

ISSUE NOTE

Issue: Grace Islet Burial Site

- A residential development proposed for a privately owned islet in Ganges Harbour, Saltspring Island will, according to First Nations, desecrate the approximately 17 burials on the islet.

Background:

- Grace Islet is a known burial site, containing at least 17 burial cairns from local First Nations. Archaeology Branch (Branch) issued a site alteration permit (under *Heritage Conservation Act*) that is necessary before the property owner can build a house. In doing so, he must avoid the burials. Local First Nations consider Grace Islet sacred and oppose any development on the site. Branch staff confirmed the private owner has conducted excavation work that is in breach of the archaeology permit. First Nations have also filed an official police complaint regarding the breach. That investigation is still underway.
- On December 14, 2012, the Branch amended the alteration permit to require the examination of the materials that were altered in breach of the permit by the property owner and that a report of the findings be prepared.
-

S.12

Decision required:

- **30 day issue although the Minister will not be required to make the decision and this note is an alert to the upcoming issue.**
- The property owner went to extensive design lengths to ensure his proposed building would not touch any of the burial cairns, although in some instances the building decks would be over top of some cairns but as the result was to avoid all the cairns the permit was issued.
- Thirteen First Nations were advised of the original application in October 2011 and only one replied with any concerns. The band that responded alleged treaty rights that are not protected by the Douglas Treaty, of which it is a signatory, so the alteration permit was issued.
-

S.12