

June 2019 Keats Trustee Report – Dan Rogers

It is getting very close to summer. Boats and folks on the beach have started to arrive. And so have bears. So I thought I would write a few notes about Keats specific items as well as Islands Trust events and issues.

Climate Change

It is difficult to talk about anything in our world these days without mentioning the impact of climate change. We generally experience it on Keats as extreme weather (although of course the climate and weather are different things).

In our area climate change appears to be showing up in three main ways.

- a) First, as more extreme wind and rain storms. We certainly experienced these this past winter.
- b) Second, in lengthy periods of warmth and drought. (when it does rain, it rains harder but for shorter periods). We see this drought all around us with water shortages, cedar trees and other vegetation dying and lots of dust.
- c) Third, and less noticeably, there is sea level rise. The combination of this with the storms has wrought some damage on our beaches and other foreshores.

Like all local governments, the Islands Trust is struggling with what to do about these events. Mitigation and adaptation strategies are being on. What is clear is that there should be no expectation of “business as usual”. Water will be an issue with every development application. Foreshores are important for the marine environment and to protect upland areas not just for recreation. It’s not clear what changes will be forthcoming but it would be a good idea for residents to factor in climate change any plans you have. Lots of questions can be asked. Do the trees you want to cut act as a carbon sink or are they a bulwark against soil erosion? Does your planned driveway interfere with water runoff? Is your

building efficient in terms of the resources it needs ie water, energy etc. Is your existing or planned dock storm resistant? Have you stopped using Styrofoam which may end up littering the beach? Just some thoughts.

Bears

For the second year in a row, there are bears on Keats. It's hard to know for sure, but I'm guessing that there have been a couple of smaller ones and one bigger one. I have not had a report where they were seen together. At least one has been swimming off the island so perhaps they have learned to come and go.

In my 23 years on the island, a bear would occasionally come over to Keats, stay a few weeks and then leave. A few years back one did come and stayed for a while and had two cubs who didn't survive the winter. Now for 2 years in a row we have multiple bears. They eat garbage, and compost and get on decks and eat from birdfeeders etc.

So like the North Shore and the Sunshine Coast we have bears. What to do? Well the only authority when it comes to bears (or other wildlife issues) is the Conservation Officer Service of B.C. Here is the web link to how to minimize the possibility of conflict and how to report.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/human-wildlife-conflict/report-human-wildlife-conflict>.

Note the section on when they will respond.

I am not minimizing the concern for both people and the bears. If a bear becomes a "problem" for example by being habituated, they will likely be destroyed. I hope that doesn't happen but we also don't want them in houses. Be careful. Apparently we are in bear territory.

What is Islands Trust?

I get asked this from time to time and I also know there are a lot of new owners, at least in Eastbourne. It can be confusing to know what level of government does what.

There are 4 levels of government here. (yikes, I know!) . There is of course the federal government and the main contact we have with them is Coast Guard and Fisheries. They don't have much interaction "on island" except they do regulate telecommunications.

Secondly we have the province. There are a number of ways islanders may interact with the province but on island, the most common are that they grant approval for docks and other "water lease" issues, they own the public roads on the island and provide the contract for maintenance and they provide the rules for water and sanitation. As well, the provincial emergency response structure (with the exception of the RCMP) is provincial as well as the Conservation Officer Service.

Third is the Sunshine Coast Regional District. This is your "municipal" service provider and for Keats that involves (for the most part) 4 (soon to be 5) parks on Keats, the water system in Eastbourne, the two public docks, building permits and bylaw enforcement related to those permits and the once a year waste removal.

The fourth level of government is the Islands Trust. In a nutshell, the Islands Trust Act gives to Islands Trust the authority to zone land and marine areas and develop official community plans all to pursue the object of the Act which is to **"preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the Trust Area and of British Columbia generally.."**

With that as our mandate, our role is to set and enforce the land use bylaws for the islands. We don't have a mandate to encourage development or maximize property values. Because Trustees come from the islands they serve, we often end up involved in all sort of other things like advocacy on various issues and helping communicate information.

So, with all that in mind, perhaps it will be clearer who you go to for what. I hope so.

Summer Etiquette

Keats is clearly busier than ever, particularly in the summer. I was going by the various beaches on a Monday morning and was surprised by how many mooring buoys there are. The dock at Eastbourne was full and as a result someone had tied to the outside. Most of the parking spaces above the Eastbourne dock were full. And it was only June the 10th!

There are more boats, more people, more cars and vehicles and off road vehicles. And exactly the same level of services. There is one dock in Eastbourne and another in Keats Landing. That is not going to change anytime soon. So some suggestions for a happy and peaceful summer:

- a) Use water sparingly. When we run out we run out! Watch for information about how the Eastbourne water system is holding up and monitor your own well if you are on one.
- b) Fire is our biggest danger, always. Don't.
- c) If you drive, drive slowly. All the roads are provincially regulated and vehicles require license and insurance and so do drivers. There are blind corners and of course, when the roads get dusty any kind of speed brings up clouds of dust. We will get dust control later in June.
- d) Be kind to beaches and all marine and foreshore areas. Don't climb the banks ... they are eroding. Don't litter of course (I'm always surprised anyone does that anymore but I found 3 cans just yesterday on West Beach). And be careful if boating where people are swimming.
- e) Don't abuse the docks or the parking near the docks. There is far more demand for them than they can handle so share.

It's all about treating your neighbours like you would like to be treated. 😊

Next LTC Meeting

The next local Trust committee meeting will be held on June 13th at New Brighton on Gambier. I sent details out last week. I will get out more formal Trustee report very soon. As always, if you have questions or comments connect with me at drogers@islandstrust.bc.ca I wish you all well.