Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

JONATHAN WELLER

BA (University of Alberta, 2012)

“Living on ‘Scenery and Fresh Air’: Land-use Planning and Environmental Regulation in the Gulf Islands”

Department of History

Monday, April 25, 2016
1:00 P.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B315

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Richard Rajala, Department of History, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Penny Bryden, Department of History, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Jamie Lawson, Department of Political Science, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Brian Thom, Department of Anthropology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract
This study examines changing conceptions of the Southern Gulf Islands, an archipelago on the coast of British Columbia, through the twentieth century. By drawing on ideas put forward by government officials, journalists, residents, and travellers it develops an explanation for how and why a conception of the Gulf Islands as a ‘special’ or ‘unique’ pastoral landscape emerged as a result of interactions between individuals and groups, and their political, social, economic, and physical environments. It then examines how these ideas in turn influenced the development of land-use policies and programs, and in particular how an innovative, overarching planning commission called the Islands Trust emerged in 1974 as a mechanism devoted to limiting development and defending the Islands as a pastoral landscape of leisure. More than reflecting such a pastoral depiction of the Islands, the initiatives undertaken by the newly formed Trust ascribed to the idea that a defining lifestyle, characterized by arcadian pursuits such as mixed farming, boutique logging, handicrafts, or the arts, was legitimate for such a landscape. By embracing such a conception of the Gulf Islands’ environment, the Islands Trust endeavoured to preserve and create this landscape through an agenda that supported farmland, forest, and open space retention, and encouraged those activities deemed to be in keeping with the unique ‘character’ of the Islands. The initial work of enshrining the pastoral ‘character’ of the Islands into land-use planning policies and programs by the Trust laid a framework for ongoing efforts to shape the landscape, economy, development, and identity of the region into the present day.