

Waterscape Gulf Islands

protecting and conserving our island water

Keeping water clean: it's just common sense

All our water comes from rain ...but little is stored

Hi there. I'm Sally. We're here on vacation. Can you tell us about water supplies on the Gulf Islands?

Sure thing. I'm Raindrop. Let's take a tour.

Water tour starts here

Well, the ferry is leaving. Thanks Raindrop for the tour. There is so much to learn about protecting and conserving water.

You're welcome. Please spread the word.

We depend on stored winter water!

Our changing climate: more droughts coming?

Conservation is crucial

Why is storage limited?
The Gulf Islands lack high mountains with winter snow that store water into the summer months. As well, there are few lakes and most are small and the water that can be stored in fractured rock under the islands is limited.

Why is storage important?
During the winter, lake levels rise, cisterns fill, and groundwater supplies are recharged. During our dry summers we depend on this stored water.

Can nature run short of water too?
Streams and wetlands can be damaged by human activities that reduce natural water flow.

Did you know?
The roof of an average Gulf Island home can capture 91 000 to 105 000 litres (20 000 to 23 000 gallons) of water in a year with an average rainfall.

Conservation is our best tool. At next step is to harvest rainwater from our roofs and store it in cisterns.

How do islanders deal with water shortages?
Conservation is our best tool. At next step is to harvest rainwater from our roofs and store it in cisterns.

What about climate change?
Scientists predict that future summers will be warmer and drier. In the future, with more people and less water, we will have to become very good conservers.

Our population swells in summer

High summer demand for water occurs as supplies dwindle.

Summer - our island goes dry

Drinking and cooking 4%

Laundry and dishes 16%

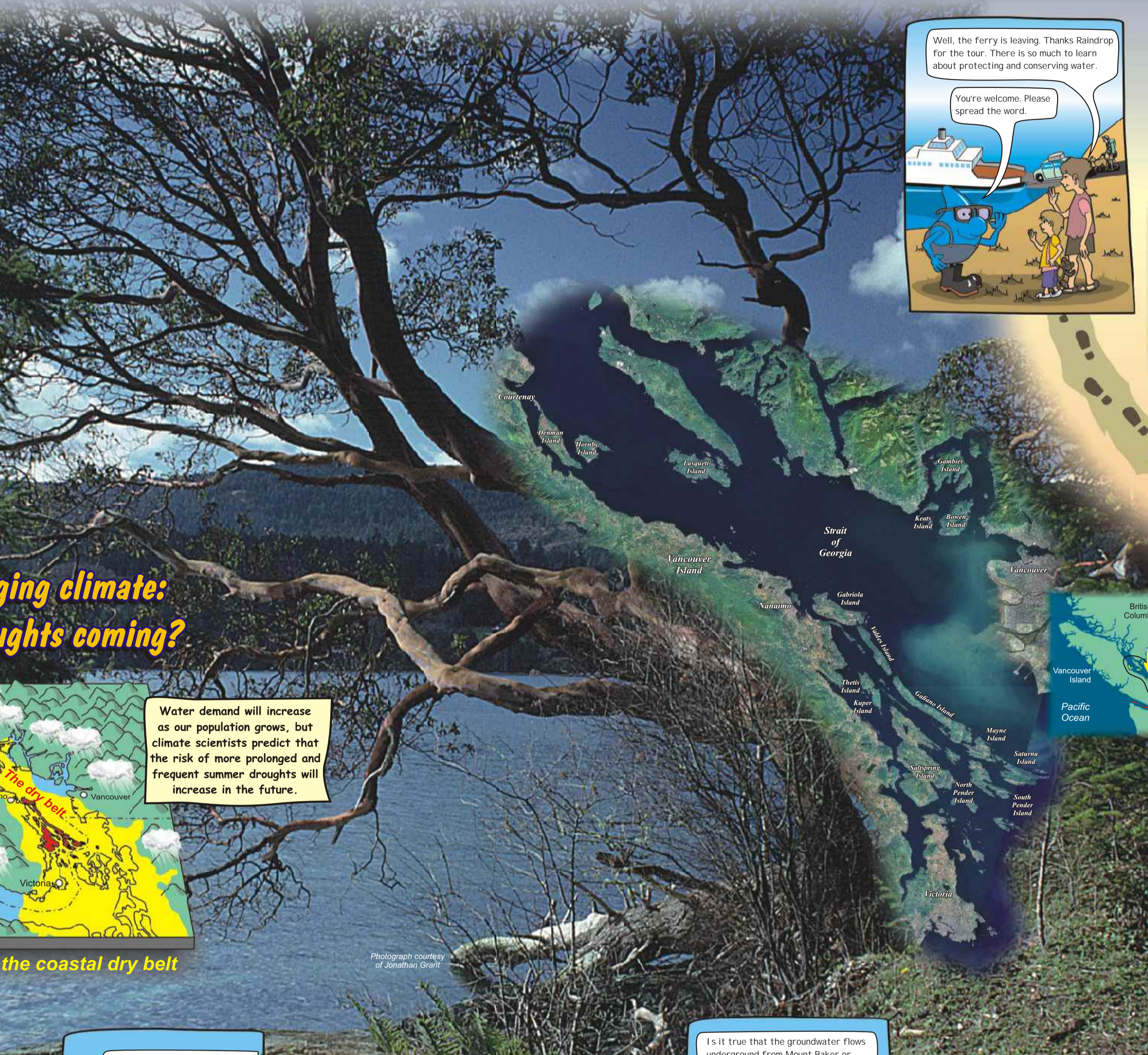
Bathing and showering 28%

Toilet flushing 32%

Gardening 20%

The old way - wasteful homes

The new way - conservation



Doing it right. Protecting our water

Doing it wrong. Degrading our water

Is your well safe?

Protected groundwater

Contaminated groundwater

Safe water supply: a sealed well with a safe distance from septic field

Unsafe well

Is your well safe?

A good septic system is a maintained septic system. Make sure your septic tank is inspected and pumped regularly.

Having enough water: increasing storage

Doing it right. Maximum storage of winter rains

Doing it wrong. Wasted opportunities

SEPTIC SERVICE

How do islanders protect the quality of water supplies?
There are many ways. Most protection is just common sense. For example, I check my septic tank annually to ensure it is functioning properly. Failed septic fields are a major source of drinking water contamination on the islands.

SEPTIC SERVICE

How do islanders increase their water supplies?
We increase groundwater storage by maintaining our forest lands. And we harvest rainwater from our rooftops.

Doing it right. Maximum storage of winter rains

Doing it wrong. Wasted opportunities

Nature needs water too!

Our deep storage: water underground

How wetlands work

How groundwater works

How a well works

How over-pumping can impact neighbours' and streams

Can nature run short of water too?
Streams and wetlands can be damaged by human activities that reduce natural water flow.

Our deep storage: water underground

How wetlands work

How groundwater works

How a well works

How over-pumping can impact neighbours' and streams

Be careful! Over-pumping of groundwater wells can reduce vital springs that maintain stream flow and wetlands through the summer.

Protecting our water means protecting our land

Want to know more?

Source area for a well

Protecting our water means protecting our land

Want to know more?
The Gulf Islands Waterscape poster is on the internet at www.islandstrust.bc.ca and www.geoscience.nrcan.gc.ca and Government of British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection www.gov.bc.ca/wat/gwis/gwis.html

The British Columbia Groundwater Association www.bcgwa.org/education.htm

Source area for a well

Every lake, stream, or well has a source area.

Islands Trust

BRITISH COLUMBIA

8 CERRES

Canada