



ISLANDS TRUST FUND

# TRUST FUND BOARD POLICY

**Policy number: 3.6**

**Title: Research Policy**

**Approved By: Trust Fund Board**

**Date: September 11, 2002**

**Resolution #: TFB 02/499**

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify:

- the types of research that the Board might support financially when resources are available
- when it will provide written support of research (for those applying to granting organizations) and
- how it will deal with research on Trust Fund Board owned lands

## BACKGROUND

The Islands Trust Fund Plan (1997-2002) indicates that areas that can be used for nature study, nature education or scientific research are worthy of protection. It was recommended that this same criterion remain in the 2002-2007 Islands Trust Fund Plan. A trustee, during the Trust Council review of the draft Plan 2002 – 2007, indicated concern with this criterion and requested that the Board clarify its position on research. She also expressed concern about the Board allowing research on red-listed bird species on property that it owns. Concern has also been expressed in the past by a partner group about the type and timing of research to be permitted at a nature sanctuary established to protect bird nesting habitat.

The Trust Fund Board does not have a policy on what types or levels of research are appropriate. Currently research on Trust Fund Board properties is dealt with at the management planning level on a property by property basis. If research is considered to be an issue, the management plan identifies how it should be dealt with.

## Policy

### General Support of Research

1. The Board generally supports scientifically-based research, both marine and land-based, relating to the significant ecosystems, natural and cultural features, and other values that relate to the unique and special character of the Islands Trust Area.

2. The Trust Fund Board may provide written or financial support for research or programs that it considers beneficial for the conservation, protection or preservation of the Trust Area's unique amenities or environment. In particular, the Board will generally support research that relates to increasing the understanding of the significance or vulnerability of the Trust Area and its natural and cultural features or to conservation of the Trust Area's natural and cultural heritage.
3. Financial support for research will only be provided under the following circumstances:
  - a) the research, or some portion of it, is being conducted within the Trust Area
  - b) the Board has reviewed a written research proposal that summarizes the goals, objectives, timeframe, methodology, anticipated benefits and potential impacts of the research
  - c) the Board recognizes a direct benefit of the research to the Islands Trust
  - d) a copy of the final research product will be provided to Islands Trust
  - e) the Board has funds that it considers to be readily available to assist with the research without unduly jeopardizing its current programs or resource requirements
4. Written support for research proposals and conservation programs/projects (e.g. to support funding applications being made by the individual, society, or agency to other funding sources) may be provided by the Islands Trust Fund Manager, on behalf of the Islands Trust Fund, based on the Manager's review of the proposal, an assessment of the organization or individual's qualifications and ability to undertake the research or program, an assessment of the benefit the research or program could provide to the Islands Trust, and available staff time.

#### **Research on Trust Fund Board Lands**

5. The Board will require researchers to acquire Board permission prior to undertaking research on Board-owned lands. The Board will require a written research proposal to be provided, summarizing the purpose/goals, timeframe, methodology, anticipated benefits and potential impacts of the research, for review prior to providing any permission. Research considered to be invasive will not be permitted unless a Trust Fund Board approved plan indicates such research should be supported.
6. Board approval of research is delegated to the Islands Trust Fund Manager in cases where an approved management plan or other Board-approved document provides specific guidelines for approval of research at that site. In such cases, the Manager will provide a report to the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
7. Staff will seek input from external experts (e.g., provincial, national, or university experts) if the proposed research is related to rare, threatened or endangered species, plant communities or ecosystems, prior to making a recommendation to the Board regarding approval of the proposed research.

8. The Board will ensure that the proposed research would not contravene the conservation covenant on the nature reserve or sanctuary, if one exists.
9. On balance, the Board must be confident that the value of the proposed research outweighs any potential impacts before it provides approval for any research to be conducted on its lands. For clarity, the Board always has the right to not permit research undertakings on its properties.
10. On Trust Fund Board lands that are closed to public use because of the potential for disturbance to a particular significant species using the site (e.g., breeding birds), the Board will not permit research during the time period that is considered by the Board to be critical to the health or well-being of the species using the site.
11. If the research is permitted by the Board, the researcher(s) will then be required to notify the Management Group and the warden for the reserve or sanctuary, if they exist, of the timing and general methodology to be used (i.e. date(s), what is going to be done, where on-site they will be, who will be there and how long the researcher expects to be on-site) prior to conducting the research and to provide the Islands Trust Fund with a research report upon completion of the research.
12. Any individual or group contracted to prepare a management plan for a Trust Fund Board nature reserve or sanctuary will be required to consider whether research is appropriate at the site, and include an assessment and related recommendations regarding how research should be handled at that site (e.g., guidelines included in the plan or a strategy regarding how such guidelines will be prepared).