

What's New in a New Term?

Democracy means a lot more than just having elections, but elections *are* important. They bring accountability, change, and, ideally, a sense of renewal. Here's what's new at the Islands Trust as we head into a new four-year term:

Locally, we've got continuity, since both Trustee David Critchley and myself were acclaimed and therefore continue seamlessly into the next four years. We do, however, have a **new chair** for the Denman Local Trust Committee. Chairs are appointed from members of the Trust Council Executive Committee. These four trustees travel the region, chairing local trust committees on the 13 main islands in the Trust Area. This provides a regional flow of information, a sharing of experience, and a sense of connection between the islands.

Denman's new chair is Sue Ellen Fast, from Bowen Island. Sue Ellen is in her second term as a Bowen Island Councillor and Trustee. She has a background in environmental education, including writing and hosting Nature Walk, a 52-episode television series, and running nature learning programs in many different settings, often for children and families. She chaired the Bowen Island Conservancy for nine years and also chaired Bowen's Official Community Plan steering committee.

On the regional level, the Islands Trust Council (the 26-member body made up of elected trustees from across the Trust Area) has changed—approximately half the members are new. We've now met twice, mostly for orientation but also to talk about what we hold dear and what we want to achieve while in office.

My sense is that this Council wants to really centralize the Trust's "preserve and protect" mandate. Climate change, First Nations reconciliation, and ocean protection are on people's minds. Also, I had some fascinating conversations about big questions such as, "What should the Islands Trust be doing? What are we here for? Who do we serve? What is our relevance?"

As is customary in a new term, Council will be renewing its strategic plan for the Trust Area, which will give us a chance to answer some of these questions and translate them into action, setting a course that we'll follow until the next election brings change again.

On a personal note...

The election brought big change for me and for how I serve and represent our island. **In the 2012-2018 term, I had the honour of being elected to the Trust Council Executive Committee**, which made me a Vice Chair of Trust Council. I held this position while continuing to sit on our Local Trust Committee. (If you are having trouble understanding this, it might help to remember that the Trust works on both a local level and regional level. The local trust committees are (mostly) autonomous local bodies, while Trust Council and its committees do the regional work.)

As Vice Chair, I took part in regular meetings of the Executive Committee, which guides the ongoing work of Trust Council, and meets at the Victoria office. Also, I chaired, and was a voting member of local trust committees on four other islands. On top of that, I attended local and regional government events such as the Union of BC Municipalities, Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities, and Local Government Leadership Academy conventions, as well as occasional meetings with Provincial ministers. That's why I seemed so busy! I was! The combination of the two roles amounted to a full-time job, with lots of travel.

This term, I did not put my name forward for the vice chair role, choosing instead to focus on the local position. There were a lot of considerations that went into this decision. Being a vice chair was a hugely engaging, wonderfully challenging, and consistently meaningful adventure. I loved it (and like to think I was somewhat good at it). It's now time to rest a bit and reinvigorate other areas of my life.

I'm pleased to bring all the experience I've gained into my current work as a Denman Trustee. I also want to acknowledge past Denman Trustees who've served as vice chairs, Louise Bell and David Graham, and thank them for their service. Denman Island has a history of being a strong contributor to Trust Council, keeping our interests on the table while supporting meaningful connections between the Salish Sea islands.