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Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case Study, Pender Islands,  
British Columbia

By

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## ABSTRACT

This Master's Degree Project is an examination of sustainable tourism development using the Pender islands of British Columbia as a case study. The knowledge gained was then used to provide recommendations as to how the people of the Islands might better use tourism to sustain and preserve their chosen way of life. These recommendations include the need to establish clear objectives, to determine a local carrying capacity, to involve the community, to improve marketing and information, and establish a more focused transport management strategy.

The historical origins of the term 'sustainable tourism development' have shaped the struggle to define and practice it. Historically, 'development' has been understood as a process leading to economic growth and prosperity through industrialization. Tourism became important in this same pursuit with the emergence of the post-industrial age.

The introduction of the term 'sustainable development' reflects the recognition that the single-minded pursuit of economic growth has created negative social and environmental impacts that threaten the future of the human race. Sustainable development has become the desired end goal. This shift in perspective requires articulation of principles by which sustainable development can be recognized and defined, and which will guide the process by which it will be achieved. The Limits of Acceptable Growth model based on the concept of carrying capacity is one such process.

The Pender Islands' experience shows that sustainable development is both a process and an end goal. Public participation on the Islands has called for the articulation of guiding sustainable development principles and is itself one of those principles. On the Pender Islands public participation has been a dynamic, ongoing process shaped by their unique political and social context. Its major flaw is that it is too often reactionary and unfocused. Just the same, they do have successes. They have devised a potentially powerful new tool for tourism management: 'appropriate technology.'

Key Words: sustainable tourism development, limits to growth, carrying capacity, public participation, tourism management, appropriate technology, Limits of Acceptable Change.

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To those who study her, Nature reveals herself  
as extraordinarily fertile and ingenious in  
devising *means*, but she has no *ends* which the  
human mind has been able to discover or  
comprehend.

Joseph Wood Krutch  
*The Modern Temper* II. iii.

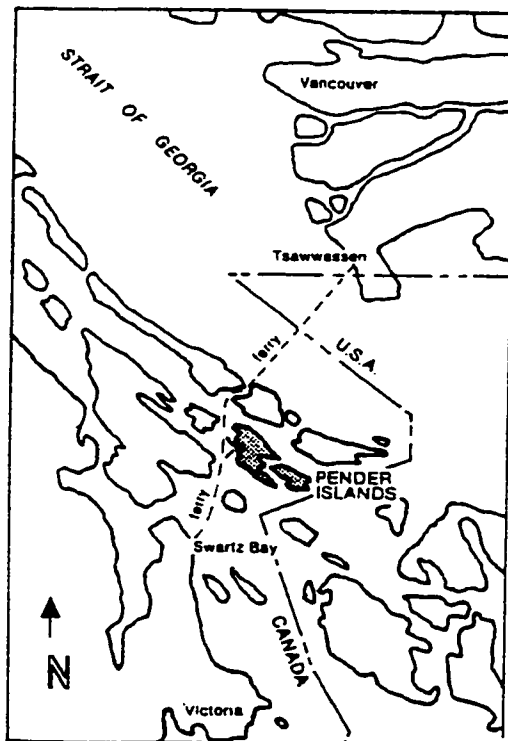
...it is inescapable that every culture must  
negotiate with technology, whether it does so  
intelligently or not.

Neil Postman  
*Technopoly. Pg.5*

## INTRODUCTION

Islands have a particular attraction for study. They have a kind of “laboratory quality”<sup>1</sup> that allows the researcher to observe activities, issues and relationships that occur in larger systems within a microenvironment. Islands also have a particular attraction for tourists because of their “separateness and difference.”<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1. Location of the Pender Islands<sup>3</sup>**



The Pender Islands are the focus of this study. They are a part of British Columbia's Southern Gulf Islands in the Strait of Georgia that separates the Canadian mainland from Vancouver Island.

## METHODOLOGY

This project is based on work that began for the Pender Islands Conservancy Association in the fall of 1995, as part of an Environmental Design 701 course project.<sup>4</sup> The Conservancy had purchased Medicine

Beach, a brackish marsh on North Pender Island, and wanted a management plan for it. During their two visits to the Islands, the 701 project team became very aware of tourism on the Islands and noted its importance to Island life as well as its potential for both positive and negative impacts on Medicine Beach.<sup>5</sup>

In order to continue that work, this author made another weeklong trip to the Islands in April of 1996. During that time, observations were continued and information more specific to tourism was collected. No surveys or other primary research was undertaken. The approach used in this field research was qualitative using personal observations and a few unstructured personal interviews. As is commonly done in qualitative field research, those chosen for interview were primarily selected by chance and opportunity, or by referral, and the questions that were asked varied from one interview to another.<sup>6</sup> However, the intent was always to determine what tourism issues and impacts Island residents see as important, and what their attitudes are toward tourism growth and management. Responses were recorded during the interview or as soon after it as possible, depending on the comfort of the interviewee. Personal observations were summarized at the end of each day.

The above findings were enhanced by a review of every issue of the biweekly *Island Tides*, one of the local newspapers, from December 14, 1989 to March 21, 1996. All articles were read with the following points and questions in mind: 1) What are the impacts of tourism identified by Island residents; 2) what issues surround the identified impacts; 3) what management tools, if any, have been used, and; 4) what overall objectives do Islanders have for tourism and development.

It is recognized that the views and attitudes of the newspaper editor bias these findings, however, this was considered to be acceptable given the exploratory nature of the research. Further, these findings were balanced with an analysis of the notes taken at public hearings held by the Islands Trust and published in the *Summary Report on the Islands Trust Public Forums: These Islands of Ours... Framing Our Common Future*, September 1992. This analysis used the same criteria as the newspaper review.

The above findings were combined with a literature review, which concentrated on tourism textbooks, published and unpublished articles and papers about sustainable tourism development. In addition, information was collected from regional and provincial government departments, the Islands Trust library, BC Ferries, Statistics Canada, the Pender Islands Public Library, and the Gulf Islands Branch of the BC Historical Association. This information was used to put together an overall description of the physical, social, cultural, and economic context of the Islands, and to determine how tourism fits into this context. It also provided an estimate of visitor numbers, origins, and characteristics. No comparable studies were found in the literature on which to base this study.

This study also draws heavily on development theory, which focuses primarily on less developed countries (LDCs), more commonly referred to as the 'Third World', or as the 'South' part of 'North and South'.

The purpose of this study is threefold. First, it is a demonstration of this student's ability to integrate and apply knowledge and skills. Second, it is hoped that the information it provides will be useful to the residents of the Pender Islands, if they so choose. Third, there is a small hope that the observations and analyses it makes will contribute to the theory and practice of sustainable tourism development.

## **OVERVIEW**

Chapter One provides a brief historical summary of the meaning and usage of the term 'development' in public policy. It also traces the way in which the term 'sustainable' became attached to 'development', and examines how tourism became a part of this progression. The purpose of this summary is to distil the features and principles that are the essence of sustainable tourism development.

Chapter Two delves into the concept of carrying capacity as it relates to tourism and sustainable development. It goes on to explore the model of Limits of

Acceptable Change that came out of attempts to apply the concept of carrying capacity to tourism destinations. The concept of 'appropriate technology' is added to the discussion.

Chapter Three is a description of the Islands in terms of geography, settlement, history, culture, natural features and attractions, infrastructure and facilities. This description is always from a touristic perspective. That is, it always attempts to describe the islands in terms of what makes them attractive to visitors, and able to support visitors. This description was obtained from personal observation, published tourism guides, and from government and company brochures.

Chapter Four arrives at an estimate of tourism demand on the Islands, identifies its primary sources and provides a description of some of the characteristics of visitors to the Islands. This was obtained from provincial tourism data and from data collected by BC Ferries.

Chapter Five explores how the people of the Pender Islands, along with other Southern Gulf Islands residents, have struggled to make sustainable development a reality in their community. It emphasizes the important role that the will of the people has played in maintaining a commitment to sustainable development and how the people of the Gulf Islands have found ways to express their will and participate in decision making in spite of numerous obstacles.

Chapter Six identifies the primary development objectives that have emerged from the struggle of Island residents. It goes on to identify the values Island residents hold, and discusses the way that the negative impacts of tourism (which have been identified by residents) are connected to their objectives and values. It also identifies a number of ways Island residents could improve the planning and

management of tourism, and explores the way in which they have used a strategy of 'appropriate technology' as a management tool.

## **CHAPTER ONE: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

### **THE HISTORY THAT SHAPED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

Within public policy, the individual words that make up the phrase, 'sustainable tourism development,' have a history of use and meaning that contributes to an understanding of their present use in combination. What follows is a very brief summary of what this author considers to be the most significant milestones in this history.

Development as a public policy term has been most frequently used to refer to economic growth. This is due to an assumption that the economic prosperity of a country, or region, is directly linked to the well being of its citizens. The study of economic growth has been traced back to the early eighteenth century where early theorists described economic growth as a process of development from a "savage state" <sup>7</sup> to an industrialized one. However, the term 'economic development', which is familiarly used today, did not emerge until after World War II. This occurred when the United States of America displaced Great Britain as the leading economic and military power on earth.

With this power shift from Europe to North America a great many colonies were able to assert their independence and become nation-states; development became a policy priority.<sup>8</sup> This priority was initiated, at least in part, by a recognition that growth in less advanced countries leads to greater demand for products produced by more advanced ones.<sup>9</sup> There was a recognition that the great disparity of wealth between the so-called 'Third World' countries (often former colonies) and the 'First World' countries meant that the market potential of these vast numbers of consumers would not be realized unless their standard of living could be raised.

Then, as the Cold War set in, there was also a strong political desire to:

*"...demonstrate that the underdeveloped nations - now the main focus of Communist hopes - can move successfully through the preconditions into a well-established take-off within the democratic world, resisting the blandishments and temptations of Communism."*<sup>10</sup>

In this way, economic development as public policy in the Western world became linked with the political ideology of the time. As a field of study and practice, economic development thus emerged out of the desire to predict and control a process- a process that would lead to prosperity and democracy. Less developed countries, and poor rural regions within industrial countries, were urged to copy the clearly identifiable stages of industrial development that had been experienced by their successful and prosperous counterparts.<sup>11</sup> This was seen as a sure guarantee of prosperity and it revealed a perception of there being only one path to development.

However, by the 1960s it became obvious to many that in spite of two decades of planned economic development the gap between the rich and the poor had not lessened. In fact, in many cases it had widened. Dissenters such as Andre Frank Gunder arose who insisted that the underdeveloped countries were not in that condition because they had failed to follow the proper steps to industrialization. Rather, they argued that the exploitation of the wealth and resources of the colonies is what actually made possible the industrialization and modernization of their colonizers.<sup>12</sup>

Gunder was followed by Immanuel Wallerstein who pointed out that the conditions favoring industrialization in some countries during the eighteenth and nineteenth century were quite different for countries struggling to modernize in the lopsided competitive environment of the twentieth century. And, he took issue

with the assumption that the outcome of industrialization and modernization was necessarily desirable, or compatible with every culture.<sup>13</sup>

Dissenters, such as Mahatma Gandhi in India, and Paulo Friere of Brazil, led large social movements which sought to confront “the misery of billions of human beings [and] ...oppose the extreme, unfair inequities of wealth and access to resources that industrialization has brought about.”<sup>14</sup> Friere’s Conscientization movement tried to do this through militant group mobilization, and Gandhi’s Sardovaya movement sought social change through promoting self-sufficiency, equality, equity and individual empowerment. His use of non-violent resistance to mobilize mass public support was an important means of achieving those goals. This drove home the point that the public could, even should, be included in development planning.

In 1972 the elite Club of Rome published its first report entitled, *The Limits to Growth*. It documented the immense environmental and social consequences arising from the continued drive to industrialize the world and increase mass consumption. This report, and others that followed, lent credence and support to the growing number of grassroots environmental movements, such as Greenpeace. Greenpeace, and many of the other social movements that emerged throughout Europe and North America during the 1960s and 1970s, often used Ghandi’s tool of public passive resistance to achieve their goals. Television and other mass media coverage enhanced the power and effectiveness of this tool.

This was also a time when ecology strongly emerged as a field of scientific study. This branch of biology focuses on how living organisms interact with their environment and with each other.<sup>15</sup> This field of study draws from, and contributes to, many other fields of knowledge including history, geography, sociology, astronomy, archeology, and increasingly economics. It is significant because it

embraces a new understanding of the systemic nature of life and of humanity's interaction with the physical environment. One of its foci is the application of scientific knowledge to allow for the possibility of taking "steps to ensure a livable future without catastrophic collapses." <sup>16</sup>

The 1980s brought more change. Japan and the European Economic Community began to seriously challenge the economic might of the United States. Further, southeast Asian countries such as South Korea had attained unprecedented economic growth without being democratic in the Western sense.<sup>17</sup> In keeping with its Confucian past, South Korea had industrialized using a policy of strong centralized control of all aspects of the economy. Also, South Korea took full advantage of the American desire to maintain its presence in the region in order to keep communism at bay. In a kind of 'reverse colonialism' the country received huge inputs of funds from the United States, which they used to help bring about industrialization. <sup>18</sup>

These, and other, events combined to alter the perception and practice of development. Although the notion of development continued to be strongly linked to the pursuit of economic growth, there was a new understanding that political, cultural, biological and environmental differences will shape the pathway that is taken in its pursuit. As Senior Minister Lee of China, who is the honorary chairman of the International Confucian Association, said:

*It is my business to tell people not to foist their system indiscriminately on societies in which it will not work.*<sup>19</sup>

Further, as the 1980s passed it became more and more evident that industrialization was not the only path to economic growth, for by this time the industrialized world found itself well into the post-industrial economy. This meant that service-based businesses now employed more people than did manufacturing.

Among these, tourism emerged as dominant. By 1991 it had become the world's largest service activity measured at \$2.75 trillion,<sup>20</sup> and was still growing.

Not only has tourism grown in economic importance in recent years, the perception and experience of it has also evolved. Although tourism can be said to have existed much earlier, tourism emerged as a significant economic force during the post-World War II period.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, within the industrial mindset of this time tourism was defined as an industry and, like all industries, the primary concern was on mass consumption. This perception existed even though its practice as a service based activity caused great difficulties for those who attempted to define and study it. There were even debates about whether or not the 'travel industry' actually existed.<sup>22</sup>

In today's service based economy, businesses have had to shift their emphasis from selling, which involved convincing consumers to buy what they had to sell, to marketing. This places importance on determining what the customer wants and needs and then designing the product that will fill that demand. Management and planning in this business environment therefore are becoming more oriented to profit over the long term rather than being primarily focused on immediate sales volume.<sup>23</sup>

For tourism this shift can be seen in the emergence of a great variety of tourism types including ecotourism, educational tourism, cultural tourism, and adventure tourism alongside of the traditional mass tourism product characterized by standardized 'sun and fun' holidays. Furthermore, tourism is now understood, and is increasingly defined, as a system which involves the activities of many businesses and industries, in many countries. The product that is now produced and sold in tourism is not a trip, but is an experience.<sup>24</sup> This experience includes bringing together a variety of desired intangible aspects such as atmosphere,

comfort, excitement, safety and service, with the tangibles of transportation, accommodations and activities.

This new concept of tourism means that those who seek to profit from it are looking to control every aspect of the tourism experience. This involves diagonal integration, " a process whereby firms use information technologies to logically combine services for best productivity and most profitability.... " <sup>25</sup> This is revealed by increasing evidence of industries and businesses forming partnerships or taking controlling interest in every key service that is needed to provide the travel experience. We now see department stores becoming travel and insurance agents, while insurance companies acquire hotels, and banking is becoming a part of hotel and airport services.

According to Poon, diagonal integration, (as opposed to the industrial economy's vertical and horizontal integration) is the distinguishing feature of this type of business. She insists that it is a "phenomenon of the services sector"<sup>26</sup> which is only made possible by information technology. Information technology (such as databases and reservation systems) is what produces cost savings rather than mass production. That is, the provision of a range of services to the same target market is what produces a competitive edge for companies rather than trying to produce one standardized product for a mass market. Poon calls this "economies of scope"<sup>27</sup> as opposed to economies of scale.

Poon believes that this new form of business is replacing traditional mass tourism. And although it is true that the way to maximize profit may be quite different from straight mass production, what she fails to acknowledge is that companies who wish to maximize profit are still interested in obtaining, and keeping, as large a share of a market as possible. So the situation becomes one of adding scope on top

of scale. The ultimate effect will be to increase the number of travelers and the number of places to which they will travel.

Governments at all levels continue to try to secure economic prosperity for their people, and they are increasingly turning to tourism as a means to do it. Some jurisdictions continue to pursue tourism as a tool to produce economic growth with little seeming regard for the social and environmental consequences.<sup>28</sup> However, a growing number are seeking to plan and manage tourism activity in order to prevent the recognized negative environmental and social consequences,<sup>29</sup> which are proving to be as devastating as industrialization ever was. The Islands Trust is one such jurisdiction.

A few governments are beginning to see development as a desired end 'state'<sup>30</sup> rather than a process, and tourism as a pathway to achieve it. This view requires that an end goal is articulated, and that planning for it will take heed of the impacts of this activity in light of the desired end. The impacts that are seen as negative will be quite different depending on the goal that is set. If profit or economic growth is the end goal, loss of market size is more disastrous than is the loss of a species or two. If quality of life is the end goal, then economic growth is but one pathway to its achievement and the loss of a particular species could outweigh the loss of profit. It is here that the word 'sustainable' becomes important.

The origins of the term 'sustainable development' in public policy are most commonly seen as arising with the publication of the Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future* in 1987.<sup>31</sup> It defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>32</sup> This added a new dimension to our thinking about development. It acknowledged that while we must pursue

development in order to meet our needs, that development must be guided, even limited, by our responsibility to future generations.

Since that time, there has been considerable debate about what sustainable development means, how it can be achieved, if it can be achieved, or even if it has any meaning at all. Because sustainability and sustainable development are used with such frequency they are sometimes dismissed as trendy, politically correct words that will pass out of use when new ones come into fashion. There are also those who argue that 'sustainable development' is an oxymoron and therefore they insist that the whole notion is unworkable.<sup>33</sup>

Many argue that in order to achieve sustainable development humankind must fundamentally change its assumptions, values and behaviours. Some cannot see this happening in time before global catastrophe forces us to change them.<sup>34</sup> Others insist that present growth, or development, is inevitable and unstoppable and that those who seek to limit it, or alter it, are "naïve."<sup>35</sup> They argue that the concept of sustainable development is only realistic as we seek to accommodate growth and minimize its negative impacts.<sup>36</sup>

Still others believe that the consequences of not pursuing sustainable development are so devastating that in spite of the difficulties and uncertainties a way must be found. There are numerous definitions, goals and sets of principles that have been set out and adopted by governments, organizations and businesses. The difficulty has been in finding a way to carry them out.

