

Climate Cafe: Gabriola's Changing Climate

Thu-26-Feb-2026, 6:30 PM at Ground Up

Report on table discussions



Recorded and collated results from the seven table discussions on the questions:

1. How can we expect **temperatures** to change, and what can we do to adapt?
2. How can we expect **water supply** to change, and what can we do to adapt?

Mitigation

Many of the responses spoke to the need to reduce GHGs to mitigate the temperature and water impacts of climate change. The actions people endorsed would increase resilience by reducing dependence on imports, vehicle travel, and services off island.

A. Policy/community level

- Reserve electricity generation for human use, not AI
- Reforestation at scale
- Retain trees (control/prevent removal, permits)
- Promote solar
- Subsidies for electric cars, bikes, and chargers
- Reduce international trade (and corresponding freight CO2)
- Protection of marshes and wetlands
- Controlled irrigation (agriculture)
- Policies that protect eelgrass

B. Individual (cultural change)

- Stop flying
- Ride a bike
- Buy local, reduce reliance on imports (food, manufactured goods, services, etc.)
- Reduce meat consumption
- Consume less, especially new items, to reduce manufacturing emissions

Adapting to changing temperature

A. Policy/community level

- Building insulation requirements, support for improving insulation
- Support for climate refugees
- Emergency planning by neighbourhood
- Adapt our working/active hours to the increased temperatures, e.g. midday siesta

B. Individual (cultural change)

- Ride the bus
- Install mini-split heat pumps (air conditioning in extreme heat, winter heating)
- Improve insulation and create shade (shutters & blinds)
- Planting (trees, shrubs) to reduce heat in home
- Swim in the ocean
- FireSmart every property to reduce fire risk

Adapting to changing water supply

A. Policy/community level

- Ease grey water regulation
- Permit and encourage composting toilets
- Desalination at scale (solar, neighbourhood)
- Control development (water capacity – limits & licensing)
- New building requirements for water catchment & cisterns
- Community water supply: towers, reservoirs (Hoggan Lake)
- More community cisterns (like The Haven, Medical Clinic)
- Government subsidies for water catchment and filtration systems
- Restrict AI data centres' use of water
- Require metering of water
- Let the land store water again, to help recharge the groundwater. Identify & protect recharge areas (see Freshwater Footprint report)
- Support re-introduction of beavers. Beavers used to create wetlands and streams running year-round on the island

B. Individual (cultural change)

- Create more ponds
- Slow flow to ocean (swales and planted barriers)
- Plant more deciduous trees
- Install composting toilets
- Use less water
- Grow food year-round

- Eat foods that are local and seasonal
- Xeriscaping, drought tolerant plants
- Support GaLTT, Streamkeepers, Climate-12
- Convert lawns to a more natural mix of trees and shrubs, etc.
- Pump & haul sewage to Nanaimo (reduce contamination, protect freshwater)
- Cover cisterns to reduce microplastics in water from breakdown by sun

C. Education

- Water monitoring, grey-water systems, cistern, and septic management
- Growing (producing) and eating seasonally; winter gardens, less meat
- Water conservation education
- Agricultural uses of water, how to conserve
- Promote riding the bus, menus for local seasonal food
- Youth climate programs
- Visitor education via Page's Resort, B&Bs, Chamber of Commerce, BC Ferries, etc.
- Reality check: How much water do we use? How to reduce?
- Best practices, community education on practical approaches
- What resilience looks like: assess what do we have, what do we need?

While not directly reducing GHG emissions, there are other environmental imperatives for restoring biodiversity, planetary health, and resilience in the face of climate change. Addressing issues of equity and over-consumption are critical, as is reducing our use of plastics and the burning of wood for heat.

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