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**Subject:** Letter for your consideration for the upcoming 19 January Local Trust Committee

The Salt Spring Conservancy respectfully submits the attached letter in support of the proposed: **Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alignment and Opportunities Project** .

Pierre Mineau, PhD

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**Access to open source publications:**

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pierre\\_Mineau/contributions?ev=prf\\_act](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pierre_Mineau/contributions?ev=prf_act)

Google scholar link: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=sSdBrhkAAAAJ>

**If you don't appreciate my science, perhaps you will enjoy my photography at:**

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7 January 2020

**Letter of Support for SSI Watershed/Ecosystem Based Strategic Watershed Protection Plan**

Dear Island Trustees,

The Salt Spring Island Conservancy is a non-profit land trust based on Salt Spring Island. Since 1995 we have worked to conserve island nature for biodiversity and the enjoyment of islanders and visitors from around the world. We protect more than 1554 acres of land on SSI through 8 nature reserves and 17 conservation covenants; we monitor and provide habitat for species at risk; we provide hiking and nature viewing opportunities for the public; finally, we engage volunteers in restoration and education and help young people learn about nature in our Stewards in Training program. Like the Islands Trust, we have become increasingly aware of the role of protected areas to mitigate effects of drought and increased fire risk brought about by climate change.

We are aware that the Islands Trust has been moving toward more integrated approaches, and is looking at watershed-based strategies as a means to better understand and set priorities to protect both our water supply and natural environment. Natural ecosystems support water cycles by reducing surface flows and sedimentation, and recharging local aquifers. Climate projections for our region clearly indicate that summer droughts will become longer. The role of healthy forested watersheds to ensure our continued supply of fresh water while protecting our native biodiversity will be more important than ever.

Like the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, the Islands Trust plays an important role in protecting and preserving the special ecosystems found on Salt Spring and other Gulf Islands. As a participant in the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA), the Salt Spring Island Conservancy wishes to **express its support for the proposal by Trustee Patrick to launch the SSI Watershed Protection Alignment and Opportunities project**. The use of more strategic and ecologically based management strategies is necessary to identify relevant responses and priorities for specific watersheds facing specific threats.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District recognized the need for harmonization and ecologically based approaches to land planning and conservation in 2017. This led to their developing a 2050 vision for the region as a whole, and a harmonization framework that integrates goals of ecosystem stewardship, biodiversity conservation, and watershed protection in the [spirit of reconciliation](#). We welcome a similar strategic framework for the Islands Trust area that marries the protection of Coastal Douglas fir and associated ecosystems with the protection of watersheds and wetlands to increase our Island's resilience in the face of a changing climate and increased development pressures.

We applaud Trustee Patrick's effort in the context of the Cowichan experience and other on-going [watershed governance pilot projects](#) enabled by the [BC Water Sustainability Act](#). We believe strongly that the Islands Trust needs to be a leader in watershed management in the spirit of [BC's Freshwater Legacy Initiative](#). We look forward to participating in this effort.

Susan Hannon, President of the Board

Pierre Mineau, Vice-president of the Board and SSIWPA representative

Penny Barnes, Executive Director