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File Number: GF/C-1-G

Misty MacDuffee, Chair
Gulf Islands Alliance
PO Box 795
Salt Spring Island BC V8K 2W3

Dear Misty MacDuffee:

Re: GIA Feb 28 letter re Islands Trust Policy on Carbon Offsets

Thank you for writing on this important subject.

Although the subject of carbon offsets is currently attracting a lot of public interest, it is complex and requires careful study before Trust Council can adopt a position on the possible use of offsets in land use planning.

Achieving carbon neutrality across our organization is an objective for this term in the Islands Trust's 2008 – 2011 Strategic Plan and, to that end, we have been planning a session on carbon offsets for the June 2011 Trust Council meeting on Denman Island.

The session will focus on our internal emissions and how to offset them, but Trust Council will also hear a presentation about the use of carbon offsets in land conservation. There are however no immediate plans for using offsets in our conservation work, as it is not an identified action in the current Strategic Plan, and would need a considerable policy framework to support it.

I want to emphasize that the Denman Island trustees had no involvement in the process that used carbon credits to achieve the recent North Denman Lands/Ministry of Environment development proposal and, in fact, knew nothing about this or other parts of the agreement until very shortly before it was announced publicly. Regardless, the Islands Trust has no authority to dictate or restrict the financing tools used by a landowner to finance a land use proposal.

Staff are working to recommend policy that will help Trust Council achieve carbon neutrality, which will require the purchase of offsets. Staff are also working to provide information to local trust committees and the Trust Fund Board to help them understand carbon credits in order to be able to evaluate future project proposals that involve carbon credits. If you become aware of any exemplary local or regional government policies that we could learn from, we would be grateful to receive your advice.

If you need more information about the nature of the Denman Island covenant and exactly how the carbon offsets worked in financing this deal, please contact Alex Langer at ERA Ecosystems (alex.langer@eraecosystems.com).

Many thanks for your constructive advice; it is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sheila Malcolmson
Chair, Islands Trust Council

pc: Christine Torgrimson, Chair Trust Fund Board
Islands Trust website