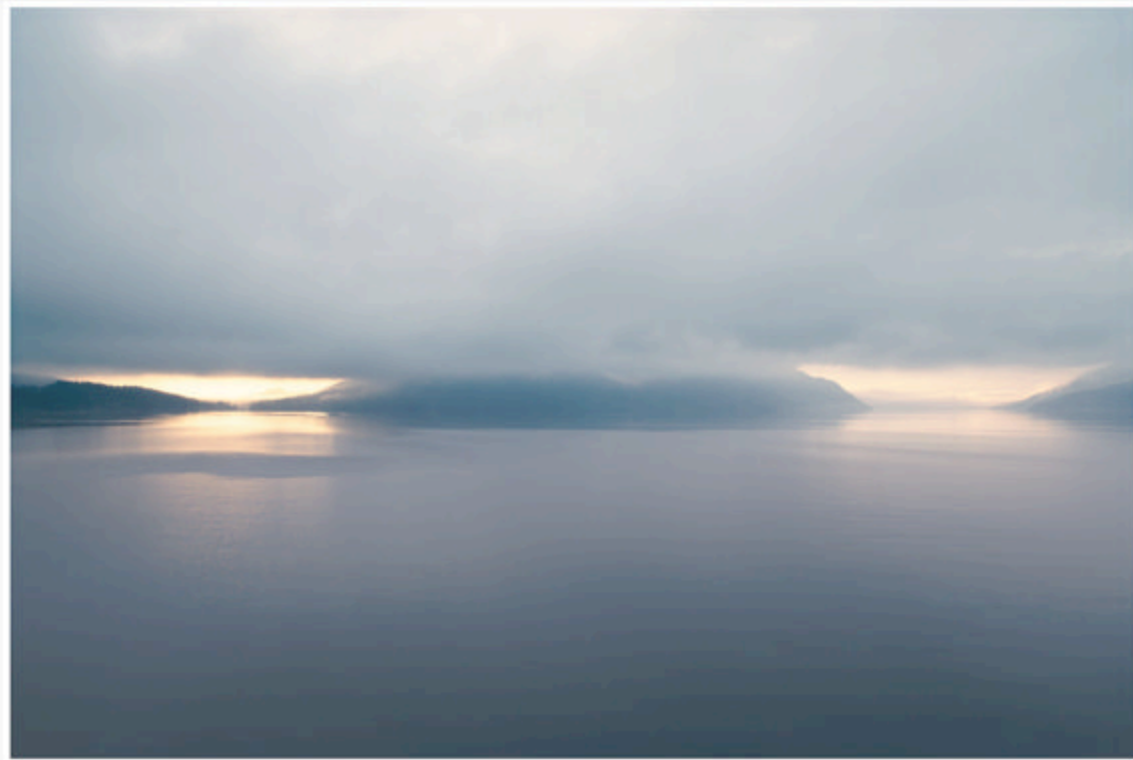


Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan

Version 1.0



Salt Spring Island Climate Action Council

April 28, 2011

www.climateactionsaltspring.ca

Salt Spring Island Climate Action Council

The Salt Spring Island Climate Action Council was established in May 2010 to coordinate the development and implementation of a Climate Action Plan for Salt Spring Island. The council consists of representatives of the following agencies and organizations:

Capital Regional District
Islands Trust
Institute for Sustainability, Education and Action (I-SEA)
Island Pathways
Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance
Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce
Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission
Salt Spring Island Water Council
Salt Spring Island Conservancy
Transition Salt Spring
Earth Festival Society
Youth representative, Gulf Islands Secondary School
and up to four members at large with specific expertise and/or interests related to the Climate Action Council's mandate.

The Salt Spring Island Climate Action Council is in the process of incorporating as a British Columbia not-for-profit society.

Acknowledgements

cover photo: Mount Erskine © M.Levy/flatearthphoto.com

The Salt Spring Island Climate Action Council wishes to thank all those who contributed to the draft Climate Action Plan, including everyone who attended the 2010 February 6 workshop, Council members who contributed sections of the plan and reviewed and edited drafts, and our twelve outside technical reviewers.

After a period for public comment, the Climate Action Council issued version 1.0 of the Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan in April 2011. Comments received on the draft are presented in Appendix E.

COMMENTS ON THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN VERSION 1.0 MAY BE MADE AS FOLLOWS:

Online: www.climateactionsaltspring.ca

By email: ssiclimaction@gmail.com

By mail: Salt Spring Island Climate Action Coordinator
PO Box 614
Salt Spring Island, BC
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

The Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan is a call to action. The context for action is a planet already affected by a rapidly expanding human population, depletion of natural resources, and ecosystem disruption. Climate change underscores the fact that infinite growth is not possible on a finite planet. We face a very serious and sobering situation that is making unprecedented demands on the human species. We are all at different places in our awareness about the reality we are facing, and the conversation about the seriousness of the climate challenge is urgently required, not only on Salt Spring Island but throughout the world.

