

2050 letter (posted on Facebook)

"To Chair and Council:

I too have been perturbed by some of the negative and misleading reactions to your initiative. The Trust's mandate, as I understand it, is to preserve and protect a sensitive habitat inhabited by humans. This habitat is emphatically not a 'wilderness'. That eurocentric word descends to us from Old English: wild doer naess i.e. 'place of the wild animals'. As such, it is contrasted with civilization, i.e. where 'civilized' urban humans live. My understanding is that our indigenous neighbours never have had such an alienated concept, viewing themselves, correctly, as an integral part of the land. Therefore, the Trust's mandate must necessarily concern itself with navigating the harmonious integration of human settlement within this special landscape to the extent possible.

A tricky and delicate task. Like it or not, this task involves compromise. For instance, I fully support the laudable aim of preserving the unique coastal Douglas Fir ecosystem. But as the owner of a relatively small parcel on Gabriola, I submit I should have the right, should it become necessary, to fell a tree that threatens my house.

As you are no doubt aware Gabriola, where I live— and I suppose other islands also— has a population that is at least a decade higher in age than the provincial median. In other words, it's full of old geezers like me. Those of us very much closer to the end of our lives than to the beginning— or even to the middle— increasingly require the assistance of younger more Yyounger people cannot find affordable local accommodation. ablebodied folks to carry out tasks that we can no longer perform ourselves. But, the way things stand at present, such younger people cannot find affordable local accommodation. Recently, because of unconscionably high rents and severe lack of rental opportunities, a number of talented younger people have been forced to leave Gabriola. This situation requires urgent creative action.

Some years ago, I was deeply offended to learn of the selfishly entitled comment of someone who had, at that time, recently moved to Gabriola from another province (which shall remain nameless). That person said that the people who cut that person's grass (presumably at minimum wage, or possible even less) did not need to live on Gabriola but could live in Nanaimo and take the ferry! We must not let such a deplorable attitude become prevalent and thus dicate Trust policy.

Of course, these beautiful islands (affirmed by at least one world-girdling blue water sailor to be the finest cruising grounds on the entire planet) have a finite carrying capacity. But they are not meant to be, and must not be allowed to become, moated communities solely for the benefit of the financially privileged.

I wish you well in your deliberations,
David Bouvier"