



ISLANDS TRUST FUND

# Backgrounder

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## BACKGROUNDER – THE ISLANDS TRUST FUND

**The Islands Trust Fund** is a regional land trust, working to protect natural landscapes in Canada's islands in the Salish Sea. The Province of British Columbia created the Islands Trust Fund (through the *Islands Trust Act*) to support the mandate of the Islands Trust – to preserve and protect the Trust Area and environment – through a land trust capacity. The Islands Trust Fund empowers private landowners to permanently protect sensitive habitats in the islands, either as nature reserves or conservation covenants.

### The Islands Trust Fund's Vision and Priorities

The Islands Trust Fund envisions an island region where vibrant natural ecosystems flourish alongside healthy human communities. The Islands Trust Fund believes these island communities can serve as examples to the world, demonstrating that people can live and work in harmony with nature. The islands will be a special place where residents and conservation partners work together to create networks of protected areas that preserve in perpetuity the native species and natural systems of the islands.

The Islands Trust Fund believes it can achieve this vision by engaging citizens in protecting the biodiversity of the islands. The Islands Trust Fund is focusing on protecting these biodiversity priorities:

- Rare and fragile ecosystems
- Ecosystems representative of the islands
- At-risk species and ecosystems
- Landscapes that connect and buffer existing protected areas
- Nearshore areas
- Islets and small islands

### Why Conservation in this Region is Important

The Islands Trust Fund is working to protect ecosystems of the Coastal Douglas-fir zone – B.C.'s smallest and most rare biogeoclimatic zone - and the Coastal Western Hemlock zone. Unlike much of B.C.'s coast, the Coastal Douglas-fir zone experiences long, dry summers, leading to an exceptionally rare collection of plant and animal species. The natural ecosystems of the islands are among the most critically imperilled in B.C., and more than 100 species-at-risk are found in the Coastal Douglas-fir zone. Naturally, people are drawn here from all over the world by the mild climate and striking beauty of the islands. Increasing pressure to develop and change the natural landscape to accommodate those people further threatens the fragile ecosystems of the Salish Sea.

### The Islands Trust Fund's Approach

The Islands Trust Fund is working to protect endangered ecosystems and habitat for species-at-risk. The Islands Trust Fund is teaming up with government agencies and non-profit conservation groups to focus conservation efforts in the islands on the following goals:

1. Protect Core Conservation Areas: Secure core conservation areas that conserve biodiversity priorities within the Islands Trust area

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\* The Islands Trust Fund does not acquire land through expropriation

2. Protect Biodiversity in Working Landscapes: research ways biodiversity priorities can be maintained on lands outside of core conservation areas, including working landscapes
3. Conserve Marine Ecosystems: work with partner organizations to conserve marine ecosystems and habitats
4. Encourage Local Governments to Prioritize Biodiversity: work with the Islands Trust Council, local trust committees and island municipalities to implement conservation goals in official community plans and land use bylaws
5. Empower Islanders to Conserve the Islands: encourage islanders to get involved in conservation and steward private land by supporting conservation education and sharing information on best practices
6. Build Strong Conservation Partners: support and enhance the work of conservation partners working in the Islands Trust area
7. Take Care of What We Have: monitor and manage existing Islands Trust Fund core conservation areas to maintain and enhance biodiversity features

### **The Islands Trust Fund's Progress**

Since its beginning in 1990, the Islands Trust Fund has protected over 1,000 hectares of ecologically significant land on the islands, with 21 nature reserves and 63 covenanted properties permanently protected and managed for ecosystem health. The Islands Trust Fund, with the generous support of private donors, has provided more than \$40,000 in grants to local conservations, helping to protect an additional 300 hectares of land. In partnership with the Islands Trust, the Islands Trust Fund has introduced the innovative NAPTEP program, rewarding private landowners who permanently protect their property with an annual 65% reduction in property taxes. With the financial support of the Islands Trust, the Islands Trust Fund ensures that 100% of every donation goes directly to on-the-ground conservation work in the islands.

### **Trust Fund Board Members**

Tony Law  
Hornby Island  
*Chair*

Dereck Atha  
Mayne Island

Julie Glover  
Vancouver, Hornby Island

Robert Grant  
Vancouver, Denman Island

Peter Luckham  
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