

Gambier Island Local Trust Committee

Gambier Island Official Community Plan and Land  
Use Bylaw Targeted Review Project

FOREST ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION DISCUSSION  
PAPER - DRAFT

July 2022



Islands Trust

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## Summary

The Gambier Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) is engaged in a targeted review of the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw in the Gambier Island Local Trust Area. As a mechanism for providing background and context, staff have prepared a discussion paper on forestry policies and regulations on Gambier Island. The purpose of this discussion paper is to provide analysis, technical information and recommend options to the Gambier LTC that will inform discussion and deliberation for forest ecosystem protection.

### 1.

#### Introduction

The Gambier Island Local Trust Committee is embarking on a review of Gambier Island's land use policies and regulations, with a specific focus on four topic areas:

- forest ecosystem protection,
- shoreline protection,
- archaeological and cultural site protection, and
- access to public docks.

The purpose of these discussion papers is to inform discussion and deliberations for the Gambier Island Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) Targeted Review. The focus of this discussion paper is forest ecosystem protection.

The overall objectives of the Project are to amend the Gambier OCP and LUB with regards to:

- First Nations Perspectives;
- Archaeological and cultural site protection;
- Forest Ecosystem Protection;
- Shoreline Protection;
- Public docks;
- Technical amendments; and
- Develop the style and structure of the OCP document as an Islands Trust model.

### 2. Background:

The Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) forest ecosystem types that occur in the Howe Sound islands are at risk, particularly from unsustainable logging, but also from rural development. These forest ecosystems support some of the greatest diversity and abundance of wildlife habitat in BC, such as providing critical habitat for species-at-risk like the Marbled Murrelet and Northern Goshawk. The CWH forests also benefit our communities.

#### Top Priority in 2015

A review of Gambier's OCP was identified as Top Priority project in 2015. At that time, there was a desire by the LTC to pursue a comprehensive plan for the area that would holistically address cross-jurisdictional issues such as forest tenure on Crown land. In particular, the Gambier Island Conservancy requested the LTC to pursue a review of the permitted uses for both the Wilderness Conservation land use designation in the OCP and for the Wilderness Conservation zoning in the LUB. A feasibility report on such a review was requested of staff as a part of the project.

### **Woodlot licences**

During this time, concern was heightened as a result of a newly created Woodlot Licence, on Gambier Island. The advertisement of two community woodlots on Gambier in late 2013 triggered an extended effort by planning staff and the LTC throughout 2014 to implement the advocacy policies in the OCP regarding the Wilderness Conservation land use designation. During this time concerns about the outdated protocol agreements between the Islands Trust and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (currently MFLNRORD) as well as concerns about the current land use designation policies for Wilderness Conservation were raised by the LTC and the community.

The issue of woodlot use in the Gambier Crown land involves both FLNRO (now MFLNRORD) and the Squamish Nation as key stakeholders; as such, any OCP bylaw amendment will require a robust level of consultation and collaboration with both in order to meet the requirements of the Ministry. The land on Gambier designated as Wilderness Conservation is comprised of what is commonly referred to as Crown land. As such, engagement on policies around Wilderness Conservation land use also requires the interests and comments from Provincial agencies and the First Nations that assert their rights and title over that land.

### **Summer 2016 Community Survey**

The community survey asked respondents which uses they would like to see in the Wilderness Conservation (Crown) land in the centre of the island, and whether they believed they needed more information about certain options. The majority responded favourably for the following options: Conservation of Ecosystems and Biodiversity; Recreation; and Network of Green Space. Hunting was also noted highly with about one-third of respondents replying favourably.

The options receiving higher requests for more information were: Community Forest Initiatives; Protected Park; and Open Space for Water Recharge.

### **Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership**

The Gambier Island LTC collaborated with the Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership (CDFCP) to secure a contract for an ecological mapping project which identified priority conservation areas on Gambier. The project has now been completed and the Project Coordinator (Ecosystem Protection Specialist, Kate Emmings) presented findings at the April 27, 2017 LTC meeting

### **First Nations Engagement**

Both the Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation have asserted Aboriginal Rights in the Gambier Island Plan area. The Squamish Nation has participated in two key consultation activities with the Islands Trust: a Community to Community Forum on March 31, 2016, and a special meeting with Gambier Islanders on

February 2, 2017. Key areas for collaboration with the Squamish were discussed at each of these events, and include: the Wilderness Conservation land use designation, parks and trails, protecting shorelines, protecting cultural sites, and the New Brighton dock. The project was put on hold in 2018 and recommenced in 2021.

## **Current**

In 2021, the LTC included forest ecosystem protection into the scope of the review project, which is anticipated to include exploration of forest protection on crown lands and private lands.

The scope of the project includes:

- Amendments to the OCP and LUB that include:
  - Language and policies that reflect First Nations perspectives;
  - Policy and schedule updates regarding land and marine use designations, including new or amended use designations;
  - Development Permit Areas to protect forests and shorelines;
  - Heritage Conservation Areas to protect archaeological and cultural sites;
  - Advocacy policies;
  - Technical amendments;
  - Developing a pilot model OCP bylaw in terms of style and structure.

This discussion paper has been prepared for the Working Group and the Gambier Island LTC, to present an overview of existing Gambier Island regulations and policies, provide a comparison of other Local Trust Area's regulations, and present potential regulatory options for proceeding.

## **3. Gambier Island's Forest Ecosystems**

### **3.1. Heritage and cultural values**

#### **Islands Trust Reconciliation Declaration**

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.

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.

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. (March 14, 2019, on Gabriola Island, Islands Trust Council adopted the Reconciliation Declaration.)

Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Nations all hold an important perspective and have a vested interest in the forest ecosystem of Gambier. Their stewardship of the land is deeply ingrained in their culture.

### **3.2. Natural assets**

The Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) Biogeoclimatic Zone is found nowhere else in Canada. It includes a unique set of ecosystems that occur along the edge of south-east Vancouver Island, across the Gulf Islands, and along the southwest coast of Vancouver Island. The Islands Trust Area is entirely within the CDF zone. There are 16 biogeoclimatic zones in British Columbia — of these, the CDF is the smallest and most at risk.

Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems are biologically, culturally, and physically important. These forested landscapes maintain our local climates, the sustainability of our freshwater systems, and the biodiversity of our islands. They are home to many endangered plant communities and are ranked as a high priority for preservation, globally and Islands Trust Staff Report 2 provincially. With the majority (68%) of CDF land across the Trust Area privately held, it is the residents and landowners who have the most responsibility and ability to carefully steward the CDF zone. Many special places on the islands are still special because of the care with which islanders take to preserving the land.

## **4. Policy and Regulatory Framework for Forest Management**

### **4.1. First Nation role**

- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act
  - Article 15.2 - States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.
  - Section 7 - enables the Province and Indigenous governing bodies to enter into agreements that recognize Indigenous decision-making with the provincial statutory decision-making framework. The intent of these agreements is to provide certainty and stability in statutory decision-making and to recognize and implement Indigenous jurisdiction as part of B.C.'s decision-making process.
- Forest consultation and revenue sharing agreements
  - These agreements help formalize how government to government engagement will take place for different decision types, and recognizes that licensee-led information sharing can be a beneficial form of engagement
  - Of critical importance is the fact that these agreements provide Indigenous communities with a portion of stumpage revenue based on a formula that accounts for the timber harvested from within their territories. Consequently, First Nations communities now receive direct economic benefits from forest operations that take place in their traditional territory.

