

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, May 2, 2018**

SUBJECT **Abandoned Boats Program Update**

ISSUE

To provide an update on progress on the regional 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) for Education & Awareness (E&A) funding and Assessment & Removal (A&R) funding. CRD staff submitted an application for E&A funding on September 30, 2017, as well as applications for Assessment funding for abandoned boats in Tsehum Harbour (\$10,400) and to assess boats in Sooke Harbour (\$16,900). Once the assessments are completed, applications will be submitted for funding to remove all assessed abandoned boats.

On March 20, 2018, Transport Canada announced that the CRD had obtained the funding for a \$66,700 public outreach campaign (E&A) and \$10,400 funding to assess the boats in Tsehum Harbour (A&R).

Staff will utilize the existing controlled waste permit process to manage the boating-related marine debris and abandoned boats. Staff presented the controlled waste process and its application to future boat and boating-related marine debris disposal at the inter-municipal Abandoned Boats working group on March 20, 2018. The process ensures that the CRD meets WorkSafeBC legislated requirements to protect all workers (including those removing the boats) and the environment. Hazardous materials, as defined by the BC Hazardous Waste Regulation, cannot be accepted at Hartland landfill.

In April 2018, Transport Canada announced slight changes to the funding program; applications for Assessment or Removal funding will be accepted on a continuous basis, rather than having hard deadlines for all applications. This change should significantly improve the turn-around in funding applications and allow boat removal to occur soon after the assessments are completed.

ENVIRONMENTAL, LEGAL AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Removing abandoned boats and associated debris will reduce environmental risks and improve habitat in the marine environment. The disposal of this material then needs to be managed in a safe manner to protect workers and the general public. New provincial regulations require that these materials be evaluated for hazardous materials prior to disposal.

Waste acceptance protocols at Hartland are governed by, and developed to meet requirements of the following pieces of legislation:

- WorkSafeBC Occupational Health & Safety Regulation
- BC Hazardous Waste Regulation
- Hartland Landfill Operational Certificate
- Hartland Tipping Fee and Regulation Bylaw (controlled wastes and recyclable material)

Hazardous materials in boats or marine debris can include asbestos-containing materials, creosote preserved wood, leachable lead, tributyltin and other products or chemicals.

The use of the controlled waste permit process will ensure proper assessment and documentation of materials received for disposal. Staff are working with local governments and other stakeholders to clarify the process, identify qualified persons to assess hazardous materials and ensure proper documentation when the materials arrive at the landfill.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the ABP program, there is a separate application process for both the Assessment funding and the Removal funding. The CRD applied for and received \$10,900 in funding for assessment of the boats in Tsehum Harbour. This covers 100% of costs associated with conducting a detailed assessment of each boat, including all pre-testing expenses, dive expenses, and staff expenses. This approach minimizes the costs of this program to the regional taxpayer, ensures that any potential environmental or human health hazards are known prior to any of the boat material being disturbed, and assists in the determination of how each component of the boat should be recycled or disposed of. Obtaining funding through the Assessment funding program is an option available to any private or non-profit group to offset costs associated with the new pre-testing requirements for boat waste disposal at Hartland.

The process requires evaluation of any hazardous materials in the assessment. Staff expect hazardous materials to be a very small component of the overall material volume. Any pre-disposal analysis costs, along with any additional disposal costs to take material to alternate facilities, can be covered in the federal ABP disposal grant applications.

The CRD also received \$50,000 from the ABP Education fund, with the CRD contributing an additional \$16,667, for an outreach program to educate the region about responsibilities and opportunities with the ABP program.

INTER-JURISDICTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

CRD staff have reached out to all municipalities, the Islands Trust and First Nations, in addition to non-governmental organizations, to coordinate efforts on abandoned vessel inventories and ABP funding applications.

City of Victoria staff have been engaged in a process to remove the remaining vessels in the Gorge Waterway, including a court injunction. In March 2018, the court injunction was upheld and the boaters are required to remove their boats from the Gorge Waterway by May 30, 2018. Victoria and CRD staff are in discussion to determine if any remaining abandoned boats would be included in the CRD process to obtain federal funds.

Oak Bay staff informed the CRD that they are continuing to work with a non-profit organization and the Royal Victoria Yacht Club to remove abandoned boats in Cadboro Bay.

Islands Trust is also working with a non-profit organization The Dead Boat Society to complete vessel inventories on Salt Spring Island (Walkers Hook, Burgoyne Bay, Fulford Harbour, Long Harbour and Ganges Harbour). They have identified 21 wrecked or sunk boats for removal.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff are now working to implement the Capital Region Abandoned Boats Stewardship public outreach campaign, which will launch this summer. This campaign will deliver an extensive outreach program to increase awareness and educate boat owners, First Nations communities, local governments and the public about abandoned boat issues, and the responsibilities of boat owners, communities and government agencies in addressing these end-of-life boat issues.

The Capital Region Abandoned Boats Stewardship initiative will include the creation and delivery of print material (brochures, rack cards, posters, pull-up banners), radio and print advertisements in several local media outlets, a video, an extensive social media campaign and on-line program, and direct public engagement and education opportunities at community events. Workshops for Local Government staff and First Nations communities will also be held.

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. Due to potential for hazardous wastes, derelict boats and other boating-related marine debris must be managed through the CRD’s controlled waste permit process. Under this process, pre-testing of some materials will be required prior to disposal to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

Funding provided by Transport Canada to the CRD will provide 100% of all assessment costs (including pre-testing requirements) and will enable the CRD to deliver an extensive public awareness and education campaign for abandoned boats in the region.

RECOMMENDATION

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

That this report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Glenn Harris, Ph.D., R.P.Bio., Senior Manager, Environmental Protection
Concurrence:	Russ Smith, Senior Manager, Environmental Resource Management
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