



2005-2010 Regional Conservation Plan Update

Prepared March 2008

Background

The Islands Trust Fund completed a Regional Conservation Plan in 2005. The plan's duration is from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2010 and it was designed to be a living document using adaptive management principles. Every year in March, the accomplishments of the plan and the barriers to success are evaluated. New action items are set and, where needed, new goals and objectives are incorporated. The Islands Trust Fund is three years into the five-year plan and over the next two years staff will be considering revisions that will be included in the 2010-2015 Regional Conservation Plan.

Below is an update to the 2005-2010 Regional Conservation Plan based on annual reviews conducted in March of 2006, 2007 and 2008. This update is intended to be read in conjunction with the complete 2005-2010 Regional Conservation Plan.

Introduction

As of March 2008, more than 15% of the Islands Trust Area has been protected as a nature reserve, nature sanctuary, natural park or conservation covenant area – an increase of 3% since April 2005. However, several islands still fall drastically short of the goal of 15% protection, most notably Denman, Gabriola, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne and Thetis which each require over 250 ha. (618 acres) of additional protected lands to meet this goal (see Table 1 below). Furthermore, almost every island in the Islands Trust Area continues to fall short of the protection objectives for natural ecosystems: streams, wetlands, mature forest, freshwater, shoreline, cliffs, herbaceous and woodland.

Table 1: Change in Percent of Protected Area from 2004/05 to 2007/08. Shading indicates islands where the Regional Conservation Plan protected area objective has been met.

Local Trust Area/ Island Municipality	% protected 2004/05	% protected 2007/08	% Increase April 2005 to March 2008	Area Required to Meet RCP Objective (ha)
Bowen	13.8%	13.9%	0.1%	53.4
Denman	5.0%	9.9%	4.9%	262.5
Gabriola	2.5%	9.1%	6.6%	345.5
Galiano	14.0%	17.5%	3.5%	0.0
Gambier	7.8%	10.6%	2.8%	434.0
Hornby	23.5%	23.5%	0.0%	0.0
Lasqueti	8.6%	9.7%	1.1%	393.3
Mayne	4.0%	4.4%	0.4%	250.6
N. Pender	18.0%	18.4%	0.4%	0.0
Saturna	43.4%	43.4%	0.0%	0.0
S. Pender	28.0%	32.2%	4.2%	0.0
Salt Spring	16.0%	18.3%	2.3%	0.0
Thetis	3%	3.9%	0.9%	432.8
TOTAL FOR THE ISLANDS TRUST AREA	12.3%	15.3%	3.0%	2172.2

Additions and Amendments to the Regional Conservation Plan Goals and Objectives

The following table shows the long-term goals and the five-year objectives as outlined in the Regional Conservation Plan (2005-2010). The eighth goal was added in April 2007.

Table 2. Goals and Five-Year Objectives of the Regional Conservation Plan as of March 2008

Long Term Goals	Five-Year Objectives (2005-2010)	Rationale for the Objectives
Protect a significant amount of each natural ecosystem in each local trust area and island municipality	To protect at least 5% of each natural ecosystem class within each local trust area and island municipality	Since its inception, the Islands Trust Fund (ITF) has completed 3 covenants and 1 acquisition per year, protecting an average of 39.4 ha annually. At that rate, it would take 1.5 years to protect the 58.5 ha of land required to meet a 5% goal. However, as wetlands, littoral and lacustrine areas have not been adequately accounted for in the mapping, new mapping would likely increase this number.
Protect the last remaining blocks of large natural ecosystems	To protect at least two parcels of land of at least 50 ha within the Bowen Island Municipality, Gambier or Lasqueti Local Trust Area	For the 5 largest parcels that the ITF has acquired to date, the average parcel size is 52 ha. These acquisitions occurred roughly every two years. Thus, a 5-year goal to achieve two more parcels is realistic.
Protect nationally and provincially identified ecosystems and habitats of species that are considered endangered, threatened or of special concern	To protect at least one of the Garry oak ecosystem sites identified by the Garry oak Ecosystem Recovery Team (GOERT)	Garry oak ecosystems are among the most endangered in Canada. Less than 5% of the original habitat remains in near-natural condition. The Islands Trust Fund has been a partner in the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team (GOERT) since 2000. Recently GOERT has developed a list of 20 priority sites within B.C. Seven of these sites are located in the Islands Trust Area.
Ensure that each local trust area and island municipality has protected viable ecosystems	To work with partners to achieve at least 15% protection of the total area of each local trust area and island municipality, including modified ecosystems on islands with few natural areas	Protecting 15% of each local trust area and island municipality represents approximately 1965 ha of newly protected land. At an average rate of 40 ha per year, the ITF would need 49 years to achieve this target. However, as most protection achieved to date in the Islands Trust Area has been led by other conservancies and levels of government, this target can probably be accomplished. The protection of modified ecosystems should be included where they will likely develop into natural ecosystems.
Expand existing protected areas for each island	To protect at least four properties adjacent to protected areas	The ITF currently protects 4 properties that are adjacent to already protected areas. Doubling this number in 5 years is a realistic target.