### **4.2. Provincial authority over harvesting Crown and private timber**

#### **Private Managed Forest Land (PMFL)**

The Private Managed Forest Land Program was established in 2003 under the Private Managed Forest Land Act, under which landowners commit to manage their property for long-term forest production,

including meeting legislated objectives for key public environmental values. PMFL is governed by the Private Managed Forest Licence Act and Managed Forest Council. The object of the council is to encourage forest management practices on private managed forest land, taking into account the social, environmental and economic benefits of those practices (s. 5 – Private Managed Forest Land Act)

LTCs are not involved in the inclusion or exclusion of land from the PMFL. If land is classified or declassified as managed forest land, the PMFL Council is to give written notice to the affected local Government. Under Section 21 of the Act, a “local government must not do any of the following in respect of land that is private managed forest land if doing so would have the effect of restricting, directly or indirectly, a forest management activity”:

- a) adopt a bylaw under any enactment;
- b) issue a permit under section 8 (3) (l) of the Community Charter or Division 1 of Part 9 of the Local Government Act; and
- c) issue a permit under Part 14 of the Local Government Act

There are three PMFLs located on Gambier Island (FINAL COPY WILL INCLUDE MAP):

- one on west side of Gambier Island, zoned Forestry
- three separate lots on west side of Port Graves Bay, zoned RR
- one lot on east side of Port Graves Bay, zoned RR

### **Crown Lands**

According to the Forest Act, Crown land is defined as “land, whether or not it is covered by water, or an interest in land, vested in the government”. Crown lands are governed by the Forest Act & Regulations, Forest & Range Practices Act and Regulations and do not fall under the authority of the local municipality, LTC, or First Nation(s). The Crown Forest Management Land Base (CFMLB) consists of provincial Crown land with forest cover that is managed by the Ministry of Forests for timber supply and/or other forest management objectives that impact timber supply within the Sunshine Coast Timber Supply Area (SCTSA), which Gambier Island is located in. The CFMLB excludes:

- Non-provincial lands that are not within the decision land base, such as:
  - Private lands; and
  - Lands under federal jurisdiction
- Provincial lands managed under another Decision Area (non-SCTSA), such as:
  - Pacific TSA lands;
  - community forests (CFs);
  - tree farm licences (TFLs);
  - controlled recreation areas;
  - woodlot licences (WLs);
  - Land Claim Settlement Areas; and,
  - First Nations woodland licences (FNWLs).
- Non-forested and unproductive lands with no impact on forest management objectives

### **Woodlot Licences**

A woodlot licence grants licence holders exclusive rights to manage and harvest Crown timber within the woodlot licence area. Woodlot licences are awarded either through an advertised, competitive application process or a direct award. About 3.5 million cubic metres of timber is currently allocated for small tenures such as community forest agreement and woodlot licences.



The maximum term for a woodlot licence may not exceed 20 years and the maximum amount of Crown land that can be included in a woodlot licence is 800 hectares on the coast (Forest Act s. 45(1)). A woodlot licence management plan is also required.

There are currently two on woodlots on Gambier Island (FINAL COPY WILL INCLUDE MAP)

- Two adjoining woodlots ([WL 2068 and 2069](#)) on the NE side of the Island, zoned Wilderness Conservation – FLNRORD has indicated neither of the licenses are allocated and there are no plans to change their status at this time.
- One on the SW side of the Island (includes Whispering Creek area), zoned Forestry

