, support, learn, protect, heritage	13	"Commitment of Islands Trust (IT) to reconciliation. Recent efforts have illustrated that the IT is "walking the talk" when it comes to reconciliation-something the provincial government has yet to do."
Safety	Children, quiet, dock, homeless, low crime	11	"I value our safe, quiet communities. However, we have a growing homeless population in downtown Salt Spring. We have witnessed aggressive behavior from some of the people. We require on island facilities, as the RCMP are chronically under staffed and 75% of the issues seem to stem from mental health."



What we heard (cont'd)

When we asked "In the context of a changing climate, what concerns do you have for the next 30 years?", sixteen main themes emerged from the 732 comments we received.

Below there is a star representing the most common theme in each Local Trust Committee or Island Municipality. There is also a legend showing the abbreviations of each area.



In the context of a changing climate, what are your concerns for the next 30 years?

* Online and in person

Key Themes	Common words used in comments to describe the theme	Total # of comments*	Example Comments
Ecosystem Change	Climate, dying, invasive, removal, extreme weather, erosion, cedars	95	"Already seeing significant tree death, fewer insects, fewer birds, etc. This is an emergency. Ecosystem health is our health."
Water	Shortage, security, ground water, portable, wells, development, desertification, biggest issue on islands, access	92	<p>"Water Security: insufficient well monitoring data, water storage infrastructure, and policy for aquifer/freshwater ecosystems protection. There is a strain on aquifers and freshwater ecosystems due to peak freshwater demands during summertime droughts (which may be prolonged with climate change)"</p> <p>"Healthy forests prevents island acidification. Coastal forests provide a biotic pump bringing in flows of moisture laden air from the adjacent ocean, which means more rain. www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKL40aBg-7E"</p>
Land and Marine Use Decision-making	Housing, over development, private, affordable, sustainable, enforcement, monitoring, bylaws, planning, tourists	83	<p>"It's important to always have a climate change lens on everything IT does. Policies and land use decision making should reflect these decisions."</p> <p>"Can Islands Trust create zoning to reduce shoreline development? We need to prevent home owners & developers building infrastructure on difficult areas."</p> <p>"Lifestyles of personal property [owners] need to change to a cooperative model where people are willing to leave a land trust for people to live and work. Higher density with adjacent farms and nature spaces. People are willing to share land."</p> <p>"Trustees spend a lot of time approving new bylaws, but those bylaws are not really enforced, meaning violators [do not] experience negative consequences. It is not a good use of time to pass bylaws that are really only suggestions."</p>

Governance	CRD, Indigenous, power sharing, tree cutting, forestry, reconciliation, regenerative development	67	<p>"I'm concerned that neither the Island's Trust nor the Capital Regional District (CRD) have the jurisdiction to really get a handle on climate change resilience planning. [That]means besides lots of words, nothing real will get done."</p> <p>"Lack of political will in spite of 'declarations'. Governments have declared emergencies rather frivolously. An emergency means you change how you operate top to bottom."</p>
Ecosystems Protection	Deforestation, preserving, protecting, threatened, shoreline, loss, cedar, species, acidification, erosion, dying, flora, fauna	49	<p>"I am very concerned about the increase of our human footprint on the landscape Habitat loss, our indigenous flora and fauna is negatively impacted by the increase in the human population and its food choices."</p> <p>"Summer drought, winter storms, extended power outages, dying and stressed flora and fauna. It is difficult to predict or prepare for what is ahead."</p> <p>"I'm already seeing die-off of cedar trees on Mayne Island. What other species are we going to lose? What will the impacts be for the delicate and beautiful ecosystems that we all love?"</p>
Transportation	Active, bikes, non-motorized paths, public transit, pollution, BC Ferries, sustainable, parking, reduce carbon emissions	48	<p>"How do we encourage islanders to ride their bikes? We need to make active transportation more accessible and safer. We require bike only paths for everyone to use and be safe!"</p> <p>"We need to reduce our carbon footprint; however, how do we do this? What is the most effective way? If we invest in electric engines, won't we be increasing the demand on our electricity grid? Will we really decrease our carbon footprint overall?"</p> <p>"We're too dependent on individual vehicles. We need shared transportation that syncs up with the ferry ebb and flow, to reduce emissions and impacts."</p>