To that end, this paper examines the Pender Islands as a jurisdiction where sustainable development principles have been set out, and it will examine existing tourism patterns in light of those principles, and in light of sustainable tourism

development theory. In this way the experience of Pender Islands residents can shed light on theory, and theory can further inform practice.

### **PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON THE ISLANDS**

In 1974 the Pender Islands, along with the other Gulf Islands, were placed under the jurisdiction of the Islands Trust Act. This legislation came in response to concerns that the unique natural resources and beauty of the Gulf Islands was being threatened by over development.<sup>37</sup> The Islands Trust's primary purpose according to this legislation 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 the Province generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of the Province."*<sup>38</sup>

A study of the Islands Trust is a study of one region's struggle to clarify the meaning of sustainable development and make it practicable. Twenty years after its formation, in June of 1994, the Trust passed Bylaw No. 17. This bylaw sets out the principles and goals according to which they intend to carry out their mandate in the years to come. The principles and goals of that bylaw have been purposely set out as a declaration of sustainable development and are a culmination of a long and painful process, of which the people of the Pender Islands were a part. These principles and goals are summarized below:

#### **Guiding Principles of the Trust According to Bylaw 17.**

- To provide leadership for the preservation, protection and stewardship of the Trust Area's amenities, environment and resources.
- Trust Council will place priority on preserving and protecting the integrity of the environment and amenities in the Trust Area when making decisions.
- Trust Council will seek information from a broad range of sources in its decision-making processes, recognizing the importance of local knowledge.

- Trust Council believes that to achieve the Islands Trust object, the rate and scale of growth and development in the Trust Area must be carefully managed and may require limitation.
- Trust Council believes that open, consultative public participation is vital to effective decision making for the Trust Area.
- Trust Council will implement a plan for the advancement of the Policy Statement as part of its annual budget process, and the Executive Committee of Trust Council will report to Council on progress in achieving the goals of the Policy Statement.

### Goals

- **To foster preservation and protection of the Trust area's ecosystems.** This is to be done primarily through land use planning, designation of protected areas, protective covenants, and encouragement of other government and non-governmental bodies to take necessary and specific actions. The ecosystems which are identified as requiring specific protection and preservation are the forest, freshwater, wetland, riparian zones, and the coastal and marine.
- **To ensure those human activities and the scale, rate and type of development in the Trust area are compatible with maintenance of the integrity of Trust area ecosystems.** The aim is to manage use of natural resources (specifically agricultural land, forests, wildlife and vegetation, freshwater resources, coastal areas and marine shorelands, soils and other resources such as minerals) in such a way that they are not depleted, and their use does not threaten island lifestyles and environments.
- **To sustain island character and healthy communities.** This goal is to be achieved through a combination of land use planning, public education and public participation. It holds that the rural character of the Islands and the aesthetic qualities that make them unique should be protected. It also specifies that growth, development and recreation must be compatible with the preservation and protection goals, and that environmental and social impact

must be taken into account. It requires planning and regulation for safe disposal of waste, the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of local heritage, and it also specifies that public participation be sought in decision-making about transportation and utilities.

## **CONCLUSION**

In public policy, development was first associated with industrial growth and the economic prosperity this brought. Because of this link, the word development was most often associated with economic development. Economic development was first seen as a process involving definable and predictable stages.

The 1960s brought a more systemic understanding of the world. It became increasingly obvious that global economic and political forces interacting with local cultural factors played an important role in determining a country's prosperity, or lack of it. This systemic view contributed to a greater understanding of the negative consequences of pursuing growth for the sake of growth. This understanding was enhanced by the mass media and forcefully underlined by numerous political movements, including the environmental movement. These movements demanded greater public participation in decision making.

Gradually, some began to see development as being a desired end state rather than a process. In democracies this requires identifying goals that take into account the needs and desires of the people who would be affected by the activities carried out in order to reach those goals.

Tourism was first seen as an industry. As the post-industrial economy emerged, tourism is increasingly understood as a systemic activity that can bring economic prosperity as well as social and environmental degradation. Today, it is still practiced as an industry in which mass consumption is emphasized, but is also

being marketed to an ever-wider range of consumers in an ever-growing number of countries.

The term 'sustainable development' is still in the process of definition and its meaning is still disputed. This is partly because of a lack of practical examples that demonstrate the successful balance of economic prosperity with the preservation of natural and man-made environments on which tourism and other economic activities depend.

The Pender Islands provide an excellent example of a place that is attempting to carry out sustainable tourism development. Their experience reinforces the lessons of history, and sheds light on how other communities can shape their future in a more sustainable way. The key is meaningful public participation.

As will be seen, public participation on the Islands has had to be worked out. Public participation is more than public involvement in decision making, it is an ongoing process of clarifying, establishing and maintaining the moral and physical limits of development. It also shows that local characteristics operating within a particular context shape the way in which participation and sustainable development take place. Therefore, public participation and the path chosen to achieve sustainable development can vary from one community, or region, to another. This reality suggests that sustainable development is both a process and an end goal.

## CHAPTER ENDNOTES

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- <sup>6</sup> Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, Sixth edition. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), 291-293.
- <sup>7</sup> David Hume, Quoted in W. W. Rostow., *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 26.
- <sup>8</sup> By the 1960s economic development was firmly established in the public policy of both Canada and the United States. This policy was applied internally as well as externally. For example, John F. Kennedy ran his presidential nomination campaign on poverty within the United States, and on how he would remedy it. Canada established the Economic Council of Canada in 1963 to achieve optimum growth, production and employment. See H.G. Thorburn, *Planning and the Economy: Building Federal-Provincial Consensus*, (Toronto: James Lorimar & Co., 1984).
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- <sup>10</sup> Rostow, 439.
- <sup>11</sup> These stages were part of a development model devised by Walter Rostow in the 1950s and 1960s. They involved a precise description of a process in which a society experiencing the development process would move from its traditional state to one of mass consumption and prosperity. Rostow's model has been identified by

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more recent development theorists as being a key influence in the development policies of the United States of America during this time period and is highly criticized by them. His model is outlined in: W. W. Rostow. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-communist Manifesto* (Cambridge University Press 1960).

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## CHAPTER TWO: LIMITS TO GROWTH

As was noted in Chapter One, the concept of sustainable development emerged out of a recognition that the untrammelled pursuit of economic growth had too many unacceptable social and environmental impacts. Sustainable development was therefore premised on placing limits on economic growth. The challenge for those who wanted to translate the theory of sustainable development into action was to determine what limits must be set, who will set them, and what level they should be implemented.

Within tourism literature, this challenge was first met using the idea of carrying capacity. The theoretical concept of carrying capacity is not new. It can be found in the early thinking of many disciplines. In geography and range management, the idea of the land having a limited capacity appears as early as 1838.<sup>1</sup> In political science, John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, which was published in 1873, talks about the need to protect nature from "unfettered growth in order to preserve human welfare."<sup>2</sup>

For their part, sociologists and development theorists generally refer to the work of Thomas P. Malthus. Malthus' *Essay on the Principle of Population* published in 1798 introduced the idea that the exponential growth of the human population would culminate in starvation and death when the food supplies of the earth could no longer meet the demand.<sup>3</sup>

Today, carrying capacity is most commonly associated with ecology, where it is defined as, "The density at which growth of a population ceases due to the limitation imposed by resources."<sup>4</sup> This means that the exponential population growth of a particular species will ultimately be halted because they have consumed the very resources that have supported that growth.

In applying carrying capacity to tourism, the literature identifies three dimensions. The first is environmental, usually meaning the natural environment.<sup>5</sup> Most tourism and tourist attractions are strongly dependent on the natural environment to establish and keep themselves as attractions. This recognition is causing some to call for tourism to be viewed as a resource-based economic activity rather than a strictly service-based economic activity.<sup>6</sup> It is hoped that if governments accept this new view they will begin to take into account the needs of tourism in planning and regulation of natural resources, just as they do for other resource-based activities, such as forestry, wildlife management, agriculture, and oil and gas exploration.

Even many 'unnatural' attractions such as Disney World, or Las Vegas, rely on climate and a particular natural setting for their ambiance. Overuse, overdevelopment and pollution can destroy the natural environment and thus the very basis of the attraction. For example, the swimming pools, golf courses, hot tubs and fountains of Las Vegas contribute to a consumption rate that is threatening to deplete the water supply of this desert city. This consumption has raised questions about the capacity of Las Vegas to continue to grow at its present rate.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the negative environmental impacts caused by tourism, there is an awareness of a social dimension to carrying capacity. This is based on recognition that tourism also has an impact on the lives of those who live at a tourist destination. Although it has long been argued that tourism brings many positive economic benefits to tourist destinations, only recently have the costs to host communities been taken into account. These include: stress on existing infrastructure; economic leakage due to outside ownership; vagrancy; seasonal unemployment; competing, or conflicting land uses; cultural conflict; competition for local services; displacement of local populations; increased crime; and the cultural assimilation of local populations.<sup>8</sup> Several of these impacts have been identified on the Pender Islands as will be seen later.

These impacts may place limits on tourism because residents may decide they will no longer tolerate them. This decision can be expressed in a variety of ways. Sometimes, host communities will exhibit hostile behavior toward tourists, which effectively discourages future visits. Another means of placing limits on visitors is through regulatory or legal action aimed at restricting or prohibiting activities found objectionable to the host country or local population.<sup>9</sup> Some of these measures have been used on the Pender Islands, as will be seen later.

Another dimension to carrying capacity is visitor satisfaction.<sup>10</sup> This capacity is intimately related to both environmental and social carrying capacity. A visitor's desire to travel to a particular tourist destination, or to return to it, is directly related to the appearance and beauty of the destination, and to the treatment they receive from local residents and service providers. The level of visitor satisfaction is affected by many factors: their personal expectations; their personality; their knowledge and experience about other cultures; their financial resources; and their needs and reasons for visiting.

The application of carrying capacity to tourism encountered difficulty because those who applied it tried to do so using 'hard science' methods, namely, empirical observation and measurement. Try as they might, researchers were unable to find "a clear and predictable relationship between use and impact."<sup>11</sup> It seemed impossible to determine exactly how many people could use a site before its capacity was reached.

There are several reasons for this difficulty in precise measurement. First, some settings within an area are more sensitive than others because of soil type, vegetation and the animal habitats they support. For example, the beach area of Medicine Beach on North Pender Island is far less sensitive than the marsh area behind it, although they are only yards apart. One hundred people walking over

the beach in one day will have far less impact than if the same number were to trample through the marsh.

Second, some settings have variable levels of tolerance to use depending on the time of year, or on weather conditions. For example, the marsh at Medicine Beach is more sensitive during the spring. This is when the birds are nesting, and the higher water level makes the ground soft and the vegetation more susceptible to damage.

Lastly, different types of activities can have different levels of impact on the land, on visitor satisfaction, and on local residents. Again, this can be illustrated using the example of Medicine Beach. An afternoon of observation at the site reveals that the property is enjoyed by a variety of users.<sup>12</sup> These include: bird watchers; strollers, who may or may not be walking their dog; kayakers launching their craft from the beach; and, sightseers or picnickers who often park their car on the beach at the bottom of the access road.

According to most measures, all of the above uses would be considered low impact activities. However, when someone's dog decides that the sights, sounds and smells of the marsh are too enticing to resist, problems arise. A bird watcher is frustrated and angry because his afternoon of patient watching has been ruined. It is not likely the birds will settle down for a while and he has to leave soon if he is going to make the ferry back to Vancouver.

The dog owner is also upset. She is a local resident who has been coming to the marsh with her dog almost every day for eight years. In her mind, the marsh has never suffered from her activities. She also resents the growing number of visitors coming to her spot and challenging her right to a peaceful stroll in her own neighbourhood, on a property which she helped to purchase.

## LIMITS OF ACCEPTABLE CHANGE

For the above reasons, George H. Stankey, Stephen F. McCool and Gerald L. Stokes came up with a different approach to carrying capacity which they called the 'limits of acceptable change' (LAC) model. The LAC model places the primary emphasis of carrying capacity on the conditions desired in an area, rather than on how much use an area can tolerate. It openly acknowledges that the sensitivity of an area has a social dimension to it: a dimension that is not readily quantifiable.

This is not to say that measurement is not needed, however, the model acknowledges that measurement only has meaning in relation to human ends and needs. For Stankey and his associates, carrying capacity as it applies to tourism is defined as, "The amount of human induced change permitted in the management objectives for an area."<sup>13</sup>

Stankey and his associates note that there are several important points that arise in making the shift from 'how much use' to 'how much change.' First, there is an assumption, or understanding, that change is inevitably accompanied by human use of any kind. If no change is desired, no use can be allowed.<sup>14</sup>

Second, this shift in perspective recognizes that land use (including tourism) is a human activity informed and shaped by technical considerations as well as values and judgements. This means that citizens, as well as managers and researchers, have an important contribution to make in determining what conditions are desired, how much change is acceptable, and how fast that change should be allowed to occur.

The outcome of this altered perspective is a nine-step process for how agreement is to be reached about: what conditions are desired; how those conditions will be maintained; how change or deviation from that desired condition will be measured; and what actions will be taken to direct and manage the change. This

may or may not involve placing limits on the number of users allowed in an area, or on the kinds of activities they may participate in. The process they have devised calls for an ongoing, interactive public participation process since, "...without public understanding and support, the process is unlikely to succeed."<sup>15</sup>

<b>LAC PLANNING SYSTEM<sup>16</sup></b>	
1. Identify area issues and concerns	6. Identify alternative opportunity class allocations
2. Define and describe opportunity classes - zoning	7. Identify management actions for each alternative
3. Select indicators of resources and social conditions	8. Evaluation and selection of an alternative
4. Inventory resource and social conditions	9. Implement actions and monitor conditions
5. Specify standards for resource and social indicators	

**Figure 2. The LAC Planning System**

The LAC model has contributed significantly to the theory and practice of sustainable tourism development. However, their discussion does not explore the role of technology in relation to carrying capacity.

### **THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN CARRYING CAPACITY**

Population ecology is the study of human populations and their interaction with the natural environment. This study shows human history as a long progression of expanding the carrying capacity of nature through technological innovation.<sup>17</sup> A central part of the debate around carrying capacity, and hence sustainable development is, "How long can we continue this pattern?" Some believe it can go on indefinitely, others say collapse is imminent.<sup>18</sup>

Technological innovation is another reason why impacts and carrying capacity are difficult to measure and predict. Human history can be described as a history of inventing ways around nature's limits. Just as a limit is identified, a method will be found to 'move' the boundary.

For example, the people of the Pender Islands often point to the shortage of potable water on the islands as a limit on development and tourism.<sup>19</sup> Many rely on this factor to help curb over-development. Others worry that the limits will be exceeded and disaster will strike them. For this reason, their land use policy and regulations require each subdivision application to prove availability of an adequate water supply prior to approval, and puts in place requirements to protect island water supplies.<sup>20</sup>

However, investigation reveals that many Islanders pay to have fresh water hauled in if their supply gets low, and calculations suggest that it is economically feasible for this to be done.<sup>21</sup> The technology does exist to exceed the carrying capacity, and local residents use it.

The study of technology in society shows that it has three layers, or dimensions, of meaning.<sup>22</sup> Different theorists tend to focus on one of these aspects more than on others. At the most basic level, technology refers to sets of physical objects. For example, it is correct to say that a screwdriver is a technology.

However, the meaning of technology goes deeper than that. It also takes in the human activities that surround those objects. The factory worker who is employed in making the screwdriver, and the construction worker who builds a house using the screwdriver are involved in technology: they are not just manufacturing and using technology. Technology has an active dimension to it. The use and manufacture of technology shapes human activities and human relationships

because its design and purpose influence what we do, and how we do things.<sup>29</sup>  
This is the second dimension of technology.

On top of the active, social dimension, technology takes in the knowledge of how to use, design and make those objects.<sup>23</sup> This third dimension involves power in society. It is about why we do what we do. Technologies can be "...inherently political, they can be designed, consciously or unconsciously, to open certain social options and close others." <sup>24</sup>

Many of the negative impacts identified previously occur because transportation technology has vastly increased accessibility, of even remote areas of the world, to vast numbers of people. In addition, computer and communications technology has increased access to markets and added convenience to travel through reservation systems, credit cards, fax machines and modems.<sup>25</sup> In the process, it is "changing time-space relations, economics, and relations between peoples." <sup>26</sup> Acculturation theory recognizes this very well. It shows that much of the harm caused by tourism lies in the sublimation of a culture by a more dominant one. The basis of this domination is superior technology. <sup>27</sup>

Technology has also vastly increased the safety and comfort of travel. <sup>28</sup> Medical breakthroughs such as inoculations mean that travelers have less worry about catching contagious diseases and they can usually get medical care quickly, should they need it, because of roads, ambulances and helicopters. Other innovations such as air conditioning, satellite television, and new methods to stabilize the motion of cruise ships all support and encourage increased travel by increasing numbers of people.

At the same time, much of the damage caused to the environment by tourism is through technology. This should not be surprising. When we consider carrying capacity in light of a system of interactions between humans and their

environment, one thing becomes apparent: humans almost always interact with nature through technology. Even a nudist on the beach in the middle of nowhere usually wears sunglasses, or at least sunscreen. The problem comes when s/he throws the empty bottle into the bushes, or when the car s/he rode in to get there destroys plant and animal habitat, or runs over wildlife.

