

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2017**

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**SUBJECT**     **Abandoned Boats Program Funding Update**

**ISSUE**

To provide an update on the status of regional funding applications for the federal Abandoned Boats Program.

**BACKGROUND**

In July 2017, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board directed staff to submit a regional application for the federal Abandoned Boats Program (ABP) Education & Awareness (E&A) funding and ABP Assessment & Removal (A&R) funding.

In August, discussions with Transport Canada provided clarification on the process required to submit funding applications (see Funding Program Implications). Transport Canada staff indicated that proponents should submit an application for Assessment funding, complete the assessments and then submit a separate application for Removal funding. As a result of this clarification, staff modified the work plan and approach to obtaining funding through the ABP (Appendix A).

CRD staff submitted an application for ABP E&A funding on September 30, 2017. The Grant Application Summary can be found in Appendix B. Concurrently, but separately, the Dead Boat Society and other local non-profit organizations in the Capital Region also submitted applications for the E&A funding.

CRD and municipal staff completed abandoned boat inventories and will submit an application on October 30, 2017 for ABP A&R funding to complete the formal assessments for approximately 20 vessels. Additional inventory work for floating, potentially-abandoned, and derelict vessels will be required through the end of 2017. The CRD will apply for ABP A&R funding for all assessed vessels in February 2018, which is the next anticipated funding call.

The Dead Boat Society and its industrial partners intend to submit applications for A & R funding independent of the CRD application. CRD staff are coordinating with them to ensure there is no duplication of effort.

**ALTERNATIVES**

That the Environmental Services Committee recommend to the CRD Board:

*Alternative 1*

That an additional \$100,000 be made available on a first-come, first-serve basis from the Environmental Resource Management Division Sustainability Reserve to pay the tipping fee costs for municipally- and electoral area-endorsed boating-related marine debris within the region not covered by the CRD's Transport Canada Abandoned Boats Program funding application.

*Alternative 2*

That the Abandoned Boat Program funding commitments approved at the CRD Board's July 12, 2017 meeting be maintained.

**FUNDING PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS**

On August 2, 2017, CRD and municipal staff met with Ryan Greville, Manager of the Navigation Protection Program with Transport Canada, who provided the following clarification on the ABP A&R funding program:

- There is only \$300,000 available for ABP A&R for the October 2017 application intake. A second funding call for A&R funds will be announced later this year and it is anticipated that more than \$1M in funding will be available. It is also anticipated that applications for the second call will be due in February 2018.
- A separate application process is required for both the Assessment funding and the Removal funding. Applicants should first apply for Assessment funding and, if approved, complete the formal assessment and appropriate documentation for each vessel. The completed assessment, which outlines environmental risks and hazards, defines a removal plan and provides an estimate of the removal costs, etc., forms the basis for a second application for Removal/Disposal funding.
- Prior to applying for Assessment funding, applicants must conduct an inventory of derelict, abandoned and wrecked vessels, attempt to identify the owner and submit a *Request for Authorization to Take Possession, Remove and Dispose of Abandoned and Wrecked Boats* to Transport Canada. If Transport Canada cannot locate an owner, they will provide the CRD with authorization to post a 30-day notice declaring each vessel as abandoned or wrecked. This notice must also be advertised in local newspapers. If no one claims the vessel after the 30-day notice period, Transport Canada will provide the CRD with authorization to board and assess the vessel. This authorization must be received from Transport Canada for each vessel before an application for Assessment and/or Removal funding can be made.
- Applications for Assessment funding can continue to be submitted to Transport Canada beyond the October 30 deadline and may be approved in batches.

**INTER-JURISDICTIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

CRD staff have reached out to all municipalities, the Islands Trust and First Nations, in addition to the Dead Boat Society, to coordinate efforts on abandoned vessel inventories and ABP funding applications.

CRD staff partnered with Sidney and North Saanich staff to inventory and document 8 wrecked and abandoned vessels in Tsehum Harbour. One vessel on Island View Beach and another in Victoria Harbour (partially submerged mast on Halkett Island) were also included in the inventory submitted to Transport Canada. Following authorization from Transport Canada, the 30-day notice was posted on these vessels and advertised in the *Times Colonist* on Sept 26, 2017.

Central Saanich staff inventoried and posted notice for 8 abandoned vessels in Brentwood Bay. If no owners come forward within the 30-day period, these 18 vessels will be included in the CRD's Assessment and Removal funding applications. CRD and Sooke staff will work through October and November to inventory and submit documentation for abandoned boats in Sooke Harbour.

