



Discovery Islands & Mainland Inlets Official Community Plan

What We Heard: Foreshore & Environmentally Sensitive Areas Community Discussion

Area C OCP Project | April 8th 2026 @ Surge Narrows Bunk House

The Strathcona Regional District would like to thank the 30 (approximate) community members who attended the discussion on Foreshore (Aquaculture and Access) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Your many thoughtful comments have been consolidated.

Staff opened this session with a short overview of the existing Rural Land Use Bylaw's (RLUB) content related to foreshore uses and ESAs.

Planning staff opened the floor to the community to start the conversation and recorded the following notes from the discussion:

This list is a short-hand transcription of comments made, as captured by the note-taker during the session. Though not a verbatim account, staff have tried to use the terms that were spoken and to capture the intent of statements made. These comments will be organized and refined into policy statements for further discussion, especially on matters where the community is divided.

- Participants reaffirmed the existing policies in the RLUB in that shoreline access for the public shall be maintained whenever possible and any new shoreline proposals will be reviewed on a site specific (case-by-case) basis
- The importance of restoring previous aquaculture sites to their natural state in a timely manner was highlighted
- Remediation of former finfish aquaculture sites and enforcement of non-compliance with aquaculture management plans is of high importance
- Fin fish farms are slowly being removed, however historic zoning still remains. The community would like to see the aquaculture zoned areas updated to align with expiration of licenses, reverting those foreshore areas back to Access use (AC) upon expiration.
- Although it was recognized that local governments cannot regulate the species or type of aquaculture under the surface of the water, the community would like to reaffirm that they are opposed to aquaculture uses for fin fish (specifically including salmon farms).
- Support for the removal of equipment related to historic aquaculture sites
- Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for a clearer and more transparent public notification process (including existing license renewals)
- Key topic: communications and an informed community (relating to provincial notifications on changes to aquaculture license)
 - o Currently: Electoral Area Directors are notified by referrals being provided through the Board meeting agenda

- The entire outer discovery islands are an environmentally sensitive area
- Potentially damaging foreshore development activities need a high bond to incentivize compliance
- The local economy is shifting to more tourism. Eco-tourism is supported.
- Importance of viewsheds
- Community consultation on new infrastructure and tenure changes are significant, especially along the foreshore
- Dark Sky Policy – supported in the Outer Discovery Islands
 - o Protection of the night sky
 - o Dim lighting and always facing downwards
 - o Large resorts are over lit
 - o Retain remote natural night skies
- No support for industrialization or data centres in the Outer Discovery Islands
- Tourist commercial/ Industrial Development Permit Areas are supported to address environmental aspects
- Need to ensure functional right of ways for beach access points, all lots need reasonable access (do not allow waterfront access lots with inaccessible steep slopes)
- No uses shall preclude access to the foreshore
- Immediate upland areas on islands should be maintained in natural character
- Advocate for cleanup of federal and marine debris, unattended derelict boats
- Communal wharves could be encouraged where access exists (avoid litter of many docks)
- Shelters places should be considered for communal wharves as a community asset
- Encourage local expertise to inform communal assets where possible with technical oversight
- Prioritize parking at public wharves for residents
- Maintain mapped wildlife corridors and heritage trails keeping them intact
- Foreshore logging for development purposes shall be minimized to lessen impact on island character
- Islands and Islets are changing character due to climate change and less precipitation, need conservation measures to lessen effects.
- Island forests take longer to regenerate and recover than continuous mainland forests
- Explore the possibility of a noise bylaw (not at this time – possibly for industrial uses, advocate to limit blasting)
- When access is present, encourage road access availability
- Water access only lots must be reasonable (existing road infrastructure should be utilized)
- For development of docks – notifications for local community for dock construction
- Maintain a distance between private docks
- Oyster leases generally supportable, discourage fin fish, encourage alternative aquaculture endeavors
- Temporary Use Permits not generally supported