



DATE OF MEETING: April 27, 2021

TO: Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee

FROM: Jason Youmans, Island Planner
Salt Spring Island Team

COPY: Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA)

SUBJECT: Salt Spring Island Watershed Stewardship and Protection Strategy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide for discussion a draft project charter for the development of a Salt Spring Island Watershed Stewardship and Protection Strategic Plan. The reason that staff are providing a memo rather than staff report with recommendations is twofold:

1) Staff Resourcing

At the moment, it is uncertain whether there is staff capacity to manage the proposed project. As such, the LTC should not endorse a project charter that commits staff to action within prescribed timelines until those staff resources are confirmed.

2) Project Scope

Staff wish to confirm that the LTC, through this project, is seeking a higher level strategy, rather than a more targeted action plan, and are seeking confirmation as to whether such is intended to address only watershed protection, or whether it is to address drinking water protection as well. Additionally, staff require clarity on whether this is anticipated to be a document for execution by the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee, or by all agencies and organizations with an interest in freshwater on the Island.

BACKGROUND

The idea of developing a watershed protection strategic plan for Salt Spring Island was first brought to the LTC's attention by Trustee Laura Patrick in the form of a [Request for Decision \(RFD\)](#) and [draft project charter](#) presented at the LTC's January 19, 2021 meeting. At that meeting, the following resolutions were passed by the LTC:

SS-2021-006

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

That the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee approve in principle the development of, under the guidance of a qualified consultant, an executable strategic plan to guide and prioritize watershed protection work on a long-term basis (5 to 10 year time frame) to better support decision-makers in advancing effective, modernized land and water use planning.

CARRIED

SS-2021-007

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to report back with a project charter for the development of a watershed protection strategic plan generally consistent with the Request for Decision included in January 19, 2021 regular meeting agenda package and that staff investigate opportunities to harmonize plan development with the Regional Planning Committee's Freshwater Sustainability Strategy.

CARRIED

SS-2021-008

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee requests that Trust Council amend the 2021/22 draft budget to include the allocation of up to \$50,000 from Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee surplus funds to hire a contractor to guide the development of a strategic watershed protection plan for Salt Spring Island and that the funds would only be expended with explicit approval of the Local Trust Committee.

CARRIED

Issues and Opportunities

Project Resourcing and Procurement

Islands Trust is currently reorganizing its delivery of planning services during the same time the LTC has increased its number and intensity of long-range planning projects. As the latest proposed project, it is unclear when Local Planning Services staff will be available to manage this proposed project on the LTC's behalf.

If the procurement process can be simplified by way of direct award to the consultants carrying out the greater Regional Planning Committee's Freshwater Sustainability Strategy, the project itself should not take significant planning staff time, as the majority of the work will be carried out by the consultant who may in turn work with the coordinator of the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA) to the greatest extent possible.

Planning staff are working to coordinate this initiative with the Islands Trust staff managing development of the Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy and with senior staff with greater procurement authority.

Project Purpose

Staff understand that the purpose of the proposed strategic plan is to identify the most important watershed protection challenges facing the island and help prioritize and coordinate the work of Island agencies and organizations to address those challenges.

In recent years, SSIWPA has undertaken an [annual work planning process](#) where members identify priority issues that SSIWPA member agencies or organizations could consider addressing. While this approach is valuable for identifying immediate challenges, concerns have been raised that such an approach is neither strategic nor long-term in its orientation. SSIWPA has also undertaken its own strategic planning initiatives, including a [2018 effort](#) led by Mike Wei. The Wei report recommended that SSIWPA endorse the following objectives:

- Objective 1: Develop and implement strategies to maximize conservation and efficient use of the Island’s limited water resource.
- Objective 2: Quantify the renewable water available and how anthropogenic changes will impact the quantity, quality and functioning of the Island’s watersheds and water resource.
- Objective 3: Develop tools to preserve the Island’s limited water resources and to protect watershed hydrological function.
- Objective 4: Communicate to partner agencies and the public the state of the Island’s watersheds and water resource, and water use.
- Objective 5: Provide access to watershed and water resource data and information.

A [framework for freshwater sustainability](#) was developed to implement the recommendations of the Wei report but was not pursued.

