



## Draft Islands Trust Policy Statement Threatens Protection of the Trust Islands

The governing body of the Islands Trust (Trust Council) has given first reading to a new draft Trust Policy Statement (TPS). This document is critical because it sets minimum standards for all islands' official community plans and other land use bylaws. There is a public consultation period through January 2026. Elected trustees hope to finalize the TPS before their terms end in November of 2026. This draft is significantly weaker than the current TPS. We have these concerns:

**Preservation and Protection** - This draft TPS breaks with historical precedent by not prioritizing the protection and preservation of the natural environment and islands' unique amenities such as rural character, as the Trust Object requires.

**Definition of Environment is Missing** - A previous definition supported by these trustees was so broad it included man-made structures. Because of public objections, they removed any definition. The definition should be the "natural environment" as was intended by those writing the Trust Act in 1974. Without this clear definition, trustees can interpret this word to mean anything.

**Growth** – The TPS proposes to "manage" rather than "limit" growth. A directive is needed for each island to determine what population each island can support while still protecting native ecosystems. This Directive in the current TPS has been eliminated in the draft: "5.2.5. Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address means for achieving efficient use of the land base without exceeding any density limits defined in their official community plans."

**TPS Enforcement** - The TPS has various policies but only those called Directives are enforceable. The Trust Act says that bylaws and Official Community Plans **must** not be approved by the Trust Executive Committee or the Minister if they are contrary to the TPS. The draft TPS states instead that Directives should be addressed "**where possible**". This lack of firm requirements is a long-standing problem with the Islands Trust that must be corrected if the Trust Area is to be protected.

**Affordable Housing** – The TPS allows density increases for "attainable" housing without defining this word and without requiring housing agreements to assure affordability or that zone changes are not given to developers of market priced housing. The TPS allows zoning by floor area which would allow many small homes on a single-family property. Instead, the TPS should support increased density **only** for affordable and worker housing, with binding affordability agreements, and where there is sufficient sewage disposal capacity, water for the new development, existing developments and the natural environment.

### Other Weaknesses

- Protection for community heritage sites is missing.
- No policy to assure that community knowledge about water shortages is considered along with computer model estimates.
- Climate change is only mentioned in two minor policies instead of being a major goal of the new TPS as promised.

### Your Feedback is Critical - What You Can Do:

- Fill out the TPS survey before February 2, 2026. Friends of the Gulf Islands Society has posted a [guide](#) to filling out the survey that reflects our concerns.
- See our [detailed analysis of the draft TSP and our recommendations](#).
- View the [recording](#) of the Trust webinar on the TPS held on Sept 10.
- Send your comments to [islands2050@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:islands2050@islandstrust.bc.ca)

For more information and to read the draft TPS visit the [Islands 2050 Project website](#).  
For background on the Islands Trust and how it is governed, visit our [website](#).