

Notes of Sustainable Gabriola meeting

Feb 25, 2024, 3 pm at the Gabriola Commons- Large Room upstairs

Present: Dyan D-F, Suzi H, Greg B, Katharine P, Deb F, Tom C Charlotte C, Deborah B, Steve E, Ivan B, Nancy H-P, John P, Joyce L, Kes A, Bob M. Fay W, Joan J.

Facilitator: Fay

Notes: Deborah

1. Introductions/Acknowledgment

Reconciliation Moment – Charlotte – Breaking Bannock event

2. Citizens' Transportation Advisory Commission – Steve

- After some discussion there was general agreement and appreciation for the formation of this new non-profit society.

The Sustainable Gabriola Climate-12 Transportation working group is proposing the formation of a Gabriola Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (GCTAC) to examine and comment on matters related to transportation on Gabriola, gather feedback from Gabriolans on transportation issues, make proposals for transportation-related changes, and respond to external initiatives to change transportation infrastructure and regulations on the island. A transportation advisory committee would help to ensure that future changes to transportation infrastructure on Gabriola are not done to us, but by us.

The GCTAC would be an independent organization consisting of volunteers and appointees from other organizations that have a stake in Gabriola transportation matters. It would be a registered non-profit society and would hold meetings at least quarterly; more frequently when necessary.

GCTAC would not have formal standing with any governmental organization. As an independent body, GCTAC would be able to examine and comment on any transportation issues that Gabriolans consider important. It would operate at minimal cost, and at no cost to taxpayers. It is hoped that over time the RDN, Islands Trust, BC Ferries, and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will recognize the legitimacy of GCTAC and will seek feedback and advice on any transportation-related changes that are proposed for Gabriola.

We are asking for your feedback (as organizations or as individuals) on the concept of creating a citizens transportation advisory committee for Gabriola. We are also seeking your advice on the structure and processes of the proposed committee, and we wish to know if your organization would consider having a designated seat at the table.

3. Climate 12 – Greg

- 2050 Vision exercise for the LTC OCP Review Project was held Tues Feb 20 at Ground Up Café.
- Very well attended (40 participants including both Trustees Elliott and Yates and a fine introduction to the evening delivered by former Trustee Scott Colbourne)

- The Climate-12 Team will complete the report for distribution to SG and for submission to the Local Trust Committee for inclusion in their OCP Review deliberations.
- There will be a Community Information Meeting at the end of March to review the 2050 submissions by various groups.

Fay has been invited to a Zoom meeting hosted by Whidby Island regarding Gabriola's 12-12 events.

4. Global Climate News – Deb(see attachment at end of minutes)

- General Theme: Hidden Environmental Costs of
- Next Month theme: Five Tipping Points
- ACTION: communication group to explore ways to distribute climate information to the island (Dyan, Greg, Steve, and Deb)

5. Yellow Heat – Bob

- Islands Future Project funded by RDN.
 - Project: Heating greenhouses; Making soap using bio-diesel
- After some setbacks last month, all is running well now.

6. Sue Big Oil – Fay

- several local governments have signed on: Qualicum, Creston, Saanich (almost),
- A letter to the Islands Trust Council (meeting in March in Nanaimo) was distributed and signed by present attendees to support Dr Peter Pare's request to Trust Council regarding "Big Oil" – **see attached letter**

7. Crab Traps – Steve

- This is a 10 year project; started 2 years ago.
- Recent report issued – 2023 was a good year as indicated from the data collected
- Invasive European Green Crabs – sighted in Sooke – another aspect to the project that might need to be monitored.
- Looking for more help to monitor the traps. – contact Steve.

8. General Communication – Greg

- Submit Letters to the Editor - to share information that is circulating in SG.
 - Greg referred to feature in the RDN Curbside App which can provide information about how to dispose of a particular item if unsure whether to dispose, recycle, etc.
- Is there something like this that SG might be able to implement?

9. Gabriola Island Land Stewardship Society – John

- John explained the organizational structure of the Board of Directors (5 Independent Directors and 6 organizational reps.)
- Nothing new to report – they continue to look at properties

10. Non-profit Societies and Climate Change - Dyan

- Dyan shared information regarding the recent work that the Gabriola Health Care Foundation undertook to include climate change statements/goals in their strategic planning.