Global climate change poses special challenges for island communities, which are particularly vulnerable to wind storms, storm surges, wildfires, drought, and sea level rise. Islands are also heavily dependent upon food imports and on fossil fuels for transportation. The Salt Spring Island Draft Climate Action Plan provides guidance to help the community respond effectively to the challenges of climate change and to meet its greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets for 2015 and 2020. Measures to meet 2050 targets are not addressed in this version of the plan, but will be included in the future.

The plan has been developed in the context of the BC provincial government Climate Action Plan and provincial targets, including the objective that local governments, schools, universities, colleges, hospitals and other public sector institutions become carbon neutral. Local governments are required to include GHG reduction targets in their official community plans. Salt Spring is part of the Capital Regional District (CRD) and the Salt Spring plan fits within the broader CRD Climate Action Program.

“Climate change is a complex, multi-year challenge for our region. It is a wake-up call to a system in decline, and the future of the Capital Region—our economic structures, government policies, and culture— will be determined by how we deal with this challenge.” — Climate Action in the Capital Region

The plan draws upon previous Salt Spring energy and GHG reduction reports, and includes input from many groups and individuals. The draft has been approved by the Climate Action Council and has undergone an outside review process by twelve reviewers with relevant expertise. The current draft will be finalized in April 2011, after the public consultation process is completed.

Suggested actions

The suggested actions to address climate change can also help meet objectives for food security, economic resilience, community health, and nature conservation. The plan encourages a shift from a highly consumptive lifestyle and its associated greenhouse gas emissions. Part of this shift will involve the growth of the local agricultural economy, the growth of the “green” tourism sector, and the sustainable redevelopment and densification over time of our village areas. Actions to be undertaken will be determined by community interest, available funding, technology developments and regulatory constraints.

In 2007, the baseline year for BC communities, Salt Spring’s greenhouse gas emissions from transportation fuels, electricity use, heating fuel, firewood, propane, solid waste, food, and BC Ferries fuel were estimated to be about 70,000 tonnes. Most of these emissions were attributable to food and on-island transportation.

The target for 2015 is to reduce these emissions by at least 15% or about 10,500 tonnes below 2007 levels. These reductions may be achieved if islanders “tune up and drive smart”, reduce the number of automobile trips we take and carpool, and if islanders adjust our diets to include more vegetarian and local and regional food.

The target for 2020 is to reduce emissions by at least 40% or about 28,000 tonnes below 2007 levels. In addition to the 2015 measures, other suggested actions to achieve this target include ongoing replacement of older vehicles with smaller, more efficient and electric vehicles, significant expansion of local food production, home energy conservation and retrofits, climate neutral measures by businesses and institutions, on-island composting of kitchen scraps, and BC Ferries replacement of the Queen of Nanaimo with a more efficient vessel.

Purchasing habits and lifestyle decisions of individuals can significantly minimize the personal carbon footprint beyond the limited range of emissions tracked by this plan. The plan provides suggestions for low-cost measures that individuals and families can make to reduce their carbon footprints.

The population of Salt Spring is projected to grow by 6.8% between 2007 and 2015 and by 12% by 2020. We need to be aware of the significant greenhouse gas emissions associated with population growth. The clearing of forested land for development to accommodate this growth can release a large quantity of carbon into the atmosphere, and the loss of forest to buildings and paved surfaces reduces the sequestration of carbon. Suggested planning measures to avoid or reduce future new emissions from population growth and development, and to support other aspects of the plan, include densification of built up areas, especially Ganges Village, and incentives to reduce land clearing for new development in forested areas.

Review and updates

The Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan is a living document to be reviewed and updated regularly by the Salt Spring Island Climate Action Council to ensure that it remains current and relevant to local conditions.

This is the first edition of the plan and is intended as a reference document. A short, reader-friendly illustrated edition of the plan will also be prepared. Successful implementation will depend upon communicating the essential points of the plan to all islanders, because the suggested actions will need to involve the whole community—individuals, families, organizations, businesses and institutions, and local government.

The Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan is for everyone.

Next Steps

1. All Salt Spring Island individuals, families, organizations, businesses and institutions are encouraged to comment on the Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan, to share ideas for reducing carbon footprints, and contribute to meeting Salt Spring's greenhouse gas reduction targets. A summary brochure of the plan and information flyers are available, together with a slide presentation for community groups.
2. The Climate Action Council will seek endorsement of the plan by the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee, by Islands Trust Council, and by the CRD Board of Directors.
3. The Climate Action Council will work with its member organizations to complete a communications and community engagement strategy to enable broad participation in meeting Salt Spring's greenhouse gas reduction targets.
4. The Climate Action Council will seek and work with community partners to develop, where appropriate, detailed analysis of strategies, and to roll out actions. Priority actions to meet 2015 targets will be the focus. And, subject to availability of resources, we will also focus on long-term projects to meet 2020 targets that require short-term initiation.
5. The Climate Action Council will continue to seek funding and in-kind support from and with its community partners, including Islands Trust and CRD, and from provincial and federal agencies. Funding will be needed to support specific actions, to coordinate the ongoing evolution and implementation of the plan, and to track progress in meeting targets.
6. Please continue (or begin) to reduce your own greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Action Council invites everyone to take ownership of the Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan.