



Islands Trust Fund

POLICY MANUAL

Code: TFB 02010

Policy Procedure Guideline

Title: Policy on Conservation of Culturally Significant Areas

Approved By: Trust Fund Board

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Chairperson Signature:

Related Files:

Purpose

This policy establishes what types of culturally significant areas the Trust Fund Board will accept and how they will be protected.

Definitions

In this policy the following definitions apply:

“Cultural” means describes something created, modified, or used by humans.

“Cultural amenities” means specific features with significance from a cultural (relating to humans or human use) perspective. Examples of cultural amenities include a heritage orchard, a heritage barn, a significant trail on a property, and a scenic lookout. “Cultural amenities” and “cultural features” are used interchangeably.

“Cultural environments” means broad landscapes (one or more properties) with significance from a cultural perspective, particularly with respect to the scenic, rural, and marine character of the Islands Trust Area. Examples of a cultural environment include a mixed rural property that includes some forest, some cleared land (pasture or cropland), some buildings and gives context to the rural lifestyle of the islands, an area of heritage buildings (cottages, retail, community use) that provides context to the community’s roots or adds to the scenic or marine nature of the area, a waterfront or mountain trail that provides recreational and scenic value across a broad area. “Cultural environments” and “cultural landscapes” are used interchangeably.

Background

The Islands Trust Fund Plan identifies, in the Vision statement, that the Board wishes to protect both natural and cultural features in perpetuity, in order to help sustain the unique character and environment of the Trust Area. It indicates that its legacy of special places will protect a variety of significant cultural landscapes that help preserve the scenic, rural and marine character of the Islands Trust Area into the future. Within the Five Year priorities and Related Goals section, the Board sets out a goal “to assist, where possible, in the protection of culturally significant landscapes”.

The Plan indicates that in assessing potential projects, buildings should not be accepted by Islands Trust Fund for long term conservation due to the intensive management that is required, unless they are of provincial significance and come with an endowment of substantial size.

Trust Council, in its review of the Islands Trust Fund Plan (2002-2007) suggested that the Board should address how it interprets the phrase “unique character” in its Vision Statement in relation protection of cultural amenities and environment. Trust Council also suggested that the Board explain how it will broaden its current focus to include the protection of cultural features.

Staff has raised concerns about the Islands Trust Fund’s capacity to protect buildings through ownership. With a limited staff complement, limited funds, and a lack of expertise in cultural protection, the acquisition of buildings, for protection in perpetuity, is beyond our existing capabilities.

Details

1. The Trust Fund Board interprets the Object of Islands Trust to include preservation and protection of the natural and cultural amenities and environments of the Trust Area. In undertaking its role, the Trust Fund Board will focus first on protecting significant natural environments and natural amenities of the Trust Area. Over time, and as staff and resources permit, the Board will seek to balance its protection of natural and cultural amenities and environments that are considered by the Board to be significant.
2. The Trust Fund Board’s focus in protecting cultural amenities and environments will be on features and landscapes that have significant value in preserving the rural or marine character of the Trust Area or that have significant value in terms of public use and enjoyment (e.g. recreational or scenic value).
3. The following cultural amenities and environments are considered significant for conservation by the Islands Trust Fund:
 - scenic features, such as heritage roads and scenic vistas;
 - areas that provide opportunity for low intensity, low impact nature-related recreation such as hiking/walking and quiet contemplation in natural settings;
 - rural landscapes that contain a mix of woodlands, creeks, wetlands, heritage orchards and cleared lands;

- historic or cultural landscapes of significance, such as heritage farms;
 - significant historical, industrial or commercial features; and
 - archaeological sites.
4. The Board will consider using conservation covenants or other similar protection tools to protect cultural amenities and environments of significance.
 5. In assessing all potential cultural projects the Board will review the following:
 - is the conservation tool proposed a reasonable tool to ensure conservation of the amenity or environment (e.g. will a covenant work, is ownership necessary?);
 - does the project protect both natural and cultural features of significance;
 - is there a willing management group;
 - what are the potential short and long term management costs associated with the project;
 - are there reasonable funding strategies available to the Board to cover the potential costs of management and monitoring;
 - does the Board have adequate staff resources to manage the project at the current time and into the future; and
 - does the Board have adequate funds to undertake all immediate management requirements?
 6. Further, in assessing potential acquisition projects, the Board:
 - should not accept or acquire any lands where there is an imposed obligation to maintain buildings in perpetuity;
 - may accept and acquire lands that have buildings on-site that can be removed or maintained at the Board's discretion;
 - should only consider maintaining buildings on-site if the Board has adequate staff resources to manage the on-going requirements, if the buildings are of Provincial significance, if a substantial endowment is provided by the donating/selling landowner that is adequate to cover on-going maintenance costs, and if the Board has adequate funds available to undertake all immediate maintenance requirements.
 - if it chooses to maintain a building(s), should consider leasing the building(s) to a suitable group for long-term management purposes.
 7. The Board will seek partnership arrangements, where possible, to manage cultural properties it owns.
 8. In the long term, as a means to implement, item 1 above, the Board will consider undertaking a cultural conservation planning program to identify the cultural amenities and environments of significance within the Trust Area and to establish a plan to protect them. This will only be considered once a regional conservation plan for natural environments has been completed and adequately implemented (e.g. the Board is well on the way to protecting 25% of the Trust Area's significant natural ecosystems).