



## Climate Change and Land Use on Denman

After a summer of drought, forest fires, and dying orcas, climate change is feeling more immediate than ever before. Without losing track of the global nature of the problem, and the need for correspondingly global solutions, many Denmanites are thinking about what we can do right here.

As a companion piece to the One Planet—One Island series offered by the Community School, here is some information about how land use regulations—the purview of the Local Trust Committee—can help.

Denman Island has some great climate change mitigation and adaptation policies in our Official Community Plan (OCP), dating from 2011 (section C4, page 30) (<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342174/debl-185-ocp-consolidated-feb-1-2017.pdf>). However, we do not thus far have regulations in our Land Use Bylaw to implement these policies.

What would bylaw amendments aimed at lowering our carbon footprint look like? Here are some options:

- **Lower maximum lot coverage:** Leaving land entirely or relatively undisturbed is an easy and free way to keep carbon sequestered in plants and trees, support aquifer recharge, and generally reduce our impact. Denman's maximum lot coverage is 25% on all lots, even large ones. For a comparison, on Mudge Island lot coverage is 10%, the lowest in the Trust Area.
- **Establish a maximum floor area for buildings:** Building a smaller home, and reducing outbuilding footprints, are both affordable ways to lower our impact. Consider the resources harvested for building materials, the carbon emissions of transporting those materials, the amount of land cleared for buildings, the energy used to heat them, and materials for repairs and upkeep. We could consider the example of South Pender Island, which recently established a maximum floor area of 5,000 to 20,000 square feet per lot (depending on lot size), and a maximum floor area per dwelling of 3,800 to 6,030 square feet for dwellings (again, depending on lot size).
- **Protect trees and natural vegetation:** Keeping trees and natural vegetation in place sequesters carbon, shades homes in summer, provides a wind-break in winter, facilitates aquifer recharge, and prevents soil erosion. Development permit areas could be used to guide tree and vegetation removal in a way that is sensitive to our environment and to also manage or require restoration after inappropriate development;
- **Provide more support for local food production, processing and sales:** This is

currently underway as part of the Farm Plan Implementation Project but more could be done;

- **Require that developments that increase density and/or intensification of use include renewable energy infrastructure;** are close to existing services and amenities; cluster buildings; include shared facilities; and/or use water conservation or other green building approaches;
- **Encourage protection of land for conservation:** Environmental scientists recognize that, "The conservation and restoration of BC's natural ecosystems and biodiversity is the best risk-management approach for adaptation to climate change and...can stand alone as a key climate action strategy." (Page 51, *A New Climate for Conservation*, published by the Working Group on Biodiversity, Forests and Climate, January 2010.) Land protection (through donation or a covenant) can be required or encouraged during subdivision and rezoning processes.
- **Ensure regulations do not discourage energy efficient or climate friendly development:** For instance, we can ensure that renewable energy infrastructure and water catchment facilities aren't counted in calculations of maximum lot coverage.

Also, we can look at regulations to mitigate the impact of climate change on our ecosystems and our physical security and safety, such as:

- Mandatory rainwater catchment for new buildings;
- Mandatory run-off management plans and/or limits to impervious surfaces to ensure rainwater is returned to aquifers;
- Increased setbacks from the natural boundary of the sea for new buildings in waterfront areas, possibly differentiated according to shoreline type, exposure, etc.;
- A more stringent approach to the prohibition of seawalls and other 'hard' modifications of the shoreline.

Of course, regulations are only one piece of the puzzle. Ideally, individuals take action voluntarily and/or as part of initiatives led by grassroots community groups. For an example of a tool to support voluntary action by individual land-owners and builders, check out the Salt Spring Island Sustainability Checklist at: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/341730/ssrptsustainabilitychecklist.pdf>.

Denman Islanders are tackling the immense challenges of climate change in a myriad of ways. Land use regulations can

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contribute. If you are Interested in exploring these, and/or other regulatory tools on Denman Island, let the Local Trust Committee know.

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## Denman Hardware News

The new owners of Denman Hardware, Graeme and Verna Isbister, Stirling Fraser and Noni Fenwick-Wilson, are hard at work re-stocking inventory and preparing the store for an October re-opening. The actual opening date is still to be determined.

Graeme and Verna Isbister’s Denman Island family roots go back one hundred years, while the Fraser family’s roots go back a mere forty. Both couples chose Denman Island as their retirement home and are committed to serving the Denman Island community .

Watch the weekly Grapevine and the hill fence for an invitation to help celebrate our Grand Re-Opening of the Store, once we know we are ready and prepared for business. We plan to serve barbecued hot dogs and vegan dogs, hot apple juice, balloons, door prizes, and more, gratis to all who come to our Grand Re-Opening to say hello and to check out the Hardware Store’s new incarnation.

We are committed to a vibrant downtown Denman, to the hardware needs of islanders, and to providing friendly, helpful service with an increased inventory.

We are very grateful to the previous hardware store owners, Evan and Ron, and the store’s founders Clark and Gloria, for their gifts of time, support, and advice. We also wish continued success to Evan and Ron and their Café Emporium.