

## **Introduction to the Council of BC Yacht Clubs:**

Founded in 1956 and formally registered in 1980, the Council is a non-profit society which represents recreational boaters on both salt water and fresh water. It is composed of more than 50 British Columbia boating organizations, encompassing more than 15,000 members.

The Council maintains representation on provincial and federal committees to provide and receive information pertinent to our interests. We are working on and otherwise supporting a variety of projects with government such as:

- Water Use Licence Applications
- Transport Canada
  - Navigable Waters Act
  - Sewage Regulations
  - Canada Shipping Act
- Canadian Hydrographic Services
- BC Park Host Program

In 1990, at the request of BC Parks, the Council formed the "BC Marine Parks Forever Society" to advocate for and financially support the creation, expansion or enhancement of BC Marine Parks. This all-volunteer registered non-profit society has been very successful. We've contributed more than \$2.6 million to the betterment of over twenty marine parks. Further, we've installed over 186 stern ties to protect sensitive holding grounds and make anchoring safer and easier.

As boaters, we travel to often otherwise inaccessible areas of the province. In doing so we are in a unique position to learn about and begin to understand the deep cultural significance of these wild places. We fulfill a role as protectors of these far-off areas, reporting violations such as pollution, industrial debris on shores, etc.

We support small communities on the coast. Where recreational boating is prevalent, these communities can see their populations more than double during the summer season. This brings significant revenue to these areas and keeps them alive and vibrant by providing income and jobs.

Both the Council and the Marine Parks Forever executives are composed of volunteers who care deeply about the environmental health of the waters we travel on, the welfare of marine creatures of all types, the sustainability of our pastime - and we understand the value of the recreational boating industry to the province's economy.

According to a 2020 study by the BC Boating Association, recreational boating is a major economic driver in the province, injecting over \$1.7 billion annually into the provincial economy, with total industry revenues reaching \$2.2 billion. Supporting more than 17,000 direct jobs, the core sector impacts marinas, boat manufacturing, repair services, and tourism, recreational boating also provides thousands of indirect jobs.

Clearly, recreational boating is very important to the province's economy and many of its citizens, and as such, in our role as spokespersons for 15,000+ boaters, we make the following suggestions regarding the 2027 budget:

**Protection of Anchorages** Marine parks and other protected areas including conservancies, ecological reserves

- Mooring buoys, dinghy docks and designated stern tie pins protect both the ocean floor and the foreshore in areas where recreational boats are anchoring. The expansion of this program offers expanded protection in areas that are already being used by boaters. It is acknowledged that additional services require additional support and maintenance from park operators which are not possible within current budgets.
- Enhanced ranger coverage also offers protection to these sensitive areas.

**Protection of cultural and archaeological sites:**

- Enhanced signage, guidance for park visitors and designated trails to assist in protecting sites by developing visitor knowledge of the areas.

**Acquisition of land that is contiguous to existing parks or infill, providing protection of additional public lands. This would support the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation goal to increase the percentage of B.C's land base that is protected to at least 30% by 2030. Examples of possible acquisitions are:**

- Privately held land at Portage Cove/Wootton Bay in Desolation Sound; adjoining the park on both sides.
- An example of Contiguous or adjacent properties would be the private farm on Prevost Island near James Bay (Gulf Islands National Park Reserve), the private properties at Princess Cove on Wallace Island and the Wardell properties at Wakes Cove on Valdes Island
- An example of a potential new protected area: Elworthy Island on Hotham Sound (Desolation Sound area) is presently Crown land but heavily used as a cruising boat anchorage and paddlers campsite.

**Expanded park host programme:**

- Volunteers from various yacht clubs currently offer park host services in 4 BC Provincial Marine Parks in the North and South Gulf Islands. These volunteers greet visitors to the park, provide useful information about the various marine parks and are often the eyes and ears to ensure park protection. BC Parks Staff report that their presence is very helpful to the contracted park operators and to the provincial staff responsible for the parks.
- It should be noted that the annual park host report includes information about the number of US registered boats making use of park resources. Over 500 US boaters have enjoyed our beautiful parks at Wallace Island and de Courcy Island alone in 2025. This number likely underestimates the US boaters in Canada last year as many Americans are not and were not flying their country's flag. US registered boats are moored, sometimes permanently, in

Canadian marinas; they purchase marine related services in our boat yards and spend money in coastal communities. The council supports the province's decision to put a surcharge on fees such as mooring buoys and docks for out of province/out of country users. Consideration of a fee to enter Canadian waters is encouraged. We acknowledge this may be a federal responsibility but encourage the BC government to lobby for such a fee.

**Sewage Pump Out Stations:**

- Boaters along the BC Coast are finding the low number of sewage pump out stations along the coast, especially further north, is problematic. Holding tanks aboard vessels have limited capacity and skippers are left without an environmentally responsible solution for the disposal of black water.