

South Pender Island Trustees' report in brief:

We offer a brief report from South Pender Trustees this month, as we are still catching our breath after the September 11 through 13 Trust Council meeting on Bowen Island followed by the September 18 Local Trust Committee meeting. Highlights from the Council meeting included adopting the strategic plan and budget for the current term. Our agenda included a demonstration of an oil spill response (without the oil, of course) conducted by Western Canada Marine Response Corporation. Presenters explained the spill response plan, the partners, some of the tools and technology and their overall capacity. Not surprisingly perhaps, and speaking for ourselves, this demonstration only deepened the conviction that we in the Trust area are in no way prepared for significant spills and there is no effective strategy for capturing dilute bitumen in ocean waters because it sinks. The presenters also confirmed that, for spills of any significance, the strategy is prevention.

A second presentation was offered by Julie Knight, of Island Oil Spill Association in San Juan County, our neighbor to the south. This community and grassroots organization works with landowners whose coastline properties would be affected by a spill in order to plan site-based preparation and quick response planning in cooperation with other agencies. This inspiring group have developed from their shared experience of actual spills and an understanding that local knowledge, access and preparedness can play a large role in effective response.

This exercise underscored the importance at the present time of Council's decision to maintain as its highest priority advocacy for the protection of marine ecosystems. Another focus of the strategic plan is the health of island economies and sustainable communities. Ferry advocacy remains an important area for ongoing attention. Public input gathered over the Summer contributed to the development of specific strategic planning goals and projects. As we know, each island is unique. There will always be goals and issues we share and others that are specific to our island.

Meetings and Events:

October 4th is the date for the upcoming joint meeting of North and South Pender Island Trust Committees, and as always, the public is welcome to attend. This meeting will focus on projects and issues important to both islands, including shoreline protection, reducing the carbon footprint with new transportation improvements, and a renewed focus on food security and local food production. A major agenda item for this meeting will be a presentation on the progress of the shoreline mapping project, with information on shoreline processes and the stewardship implications for different types of areas.

Shoreline processes and protection is the focus of the October 13th event planned by PICA and Parks Canada, and the Islands Trust will be mailing information to all oceanfront property owners on South Pender. The event is a rare opportunity for all residents of the Penders to benefit from expert presenters on many aspects of coastal and shoreline ecology and stewardship.

For recent meeting minutes, announcements, and highlights of interest, please check the Islands Trust website and go to the South Pender page. You can also contact us there and we appreciate hearing from you.

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