

## ***Cortes Island (Area I) Regional Director's Report***

As Regional Director I field a lot of questions. The queries generally pertain to zoning, planning or services. If I am unable to supply the answer I refer folks to staff members who can. Island feedback has consistently found the regional district staff to be responsive and helpful when called upon.

Another area of interest focuses around my position as Regional Director. One of the current favorite questions is if I have any regrets in running for office. This generally causes me to scratch my head and respond, "Quite honestly, I don't go there." The position is very challenging, interesting and time consuming and I field an amazing array of issues and situations. I focus the vast majority of my energy to this particular endeavor, like most things in life some days are good—others not. Here's a glimpse of two of the issues I've been working on.

### ***Public Notification***

I make a concerted effort to give as much public notification of Public Hearings and information meetings put on by the Regional District. Notices are placed on [cortesisland.com](http://cortesisland.com) and in the local flyers. In conversations with various branches of the provincial government I reinforce this concept. The provincial government has statutory requirements regarding public notification that must be met. Unfortunately, this does not mean that announcements impacting Cortes residents will be advertised in the local flyers. The provincial approach is to send Information Bulletins to local newspapers, which are run when space is available. Of course, we don't have a daily or weekly newspaper and our local flyers run classified ads. Currently, there is a reluctance to consider information bulletins as a form of advertising. I continually point out that while the various ministerial branches may meet the statutory requirements it cannot be considered public notification if those most affected remain unaware and uninformed. This is an issue that has significant impact on the community and discussions will be ongoing.

### ***Geoduck Information Meeting***

The Integrated Land Management Bureau held a public information meeting on July 24, 2004, at the Gorge Hall to educate island residents about geoduck culture. Tom Yacyshen (ILMB) was the facilitator of the meeting. Baron Carswell (MAL), Kerry Marcus (DFO) and Eric Gant (VP—Argosy Sea Farms) gave individual presentations. Several other individuals from ILMB, MAL, DFO, and Argosy were also in attendance and available to answer questions.

The Hall was filled with approximately 60 people—which was a good turn out given the meeting was held during normal supper hours and there was a competing gathering at the Manson's Landing Community Hall. Questions flowed from the audience as soon as the first slide appeared on the screen. Concerns were expressed and questions asked about virtually every slide thereafter. The audience listened with respectful skepticism to the information presented. ILMB, MAL, DFO and the industry representatives stated that research and development to date leads them to believe that geoduck culture is sustainable and will have little impact on the environment. Many present did not share this perspective. Some of the concerns expressed regarded

approving tenures without adequate information, the broken cycle of sustainability which requires geoducks to now be farmed, the potential impact on existing oyster and tourist based businesses, the visual pollution created by miles of net washing ashore, noise, and the environmental impact of the harvesting techniques.

The meeting was lengthy—an indication of the great concern the community has regarding this new industry. Anyone wishing more detailed information about the meeting should speak to someone that attended. Anyone wishing to send comments can do so until the close of the August 8 business day. Letters should be forwarded to:

Tom Yacyshen—AQ Program Officer  
Integrated Land Management Bureau  
Suite 142 – 2080 Labieux Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6J9  
Fax: 250-751-7224  
[Tom.yacyshen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tom.yacyshen@gov.bc.ca)

Mr. Yacyshen will review all the information received and write a report for the adjudicator. I will remain in contact with ILMB and once a decision is made will relay it to the community as quickly as possible.

Feel free to contact me about these or any other issues at 935-6488 Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 4 pm. If you get the answering machine try my cell phone -- 202-6488. You can also email me at [brijen@oberon.ark.com](mailto:brijen@oberon.ark.com) anytime.

Enjoy the season. Jenny Hiebert—Director, Cortes (Area I), CSRD