

Council of BC Yacht Clubs Newsletter - September 2026

Events Since our June Report:

Gambier Island Shoreline Development Restrictions.

Since June CBCYC has been involved in numerous government meetings to further the interests of the recreational boating public including most recently 3 meetings with the Local Area Commission of the Islands Trust regarding the planned Development Permit Area (DPA) restrictions for shoreline development on Gambier Island, and island stakeholders were asked to respond to a survey on the proposed changes. CBCYC noted a number of concerns:

1. The increase of the DPA from 15 meters to 30 meters from high water is hard to justify as 'shoreline protection' and impinges on yacht club facilities that need to be close to the water by necessity. This DPA will extend along the entire shoreline of Gambier Island.
2. Design restrictions for on-water structures such as docks and ramps are based on the need to protect eelgrass growth. However, only 17% of the shoreline of Gambier is amenable to eelgrass, yet restrictions will apply to the entire shoreline.
3. Dock dimensions will be restricted to boats that are less than 2.2 meters in draught and will have a total area limit of 35 square meters. Ramps are restricted to the widths of 1.5 meters. Light penetration decking is required regardless of whether eelgrass growth is possible underneath specific sites. Justification for these restrictions was never made clear.
4. The applications process for development within the DPA involves extensive consulting requirements and cost. In its statement of goals, Islands Trust nowhere stipulates that new rules should be cost sensitive and easy for property owners to comply with.
5. The application of these new rules to yacht club outstation zoning (YCO) is unclear. The existing zoning for club outstations (YCO) was mentioned at one meeting verbally as outside the new rules, but nowhere in the presentations was this clearly stipulated, nor was it made clear if there would be any like changes anticipated to that zoning

Over 350 people responded to the survey with a large majority being non-resident property owners (38%) and part-time residents (29%). Here's what stands out in terms of results:

- **64% strongly oppose and 19% somewhat oppose** the DPA as currently written
- **73% say** the proposed 30-metre area is "too large"
- **67% are "very concerned"** the DPA will affect their ability to use their property
- **61% do not support** applying shoreline protection uniformly across all of Gambier
- **58% oppose** requiring professional reports for shoreline development

In the written comments, there were several common themes:

1. A "blanket" 30-metre rule doesn't fit an island as varied as Gambier.
2. Existing homes, docks, and structures should be protected.
3. The cost of required professional reports is a real burden.

A new Local Trust Commission (LTC) will be voted in in October to address how to deal with the stakeholder response. It is important that CBCYC and member clubs continue the effort to lobby IT for more reasonable DPA rules and to push IT to clarify exactly which, if any, of these restrictions will apply to club outstations.

BC Parks Stern Tie Restrictions in Prideaux Haven

There are new signs posted by BC Parks on Scobell and William Islands in Prideaux Haven that boats must not stern tie to trees, rocks or any natural objects. This is supposedly to reduce harm to potential eel grass propagation in the area, but reduces the capacity of the bay from 12 to 15 boats stern tied to about 3 that can swing at anchor. CBCYC will be proposing to BC Parks that the more effective solution is to install stern tie chains on the shore rocks instead of having vessels drag anchor chains across the bottom of the area, and that this approach should be applied at other provincial marine parks.

CBCYC General Meeting

The schedule for the next Council meetings for all representatives in 2026 is as follows:

Sept. 19th (Zoom)

Nov. 21st (Hybird Zoom and in-person at WVYC)

At the November meeting, WVYC will invite delegates to an evening dinner presentation the Friday night before to be given by Dr. Tom Dakin on the use of sound by many marine animals to communicate with each other. Whales, for example, can communicate across thousands of miles to each other at very low frequencies. Other small creatures also have surprising ways to use sound to hunt and protect themselves. He will also talk about how boat noises interfere with that communication and the progress being made to mitigate the problem.

During our meeting on September 19, delegates will be asked indicate if they expect to attend this presentation.