Long Term Goals	Five-Year Objectives (2005-2010)	Rationale for the Objectives
Create a network of protected area for each island	To see protected area networks delineated in all OCPs across the Islands Trust Area. The first step in achieving this target is preparing set of guidelines for approval by Trust Council	Most Official Community Plans (OCPs) will be reviewed in the next 5 years. By developing guidelines to assist planners and trustees, the ITF can help each local trust area and island municipality create a network of protected areas.
Improve the Islands Trust Ecosystem Mapping (ITEM) to form a stronger foundation for future plans	To update the ITEM and increase accuracy by ground-truthing at least 20% of polygons and to provide information to all partners each year on protected status for each local trust area/island municipality	The Islands Trust and the Islands Trust Fund have developed a schedule to update the ITEM for all local trust areas and the Bowen Island Municipality within the coming 2–3 years (see Section 2.5). This information will assist the ITF in adjusting its goals on a yearly basis.
Ensure safety and ecological integrity of protected areas	To develop an implementation plan that ensures the safety and ecological integrity of all TFB owned and covenanted lands	The Islands Trust Fund has a duty to ensure that its properties are being properly managed both for ecological values and to ensure the safety of the public.

Status of the Regional Conservation Plan Goals and Objectives as of March 31, 2008

The Islands Trust Fund has completed the third year of its five-year Regional Conservation Plan. An assessment of the progress of land conservation initiatives in the Islands Trust area to date is summarized below.

Table 3: Status of the Regional Conservation Plan's Five-Year Objectives as of March 2008

Long Term Goal	Five-Year Objective	Status of Objective
Protect a significant amount of each natural ecosystem in each local trust area and island municipality	To protect at least 5% of each natural ecosystem class within each local trust area and island municipality	Incomplete - All islands except South Pender and Galiano have natural ecosystems that have less than 5% protected.
Protect the last remaining blocks of large natural ecosystems	To protect at least two parcels of land of at least 50 ha within the Bowen Island Municipality, Gambier or Lasqueti Local Trust Area	Complete - Mt. Artaban (107 ha) on Gambier and Mt. Trematon (57.87 ha) on Lasqueti are now ITF Nature Reserves.
Ensure that each local trust area and island municipality has protected viable ecosystems	To work with partners to achieve at least 15% protection of the total area of each local trust area and island municipality, including modified ecosystems on islands with few natural areas	Incomplete - Bowen (13.9%), Denman (9.9%), Gabriola (9.1%), Lasqueti (9.7%), Mayne (4.4%) and Thetis (3.9%) are still below the target

Long Term Goal	Five-Year Objective	Status of Objective
Expand existing protected areas for each island	To protect at least four properties adjacent to protected areas	Complete - David Otter Nature Reserve on Bowen borders Crippen Regional Park; a NAPTEP covenant on Galiano is adjacent to another conservation covenant area; Long Bay Wetland Nature Reserve on Gambier is adjacent to Mt. Artaban Nature Reserve; and a NAPTEP Covenant on Salt Spring that is adjacent to a Provincial Park and the Salt Spring Island Waterworks lands.
Create a network of protected area for each island	To see protected area networks (PANs) delineated in all OCPs across the Islands Trust Area. The first step in achieving this target is preparing set of guidelines for approval by Trust Council	Incomplete – Guidelines to be produced by Local Planning Services.
Improve the Islands Trust Ecosystem Mapping (ITEM) to form a stronger foundation for future plans	To update the ITEM and increase accuracy by ground-truthing at least 20% of polygons and to provide information to all partners each year on protected status for each local trust area/ island municipality	Incomplete – the province will be providing Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping for all islands except those in Howe sound by the end of 2008.
Ensure safety and ecological integrity of protected areas	To develop an implementation plan that ensures the safety and ecological integrity of all TFB owned and covenanted lands	Incomplete – currently under development with anticipated completion date by the end of 2009.