- How can we encourage all the groups on Gabriola to include a Climate Change statement in their strategic planning?

- Greg reported that GAC is holding a meeting soon at which he will be raising the topic of including Climate Change in GAC planning/documents

Action: to revive the Gabriola Climate Charter – Deb and Fay will look for the Charter \ document that was drafted a few years ago.

Action: Add Climate Charter to next SG meeting.

11. Announcement:

Dr Alison Smith will be speaking on Homelessness at the Rollo Center, Sat Mar 2 at 2pm.
Sponsored by the Gabriola Commons.

Next Meeting:

Sunday, March 24 at 3pm

Facilitator: Deb

Note Taker: Nancy

Reconciliation Moment: Greg

Agenda Topics:

WildFire Hazards on the island

Gabriola Climate Charter

https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-the-hidden-environmental-cost-of-your-overflowing-e-mail-inbox/?utm_source=Shared+Article+Sent+to+User&utm_medium=E-mail:+Newsletters+/-E-Blasts+/-etc.&utm_campaign=Shared+Web+Article+Links

Hidden Environmental Costs/Reducing Carbon Footprint

1. Overflowing e-mail inbox

A typical user receives about 75 e-mails daily, averaging 1.38 grams of CO₂ equivalent each and **producing a yearly carbon footprint of 38 kilograms, the equivalent of driving 200 kilometres in a small gasoline-powered car. 4.2 billion e-mail users sent and received 333 billion e-mails a day, a number that's expected to hit 400 billion by 2026**

Meanwhile, the data centres and servers like Google and Microsoft that transmit and store each e-mail consume significant amounts of energy. **Global data centres consumed roughly 340 terawatt hours in 2022, according to the International Energy Agency. That's enough to power New York City for six years.**

Meanwhile, these good habits are the foundation for e-mail users seeking to take immediate action about the carbon footprint:

- delete old e-mails.
- Use the right communication app for the context: Instant messaging for things that won't need saving, such as quick questions at work, or "I'm running late" messages.
- Use a self-deleting function, such as the 'disappearing messages' option in WhatsApp.
- Archive your stored e-mails. It compresses and reduces their size in the cloud so they need less power to live on.
- Avoid reply-all. Only send e-mail to people who need to see it – fewer people means fewer devices, less e-mail network traffic, less electricity used and fewer emissions.

<https://theconversation.com/the-internet-consumes-extraordinary-amounts-of-energy-heres-how-we-can-make-it-more-sustainable-160639>

2. The Internet

Around 4.6 billion people use the internet [every day](#). [Research](#) estimates that by 2025, the IT industry could use 20% of all electricity produced and emit up to 5.5% of the world's carbon emissions. That's more than most countries' total emissions bar China, India and the US.

A growing proportion of IT energy consumption comes from data centres. These are buildings used to store data and computer hardware, which almost always plug directly into the local [electricity grid](#). In most countries, that means they mostly use non-renewable sources of electricity.

A number of these data centres have been trying to reduce their environmental impact and, in the process, to secure lower energy bills. Google have announced their goal to achieve 24/7 renewable energy-powered [data centres](#) by 2030, and their first such data centre became [operational](#) last year near Las Vegas. To run such centres solely off renewable energy, locating them in regions with abundant wind, solar, geothermal or hydroelectric power available is vital.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-024-00478-x>

3. Generative AI

The artificial intelligence (AI) industry is heading for an energy crisis.

ChatGPT, the chatbot created by OpenAI in San Francisco, California, is already consuming the energy of 33,000 homes. It's estimated that a search driven by generative AI uses four to five times the energy of a conventional web search. **Within years, large AI systems are likely to need as much energy as entire nations.**

Generative AI systems need enormous amounts of fresh water to cool their processors and generate electricity. In West Des Moines, Iowa, a giant data-centre cluster serves OpenAI's most advanced model, GPT-4. A lawsuit by local residents revealed that in July 2022, the month before OpenAI finished training the model, the cluster used about 6% of the district's water.

One preprint¹ suggests that, globally, the demand for water for AI could be half that of the United Kingdom by 2027.

