

## **Consolidated Community Feedback from Trustees** **Agenda of Trust Programs Committee Meeting**

**Late addition to the agenda:**  
**From Paul Brent (Saturna Trustee)**

### **Islands Trust Policy Statement Rewrite: Saturna Island Views**

There are a significant number of Saturna Islanders who have familiarity with the Trust Policy Statement rewrite (TPSR). 10% to 15% of the island residents (35 to 50) have read it cover to cover, and compared it thoroughly to the current TPS. Another 15% to 20% have skimmed the TPSR, probably directed by local and off-island groups to areas identified as concerning. Another 25% to 30% have heard elements of the TPSR that are of interest to them (directive policies, desalination, forestry, agriculture and similar). The balance has no idea of what the TPSR is, or much knowledge of the Trust, and are generally not much involved in the community.

The dominant view of Saturna Islander's with knowledge of the TPSR is that they want the existing one shelved, and for consultation and engagement with the community to begin anew.

The other dominant view on Saturna is that the process of prior engagement and the timing from release of the TPRS and scheduled First Reading was completely unacceptable. This view is near universally shared. Hence, the foundation of the TPSR is suspect, and unfortunately, the entire organization has been cast in a negative light and shadow of suspicion as a result.

From the Saturna perspective, there are deep and numerous flaws with the TPSR. The core of this comes from the belief of Saturna residents and property owners that they have managed preserve and protect for the past twenty years without significant intervention from the Islands Trust. The island is 45% park and that amount is growing at 1% or so a year. And that recent growth is the result of resident investment – not the Trust. Desalination exists on the island. It is solar driven, it works and it makes sense. It is the one cow family versus the 40,000 head of cattle industrial operation. The Trust's best available science isn't trusted.

Forestry is relatively small scale and supports local people. We have one PMFL owner, and they represent about 4% of the island's landmass. They've thinned, not logged their land. We've had a couple of large clear cuts in the past 40 years, one for agriculture, one to support First Nation's initiatives. The agriculture supports local food production,

which is something we on Saturna think is important. So do many people these days. These agricultural firms support local jobs, which we on Saturna think is important. The First Nations land is not governed by the Islands Trust, and we suspect it will be recovered in a fashion that will ultimately support First Nations. And our non-indigenous Saturna-ites will be there to help.

As a consequence, Saturna has generally little interest in a TPSR that is based on a one-size-fits-all TPRS. And with over fifty directive policies, Saturna Islanders have formed their own opinion that the TPSR is a one-size exercise, and will deeply undermine local control – a local control that has a demonstrated a proud and effective history or preserve and protect, both the environment AND the community. Rural character – it's found in the community, not in a design charette that advocates split rail fencing and barn board.

Additionally, many Saturna folk reject the Trust's rejection of "definitions" in the TPRS. The Trust may believe they definitions are mainly "academic colonial" exercise, but the laws that govern the Trust are still colonial, and words matter to the residents of our island. Chaos follows without definitions in a written document meant to guide not only its authors and those who might approve it, but the generations to come.

That said, most on Saturna are anxious to engage with the firm hired to consult with islanders on the TPSR. Our islanders want to be heard first and foremost. And they want in-depth engagement, not a box checking exercise where X number of people walk past a booth. They seek to build a strong foundation for governance, not be pushed into a compromised structure.

I didn't want to be put in a place of editing the received draft as this assumes what the text requires are corrections and adjustments. What I overwhelmingly heard was: if the statement is going to be completely rewritten then go for it - rewrite from the ground top so you have full freedom to express the contemporary thoughts of staff, Trustees and Islanders. Trying to link the new revision to the previous document basically makes for very difficult reading and shows just how much of the text is new anyway. Following that the redraft that can now be a rewrite should concretely embody the input of Islanders. A comprehensive consultation is underway. People want to have

their say and the rewrite should flow from what is said. Finally where there is an embracing of new material - such as reconciliation - work very hard to bring the reader along with you. Reconciliation requires conversation and education. The previous draft came dangerously close to presenting reconciliation as something too rarefied for the general public to understand with the subtext being "we'll take care of it". This is a big lost opportunity to help foster the conversations that will lead to reconciliation. One final and related note on style and approach to mention in the previous text that based on feedback I believe will have to be abandoned is what the text counts as knowledge. Related to reconciliation the current draft talks about a diversity of ways of knowing and goes on to imply that the Trust will decide in each case concerning different ways of knowing which of those ways of knowing is counted as producing evidence to be used in making decisions. That may not have been the intent but in practice the previous text required decisions on evidence to in effect be made in secret. That doesn't help anyone. In the rewrite a different way of addressing indigenous ways of knowing in comparison to scientific knowledge and community tradition will need to be found. I recognize that won't be easy but a full rewrite should making doing so easier than in the previous version.