

Trustee Notebook *By Laura Busheikin*

Know Where You Live

One of the best things so far about becoming an Island Trustee has been the impetus to learn more about where I live.

Hands down, the best way to learn about this wonderful Island is to get outside and experience it, whether that's walking, gardening, sitting quietly, kayaking, mushroom picking, volunteering for conservation activities, or whatever connects you to the land. There is no end to what the forest, the shore, the waters, the soil and the critters can teach us.

But it's also enlightening for all of us -- and essential for me -- to learn about how humans organize the way we live on this land. This means learning about The Islands Trust, our totally unique governing body. For that, the written word is useful. Here's are a few recommendations of Islands Trust publications:

The Islands Trust Story, by Peter Lamb

This 30-page booklet reminded me all over again why the Trust came into being, and how hard people had to work to create and defend it. Lamb takes us back to the 1960s, when an alarming UBC study predicting rapid, intensive private development on the Gulf Islands, and radical densification was already taking place in some places.

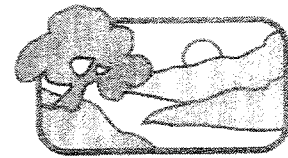
I was heartened to read how the push to create the Trust came from all over BC. A government report pointed out that "the islands are too important to the people of Canada to be left open to exploitation by real-estate developers and speculators." Yes -- important to the people of Canada. This truly is a special place.

The booklet describes the formation of the Trust and the various transformations and challenges it has been through. It's a great primer, and by the way Denman's former Trustee Louise Bell contributed a fair amount of the text.

You probably read a more local (and more colourful!) version of this story in last month's Flagstone article by Robbie Newton. If not, I recommend it.

A Place In The Islands: How Private Land Owners Shape the Future of the San Juan and Gulf Islands

This beautiful booklet includes stunning



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photography, art, quotations and a surprising amount of very pragmatic information about how to live in harmony with nature.

The Islands Trust "preserve and protect" bylaws provide a sort of bottom line for living lightly on the land; this booklet tells us how, without being preachy. How to create a site plan, build a home, heat that home, access water, and garden in harmony with nature, how to contribute to conservation, how to honour Island history -- it's all here, plus a handy resource list tucked into the back cover.

The Denman Island Official Community Plan Vision Statement, and Part A: A History of Denman Island

When I started writing this article, I promised myself I wouldn't push people to read the Land Use Bylaw or the Official Community Plan -- big fat binders full of policies and bylaws and zoning tables and other literary forms that never make it onto the best-seller lists.

But the Vision Statement! It's short, succinct, perhaps a touch idealistic, and beautiful. You'll find it on page 10 of the OCP. And Part A is a 7-page tour of the Island's geographical, biological and human history. Surprisingly interesting.

I've focused here on publications produced by the Islands Trust, but there is lots more to read. Denman Island is full of wonderful stories and gifted storytellers. If you have a story to tell about the Trust or about living on Denman, please share it, in print or with your friends. Telling our stories is one way we stay strong as a community.

Where to find these documents:

The Islands Trust Story: Abraxas Books and the Denman Library.

A Place in the Islands: Denman Library, and can be downloaded from the Trust Website as a PDF (you'll find it in the left-hand column of the opening page of the Trust site)

You can get both the above publications from me (335-2089 / lbusheikin@islandstrust.bc.ca).

Official Community Plan: Denman Library, on the Trust Website (go to the Denman Island page and click on Planning Bylaws in the righthand column).