

Islands Trust offers Climate Action Opportunities

As I'm writing this, the skies are filled with smoke, COVID cases are spiking, looper moths are invading, and a headline in *The Guardian* reads, "World fails to meet a single target to stop destruction of nature—UN Report."

At this point, would anyone be surprised to see a crowd of ravenous zombies staggering up the ferry hill?

So I need to start by saying, "forgive me: I'm going to write about climate change." WAIT! Don't go! I admit, I don't bear good news. But I am going to write about initiatives aimed at helping us understand and adapt to climate change. For most of us, focussing on what we *can* do, even tiny steps, makes everything (fire, smoke, pandemics, destruction of the natural world, zombies....) easier to live with.

The Islands Trust has numerous climate-focused initiatives on the go. This fall, we're offering a **Climate Action Speaker Series**. The goal of this free webinar series is to help islanders support climate change adaptation and resilience at home and in our communities.

The first of three fall 2020 webinars, on rainwater harvesting, already took place in late September. The recording will be available (and may be by the time you read this) on the Islands Trust website.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), on Tuesday, October 27, 6:30 – 8:30 pm, looks at how this approach, which is gaining traction internationally, works with nature-based approaches to enhance resilience for humans, other species, and ecosystems.

Eelgrass: A Climate Hero, November 24, 2020, 6:30 – 8:00 pm, examines how this underwater plant stores "blue carbon" while also providing many other ecosystem benefits, and discusses what we can do to protect and restore it.

For more info about the webinars, the presenters, and how to connect via Zoom, go to islandstrust.bc.ca.

The Trust is also gathering data and analysis to help understand and track climate change. This will help the Trust and others prioritize climate action. In March, the Islands Trust Conservancy completed *Climate Projections for the Islands Trust Area*. This report uses climate models developed by the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (PCIC) to predict some of the key impacts of climate change over the next 60 years. It is an unsettling read.

For instance, the annual number of days with temperatures over 25 degrees, currently 21 for our region, is predicted to increase to 55 in the 2050s and 91 in the 2080s. Growing seasons will get longer, and winters warmer. By the 2080s, there will likely be on average only 2 frost days per year, compared to 50 in the recent past. That might sound pleasant, but it will play havoc with the ecosystem.

As well, the Trust has begun to monitor climate change and to measure how effective our mitigation and adaptation efforts are—in other words, to use an evidence-based approach to figuring out what most needs to be done, and what responses work best. You can read more about plans for the Climate Change Indicators Project in the most recent Trust Council meeting package, available on the Islands Trust website at islandstrust.bc.ca/media/349885/Tc-2020-09-15-16_agd_pkg_final.pdf.

As well, Trust Council is undertaking mapping of aquifers, eelgrass, and forest ecosystems, and also working on changes to policies and regulations to better protect forests and the shoreline. Stay tuned for a Denman aquifer mapping project in 2021.

New regulations might make life more onerous for locals wanting to develop their property. Finding the balance between respecting property rights and individual autonomy versus using regulations to ensure environmental protection is always tricky. All regulatory changes for Denman will go through public consultation processes, and we can have these hard but important conversations as a community.

In the meantime, we share these islands with thousands of other species, all of them impacted by climate change. There are things we humans can do about this. The Islands Trust Conservancy is launching a major project, supported by \$597,000 from Environment and Climate Change Canada, in support of increased protection of species at risk in the Trust Area.

This season's smoke will eventually clear, but climate change isn't going away. The initiatives listed above are what the Trust is doing. You, your neighbours, community groups, non-profit organizations and other levels of government are all doing many other things, and have potential to do much more. Last time I checked, the zombies hadn't yet arrived, and there is still opportunity to take action in the face of climate change.