

Chair Report for DIRA Annual General Meeting, April 16, 2012

Submitted by Frank Frketich

It has been my honour and pleasure to serve as the Chair of DIRA for the 2011/2012 year. The challenges have been interesting and the learning curve steep. The Executive Board deserves special thanks and recognition for being supportive and being willing to meet the challenges as they arise. I regret the loss of two Board members this year Clark Sifert and Jane Kerr and would like to publicly recognize and thank them for their contributions.

Two important DIRA projects came to fruition this year. One was the completion of our Community Dock. This project has been many years in the planning and we owe a huge thanks to John Johnston and the Dock Committee who did the real work of guiding the project from inception to completion. Well done!

The other project was the planning and building of the stairway at Morning Beach Park. This project was a clear indication of what can be accomplished when there is a high level of cooperation between the CVRD through its Parks Department and DIRA through its Parks Committee. Peter Karstens and the Parks Committee deserve special mention for their work here.

Last summer the Parks and Greenway Plan was completed by the CVRD and adopted by DIRA members as a working document to guide planning for the future. One of the outcomes of that has been the development of a revitalized Trails Committee since trails was recognized as an important component of the study. That committee has already done preliminary survey work on a ferry to ferry trail and DIRA members have approved the route and a name, the Cross Island Trail. Once again we are seeing a high level of cooperation between CVRD and DIRA on this project.

In the recycle centre this year we saw the purchase of a glass crusher which allows us to process glass on island for use by islanders. Crushed glass has as many uses as islanders' imaginations will allow. I have even heard of cement counter tops with crushed glass embedded as one possibility.

Another important aspect of DIRA's role on the island is to provide a forum for discussion and action on issues that affect residents. During this past year we fulfilled this role in several areas. We were very active in our opposition to Raven Coal's application to establish coal mines in the Fanny Bay area. As a Society we wrote letters supporting Denman Opposes Coal in its efforts to halt these mining developments because of real concerns for our air and water quality.

As well, DIRA was very active in its opposition to the cable ferry proposal put forward by B. C. Ferries Inc. We see it as a one off experiment in which the residents of Denman Island are the pawns. We also wrote to the Ferry Commissioner as part of his review of the B C. Ferries Act suggesting changes we would like to see in the Act.

With regard to these two issues, the suggestion has been made that DIRA should invite our local MLA Don McCrae to a public meeting to explain our views to him and to hear his views as well. That is still a possibility as soon as the Environmental Review process is complete.

Last fall DIRA spearheaded a drive to raise funds to prepare a memorial for Andrew Scruton, a long serving DIRA Board member. The results were very gratifying with over \$1600.00 being raised. A memorial bench is now complete at the new Community Dock as is a tree at the new garden of the Health Clinic. DIRA would like to thank all islanders for their generosity.

Also last fall the DIRA Board authorized a study of the how Recreation Grant Recommendations were handled. The result of this study was an extensive review of the recommendation process and how to make it fairer and more transparent so that there would be no possibility of a conflict of interest on the part of DIRA. I would like to thank Bert Taylor and Anne Page for their work in bringing this review to a successful conclusion.

Since Trust Elections were scheduled for November of 2011 DIRA hosted an all candidates forum. The event was well attended with over 200 islanders filling the Community Hall to question the six candidates.

As in the past, DIRA spent considerable time and effort on insurance issues this year. Committee chairs that have means to pay came together and agreed to a sharing of insurance costs. This has set a useful precedent for future years and we will try to further improve our model as time goes on. With regard to Directors insurance DIRA has renegotiated our policy through Axis insurance at a savings to the Society of over \$400.00 per year.

In some ways this has been a quiet year for DIRA as we try to determine what should be the real function of the organization and how it should relate to the people it represents. This is one of the challenges we must carry forward.