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**Cc:** Bronwyn Beairsto, Editor <[editor@bowenislandundercurrent.com](mailto:editor@bowenislandundercurrent.com)>  
**Subject:** I think I helped create a monster with the Islands Trust

## **Hey Folks. I think I helped create a monster with the Islands Trust.**

**That's right, I was involved at the outset of the creation of the Islands Trust and any vote on a revised policy statement at this time is premature because of the failure of the Islands Trust to communicate effectively with the broader audience. I urge that the vote be stopped.**

About 50 years ago as a young lawyer working for the City of Vancouver, I was part of a bureaucracy. I was anxious to help ensure reasonable development on Bowen Island where we had recently purchased a property. A lot of people knew me so I was contacted by several people who had concerns about the rapid development that was starting on the Gulf Islands and had an informal meeting with a young lady who sat with me on a grassy knoll looking out off the south end of Bowen toward the Gulf Islands. There, we visualized the necessity of creating some sort of an organization that would avoid the chopping up of the islands which would make it impossible to preserve the natural beauty of the area. I think we had in mind the existence of such organizations elsewhere that were named similar to "Islands Trust". I think most people were concerned about runaway development and I recall that there was the 10-acre-freeze including for this area to hold back exactly that.

In order to develop our dream, it was essential that some organization be created for the Gulf Islands and at that time Bowen Island sort of fitted into the pattern. So the Trust was created by intelligent women and men with the best of intentions. While I was busy with many other things in those days and not very involved with the Trust, they were a group of motivated people with the savvy, time and ability that was necessary for the successful develop of the organization to *preserve and protect* the islands.

Because the Trust fulfilled a need, it grew rapidly and as it grew, it developed a need for funding. At that time, Bowen Island was not a municipality and those involved in development of Bowen supported the organization. The Trust needed money to keep going and was given the power to tax. Bowen Island became a cash cow and despite now having become the Municipality of Bowen Island, the Islands Trust just won't let us go.

The Trust was an important part of the development of Bowen Island but it no longer has any significant reason for being on Bowen except to raise money for its operations. Currently Bowen Island pays a huge sum for which I feel Bowen gets little benefit. Perhaps we have outgrown it. We are a municipality now that is part of Metro Vancouver. We have a governmental framework and bylaws. We have forward thinking elected officials with a vision of our future.

The message that I received from the "Concerned Residents of the Islands" reflects what has happened as a result of this bureaucracy getting out of control. This was the first that I had heard of this Trust project and that causes me a great deal of concern.

LET'S ALL TAKE A BREATHER and consider how we can use all the tools at hand to achieve a happy result and a path forward that residents truly want for our island.

The Trust has moved ahead very quickly on this project and it doesn't seem to have truly captured the essence of what residents want for our island's future. If it is to proceed, it needs to be done with a more consultative approach ensuring that the wording does not create restrictions that will be duplications, be too restrictive, unreasonable or too controlling to allow Bowen any autonomy around its uniqueness.

Proper consultation before they plan on making changes is needed. It isn't the length of the study conducted in months, it's the number of property owners and other affected stakeholders who they help understand, input into, and buy into the policy changes. Otherwise, the Islands Trust is not representing our best interest. While I support the Trust's objective of "preserve and protect", it is important to have a balanced approach on how to address the new policy statement and ensure that it doesn't overlap the efforts or jurisdiction of our other governmental structures.

What we have to do is have consultation with all concerned in the entire Gulf Islands area, and in particular on Bowen Island to determine if Bowen Island continues to align with the new policy statement proposed by the Islands Trust. I realize there are many other issues including climate change but this is a much bigger subject than I can delve into here. Suffice to say that the "3 pillars" are far beyond our Islands Trust scope and should be left to municipality, provincial and federal authorities.

Any vote is premature at this time because of their failure to communicate and to ensure that their policy is actually supported by those affected.

Sincerely,  
Ian G Henley