COVID-19 Response - Recovery

WEBINAR + ROUNDTABLE

Current • Practical • Localized

THE ISLANDS

Bowen, Cormorant, Cortes, Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Hornby, Lasqueti, Malcom, Mayne, Pender, Quadra, Salt Spring, Saturna, Queen Charlotte Strait, Texada, Thetis

May 7, 2020 • 3 - 4 PM

Virtual Meeting Format

- MUTE when not speaking
- Close video to save bandwidth
- Raise 'hand' button'- moderator will recognize
- In 'chat' introduce yourself and your island
- Submit question/comments in 'chat'
- Q & A will <u>follow all</u> presentations
- Meeting is being recorded

Today's Program

WELCOME:

- Denman, Saturna, Thetis Island Updates
- Impact of Pandemic on Island Food Security
- Postponed: Findings: Island Response & Recovery Surveys
- Registering Island COMEBACK
- Q & A + Additional Updates

Island Updates

- Key challenges each Island is facing
- Recent actions taken to support island economic response and recovery
- Most effective communication tools being utilized
- Advocacy and/or coordination with local government
- Share a personal reflection or 'good news' story

Island Update - Denman

Tony Gregson, Denman Island

Denman Works!

Population: Only one moat

- Small population: 1100 people –
 community plan max 1700
- 500 households
- 29% of housing is secondary homes
- Seniors are 60% of population
- Not a suburb of Comox Valley
- Hornby island

Consumer Services: fragile but critical

- Only five real shops, and a farmers market
- Only one restaurant and a takeout.
- Businesses tend to be jobs, not investments.
- Success depends on conservative financial management and highly nuanced knowledge of local needs
- Christmas Craft Fair is major event
- Community Plan very restrictive about commercial development

JOBS:
I can do
anything if
I'm paid. But
not before
noon.

- Home Care is biggest single employer
- Significant off-island employment
- Government: Ferries, school
- Construction
- Lots of artists and craftspeople
- Young families taking up farming
- Some oysters leases and commercial clamming
- Not uncommon to have several micro-businesses
- Few branded businesses: Corland Winery, Denman Chocolate

Tourism?
You mean
respectful
visitorship

- Main attractions are natural beauty and rural peace
- Very limited tourist infrastructure restricts events
- About 12 B&Bs and a youth hostel, some camping
- Tourism is a conflicted area, visitors are key to cultural events and shops
- Actively promoted by Denman Works through brochures, visitor website, and project grants

The problems of Paradise

- Affordable housing
- Water
- Ageing population
- Poverty
- Growing regulation
- Climate change and pollution

Specific COVID Challenges

- Not enough data
- Massive cancellations of cultural events
- Some businesses hit very hard but coping
- Need to develop export mechanisms
- Farmers are under a lot of pressure to provide food security
- Home care support workers are exhausted
- A lot of marginal employment doesn't qualify for assistance
- Some businesses are too small to qualify for assistance

Recent Actions/ Initiatives

- Formation of a Covid response committee
- Denman Works has contracted for a grant facilitator
- Great support from residents for local businesses.
- Programs initiated for nutrition coupons, shower coupons, volunteer food delivery, funding for a public ;laundry, food bank and farm to family programs.
- Key businesses coping well with social distancing, on-line ordering and home delivery

Most Effective Communication Tools

- Inserts, advice and support published in Denman monthly magazine and a weekly newspaper delivered free to all households.
- Zoom meetings for non-government community organizations
- Business and non-profit websites
- Facebook bulletin boards
- Community website of COVID info
- RIEP and other trusted government sites

Advocacy
And/Or
Coordination
With Local
Government

- Lots of involvement
- COVID response committee is chaired by island trustee Laura Busheikin and includes CVRD Electoral Area A director Daniel Arbour
- Islands Trust has responded to crisis
- Comox Valley Regional District has directed funds to specific non-profits providing community services
- NDP MP Gord Johns (Alberni-Comox)

Good News

- No COVID on island so far
- Islanders are resilient, self-reliant and DIY.
- People are enjoying opportunity for reflection and quiet
- Feeling that islanders almost take a certain pleasure in an emergency
- Businesses are coping
- Lots of people have been able to quickly take advantage of assistance.

Island Update - Saturna

Katie Dentry,

Saturna Island, Saturna Liaision, CRD

Saturna Island

- ~Population: 350 yr. round residents
- Median age: 66 years
- Median (after tax) income of households: \$47,488
- Tenant households spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs: 50%



All statistics from 2016 Census

Challenges

- 1) Specialized Economy
- 2) Cancellation of all Spring/Summer Fundraiser Events
 - Ex. Canada Day Lamb BBQ
 - o ~70 year history
 - ~this one day even attracts 2000 people to our island, many of whom stay for weeks
 - o ~In 2019 the event raised \$52,000 for community non-profits
 - ~Money raised at event provides support for:
 - -Facilities like the community hall, recreation centre, medical clinic, library, and cemetery
 - -Programs and Services such as the meal program for seniors, choir, cinema club, heritage programs, softball team, youth programs, and firefighters
 - 3) How do we move forward?