As mentioned previously, there is not much exploration in tourism literature about the third dimension of technology. This dimension is what provides the potential for planning and management. This is not to say that this dimension is not present, it is just that it is more assumed than recognized. For this reason, its power is not fully realized. Sustainable tourism proponents generally revert to seeing technology as a tool to increase carrying capacity while minimizing damage to the environment. For example, Peter Murphy tells how Walt Disney World,

*...took marginal Central Florida land and converted it into a local environmental triumph...able to combine 25 million visitors a year with restful resorts and golf courses, all next to a conservation area where native plants and animals have been attracted to a reclaimed area of Central Florida wetlands.*"<sup>29</sup>

He recounts how the company constructed dams, canals and reservoirs to control and regulate water flow onto the property. They also treat sewage and "return it to the ecosystem"<sup>30</sup> through the golf courses and a tree farm. Then, in order minimize damage to sensitive areas they have "...raised, and in some cases, hardened, environments..."<sup>31</sup> that safely direct and control visitor movement.

This perspective is not unusual in the literature because most people who write about tourism make their living from it, directly or indirectly. Therefore, it is only natural that they want to see it thrive and grow. Articles abound about how to create zones, and how to design parks and recreation areas so as to minimize environmental damage while maximizing visitor capacity. However, the question must be asked: Is this truly what we mean by sustainable tourism development?

If we consider the LAC model and the theoretical history that informs our understanding about sustainable development, the answer to that question is, "Sometimes it is, and sometimes it is not." The model and the theoretical history from which it sprang, both underline public participation as being an important component of sustainable development.

Murphy's description of the property at the time of its purchase is that it was marginal. We need to ask, Who decided it was marginal and on what basis, Disney, the local residents, ecologists? Were the local residents asked if they wanted 25 million people coming to their area? What are the impacts of that? Without the answers to these questions, we cannot know if this is truly an example of sustainable development. Just because Disney can make a lot of money without visibly trashing the place does not constitute sustainable development.

These questions bring us to the third dimension of technology: the purpose and design of technology. Technologies are made and used to achieve a purpose. This purposefulness and the fact that carrying capacity can be manipulated are what make planning and management possible. For this reason, technology can be used to limit growth and direct change, as well as encourage it. However, the purpose must be clearly defined, and it must be understood and supported by those who will be impacted by its use.

Again, development theory can shed light on this matter because development theorists and practitioners have been struggling with this issue for some time in the area of appropriate technology.

Appropriate technology as an area of study and practice began out of, "the belated recognition of the role and importance of technology and the concomitant desire to organize and direct the growth of technology and industry toward national or other identified goals."<sup>32</sup> Appropriate technology has been defined as:

*...the generic term for a wide range of technologies characterized by any one or several of the following features: low investment cost per work-place, low capital investment per unit of output, organisational [sic]simplicity, **high adaptability to a particular social or cultural environment** [my emphasis], sparing use of natural resources, low cost of final product or high potential for employment.<sup>33</sup>*

Appropriate technology embraces the understanding that different societies develop in different ways because different cultures have different experiences and values. It recognizes that a people's access to technology can directly affect their ability to feed themselves. At the same time, it also recognizes that people can be harmed or overwhelmed by the type and use of technology. Therefore, technology must be appropriate to the knowledge, values, experiences and goals of the place it is used.

Because of the dual nature of technology, appropriate technology also embraces the notion that local communities should have a say in which technologies they will accept, and which ones are not appropriate for them. This will depend on their cultural values, their readiness to accept them, and their self-defined needs.<sup>34</sup>

There is also growing recognition that technology is also systemic. This characteristic has important implications for planning as well. The systemic nature of technology means that one technology feeds on another, or provides the impetus for another. It also means that many technologies require vast systems to be in place to support them. We see this regularly in our homes. For example, something as mundane as a washing machine is useless without the support of electricity, or water and sewer.<sup>35</sup>

This systemic nature of many technologies means that once they are adopted they are difficult to change and they can have unanticipated consequences. These characteristics explain why there is sometimes reluctance to embrace new technologies on the part of those committed to the concept of appropriate technology.

## CONCLUSION

The history of sustainable development theory is rooted in recognition of the negative environmental and social impacts caused by commitment to economic growth as an end goal. Initially, the concept of carrying capacity was used to try to impose limits on growth. Later, there was realization that the limits referred to in the notion of carrying capacity are not fixed. In fact, they are constantly being pushed and pulled in one direction or another. Technology plays a pivotal role in this flexibility and in the impacts we experience.

What is seen as a limit depends on: the availability and accessibility of human resources in a given time and place; human values and priorities in a given time and place; availability and accessibility of human ingenuity and creativity; and, the resistance and resilience of natural forces at the point of interaction.

As will be seen in the final chapter, the residents of the Pender Islands understand the concepts of carrying capacity and the important role technology has in moving its boundaries. They also have begun to use this insight as a tool to manage tourism on the Islands.

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<sup>10</sup> Don Getz. "A rationale and methodology for assessing capacity to absorb tourism." *Ontario Geography*, Vol 19, 92-102.

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<sup>31</sup> Peter Murphy, 286.

<sup>32</sup> Tony Marjoram. "Technology and Development in the Small States of the South Pacific," in *Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asian Conference on Technology for Rural Development* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, December 4-7, 1985), 50.

<sup>33</sup> Nicolas Jequier and Gerard Blanc, *The World of Appropriate Technology*, (Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris 1983), 10.

<sup>34</sup> George Ovitt Jr., "Appropriate Technology Can Help the Third World Develop," *The Third World: Opposing Viewpoints*, Janelle Rohr ed. (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 1989), 178-182.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas P. Hughes. *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society 1880 - 1930*, (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 80.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE OF THE PENDER ISLANDS**

This chapter identifies the physical, social and biological characteristics that make the Pender Islands desirable to visitors.

### **SETTLEMENT**

Settlement on the Islands is usually described as rural, and the “rural lifestyle” is highly cherished by Island residents. The rural character is also attractive to many visitors. Although there is nothing on the Islands which can be called a village or urban center, there are several settlement ‘clusters’ which reflect the history of the area. Port Washington, Otter Bay, Hope Bay (see picture on page 51) and Port Browning have their origins in the late 1800s and early 1900s when European settlement on the Islands began.

The largest and most heavily populated subdivision of all the Southern Gulf Islands is on North Pender surrounding Magic Lake. The Magic Lake Estates, as this subdivision is called, resembles most acreage areas surrounding many typical large North American cities. A Vancouver developer constructed it in the late 1960s and early 1970s and marketed it heavily in Alberta. It was this development which sparked controversy over land use in the Gulf Islands and resulted in the passage of the Islands Trust Act and the formation of the Islands Trust in 1974. The Islands Trust was empowered to “preserve and protect” the lands which are a part of the archipelago in the southern part of the Georgian Strait.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

There are three main ways for visitors to get to the Islands:

**a) Ferry** - The majority of visitors arrive on the Pender Islands by ferry from either Vancouver or Victoria. Throughout the year, British Columbia Ferries provides a minimum of two daily ferries to North Pender Island traveling to and from Vancouver out of the Tsawwassen terminal. This trip takes just over two hours with two stopovers. In 1996 the cost for one automobile was \$33.50, plus \$8.00 per adult passenger including tax. There are also five direct daily departures and arrivals between the Penders and the Swartz Bay terminal of Victoria on weekdays, and four on weekends or holidays. This trip takes about forty minutes.<sup>1</sup> The ferries also transport bicycles and recreational vehicles, and will tow motorboats.

**b) Boat** - Another way to get to the Penders is by boat. There are numerous bays, coves and beaches which provide 26 marine access points to the islands.<sup>2</sup> There are three marinas: one in Browning Harbour, one in Otter Bay, and one in Bedwell Harbour. The one in Bedwell Harbour is the site of a Canada Customs office which processes approximately 9,000 American yachts per year.<sup>3</sup> There are also two government docks: one at Hope Bay, and one at Port Washington. A boat taxi is also available out of nearby Ganges Island. This service is primarily inter-island.

**c) Float Plane** - Lastly, a small but growing number of people are arriving by float plane. Some planes are privately owned, but two companies currently provide regular air service out of Vancouver to the Pender Islands. Harbour Air offers at least one regularly scheduled daily flight to and from the islands on weekdays throughout the year. Additional flights (as many as twelve have been done) are added on weekends and in the summer. The cost is \$65 (including tax) and the trip only takes half an hour, one-quarter of the time that the ferry takes.<sup>4</sup> Both companies also provide charter services.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Nature provides the greatest attractions for visitors to the Pender Islands.

**Climate-** The Pender Islands enjoy one of the most moderate climates in all of Canada. They lie in the rain shadow of Vancouver Island within the Dry Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone. This is characterized by mild winters with little or no snow, and cool summers. The average annual precipitation is 762.5 mm, with December being the wettest month and July being the driest. Most of the precipitation comes as rain, or fog, and is highly variable from year to year. It is not unknown for July to receive no precipitation at all and it is not uncommon for 50 to 60% of the total summer rainfall to occur in one twenty-four hour period. This means that this area receives one of the greatest number of summer sunshine hours in Canada.<sup>5</sup>

The Pender Islands experience their warmest temperatures in July and August with an average of 16.5°C. The average temperature in January, which is their coldest month, is 4° C.<sup>6</sup> The Islands have a number of distinct micro-climates wherein some spots are known for getting more precipitation and fog than others.<sup>7</sup> The Islands' location in the Strait of Georgia also means that they are sheltered from much of the force of strong ocean winds and waves experienced by those living right on the Pacific coast.

**Vegetation** - Because of their climate, the Pender Islands are home to a great variety of plants; some of which are unusual, or even rare, in other parts of Canada. The abundance of vegetation and its uniqueness contributes to the attractiveness of the islands for visitors. The first impression a visitor receives of the Islands is the greenery of the forests. These are made up of Douglas fir, balsam and Western red cedar interspersed with the unusual shapes of the Arbutus tree, and the rare Garry oak.

The Arbutus is particularly striking and is often used in artwork and illustrations of the region. This tree is at its northern limit in this area, and is actually a broad-leaf

evergreen. It has close-grained wood and its papery bark is a orange-brown colour which peels somewhat like a birch. It also has very broad, reaching branches.

The forests of the Islands are interrupted by many small, natural, grassy clearings, which provide a place for wildflowers and flowering shrubs of all kinds to grow. One claim is that there are at least two hundred and fifty different species of wildflowers in this region.<sup>8</sup> Some examples of the kinds of flowers that can be seen include stonecrop, blue camas, satin flower, shooting star, salmonberry, huckleberry and white fawn lily.<sup>9</sup> There is even a rare Calypso Bulbosa which is in the orchid family.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, there are a number of large open areas, which look like meadows, where farmers have cleared the land. This is particularly true of North Pender Island. South Pender Island is not as developed as North Pender Island and it is more rugged. It therefore has a 'wilder' appearance.

**Wildlife** - The Pender Islands are visited by, or are home to, a number of bird, fish and animal species which are of special interest to many visitors. The Gulf Islands are on the edge of the Pacific flyway and hence thousands of migratory birds pass by in the spring and fall. Dozens of other species like bald eagles, ospreys and great blue herons nest on the islands, as do a great many kinds of shore birds. One source claims that almost 200 species of birds have been identified in the Gulf Islands, with almost half of that number nesting there.<sup>11</sup>

Medicine Beach is located on North Pender Island (see map on page 46). This brackish marsh is the largest of several scattered throughout the Gulf Islands and is unusual for the number and diversity of plant and bird species, including the Virginia Rail, which make their home here. This unique property has been

purchased by the donations of Pender residents and conservation groups in an effort to preserve and protect it.<sup>12</sup>

The waters that surround the Islands are visited by pods of Orcas (killer whales). They are most commonly in pursuit of the harbour seals and porpoises, which are themselves in pursuit of the schools of fish that pass by.<sup>13</sup> Gray whales and humpback whales occasionally pass by the Islands as well. There are at least five species of salmon known to this area, as well as herring, dogfish, halibut and perch,<sup>14</sup> many of which are big attractions for sports fisherman. Northern sea lions also frequent this area, especially during the breeding season, and at least one group has been known to winter on nearby Mayne Island.<sup>15</sup>

Island beaches are replete with a great variety of shellfish which include: crabs, oysters, clams, mussels, scallops, urchins, shrimp, prawns and about 90 species of sea stars. Fresh water otters can also be seen frequently as they dive and play along the rocky coasts and driftwood beaches.<sup>16</sup>

On land, the largest and most noticeable animal is the black-tailed deer, which is commonly seen in the early mornings or evenings feeding alongside the roadways or in residential gardens. As early settlers eradicated the deer's natural enemies, such as cougars and wolves, they are very abundant to the point where some islanders view them as pests.<sup>17</sup> However, the absence of large carnivores is also a plus for campers and hikers since they do not ever have to worry about the possibility of dangerous encounters.

Another creature that is quite unique to this region, and which is of interest to many visitors, is the tiny green pacific tree toad, usually called a tree frog. It is about three to four centimeters long (less than 2 inches). These can sometimes be heard 'singing' in the trees but are elusive and require patience to be seen.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES

Although the Pender Islands are small and rural they do have all of the basic modern amenities.

**Transportation, Utilities & Services** - Transportation on the islands is made possible by a network of narrow roads, most of which are paved. These roads tend to follow the natural terrain and were largely built over early trails. Consequently they are winding and hilly, which makes them very picturesque and interesting to explore. One is always wondering what will be found around the next bend, or what new view will await over the next hill. Bike enthusiasts and hikers find them almost irresistible.

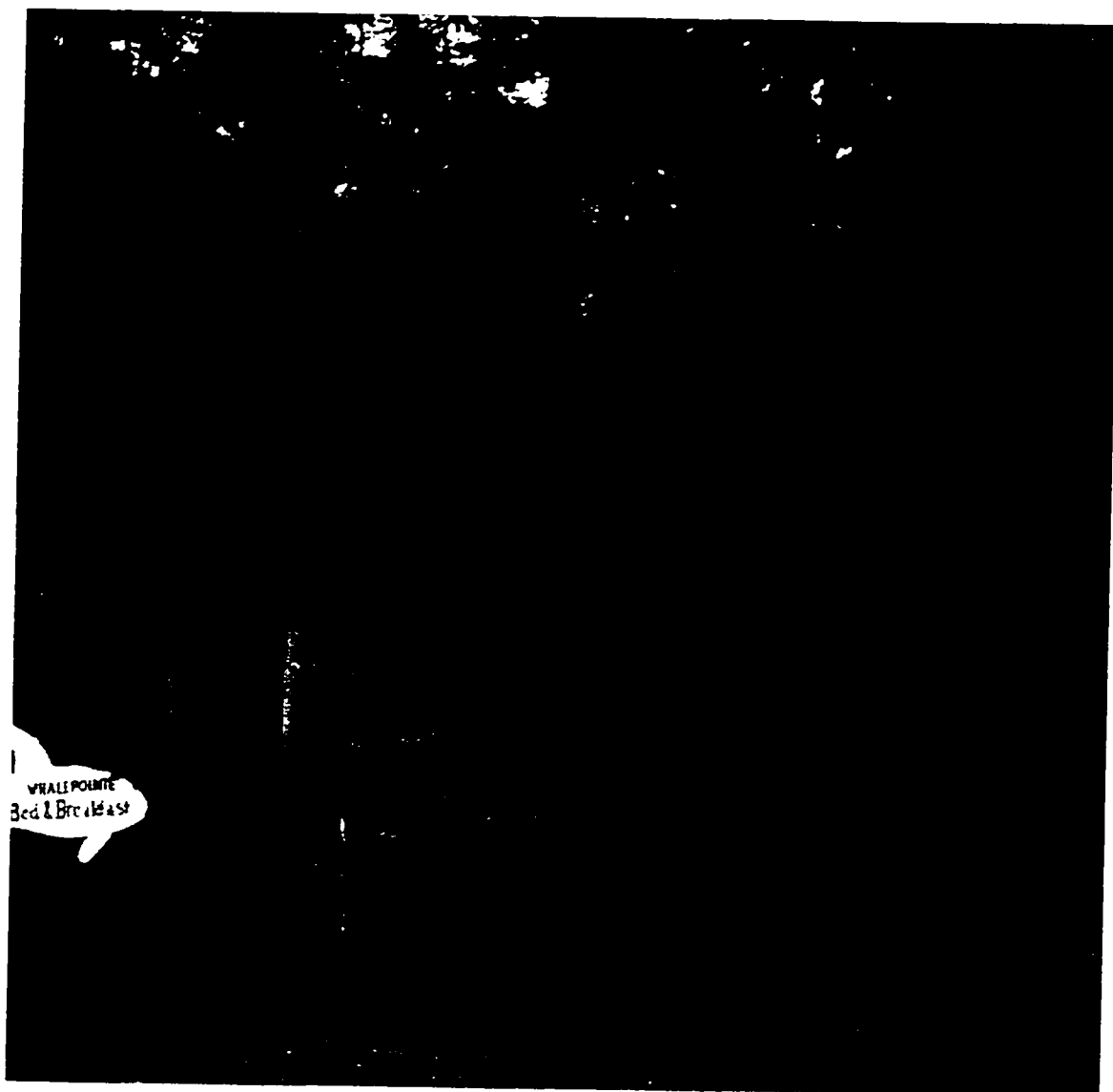
There is no town or village on Pender Islands; however, there is a small shopping center called, *The Driftwood Centre*, which is located almost in the middle of North Pender Island. It contains a bakery, a grocery store, a postal outlet, a government office, a liquor store, a real estate office, an insurance agency, a garage, a hair salon, a gift store and a pharmacy. Other retail outlets are scattered throughout the islands. There is a second-hand clothing store, a lumber yard, a newspaper, car rentals, and a veterinary clinic. In addition, many services like plumbing, electrical contracting, appliance repair, construction, landscaping, and accounting are offered through home businesses.

Other essential services that are available on-island include an RCMP station, a medical clinic, an ambulance service, two fire stations, a library, four churches, and an elementary school.

### Accommodations

#### a) Bed and Breakfasts

The Pender Island Bed & Breakfast Association lists eight Bed and Breakfast establishments on the Islands. Most cater to adults and do not accept pets. Prices



**Figure 3. A Bed and Breakfast on South Pender Island**

range from \$75. for double occupancy to \$105. Most are also open all year, although they are busiest in the summer.

**b) Resorts, Retreats and Inns**

There is one tourist resort on South Pender Island, *Bedwell Harbour Island Resort and Marina*. It offers 24 accommodation units: some in rooms, others in cabins or villas. The resort caters heavily to private cruise boats offering a Canada Customs office, fuel, ice, fishing licenses, charts, a grocery store, bar and restaurant, swimming, tennis, bicycle rentals, and a playground. It is also the landing site for regularly scheduled seaplane flights from Vancouver.

