



## **COOPERS GREEN PARK (tituls) BOAT RAMP**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Coopers Green boat ramp is an important community asset that affects different people in different ways. Located in Coopers Green Park, the ramp and adjacent water area are currently used for swimming, SCUBA diving, boating, fishing, kayaking, and to move people, goods and services to and from nearby islands.

The information in this document is intended to help create a shared understanding of how the ramp is managed and some of the factors to consider when thinking about past use, current use and potential future changes.

Specific management changes are not planned for the ramp at this time, however there are challenges associated with the ramp and there is interest from stakeholders and the public to develop a clear plan that will meet multiple interests and needs.

### **HISTORY**

What is known today as Coopers Green has been an important place for the shíshálh Nation since time immemorial. The shashishalhem name for the park is *tituls*, meaning “big rocks.”

A succession of commercial and recreational uses that have included, at various times, boat launching, have existed in the area since at least 1909. In 1985 the upland area was gifted to the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) for park use.

The current ramp was substantially constructed on the foreshore (also called “land covered by water” in some documents) by the SCRD in 1986. The ramp was designed for launching recreational watercraft and has been maintained to that standard. Major repair work was completed by the SCRD in 2012. There is a long history of community partnership and volunteer contributions in and around Coopers Green.

## **JURISDICTION**

The ramp is located on land owned by the Province of British Columbia and is located within the shishalh swiya. The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development has jurisdiction over, or manages, the land covered by water for the Province.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is responsible for Fisherman Road, to which the ramp attaches. The map included with this document shows the various areas of jurisdiction.

The SCRD owns and manages Coopers Green Park, on the east side of Fisherman Road, across from the ramp.

## **ROLE OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT**

The SCRD operates the ramp under a foreshore Licence of Occupation (#242861) from the Province of British Columbia. The licence area covers the majority of the beach area that fronts Coopers Green Park.

The current licence replaces an earlier licence (#239642, granted circa 1985) that came into effect September 14, 2015 with a term of 30 years. These licences are provided through the Province's [Commercial and Institutional Land Use Program](#), which provides use of provincial lands to support community, social and economic goals.

The licence is non-exclusive and is for “public swimming and recreational boating” purposes. This wording dates from December 2015 and clarified the September 2015 purpose of “public recreational.” The amended wording was put in place to reflect SCRD’s management plan for the ramp. The licence and modification letter are included with this information package.

## **PLANNING**

The Coopers Green boat ramp is designated as Marine Transportation in the [Halfmoon Bay Official Community Plan](#) (SCRD Bylaw No. 675). On January 14, 2016, the SCRD Board adopted the Coopers Green Park Management Plan as a guiding document for the future development of Coopers Green Park. The plan directs that SCRD support the public recreational use of the Coopers Green boat launch as permitted within the existing licence with the Province of British Columbia.

During the Park Management Plan process, the existing Coopers Green water licence with the province was up for renewal and SCRD staff researched the possibility of changing the existing water licence to a commercial (user pay) or industrial licence to accommodate the transportation of goods and materials to the Area B Islands. SCRD was informed that because Coopers Green is part of a ‘Safe Haven Reserve’ for boats in the event of a storm or other emergency, the licence could only be renewed ‘as is’ under a grandfathered clause as government policy does not allow overlapping licences in a Safe Haven Reserve.

During planning done in 2017 and 2018 for a possible rehabilitation or replacement of Coopers Green Hall, public input was received that indicated both a concern for how the ramp was used and a desire for clarity and potential change going forward.

## **RAMP LOAD LIMIT**

An engineering report completed in 2016 set the load limit for the ramp to the weight of a full size truck and 25-foot boat on a trailer (approximately 25,000 pounds). The report outlined more than \$350,000 of repairs that need to take place over five years.

There are a number of sections of the ramp that are failing due to use, weight, settling and natural actions of the ocean. The report states that heavy vehicles should not be permitted on the ramp. Condition is one factor affecting the load rating, but the underlying design of the ramp is not meant for heavier vehicles.

The SCRD has budgeted for some ramp repairs in 2020 and has posted a sign stating the load limit for the ramp. Adherence to the load limit is important for employers as it is connected to WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. There may also be vehicle or other insurance implications associated with failing to adhere to posted load limits.

## **COMMERCIAL USE**

SCRD staff have recently confirmed that the Province considers 'commercial use' to be pay-per-use, and has advised the SCRD that use of the ramp for transporting goods is acceptable under the terms of the licence. An inspection by the Province found that SCRD's approach to operation of the ramp is not in contravention of the licence.

Ongoing, scheduled use by a "for hire" barge company would not be acceptable. The SCRD has authority to update the management plan for the ramp, subject to Provincial approval, to introduce, for example, details about limits on goods transportation use (such as specific days/hours of use). The Province has suggested that an updated management plan could help clarify permitted use.

## **NOISE RESTRICTIONS**

The SCRD Noise Control Bylaw No. 597 section 3(a) says: No Person shall cause, permit or allow to be caused any noise which disturbs the quiet, peace, rest, enjoyment, comfort, or convenience of any person or persons in the neighbourhood or vicinity. Section 4(b) Machine Noise and (c) Quiet Hours restrict times for noise-making activities, generally to 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., with specifics listed in the bylaw.

## **MARINE TRANSPORTATION ON THE SUNSHINE COAST**

The SCRD understands that there are four other commercial use ramps on the Sunshine Coast that have the capacity to load barges. Barge access is required to load service equipment needed for residents on Sunshine Coast islands, such as building supplies, propane and construction equipment.

The most used ramps are located at either ends of the Coast in Earls Cove and in Port Mellon, which is a significant increase in travel distance and cost (3 hours by barge one way) to residents of the islands in the middle of the Sunshine Coast, such as Thormanby and Merry Island. The shísháhlh Nation has a boat ramp in Sechelt, however it can be steep and difficult for offloading in low tide situations.

The Harbour Authority in Madeira Park also has a ramp that can be used for commercial loading, however the dock can be tight for loading in lower tide situations.

The SCRD is not the authority that regulates marine transportation, the foreshore or land covered by water. Landing of barges (at ramps or elsewhere) is subject to provincial and/or federal regulations. There are a number of sensitive environmental areas on the Sunshine Coast, including in Halfmoon Bay and on Thormanby and Merry Islands.

## **STAKEHOLDERS**

The following is a non-exclusive list of agencies, groups, entities and people who may be interested:

- Shishalh Nation
- Province of BC
- Government of Canada (Department of Fisheries and Oceans)
- Sunshine Coast Regional District
- Islands Trust, to the extent that the ramp impacts area islands
- Ratepayers of the Sunshine Coast rural areas (all of whom participate in the Community Parks service through which the ramp is managed)
- Residents of the Coopers Green/Redroofs Road area
- Residents of Thormanby and Merry Islands
- Marine transportation operators
- Contractors, builders and suppliers who require marine transportation facilities to move goods and services
- Fishing/recreation watercraft users
- General public using the licence area for swimming
- Terrestrial, riparian and marine ecosystems; fresh and marine water resources in the area

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE RAMP**

1. Why does this ramp matter to you/your group?
2. What else should SCRD and other ramp stakeholders know?
3. When we think together as one community about the future of the ramp, what needs be part of a sustainable vision?

### **For more information:**

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