SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS FORUM

Meeting Minutes
Friday, July 10, 2026, 9:00am – 11:00am
Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Members (virtual):

1. Elizabeth May, MP (Saanich – Gulf Islands)
2. Laura Patrick, Islands Trust Chair and Trustee (Salt Spring Island)
3. Tobi Elliot, Islands Trustee (Gabriola Island), Vice-Chair of Islands Trust Council
4. Earl Rook, SSI Local Community Chair
5. Gary Holman, SSI Electoral Area Director, CRD

Notetakers

6. Ryley Johnston (Office of Elizabeth May, MP)
7. Chloe Straw (Islands Trust)

Open meeting: Chair (Elizabeth May, MP)

1. Welcome & Land Acknowledgement
2. Approval of minutes from March 2026 - APPROVED
3. Overview of agenda – APPROVED

Arising Matters & Updates from Representatives

1. Federal Update from MP Elizabeth May

    - Discussion of proposed drudging of Burrard Inlet slated to begin in September 2026.
        - Last week, provincial and federal government approved drudging of the Inlet starting September 2026
        - It appears the Southern Gulf Islands/lower mainland has become a 'sacrifice zone' to protect Northern BC for pipeline expansion, nor was the Tsleil-Waututh Nation properly consulted
        - MP May recently joined the board of Sea Change, who worked closely with Tsleil-Waututh on habitat restoration in Burrard Inlet.

- MP May referenced two May 8th Discussion papers on Species at Risk Act. Anu Roa, Senior Environmental Specialist with Tsleil-Waututh Nation, responded saying that it looked like it was to get rid of protection of the southern resident orcas to allow for expansion of diluted bitumen. As a result, the government extended the public comment period to July 22.
    - Trustee Elliot: How do we support First Nations who are having their food sources, their inherent rights trampled on? This should be the focus of any advocacy.
    - MP May: Yes, supporting Tsleil-Waututh in whatever they decide to do. The Burrard Inlet, which was formally an industrial zone, has, against all odds, been restored to a marine environment that is teeming with life.
    - We should step up to support Tsleil-Waututh in whatever they decide to do. When they ask, we show up. Until then, we raise the public awareness about what govt is planning to do. What does it mean for the Salish Sea?
- Other Members of Parliament to contact regarding Burrard Inlet:
    - Wade Grant, MP for Kitsilano-Musqueam; advocate for SRKW
    - Patrick Weiler, MP West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast; working with MP May on issue of more anchorages clogging the Salish Sea.
    - Will Greaves, MP Victoria
    - Ernie Klassen, MP Surrey-White Rock; parliamentary secretary for Fisheries Canada
    - Stephanie McLean, MP Esquimalt-Sooke

- On Friday, July 16th, MP May will be at Ask Salt Spring. Any trustees or regional directors wanting info shared at that event, email her. E.g. we know there's something happening with devolving docks in the region.

Action Items

- *MP May will share photos of Anu Roa in her scuba gear planting eel grass in Burrard Inlet, to share content like to get people to care about the imminent threat to the work done to restore the ecosystem.*
- *MP May suggested Islands Trust could put in writing all that Islands Trust is protecting and Elizabeth can share it with relevant ministers.*
- *Amplify Tsleil-Waututh's website/socials to support their voice*

2. CRD updates from Gary Holman
    - SSI community is focused on derelict vessels and seeking funding to inventory the status of the liveaboard community (i.e. map the number of moorings, which are tenanted, are they seaworthy)
        - Very little government support in this project
    - Fed government is divesting/devolving docks in the region, including Fulford dock.

Action Items

- *MP May requested the information regarding divesting/devolving docks be shared with her office so that she can investigate further and reach out to Minister of Transport.*

3. Island Trust updates from Trustees
    - Trustee Elliott
        - There was an update at recent Lasqueti Island meeting from Andrew Fall of qathet regional district on divesting/devolving docks. There was an AVICC (Association of Vancouver Island Communities) resolution that he will take to FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities).
            - MP May has heard discussions at the federal level about privatizing ports and airports, but nothing about docks.
    - Trustee Patrick
        - Recently attended a conference at Tigh Na Mara about making the gulf islands an international biosphere.
            - MP May referenced a Parks Canada publication done about 10 years ago that mapped the different resident species across the islands. This would lend itself to a marine conservation biosphere.
                - the federal government/Parks Canada mention funds for the gulf islands "once there's a conservation area." While many environmental protections are being dismantled, the Carney government has retained its commitment to protect 30% by 2030. The biosphere would fall under this. Look to the Gwaii Haanas model which includes active Watchmen program to monitor visitor activity and educate visitors.
                - Gulf Islands National Park is the only national park in Canada that does not have a visitors' centre. No opportunity to educate visitors.
    - Trustee Elliott
        - Currently working on a call on BC government to legislate the Coastal Marine Strategy.
        - Motions from Trust Council (Dec 2024) Requesting options to support renewed advocacy with San Juan County and Indigenous Governing Bodies that is directed to our respective federal and state/provincial bodies on oil spill prevention in the Salish Sea.
        - June 2026 Writing to the Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship advocating that the British Columbia Coastal Marine Strategy be enshrined into law.
        - Engaging the Province about the Infrastructure Projects Act Bill 15 to clarify the implications in the Trust Area and intentions to respect the provincial Islands Trust mandate.

Action Items

- *Trustee Patrick to reach out to Trustee Stamford (Gambier Local Trust Committee) who is working with Andrew Fall.*

Confirmation of date and details of next meeting

- Sept 4, 2026 is the date of next meeting – call for Chair to go out prior with agenda