Just two years ago *Clam Bay Farm* also opened for business on North Pender Island. This operation specifically targets business retreats, primarily out of Vancouver. It has a capacity of 30 visitors.

The *Inn on Pender Island* has nine rooms. It offers a licensed dining room, colour TV and continental breakfasts. It is centrally located near the main Island shopping center and is adjacent to Prior Provincial Park.

**d) Cabins and Rentals**

Besides the above noted establishments, a great many visitors who stay on the Islands are accommodated privately. There is no way of knowing how many units there are and advertising is seldom used to attract visitors.

Many people who own houses on the Islands do not use them all the time. The locals call them 'weekenders' because they often actually live in Vancouver or Victoria and come to their Island home on weekends, or over their holidays. They help to pay for this get-away residence (and future retirement home) by renting it out when they are not using it. Some of these properties are listed with Breakaway Vacation Rentals Ltd. However, many obtain their clientele solely by word of mouth, or referrals.

In addition, many permanent Island residents regularly supplement their income by renting out an extra bedroom, a basement suite, or a guest cabin on their property. Again, the number of these units is unknown and advertising is seldom used, or needed.

### **Recreation and Entertainment**

#### **a) Parks, Trails and Campgrounds**

Despite their small size, the Pender Islands contain a federal/provincial park, two provincial parks, one regional park and eleven small community recreation and nature appreciation parks. There are also sixteen short hiking trails situated in various parts of the Islands.

The federal and provincial governments under the Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy project of Parks Canada are jointly purchasing property for five planned parks throughout the Gulf Islands. In the summer of 1996, 215.4 hectares of land on North Pender Island were purchased for this purpose. This park is not open yet.

The provincial government operates two parks on the Islands. These parks are the only ones that allow camping. Prior Centennial Park on North Pender Island is conveniently located close to the Driftwood shopping centre, Browning Harbour and Medicine Beach. It has 17 tent sites and access to a hiking trail.

The other provincial park is Beaumont Marine Park on South Pender Island. This park is intended to provide a stopping place for boats and it offers fifteen mooring buoys and eleven campsites. There are toilets, drinking water, and picnic areas at the site as well as access to hiking trails. The park is located just north of Bedwell Harbour Resort.

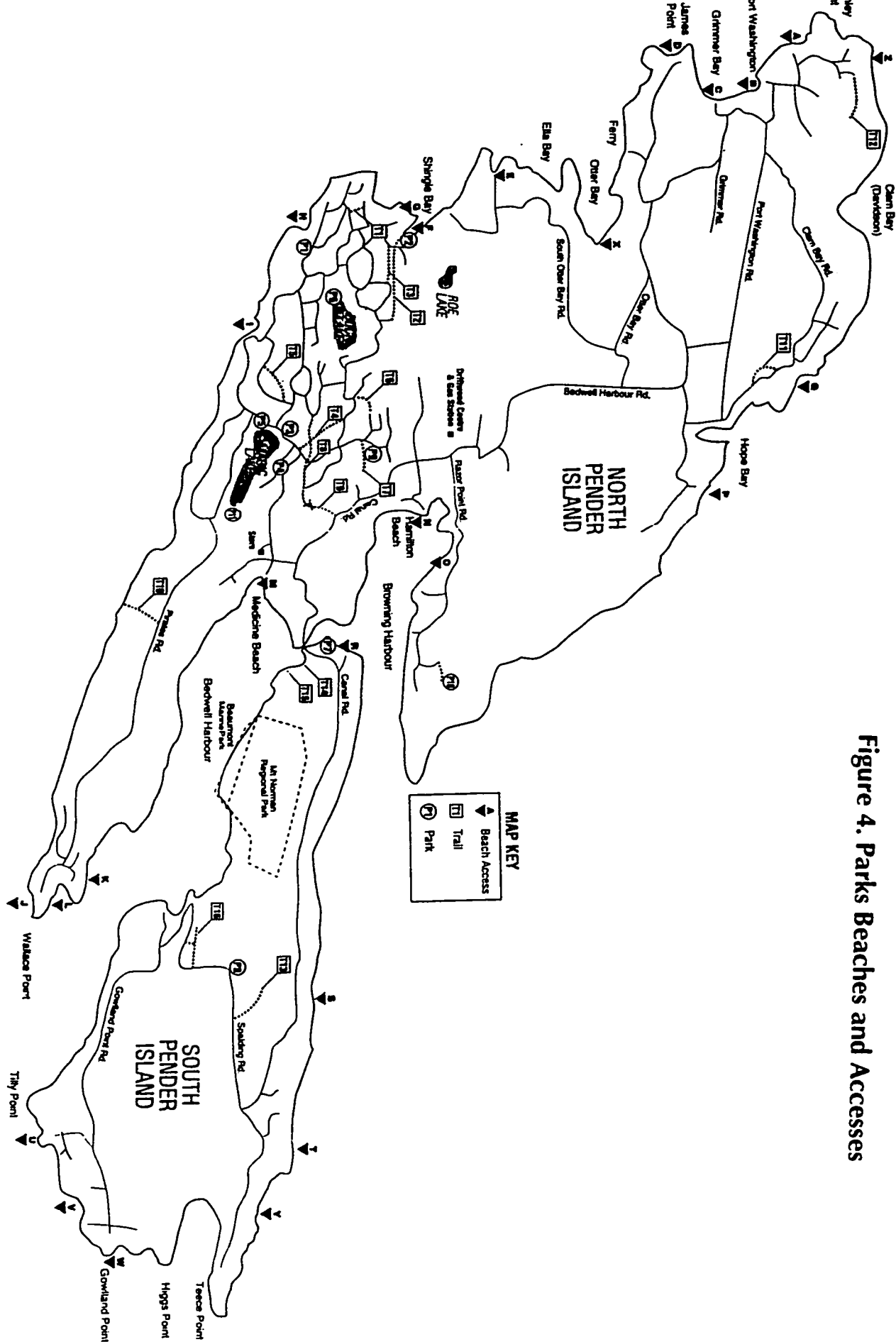


Figure 4. Parks Beaches and Accesses

## b) Sports

The Pender Islands are great for outdoor enthusiasts, especially during the spring, summer and fall. As noted previously there are many hiking trails around the islands and plenty of beaches to stroll along. Bird watching is another popular activity. The islands have a Field Naturalist organization that can be consulted, and there are bird check lists available in some stores.

Although swimming in the ocean is generally avoided because of the cold water temperatures, Magic Lake does warm up enough in the summer to offer this opportunity. In addition, Bedwell Harbour Resort and Port Browning have outdoor pools that are available to the public for a small fee. Canoeing and kayaking are also very popular in the lake and in the waters surrounding the islands (see Figure 5). There is a rental shop for those who do not own this equipment, or did not bring it along.

Boat rentals are also available at several marinas for those who want to go fishing, or just go out for a jaunt. And, for those who like an underwater view of the ocean, scuba diving charters are available during the summer season.

Cycling is an extremely popular activity on the Islands. Many cycling clubs organize trips to the Islands, and international travel companies offer island-hopping bike excursions.<sup>18</sup> In addition, many Vancouver residents hop on their bikes for a leisurely weekend on the Islands. For those who do not like to pedal, scooter rentals are available and for those who prefer a live mount, horse back trail rides can be arranged locally.

There is a nine-hole golf course on North Pender as well as a challenging 18 pole disc golf park. Both courses are open all year. There are also several tennis courts on the island, as well as a number of playgrounds for younger children.



**Figure 5. A Kayaker in the Canal**

**c) Events**

There are a number of regularly scheduled events on the islands that are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Throughout the summer a farmer's market is held every Saturday at the Driftwood Shopping Centre. In June there is a Summer Solstice Festival , and an annual Garden Party in July. August provides the Tapestry of Words which is a one-day story-telling event, and the annual Fall Fair.

Besides these regular events there are always opportunities for alert visitors to attend less well known and irregularly scheduled events sponsored by one of the many local organizations as a part of their activities. These events will sometimes require permission, or an invitation, but Islanders usually make everyone welcome. Visiting lecturers and artists are not uncommon, and while this author was on the islands there was a community fundraiser that offered guided tours of many notable homes on the Islands. It was a unique and unexpected opportunity. A good way to find out about these kinds of events is through the local newspapers. These are available at the local grocery store and one is distributed free of charge at the ferry terminal.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT HAVE SHAPED TOURISM**

### **History and Culture**

The Gulf Islands, and the Pender Islands, have been visited by, or home to, peoples from many parts of the world. Even a cursory understanding of this history does much to add interest for those visitors who wish to know more about what they are seeing. It also drives home the point that the events that have shaped the lives of these Islanders's are a part of the larger context of Canadian and world history.

The earliest known occupants of the islands were members of two different tribes of the Coast Salish people: the Cowichan and the Saanich. It is estimated that these people could have been making annual migratory visits to the islands for hunting, fishing and gathering as early as 9,000 years ago.<sup>19</sup>

Evidence of their presence is quite prevalent, however, it is not well understood or very carefully preserved except in the private collections of local amateur archaeologists.<sup>20</sup> Although over fifty archaeological sites have been identified on

the Islands,<sup>21</sup> only two are fairly well known, and only one has been extensively studied.

In 1903 the government dug a canal which now separates the North and South Islands. This was done to allow water passage between Bedwell and Browning Harbours. The canal site contained a large shell midden<sup>22</sup> and a host of native artifacts testifying to its continuous use by earlier peoples thousands of years ago. It was not until the 1950s that test excavations were made by archaeologists. More extensive excavations did not follow until the 1980s after the spot was declared a heritage site.<sup>23</sup> Today, a roadside plaque is almost all that remains to testify to the presence of these early occupants.

Another shell midden stretches across Medicine Beach. It was surveyed in 1974 and declared a protected site. No test pits or excavations were done although it has been suggested that this midden was deliberately constructed by native peoples in order to trap and net fish.<sup>24</sup> Because the midden shows signs of erosion and vandalism, and because it is located on an environmentally unique and sensitive property purchased by The Pender Islands Conservancy, there are plans to develop an educational interpretive program that would focus on native history and the midden.<sup>25</sup> If this is done, it will add a new and important dimension to tourism on the Islands.

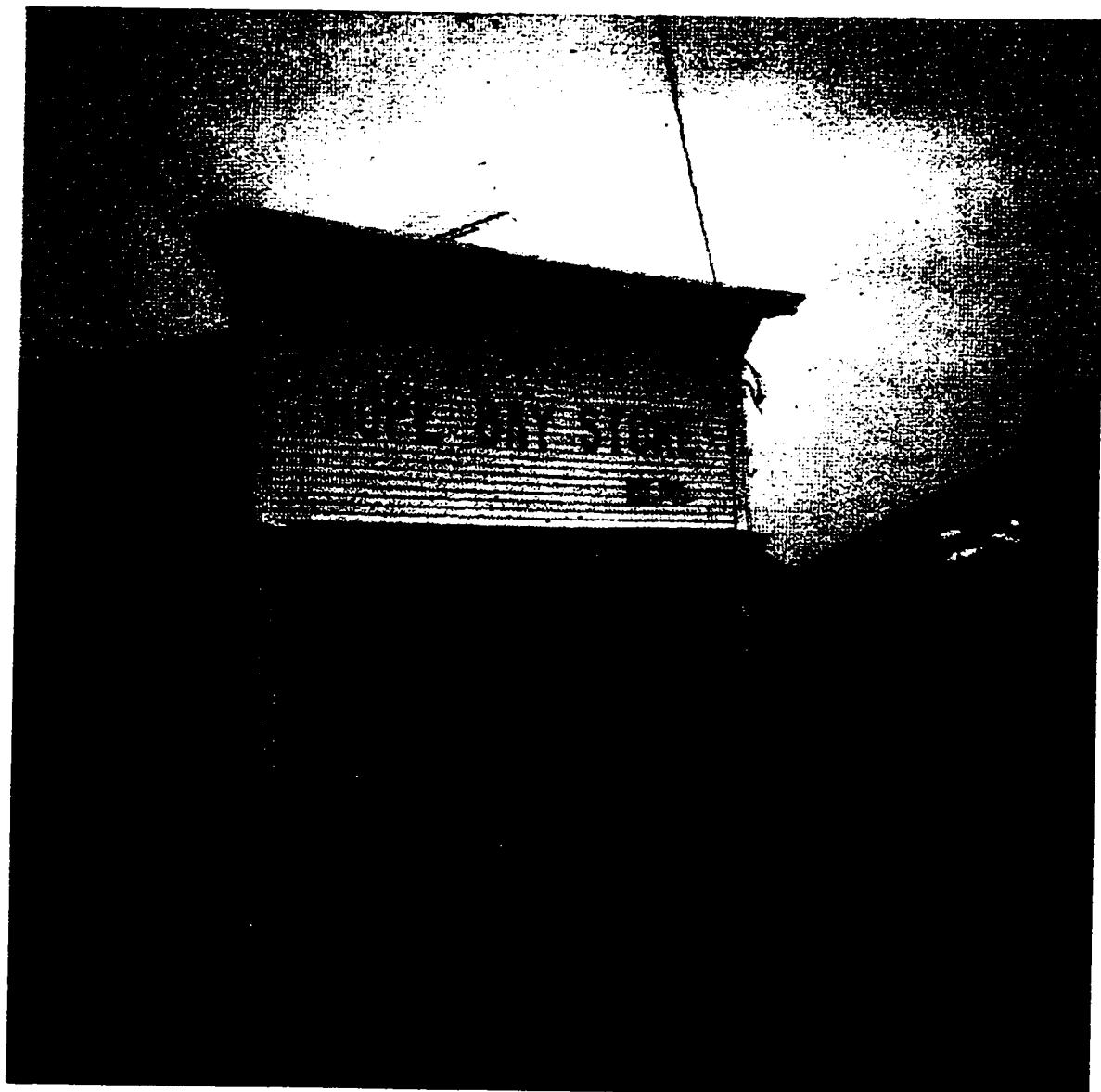
It is known that Europeans began to arrive in the area of the Gulf Islands during the latter part of the eighteenth century. In the summer of 1791 there is a record of Spanish explorers arriving to explore and map the area.<sup>26</sup> The Juan de Fuca Strait still bears the Spanish name given to it by these early mariners.

It was not until around 1877 that the first permanent European settlers began to arrive on Pender Island.<sup>27</sup> Many came directly from England, Scotland, Ireland and

other European countries. Others came from different parts of Canada and the United States. They first cleared the land to raise sheep, poultry, grain, fruit and vegetables, and for logging. Some invited paying guests as a means to supplement their income. For example, Frederick C. Smith, who was a poultry farmer at Clam Bay in the 1920s, built three guest cottages on his farm that he named "Welcome Bay Inn."<sup>28</sup> He operated this enterprise each summer until the outbreak of WWII.

Local residents have taken considerable pains to preserve and record this settlement phase of their history. There is an active historical society that has recently published two volumes of anecdotes collected from the diaries and memories of the families of early pioneers, and from newspapers and other official records of the time. In addition, over twenty homes, churches and stores that were built and occupied by early settlers have been designated as heritage buildings on the Islands (see Figure 6).

The kaleidoscope of stories collected by these local historians reveal specific cultural characteristics and values which continue to influence the attitudes and behaviours of today's Island residents. Early on, a painful vignette recounts the clash between Island settlers and some of the last of the Cowichan people living on the Islands. The author obviously struggles to accurately retell the events surrounding the murder of a couple of would-be settlers who temporarily landed on Pender Island in 1863. He tells of the subsequent burning of a deserted native village and the unjust hanging of three Cowichan youths. It is clear that although the murders were what ostensibly sparked this retribution, in fact it was a part of the colonial government's urgent campaign to populate the region with British subjects in order to prevent the Americans from laying claim to it.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 6. Hope Bay Store on North Pender Is.**

There are also poignant accounts of the failed attempt of Japanese settlers to establish themselves on the Gulf Islands. One Japanese family, headed by Yoshimatsu Yamada, purchased property near Otter Bay (the site of today's ferry landing on Pender Island) in 1895. Yoshimatsu was killed in an accident while he was felling a tree on his property in 1897. This property was later recorded as

being sold to a farmer of European origin around 1905. A bulldozer unearthed Yoshimatsu's gravestone in 1941.<sup>30</sup>

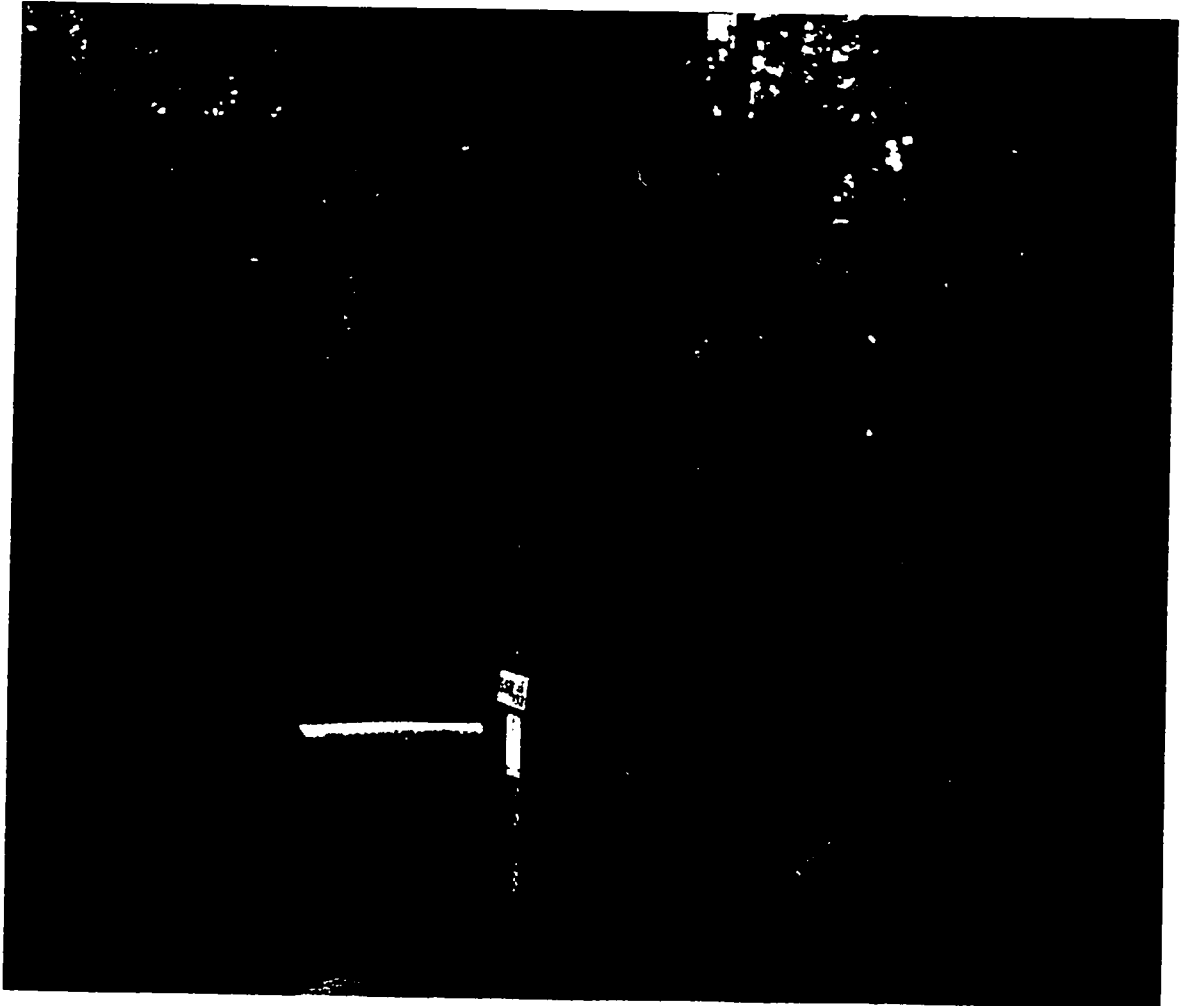
Although not much is known or recorded about Yoshimatsu's family, there is a record of what happened to other Japanese families in the Gulf Islands. Many cleared land and prospered by market gardening and fishing. However, most were deliberately forced out of the fishing industry by discriminatory legislation imposed on them throughout the 1920s. Then after WWII broke out they were forcibly removed to internment camps. Following the war, although many tried to regain their property, they found it had been sold to war veterans and that few residents were willing to sell land to them.<sup>31</sup>

These kinds of accounts tell how early settlement of the Islands deliberately excluded those who were not European, and favoured those with British origins, or sympathies. It helps to explain why many of the gardens on the Islands have a distinctly British look to them, and reveal the source of the European style of Bed and Breakfast establishments.