Actions/Initiatives

- 1) CESC's SGI Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan First priority is to schedule inter-island "sector meetings" between Mayne, Pender, Galiano and Saturna
- 2) CRC Business and Non-Profit Survey
 To determine status and needs of island businesses and organizations
- 3) Bi-weekly meetings with Emergency Program Community Coodinator, Electoral Area Emergency Program Coordinator and island stakeholders

Communication & Advocacy

Communication

- Covid-19 Facebook Page
- Covid-19 "hotline"
- Saturna Island Tourism Association FB Page
- Saturna Island Ratepayers and Renters Association email list

Advocacy

- Emergency Program Community Coordinator sends reports and requests to CRD EOC
- CRD Liaisons keep SGI Manager of Service Delivery appraised of any changes that might impact the CRD's island services
- Local organizations advocating (as needed) to local government regarding island needs.
- Ex. FireSmart Committee and SGI fire chiefs advocating with UBCM and CRD for FireSmart grant extension.

Good News + Reflections

Good News

- New Community Garden
- Food Bank Support
- Take-Out meals "sold out"
- Sourcing PPE

Personal Reflections

- A time to think about how to build self-reliance and resiliency within the community.
- A time to consider how we diversify our economy, so we are not so dependent on tourism dollars for our survival.

Island Update - Thetis

Doug Fenton, Thetis Island

Islands Trustee

THETIS ISLAND

We are grateful for the opportunity to live on the unceded territory and of the Penelakut First Nations people.

The COVID Challenge...



Specific Challenges

Thetis has limited on island services or supplies – reliant on Chemainus and area;

And the Community hall renovation has had contractor issues that were further impacted by the COVID challenges, but with a new contractor the renovation has re-started.

Recent actions taken to support Thetis farm and business response and recovery

- TI Comm Assoc. held an emergency vote using "drive through voting" technology to be able to authorize necessary actions to get our community hall renovation back on track;
- •Our local Cedar Beach Pizza and Pot of Gold coffee have figured out how to function within the COVID protocols and their products are back... ©





Most Effective Communication Tools



eSPOKES – a daily email-based newsletter/ tiny letter, just keeps on connecting those in need...;)



Brand new Wi-Fi available on the NE corner of Thetis.

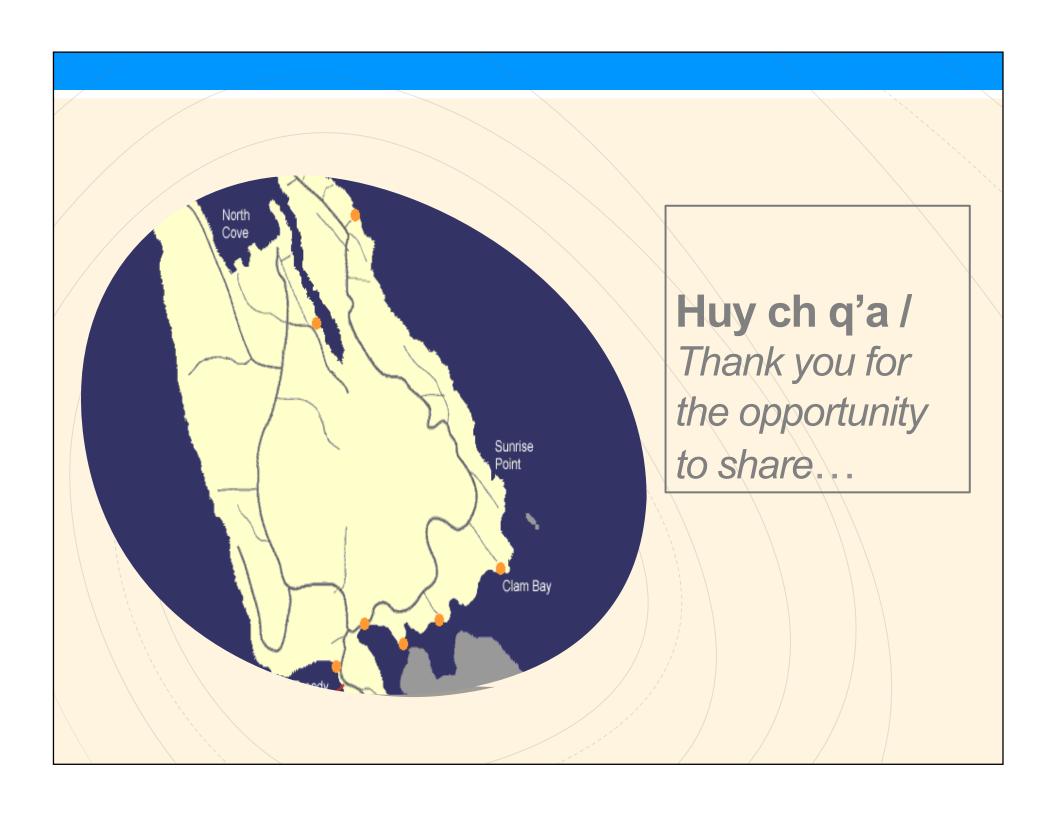
Advocacy and/or coordination with local government

