



January 25, 2021

Mr. Brett Hudson
Director, Planning and Land Administration Section
BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Strategy

Re: Saturnina Island as a Potential BC Marine Park

Dear Mr. Hudson:

I am writing on behalf of the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT) to support the initiative of the BC Marine Parks Forever Society for the purchase of Saturnina Island as a BC Marine Park.

GaLTT is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization focused on protecting Coastal Douglas Fir (CDF) ecosystems on Gabriola and nearby islands, developing and maintaining a network of public trails, and providing public education and awareness of outdoor recreation and conservation issues. Our conservation work includes advocacy, land acquisition and conservation covenants. In recent years, GaLTT has worked closely with BC Parks on invasive plant removal/ecosystem restoration and improving accessibility for visitors with mobility restrictions to Gabriola's provincial parks.

You are well aware of the increasing threats to CDF ecosystems due to development pressures and climate change. In their current Regional Conservation Plan, the Islands Trust Conservancy states that, "In particular, the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area [which includes the Flat Top Islands] is vulnerable to loss of natural ecosystems to residential and associated uses." Only 12.13% of the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area is currently protected, compared to an Islands Trust average of 19.58% (<http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/i-am-a/local-government/lta-protected-areas/>).

Saturnina Island is an excellent candidate as a BC Marine Park both for conservation and recreational purposes. Protecting this forested and undeveloped 10-acre island would be a valuable addition to the parks system. From a recreational perspective, the island is already a popular day destination for local kayakers with close proximity to Gabriola and a nice pebble beach and sandstone shoreline. A few simple trails would provide opportunities for exploring the natural environment in a non-intrusive way.

As a conservation organization, we encourage the purchase of this island as a BC Marine Park and would assist with fundraising efforts.

Yours truly,

Robert Brockley
President, Gabriola Land and Trails Trust

cc: Jamie Aikman, BC Parks
George Creek, BCMPFS
Jim Phillips, BCMPFS