

## **SOUTH PENDER LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE**

Ordinarily, the South Pender Island Local Trust Committee focuses on land use planning and regulation, consistent with the Islands Trust mandate to protect and preserve the trust area, but the LTC's role as local government sometimes requires it to deal as well with issues peripheral to land use planning but nevertheless central to island life. Front and centre among the concerns of South Pender Islanders this fall is "dial-up purgatory" and the desire to obtain high-speed internet access. A bigger picture issue is the need to address the impacts of global warming, which has ramifications not only for land use planning but also for day-to-day living. This month's Pender Post report touches on these two issues as well as a current initiative closely related to land use planning: ecosystem mapping.

### **High-speed Internet Access: Long Tunnel, Little Light**

What do your North Pender neighbours have that you don't have and you want to have? Precious little, you say? Careful—they might be reading this. Actually, there is one thing, according a recent poll we conducted—and that's high-speed internet access.

At the end of September 2009, Broadband Canada announced a round of funding for delivery of high-speed internet to rural communities as part of the \$225 million commitment to do so in the January federal budget. A tight time-frame was set for receipt of applications, with a deadline of October 23. Shaw Cable assured us that it intended to apply on behalf of South Pender for the Broadband Canada funding and build the infrastructure needed to deliver high-speed (more than 1.5 megabytes per second) to all of us. In this day and age, high-speed access has arguably become as much a necessity as the telephone in the conduct of business, schooling, and ordinary day-to-day affairs. A few people on South Pender already have high-speed through a variety of means but if you lack a cell-phone signal or "line-of-sight" capability, you're basically out of luck.

Then, on October 20, three days before the deadline, came the bad news—a call from Shaw to say that, after reviewing the situation, it had concluded it lacked the resources to put together the application in time for the deadline but would reconsider its position if a second round of funding is announced later. Naturally this is a terrible disappointment to the more than 60 south islanders who, within a few days of the initial announcement, sent us letters of support to forward to Shaw.

We will continue to explore all options to bring this much needed service to South Pender as early as possible. If you would like to obtain more information or receive updates from time to time, please email or call David Greer (contact information below). If you'd like to share your views about lack of high-speed service on South Pender in the context of Canada's Economic Action Plan, your MP is Hon. Gary Lunn ([LunnG@parl.gc.ca](mailto:LunnG@parl.gc.ca)) and the Minister of Industry (responsible for Broadband Canada) is Hon. Tony Clement

(Clement.T@parl.gc.ca), and letters to the House of Commons may be mailed without a stamp. (Worst scenario: Round 1 of the Broadband Canada initiative will eat up the entire \$225 million allocated in the federal budget, and we'll have fallen through yet another crack.)

### **Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions—The Legal Requirement for Local Action**

The naysayers have pretty much disappeared. Virtually everyone now accepts that global warming is reality, humans are the primary cause, and if we don't do something very drastic very quickly to curb our greenhouse gas emissions, we as a species will be in very deep trouble.

At the global level, combustion of fossil fuels and deforestation are the most significant contributors to carbon dioxide increases in the atmosphere, but they're not the only major culprits in global warming. Methane production, for example (from the vast number of cattle required to feed our red-meat addiction) plays a surprisingly big role. It's hard to worry about the impacts of global warming when the most dramatic consequences are likely to be relatively slow (in terms of our own human lifetime) to take effect, but the results are likely to have a far more dire effect on our grandchildren and our grandchildren's grandchildren if we don't take immediate action. Not so long ago, scientists who predicted that shellfish would within decades no longer be able to manufacture shells because of ocean acidification (resulting from absorption of carbon dioxide) were on the fringe; now that's just one of many alarming mainstream predictions of what will happen without concerted immediate action to reduce emissions. The eventual impacts on Planet Earth extend far beyond the prospect of bigger storms and dramatically higher sea levels.

The good news is that governments and the corporate world and ordinary people have begun to take note that we really need to take a hard look at how we contribute to global warming and what we can do to reduce our emissions. Fierce arguments may rage about whether a carbon tax or cap-and-trade is the better way to go, but at least the debate is taking place with some recognition that inaction is not an available option.

In May 2008, the Local Government (Green Communities) Statutes Amendment Act came into force, amending BC's Local Government Act to require all local governments to include GHG emission reduction targets—and policies and actions to achieve those targets—in their Official Community Plans. South Pender is required to amend its OCP by May 2010 to meet that statutory requirement, and the Local Trust Committee will be receiving advice in coming months from Islands Trust staff on how to do so. Naturally, we also welcome suggestions from you on ways to address this monumental task.