### 4.3. Islands Trust/LTC authority & limitations

Land Tenure	Authority – What Islands Trust/LTC can do	Limitations – What Islands Trust/LTC cannot do
Private Managed Forest Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- include advocacy policies: e.g. encourage retention of old growth forest stands, harvesting not exceed rate of re-growth of trees, sustainable forest management, encourage the Council/land owners to work with the LTC in addressing issues on PMFL and/or include a public review process in development/review of management plans, adopt legislation that allows the LTC to regulate private land forestry.</li> <li>- include subdivision policy and regulations to support long-term viability of forestry use.</li> <li>- include policy and regulation to allow forestry use and limited residential use as allowed in PMFL Act.</li> <li>- include policy and regulation to encourage low impact recreation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adopt a bylaw or issue a permit that directly/indirectly restricts forest management activities (e.g. not permit forestry activities).</li> </ul>
Woodlot Licences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- include advocacy and other policies as above: e.g. request Ministry of Forests to only create new woodlot licences on limited lands (e.g. designated Forestry) and on a site-specific basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulations that restrict forestry activities may have no force and effect (may need a legal opinion to clarify assertion of authority)</li> </ul>
Other Crown Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- include advocacy and other policies as above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulations that restrict forestry activities may have no force and effect (may need a legal opinion to clarify assertion of authority)</li> </ul>

Private lands (non PMFLs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See the <a href="#">Coastal Douglas-fir and Associated Ecosystems Protection Toolkit (Link)</a>.</li> <li>- enact a Development Permit Area for the purposes of protection of the natural environment.</li> <li>- Include policy and regulation to limit subdivision, cluster development, etc.</li> </ul>	- Other than Development Permit Areas, regulate tree cutting.
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## 5. Guidelines for Forest Ecosystem Protection Strategies

### 5.1. Coastal Douglas-fir & Associated Ecosystems Conservation Strategy 2021

Coastal Douglas-fir and associated ecosystems (CDFAE) are found across the landscape. Large areas are set aside for ecosystem protection, forestry and agriculture, while small patches of natural habitat exist in community parks and backyards. The mosaic of protection and stewardship recognizes that this place is home to a diversity of native plants and animals, as well as home to many people. Some areas will be protected and set aside with a primary purpose of supporting ecological integrity; the primary use of other areas may be for economic, recreational or other uses. Stewardship of the CDFAE lands must balance these sometimes competing, sometimes complementary, roles.

The Coastal Douglas Fir & Associated Ecosystems Conservation Strategy ([Link](#)) sets a 30-year vision and goals for the Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership (CDFCP); with objectives and actions Identified until 2025. The intent is to review and update the strategy every 5 years. The strategy indicates that the greatest threats to the integrity of the CDFAE are:

- Land Conversion
- Ecosystem Degradation and Biodiversity Loss
- Loss of Natural Processes
- Species Disturbances
- Invasive Species
- Climate Change; and
- Environmental Contaminants

The CDFCP have set three core goals for working towards a vision of ecological integrity for Coastal Douglas-fir and associated ecosystems (CDFAE). Three strategies reflect the broad approaches the CDFCP will use in achieving these goals.

- Goals
  - CDFAE values (including species and ecosystems at risk), are incorporated into local and regional policy and planning processes, and integrated into nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
    - **OBJECTIVE 1.1:** Collaborate with governments, First Nations and ENGOS to develop plans, policies, bylaws and incentives that recognize and enhance CDFAE values, and to integrate these values into nature-based solutions for mitigating climate change and climate change risk, with a focus on private and First Nations lands.

- **OBJECTIVE 1.2:** Provide education and outreach support to local governments and First Nations working to incorporate CDFAE values and nature-based climate solutions into their planning processes.
    - **OBJECTIVE 1.3:** Keep up-to-date with mapping and modelling initiatives relevant to the CDFCP area and capitalize on opportunities to share, collaborate and improve/extend decision-support tools.
  - Additional protection and stewardship of CDFAE is secured.
    - **OBJECTIVE 2.1:** Support local governments in establishing local conservation funds.
    - **OBJECTIVE 2.2:** Assist local governments, conservation groups and First Nations in identifying priority areas for securement and stewardship in their jurisdictions.
  - CDFCP capacity to deliver the above goals is enhanced and sustained.
    - **OBJECTIVE 3.1:** Secure adequate and ongoing funding and support for CDFCP staffing and programs.
    - **OBJECTIVE 3.2:** Monitor and report on the status CDFAE and related natural capital assets.
- Strategies
  - Encourage incorporation of science and traditional ecological knowledge into land-use planning, securement and stewardship.
  - Build effective partnerships among conservation groups, government, First Nations, universities and funders.
  - Increase awareness and support for CDFAE conservation and nature-based climate solutions.