- The Thetis Island LTC has been handicapped for almost a year, because of our Community Hall renovations and consequent lack of on island public meeting space;
- This forced the LTC meeting to Chemainus and now none until this week's news;
- As many may know, this week the legislative changes needed to allow for IT to work via Zoom have been approved.

Share a personal reflection or 'good news' story;

- TrincomaliChannel iscurrently freighterfree!!
- oThe Thetis Island real estate market is on hot: 4+ properties have sold in recent history!!





Q&A + Comments

FOOD SECURITY Roundtable

Representing Salt Spring Island:

- Presenter Elizabeth Zook
 - Emergency Response Professional
- Presenter Tine Rossing
 - Climate Change Technician



Food Security - Salt Spring Island

- Definition of Food Security
- Different groups involved in food security on SSI
- How much food is being produced
- Salt Spring has between
 11,000 15,000 residents

Food security is

"The condition in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." (Source: World Health Organization)

Impact of COVID On Island Food Security

COVID Impact:

Increase in **Food Insecurity** = increases in both existing & new challenges

- Changing Demands
 - We have a very heterogeneous population with very different food needs and consumption patterns
 - Many vulnerable sub-groups
- Affecting food supply (food production)
- Affecting food distribution
- Increased need for food storage



What Can We Do To Enhance Island Food Security?

OVERALL - We need better data!

To better understand the food security situation, especially food DEMAND, on our islands and how people are trying to meet their needs.

- HOW? Carry out detailed food security assessment!
- Then develop a 2-pronged strategy:
 - Short-term FS emergency response and recovery vs. Longer-term FS resilience

Short-term response and recovery

 Need to understand <u>changing</u> food demands, supply and distribution during emergency

Long-term resilient food security

 OVERALL – We need a REGIONAL ISLAND FOCUS – to enhance food self-sufficiency!!

QUESTION TO THE GROUP:

How do we advocate for making regional island food security a priority?



WELCOME to Island COMEBACK:

To register for the online gift certificate and donation program: www.islandcomeback.ca/register

As a pre-approved registrant, Island COMEBACK is free to you.

Start generating immediate assistance for your island business or organization.

IMPORTANT REQUIREMENT:

Please register with the Stripe Platform to start accepting payments

https://dashboard.stripe.com/register

NOTE:

This response and recovery initiative is being sponsored by the Rural Islands Economic Partnership, along with our rural island partners.









Island COMEBACK

- BIGGER and SHINIER it will be a polished presentation, with well-thought out marketing minds behind it..
- FOCUS on PEOPLE Unlike other Buy Local campaigns, this one focuses on the people behind the businesses. That is why the photos are of people, their product, their craft, their employees.
- EASY to USE They are spending additional time on making it easy for buyers of gift certificates AND the businesses (not all of who are as tech savvy)
- **NO COST** There is NO cost to the businesses involved. The minor processing fee of 3% is added onto the buyer's bill on check out.
- THOUGHT BEHIND IT a lot of thought and work is going into the behind-the-scenes efforts of making it useful and fool-proof, doing it on a small but effective budget
- ISLAND SPECIFIC Each island will get to write their own front page copy, similar to the ones in the presentation. We can have photos of our businesses, our island.
- **EACH BUSINESS** Can have their logo, link to their website and personalize the offer, if they wish, eg. buy a gift certificate and get a discount. Or not. Up to them.
- **FUTURE PLANS**: The other good news is that building a solid platform means a future e-Commerce site.

Q&A + Comments

Covid -19 INFO HUB

One-Stop for Response and Recovery Current info; includes link to local plans

- Now live https://hub.ruralislandspartnership.ca
- Being updated 3x per week
- Please send and new info you found useful to share

Next Webinar- Thursday, May 21

- Webinar Outcomes Link https://ruralislandspartnership.ca/response/-recovery-webinarseries
- Roundtable Topics Suggestions welcome
- Islands Response & Recovery Survey
 Findings will be shared