

July 5, 2021.

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Dear Trustees;

Re. Island Trust Mission Statement; Now and for the future.

The Trust's current statement;

"The Islands Trust is a federated body responsible for protecting the unique nature and amenities of 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands and surrounding Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. It regulates local land use, manages a trust fund of land and other assets and works with other levels of government. "

This is a tall but a worthwhile order and likely one that has taken lessons learned elsewhere in the world by older cultures.

We are not sure how much attention has been given to an examination of "Small Island Economies", but should you be curious, a considerable amount of thought has been given to this issue in the past decade or more. Sea-level rising has been the biggest motivator simply because of the implications for humans living on "Small Island Nations".

From the UN Environment-Program, a report was prepared in 2013 that identified emerging priority environmental issues that are of concern to small island developing states (SIDS). This report identified 20 issues critical to sustainable development. Prominent on this list were "climate change, sea-level rise, loss of biodiversity".

Another report was prepared for the World Customs Organization in Brussels dated June 2018. This report featured the following challenges facing small island economies.

" lack of connectedness to global value chains;
remoteness from large markets;
high communication costs;
proneness and vulnerability to natural disasters."

A third report by C. Tisdell, titled "Economic Challenges Faced by Small Island Economies" features this abstract.

"The environmental situation facing small island economies varies. Some have undergone rapid urbanisation and centralization of their populations and this has caused SIGNIFICANT POLLUTION PROBLEMS AND WATER AVAILABILITY PROBLEMS. Furthermore, some are at considerable risk from climate change. Using mathematical relationships, it is demonstrated that small island nations will lose (on average) proportionately more of their land mass as a result of sea-level rises than larger nations."

This kind of abstract thinking and projecting, while likely accurate, often fails to generate real concerns and action, so we now wish to switch attention to two islands I have had direct personal experience of, besides Gabriola Island.

The first island of interest is Sardinia, part of Italy but a considerable distance from the mainland. I spent 3 weeks there each year for 3 years in the early 60s and so acquired some personal knowledge. The population was poor then, the beaches and sun were great and the wine was so dry, one had to order bottled water alongside at the same time. The island is 20 kms long and has one fresh water storage facility, originally dammed in 1920s and re-dammed in 1997. Sardinia's, population was and still is capped by the very limited amount of fresh water they get and store in their one facility, a very high-risk condition. All the limitations of a small island economy, previously mentioned, translate into a per capita annual income that is 20% less than for mainland Italy and even less compared to the EU per capita incomes. In 2012 the unemployment level for Sardinia was 8.6 % and now is 14.6%. The income from their only export, tourism, has dried up, showing just how vulnerable the island's population was and is.

The second island example I wish to use is Guernsey, off the French coast but politically connected to England. This island has an interesting history. My connection to Guernsey started in the 70s after a Dutch friend moved there from Holland to grow tomatoes and roses for British markets. This was then a way of circumventing punitive tariffs. Peter and family stopped growing in the 90s, theoretically because of the UK being then in the EU, but more likely because of the high cost of fresh water. Guernsey is a semiautonomous island that has no national debt, used to print its own currency and required US \$10 million cash, in a local bank, before granting citizenship.

Like Sardinia, Guernsey is seriously fresh water deficient but lots of money has been deployed to correct this issue. They started by purchasing disused quarries for storage and installing a ditch water recovery system. In 1960 Guernsey Water Company installed one the earliest desalination plants in the UK.

Guernsey is very dependant on its role in the financial world, which, when coupled with total control of in-migration of people, has been and is for as long as tax-havens are tolerated, looking at the prospect of a stable but very expensive fresh water restricted future.

From the forgoing, we think the Islands Trust currently has a mission statement that helps all of us residents navigate the challenging world of living on a small island. Seeking to live more like those who live and work on the mainland is in conflict with small island realities, particularly in the matter of available fresh water.

Sincerely; Erik and Catherine Andersen

Cc All Trustees

Islands Trust, Gabriola Island

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