## 5.2. Conservation Planning in Coastal Douglas-fir Ecosystems: A Quick Guide for Local Government

The Coastal Douglas Fur Conservation Partnership (CDFCP) arose from the recognition of a need for a more strategic and collaborative approach among those involved and interested in conservation efforts in Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems, and was developed through levels of engagement with governments, non-government conservation organizations, and community to achieve shared conservation goals. The CDFCP promotes shared stewardship and will identify conservation priorities, reduce duplication of effort, share resources and information, and provide support to its participants.

The Quick Guide ([Link](#)) provides a snapshot of the tools available to achieve CDFCP's goals and objectives to conserve coastal Douglas-fur and other ecosystems. Tools include:

- Policy and Development Tools
  - Official Community Plans
    - Development Permit Areas
    - Development Approval Information Areas
    - Land Use Plans
  - Zoning Bylaws
    - Zoning of land
    - Amenity zoning/upzoning
    - Density bonus

- Clustering
  - Density transfer
- Asset Management Plans - Asset management is a systematic business process for making strategic and operational decisions about municipal assets over their entire lifecycle. Since asset management frameworks are an important tool for local government budgeting and priority setting, they can be used to raise the awareness of ecosystem services provided by CDF ecosystems.
- Strategic Plans – Examples include: conservation strategies, watershed plans and urban forest plans.
- Incentives for Landowners – Incentives—such as density bonusing—can help to ‘sweeten the pot’ in discussions with developers. There are also financial incentives for landholders to donate all or part of their land to a land trust, or to place a conservation covenant on their land.
- Land Acquisition and Conservation Funds –In some areas of BC, Regional Conservation Funds have been established to support land acquisition and conservation projects.
- Partnerships with Conservation Organizations – Conservation organizations play a significant role in educating the public about ecosystem values. Many local governments have partnerships with these organizations to fulfill mutual goals.

## **6. Islands Trust Policy, Initiatives & Plans**

### **6.1. Islands Trust Policy Statement**

Trust Council is required under the Islands Trust Act to adopt a policy statement that applies to the entire Trust Area. The Islands Trust Policy Statement could be considered a regulatory tool. It is intended as a general statement of the policies of Trust Council for the purpose of carrying out the object of the Islands Trust, and is the legal mechanism by which Trust Council ensures that LTC bylaws are consistent with those policies. It provides a framework for land use planning in the Trust Area, and is a mechanism for compatibility between plans for the various local areas. All local trust committee bylaws and all official community plans and amendments must comply with the Policy Statement. Prior to adopting a bylaw, an LTC must forward the bylaw and checklist to the Executive Committee (EC) for approval and EC may only approve the bylaw if it is not contrary to or at variance with the Policy Statement.

Section 4.2 of the Islands Trust Policy Statement outlines commitments, directive policies, and recommendations in regards to forests on the islands. The major themes include sustainable forestry and protection of the forests throughout the islands. Recommendations include encouraging the Provincial Government to adopt mechanisms and policies to ensure meaningful community participation, promote sustainable forestry, protect forest ecosystems, and promote preservation (s. 4.2.9 – 4.2.16)

### **6.2. Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022**

Trust Council uses its strategic plan to guide its work. The strategic plan is a policy tool developed as the work program for Trust Council, and by extension, local trust committees, over the course of each political term. The strategic plan represents the political direction to undertake work; it is the organizational tool that can direct staff to develop policy and make recommendations for the protection

of the coastal Douglas-fir zone and its associated ecosystems. If protection of the CDF zone is not identified as a work program item in the Strategic Plan, it will not be resourced and advanced throughout the organization.

