



SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS FORUM

Meeting Agenda for Friday, May 16, 2025 – 12:00pm-1:30pm

Attendees

Members (virtual):

1. Mairead Boland, Islands Trustee (Saturna Island)
2. Rob Botterell, MLA (Saanich North and the Islands)
3. Paul Brent, CRD Director (Southern Gulf Islands)
4. Jeanine Dodds, Islands Trustee (Mayne Island)
5. Dag Falck, Islands Trustee (South Pender Island)
6. Bel Manson (Land Referrals Coordinator, STÁUTW_ (Tsawout) First Nation)
7. David Maude, Islands Trustee (Mayne Island), Vice-Chair of Islands Trust Council, Chair of Saturna and Pender Local Trust Committees
8. Elizabeth May, MP (Saanich-Gulf Islands)
9. Lee Middleton, Islands Trustee (Saturna Island)
10. Deb Morrison, Islands Trustee (North Pender Island)
11. Laura Patrick, Islands Trustee (Salt Spring Island), Chair of Islands Trust Council
12. Eryn Rogers, WSANEC Leadership Council

Support Staff (virtual):

1. Clare Frater (Islands Trust Secretariat)
2. Noah Hollis (Office of Elizabeth May, MP)
3. Patricia Pearson (Office of Rob Botterell, MLA)
4. Chloe Straw (Islands Trust)

Meeting Opening

Trustee Boland offered a land acknowledgment, and participants introduced themselves. The agreed-upon agenda was outlined. The group decided to add BC Ferries to the agenda.

Updates from Elected Representatives

1. Provincial update from MLA Botterell

- The BC NDP is looking to expand the provincial government's ability to pass infrastructure projects.

- Recently met with politicians in Washington State to continue the process of putting together an interprovincial cooperation agreement, in line with this group's work with the San Juan Islands.
- Continuing to work on housing challenges across the Southern Gulf Islands.
- Looking at renewing the BC Greens' agreement with BC NDP and will revisit a variety of issues.

2. Federal update (elections, etc.) from MP May

- Updates on federal legislation → all died on Order Paper on January 6. There are now new ministers. MP May is attempting to get in touch with them as soon as possible.
- Files on derelict vessels and anchorages have all moved to Minister Chrystia Freeland, who is now Minister of Transport.
- Parliament resumes on Monday May 26.

3. Island Trust updates – Trustees

- The Trust Council meeting will be held from June 17-19. MLA Botterell will be speaking to the group on 18th.
- Trustee Patrick → kicking off OCP project on Salt Spring.
- Trustee Middleton → seeking to build alternative communication protocols for reconciliation.
- Trustee Morrison → North Pender has an ongoing housing project, also looking into tiny housing as a potential to jurisdictional challenges with building codes and proof of water
 - Trustee Maude → Conservation of deer is a pressing point. Numbers of fallow deer being assessed by a scientist.
 - Trustee Patrick → Beach erosion protection (Baker Beach) development permit denied. Applicants informed they can appeal to the local Trust committee, waiting to see if that happens.
 - Trustee Boland → Asked MLA Botterell about article in the Driftwood that urged for delay in amending the Trust Policy Statement until after the 2026 trustee elections. Expressed concern this implies that currently elected trustees do not have a legal mandate. Requested we continue this conversation at the end.
 - MLA Botterell → Stated he wants to meet with trustees on Saturna in-person to discuss his approach and Trustees' concerns.
 - MP May → Asked when the Trust Council meets. Expressed interest in attending the Trust Council meeting on Salt Spring Island and asked to be added to notification emails.
 - Trustee Boland will confirm with MP May's team.

4. CRD updates – Director

- Estimates that there are 1200-1600 fallow deer on Mayne Island. Another count will be conducted in the fall.
- Housing is the key issue. Struggling to get housing built on these islands. It's been over 4 decades since Plum Tree Court opened on Pender Island. BC Housing is now removing supports for this; will no longer be supported by 2028.

- There is a 20-unit housing project called Forest Homes on Galiano.
- Forest Homes received 4.5 million from BC Builds to move it forward. CRD has bought the property and provided another 3.5 million to get it going. Phase 2 tenders have been received and are going through evaluation.
- Projecting a 2–4-million-dollar deficit. They are unlikely to move this project to construction due to the deficit.
- Director Brent sent MP May's team a briefing to share with the new Housing Minister. They are seeking an additional \$2 million from the federal government in equity funding and are prepared to go to CRD board for additional funding if the federal government commits funding.
 - MP May has the one-page update. Starting from scratch with Minister Robertson. Hasn't succeeded in getting contact info from him yet but will be able to give it to him hard copy in person on the 26th onwards.

5. First Nations updates

- No updates/attendees during updates.