Other accounts reveal how the isolation of the Islands attracted hardy, industrious individuals with a distinctly independent streak. There are numerous accounts of the involvement of many early settlers with rum running and smuggling. Many of these are recounted in a light- hearted, sometimes humorous way. They reflect a somewhat irreverent attitude for the strict letter of the law and a love of individual freedom that is a strong characteristic of many Islanders today.

It is also reflected in the high numbers of artists and artisans who make the Islands their home. These contribute to the cultural interest of the Islands for visitors. In every corner of the Islands there are art galleries, artist's workshops and works of art on display (see Figure 7). Some of the more well-known artists who have lived,

54  
or still live, on the Penders include: James Barber, CBC's Urban Peasant; Ralph Sketch, an internationally renowned bronze sculptor; Harriet and Roger Stribley, well known BC potters; and William Deverell, a successful Canadian author.



**Figure 7. One of Many Art Studios and Galleries on the Islands**

## **CONCLUSION**

The Pender Islands are small and rural having a scattered settlement pattern with no town or village centre. The climate is mild all year round and it is a nature lover's paradise with plenty of birds, plants and animals to enjoy. The Islands have

all the basic modern amenities and many parks. However, public accommodations and camping facilities are scarce.

The Islands have a long history of settlement, first by the Coast Salish peoples, then by Europeans who arrived in the late 1800s. Small-scale tourism on the Islands also has a relatively long history. There are records of local farmers opening up cottages in the 1920s as a means of supplementing their income. It is a pattern of tourism that dominates the Islands to this day.

## CHAPTER ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> BC Ferries, "Schedules: Southern Gulf Islands," January 5, 1996 to May 12, 1996.
- <sup>2</sup> Paul Woods, for Pender Islands Parks and Recreation Commission. "Pender Islands Parks Trails Ocean Accesses." (Graphic Production: Sheridan Studios, 1996) Brochure.
- <sup>3</sup> David and Andrea Spalding, Georgina Montgomery and Lawrence Pitt, *Southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia*, (Vancouver: Altitude Publishing, 1995), 94.
- <sup>4</sup> Harbour Air. Facsimile Transmission of Schedule and Rates, October 24, 1996.
- <sup>5</sup> Jim Henderson. "Masters Degree Project" (in progress). Faculty of Environmental Design (Environmental Science Program), University of Calgary, Alberta. 1995.
- <sup>6</sup> Jim Henderson.
- <sup>7</sup> Steve Wright. Personal Communication, 1996.
- <sup>8</sup> Brennan Simpson. "Wildflowers" *Island Tides*, (Jan. 4, 1990, Vol. 2 No. 1) 3.
- <sup>9</sup> Bruce Obee. *The Gulf Islands*. (Sidney B.C.: Gray's Publishing/White Cap Books. 1981), 8.
- <sup>10</sup> Brennan Simpson. "Wildflowers" *Island Tides*, (Jan. 18, 1990, Vol. 2 No. 2), 7.
- <sup>11</sup> Arthur Fielding Sweet. *Islands in Trust*. (Lantzville, British Columbia: Oolichan Books, 1988), 21.
- <sup>12</sup> Lloyd Ostrinsky. "An Area Management Plan and Preliminary Design for the Medicine Beach Property North Pender Island, British Columbia," Master's Degree Project. (Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary. Calgary, Alberta. September 1996). 53.
- <sup>13</sup> Arthur Fielding Sweet, 31.
- <sup>14</sup> Bruce Obee, 12.
- <sup>15</sup> Bruce Obee. 9.

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<sup>16</sup> Bruce Obee, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce Obee, 20.

<sup>18</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Distinctive Bicycling Vacations," *Backroads*, (Berkeley California, 1995), 28.

<sup>19</sup> Gulf Islands Branch, BC Historical Association, "The Indians of the Gulf Islands," in *A Gulf Islands Patchwork*, (Pender Islands, BC: Gulf Islands Branch, BC Historical Association, 1991), 3,4.

<sup>20</sup> Gulf Islands Branch, B.C. Historical Association, "The Indians of the Gulf Islands," in *A Gulf Islands Patchwork*, 3.

<sup>21</sup> E. Anne English, Susan Friesen, Elizabeth Henderson, Lloyd Ostrinsky. "Medicine Beach Development Options." (University of Calgary, Faculty of Environmental Design, EVDS 701 Project, November 1995), 13.

<sup>22</sup> A midden is a large bank of debris left by earlier inhabitants. Shell middens obviously contain large quantities of shells.

<sup>23</sup> David and Andrea Spalding, Georgina Montgomery and Lawrence Pitt, *Southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia*, (Vancouver: Altitude Publishing, 1995), 94.

<sup>24</sup> E. Anne English, et al. 13.

<sup>25</sup> Lloyd Ostrinsky, 142.

<sup>26</sup> Gulf Islands Branch, B.C. Historical Association,. "In the Wake of the Explorers." in *More Tales from the Outer Gulf Islands*, (Pender Islands, BC: Gulf Islands Branch, B.C. Historical Association, 1993), 11.

<sup>27</sup> Gulf Islands Branch, B.C. Historical Association, "Early History of Pender Island." in *A Gulf Islands Patchwork*, 41.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas K. Ovanin. "Island Heritage Buildings," (Islands Trust, Victoria 1984. Reprinted by Queens' Printer 1987), 132.

<sup>29</sup> Les Laronde. "The Gulf Islands Crisis of 1863" in *More Tales from the Outer Gulf Islands*. 194 - 199.

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<sup>30</sup> Peter Campbell. "The Gravestone at Razor Point" in *More Tales from the Outer Gulf Islands*. 35 - 36.

<sup>31</sup> Marie Elliott. "The Japanese of Mayne Island," in *More Tales from the Outer Gulf Islands*, 179 - 183.

## CHAPTER FOUR: VISITOR PATTERNS AND TRENDS

The introduction to the Islands Trust Bylaw No. 17 recognizes tourism as an integral part of Island life, noting that:

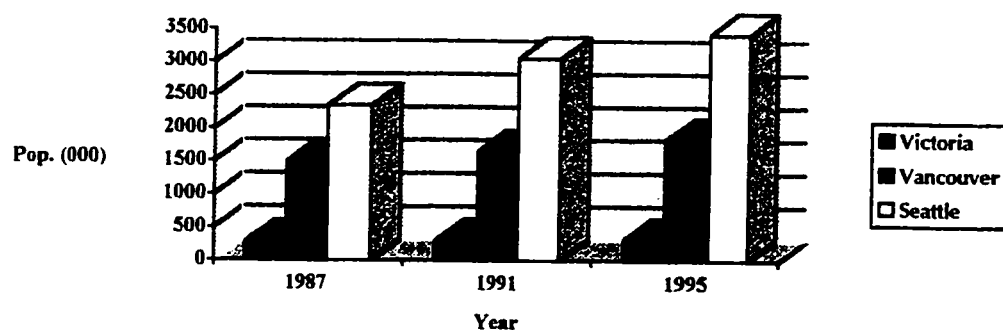
*"The Trust Area continues to experience extreme pressure from population growth and tourism.... Increasing numbers of people from the rapidly growing surrounding urban areas can be expected to be attracted to the Trust Area as a place of residence and recreation...."*

A look at the geography, population and visitor statistics of the Pender Islands thoroughly confirms these statements.

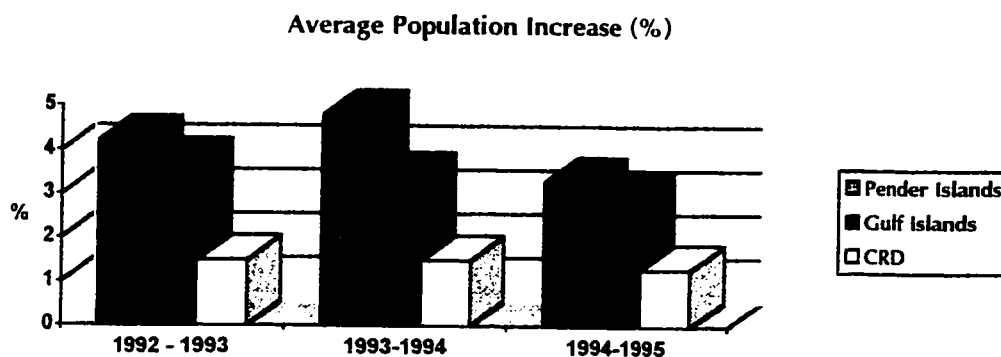
### GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION

The Pender Islands are located about 60 kilometers from Vancouver, and about 45 kilometers from Victoria in the Strait of Georgia. In addition, their location at the border between Canada and the United States, places them in close proximity to the even larger metropolitan area of Seattle, Washington (about 160 km.). This means that they are surrounded by over five and one-half million people. Since Vancouver is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada, this number will likely increase significantly in the years to come.

**Figure 8. Metropolitan Populations Surrounding the Pender Islands<sup>1</sup>**



The Capital Regional District (CRD) has provincial jurisdiction over municipal services in the Gulf Islands, the southern peninsula of Vancouver Island, Victoria and the surrounding metropolitan area. Although the Gulf Islands represent only about 4% of the population in this region, they are the fastest growing area in it. Of these, the Pender Islands have experienced the fastest rate of growth. The CRD estimates that in 1995 there were 1,864 permanent residents on the Pender Islands. This represents a 3.3% increase over the previous year and a 21% increase from the census figures of 1991.<sup>2</sup> About one-third of residents in this region arrive from Vancouver.<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 9. Population Growth Comparisons**

### **VISITOR PATTERNS**

In order to obtain a reasonable estimate of the number of visitors to the Pender Islands and their place of origin, the data collected by those who make access to the Islands possible was examined. Because the ferry system handles the majority of passengers to and from the Islands their records are the most important. However, air transport and boat access are also of some interest and importance.

### **Ferry Passenger Data**

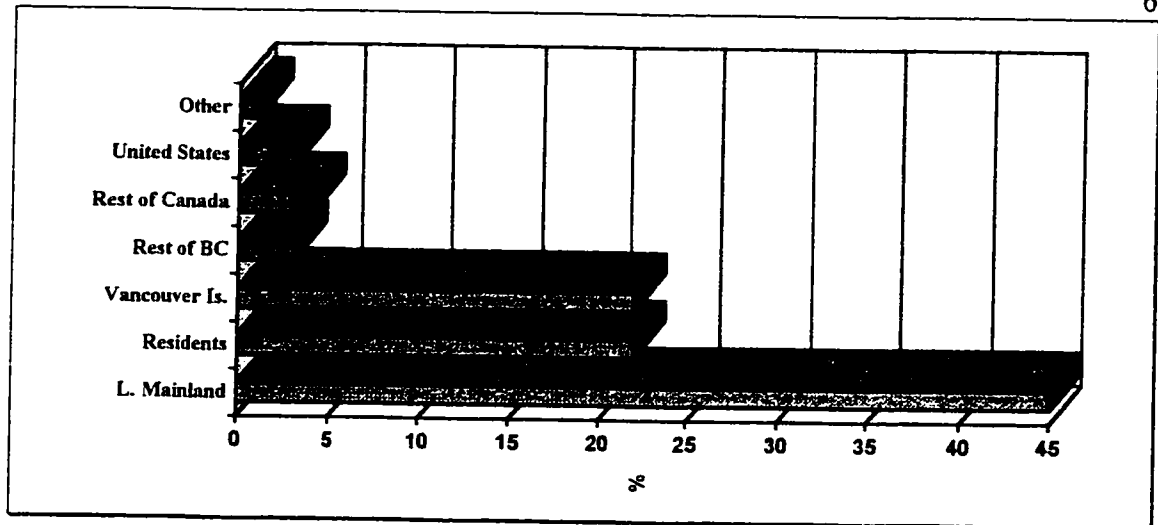
There are four different seasonal traffic patterns recognized by BC Ferries: November through February is the off-season, which experiences the least traffic; March through May is considered a shoulder season where traffic begins to pick

up; June through August is the peak season where traffic is the highest of the year; and September through October is another shoulder season where traffic begins to taper off. This is based on their monthly records of passengers and vehicles on each of their routes.

Unfortunately, this information is not very useful for determining visitor numbers, or origins for the Pender Islands, because it does not differentiate between visitors and residents, and the corporation has not normally tracked the number of travellers who embark or disembark at each individual Island on each route. However, in 1995 the Corporation began a comprehensive strategic planning process that did include some of these kinds of measurements.

This process came about because of an increase in *overall* ferry traffic to the Southern Gulf Islands over the past decade from 1,389,666 passengers in 1984/85 to 2,135,201 in 1994/95. This growth occurred at the same time as ferry infrastructure was ageing, and governments began to exert fiscal pressure on the heavily subsidized service by transferring the responsibility for capital costs onto the Corporation.<sup>4</sup> Further, the Corporation is predicting an additional 34 percent growth in traffic within the next five years.<sup>5</sup>

According to the information that has been collected and analyzed so far, there have been some noticeable differences in ferry travel patterns to the Southern Gulf Islands between 1991 and 1995. This difference cannot be described as a trend and it must be pointed out that the methods and amount of data collected in the two years were not the same.



**Figure 10. Origins of Ferry Passengers to the Southern Gulf Islands in 1995 (%)**

During the peak 1991 summer season, half of the travellers to the Southern Gulf Islands were either from Vancouver Island, or from the Lower Mainland. In 1995, 67 percent were from these locations. In the 1991 peak season, visitors from elsewhere in British Columbia, Canada and the United States accounted for close to 30 percent of travellers, while in 1995 this group only accounts for 10 percent. Resident<sup>6</sup> use of the ferries dropped from 25 percent in 1991 to 22 percent in 1995,<sup>7</sup> even though the population of the Islands had increased by almost 13 percent, from 11,474 people in 1991 to about 12,925 in 1995.<sup>8</sup> This points to a strong increase in travel to and from the Gulf Islands by people living on the mainland, or on Vancouver Island.

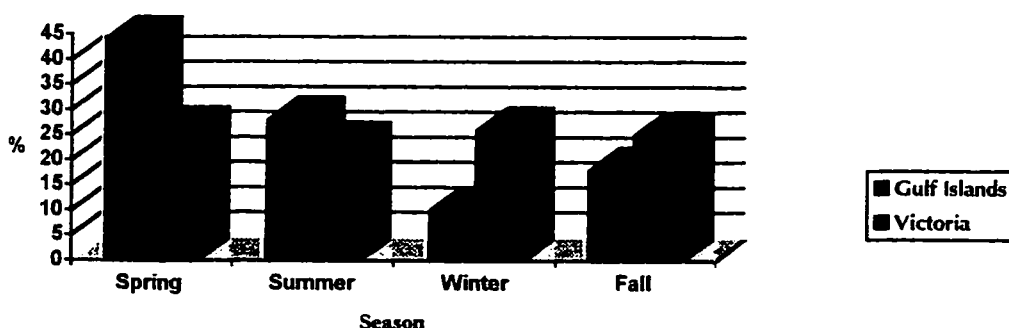
Of the 67 percent of people travelling to the Southern Gulf Islands on the ferry, 45 percent are from the Vancouver area, while 22 percent arrived from Vancouver Island. An additional four percent are from other Canadian provinces, and 3 percent are from the United States, specifically Washington.<sup>9</sup>

BC Ferries operates two routes that serve the Pender Islands: Route 5, which arrives and departs from Swartz Bay (Victoria); and Route 9, which arrives and departs

from Tswwassen (Vancouver). The 1995 study did break out passenger arrivals and departures from every island on each route *for BC Ferries' peak season and the spring shoulder season*. It also identified the place of primary residence of these passengers *for the spring shoulder season only* and obtained detailed information about age, income, duration and purpose of trip, and ownership of seasonal homes.

In order to arrive at a reasonable estimate of the number of visitors who travel specifically to the Pender Islands these percentages were applied to the traffic counts for each route. The percentages for the spring shoulder season were applied to the fall shoulder season. It is noted that the figures this produced are only an estimate. The results do show that spring visitation is slightly higher in the spring shoulder season, than in the ferry company's peak summer season. This discrepancy is in keeping with provincial data.

Provincial data indicate that the entire Vancouver Island region accounts for one-third of BC resident travel. Travel to the Gulf Islands accounts for five percent of the province's resident travel. The preferred season of travel for BC residents to the region varies. Victoria is visited almost equally in all seasons while most other areas, except the Gulf Islands, are primarily visited in the summer. The Gulf Islands and northern Vancouver Island experience the majority of their visits from BC residents in the spring.<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 11. BC Resident Season of Travel (%)**

It is also important to note that visitors during the winter off-season are not included the results. This would offset the overestimate caused by applying the same shoulder season figures to the fall season, which provincial data indicate is lower than the spring season.

According to the 1995 study, 53 percent of passengers travelling to and from Swartz Bay (Victoria) on Route 5 during the shoulder season have their primary residence on one of the Southern Gulf Islands. Another 21 percent reside in Victoria, 12 percent in the Vancouver area, 5 percent in the rest of BC or Canada, and 1 percent are from the United States. The rest are not accounted for. Out of the total number of passengers in this season, 18.1 percent were travelling to the Pender Islands, whereas in the peak season, 12.3 percent of passengers were travelling there.

On Route 9 (Vancouver), resident use accounts for 39 percent of traffic. Travellers from the Victoria area account for two percent, those from the Vancouver area 42 percent, and from the rest of Canada and the United States nine percent.

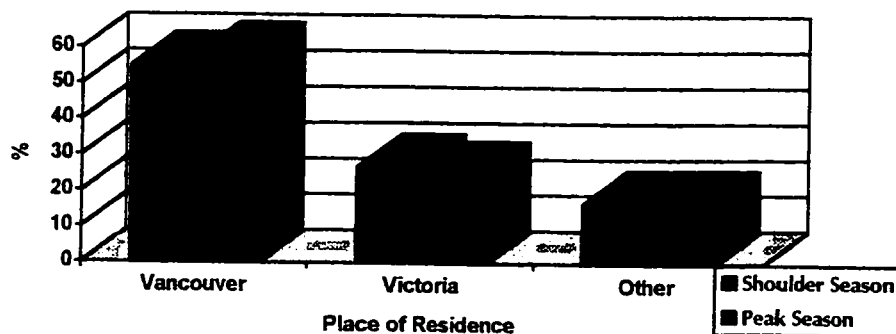
Passenger Origins	Route 5		Route 9		Origin Totals (residents excluded in final total)
	Shoulder	Peak	Shoulder	Peak	
Vancouver	3998	2074	11295	7131	24499
Victoria	6996	3629	549	340	11514
Other	2332	1210	2468	1528	7538
Residents	17657	9159	10696	6622	44134
Non- Resident Totals	13326	6913	14311	8999	<b>43549</b>

**Figure 12. Passenger Estimates to the Pender Islands by Ferry Route**

These estimates show that about 43,549 non-residents<sup>11</sup> visited the Pender Islands in 1995. This means that during the shoulder seasons an average of 5,528 non-residents visited the Pender Islands each month. Fifty-five percent of these visitors were from the Vancouver area, of which three-quarters arrived on Route 9. Twenty-seven percent of these visitors were from the Victoria area, of which 93 percent arrived on Route 5. This left 17 percent who originated from other parts of British Columbia, Canada and the United States. Of these, 51 percent arrived on Route 9 and 49 percent on Route 5.

During the peak season, an average of 5,304 non-residents visited the Islands. Again, Vancouver area residents dominated with 58 percent of visitors arriving from that area. Seventy-eight percent of this group arrived on Route 9. Twenty-five percent of visitors in the summer season were from the Victoria area and 91 percent of them used Route 5 ferry service. Again, 17 percent of visitors at this time were from other parts of British Columbia, Canada or the United States. Fifty-six percent of this group arrived on Route 9 and the remainder used Route 5.

**Figure 13. Origins of Visitors to the Pender Islands in 1995 (%)**



According to BC Ferries, during the shoulder season on both routes non-resident use of the ferries is anywhere from 25 to 71 percent higher on weekends than on weekdays. This is especially true of those passengers from Vancouver and Victoria.

<sup>12</sup> However, the duration of the trip is almost completely reversed for each route.

On the Victoria route (Route 5), 69 percent of travellers said that their trip would last one day or less, while on the Vancouver route (Route 9), 37 percent said they were only on a one day excursion (or less). Of the remaining 63 percent on Route 9 whose trip was going to last more than one day, 21 percent said it would last two days, 15 percent said three days, and 27 percent were taking four days or longer. On Route 5, 11 percent said their trip would last two days, 8 percent said three days, and 12 percent said four days or longer.

The incidence of travellers having seasonal homes on the Gulf Islands also differs between routes. On Route 5 about 18 percent of shoulder season travellers have a seasonal home on the Islands, while 26 percent do so on Route 9.<sup>13</sup>

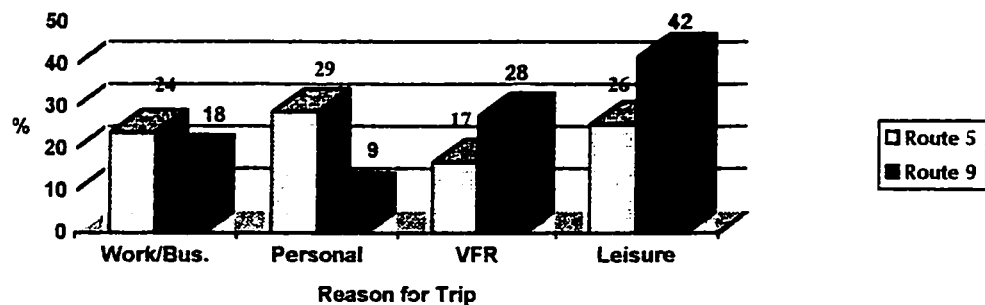
On both routes about two-thirds of the passengers are adults aged 35 and over. Those adults between the ages of 45 and 64 make up the largest numbers in this group accounting for almost one-third of all passengers. Seniors over 65 years of age and adults between 35 and 44 years of age each represent just under 20 percent of all passengers.<sup>14</sup>

About one-quarter of passengers in the shoulder season on both routes, said they were retired, while almost one-third are self-employed (includes homemakers). Another one-third said they were otherwise employed. The remainder were unemployed, students or did not say.<sup>15</sup>

Travellers on Route 9 appear to be wealthier than those on Route 5 with 42 percent of them declaring an annual income of over \$50,000 per year, compared to 28 percent on Route 5. Twenty-seven percent of Route 5 travellers make under \$30,000 per year while 22 percent of Route 9 passengers are at this lower income level. However, 19 percent of Route 9 passengers refused to answer this question, and 26 percent did the same on Route 5.

The differences between the routes are most significant in terms of the reasons passengers gave for their trip. On Route 9, 28 percent of travellers said they were on either work-related business, or personal business such as shopping, while 56 percent of those on Route 5 gave the same reasons. It suggests that Route 5 has a higher use by local residents who tend to 'go to town' in Victoria for shopping and other business more frequently than 'to the city,' that is, Vancouver.

On Route 9, 28 percent of travellers indicated they were going to visit friends and relatives (VFR), while 17 percent of those on Route 5 said the same thing. Most travellers on Route 9 (42 percent) said they were going for leisure activities such as recreation (23 percent), commuting to a seasonal home (14 percent), special events (3 percent) or touring (2 percent). By comparison, 26 percent of travellers on Route 5 were going for leisure activities with 12 percent saying it was for recreation, 8 percent saying they were commuting to their seasonal home, 4 percent were going to attend a special event and 2 percent were going touring.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 14. Reasons for Trip on Each Route in 1995**

### **Boat or Yacht Data**

Because the Pender Islands are located so close to the United States border, Bedwell Harbour on South Pender Island is the site of a Canada Customs office which is only open during the yachting season: May 1 through September 30.

Although the office processes about 9,000 vessels per year,<sup>17</sup> it is not known how many people actually disembark to spend time on the Islands.

### **Floatplane Passenger Data**

Although the number of passengers arriving by plane is not as large as those who arrive by ferry, the existence of this service is significant for planning and managing tourism. Charter, floatplane service greatly reduces travel time to the Islands, and it increases flexibility for those who want to get to the Islands. It also increases the opportunity for people who work in Vancouver to take up residence on the islands, or buy a seasonal home there. In addition, the opportunity for Vancouver residents to take a 'weekend getaway' on the islands is greatly enhanced since they are not restricted to ferry schedules.

As noted previously in Chapter 2, there are at least two charter floatplane services provide regular service to the Pender Islands. Both operate out of Vancouver. According to Harbour Air they carry an average of 500 passengers to and from Bedwell Harbour every year. Their busiest season is from July through September.<sup>18</sup> Jim Embry, Director of Marketing for the company, said that although they do not record detailed information about their passengers, his impression is that most of those on their regular flights are "local business professionals"<sup>19</sup> who live on the Islands. The other float plane service to the Penders is provided by Hanna Air. No information was available from this company.

		1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter		TOTALS
1995	To Bedwell	22	87	150	63	From Vancouver	322
	From Bedwell	9	90	124	56	To Vancouver	279
1994	To Bedwell	23	80	121	46	From Vancouver	270
	From Bedwell	11	64	65	18	To Vancouver	158
1993	To Bedwell	5	90	136	43	From Vancouver	274
	From Bedwell	4	52	114	32	To Vancouver	202
TOTALS		74	463	710	258		1505

**Figure 15. Harbour Air Seaplane Passengers to the Pender Islands 1993-1995**

## CONCLUSION

The available data show that most visitors to the Pender Islands come from Vancouver and Victoria for short 'getaways.' Many of these visitors own second homes on the Islands. As the population of these two urban centres grows, the number of visitors to the Islands can also be expected to grow. This pattern has caused the observation that the islands are primarily "a recreation retreat for urban residents."<sup>20</sup>

The Island residents, many of who were once themselves from either Vancouver or Victoria, are concerned about the development pressure that this demand produces. The remainder of this paper is an examination of the ways in which they have tried to manage growth and preserve their rural way of life.

## CHAPTER ENDNOTES

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- <sup>11</sup> Canadian statistics from Statistics Canada. "Population and average annual growth rate, census metropolitan areas." Internet address: <http://www.statcan.ca>. October 22, 1996. Seattle statistics from 1989, 1993 Statistical Abstract of the United States. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 109<sup>th</sup> and 114<sup>th</sup> editions. P. 31 and 39. 1995 Seattle figures were estimated based on average annual growth rate.
- <sup>2</sup> Capital Regional District. Facsimile Transmission, September 25, 1996.
- <sup>3</sup> Capital Regional District. *Trends*. Vol 12 No 2. Victoria, BC, October 1995. 20.
- <sup>4</sup> British Columbia Ferry Corporation, Planning Services Department. Southern Gulf Islands Strategic Planning Process, Interim Report. July 1996. 1- 1 and 1-2.
- <sup>5</sup> British Columbia Ferry Corporation, Planning Services Department. Southern Gulf Islands Soundings, Newsletter on Planning Issues Summer 1996. 3.
- <sup>6</sup> Defined as those passengers whose permanent residence is on one of the Southern Gulf Islands.
- <sup>7</sup> British Columbia Ferry Corporation, Planning Services Department. Southern Gulf Islands Strategic Planning Process, Interim Report. 3-1 and 3-2.
- <sup>8</sup> Capital Regional District. Facsimile Transmission, May 6, 1997. This gave the 1996 Census of Canada population count. In order to approximate the 1995 population the difference between the population in 1996 and 1991 was divided by 4 and spread evenly between each year.
- <sup>9</sup> British Columbia Ferry Corporation, Planning Services Department. Southern Gulf Islands Strategic Planning Process, Interim Report. 3-2.
- <sup>10</sup> BC Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, "Tourism Highlights 1992," (Victoria, British Columbia, October 1993), 5 & 10.
- <sup>11</sup> Defined as all those who do not permanently reside anywhere in the Southern Gulf Islands.
- <sup>12</sup> Robert F. Goodell, Campbell Goodell Traynor. British Columbia Ferry Corporation Minor Route 5,8,9, & 20 Segmentation Study, Vol 1, Summary. (May 13, 1996), 9, 67.

<sup>13</sup> Robert F. Goodell, Campbell Goodell Traynor. 21,79.

<sup>14</sup> Robert F. Goodell, Campbell Goodell Traynor. 15, 73.

<sup>15</sup> Robert F. Goodell, Campbell Goodell Traynor. 16, 9.

<sup>16</sup> Robert F. Goodell, Campbell Goodell Traynor. 20, 78.

<sup>17</sup> David and Andrea Spalding, Georgina Montgomery, Lawrence Pitt. *Southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia*, (Vancouver: Altitude Publishing, 1995), 94.

<sup>18</sup> Jim Embrey, Manager of Marketing and Sales for Harbour Air. Facsimile Transmission, October 27, 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Jim Embrey, Manager of Marketing and Sales for Harbour Air. Personal Communication, October 25, 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Ann Popperwell. "Trust By-Laws, Forests Issues at Islands All-Candidates Meeting," *Island Tides* , (October 10, 1991 Vol 3 No 21), 9.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: AN EMERGING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

The previous chapters show that the Southern Gulf Islands, and the Pender Islands, are experiencing strong population growth pressures that are closely tied to tourism. Tourism on the Penders is dominated by nearby urban residents seeking a respite from city life. In the process, some of these visitors build seasonal homes, and eventually retire on the Islands.<sup>1</sup>

The Islands Trust has responded to this growth pressure with a growth management strategy that is summed up in the sustainable development principles and goals of Bylaw No. 17. They declare their intention to provide leadership in preserving and protecting the amenities, environment and resources of the islands through careful management and, if needed, limitation of growth and development. Further, they acknowledge the fundamental need to involve the public.

In spite of these high ideals, public participation on the Islands has not been smooth and does not even closely resemble the rational and reasoned process described in the LAC model of Stankey and his associates. For the people of the Gulf Islands, the establishment of the overall end goal of sustainable development that is articulated in Bylaw No. 17 is the culmination of a hard won, lengthy, ongoing public participation process. The process has been largely reactive involving a push and pull interaction between government and the grassroots.

The newspaper review carried out in this study reveals those efforts of the Islands Trust to involve the public in decision making have been sporadic, sometimes painful and have been hampered by the Trusts' limited powers and resources. Indeed, the Trust's commitment to public consultation would not likely have emerged without the determination of Island residents throughout the Trust area, including those on the Pender Islands. In fact, the very weakness of the Trust has

helped to push residents to take greater initiative, and has given them the power to do so.

## **THE PROCESS**

The public participation process on the Islands has emerged as a complex push and pull interaction between government and the grassroots. Although the Islands Trust talks about taking leadership in achieving sustainable development in Bylaw No. 17, it has a history of establishing policy in a reactionary way. They often act only when they are pushed to do so.

At other times, when the Trust has taken the initiative, the public has responded to change their course. This pattern has contributed to considerable dissension and conflict to the point where elected Trustees have been personally sued. In turn, this threat of lawsuit has likely served to make the Trustees more cautious and reluctant to act.

The response of the public has come about because the people of the Islands have certain expectations of the Trust that have been created by the lofty ideals expressed in the legislation and by their commitment to them. However, the Trust's lack of authority in many areas has made that body unable to carry out many of these expectations, at least not in the accepted ways. The 'Bedwell Harbour Crisis' of 1989 and 1990 and the Trust's attempt to establish a forestry policy illustrate this pattern very well.

The Bedwell Crisis was precipitated by the planned expansion of the Bedwell Harbour Resort and Marina. The new owners had engaged the Coast Hotels to turn the property into a year-round resort "...of the highest international standards."<sup>2</sup> Many residents on both islands responded by joining a Community Action Coalition in opposition to the development saying that it was incompatible with the

rural character of the islands, and would result in sharp increases to property values and prices.<sup>3</sup>

Because of this heavy public pressure, the property owners were refused a development permit even though their plans did not violate the existing land use bylaws. The owners filed a petition with the BC Supreme Court that forced the issuance of the permit. However, work had already begun by the South Pender Island Local Trust Committee to change the zoning by-law. On April 26, 1990 two new zoning bylaws were passed. They restricted the number of hotel sleeping units to five per acre of usable site area and limited the size of hotel cottages to 93 square meters. One Bedwell owner said the bylaws were “custom drafted to try to stop our development.”<sup>4</sup>

Again, the property owners went to court. They launched a civil writ for damages against the Islands Trust Council, the South Pender Local Trust Committee, the Trust Chairman, and former South Pender Trustee, Steve Wright, who was a major leader of the Community Action Coalition. The Coalition responded by organizing a boycott of the resort store and restaurant.

Meanwhile, on North Pender Island work began to revise the Official Community Plan and zoning bylaw so as to prevent ‘another Bedwell.’ This resulted in intensive scrutiny of commercial accommodation zoning. This scrutiny exposed the tension caused by conflicting needs and values within the community, showed how central tourism is to island life, and how closely connected it is to Island land use development.

The process dragged out until October 19 of 1991 when the third reading of the new North Pender Island commercial zoning bylaw was finally passed. During this time an Island Trustee election was also held. The election was fought between candidates who insisted that regulation was becoming too invasive of individual

freedoms, and those who wanted growth managed, "...on our terms...at a rate and style set by the residents of the Island." <sup>5</sup> The candidates who favoured managed growth won the election having gained 75 percent of the vote. There was no mention about how this growth would be managed, or how the rate and style would be determined except for through the usual reactionary zoning process.

The Bedwell Harbour crisis was obviously painful for Island residents. It pitted one resident against another as accusations about motives and intentions were made and yet another set of lawsuits was launched.<sup>6</sup> On the negative side, the hurt feelings continue to this day, and the memories of this time have made some Islanders more reluctant to be involved in the future. <sup>7</sup>

Much of the reason for the Trust's reactionary pattern of decision making lies in the fact that the Islands Trust Act has only been given regulatory authority over land use planning. Land use planning is a limited management tool and is not noted for innovative and forward thinking.

Island residents throughout the Trust area have criticized the Islands Trust for its lack of effectiveness, even though they support its mandate. In an extensive telephone survey and questionnaire carried out in 1987, Gulf Islands' residents indicated that the Trust needed more powers if it was to effectively carry out its mandate<sup>8</sup>, and that it suffered from a lack of financial resources.<sup>9</sup> However, this lack of authority has resulted in increased need for public support, as was seen earlier in 1982 when the Minister of Municipal Affairs declared that the Islands Trust should be dismantled. Gulf Islanders responded with a massive letter writing campaign and lobbying effort that was largely responsible for preserving the beleaguered agency.<sup>10</sup>

Because the Trust's primary authority is over land use, they are extremely limited in what they are able to regulate. For example, the Trust has been very concerned

about logging on the Islands. So much so that in early May of 1990 they placed a moratorium on all commercial harvesting of timber in the Islands Trust area.<sup>11</sup> The Trust had to rescind their moratorium because of extremely strong public opposition and by the fact that they had no power to enforce it. It was only then that they came back with an interim policy that would restrict logging on the Islands and require each Island to establish acceptable logging practices through a consensual public process.<sup>12</sup>

In spite of this decision to turn to the people, residents openly discussed that they could not let down their vigilance because any policy that was established out of the public participation process would only be legally binding in as far as it complied with the provincial Forest Act. The Forest Act takes precedence over any bylaws the Trust would pass as an outcome of the process.<sup>13</sup> Similar limits apply in their lack of jurisdiction over sewage, roads, agriculture, parks and beaches.

At times, resentment and frustration also erupt on the Islands because it is felt that the needs and desires of non-residents overly influence the Islands Trust leadership and the bureaucrats who carry out the decisions made by that leadership.<sup>14</sup> There is resentment that the offices of the Trust are in Victoria rather than being within the boundaries of the Trust area. This physically places civil servants outside of the Trust area, and in an urban environment that is quite removed from the area they are required to serve.

To complicate things further, the Islands Trust Act specifically requires the Islands Trust to include the needs and interests of non-residents in their decision making stating that:

*The object of the trust 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 the Province generally....*<sup>15</sup>

This frustration felt by island residents has led to periodic discussion about the potential for some form of municipal incorporation on the major islands of the Trust area. On November 16, 1991 the residents of Bowen Island put the issue to a vote. Municipal incorporation was defeated because residents feared that without the protection of the Trust they would be overwhelmed by development, and they thought their taxes would go up significantly.<sup>16</sup>

The residents of the Pender Islands have also considered the option of municipal government as recently as September of 1995.<sup>17</sup> In this discussion, they hoped to find a way to become a municipality while continuing to remain under the protection of the Trust. To date, no action has been taken in this regard.

These kinds of experiences have taught the people of the Islands that they have a voice, and that the future of the Islands rests largely on whether or not they are willing to become involved and stay involved. It has been a slow and sometimes painful learning process but it appears to be gaining strength with experience:

*If we realize that public process, immature though it is on the Island, is both here to stay and vital to our future, we will understand that a good deal of our current task is to 'grow it up' through lots of practice.... If we get fixated on quick results rather than good process we will continue to live with hurt feelings and disenfranchisement; an unacceptable alternative.*<sup>18</sup>

However, a new less reactionary and confrontational process needs to be put into place. It is vital that the people be given a reliable mechanism for voicing themselves and for obtaining the information they need.

The need for a more proactive and consultative approach was clearly articulated by Steve Wright, who was a leader of the grassroots protest over Bedwell Harbour. In an open letter to the Island Tides, Wright said that the controversy could have been averted if the planning process had included more public involvement, if the

people had been better informed, and a direction for planning had been previously established. He said:

*Land use planning on the Penders is increasingly looked upon with dread, apathy, or ridicule. I would prefer that the planning for this community's future be seen as an educational and unifying process, approached with enthusiasm and respect for differences, because when all is said and done, we will still have to live together.<sup>19</sup>*

Whatever process does finally emerge it will be unique to the people who have shaped it because they are unique and the situation and context in which they live is unique. Two factors stand the Island people in good stead. First, their population is small enough for individual voices to be heard. Second, the population is extremely well educated. According to Statistics Canada, 16 percent of Pender Islands' residents have a university degree and another 13 percent have some university training, without a degree.<sup>20</sup>

This is not to say that only university educated people can successfully be involved in public participation. However, more educated people tend to have more resources available to them. They tend to be more knowledgeable about how to make 'the system' work for them (because they have worked in it), they are often more articulate in the language of power (because of their training), and generally more confident because of it.

## CONCLUSION

In their struggle to achieve sustainable development, the people of the Islands Trust and the Pender Islands have experienced many difficulties. These difficulties have created barriers to success, and have been exacerbated by the political and regulatory environment of which they are a part. Islanders have actively participated in sustainable development through every means at their disposal: the courts, elections, organized boycotts and lobby efforts. However, a more consistent, focused, consensual and effective process must be found. Such a process is an essential part of sustainable tourism development.

## CHAPTER ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Lorna R. Barr, Islands Trust and Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Province of British Columbia. "Land of the Trust Islands: A Review of Subdivision, Housing and Ownership for the Major Islands," (April 1978), 15.

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Coast Hotels to Manage Bedwell Resort," *Island Tides*, (Feb 1, 1990 Vol 2 No 3), 1.

<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Community Action Coalition Opposes Bedwell Development," *Island Tides*, (Feb. 15, 1990 Vol 2 No 4), 6.

<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "South Pender Trust Committee Passes Two New Commercial Zoning By-laws," *Island Tides*, (May 10, 1990 Vol 2 No 10), 3.

<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Trust Candidates Face Aggressive Audience at Friday Night Meeting," *Island Tides*, (Nov. 8, 1990 Vol 2 No 23). 1,18.

<sup>6</sup> This set of lawsuits was launched by the owners of the Port Browning Harbour Resort on North Pender Island who were being asked to reduce her commercial holdings by half under the new proposed bylaw. When they protested, the Trust Committee decided to pass the bylaw without the area in which the resort was located and deal with its zoning later. \_\_\_\_\_ "Browning Bylaw Dropped," *Island Tides*, (January 30, 1992, Vol 4 No 3), 1,2.

<sup>7</sup> Personal Communication. Want to remain anonymous.

<sup>8</sup> Dave Barrett et al, "To Preserve and Protect: An Institutional Analysis of the British Columbia Islands Trust," (Master of Natural Resources Management Program, Advanced Natural Resources Management Seminar, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC. September 1987), 60.

<sup>9</sup> Dave Barrett et al, 57.

<sup>10</sup> Colin Crance, "Government Coordinating Agencies in Canadian Coastal Planning and Management: The Islands Trust and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust," Masters Degree Thesis, (Department of Geography, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1995), 64.

<sup>11</sup> Editorial. "Island Trust Resolution Called 'An Oversimplification,'" *Island Tides*, (May 24, 1990, Vol 2 No 11), 4.

<sup>12</sup> Editorial, "Not as Simple as it Looks," *Island Tides*, (May 24, 1990, Vol 2 No 11), 4.

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<sup>13</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Forest Act Amendments Fall Short," *Island Tides*, (August 16, 1990 Vol 2 No 17), 10.

<sup>14</sup> Roger Langrick, "Readers' Letters," *Island Tides*. (May 24, 1990, Vol 2 No 5), 4.

<sup>15</sup> British Columbia. *Islands Trust Act*, (Consolidated November 15, 1990, The Revised Statutes of British Columbia Vol 3, Queen's Printer for British Columbia, Victoria,) 3.

<sup>16</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Municipality Proposal Defeated." *Island Tides*, (December 5, 1991 Vol. 3 No 25), 1, 8.

<sup>17</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Incorporation studies too narrow," *Island Tides*, September 21, 1995, Vol 7 No 19), 2,6.

<sup>18</sup> Editorial. "Democracy: Alive & Well," *Island Tides*, (September 21, 1995, Vol 7 No 19), 4.

<sup>19</sup> Steve Wright, "Readers' Letters," *Island Tides*, (December 19, 1991. Vol 3 No 26), 4.

<sup>20</sup> Capital Regional District. "1991 Census Profile for Gulf Islands," Victoria, BC, compiled from Statistics Canada 1991 census data, np.

## **CHAPTER SIX: A SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

As the people and government of the Pender Islands work toward establishing a more effective public participation process, they can begin to take a more proactive and constructive approach toward developing a tourism management strategy that is suited to preserving and maintaining their chosen way of life. One way of approaching this task has been described by Great Britain's Tourism and the Environment Task Force.<sup>1</sup> This model was chosen because although it provides a specific structure, it is flexible enough that almost any region or community within a democratic political system will find it useful.

Drawing on examples from all over the world, the Task Force has distilled an overall strategy for applying the principles of sustainable development and the idea of carrying capacity. It emphasizes that all management approaches do at least one of three things: 1) Control the volume of visitors; 2) modify the behaviour of visitors; 3) adapt the resource in some way.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, the Task Force has outlined a number of areas that ought to receive attention in a management strategy.<sup>3</sup> These have been applied to the situation on the Pender Islands in what follows:

### **ESTABLISH CLEAR OBJECTIVES**

The Task Force is in agreement with the LAC model in that it requires having a development goal, or objective, that is established by the community. This is one reason why a good public participation process is necessary. A goal created by the community is more likely to be accepted and achieved.

The review of local newspaper accounts and Islands Trust documents shows that in their own way Island residents have established two primary development objectives that have been articulated in planning policy and regulation, and which

are continually reaffirmed. The first is, to preserve and protect the rural character of the islands. The second is to preserve and protect the natural environment of the Islands.

The Islands Trust public hearing sessions in July of 1992 revealed that the main reason residents gave for wanting a rural lifestyle is that it is devoid of those aspects of urban, or city living, that they do not like (see Figure 16). Residents said they prize the quietness of island living. This includes the small population, and being away from commercial pressures, crime, busy highways, sidewalks and streetlights. They also value the fact that they can afford to live here, and that it is relatively unpolluted.

Closely connected to the idea of rural lifestyle is the high value that is placed on personal freedom and autonomy. Residents value being able to own their own property and to be able to maintain their privacy, or personal space. They also said that they like living in a place where they can make a difference. Many feel that the Island lifestyle provides an environment that is conducive to creativity, which they also prize.

At the same time as they cherish rural living and personal privacy, residents also value having ready access to basic amenities. Those that were specifically mentioned included good medical care, recreation and schooling for their children. Moreover, although they like being away from the city, they like having access to it when they need its services, or want its amenities.

They also place a high priority on having a cost of living that enables people of all ages and backgrounds to live on the islands. They appreciate the feeling of safety they have living on the islands, and the fact that they can meet neighbours and have a close sense of community. There was also mention of the fact that owning

property on the Islands contributed to economic security since it was a solid investment.

The natural environment is also very important to Island residents. They like the mild climate, and being able to step outside their back doors to enjoy the birds, plants and animals.

<b>To preserve and protect the rural character of the islands.</b>		
<b>Objectives:</b>		
<b>To preserve and protect the natural environment of the islands.</b>		
<b>V A L U E S</b>	Want ready access to urban amenities- restaurants, shopping, recreation etc.	Want families to be able to live on the islands.
	Want to be able to use and enjoy the natural environment.	Want to keep the natural environment intact.
	Want financial security through property investment.	Want affordable property values.
	Want large lots with privacy and plenty of personal space.	Want small population and close neighbourhood feeling.
	Want autonomy and freedom from the restrictions and pressures of city life.	Want strong restriction and regulation of development.

**Figure 16. Development Objectives and Values of Island Residents<sup>4</sup>**

The issues that arise do so when these values conflict with one another, or when one is placed in higher priority than another is. The central issue repeatedly voiced by Islanders is development, and tourism is central to this issue. Here the value Islanders place on personal freedom, their rural lifestyle and the protection of the natural environment is continually being placed in conflict with their need and

desire to have economic security. This results in demands for strong controls on development. This only serves to push land prices up and make it harder for young families to live on the island. This in turn drives land speculation. It also has sparked some very bitter disputes in the community.

*We have to preserve and protect the Islands not only for Islanders but also for all of B.C. so other people can enjoy it. I have difficulty justifying the attitude, 'I'm here now, nobody else can come.' We must have accommodation for visitors. We cannot stop progress.<sup>5</sup>*

*The tourists come anyway [in spite of zoning] – they need some accommodation...Everytime a new little place opens, it plants the seeds of a bigger place.<sup>6</sup>*

*Recent development does not seem like a planned community in moderation. I see overdoses of greed and land abuse and exploitation in dizzyingly gross proportion.... Are these islands going to become another Mediterranean, Hawaii or Acapulco? Will there be room for our children's children in a rural setting – or will these islands and the resources here be one long waterfront string of resorts and condos....<sup>7</sup>*

The Islander's desire to have ready access to the many urban amenities also erodes their ability to obtain and retain the economic security and equity they say is very important to them. Easy access to urban amenities produces economic leakage, which means local businesses have to struggle to survive and young families find it difficult to obtain employment and stay on-island. This only increases their need for tourism dollars.

Although there is widespread agreement among Islanders to preserve and protect the rural character of the islands, there is not agreement about what rural character means. This difference has its roots in the history of the Islands. When the Europeans arrived on the islands, most residents made their living off the land (farming or forestry), as they did in much of Canada. The rural lifestyle meant a life of hard physical labour, and doing without many of the amenities of urban life. For many it also meant not having as much financial security. The physical expression

of this lifestyle was seen in small village-like<sup>8</sup> clusters of homes providing year-round basic services to scattered farms joined by winding trails.

Descendents of these early settlers still make their home on the Islands to this day. Others who came in search of the kind of lifestyle associated with this earlier time have joined them along the way. Many of these were hippies and social dropouts of the 1960s who, "sought to use the land as buffer between themselves and more organized society."<sup>9</sup> To many of these people, the changes that have occurred on the Islands in recent years are destroying a rural way of life and the rural character that it produced. They look back to a time when "City folks hadn't really taken over with city ways...."<sup>10</sup>

The 1980s and 1990s have brought a new idea of rural life and rural character. This is the view of the many urban residents coming to the Islands as "freedom seekers...looking for a place to stretch."<sup>11</sup> This group has been accused of defining rural character as large lots with a driveway every fifty yards instead of every five.<sup>12</sup>

Another area that lacks clarity is the perception and definition of tourism on the Islands. One of the most difficult aspects about tourism on the Pender Islands is that the line between who is a tourist, and who is not, is very blurred. Many permanent Island residents are acutely aware that they too were once visitors. Many started as regular visitors from the Mainland who then purchased property. Gradually they became 'weekenders', then part timers, and finally permanent residents. At what point in this continuum one ceases to be a visitor can be arbitrarily established using some form of residency criteria, but the boundaries are not so easy to set in practice.

Further, the process of evolution (from visitor to resident generates internal value conflicts for some. It is not only a case of one resident having a different value or

priority from another. It is a case of individuals finding themselves torn between wanting to protect the Islands from over-development, and having great sympathy for those who want to settle there because they remember how badly they wanted the same thing. This internal conflict contributes to inconsistency between what is said and what is practiced.<sup>13</sup>

### **DETERMINE A LOCAL CARRYING CAPACITY USING A SYSTEMS APPROACH**

It is this shift in social value and social definition of rural character that has changed the pressures on the land over time because of the settlement pattern it produces, and the decisions that are made to maintain and protect it. This pattern contributes significantly to the negative impacts associated with tourism that have been identified by Islanders. A systemic approach helps to clarify the interactive nature of tourism and the ways in which visitor patterns impact the social economic and environment of the community. The following are a few illustrations. There are probably others.

**Water, sewage and waste disposal** - In order to preserve the rural character of the Islands, the South Pender Island Official Community states that community funded water and sewerage systems will not be permitted. This is because there is a fear that installation of a municipal system would increase pressure for development density.<sup>14</sup> This forces each home to have its own sewage disposal system using septic fields, or septic tank systems,<sup>15</sup> and obtain its own water supply from water wells and cisterns. The by-law enforces this by requiring proof of an adequate water supply prior to a residence being built, and adherence to approved sewage disposal methods.

This type of water and sewage system is not well suited to the land or the climate. Fire is an ever-present concern over the summer months when visitor levels are high and precipitation is at its lowest. In addition, the nature of the bedrock on the Islands means that the land is largely impermeable to water. The outcome is that

most of the scarce precipitation on the Islands evapotranspires or runs off. It also means that water wells are highly subject to contamination.<sup>16</sup>

Solid waste on the islands is disposed of off-island although a recycling system has been set-up. Unfortunately, because of the inconvenience this causes, sometimes garbage is found hidden in the trees, and garbage bags are seen floating out in the water.

**Roads and Cars** – The scattered settlement pattern also means that Island residents must have a vehicle in order to access most everyday necessities such as groceries, the mail, and the ferry. As noted earlier, the roads are narrow and winding. These characteristics give them their rural charm and character, which is very important to residents. So much so that the Islands Trust entered into an agreement with the Department of Transportation to ensure that they would stay that way, even though most do not meet provincial road standards.

As noted previously, these roads are also very attractive to cyclists. Consequently, during the spring and summer months, particularly on weekends, bike and car travel can be hazardous<sup>17</sup> and is a source of concern to many residents.

**Crime** – Island residents perceive that crime and vandalism on the Islands is on the increase, which they link with "...the number of youthful summer visitors.<sup>18</sup> This perception is supported by local RCMP detachment reports showing a 30 percent increase in property crimes between 1995 and 1996.<sup>19</sup> The highest number of these crimes was for break and enter offences. A longer-term study is needed to confirm this as an actual trend.

Crime is a concern for Island residents because they highly prize the safety and security they find on the Islands and it is not uncommon for them to go out and

leave their doors unlocked. They regret the growing need to lock their houses and to experience mistrust and insecurity about the safety of their property.<sup>20</sup> Although this impact is not as closely linked to the settlement pattern, the settlement pattern does make crime and vandalism harder to prevent because neighbours cannot keep an eye on each other due to the size of the properties, and the forest cover.

The people of nearby Salt Spring Island have confronted the issue of their scattered settlement pattern and concluded that the low density pattern of development formerly encouraged on the Islands is not only too costly to service, it does not save open space. For this reason, their new community plan proposes to encourage clustering of settlement interspersed with large open spaces.<sup>21</sup> It may not be the approach Pender Island residents would choose but it is one that can be considered.

Once a thorough understanding of the many ways tourism interacts with and impacts the community is achieved, specific areas can be identified for attention, control and perhaps modification.

