



**Council of
BC Yacht Clubs**

Advocating for Recreational Boaters



October 20.26

What's New Since September

Here's a quick catch-up on where things stand. For the latest between newsletters, check our website at www.cbcyachtclubs.org.

Quick Catch-Up

- The CBCYC Executive met online on August 30.
- The Southern Gulf Islands private dock advisors held their seventh meeting on September 2.
- Our General Meeting was held in Nanaimo on September 19.
- Steve Macdonald gave a presentation to Capital City Yacht Club on October 17

Election Pause

With the provincial election called, the government is in caretaker mode until the new legislature is sworn in, likely at the end of November. Advisory committees are on hold, which stalls both the Gambier Island community planning work and the Southern Gulf Islands dock plan. Review of existing private moorage applications in the Gulf Islands is paused too.

Shoreline and Dock Rules: Same Problems, Two Places

Islands Trust on Gambier and the Province in the Southern Gulf Islands are each writing new shoreline rules, and both are heading the same way: blanket rules for very different shorelines, eelgrass protections where eelgrass can't grow, light-penetrating decking whether it helps or not, and costly professional reports. Here's where each one stands.

Gambier Island (Islands Trust)

Since June we've attended three meetings with the Local Trust Committee (LTC) on its proposed shoreline Development Permit Area (DPA). Our main concerns:

- **Size.** The DPA doubles from 15 to 30 metres back from high water around the whole island, catching yacht club facilities that have to sit near the water.
- **Eelgrass.** Dock and ramp rules apply to the entire shoreline, though only 17% of it can support eelgrass.
- **Dock limits.** Docks are capped at 35 square metres and boats under 2.2 metres draught, ramps at 1.5 metres wide, and light-penetrating decking is required everywhere. Nobody has explained why.
- **Cost.** Applications need expensive consultants, and keeping costs down for owners isn't among the Trust's stated goals.
- **Outstations.** We were told verbally that yacht club outstation (YCO) zoning is exempt, but it's never been put in writing, and we don't know whether similar changes are coming to that zoning.

Islanders agree with us. More than 350 people answered the Trust's survey, most of them non-resident owners (38%) and part-timers (29%):

- 83% oppose the DPA as written (64% strongly)
- 73% say 30 metres is too large
- 67% are very concerned about their ability to use their property

- 61% don't want the rules applied uniformly across Gambier
- 58% oppose mandatory professional reports

The written comments said the same things we did: a blanket 30-metre rule doesn't fit an island this varied, existing homes and docks should be protected, and the reports cost too much.

A new Local Trust Committee is being elected this October and will decide what to do with that feedback. We'll keep pushing for reasonable rules and a clear answer on outstations, and we encourage member clubs to do the same.

Southern Gulf Islands Private Dock Plan (Province)

The first draft of the plan was open for public feedback until October 18 and is still available [here](#). Our concerns are shared by the Waterfront Protection Coalition and other members of the advisory group:

- **No real grandfathering.** Existing docks would have to comply within 10 years. That puts legal and financial costs on owners who followed the old rules in good faith, forces replacement of sound docks, floats and pilings that now support healthy habitat, and creates a disposal problem.
- **One-size-fits-all rules for a complex ecosystem.** Light-transmission targets are rarely achievable with the flotation year-round docks need, and they're pointless where the bottom won't support eelgrass anyway. There's no allowance for artificial light or for concrete and engineered floats, and only two habitat categories where more would fit the Gulf Islands better (mudflats could simply be no-go zones, for example).
- **Too much reliance on experts.** Required reports add cost and delay, only cover one property at a time so they can't address dock density, and feed rules too rigid to use the detail anyway. A self-assessment checklist for owners, or a basic survey, would do the job for less.

Steve Macdonald, our representative, has recommended that the CBCYC Executive send the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) a formal response.

Marine Parks and Stern Ties

- **Prideaux Haven.** BC Parks has posted signs on Scobell and William Islands banning stern ties to trees, rocks or anything natural, citing eelgrass. That shrinks the bay from 12 to 15 stern-tied boats to about three swinging at anchor, with their chains dragging the bottom. We'll propose that BC Parks install stern-tie chains on the shore rocks instead, here and in other provincial marine parks.
- **New stern ties.** The Marine Parks Forever Society (MPFS) has bought 25 more stern ties for Sabine Channel, north of Jedediah Island, which the Province will install this winter. More are coming to Pirates Cove and Princess Cove in the spring.
- **Fundraising.** RVanYC will share proceeds from its 2026 charity fundraiser with MPFS.
- **Wallace Island.** A 12-acre property could join the two parts of Wallace Island Marine Park. BC Parks hasn't signed on yet, but the BC Parks Foundation has been contacted.
- **Elsworthy Island.** MPFS is working to protect a walking trail and anchorage on Elsworthy Island in Waddington Channel, Desolation Sound. The Ministry is enthusiastic, and talks have started with three First Nations, who are concerned about boaters' impact. MPFS has offered to fund mooring buoys, stern ties and dinghy docks, and to put eelgrass beds off-limits. It's also a chance to team up with Marine Trails (kayakers).

Derelict Boats and Mooring Buoys

CBCYC is hoping to draft a policy on derelict and abandoned boats, mooring buoys their regulation. We'll ask the federal government for help through the Regional Boating Advisory Committee (RBAC) and the Oceans Protection Plan (OPP), and we're considering a workshop or working group. Delegates are

welcome to pitch in with ideas or time. Next CBCYC AGM will devote time to this discussion and how to bring this issue on to the front burner.

Pender Harbour Resident's Association (PHARA) Constitutional Challenge

Good news from PHARA's legal challenge. At a case management conference on September 23, Justice Ramsay set clear timelines for both sides to finish the remaining procedural work, with another conference scheduled for October 23 to check progress. The trial is currently set for November 2027, but she indicated it could move up to summer or fall 2027. After a long road, the case is finally moving ahead steadily, and PHARA will keep supporters posted as things develop.

Coming Up: November 21 AGM

Our AGM is November 21, on Zoom and in person at WVYC. The night before, WVYC is hosting delegates for dinner and a talk by Dr. Tom Dakin on how marine animals use sound: whales calling to each other across thousands of miles at very low frequencies, and smaller creatures using it to hunt and protect themselves. He'll also cover how boat noise gets in the way and what's being done about it. Let us know if you'd like to attend.