

Pender Post March 2019
North Pender Trustee Corner
By Deb Morrison

First I would like to thank all of you who are making time to come to the various Trust events, in person or virtually. I appreciate discussion to help inform how we can help make our land use planning better. As many of you know the January meeting, and the February one most likely as well (though I'm writing before it), brought up a few tense issues for our community including the plan to relocate the concrete facility, storage of containers on otherwise vacant land, and possible ways forward for the waste management challenges we face here. Such decisions are complicated, involving not only the Trust but also the CRD (services for waste management and economic sustainability efforts), and also have deep roots in our community.

It seems that in the past folks have applied for permits after already engaging in non-zoned uses for a given piece of land or as they begin a new use on land. As should be apparent from our decisions, this is not a good idea as there is no guarantee that you will then be issued the requested permit or rezoning. I commend those who have done the process correctly, as stated in the permit applications, and waited for permits to be issued before changing land use activity. I know this is a change in norms for many and as such there are some adjustment tensions but the process allows better community based decision making. The alternative is that it is more of a free for all and that has led to problems with ground and surface water quality and flow, noise and disruptive activity in central community locations, and increasing frustration and disgruntlement between community members. This is the reality of our past choices. We get to decide who we want to be both individually and as part of the Pender fabric. It may not always be the choice that is easiest or best for an individual that is best for us and, from the Trust's perspective, for our Islands' land and water.

Also at the January meeting we directed staff to engage in proactive enforcement of existing bylaws. Many people have mentioned that there are things going on around North Pender that are against established bylaws embodied within the official community plan. If you are someone who has been cutting required buffers from your land (riparian, other DP, or industrial), has accumulated trash or derelict vehicles, or has been incorrectly storing hazardous chemicals, please remedy these issues prior to enforcement having to become involved. Every time the Islands' Trust enforcement is used it costs taxpayers money. Please be responsible for abiding by our shared rules of land management and don't make us as a community pay further for your actions.

I appeal to all of us to take some time this spring and become involved and informed deeply about issues we face as there are some tough decisions coming and likely some miscommunications about issues will circulate. Question each other, ask for specifics, talk with Ben and myself, pause before you go into a rant on facebook that you can't take back. Think about how you can contribute to a solution instead of just rehash the problem; as a community we need to creatively be thinking about what kind of solutions can work for all of us.

Please explore our Trustee site for both North and South Pender Islands (www.penderislandstrust.org). If you are having trouble finding something on the main Islands Trust site, let one of us know and we'll try to get a link up to the Trustee site.