The full planetary costs of generative AI are closely guarded corporate secrets.

legislators are taking notice. On 1 February, US Democrats led by Senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts introduced the [Artificial Intelligence Environmental Impacts Act of 2024](#)

<https://earth.org/online-shopping-and-its-environmental-impact/>

4. Online Shopping

In June 2020, global retail e-commerce traffic reached a record [22 billion monthly visits](#) and a staggering [US\\$26.7 trillion in sales](#).

In 2020, the shipping and return of products accounted for [37% of the total GHG emissions](#)

The Issue of Over-Packaging

Products' packaging contributes in large part to CO2 emissions from producing plastics, polluting ecosystems as well as adding enormous amounts of waste to our landfills. **3 billion trees are pulped yearly to produce 241 million tons of shipping cartons, the forest conservation group [Canopy](#) found. And of the 86 million tons of plastic packaging produced globally each year, [not even 14% is recycled](#).**

It is estimated that by 2030, the number of delivery vehicles will increase by 36%, reaching approximately 7.2 million vehicles. This will not only result in an increase of about 6 million tonnes of CO2 emissions, but it will also increase commutes by 21%, as vehicles will take longer to travel due to higher traffic congestion.

<https://inweh.unu.edu/the-hidden-environmental-cost-of-cryptocurrency/>

<https://bc.ctvnews.ca/crypto-mining-company-loses-bid-to-force-bc-hydro-to-provide-power-1.6756991>

5. Cryptocurrency- Bitcoin mining impacts climate, water and land

Bitcoin were a country, its energy consumption would have ranked 27th in the world, ahead of a country like Pakistan, with a population of over 230 million people. The resulting carbon footprint was equivalent to that of burning 84 billion pounds of coal or operating 190 natural gas-fired power plants. To offset this footprint, 3.9 billion trees should be planted, covering an area almost equal to the area of the Netherlands, Switzerland, or Denmark or 7% of the Amazon rainforest.

Bitcoin's water footprint was similar to the amount of water required to fill over 660,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools, **enough to meet the current domestic water needs of more than 300 million people in rural sub-Saharan Africa. The land footprint of worldwide Bitcoin mining activities during this period was 1.4 times the area of Los Angeles.**

China, by a large margin, has been the biggest Bitcoin mining nation. To offset the carbon emissions from China's coal-intensive Bitcoin mining operations in 2021–2022, about 2 billion trees should be planted, covering an area equivalent to the sum of Portugal and Ireland

The **world's top 10 Bitcoin mining nations in 2020–2021** included the United States, Kazakhstan, Russia, Malaysia, **Canada**, Germany, Iran, Ireland, and Singapore.

GOOD NEWS – Crypto mining company loses bid to force BC Hydro to provide power

A cryptocurrency firm has lost a bid to force BC Hydro to provide the vast amounts of power needed for its operations, upholding the provincial government's right to pause power connections for new crypto miners.

Conifex Timber Inc., a forestry firm that branched out into cryptocurrency mining, had gone to the B.C. Supreme Court to have the policy declared invalid.

BC Hydro CEO Christopher O'Riley had told the court in an affidavit that the data centres proposed by Conifex would have consumed 2.5 million megawatt-hours of electricity each year.

That's enough to power and heat more than 570,000 apartments, according to data on the power provider's website.

To Islands Trust Council

February 25, 2024

For decades, oil and gas corporations have known that burning fossil fuels would cause the heat waves, wildfires, drought and flooding that we're now experiencing in BC. These multinational companies spent millions to deceive, deny and distract us on their way to billions in profit by preventing action on climate change.

It's not right that CEOs and investors continue to pocket the profits while ordinary people pay the skyrocketing costs of climate damages. We must force oil and gas corporations to change their business practices and pay their fair share for the harm they're causing.

To that end the following Gabriola residents support Dr. Peter Pare's request to the Islands Trust Council and call on the Islands Trust Council to:

- Act urgently to tackle climate change and protect us from future heat waves, flooding, wildfires and other climate impacts;
- Join with other local governments to file a class action lawsuit to recover a fair share of our climate costs;
- Allocate at least \$.50 per person towards a community fund to sue Big Oil;
- Build equitable and sustainable communities that put people and the planet before corporate profits; and
- cooperate with Indigenous peoples in doing so.

Yours sincerely,