



Keeping Sonora Green, for Generations to Come

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Sonora Island is located within some of the most spectacular, pristine natural beauty in the world. Nestled in the straits between Vancouver Island and the British Columbia mainland, our wilderness is abundant, and our air is crisp and clean.

At Sonora Resort, we have a responsibility to preserve and protect our environment. Everything we do, from building projects to the details in our guest rooms, is done with the environment in mind.

WE ARE WATER-CONSCIOUS

As an Island resort, water sources are of paramount concern. All of the water used on the resort comes from wells that we've tapped. Our water is sand filtered and UV radiated to ensure absolutely safe, clean water for drinking. We use no chemicals to treat the water as this may end up back in the environment.

We encourage moderate water consumption. Every room has reduced flow rain shower heads. These are not only luxurious for our guests, but they use less water than standard shower heads. Our toilets are likewise low volume flush models, helping to reduce unnecessary water consumption.

All laundry and housekeeping cleaning products have been specifically chosen to be friendly to the environment. Our laundry and kitchen detergents and equipment are supplied by Haddon (haddon.ca), including the X3 solid laundry system, which is completely environmentally clean. We use washer programming to reduce our water and energy consumption even further.





SEWAGE TREATMENT

After researching different methods of sewage processing, we selected a system from Sanitherm (sanitherm.com), a local North Vancouver company that uses cutting edge technology to process sewage. The plant is operational now, and is the first of its kind at a coastal resort.

The new processing plant works in a way similar to reverse osmosis, where the sewage is forced through a very fine filter, so fine that bacteria cannot penetrate it. This produces clear water that contains no coliform bacteria. It is also a chemical-free process, so no harmful substances are released into the ocean.

Our next step will be to obtain the necessary permit so the treated water and compost material can be used on land. Once permission has been obtained, treated water will be used for irrigating the landscaping around the resort, even as the original ornamental landscaping is replaced with drought-resistant indigenous species.

ENTERTAINMENT AND EDUCATION

Sonora Resort offers some of the most splendid outdoor adventures in the world. We have one goal when we choose what to offer our guests for entertainment: to present and instill a love of some of North America's most sensational outdoor beauty, while having a minimal impact on the environment itself.

Perhaps our most popular eco-tour is the Grizzly Bear Tour. This tour is offered in conjunction with the Homalco First Nation, who provides a minimally-invasive way to view the bears of the pristine Orford Valley. The Homalco have erected twelve foot wooden stands to keep observers safe and to give the Grizzlies unfettered access to the salmon of the Orford River. The bears are habituated to the stands; they rub against them to mark them and they use them to scratch their backs.

Our relationship with another neighbor, the Kwiakah First Nations, has recently formed into a partnership to restore the Phillips River Estuary. Sonora's guests have the opportunity to take an educational tour of their cultural lands, the old and new growth forests, and the old logging camp, which will sequentially help this tribe fund improvements in the once pristine valley.





Both of these agencies and groups have an interest in preserving and maintaining the natural wonder of Sonora Island and its surroundings. Working cooperatively with them enhances our understanding of the environmental issues that face this unique and spectacular part of the world.

Orcas travel the straits around Sonora Island during their yearly migrations. When we take our guests to see the Orcas or other marine mammals, we adhere to the rules of the North Island Marine Mammals Stewardship Association, www.nimmsa.org, for safely observing whales. We want our guests to see these magnificent creatures without impeding natural migration or threatening the animals' well-being.

Sonora Island is vast and virtually untouched, and we encourage our guests to hike and experience the island for themselves. We ask our guests not to smoke on the hiking trails, both to avoid the litter of cigarette butts and to prevent any potential for forest fires. We also ask guests not to leave any refuse behind, including food waste. There are black bears, cougars, wolves and other indigenous wildlife on the island, and feeding them is not only unhealthy and disruptive for them, but is illegal and unsafe.

RESPONSIBLE FISHING

For those who love to fish, Sonora Resort offers outstanding Chinook salmon fishing. Salmon are a precious resource, and we enforce strict regulations to preserve the health and numbers of the stocks.

Sonora Resort works closely with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and stringently adheres to all fishing regulations. We also encourage guests to participate in our voluntary 'catch and release' program, and assist us in providing fish catch and retention data back to biologists to better manage this magnificent resource.

Sonora Resort also works closely with the Gillard Pass Fish Hatchery to replenish the stock of Chinook salmon. Every year, the hatchery collects the brood stock and raises them. When the young salmon are ready, about 175,000 are released into the Phillips River.





ENERGY USE AND CARBON FOOTPRINT

This is one area of Sonora operations where we are still working to improve our sustainability. Right now, the electricity on Sonora Island comes from three high-efficiency, computer-controlled diesel generators.

Sonora resort is researching a cleaner source of energy, specifically hydro-driven power sources. The lakes and creeks on the island are too small to generate enough power, but with only a ½ mile channel between Sonora Island and the Mainland, it is feasible to capture the hydro power at Patricia Creek (a non-fish-bearing creek) and transmit it via underwater cable to the island. With this cleaner power source, the diesel generators would be used only for backup.

On a smaller scale, our housekeeping and other service staff travel use electric carts for local resort transportation, and new, 4 stroke outboards have been chosen for our guide boats. These engines consume less fuel and meet all California low and ultra low emissions standards.

SOLID WASTE REMOVAL

At Sonora, we recycle all aluminum, plastics and glass by shipping the items by barge to Campbell River recycling plants. We also recycle all compact florescent light bulbs, alkaline batteries, and car batteries. Used oil is collected and recycled, as well as all oil and fuel filters.

For kitchen waste disposal, we carefully investigated composting options, but chose incineration to ensure the island wildlife (raccoons, bears and deer) would not become habituated to the smell and availability of human garbage. Waste is burned in a state of the art medical waste incinerator.

After much research, we chose an incinerator made by the Alberta company Infratech. The Infratech incinerator has two chambers. The first is heat controlled for the initial burn, while the second heats up to 1900 degrees and incinerates the particulate from the initial burn. After the two-chamber process, the remaining hot air is released, free of harmful particulates.





RESPONSIBLE CONSTRUCTION

In building and renovating our resort, we made every effort to leave the shoreline untouched. When we replaced the old decks, the new ones were slightly larger and differently shaped and we knew we would disrupt the bubble weed.

In consultation with environmental experts and Federal Fisheries authorities, it was determined that for every square meter of disrupted bubble weed, we should compensate the environment with 10 square meters of beneficial planting. We hired divers to plant eel grass, which is the natural home for many aquatic species, improving the habitat for the disruption we caused.

ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS

Sonora Island falls under the domain of several environmental branches at both the provincial and federal levels of government. We are proud to be an active and cooperative partner with all of these agencies. We approach them with our plans, and listen carefully to their suggestions. Our aim is to use the agencies as a resource so we can make the most responsible and sustainable decisions. Since many agencies do not have the funding to travel to remote areas to inspect the work, we hire an environmental consultant to report to directly to them.