Community Resilience	Adaptation, survival, responsibility, local sustainable systems, community resources and strategies, difficult times to come	47	<p>“Deep concern that we are not collectively prepared – in terms of infrastructure, food security, community resilience, civility. A significant amount of foresight, planning and thoughtfulness is required to address this crisis.”</p> <p>“I am afraid that the majority of people are ignoring climate change and not making lifestyle changes to alleviate the problems. Ideally we act as a community supporting local farmers and businesses and [use] public transit instead of driving all over the place as well as off island.”</p> <p>“How do we reconnect and support one another when we all have differences of opinions as a community?”</p> <p>“How will the stress of climate change affect the cohesive quality of communities? Will the rich/poor divide widen? Denman Island has the highest levels of household poverty in the Comox Valley, and some extremely wealthy property owners.”</p>
Food security	Local, agriculture, productivity, climate change, drought, island grown, system, regenerative agriculture, sustainability, soil quality	47	<p>“Regenerative agriculture sequesters carbon. Current agriculture is oxidizing soil carbon producing greener house gas (GHG) emissions. See <i>The Magic of Soil</i> on YouTube and learn about regenerative agriculture.”</p> <p>“Food insecurity is going to grow exponentially. Food will grow more costly, and moving it around the world costs carbon. Local food movements are growing, but there is a limited opportunity.”</p> <p>“Food production is one of the largest costs to islanders How do we produce food sustainable on our islands? Should we invest in electric transportation and other forms in order to produce local food?”</p> <p>“The growth in animal agriculture on our gulf Islands seems ignorant of the impact of GHG omissions, excessive water use, and biodiversity loss. We must shift our agriculture to stock free, agro ecological systems for better use of arable lands currently occupied by resource intensive livestock.”</p>



Fire Risks	Forest fires, drought, risk management, climate change, wildfire, dry	42	<p>"I'm concerned about dry forests and absent-minded people starting fires on the islands. In 2006, we had a massive fire on Galiano, and if the winds hadn't changed our island community would have predominately disappeared."</p> <p>"Fires are increasing everywhere with climate change, and we are extremely vulnerable on these islands. We need to protect our wetlands and lakes and be fire smart with replanting forest cover."</p> <p>"Flammable invasive plants like Scotch broom should be required to be removed by property owners with disposal managed by the city. The plant, due to its high flammability, poses an increased risk to [the] life and of our ecosystem."</p>
Education	Communication tools, advocacy, reduce, reuse, and then recycle, value, technical advice, lack of knowledge, lots of questions asking for help	37	<p>"I take responsibility for protecting biodiversity on our island. I do not cut down trees. I am conscious of the ground water I use. I want support from the Islands Trust in the stewardship of the forest and wildlife. I need technical advice, especially in this changing climate."</p> <p>"[The is a] lack of knowledge and commitment to IT mandate from most residents."</p> <p>"We need to educate! Let us implement simplistic ways to educate people on climate change. We need to help spread what to do about climate change."</p> <p>"[Have] Education for newcomers regarding critical island resources and ways of living responsibly on the land. Newcomers may be eager to discover ways they can live connected to the natural environment, but islanders and Islands Trust lack efficient communication tools."</p>



