

**ABANDONED BOATS UPDATE
JANUARY 2018**

ISSUE

On October 25, 2017, the Environmental Services Committee requested an update on the progress of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Abandoned Boats Program and the status of funding applications submitted to the federal (Transport Canada) Abandoned Boats Program.

STATUS

At its July 12, 2017 meeting, the 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.

On September 30, 2017, CRD staff submitted an application for ABP E&A funding. The successful recipients of the grant have not been announced yet; Transport Canada staff have indicated notification of successful applicants is awaiting final Ministerial approval.

On October 30, 2017, CRD and Central Saanich staff submitted separate applications for ABP A&R funding to complete the formal assessments for 9 vessels in Tsehum Harbour and 10 boats in Brentwood Bay, respectively. To date, Transport Canada has not finalized decisions around A&R funding. CRD staff are preparing the procurement documents necessary to engage a contractor to conduct the assessments in early 2018 and are defining a controlled waste permitting process to track all boating-related marine debris and derelict boat waste that is disposed of at Hartland landfill.

Through the CRD First Nations Relations division, several First Nations expressed a need for assistance in dealing with abandoned boats on First Nations lands. Staff are exploring opportunities to include eligible boats (boats below the high tide) on First Nations lands in the CRD applications and options to remove and dispose of ineligible abandoned boats (boats above the high tide or that were previously removed from the water).

In November, Transport Canada held a strategy session to obtain local government and stakeholder input on the federal strategy for dealing with abandoned boats. CRD and local government staff attended and commented on ways to make the funding process more streamlined and less onerous and expressed concern over the local government resources required to apply for funding (i.e., boat costs to inventory and then serve notice on vessels, advertising costs for 30-day notices, staff time for level of documentation required, length of time for processing funding applications). Input was also sought for the new vessel registration regulations.

In early December, CRD and Sooke staff completed an abandoned boat inventory in Sooke Harbour and applied to Transport Canada for authorization to take possession of 11 boats that appear to be abandoned. After authorization is received, staff will post 30-day notices and advertise to try to find the owners of these boats. Should no owners come forward, Transport Canada will provide the CRD authorization to take possession of the boats. At that point, CRD staff will submit an application to Transport Canada's ABP program for assessment funding.

Transport Canada announced that the next intake of ABP funding applications is due March 15, 2018. CRD staff intend to submit an application for removal funding for all vessels that have been

formally assessed by that time (approximately 20 boats in Tsehum Harbour and Sooke Basin). Central Saanich staff also plan to submit a March application for removal funding for the 10 abandoned boats in Brentwood Bay.

The Dead Boat Society (DBS) has inventoried, submitted paperwork to Transport Canada, posted 30-day notice for 20 abandoned boats in several bays on Salt Spring Island (Walkers Hook, Burgoyne Bay, Fulford Harbour, Long Harbour and Ganges Harbour) and is awaiting Transport Canada's authorization to complete the assessments of these boats. It is also preparing a submission for several boats in other Gulf Island bays and harbours. The DBS and the Cadboro Bay Community Association intend to inventory potential abandoned vessels in Cadboro Bay over the winter. The DBS intends to submit an application for removal funding for all assessed vessels (approximately 20-35 boats) in March.

SUMMARY

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. Transport Canada's Abandoned Boat Program provides funds to assist local governments in removing and disposing of abandoned boats across the Capital Region.

CRD staff are coordinating with the Dead Boats Society, Central Saanich staff and other stakeholders working on abandoned boats to ensure there is no duplication of effort. At least 3 applications for assessment funding have been submitted to Transport Canada and all are awaiting the results of funding decisions. If the CRD, Central Saanich and the Dead Boat Society are successful in their funding applications, it is anticipated that more than 50 abandoned and derelict vessels will be removed from the region in 2018.