

April 17, 2013

Ken Forde boat ramp opens for May

The City of Campbell River is working to have the Ken Forde boat ramp open by May 1.

"Thanks to our 2012 agreement signed with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the City is able to schedule regular maintenance of the boat ramps," says Ross Milnthorp, the City's general manager of parks, recreation and culture. *"The Ken Forde boat ramp in particular is clogged with logs and gravel from winter storms, and the agreement now allows us to stockpile and use that material to rebuild eroded foreshore along our waterfront."*

Boat ramp clearing work is timed with the tides, and an estimated 1,200 cubic yards of material will be removed from the boat ramp areas this year. The locations to be restored will be determined later this spring. The City budgets \$50,000 each year for beach restoration, funded by the Federal Gas Tax Community Works Fund.

In 2008, the City of Campbell River began following Mother Nature's lead to better protect approximately 16 kilometres of the community's storm-battered waterfront. Soft shore restoration is now the preferred approach for City-owned shoreline property.

"It's cost-efficient, looks natural, keeps land from washing into the sea, restores habitat, protects infrastructure and enhances safe public access to the foreshore," Milnthorp explains.

Soft shore restoration re-creates a natural beach slope using driftwood, logs and gravel cleared from local boat launches. Waves break offshore and lose their power rolling up a gradual slope – rather than pounding water and debris against armouring. The natural contour also encourages the northern movement of wood and gravel up the coast, a vital link for healthy fish habitat.

Video and onsite inspection indicate that soft shores help keep roads, utilities infrastructure and the community's popular seawalk from being washed away by winter storms.

The City's first soft shore restoration was at the City's Dick Murphy Park, where a badly-eroded marine shore previously reinforced with waste materials and contaminants was re-contoured using native materials and salvaged plants. The restoration work received a gold level rating from the Green Shores Technical Working Group, a project of the Stewardship Centre for BC.

In an innovative solution to solve two problems, the City of Campbell River and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) signed an agreement in September 2012 that approves restoring damaged shoreline using approximately 1,200 cubic yards of material that clogs the City's boat ramps each year. Based on Campbell River's *Marine Foreshore Habitat Assessment and Restoration Plan*, the agreement complies with the *Federal Fisheries Act*, clarifies acceptable work procedures in and around the marine foreshore and is expected to shorten the DFO review process time from months to 10 working days. The plan identifies priority foreshore locations for future restoration and/or beach nourishment, and every year, up to 200 metres of eroding shoreline is restored – and public boat ramps are kept open.

"With this agreement, Campbell River has demonstrated how seriously it takes its obligation to restore degraded and eroded foreshore areas," Milnthorp adds. *"This approach is particularly essential in view of the anticipated rise in sea/tidal levels linked to climate change, and this agreement sets an example for other coastal communities to follow."*

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