Sea Level Rise	Impacts, docks, planning, shorelines, development, infrastructure, water levels, erosion, wells, sewage, waterfront properties	31	<p>“Can we complete an asset management report prior to sea level rise? Who will pay for the property that may be lost?”</p> <p>“Sea level rise will affect beachfront properties. Owners of property on the sea (i.e. waterfront) are likely to build berms and channels. The trustees should enact local bylaws and clarify federal ownership of intertidal zones, to avoid disrupting breeding/spawning of marine species.”</p> <p>“Rising sea levels will slowly reduce the usability of ferry docks. The Islands Trust should lobby BC Ferries, and the government must upgrade ferry docks to maintain existing services. In particular, Denman’s cable ferry may be less adaptable to other ferries.”</p>
Wood Smoke	Fine particle pollution, cigarette smoke, cheap, air pollution, science, health, carbon footprint	21	<p>“Scientific studies have recently linked the fine particle pollution created by burning wood to heart attack and stroke. When particulate pollution goes up, so do deaths from heart disease and stroke.”</p> <p>“Taxing the cost of wood burning needs to be implemented so it is no longer “a cheap alternative “to other greener, cleaner solutions.”</p> <p>“Wood smoke is worse than cigarette smoke; the toxic properties are similar, but wood smoke contains dangerous PM2.5 particulate matter.”</p>
Economics & Employment	Tourism, tourist, development, pressure, internet, jobs	20	<p>“Island Tourism and Climate Change – Plans for protecting island ecology and permanent residents with increased tourism while maintaining stable economy Increased strain on water and terrestrial ecosystems, local food security with increased tourism; however we don’t want to remove people’s main income.”</p>
Public Services	Community planning, services,	17	<p>“Public services vary depending on what islands one lives on. Public Services can mean a variety of services, but what does IT provide all of us?”</p>
Population	Economy, overpopulation, limited resources, tourists, how many people can live on the islands?	13	<p>“Since the elephant in the room is population, would we as a community ever consider a population cap? Any healthy ecosystem can only support a limited number of individuals (e.g. planet). Should we start limiting the number of people to match resources/eco?”</p>

**Deforestation &
Tree Cutting**

Private, developers, tree removal,
policy

13

“Consideration of tree retention policies to protect the ecosystems of the islands may be necessary. People say they value trees, but clear. Their land Developers will log the more merchantable trees (fir and cedar) and leave the maples and alders.”

Alternative Energy

Sustainable, electric, invest,
composting toilets

10

“The inflexibility shown by the IT and CRD regarding more sustainable building is unconscionable. The lack of incentives or support for alternative water, grey water reuse, composting toilets, alternative energy, etc. is sad and so backwards.”



What we heard (cont'd)

When we asked "What opportunities do you see to preserve and protect the Trust Area?", seventeen main themes emerged from the 225 comments we received.

As not all geographical areas provided feedback on this question during in person events, rankings are not indicated.



Advocacy



Climate Change



Emergency Preparedness



Preserve & Protect Mandate



Alternative Energy & Infrastructure



Cultural Heritage & Reconciliation



Enforcement



Partnerships & Program Initiatives



Alternative Living & Community Resilience



Forestry, Deforestation & Tree Cutting



Food Security



Planning & Policy Initiatives



Biodiversity & Species Protection



Economics & Employment



Governance



Water System Infrastructure & Management



Education & Communication



Housing

Principles

Islands 2050 principles helped guide our engagement process and will continue to influence our requests for public input. We work to:

- Ensure our processes are inclusive and support participation
- Involve and provide access to anyone who wants to participate
- Improve events based on community feedback
- Provide participants with simple yet meaningful information
- Nurture community conversations that value all voices in a safe environment
- Bring people together and work collaboratively in a solution-focused way

How to get more involved

There is still time to provide input to Islands Trust. We encourage individuals, community groups and agencies to write to us.

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Next steps

Staff will continue to undertake an analysis of the Policy Statement with the themes that emerged during the engagement process. They will provide options for addressing gaps and make amendment recommendations. Islands Trust will be seeking further input from the public.

This work will be influenced by the on-going First Nation engagement process. We will draft amendments to the Policy Statement which will be provided to Trust Council.

After Trust Council has accepted a draft, we will provide more opportunities for public input.

Then the Policy Statement will go to Trust Council for adoption before getting final approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Finally, the last step will involve local trust committees and Bowen Island Municipality. They will work with their communities and First Nations to update their official community plans to reflect and respond to the new Islands Trust Policy Statement.

Stay informed

Thank you for your interest and contribution to the Islands 2050 engagement process.

Sign up for our Islands 2050 subscriber notice and we'll email updates to you.

Follow us on:

 @IslandsTrust

 @Islands_Trust

Visit our website IslandsTrust.bc.ca

Pictured: Islands 2050 open house on Thetis Island in November 2019.