



ISLANDS TRUST CONSERVANCY

# News Release

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## **Sandy Beach on Lhek'tines/Keats Island, Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound, now a protected nature reserve**

*Lək'wəḡən*, METULIYE/Victoria, B.C. — In its 30th year, the Islands Trust Conservancy is celebrating that [Sandy Beach on Lhek'tines/Keats Island](#) will become its 30th nature reserve. The site is remarkable both for its biodiversity and cultural significance.

Located on the southwest shoreline of Lhek'tines/Keats Island, Sandy Beach includes 3.4 hectares (8.4 acres) of Coastal Douglas-fir forest and over 250 metres of beachfront. The property provides suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species including birds, such as the Northern Goshawk, Great Blue Heron, and the Olive-sided Flycatcher, and the Little Brown Myotis bat. The beach has been identified as appropriate spawning habitat for surf smelt and Pacific sand lance, two fish species that are important food sources for wild salmon.

The Sandy Beach Nature Reserve is a location of cultural heritage for Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations and protection from land-altering activity under the management of the Islands Trust Conservancy is the first step to the preservation and protection of this location.

Sandy Beach was a part of “Keats Camp”, a Baptist summer youth camp operated by the Convention of Baptist Churches of British Columbia, which was founded in 1926. The land was transferred from the Convention of Baptist Churches of B.C. to Islands Trust Conservancy on December 18, 2020, as part of a rezoning and subdivision application and comes with a \$12,000 contribution which has been allocated to a land management fund.

### Quotes

“Sandy Beach holds a special place in the hearts of the Keats community members and is the first Islands Trust Conservancy protected area on the Island. Next steps for the land will include the development of a management plan and negotiation of a conservation covenant to provide an additional layer of protection. We're very proud and thankful for the many years of hard work that went toward making this happen.”

– Kate-Louise Stamford, Chair, Islands Trust Conservancy Board

“The Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) people have a long interconnected history with Lhek'tines (also known as Keats Island). The island is laden with place names and areas of cultural significance that remind us, as Skwxwú7mesh, who we are and how the island provided for our people since the beginning of creation. We relied on the aquatic and terrestrial resources of the island to maintain our culture and way of life. The Nation looks forward to continuing our relationship with the Islands Trust Conservancy to ensure that we are protecting both our environment and Skwxwú7mesh connections to the land and the resources.”

– Syeta'xtn (Chris Lewis), Spokesperson and Councillor of Squamish Nation

“Protecting and preserving fragile ecosystems like the Sandy Beach Nature Reserve on Lhek'tines/Keats Island is an important legacy and has special significance for the Coast Salish Indigenous peoples, particularly the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, who have had deep cultural connections to this land since time immemorial. Our government is proud of the work that the Islands Trust Conservancy has accomplished over the past 30 years and we will continue to support them in their efforts to protect island habitats in B.C.'s Salish Sea.”

– Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs, B.C.

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## **A Conservancy for islands of the Salish Sea**

Ballenas-Winchelsea · Bowen · Denman · Gabriola · Galiano · Gambier · Hornby  
Lasqueti · Mayne · North Pender · Salt Spring · Saturna · South Pender · Thetis

“As a resident of Keats Island, I am thrilled by the transfer of the Sandy Beach property to the Islands Trust Conservancy. This land is treasured by islanders for its beauty and important ecological values. We are now assured that the southwest section of Keats will never face development. The Nature Reserve is a culmination of years of work by the landowner, islanders, Islands Trust staff, and former trustees including former Islands Trust Chair Kim Benson and Trustee Jan Hagedorn, both from Keats Island. We thank the Conservancy for agreeing to protect this property in perpetuity.”

– Dan Rogers, Gambier Island trustee and Keats Island resident

“Sandy Beach has always been a special place to the community on Keats Island from a recreational perspective. We are excited to formalize the protection of access to the community to this space in addition to preservation of the diverse and fragile ecosystems”.

– Josh Lepin, Project Manager Subdivision & Rezoning, Convention of Baptist Churches of B.C.

### Quick Facts

- Sandy Beach on Lheḵ'tínes/Keats Island has made history for Islands Trust Conservancy as the 30<sup>th</sup> nature reserve created in 30 years
- The Islands Trust Conservancy manages 1,307 hectares (3,229.7 acres) of natural landscapes across the region through private landowner conservation covenants and as nature reserves
- The Sandy Beach area is located within the territories of the Sk̓w̓w̓ú7mesh and sə́ilwətaʔ First Nations and is an area of cultural significance and use since time immemorial
- Lheḵ'tínes/Keats Island is one of the larger islands in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound, located offshore from the community of Gibsons on the Sunshine Coast, and is directly west of Bowen Island
- British Columbia is the most biologically diverse of Canada's provinces and territories, and is home to many regionally, nationally, and globally significant species and ecosystems ([Biodiversity BC](#))
- B.C. has more species at risk than any other province in Canada, and the number continues to rise. Protecting healthy habitats is one of the best ways to prevent species from becoming at risk
- As of January 2020, the B.C. Conservation Data Centre reports 1,336 species (or subspecies) and 344 ecological communities as being at risk in B.C.
- Cultural sites within the Islands Trust Area can be over 8,000 years old, and any archaeological site on private or public land is protected under the Heritage Conservation Act

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### About

The Islands Trust Conservancy is the conservation land trust for over 450 islands of the Salish Sea and is a part of Islands Trust. Since 1990, the Islands Trust Conservancy has protected more than 1,300 hectares of island ecosystems. This success is thanks to the vision, support, and generosity of our donors and partners. Visit us online at [www.islandstrustconservancy.ca](http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca).

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