

From: Islands2050
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 11:40 AM
To: Islands2050
Subject: FW: Islands 2050 and Thought Exchange program

From: Dan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2019 9:39 AM
To: Lori Foster <lfoster@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Cc: Alex Allen <aallen@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Grant Scott <gscott@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Islands 2050 and Thought Exchange program

Dear Ms. Foster, Islands Trust Council, Trustees Allen and Scott

Here are my responses to the two questions posed in the online “Thought Exchange” survey concerning the future of the Trust area. (I did participate in that online program, but wish also to present my thoughts here in the form that I conceived them.) With regrets, I missed the “Community Open House and Group Discussion” held on Hornby on October 28, so here is my written submission in lieu. I have added to those two questions my opinion of the “Thought Exchange.”

1. What I value about the Islands Trust area.

I’ve lived on Hornby Island since 1985, where I own property and built my own house. For two years I was the secretary of the local ratepayer’s association (HIRRA), for which I produced a document still available, called “The Hornby Way.” I was also on the board of the local land trust (ISLA) for two years, whose mandate was affordable housing.

I was first attracted to Hornby because of its natural beauty and peacefulness, in contrast to city life. Over the years, through participation in the community, I came also to appreciate the island way of life as a refuge from the ubiquitous culture dominated by urban values and practices. In some ways it is still a kind of frontier, where we do things from scratch and rely upon each other more than upon commercial or government services. I see that way of life as endangered, in the way that the indigenous way of life was and continues to be threatened by the larger culture.

For me, therefore, the mandate of the Islands Trust—to “preserve and protect”—must include the preservation of a certain alternative way of life as well as protection of the natural environment. If the goal were merely to guard nature against human intrusion, the ideal would be a Trust area that is pure parkland with no inhabitants. But we are here, the inhabitants, and our challenge is to live in balance with the earth. That means a way of life quite different from that of modern civilization, which overall is clearly out of balance with the needs of our planetary home.

2. In the context of a changing climate, what concerns do I have for the region over the next 30 years?

An island is not sheltered from geophysical change, whether natural or human-induced. Even if it were politically sovereign, neither would it be sheltered from social, legal and technological pressures and ideologies surrounding it. I am personally more concerned about the impact of such factors than that of changing weather patterns. Some of the same factors that contribute to the general human impact on the planet also threaten the island way of life in particular. An island may seem to be surrounded by a protective moat. But relative to the engulfing mainstream culture, it is rather more like a vacuum that the latter tends to fill with its attitudes and institutions.

As a level of government, Islands Trust must exercise its limited control over the factors that threaten the island way of life and its natural setting. It shares authority with agencies that are based in urban centres and tend to be dominated by values hostile to its mandate. There is the ever-present pressure of market forces for “development,” which it must resist. But there is also an ever-present pressure to conform to the ways of the wider world that it must also resist. It would be too ironic if Trust policy and practice added to these menaces by trying to regulate life on Hornby in imitation of the sort of burgeoning regulation that permeates urban society. National and provincial governments and regulating agencies would have us be like everywhere else. But that should never be the goal of Islands Trust.

My greatest concern is to insure that the island culture of the Trust area in 2050 should not come to look and feel just like everywhere else in North America—even if, ironically, the trees are left standing and flora and fauna are preserved. My hope is that the area will become more, not less, politically autonomous and culturally unique. That, however, will not happen of its own accord, but only by firm intent. We could take a lesson from indigenous cultures that are struggling to preserve and re-invent their identities in the face of cultural domination.

3. I wish to add my protest that the format of the Islands Trust “Thought Exchange” is anything but an exchange. A brochure advertising the October 28 “Community Open House and Group Discussion” states: “Can’t make the event? Visit our website and join the conversation”. This misleadingly suggests an online opportunity for participation parallel to the live meeting. I happened to miss that meeting and looked forward to participating online. I was disappointed. Instead, it is an example of the sort of imposed manipulation of information that mocks true discussion and thereby does not support the island way of life. Why not solicit people’s thoughts as they wish to present them instead of “regulating” their input in this contrived way? Why not allow people to comment on each other’s thoughts? By breaking up a train of thought or argument into artificial units (150 characters!), the continuity and sense is destroyed. By limiting response to “rating”, there is no “conversation” among participants or with Islands Trust. Far from being an exchange of thoughts, it is no more than a cute variety of survey in disguise.

Thank you for your attention.

Respectfully and very sincerely,

Dan Bruiger



Dan Bruiger

Author of *The Found and the Made: science, reason, and the reality of nature*

www.thefoundandthemade.com