Through discussion at the LTC meeting of April 27, 2021, staff are seeking to confirm the following assumptions based on the LTC’s January 19, 2021 resolutions and the [draft project charter](#) that was considered at that meeting:

- 1) The LTC is seeking a strategic plan (rather than an action plan to implement the objectives identified in the Wei report);
- 2) This strategic plan will address watershed protection (rather than just drinking water and watershed protection);
- 3) This strategic plan will contain recommendations applicable to all agencies and organizations with an interest in freshwater, not just the Local Trust Committee.

NEXT STEPS

Pending project charter amendments arising from discussion of assumptions 1, 2 and 3 above, staff will return with a project charter for endorsement and once project resourcing and procurement issues are resolved and the project can commence.

Submitted By:	Jason Youmans, Island Planner	Select Date.
Concurrence:	Stefan Cermak, Regional Planning Manager	April 15, 2021

ATTACHMENTS

1. DRAFT - Salt Spring Island Watershed Stewardship and Protection Strategy Project Charter v. 1.0

SALT SPRING LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE**PROJECT CHARTER v1.0****Salt Spring Island Watersheds Stewardship and Protection Strategic Plan****April 27, 2021****Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to hire a freshwater sustainability consultant to develop a strategic plan to preserve, protect, and restore watersheds on Salt Spring Island.

Background

The object of the Islands Trust is to “preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of residents of the Trust Area and of the province generally, in cooperation with the municipalities, regional districts, other persons and organizations and the Government of British Columbia.”

Section 24(2)(b) of the Islands Trust Act allows Local Trust Committees to regulate the development and use of land for the purposes of carrying out the object of the Trust. This means that local trust committees can use their regulatory powers to preserve, protect and guide restoration of watersheds.

- In 2013, Islands Trust Council adopted Bylaw No. 154 which delegated authority to the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (LTC), for the purpose of preserving and protecting the quality and quantity of water resources within the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area, the power to coordinate and assist in the determination of regional, improvement district and government of British Columbia policies, and
- Coordinate the implementation of regional, improvement district and government of British Columbia policies; and
- Coordinate the carrying out of regional, improvement district and government of British Columbia policies

To date, the LTC has used this delegated authority to fund and coordinate the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA). SSIWPA has advanced understanding, agency cooperation, and community engagement in watershed issues. SSIWPA undertakes an annual work planning exercise to identify water issues of concern to SSIWPA's membership and wider community in the hope that member agencies will undertake projects to address the issues raised. However, a long range strategy for watershed protection on SSI has not been developed.

Objectives

- Identify what are the challenges to watershed protection on SSI;
- Identify what are the desired outcomes (what does the community or agency(ies) want to do, or do differently);
- Identify the potential tools that could assist with these challenges (not limited to Water Sustainability Act);
- Provide options and recommend optimal approach to improving watershed protection on SSI;
- Develop watershed protection strategic plan for Salt Spring Island. This strategic plan will contain:
 - Clear, shared vision/goals;
 - Objectives/Targets;
 - Actions
 - Recommendations for how to engage First Nations on SSI freshwater
- Situate SSI watershed strategic plan in the context of other plans and initiatives (CRD/NSSWD Integrated Water Management Service Review, IT Freshwater Sustainability Strategy, IT Strategic Plan, SSI OCP, SSI Area Farm Plan, SSI CAP 2.0; Islands Trust Conservancy Regional Conservation Plan)
- Apply POLIS Water Champion Handbook Stepping-Stones.

In Scope

- Review and assess historical and current approaches to watershed protection on SSI;
- Identify and engage all relevant stakeholders, First Nations, and broader community;
- Identify and assess potential tools and best practices
- Apply best practices to address challenges and enhance what is working;
- Develop a strategic plan to guide and prioritize watershed protection work on a medium term (10 years) time frame
- Assess strategic plan within context of other relevant plans and initiatives

Out of Scope

- Watershed Assessments
- Implementation of strategic plan

Work Plan Overview				
Deliverable/Milestone				Date
LTC endorse project charter and direct staff to proceed with procurement				TBD
Procurement process				TBD
Plan development				TBD
Final Deliverables received				March 31, 2022
Project Team		Budget		
	Project Manager	Salt Spring Island Water Sustainability Top Priority Project		
	Project Support	Fiscal	Item	Cost
	Project Support	21/22	Consulting Services	\$50,000
	Project Sponsor			
Director Approval:	LTC Endorsement:			
Date: DD, MM, YYYY	Resolution #:			
	Date: DD, MM, YYYY			
		21/22	Total	\$50,000

DRAFT