Trust council recently amended its Strategic Plan to include a number of forestry related initiatives:

- Establishment of development permit areas for Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems
- Enforcement of developments via municipal ticketing
- Advocacy to increase community input to the Private Managed Forest Land program
- The development of heritage overlay mapping for cultural heritage sites, which includes discussions with FLNRORD regarding Crown Lands
- Seeking a tree cutting authority under S 8 of the Community Charter, similar to municipal governments in BC

### **6.3. Islands Trust Conservancy Regional Conservation Plan 2018 – 2027**

To protect and restore these endangered species and ecosystems, the Islands Trust Conservancy has prepared a science-based Regional Conservation Plan that sets out strategies for the next ten years (2018-2027). The goals of the conservation plan include:

- Goal 1: Science-Based Conservation Planning;
- Goal 2: Collaboration with First Nations;
- Goal 3: Protection of Core Conservation Areas;
- Goal 4: A Strong Voice for Nature Conservation;

Because of limited resources, the Islands Trust Conservancy must conduct programs, including its outreach and fundraising, strategically. Based on the information available regarding ecosystem values, threats and current levels of conservation, the Islands Trust Conservancy will focus its outreach programs primarily on the Lasqueti Island, Salt Spring Island and Thetis Island local trust areas with a secondary focus on the Gabriola Island, Galiano Island and Gambier Island local trust areas.

### **6.4. Protecting the Coastal Douglas-fir and Associated Ecosystems: Islands Trust Toolkit**

This toolkit proposes that Islands Trust can better use its legislative scope to improve protection for the CDF zone. In doing so, Islands Trust policy development should be guided by the following objectives when advancing Coastal Douglas-fir protection throughout the Islands Trust Area:

- maintain contiguous forest cover;
- protect and Restore Functioning Ecosystems;
- protect watershed ecology;
- honour Coast Salish cultural heritage

These objectives will offer foundational direction for Islands Trust to consider in protecting its Coastal Douglas-fir forests. From the regional Trust Council (TC) and Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC), to local trust committees (LTCs) and community level actions, the Islands Trust has many tools to use in preserving and protecting the Coastal Douglas-fir zone across the Trust Area.

### **6.5. Trust Wide Stewardship Education & Advocacy**

At the Islands Trust, advocacy is the act of influencing and seeking cooperation with other agencies and decision-makers. A number of advocacy efforts respecting forest ecosystem protection have been undertaken ( <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/whats-happening/advocacy-letters/>) including:

- Asking the Province to change the Private Managed Forest Land Act (PMFL) to allow Local Trust Committees to regulate, but not prohibit, forest activities on PMFL lands.
- Asking the Province to enhance Trust's jurisdiction over tree cutting to make its jurisdiction equal to that of municipalities.
- Asking the Province to work with Islands Trust to update agreements about provincially managed lands.

## **7. Local Trust Committee Policies, Regulation & Stewardship Education**

### **7.1. Gambier Island Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 73, 2001**

The Gambier Island OCP has several policies that are relevant to Forestry. Forestry uses are permitted in two land use designations: Rural Residential and Resource Lands.

*Policy 4.21* states that the principle permitted use of Rural Residential should be single family residential. However, agricultural and forestry uses may also be permitted subject to compliance with the minimum parcel area requirements as specified in the zoning regulations.

*Advocacy Policy 6.17* states that Crown land areas of particular importance for park and conservation purposes may be protected as park for such purposes. Included in this list is i) all areas of old growth forest.

Section 7 of the OCP lays out policies and objectives in regards to Resource Lands. Uses included in Resource Lands are as follows:

- Agriculture;
- Forestry;
- Wilderness Conservation; and
- Marine and Foreshore Areas.

