



News Release

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COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE FOR NEW ECOSYSTEM MAPS

VICTORIA — The Islands Trust and Islands Trust Fund will host open houses throughout November to introduce new ecosystem maps to Gulf Island communities. Join Kate Emmings, Ecosystem Protection Specialist, as she leads a journey into the world of ecosystem mapping.

A diversity of plants and animals – many of them rare and endangered – make the ecosystems of the Gulf Islands unique in the world. The natural landscapes that support this diversity are fragmented and in urgent need of conservation. For example, less than 1% of the region’s old forests remain. The Islands Trust and Islands Trust Fund have partnered to identify and map these fragile ecosystems to meet conservation goals.

In collaboration with Parks Canada and the Province of British Columbia, ecosystem maps are being created for the entire Islands Trust Area using the most recent aerial photography and field data collection. These maps are the foundation of the Islands Trust Fund’s 2010-2015 Regional Conservation Plan. The new five-year plan will focus staff and volunteer attention on the most at-risk ecosystems and on identifying a possible network of protected areas. The ecosystem mapping will also be available to local trust committees for land use planning.

The Islands Trust and Islands Trust Fund invites Gulf Island communities to the November open houses to learn more about ecosystem mapping and to provide feedback on maps of their islands. The open houses will be hosted on [Denman](#), [Gabriola](#), [Galiano](#), [Hornby](#), [Lasqueti](#), [Salt Spring](#), [Saturna](#), [South Pender](#) and [Thetis](#) Islands (click on island links for details). Drop by at the start of your island’s open house for an introductory presentation to learn how and why the maps were created and how they might be used by your community. Stay to interact with the digital mapping displays and 3-D air photo viewing that will enable you to dive into the many layers of ecosystem mapping. Kate will be available during these times to answer questions and receive community feedback. Come out and try your hand at mapping. Everyone is welcome.

The Islands Trust is a federation of independent local governments responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

The Islands Trust Fund is a regional land trust established in 1990 to help preserve and protect the unique character and environment of the Islands Trust Area. The Islands Trust Fund protects natural areas through voluntary land donations, conservation covenants, land purchase and stewardship education programs. With the generous support of island communities and landowners, the Islands Trust Fund has protected more than 985 hectares of natural and cultural values on 77 properties.

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Preserving **island** communities, culture and environment

Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis
