



Meeting Minutes
Friday January 9, 2026 – 9:00am-10:30am
Zoom

Attendees

Members (virtual):

1. Tim Peterson, Island Trustee (Lasqueti Island), Vice-Chair of Islands Trust Council – *Meeting Chair*
2. Laura Patrick, Islands Trust Chair and Trustee (Salt Spring Island)
3. Mairead Boland, Islands Trustee (Saturna Island)
4. Dag Falck, Islands Trustee (South Pender Island)
5. David Maude, Islands Trustee (Mayne Island), Vice-Chair of Islands Trust Council
6. Tobi Elliot, Islands Trustee (Gabriola Island), Vice-Chair of Islands Trust Council
7. Eryn Rogers, Policy and Negotiation Analyst (WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council)
8. Ned Taylor, Local Government Program Manager (WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council)
9. Barry Joyce, Marine Manager (Penelakut Nation)
10. Earl Rooke, SSI Local Community Commission Chair
11. Paul Brent, CRD Director (Southern Gulf Islands)
12. Gary Holman, SSI Electoral Area Director, CRD
13. Elizabeth May, MP (Saanich-Gulf Islands)

Notetakers:

1. Aysha Emmerson (Office of Elizabeth May, MP)
2. Emmanuelle Young (Office of Elizabeth May, MP)

Meeting Opening (Chair, Trustee Peterson)

Trustee Peterson offered a welcome/land acknowledgement. Participants introduced themselves. The previously approved agenda was outlined, and the B.C. Coastal Marine Strategy (CMS) was added for discussion.

Updates from Representatives

Summary: Participants shared jurisdictional challenges, updates, and priorities for 2026—with a focus on housing, health, anchorages, and reconciliation. Discussion included the Forum’s record of success and activities, as well as how First Nations can benefit from the Forum while being mindful of limited institutional capacity/funding.

1. WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council Updates from Eryn Rogers and Ned Taylor

- Erin and Ned are participating today on behalf of WLC to learn more about the Forum.
 - WLC represents Tsartlip and Tseycum on a variety of files.
 - Erin and Ned are participating in SGI Forum today to provide Forum with some information about what they do, and to build connections with its participants.
 - Eryn’s past work was in Aotearoa, specializing on shared governance, legal personality, and treaty settlements. Now works on WLC Land Trust Society.
- Updates on WLC files
 - Land trust
 - Recently received a donation of ~50 acres of land in central Saanich that is undergoing restoration.
 - Community planning for land (waste land) awaits funding.
 - Indigenous Management Board (11 nations – including WSÁNEĆ and Nanaimo)
 - Board was initially established for the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.
 - Parks Canada and B.C. have paused funding for this Board.
 - Without funding from elsewhere, it may have to end.
 - This Board is the only Forum for these 11 nations to come together to discuss unified approaches to shared challenges.
 - There are big capacity challenges for each nation to keep participating without funds.
 - Board discussions span fishing, national marine reserve, and other cross-jurisdictional problems. Adopts a holistic approach.
 - Local government relationship-building
 - Ned is involved in building relationships, specifically through MoUs with local governments making decisions on WSÁNEĆ territory.
 - Ned is building out a robust and sophisticated governance framework for his program.
 - WLC signed an MoU with District of Saanich in 2021, since then signed a CRD MoU in 2024.
 - WLC is now working on MoUs with Town of Sidney and Islands Trust.
 - MoUs explore a wide range of topics, from place names and public education, parks, to economic and land acquisition concerns.

2. Penelakut Nation Update from Barry Joyce

- Anchorages are a priority concern for the Nation.
- Attending today’s Forum on behalf of Chief.

3. Federal Updates from MP Elizabeth May

- Background on the Forum, including First Nations involvement
 - Forum does not want to add to the Nations' workload, including that of Eryn, Ned and Barry, etc.
 - Without speaking for them, hopes Forum can help lighten Nations' workload, advocating, when and as requested to do so, on their behalf, rather than stretching their already limited capacity thinner.
- Anchorages
 - MP May has repeatedly raised anchorage concerns to every Minister of Transport Canada—from Lisa Raitt to Marc Garneau, Omar Alghabra, Anita Anand, Chrystia Freeland and the current Minister Steve MacKinnon.
 - There was an announcement yesterday that we have made some progress with recreation vessels; new license renewal requirement will help track ownership.
 - Transport Canada has now set a requirement that recreation vessels need to be registered and pay a fee.
 - MP May contacted the Minister's senior BC staff to ask whether this will be used for derelict vessel remediation. She was assured that her recommendation to do so, first put forward three years ago, is the direction the Minister is pursuing.

4. Islands Trust Updates from Trustees

- Trustee Laura Patrick
 - Trust Policy Statement going through second/third round and in March and June with return; 1993 version is not adequate in addressing reconciliation and relationship-building with First Nations.
 - Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) report delivered in December recounted that there is good political will on Trust Council to build relationships with Nations, but Trust's capacity does not equal its desires.
 - Held a meeting in December with San Juan Island representatives, renewing longstanding desire to work together on oil spills.
 - They are developing a working group to keep this conversation active.
 - Salt Spring Island is limping through the community planning process. Salt Spring offices have finally opened and are holding meetings.
- Trustee David Maude
 - Fallow deer, as always, are an issue.
 - B.C. ferries is also down to one birth on Mayne due to maintenance. There has been some confusion with the new schedule.
 - Communication from the ferries has been poor.
- Trustee Dag Falck
 - Pender Trust has a meeting in early Feb.
 - Otherwise not much new to report.
- Trustee Mairead Boland
 - Things on Saturna are quiet.
 - Will hold a community information meeting on the Trust Policy Statement.

- Trustee Tobi Elliot
 - The policy statement has been creating chatter that is largely based on misunderstanding.
 - There has been some alarmism regarding land back issues.
 - Nothing has changed as a result of recognizing First Nations title in Richmond, yet there is fear.
 - The policy statement is not revolutionary; it is just catching up with the times.
 - Trustee Elliot is drafting an essay to tease out the different meanings of land back. She has been soliciting staff advice.
- Trustee Tim Peterson
 - The policy statement seems to have hit somewhere in the middle, even if there are continued issues with it.
 - In its budget review, Islands Trust declined to fund this Forum (SGI) moving forward. Nothing, though, is official.

5. CRD Updates from Directors

- Director Paul Brent
 - Grappling over the Trust Policy statement is nothing new; it has been taking place for the better part of two decades.
 - The CRD is focused on housing and health, though the dial hasn't moved much.
 - All the other SGI have BC ambulance services funded, but not Saturna. This is a big issue and inequitable. Will need to seek help from Rob's staff on this front.
- Director Gary Holman
 - The local community commission (LCC) on SSI is largely focused on housing and harbour management.
 - Dissolution of the Ferry Advisory Committee is tough.
 - Question: what is the federal funding commitment on housing? Carney talks big about housing stock increases, but all we hear about is cuts. Would be nice to know what the plan is from the government.
 - MP May reply: Carney administration has been opaque and misleading about housing. Build Canada Homes was created as a Special Operating Agency; it does not report to the Minister of Housing and much of its background documents are covered by Treasury Board rules of confidentiality.

6. LCC Updates from Earl Rook

- Housing is the priority issue on Salt Spring.
- Aiming to create a more integrated, concrete housing strategy, including a strategy for engagement with stakeholders.
- The island is struggling with providing public transport given the rise of inflation.

Action Item: Aysha will share meeting notes with MLA Botterell's team ASAP, particularly regarding the Saturna Ambulance issue.

***Action Item:** MP May office will follow up with Islands Trust about potential cutting of budget for SGI Forum. Forum may need to send a letter with a formal request, as in past years.*

Discussion – WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council x SGI Forum

Summary: Further discussion of WLC's involvement with the Forum. What could be an effective, efficient, and mutually beneficial working arrangement?

- Eryn Rogers → What is the benefit of the Nations being involved with the Forum? How can the Forum benefit the Forum, and how can the Forum benefit the Nations? WLC would like to be more engaged but needs to figure out what this looks like to be sustainable.
 - Trustee Peterson → When we can all work together, we are stronger together.
 - MP May → Would love a routine notification if there are any important meetings happening with the Chiefs and Councils, which would be appropriate for Forum members to attend. Happy to meet Nations where they are, if this is easiest.
 - Trustee Patrick → This group is informal and can help kick-off advocacy.
 - Director Holman → Sharing information can lead to joint advocacy.

***Action Item:** Eryn and Ned will develop a working plan for WLC's engagement with the Forum, sharing it with the wider group. They will consider, for example, a schedule for attending meetings on a quarterly basis.*

Discussion – Housing and Health (CRD)

Summary: Open discussion about continued housing and health challenges in SGI—spurred from concerns over the lack of a free ambulance service on Saturna.

- Director Holman → Housing is the number one social issue across the SGI. There are clear resource and infrastructure constraints.
 - Continued challenges for smaller/rural areas in attracting senior government funding.
 - As a positive, there is a new emergency room established on SSI and funding has been provided for more primary care.
 - It is also hard to attract funding for seniors care.
- Director Brent → Both Director Holman and him are pushing affordable housing. Affordable housing on SSI is \$800 a unit compared to \$550 a unit in Victoria.
- Trustee Patrick → In the official community plan for Salt Spring a 50% increase in housing density is expected.

Discussion – BC Coastal Marine Strategy

Summary: Newly added agenda item. Update on the strategy, which the City of Victoria requested to be legislated by the province.

- City of Victoria has asked this strategy to be legislated.
- Trust is exploring joint advocacy to support the strategy.
- Barry has said he would like to know more about marine strategy.
 - Trustee Elliot will forward this information to Barry.
- There will be a January 20 meeting between the Trust and Province about moving things forward on the strategy.

Discussion – Next Steps on Issues Raised in Updates

- March 5, 2026, will be the next in-person meeting (Rob's office).
- Earl Rook will Chair this meeting; invitation is open for anyone to co-Chair.
- Summary of actions:
 - Follow-up about budget for Forum (MP May office)
 - Follow-up with WLC working plan (Ned and Eryn)
 - Follow-up with province and MLA Botterell about Saturna ambulance (MP May office)