Forestry has its own specific objectives within the Resource Lands section:

- Objective 7.7 - to retain large contiguous areas of forested land;
- Objective 7.8 - to support forestry practices which are compatible with and complementary to the values of conservation and sustainability;
- Objective 7.9 to support limited small-scale timber production while retaining the environmental and recreational values of forested land;
- Objective 7.10 to encourage the use of forested land for recreation, wildlife habitat, biological diversity and cultural resource uses;
- Objective 7.11 to support access by area residents to the Gambier Island's crown land timber supply for community forest or woodlot purposes.

*Advocacy Policy 7.8* is particularly important since the majority of the Forestry lands are located on Crown Land. This indicates that there is a jurisdictional component, since the lands are owned by the Province of British Columbia and not Gambier Island. The policy states:

*While crown land in the Gambier Island Planning Area is recognized to be within the Sunshine Coast Timber Supply Area, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management is requested to examine means to remove Gambier Island from any annual allowable cut through the Land and Resource Management Plan process and provide that no licensing process for timber harvesting is provided, other than through woodlot tenures or a community forest. If Gambier Island cannot be removed from any annual allowable cut the Ministry of Forests is requested to treat Gambier Island as a sustainable forest management unit through the Forest Development Plan and allow only sustainable harvesting of trees through its licensing procedures and insure that such harvesting should not exceed the rate of re-growth of trees on Gambier Island.*

Policies 7.9 through 7.20 provide direction on how Forestry Land use objectives are to be met/exceeded. The section also provides other advocacy policies (7.21- 7.24).

One of the primary goals of the OCP, when it comes to forestry, is to retain as much of the existing forested land on Gambier Island and mitigate loss through policies and objectives. However, because the majority of the forested land on the Island is Crown land, it makes it very difficult for the LTC since they do not have authority over much of the forested land on the Island. Through the Gambier OCP, the LTC and Islands Trust have advocated for the Province to take a conservation approach on Gambier Island to prevent unnecessary harm to the forests and associated ecosystems and species.

## **7.2. Gambier Island Land Use Bylaw**

The Gambier Island Land Use Bylaw (LUB) has several policies that are relevant to Forestry. The bylaw defines *Forestry* as being “all activities related to the development and care of forests, including harvesting of timber, seedling and tree nurseries, and including the regulated processing of timber harvested on the same lot”. The use of private managed forest land for a forest management activity related to or carried out for the production and harvesting of forest resources is permitted in all zones. This use is also exempted from obtaining a development permit for DPA #1. The following zones reference forestry uses:

*Rural Residential (RR) Zone* - The purpose of the RR zone is to provide regulations for the development of low density single family residential areas and agriculture and forestry on larger lots. Forestry is listed as one of the permitted uses for this zone. Buildings and structures accessory to agriculture use and forestry use are also permitted. The RR zone permits single family residential use on all RR zoned land; however, depending on the size of the parcel, an associated secondary dwelling is permitted in the case the parcel is 0.4 ha or greater unless the parcel complies to 3.14(1)(c), which states:

*In those instances where the lot is less than 0.4 hectare in area and a dwelling unit with an occupancy permit from the Sunshine Coast Regional District issued prior to November 15, 1996 has been constructed on the lot, an associated secondary dwelling with a maximum floor area of 60 square metres shall be permitted.*

*Forest (F) Zone* - The purpose of the F Zone is to provide regulations to support small-scale forestry such as community forestry and woodlot use, and coastal log storage and handling use in the marine area adjacent to upland Forest zoned lots. Forestry is listed as one of the permitted uses for this zone. Accessory uses to forestry are also permitted. The FF zone also permits one single family residential dwelling with buildings and structures accessory to the permitted uses with the maximum total lot coverage of all buildings and structures being 5%.

The Gambier Island LUB does not have extensive policies in regards to forestry, nor does it specify the extent to which land can be forested. It does, however, regulate how much land can be developed on parcels where the zones permit forestry uses.

