

Pender Post August 2019
North Pender Trustee Corner
By Deb Morrison

This month I'd like us to understand climate change more....I think about this a lot and want to share some ideas on what might impact us locally and how we might act. As many of you know Gardom Pond is being drained as I write this. The Gardom Pond issue is complex and decades in the making, the point I'd like to make here is that a local issue like this that appears to involve just a few folks with water licences is actually a broader community issue connected to all of us due to our shifting climate. Let me talk about two main impacts that concern many locally: salt water intrusion into groundwater and fire risk.

Many resources are available on the web about salt water intrusion but I like resources that are easy to understand and have been vetted by professionals deep in the science of a topic (eg. tinyurl.com/bc-saltwater-intrusion). The basic message of such resources is that our region is subject to saltwater intrusion, that human activity such as development and increasing well density increases this risk, that aquifer use should be closely measured and studied to reduce the risk, and that storage of water in other forms is a best practice to shift onus on groundwater. Consider how this might all apply to the nature of Gardom Pond as a community resource. What decisions are we willing to make as a community to head off salt water intrusion before we have to live with even more limited potable well water?

In terms of fire, many Penderites are more aware of risks. We consider how best to fire safe our homes and we take precautions to reduce fire risky activities during the dry season. However, water storage also comes into play when we think about fire. Having stored water (cisterns, ponds, lakes) spread out across our landscape is a fire resilient strategy as are many other forest management practices (see Table 2 of tinyurl.com/bc-fire-resilience). We need to reduce drought stress of our forests, particularly those near buildings, and as such need to have plentiful summer water as our dry season gets dryer. Consider what you can do in your area. How can you keep the natural moisture an overstory provides while also limbing trees so fires that may come your way don't have plentiful fuel to clime up into the canopy? What options do you have for planting other things that retain natural ground moisture without becoming fuel? How can you organize to provide summer water for this vegetation?

As we move through the summer, please reach out to me about your thoughts about issues in our community such as waste management, climate change emergency actions, and the siting of the concrete plant (dmorrison@islandstrust.bc.ca). I have greatly appreciated those of you who have shared your thinking to date. Also 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.