



Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP)



APPLICATION GUIDE

The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) is available to **Gulf Island landowners in the Sunshine Coast and Capital Regional Districts** in British Columbia. Landowners who permanently protect natural and cultural features of their land can receive a 65% exemption in property taxes on the protected portion of their land. The application process is described below.

PHASE ONE

1. PLAN YOUR APPLICATION

Before making a decision to apply to the Natural Areas Tax Exemption Program, you should obtain independent legal and tax advice to be sure you understand how it will affect your particular situation.

To receive your tax exemption for the next tax year you **MUST** submit your application by April 1st at the latest. We strongly recommend that you submit your application early.

You may find it helpful to read the complete application package that can be downloaded from www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca or obtained from Islands Trust offices located in Victoria and on Salt Spring Island. Other useful information sources are listed at the end of this document.

2. SUBMIT YOUR FEE & APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

If you decide to apply, you will need to obtain an application package from the Islands Trust Fund and gather all information required on the application checklist. You will also need to submit the Phase One application fee of \$275, payable to the Islands Trust. The complete application package can be downloaded from <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/naptep.cfm> or obtained from Islands Trust offices located in Victoria and on Salt Spring Island. *Please note: Staff cannot process your application until a complete application is submitted and the Phase One fee has been received.*

3. STAFF REVIEW YOUR APPLICATION (UP TO 30 DAYS)

Once you have submitted a complete application, Islands Trust Fund staff will evaluate your application to confirm its eligibility under the *Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Regulation*. Depending upon the information you have provided, this may involve a visit to your property.

4. APPLICATION REVIEWED BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Your application will be forwarded to the Trust Fund Board, and other appropriate organizations for comment. Staff will prepare an application report for Trust Council.

5. TRUST COUNCIL CONSIDERS YOUR APPLICATION

Trust Council meets quarterly and will make one of the following decisions about your application:

- Issue a Natural Area Exemption Certificate subject to registration of a NAPTEP covenant on your Certificate of Title
- Put your application on hold pending further information
- Decline your application

You will receive written notice of Trust Council's decision. If your application is approved, you will be advised of the steps for Phase Two of the application process. You will have **two years** to complete Phase Two, after which, you will need to resubmit your application if you wish to proceed.

PHASE TWO

6. PAY PHASE TWO FEE & CONSULT ISLANDS TRUST FUND STAFF

Once your application has been approved, you must submit the Phase Two fee which is \$175, payable to the Islands Trust.

7. REVIEW NAPTEP COVENANT WITH A LAWYER

A draft of the covenant will be sent to you after payment for Phase Two has been received. It is recommended that you review this NAPTEP covenant with your lawyer and tax advisor.

8. GET A SURVEY OF THE PROPERTY AND COVENANT AREA

If you are only applying the NAPTEP covenant to a portion of your property, a registered British Columbia Land Surveyor will need to prepare a survey of the area. Depending on your situation, you may be able to submit an explanatory plan instead of a full survey. You will need to contact the Land Titles Office for more information on this option.

9. COMPLETE A BASELINE REPORT

The Baseline Report is a record of the condition of a covenant area at the time the covenant is registered. It typically includes information on the area's ecology and other significant features. You will need to hire a pre-approved Environmental Professional to prepare this report.

10. HAVE COVENANT SIGNED BY ALL PARTIES

All parties must sign the covenant before it is registered.

11. REGISTER COVENANT WITH LAND TITLES OFFICE

Once all signatures are obtained, you must submit your covenant to the Land Titles Office to be registered on your Certificate of Title by October 15 to receive your property tax exemption for the following tax year.

12. REQUEST NATURAL AREA EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

After the covenant has been registered on your Certificate of Title, the Islands Trust will issue you a Natural Area Exemption Certificate.

13. MONITORING

To ensure that your land is protected forever, your NAPTEP covenant will be monitored every year. You (and future landowners) will receive a notice from the Islands Trust Fund each year reminding you that an Islands Trust Fund monitor will be visiting your property.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information, please contact Islands Trust Fund staff at (250) 405-5186 or visit our website at www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca.

For information on covenants consult:

Greening Your Title: A Guide to Best Practices for Conservation Covenants, Second Edition. Ann Hillyer and Judy Atkins (2005). Available in print or online from West Coast Environmental Law: www.wcel.org/resources/publications/

Green Legacies: A Donor's Guide for B.C. Stewardship Centre for British Columbia (2004). Available in print or online from the Stewardship Centre: www.greenlegacies.ca/resourcesOrder.asp

Important: This document is designed as a guide only. Following the steps in this guide does not necessarily entitle you to a Natural Area Exemption Certificate.