### **INVOLVE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

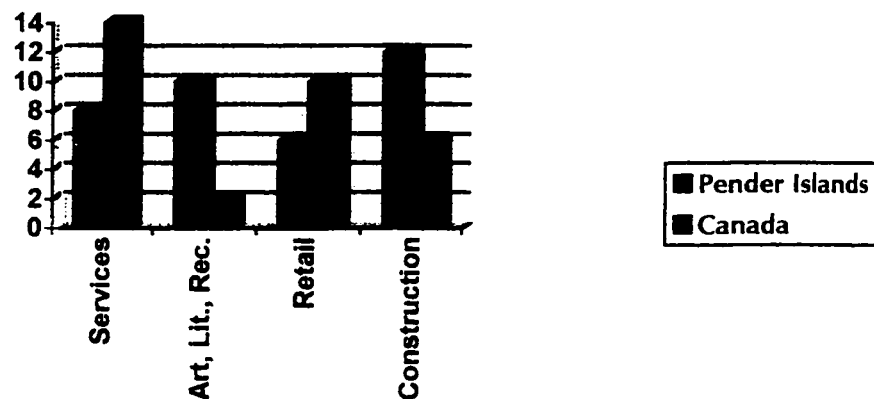
The involvement of the community flows out of a full understanding of the systemic nature of tourism. In turn, the community's involvement helps increase that understanding. Involvement of the community goes beyond establishing a good public participation process. It includes focusing that process on the needs of the community and the ways that its interaction with tourism activity can be used to meet those needs. One area needing attention on the Pender Islands is that local residents do not appear to be receiving enough economic benefits from tourism.

At this point it is not clear why this would be. It is possible that this is a result of a deliberate decision by individual Islanders not to become too dependent on

tourism. It is also possible that there has been so much focus on limiting development that no thought has been given to how more money could be generated from it.

Since the complete 1996 census data were still not available at the time of this writing, the 1991 census information from Statistics Canada were used to determine the importance of tourism in the local economy. This data shows that in 1991 there were 620 people on the Pender Islands in the labour force. This represented 40 percent of the entire population.

Of this group, 8 percent were employed in the accommodation and food service industries, and 10 percent were listed as being employed in art, literacy and recreational occupations. Retail trade employed 6 percent of the labour force.



**Figure 17. An Employment Comparison<sup>22</sup>**

This means that 24 percent of the labour force on the Islands were employed in occupations that are directly impacted by tourism. In comparison to the national average the employment levels in the retail and service sectors are very low. It would suggest that local residents are not benefiting as much as they could from tourism. This is probably due to the fact that many visitors rent local housing and

bring in their own provisions. In addition, there are not many places to spend money on the Islands.

An additional 12 percent of the Pender Islands labour force in 1991 were employed in construction trades. Tourism on the Penders, as well as throughout British Columbia plays a vitally important role in supporting the construction sector.”<sup>23</sup> The local telephone book lists 26 construction trade companies on the Islands, which is a reflection of how dependent the local economy is on development. This is probably the biggest economic benefit the community gets and it is exactly the kind they say they do not want.

According to the Capital Regional District’s area profile for Pender Islands, the local economy is supported heavily by the pension income of retirees who made up about one-third of the population in 1991. Those who are not retired generally have more than one source of income. Many operate their own small home-based businesses alongside of other employment. Some commute to the mainland or to Vancouver Island on a semi-regular basis for work. Opportunities for wage employment are seasonal (because of tourism) and wages are generally low.<sup>24</sup>

One couple that was interviewed provides a good example of this pattern. This couple make their living by writing books, doing consulting work and operating a small Bed and Breakfast. Sometimes they collaborate on their work, and sometimes they work alone. Sometimes they are able to work at home, and sometimes they have to travel to do their research and meet with clients.<sup>25</sup>

According to several local residents, more and more young families are finding a home on the Pender Islands. They said that this is due to the increased opportunities for long distance employment through computer technology. This observation could not be confirmed since the 1996 census data was not available

at the time of this writing. The information provided by Harbour Air does suggest that float plane service is supported heavily by professionals who commute on a semi-regular basis to their source of income while working primarily at home.

<sup>26</sup> If this demographic shift is real it will certainly impact the community because of demands for new and different kinds of services, and for job opportunities for family members. Some are likely to turn to tourism for added revenue.

## **MARKETING AND INFORMATION**

Marketing and information begins with an understanding of who visitors are, why they come, and what they do when they arrive. Some of that discovery has been done in this study but more specific information needs to be collected before a thorough understanding is achieved.

Once this information is collected, it is combined with the knowledge of the previous process and specific strategies can be devised to better match visitor needs with community goals and needs. There are a number of areas where this could be done. First, because most visitors tend to arrive on weekends over the spring and summer, strategies could be devised that would target marketing to the type of visitor that might like to come in the middle of the week, or during the off-season. At the same time, other strategies could be found that might discourage weekend visitation. Where possible, these strategies ought to support and strengthen local businesses, without interfering with the interests of other community members.

One example of this type of need is the relatively new business retreat facilities at Clam Bay Farm. This small but growing facility caters to business people, primarily from Vancouver. This target market is less influenced by season and more likely to arrive during the business week. The retreat facility's biggest problem has been marketing because they find it difficult to reach their market and differentiate itself from a hotel or resort.<sup>27</sup> Community support for this kind of endeavour might suit everyone's interests.

Other ideas suggested by the Task Force are for communities to educate visitors about the community and help them to understand why certain areas have been chosen for restricted access, or certain activities are not appreciated. This can be done through signage, brochures, interpretive programs, or reward systems. This training of visitors must be consistent and ongoing and evaluated regularly. Of course, this assumes that the community has gone through an open process of identifying these kinds of areas and specifying the kinds of activities that are acceptable, or are not acceptable.

Another interesting idea is one that has been used by the provincial Parks Department. During 1990 they were conducting interpretive programs on the ferry to provide information about wildlife and the history of the Islands.<sup>28</sup> This strategy might also be useful to consider.

The Task Force suggests that wherever possible visitors ought to be required to pay for what they receive.<sup>29</sup> For example, a small charge to cover the cost of brochures is not inappropriate, nor are fees, or collections, out of line for an interesting talk while waiting out a tedious ferry trip.

## **TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT**

In discussing transport management, the Task Force generally refers to traffic flows and parking problems. They suggest the use of park and ride schemes, public transport, road closures, rerouting and pedestrian priority schemes.<sup>30</sup> Island residents are using a somewhat different strategy.

As noted in the Introduction, this study involved a review of management tools used by the residents of the Pender Islands. Without question the primary management tool has been land use planning and regulation. This has been

effective in some areas but requires support and enhancement from a more focused and integrated management strategy.

However, the Islands are using another management strategy on a more informal level. This strategy is appropriate technology. In the course of conversations with Island residents it became evident that one of the reasons many in the community wanted to keep the roads winding and narrow was as a deterrent to recreation vehicles (RVs). It was also noted that no sewage disposal services are available for these vehicles on the island and are not likely to become available.

Upon closer scrutiny it became apparent that this refusal to provide infrastructure for undesired types of tourism technologies, and accompanying tourist activities, is used in more than one instance by Island residents as a management tool. However, it does not always seem to be clearly articulated or well thought out and has varying degrees of success.

For example, as noted earlier many residents find the number of cyclists on the Islands to be a problem. It is openly recognized that the lack of facilities for these cyclists on South Pender Island is contributing to fire hazards, trespassing on private land and "the creation of unsightly, unhealthy conditions..."<sup>31</sup> caused by a lack of toilet and garbage facilities.

On North Pender Island the Official Community Plan expresses support for the development of pedestrian walkways and cycling paths.<sup>32</sup> However, from discussion with local residents there is some obvious reluctance to provide these amenities because of a fear that they will only encourage more cyclists to arrive.

Finally, there are the ferries. As noted in Chapter Four, the majority of visitors arrive on the Islands on the ferries. Local residents also rely on these same

transport vehicles to obtain needed supplies, and to travel to and from the nearby urban centers. Throughout the review of newspaper articles it became apparent that the ferry service is an ongoing issue on the Islands. There are many stories about residents being left behind because the ferry was too full, and about late ferry schedules on Friday nights that deter visitors from bookings at local Bed and Breakfasts.<sup>33</sup>

Residents were often angry and frustrated and did not feel that they had any influence or control over something that had such a tremendous impact on their lives. This did not prevent them from continually expressing their discontent over the years. Now, six Advisory Committees have been established in the Southern Gulf Islands to act as a communication link between BC Ferries and local residents. In addition, as part of their strategic planning process the Corporation has conducted community surveys and analyzed the community plans of the Islands.

One outcome of this process is the information presented in Chapter Four. Another is consideration of providing more service to the Islands on passenger-only ferries.

This consideration of reverting to an earlier technology as being more appropriate for the needs of Island residents and the Ferry Corporation is interesting and significant. The change is intended to save the Corporation money, and is expected to reduce car use (traffic) on the islands, as well as be more environmentally friendly.<sup>34</sup> The negative consequences that may be anticipated because of this change are still being weighed before the idea goes ahead. For one thing, it is not certain of the effect this would have on the number of people that will travel to the Islands.

It was this example that led to the exploration of appropriate technology in Chapter Two. It is hoped that that exploration may encourage and stimulate Island

residents to increase their use of this innovative management tool. Perhaps it will lead to the 'invention' of new and better technologies that are designed to serve the needs and goals of the people of the Pender Islands.

During the exploration that this example stimulated, one such example was found. Appropriately enough, this example comes from the work of the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales. The purpose of this Centre is to explore new methods of achieving sustainable development using "simple, renewable technologies..." and then teaching them to others. In the process, the Centre itself became a tourist attraction containing a research laboratory, a data bank, a wildlife refuge, a wholefood restaurant and a bookshop.

Between 1980 and 1987 the Centre was attracting between 50-55,000 visitors per year (about the same number as the Pender Islands). These numbers have steadily grown. The Centre produces its own electricity from wind power and has designed a "water-balanced cliff railway" to carry visitors up the steep hill to where the Centre is located.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of this innovative approach the Centre is not a perfect example of sustainable development either. Because of their unanticipated popularity they did not plan for the impact that would be caused by the number of people arriving to the site in their cars. It is not clear either, if they were involved in public participation process. If not, it may explain the reason for the oversight. The situation is being worked on through a plan to provide public transportation to the site.

## **CONCLUSION**

The people of the Pender Islands have a lot to teach others about their pathway to sustainable development. Although there are many areas that need to be addressed, they have achieved much. Their experience drives home the lesson that

the pathway to sustainable development is shaped by conditions unique to any given community or region. Although experiences and ideas can be shared, ultimate success lies in the ability of the community or region being able to adapt those ideas and solutions to meet their specific needs, and having the will to do it. This adaptation and acceptance comes in different ways depending on the values, skills and tools available to the people. The process is as much a part of sustainable development as is the end goal.

## CHAPTER ENDNOTES

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- <sup>2</sup> Tourism and the Environment Task Force. Pg 24
- <sup>3</sup> Tourism and the Environment Task Force pg 24 – 45
- <sup>4</sup> Islands Trust. "Summary Report on the Islands Trust Public Forums: These Islands of Ours... Framing Our Common Future, " Victoria, BC., September 1992.
- <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "North Pender Islands Trust By-election Saturday April 21," *Island Tides*, (April 12, 1990, Vol 2 No 8), 1.
- <sup>6</sup> Lou Henshaw. Readers' Letters, "Downzoning: The Other Side of the Story," (July 5, 1990, Vol 2 No 14), 4.
- <sup>7</sup> M. Marsden. Readers Letters, "Bedwell Funding," *Island Tides* , (August 2, 1990, Vol 2 No 16), 5.
- <sup>8</sup> The settlement clusters on the Pender Islands are so small that they really could not even be described as villages. Today, the one at Hope Bay has only about 10 buildings.
- <sup>9</sup> Roger Langrick. "Islands and Ideas: Villages," *Island Tides* , (August 17, 1990, Vol 2 No 16), 7.
- <sup>10</sup> Joy Mac Aughtrie, "Ebb and Flow," *Island Tides*, ( Jan. 4, 1990, Vol 2 No 1), 3.
- <sup>11</sup> Roger Langrick, 7.
- <sup>12</sup> Roger Langrick, 7.
- <sup>13</sup> Dave Barrett, et al, "To Preserve and Protect: An Institutional Analysis of the British Columbia Islands Trust," (Master of Natural Resources Management Program, Advanced Natural Resources Management Seminar, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC. September, 1987), 61.
- <sup>14</sup> Islands Trust. South Pender Island Official Community Plan By-Law # 28, 1989, 15.

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- <sup>15</sup> The one exception is on North Pender Island where part of the Magic Lake development has a municipal sewage system.
- <sup>16</sup> Lloyd Ostrinsky. "An Area Management Plan and Preliminary Design for the Medicine Beach Property North Pender Island, British Columbia." Master's Degree Project. (University of Calgary, Faculty of Environmental Design. Calgary, Alberta. September 1996), 48.
- <sup>17</sup> T.K. Ovanin. "Island Cycling Safety," *The Islands* , ( August 1983, Vol 2 No 7), np.
- <sup>18</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Boats, van stolen, recovered; help sought on theft of cash," *Island Tides*, (August 11, 1994, Vol 6 No 16), 1.
- <sup>19</sup> R.C.M. Police Operational Statistics Reporting System of Detailed Crime. Report OSRA002. Pender Island Detachment April 30, 1997.
- <sup>20</sup> Morny White. Personal Communication.
- <sup>21</sup> Islands Trust. Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan, Background and Summary of Draft 2, October 9, 1996. 5, 6.
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- <sup>23</sup> The Council of Tourism Associations. "Sustainable Tourism The Road Less Travelled," A Briefing Paper prepared for The B.C. Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, November, 1991. 3.
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- <sup>25</sup> David and Andrea Spalding. Personal Communication, 1996.
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- <sup>27</sup> Dorothy Murdock, Manager of Clam Bay Farm. Personal Communication, 1996.
- <sup>28</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ "Ship's Naturalist Program on Gulf Islands Ferries," *Island Tides*, (July 5, 1990, Vol 2 No 14), 2.
- <sup>29</sup> Tourism and the Environment Task Force, 41.

<sup>30</sup> Tourism and the Environment Task Force, 28, 29.

<sup>31</sup> Islands Trust, South Pender Island Official Community Plan. Bylaw No. 28, 1989. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Islands Trust, North Pender Island Official Community Plan. Bylaw No. 83, 1993. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Linda Wein. Chairperson of the Pender Island Ferry Committee. Personal Communication, 1996.

<sup>34</sup> British Columbia Ferry Corporation, Planning Services Department, "Southern Gulf Islands Soundings," Newsletter, Summer 1996, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe. "Loving Them to Death? Sustainable tourism in Europe's Nature and National Parks," Date and place of publication unknown. Roger Kelly, Director, Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, GB – Powys, SY20 9AZ, Wales.

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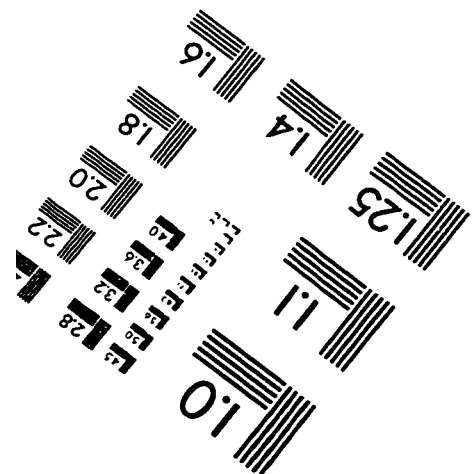
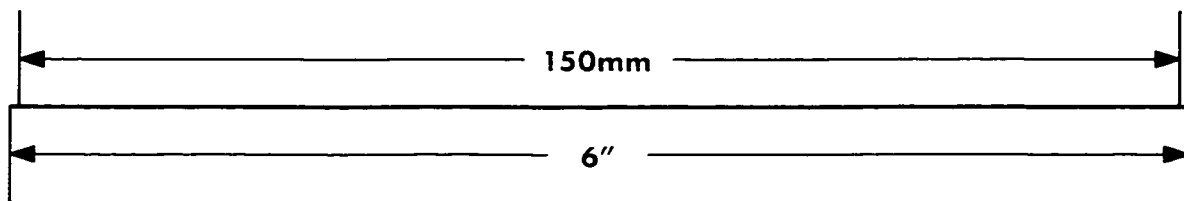
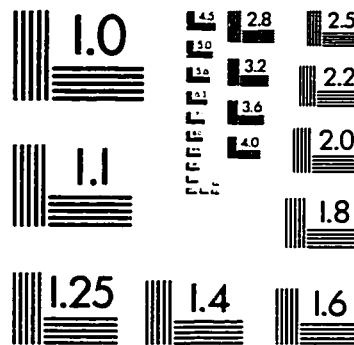
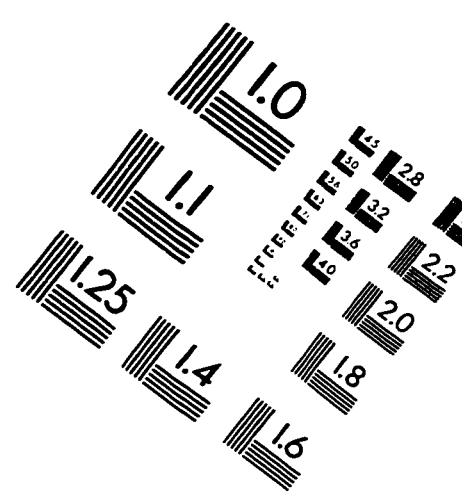
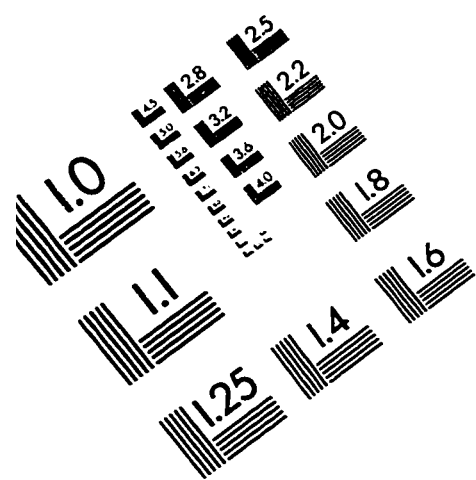
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