

April 12, 2017

Boat ramp construction postponed – City to review plans, coordinate with highway project

With concerns raised by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans about the potential environmental impact of the proposed re-design of the Big Rock boat ramp and the related permitting taking longer than anticipated, construction has been postponed – and the delay offers a potential timing benefit.

“We had hoped to be able to begin construction work this year, but due to the planned infilling around the expanded breakwater area, one of the environmental permits requires more information and will take longer to process than anticipated. We will not be able to complete construction during this summer season when foreshore work is usually permitted,” explains Ron Neufeld, Campbell River’s deputy City manager and general manager of operations. *“The City shares DFO’s goal to protect fisheries habitat and will gather additional information and review the boat ramp design to ensure it uses the best science to minimize environmental impact.”*

Neufeld adds that *“the silver lining is that with the recent announcement of funding for the next phase of Highway 19A, we can work to coordinate the boat ramp upgrade with the future highway upgrade to minimize the amount of time the ramp would be inaccessible for these two construction projects.”*

The Big Rock boat ramp upgrade has been on Council’s to-do list for several years, and after two unsuccessful submissions for senior government grants to help fund the project, Council approved funding in the City’s 2017 financial plan. At Council’s direction, City staff had worked to fast-track the project for 2017.

“With the announcement in March confirming that federal and provincial government grant funding would be available for the next phase of the Highway 19A upgrade project that extends to the boat ramp property, there is an opportunity to see if we can find some efficiencies in coordinating the design and costs of the two projects,” says Mayor Andy Adams. *“We’re all eager to see the boat ramp expanded and upgraded, and Council has directed staff to use this additional time to further review and fine-tune the proposed boat ramp design and coordinate this work as much as possible with the highway work, to minimize disruption for the public. In the meantime, Big Rock boat ramp will be open as usual this summer.”*

Boat launch facilities are also available at Discovery Harbour Marina and Ken Forde Boat Launch.

Plans to improve the Big Rock Boat Ramp and McCallum Park were developed through three public consultation events, and the boat ramp upgrade will focus on improving safety and ramp use for boaters and anglers.

The sign posted at the boat ramp to inform people of the timing and details of upgrades will be changed to reflect the construction delay.

To keep current on what’s happening with this and other capital projects, check out the webpage at: <http://www.campbellriver.ca/city-services/capital-improvement-projects>. To get the news as it’s published, register for email updates.

As per the agreement between the City and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, gravel and woody debris removed from Ken Forde and Big Rock boat ramps will continue to be used in foreshore restoration.

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