

Not Much Trust

by your trustees

Saturna's trustees don't have much to report since last issue, as summer has been relatively quiet from a reporting view. An exception to this was the Trust's request for public feedback on their Strategic Plan priorities for this term (ending 2014). The Trust received some 86 letters and emails, 74 of those from individuals, of which Saturna's comprised 30 responses, or over 40% of the individual emails.

From the public's perspective, the top three priorities, by a large margin were

- 1) Enhancing community economic sustainability and security,
- 2) improving organizational cost and operational effectiveness and tied for 3rd,
- 3) enhancing community engagement and participation & protecting and restoring community and socioeconomic diversity.

Both Pam and Paul attended their respective committee meetings in the last half of August, Pam is on the Local Planning committee and Paul is on Trust Programs and Financial Planning committees. During these sessions, committee trustees voted as to what they felt were the most important priorities for the Trust to focus their efforts. The committee results were quite different than the public's:

Protect coastal and marine ecosystems got two 1sts and one 2nd,
protect the natural environment of islands got one 1st and one 3rd
protect the quality and quantity of water resources got one 2nd and one 3rd &
enhancing community economic sustainability and security also got a 2nd and a 3rd.

Your trustees queried those present as to why they thought trustee committee votes varied substantially from our public input, as only one of the public's top objective's made the committee lists and it came in tied for third.

The Trust executive members responded, one positing that 86 emails would not in their view be statistically valid, confirmed by another who suggested a sample of 3% or more would have had validity, i.e. more than 750 responses from the Trust area. Another noted that public opinion is just one of a number of factors for trustees to consider and that this was not a referendum, and finally that all trustees conversed with many in their communities and probably had a good sense of what was needed.

This clarified the matter for your trustees and at least in respect of Saturna we have crossed the threshold of this view of statistical validity. So thank you all immensely.

No determination has yet been made as to what the final Strategic Plan priorities will be. Further discussion will occur at our quarterly Trust Council meeting (where all 26 trustees gather) mid-September, and refinement of strategies and activities,

including assessment of costs will occur thereafter before a final determination is made in December.

On a local note, our Local Trust Committee Meeting is September 6th at 12:30 at the Rec Centre Lounge. There are a lot of things on our agenda, please check the Saturna page on the Islands Trust Webpage for the agenda and relevant information; it should be there by the time this article is printed. Individually we may not like all the decisions that are made, but at least they will be our decisions, made by Saturna Islanders for Saturna Island.