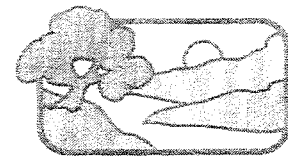


Trustee Notebook

By Laura Busheikin



Islands Trust

In May, I published part I of The User's Guide to Denman Island's Local Government, to help Islanders understand and be part of our political process. This month I present **Part II: The Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Land Use Bylaw (LUB)**.

These two documents guide the work of the Denman Island Local Trust Committee. They are the distillation of ongoing, in-depth community discussion and represent the closest we can come to consensus. The LUB lays out the land use rules — if you want to know what you can and can't do on your property, that's where you look. If you want to know *why* these rules exist, or if you want to read about the community's vision, hopes and values, you would turn to the OCP.

The two documents are intended to provide a blueprint for living in harmony with our natural environment, with each other, with the larger world around us, and with the mandate of the Islands Trust to preserve and protect this special place.

The Denman OCP and LUB were first created in 1978. They are living documents that change and shift over the years, evolving (hopefully!) based on changing times and lessons learned.

The OCP and LUB had what's called a "targeted review" (a small scale review) in 2005 - 2008. They last underwent a *full-scale review* in 1997 - 2001. Yes — you got the math right: it took five years. I'm sure that, in retrospect, ways could be found to work more quickly, but the fact is democracy takes a long time.

Any changes to the OCP or the LUB undergo a thorough public consultation. For a review, there are community events, committees, focus groups and meetings both formal and informal; there is ongoing media activity; and there are passionate discussions outside the General Store (or, to the chagrin of others in the line-up, at the counter).

Studies, research, and surveys are brought to the table. Trustees consider what has worked and not worked in the past on Denman and on other Islands. Planners and other Trust staff bring their perspectives. The language is scrutinized to ensure it is consistent and clear. Also, neighboring First Nations are consulted from the very beginning.

Any proposed changes are analyzed to make sure they align with the Islands Trust Policy Statement, the "Mama" document for the whole Trust area.

And because we don't exist in a vacuum, once the local conversation wraps up, the proposed new regulations are sent out to other parties, ranging from the Agricultural Land Commission to the Regional District, for comment.

When that's done, they are forwarded to the Islands Trust Executive Committee for a final going over, and then, finally, submitted to our Minister for ratification.

All these discussions — except the ones at the General Store — are documented and the results made publicly accessible.

These targeted and full reviews are initiated by the Local Trust Committee. Change on a smaller scale can be instigated by the LTC, community initiative, and rezoning proposals. These too go through the whole public process.

The goal of all this is to consider all the angles, to take into account all the relevant information, and to hear as many voices as possible. It is of course an imperfect system — vital information can be overlooked, as can vital voices.

The Local Trust Committee needs to continually work on reaching out to all Islanders. At the same time, there is probably no way to make democracy easy; it is somewhat of a use-it-or-lose-it affair, and requires people to step out of their comfort zone, get educated, and take part in the process, even when it's challenging, confusing, or just taking a long time.

These two documents are part of our Island culture and reality, and thus are relevant to all of us. If you are engaged in any sort of community or private project that involves land use, it behoves you to understand the relevant OCP and LUB sections.

If you don't like a regulation in our LUB, the logical next step is to figure out the rationale behind it by reading the corresponding section in the OCP. If, after that, you still think the regulation is not in the Island's interests, you can consider how to instigate change. Remember, these are *our* rules.

The LUB and OCP are available on the Islands Trust website (Denman Island page) and at the Denman library.

for more info:

www.islandstrust.ca/

Islands Trust general inquiries: 250-247-2063

Island Planner Courtenay Simpson: 250-247-2209

[/csimpson@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:csimpson@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Local Trustee Laura Busheikin: 250-335-2089

lbushiekin@islandstrust.bc.ca

Local Trustee David Graham: 250-335-3033

dgraham@islandstrust.bc.ca