

**A publication of the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory Project No. 6
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Ecological Gifting

What are Ecogifts?

Ecogifts are gifts of full title to a property, or of the value of a conservation easement or covenant attached to that title, as defined by provincial legislation. Since 1995, landowners across Canada have been able to receive federal and provincial tax assistance for protecting ecologically significant lands. Ecogifts include lands that:

- Are identified, designated or protected for environmental conservation. For example on east Vancouver Island, Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory polygons would apply if they have been field checked.
- Are locally important natural areas;
- Are close to other environmentally significant properties;
- Buffer environmentally sensitive areas such as water bodies, streams and wetlands; or
- Support the conservation of biodiversity or Canada's environmental heritage.

How are ecogifts certified as eligible for tax and income reduction?

Several agencies and groups in British Columbia are authorized to certify that the proposed ecogift qualifies for tax reductions. The agency or group will verify that the land is ecologically sensitive; that the recipient of the gift is a registered charity, an incorporated municipality, or a federal or provincial Crown agency; and that the value of the ecogift is at fair market value.

What are the benefits to using the Ecogifts Program?

For an individual property owner, 100% of the value of the donated ecogift can be used to reduce income for tax purposes. Recent changes have been put in place to provide greater benefit to corporations, including reduction of any capital gains tax payable that may be associated with the gift. Ecogifts are currently 75% capital gains exempt.

For more information, please contact:

**Ecological Gifts Secretariat
Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment Canada**

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3

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Fax: 819-953-3575

E-mail: ecogifts@ec.gc.ca

Web: www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/ecogifts

Billboard

"Can the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory staff provide Terms of Reference to use for ecological surveys?"

The Ministry of Environment (Vancouver Island regional office) is finalizing terms of reference for bio-inventories, which will be in the revised Best Management Practices document. Contact Marlene Caskey for more information (phone 250-751-3100 or e-mail Marlene.Caskey@gems7.gov.bc.ca). You can view the Best Management Practices on the MoE website: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/BMP/bmpintro.html>

If you are hiring contractors, you can contact Bill Hubbard or Jan Kirkby for copies of field data forms, as well as information about other sources of data or plant communities. (See [page 4](#) for contact information.)

"Are the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory maps and database available on your website?"

We are working to provide the maps and database information on the SEI website, and to include the field data for ground-truthed polygons.

In the interim, our colleagues at DFO and MELP have provided a web tool for viewing SEI data. To see the SEI maps online, go to www.shim.bc.ca and follow the "wildlife observations/SEI" link. You will need to download a mapguide plug-in.

A big "thank-you!" to Brad Mason of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Rob Knight of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks for their help on this project.

Note of Thanks

The SEI Technical Advisory Group and Steering Committee would like to acknowledge our SEI workshop coordinator and facilitator, Judith Cullington of Judith Cullington & Associates, for her valuable and ongoing contribution to the SEI project. Her cheerful and enthusiastic presence, combined with her competence and professionalism, have made her a tremendous asset to the group as well as a pleasure to work with. Thanks, Judith!

CORRECTION!!

Due to a computer glitch, some of the tables in the SEI Conservation Manual (Volume 2) were incorrectly totalled. In this SEI Update you will find sticky labels to place over the tables on pages 16, 17 and 71. For additional labels contact Peggy Ward at (250) 752-9611 or Peggy.Ward@ec.gc.ca

The Islands Trust and the Local Government Act

The Islands Trust is a provincially mandated agency responsible for land use planning in the Gulf Islands. It was established in 1974 under the *Islands Trust Act*.

Planning in the Islands Trust is similar to that found in regional districts. However, there are some major differences.

- All Official Community Plan and land use decisions of the local trust committees and municipalities in the Trust area must be consistent with the legislated mandate of the Islands Trust to “preserve and protect.”
- Local trust committees lack some of the powers in the *Local Government Act* (such as the ability to levy development cost charges).
- Local trust committees are given additional special powers under the *Islands Trust Act*.

The Islands Trust area includes one municipality (Bowen Island). Planning here is similar to that in other B.C. municipalities, except that the Official Community Plan and land use bylaws must comply with the Object of the *Islands Trust Act*.

The *Islands Trust Act* and its regulations give land use planning authority to the local trust committees and municipalities (not Trust Council). Generally, the *Islands Trust Act* and its regulations confers most of the land use planning powers of Part 26 and Part 27 of the *Local Government Act* as they apply to regional districts. Other sections of the *Local Government Act* that are required for day-to-day operation of the Islands Trust (such as meeting procedures and bylaw enforcement) are also authorised.

The *Islands Trust Act* contains three specific powers that a local government does not have.

- In areas where zoning exists, but there is no building inspection service provided by the regional district, a local trust committee can adopt a Siting and Use Permit bylaw. Once adopted, a permit is required prior to the commencement of any construction.
- Within un-zoned areas, landowners must seek permission from the local trust committee (by a resolution) to construct anything other than a single-family dwelling, a small accessory cottage, or accessory building.
- Local trust committees may vote on matters without holding a meeting. The only restriction to this is that the second and third readings for bylaws must be considered in a meeting.

When the legislature amends the *Local Government Act*, or introduces a new regulation, if the part, division or section of the act or regulation being amended has already been conferred on the local trust committees by the *Islands Trust Act* or its regulations, then the amendment automatically applies to the Islands Trust. On the other hand, if the amendment creates a new part, division or section to the *Local Government Act*, a consequential amendment to the *Islands Trust Act* will be required for it to apply to the Islands Trust.

For more information contact David Marlor, MCIP, Regional Planning Coordinator, Islands Trust, phone (250) 405-5169.

Information in the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory Conservation Manual applies to powers under the *Local Government Act* (formerly the *Municipal Act*). It is important to note that some of these powers are modified in the Islands Trust area. Islands Trust planner David Marlor explains the differences.

Purchasing the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory Manuals

The Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory has two manuals to help users.

The **Technical Report** (*Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory: East Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands 1993-1997, Volume 1*) describes the SEI ecosystems and inventory methods, and provides a summary and analysis of the data. This document may be purchased from the Queens Printer (cost approximately \$18 for a single copy). Call (250) 387-6409 or 1-800-663-6105, quote stock number 7680000940.

The **Conservation Manual** (*Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory: East Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands 1993-1997, Volume 2*) provides management recommendations, conservation tools and other information for local governments, developers, landowners and conservation agencies. To purchase the Conservation Manual (\$35), or both manuals, call Judith Cullington at (250) 391-8772 or e-mail jcullington@shaw.ca

Copies of these manuals are available in local government planning departments, and in libraries. They can also be downloaded from the SEI website. Information from these manuals is also available in the [Living Legacy \(PDF 906KB\)](#) brochure, and a series of [Ecosystem Brochures](#).

SEI website updated, check it out!

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sei/>

Download manuals from <http://aardvark.gov.bc.ca/apps/acat/viewReport.do?reportId=2124>

For more information, contact:

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To order maps, contact:

Clover Point Cartographics

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