The provincial government has identified vehicle emissions as the major contributing cause of GHG emissions on South Pender, a not surprising finding given the distances we have to travel even for groceries. Identifying meaningful ways of reducing GHG emissions will require creative thinking, not to mention individual commitment. Obviously we're not all going to be riding our bicycles to the Driftwood Centre, but consider this—simply obtaining access to high-speed internet could result in a

remarkable reduction in the number of trips we have to make to get day-to-day business done. The Car Stop program is another example of creative thinking producing meaningful “green solutions”. Would limited bus service serving North and South Pender (like the new Saltspring model) be out of the question? All options need to be on the table.

Thinking of ways to reduce our vehicle use is only the beginning. If we’re really serious about addressing global warming, we’ll need to take a pretty comprehensive look at how else we can reduce emissions. We might have to think twice about regularly buying that feedlot-produced Alberta beef that produces methane before it becomes steak and afterwards burns gas to travel 800 miles to get here. The same goes for products produced halfway around the world and packaged in excessive amounts of hard plastic (another petroleum product). On the other hand, making “buy locally” a rule without exception is a virtual impossibility unless you’re committed to monastic minimalism.

Becoming “carbon-neutral” is a fine goal but hard to achieve. But if you set your goal at becoming 20 percent better, for starters, that might just seem a little more within the realms of possibility. For example, washing clothes for a family of four in cold instead of hot water can reduce your household emissions by about four tonnes. If it helps to try and visualize what that means, consider this: a tonne of carbon dioxide is roughly equivalent to the amount that could be held by 100,000 ordinary-sized balloons. (On average, every person is responsible for emitting around 12 tonnes a year.) Saving almost half a million balloons’ worth of emissions in a year makes cold-water washing seem a more attractive proposition.

For more information on many perspectives on global warming, go to [www.350.org](http://www.350.org) or [www.fightglobalwarming.com](http://www.fightglobalwarming.com) or [www.climatedebatedaily.com](http://www.climatedebatedaily.com) or [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch) If you’re lucky, one of your friends on North Pender will let you use her high-speed internet connection.

### **Ecosystem Mapping Open House Nov. 26**

Intact natural ecosystems of different types (e.g., wetlands, mature forest, shoreline and cliffs) are vital for the conservation of plant and animal species that might be threatened, the biological diversity of species, and natural processes that benefit both species diversity and human needs for resources such as clean water.

The Islands Trust and Islands Trust Fund (a regional land trust), in collaboration with Parks Canada and the BC government, are in the process of mapping sensitive (rare and fragile) ecosystems on the Gulf Islands through a combination of aerial photography and on-the-ground field checking. No one understands the nature and extent of local ecosystems better than the people who live nearby and walk the land. On November 26, the Island Trust and Islands Trust Fund will host an open house at the South Pender fire-hall to provide information about the ecosystem mapping process and how the maps might be used by the community and also obtain feedback from residents on the accuracy of the draft sensitive ecosystem maps that have been prepared for South Pender. The open house will begin at noon with an introduction to how and why the maps were

created and will remain open until 3 pm, with ecosystem protection specialist Kate Emmings on hand to answer your questions and receive feedback.

The maps will ultimately form the foundation of the Islands Trust Fund's 2010-2015 Regional Conservation Plan, which will provide a focus on the most at-risk ecosystems and identification of a possible network of protected areas.

### **Subdivision Application Referred for Reconsideration of Parkland Dedication**

At its last meeting on October 8, the South Pender Local Trust Committee reviewed an application for subdivision of a 7.74 acre oceanfront parcel of land fronting Boundary Pass Drive and Conery Crescent (the Scoones property).

Section 75 of the Land Title Act requires a 20-metre-wide access corridor to be provided to any body of water the bed of which is owned by the Crown. In this case, the approving officer appointed by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure had said he was willing to grant an exemption from the requirement given the topography and instability of the land. South Pender's Official Community Plan and the Parks Master Plan identify future ocean park and oceanfront access as being desirable in the vicinity of the subdivision, and the application did not address the possibility of solely pedestrian access (via stairs, trails or walkway) or of provision for an ocean viewpoint that would be unaffected by topography or instability.

Given these factors, the LTC decided to ask the approving officer to reconsider the decision to grant an exemption. The LTC also asked the Pender Islands Parks and Recreation Commission, which had endorsed the application on condition that the park dedication be equal to 5%, to review the proposed parks allocation as the 5% allocation specified by the Commission had not been fully achieved.

### **Contact Your South Pender Trustee**

David Greer (250) 598-3607 or [dgreer@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:dgreer@islandstrust.bc.ca)  
Wendy Scholefield 629-3681 or [wscholefield@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:wscholefield@islandstrust.bc.ca)