Discussion - SGI Forum Funding

Patricia Pearson/Chloe Straw: Discussion of uses for \$3,000 recently approved for the SGI Forum by the Islands Trust.

- Patricia thanked the Islands Trust for approving the request for \$3000 up until next March.
- Chloe spoke with folks who provide support for the Forum website. There are three options ranging from \$800-900 to \$2000 for website hosting, maintenance, and updates.
- The pair discussed the possibility of a half day forum in coordination with the cross-border group in September 2025. They reached out to Victoria Compton from that group, who said it would be great to put aside \$500 for the Forum.
- They are looking into a possible facilitator/note-taker; however, this can take up quite a bit of funds. 6-7 meetings in 2023 cost about \$5000 for a facilitator and note-taker.
 - Patricia believes several members of the Forum have capacity in their offices to take notes, but the group may want a facilitator for the cross-border forum and half-day meeting in March.
 - Trustee Morrison wants to be clear that this was not Adam Olsen's forum, but a collective collaboration. Also wants the group to explore a rotating chair for meetings since this is a collective effort.
 - Trustee Patrick said that a cross-border forum is a good use of time. She suggested that the money could go towards honorariums to support Indigenous involvement.
 - Trustee Boland said it would be helpful to find a cohesive way to organise agendas and minutes. Would like to see a one-pager put together to show who is taking responsibility for the meetings and how this organising process works.
- MP May emphasized she has no objection to rotating chairs or a flat structure. She doesn't want it to seem that MP/MLA are the 'leaders' of the forum.
 - MP May's team and the MP budget can provide occasional support for a venue (catering, etc.) for in-person meetings.

- Chloe shared three options for website development in the chat for participants to review and consider. The goal is to keep the website cost under \$1000.
 - The recommended option is under \$400, includes three hours of support over 12 months. They did go over that level of support last year due to time taken to upload documents. Chloe asked if they could provide training so Forum staff can manage the website documents uploading to save on cost.
 - Director Brent raised the need to keep the website as simple as possible.
 - Patricia/Chloe will follow up if they have any other questions after the call.
 - Trustee Boland asked Ms. Pearson and Ms. Straw for a short document explaining what will happen here.

Discussion - Cross-border Forum and Letter

Patricia Pearson provided an update on the cross-border forum and draft letter being circulated for approval. She noted that she is looking into a mid-June meeting for the cross-border forum once the statement has been released.

Discussion - CMHC or Federal Support for SGI Accessible Housing

CRD: Discussion of CHMC and federal funding to support SGI accessible housing.

- Director Brent → discussed above in CRD Director update, so no need to revisit here.
 - CRD has a program rolling out to match the BC secondary suite grant for up to \$40,000. Provides secondary suite in return for 5-year housing agreement of submarket rents
 - Just before the grant was to be launched, the province stopped the grant. The federal government has a similar program that CRD is trying to align with, but the election has shaken things up.
- Trustee Patrick said the Islands Trust did receive the housing needs assessments that it did for the entire Islands Trust area.
 - The committee expressed deep disappointment with the reports. They found that the data is not good, and it underestimates the severity of housing needs on Gulf Islands.
 - The committee is looking to prepare a data set that can be done collaboratively to accurately represent regional housing needs.
 - Trustee Falck said he wants to move forward on tiny homes. He asked Director Brent if the building codes are ever going to get relaxed. He also noted he would like a summary created on the tiny homes issue.
 - Director Brent shared that the Islands Trust has initiated a tiny homes review based on work done by Trustee Tobi Elliott and building inspectors from the Regional District of Nanaimo.
 - The issue is the provincial building code. They are attempting to get BC to separate the building code for tiny homes on wheels, resembling the system in place in Nova Scotia.
- If reports from the province suggest there is no housing shortage on the Gulf Islands, MLA Botterell is happy to take this up with the provincial minister.
 - MLA Botterell said he would appreciate the opportunity to work with Director Brent and anyone else on the call because the one-year renewal of the BC Greens/BC NDP accord in the fall will be an opportunity to make it a centerpiece of their negotiations.

- Trustee Boland shared that there is a specific guide in the BC building code on exceptions/variants. She has asked why this guide can't be used but has been met with silence and statements that "we've never done that before." She wants to see this used for a tailor-made solution.

Discussion - Next steps on issues raised in updates

MP May will pursue items she discussed with Ministers when Parliament resumes. She said that if anyone wants a specific pitch hand-delivered to a specific minister, get it to her team before Saturday, May 24.

Closing Remarks and Reflections; Confirmation of date and details of next meeting

The next SGI Forum meeting will be hybrid, held in-person at MLA Botterell's office, with the ability to join remotely on MS Teams.

DATE and TIME: July 3, 9:00AM - 11:00 AM PT.

For follow up inquiries regarding the minutes, please contact MP May's office at Elizabeth.May.C1@parl.gc.ca