City of Victoria staff have been engaged in a long process to remove the remaining vessels in the Gorge Waterway, including a court injunction. They currently have a court date set for October 30 and will determine their next steps based on the results of the hearing.

Oak Bay staff informed the CRD that they are working with the Dead Boat Society and Royal Victoria Yacht Club to remove the 5 wrecked boats on Cadboro Bay beach in October. The CRD Community Clean-Up fund previously committed \$4,000 to support this effort. The Dead Boat Society and the Cadboro Bay Community Association intend to inventory potential abandoned vessels in Cadboro Bay through the fall and winter and will apply for removal funding.

The Dead Boat Society is liaising with Islands Trust and has completed vessel inventories on Salt Spring Island (Walkers Hook, Burgoyne Bay, Fulford Harbour, Long Harbour and Ganges Harbour) and has identified 15 wrecked or sunk boats for removal; an additional 6 boats may be released by owners for removal. They also intend to conduct inventories of abandoned boats around Hornby, Denman, and Thetis islands and off Ladysmith in the near future. In partnership with its industrial partners, the Dead Boat Society intends to submit its own application for removal funding for these vessels. In addition, the Society has also submitted a separate application for Education and Awareness funding.

On October 2, 2017, the District of Central Saanich requested additional funding assistance from the CRD (Appendix C) to help pay the tipping fee costs for disposing of other boating-related marine debris, such as derelict floats and docks, not covered by the Transport Canada ABP program. Providing such funding for unfunded marine debris initiatives will help ensure that the region's waterways are further restored toward their natural state.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In July, the CRD Board directed that the following funds would be transferred from the Environmental Resource Management division Sustainability Reserve, in support of a regional ABP application:

1. \$50,000 - 2017 budget amendment, for preparing the program application and issuing a contract to inventory current abandoned and derelict vessels (non-eligible under the ABP).
2. \$350,000 - as the CRD contribution to a \$1,400,000 budget (\$1,050,000 from the ABP) to pay for in-house or contracted resources to deliver educational initiatives and vessel removal and disposal services starting in 2018.
3. If approved, additional funding from the Environmental Resource Management (ERM) Division Sustainability Reserve in the amount of \$100,000 will be required to pay the tipping fees for local government endorsed requests for disposing of marine debris from within our region.

While vessel removal costs will be determined through the formal assessments, it is likely that the boat removal costs will be less than originally estimated. In addition, more than half of the abandoned vessels in the region, particularly those in the Gulf Islands, will be under the Dead Boat Society application, not the CRD application. Therefore, it is expected that the CRD application for Removal funding will not be as high as \$1.4M and that the full amount from the reserve fund will not be required.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Due to the potential health and environmental risks associated with derelict boats and other boating-related marine debris, both will need to be managed through Hartland landfill's controlled waste process.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

A legal review of the Hartland Landfill and Tipping Regulation Bylaw No. 3881 will be conducted to determine the appropriate means by which the CRD can directly pay the tipping fee costs of boats being disposed through the ABP, as well as the other boating-related marine debris. Any necessary bylaw amendments are anticipated to be brought back to the November Board meeting for consideration.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Abandoned vessels present an environmental risk to the region's shorelines and nearshore waters. These vessels also degrade the aesthetic enjoyment of these areas and present a safety risk to the public.

In August, discussions with Transport Canada provided clarification on the process required to submit funding applications and the timing of the release of funds. As a result, staff have modified the work plan and are proceeding with two Assessment & Removal funding applications: one by October 30, 2017 and the second in February 2018.

If both the CRD and the Dead Boat Society are successful in their funding applications, it is anticipated that more than 40 abandoned and derelict vessels will be removed from the region.

Should the CRD wish to reimburse the cost of disposing of other regional boating-related marine debris, such as derelict floats and docks, an additional commitment of \$100,000 from the Environmental Resource Management Sustainability Reserve is recommended.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Environmental Services Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That an additional \$100,000 be made available on a first-come, first-serve basis from the Environmental Resource Management Division Sustainability Reserve to pay the tipping fee costs for municipally- and electoral area-endorsed boating-related marine debris within the region not covered by the CRD's Transport Canada Abandoned Boats Program funding application.

Submitted by:	Glenn Harris, Ph.D., R.P.Bio., Senior Manager, Environmental Protection
Concurrence:	Russ Smith, Senior Manager, Environmental Resource Management
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

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Attachments: Appendix A – CRD Work Plan for Removal of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels  
Appendix B – CRD Education and Awareness Grant Application Summary  
Appendix C – Funding Request Letter from Central Saanich – Tipping Fee  
Waiver, October 2, 2017