

Keep GHG emissions low; no new densities, by Jacinthe Eastick, Thursday, December 17 2009.

I read in the Province that Vancouver's GHG emissions are now at 1990 levels. Does anyone know if measurements were ever taken of Gabriola's carbon footprint? With all the evergreens that feed on carbon dioxide, no industries, no landfills, no polluters other than wood stoves, backyard burning, and vehicles, I would hope that we are still carbon neutral. Does anyone know? We are already committed to a population of about 12,000 people. So, I suppose that while we are in-filling, we should create no new densities and encourage 'à-la-Merv-Wilkinson-only-logging' to ensure that we stay carbon neutral ... that is if we are (?).

Flying Shingle, December 31, 2009, p.5

Gabriola far from carbon neutral

Dear Editor

I'm not sure what world Jacinthe Eastick (Letter Dec. 18) is living in when she suggests Gabriola is carbon neutral, and can possibly remain so in the face of a population increase to 12000 people, but it sure isn't Gabriola.

In 2002, I figured Gabriola's per capita greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) were about 9% per capita higher than the rest of BC. We were then emitting an estimated 6100 tonnes of carbon a year. Our fossil fuel consumption is largely determined by our vehicles, the electricity we use, and the ferry. Currently, the population is rising at around 2.8% a year, at which rate we would reach the 12000 mark in about 40 years time. Given that electricity usage is going up at 5% per year, at which rate it will increase six-fold in 40 years, that people would likely not be happy with the present ferry being used for 8000 extra people to go shopping, and 2/3 of Gabriolans are not likely to abandon their cars any time soon, I can foresee that the probability of us being carbon neutral in 40 years time with present policies and attitudes is about the same as the probability that donkeys will learn to fly.

Sincerely

Growth: the measure of carbon outputs, and rural character, by Jacinthe Eastick, from Gabriola's rural south-end, Sunday, January 10 2010

Dear Editor,

I was very glad to have received, in your Dec. 31 edition, an answer to my question as to whether or not Gabriola was carbon neutral. Nick Doe is a man I respect very much.

Rightly or wrongly, I make a distinction between production and net emission. I might have read too many National Geographic articles on the matter. Nick reported that we produced 6,100 tonnes of carbon in 2002 which was, per capita, nine per cent higher than the rest of the province. I am not questioning his ability to calculate our carbon production, I am however

wondering if he factored in the evergreen carbon absorption to determine Gabriola's net carbon emission in that year.

For the record, I cannot see 12,000 people on this Island without losing the character we so cherish and are mandated to preserve and protect by the Province. We must fight to retain our rural character now, in our Official Community Plan review. For one, we should all agree to create absolutely no new density and to explore ways to reduce potential densities.

Flying Shingle, January 25, 2010, p.5

Reduce density: Tax oxygen

Dear Editor

Further to Jacinthe Eastick's comment that Gabriola should receive credit in the effort to control greenhouse gases because of its greenery (Jan, 11 2010), I will confess at this point that I don't really understand what "carbon neutrality" means, and I'm not sure if I'm in favour of it, being full of it myself. Being naughty, and absolving yourself by paying somebody else not to be, seems to be the idea. There is no "neutrality" about it if you mean reducing fossil-carbon emissions to zero.

If you walk through the forest and look up, you see growth absorbing CO₂ from the air, but if you look down, you see rotting leaves and fallen trees returning it. It's a natural cycle that is balanced. The question is, if we increase the amount of CO₂ in the air using fossil carbon, will the forest absorb it? The answer is clearly no, otherwise we wouldn't have a problem.

The bad news for Jacinthe is that as the climate warms the carbon sequestered in Gabriola's forests will decrease, not increase. This is because biomass here is not limited by the availability of carbon, it's limited by the availability of water. A warmer climate almost certainly means less groundwater and fewer trees. It might help us move toward true neutrality if we all buried oyster shells in the garden, but perhaps an even better idea is to tax the use of oxygen. Hasn't anyone noticed that there's an O₂ in CO₂? Who knows, perhaps taxing oxygen might help make the island less dense.

Sincerely

Flying Shingle, March 22, 2010, p.4

Carbon in — carbon out

Dear Editor

With regard to Al Reed's rather frivolous suggestion that pet owners pay a tax because of the

greenhouse gas their animals produce (March 15), I would gladly pay Buster's share so long as the rate is set eight times higher for humans than for dogs, in accordance with the relative sizes of their ecological footprints. I wouldn't however recommend AI as an accountant since he wants us to count re-forestation as a credit, yet ignore the de-forestation that made it necessary. As far as the atmosphere is concerned, it all adds up to one big zero.

Sincerely
