

The Shore Line Buffer Conversation

Re: [Reimagining Growth: The Shoreline Buffer Conversation - Islands Trust](#)

The Islands Trust was established in the early 1970's to prevent rapid development pressure from damaging the Gulf Islands. The Trust's goals were to protect fragile ecosystems, to maintain the island's rural character and protect the limited freshwater supplies from overpopulation and resort development. The Trust on Gabriola has achieved these goals primarily by maintaining the population density established at the time of the ITs inauguration. The result for Gabriola has been a huge increase of parkland in exchange for allowing some minor subdividing of larger land parcels. They have been successful in conserving the nature of our beautiful island but are now exceeding their mandate by introducing land-use changes which will limit island residents' enjoyment and development of their private property.

Who is affected by this proposed 200-metre buffer "Development Permit Area" around the shore line of Gabriola Island? You don't have to have a waterfront property to be affected. Using the latest RDN maps, I estimate there are approximately 600 waterfront properties on the island and, since 200-metres extends past many inshore property lines, another 450 properties may also be "in the zone". Think of the houses across the street on The Strand, Canso Whalebone, Malaspina Drive, Berry Point and several others. All of the DeCourcy peninsula is included. Maybe 20 square kilometres of the island land mass is affected. And for what?

Our Trust representatives will use intangibles like climate change and Indigenous reconciliation to justify their encroachment on our private property rights. Coastal erosion is a fact of life that affected property owners acknowledge and must live with whether there is any rise in water levels or not. If there is a real problem with fertilizers and pesticides making their way into the sea, it would be an Island wide issue given the numerous creeks crossing the landscape and not be limited to only the first 200-metres. But the largest threat to the approximately 1,000 affected properties is to declare them within a cultural heritage protected area.

We can assume that, reminiscent of the Island Trust's 2012 Steep Slope initiative, property owners will be required to get permission to affect any change on their land whether it be installing a concrete pad for an out-building or hottub, removing a tree or making any changes to the landscaping. Purchasing a permit will be followed by obtaining approval through the requisite consultation with archeologists, arborists, botanists, geotechnical engineers, etc., and we know who is going to pay for that. Witness the delays and frustration in the town of Lytton since their 2021 fire. Four years later only a couple of building permits have been issued to allow reconstruction. Would you buy a property where control over how you maintain the land is managed by an agency who is indifferent to the cost and delays incurred? Of course not and neither would anyone else. If this "Development Permit Area" plan goes ahead, property values will plummet. Home equity counted on for retirement or anything else will be extinguished.

Do we know if any of the proponents of this "Development Permit Area" live within the 200-metre buffer? I doubt it. Any consideration of this initiative should be stopped now before any further tax payer money is spent on developing such a bad idea.

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