

# Reprint **Island Tides**

Visit [www.islandtides.com](http://www.islandtides.com) for more interesting articles on other BC, national & international topics

Reprint from Volume 23 Number 13

June 30, 2011

## Printed ferry schedules, for now... —Sara Miles

The new summer ferry schedules are out, and many people are happy with them—for now. They may be reviewed in two years, at which time BC Ferries will probably look into a completely paperless scheduling system.

‘They were planning to get rid of the [Gulf Islands] schedule, full-stop,’ says Ferry Advisory Commission (FAC) Chair Brian Hollingshead. ‘The FAC was vigorous in explaining why that would not work because it was too complex and too many people depend on it. We needed [a schedule] that would serve our interests.’

Hollingshead says the three minor route black and white schedules are easier to use and to read. ‘We are happy with what they have done,’ he says.

Citing costs and environmental concerns as reasons for the new schedules, Director of Media Relations Deborah Marshall says that BC Ferries will also be better able to ensure that customers have the most up-to-date schedule if it is online only.

Printing 500,000 copies of the previously-issued ‘all-routes’ schedule cost BC Ferries about \$150,000, plus another \$50,000 in advertising to communicate unexpected schedule changes and mistakes in the printed schedule.

For summer 2011, they have printed 60,000 schedules for the Southern Gulf Islands; 30,000 for Sunshine

Coast/Powell River; and 10,000 for each of the Denman/Hornby and Quadra/Cortes routes. The Vancouver Island–Mainland schedule is only available online now. The cost saving of the minor routes black & white schedules was not available to *Island Tides*. Clearly, going paperless would save BC Ferries even more.

While people with smartphones and laptops may find it convenient to access the schedule online, many visitors and islanders, especially seniors and those travelling on complex routes, require a printed schedule.

‘People traveling don’t have computers with them necessarily. All of us in the Gulf Islands have those brochures, one in the car and one by the phone,’ Hollingshead says. On many routes, a schedule is absolutely necessary for making it to the right boat, at the right time, on the right day.

Many Islands’ residents do not have high speed internet, added Hollingshead, and the connectivity issue will not be resolved in the next two years.

Although BC Ferries confirms that their desired end state is a paperless one, they say they will only arrive at that point if and when it is appropriate.

When asked about travellers unable to get a printed schedule in the case of exhausted supplies, BCF said terminal staff will print a schedule for travellers who need it, provided the terminal has the necessary resources. ☞

© Island Tides Publishing Ltd. This article may be reproduced with the following attribution, in its entirety, and notification to Island Tides Publishing Ltd.

*This article was published (June 30, 2011) in 'Island Tides', an independent, regional newspaper distributing across the Southern Strait of Georgia from Tsawwassen to Victoria to Nanaimo.'*

Island Tides, Box 55, Pender Island, BC, Canada. Phone: 250-629-3660. Fax: 250-629-3838.  
Email: [islandtides@islandtides.com](mailto:islandtides@islandtides.com). Website: <http://www.islandtides.com>