### **7.3. Gambier Local Trust Committee Stewardship Education & Advocacy**

#### **7.4. Other Local Trust Area work**

- Riparian Areas Protection
  - The purpose of the provincial Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR) (formerly known as Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR)) is to provide protection for riparian areas from development that would damage fish habitat. Riparian areas broadly refer to streams, lakes, and wetlands, but, the main focus of this initiative is on watercourses that support fish habitat. Enacted in 2004, the RAPR requires local governments in the province to adopt bylaws to control development within 30 metres of streams that support fish habitat.
- Keats Island Shoreline Protection
  - This project has now entered Phase 3 which includes the establishment of a Shoreline Development Permit Area (DPA) for the purposes of protecting the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity, and protecting development from hazardous conditions. Included in this phase are potential land use bylaw amendments to restrict the size and type of identified marine structures.

## **8. Options for Forest Ecosystem Protection Strategies**

### **8.1. Development Permit Area**

*Considerations: Contemplate creating DPAs to protect the Gambier Island Forests and associated ecosystems within jurisdiction.*

**Pros:** Allows Islands Trust to control land uses in specific areas. Additionally, introduces more additional robust layers of justification that an applicant must provide to ensure mitigation measures are in place and there are no adverse effects on the forests or associated ecosystems.

**Cons:** Not an Island wide policy and typically just small areas of land. Additionally, DPAs are only applicable to land in Islands Trust jurisdiction.

### **8.2. Enhancing Policy and/or Land Use Bylaw Regulations**

*Considerations: Review OCP and LUB for strong language that prioritizes protection of Gambier Island forests in land use planning within jurisdiction.*

**Pros:** Allows Islands Trust to have authority over what land uses are/are not allowed on a higher level OCP level and site by site LUB level.

**Cons:** At the OCP level, policies can cover a wider area meaning that Islands Trust can control how land is used at a higher level. However, at the LUB level, the policies are on a site by site basis and single zones typically do not cover large areas. Additionally, as is the case with DPAs, OCP and LUB policies are only applicable to land in Islands Trust jurisdiction.

### **8.3. Stewardship Education, Advocacy, Partnerships**

*Considerations: Strengthen engagement with the Provincial and Federal Governments to find opportunities for protection of the Gambier Island Forests.*



**Pros:** Potential to have the greatest positive impact on forestry protection on the Island since the majority of the forested land on Gambier is Crown land. An example of a strong advocacy role that produced results was the 2018 Ministerial Order that has protected the CDF zone on Crown Lands across the Trust Area.

**Cons:** There are no notable cons to Islands Trust being in stewardship education, advocacy, and partnership roles.

## **9. Conclusion**

Forestry on Gambier Island is an important issue in which the Province, LTC, First Nations, and public all have an interest in. The health and sustainability of these forests and associated ecosystems/species is of utmost importance. The biggest threat to the Island's forests are fragmentation through logging/forestry and development.

Islands Trust has some tools available to achieve protection of forests and ecosystems, however, because the lands aren't squarely within Islands Trust jurisdiction they do not have authority to make any policy decisions. The majority of the forest lands on Gambier Island are Provincial Crown lands and thus Provincial authority. Islands Trust bodies can mitigate this by collaborating with the Provincial Government and advocate for sustainable forestry and protection of the forests and associated ecosystems. This would help to achieve the goal of ensuring policy development that achieves Trust Council goals and objectives by undertaking the following:

- Contemplate creating DPAs to protect the Gambier Island Forests and associated ecosystems within jurisdiction.
- Review OCP and LUB for strong language that prioritizes protection of Gambier Island forests in land use planning within jurisdiction.
- Strengthen engagement with the Provincial and Federal Governments to find opportunities for protection of the Gambier Island Forests.

## **10. Appendix 1 – Islands Trust Policy Statement Policies**

## **11. Appendix 2 – Gambier Island OCP Policies**

## **12. Appendix 3 – Gambier Island LUB Regulations**

## **13. Appendix 4 – etc.**

Insert Map that shows provincial, private and municipal lands.

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