



Sointula Harbour

LOCAL CONTROL SUITS INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY

When the crew of the trawler *Northisle* brought up an old anchor while fishing off Estevan Point on the west coast of Vancouver Island in 1989, skipper Jimmy Erickson wanted to dump it back overboard. Crew member Calvin Siider insisted that the huge rusted piece of iron had historical value and took it back to his home harbour of Sointula.

There, a marine artifact expert examined the anchor and declared that it was made in England sometime between 1750 and 1800. Records of Captain Cook's exploratory voyage of the west coast of North America in 1776 state that while the ship *Resolution* was anchored in the region of Estevan Point, three anchor lines broke during a storm. Calvin Siider's find, Sointula residents concluded, was one of Captain Cook's three lost anchors!

That anchor is now the centrepiece of the Sointula Fishermen's Memorial, installed and dedicated in the summer of 2002. "Most seaports have some sort of memorial honouring fishers lost at sea and we thought it was appropriate to use the anchor in ours," says Dick Michelson, President of the Malcolm Island Lions Harbour Authority.

Sointula is located on Malcolm Island, a small island off the northeastern tip of Vancouver Island. The name (which means "harmony" in Finnish) reveals the community's origins as a Utopian community founded by Finnish coal miners. Their leader was a charismatic playwright with strong socialist leanings named Matti Kurikka. His Kalevan Kansa Colonisation



Sointula Harbour: An anchor (inset) thought to be from one of Captain Cook's ships graces the harbour's Fishermen's Memorial. Photos by Kelly Edwards.

Company Limited received a Crown grant of land on Malcolm Island in 1901.

As with many Utopian communities, things did not go well. The land proved unsuitable for farming, a disastrous fire killed 11 people and destroyed the community centre, a bridge-building contract bankrupted the community, and a logging business failed. Many of the settlers left when Kurikka resigned as leader. The remaining Finns took up fishing. Over time, they built a strong economy around commercial fishing, fish processing, logging and lumber production.

Fishing for salmon, halibut, shrimp and rockfish is the mainstay of the economy of Sointula, home to approximately 1,000 people. "We have the largest per capita fishing fleet in British Columbia," says Harbour Manager Lorraine Williams. The

harbour berths 124 boats, the majority of which are licensed commercial fishing boats. The remaining vessels include tugboats, pleasure craft and a ferry that runs between Malcolm Island and Vancouver Island.

The construction of a rock breakwater, wharf heads and floating docks to expand and improve the harbour was well underway when the federal government approached the community about forming a harbour authority in 1993. The Malcolm Island Lions Club was the only group in the small, independent-minded community willing to take over managing what everyone thought was doing fine on its own, explains Mr. Michelson.

But the harbour has benefited from the formation of the harbour authority, he

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NHAAC COMPLETES ANNUAL MANDATE REVIEW

On November 14 and 15, 2002, the National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee (NHAAC) held its fourth meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. After being warmly welcomed by their hosts, NHAAC members and Small Craft Harbours (SCH) representatives entered into the two-day meeting with a positive attitude, eager to share

Sointula Harbour,

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admits. "We're pretty busy in the spring, summer and fall with commercial fishing and pleasure craft. On-site harbour management is necessary to keep track of all the activity all year round." And local control of the management of the harbour — an important element of the Small Craft Harbours program — suits the independent character of Sointula and its fishers.

ideas and promote better work practices among harbour authorities.

At the top of the agenda were the annual review of the NHAAC mandate and a discussion of how the NHAAC functions. The group reiterated that the committee functions most effectively as an advisory body — providing information and advice to SCH staff. In light of this, members questioned the format of the semi-annual NHAAC meetings: up to now, members have used the meetings primarily to update each other on recurring issues. Members identified other issues they would like to discuss as agenda items for upcoming meetings.

However, to make the most of these discussions, members said they would need to know about these issues in advance, so they could discuss them with their respective regional advisory council or association. In this way, NHAAC members would be able to give feedback that truly represented the views of all harbour authorities, rather than just their own opinions and experiences. This

discussion was a key part of the meeting, since it demonstrated members' continuing desire to see the NHAAC grow and develop and to be as effective as possible.

The committee spent the rest of the meeting discussing ongoing issues, such as fatigue among harbour authorities, the Alternate Service Delivery pilot project and insurance. The night before the meeting, members elected the executive, with all three sitting members being re-elected: Osborne Burke as Chairperson, Rick Hill as Vice-chairperson and Melanie Sonnenberg as Secretary.

The committee's time was not completely filled with business discussions. The conference hosts demonstrated the famous Newfoundland hospitality by holding a reception at the end of the first day's proceedings, and the group spent the day following the meeting visiting Petty Harbour, Port de Grave, Harbour Grace, Bay Bulls and Tors Cove.

The next NHAAC meeting will be held in Quebec's Îles-de-la-Madeleine in early May.

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NEW LOOK FOR WEB SITE

The Small Craft Harbours Web site was recently redesigned in response to the Government On-Line Common Look and Feel initiative. The site was redesigned keeping harbour authorities in mind. While most of the information you are used to seeing on the site is still there, many of the page names have changed, so you should update your bookmarks accordingly. At your convenience, please type the following link into your browser to view the site: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch>. Your comments and suggestions for improving the site are always welcome.

FROM THE EDITOR

I am very excited to see such wonderful material in this issue of *Harbour Authorities Forum*. It gives me great pleasure to be able to help you share these stories with your colleagues.

I am also very grateful to all of the people in the Pacific Region office for their hospitality, especially to Stacey Martin and Levi Timmermans who so capably arranged the details of my visit.

Tara Hartley

GOODWILL BRINGS FISHERS TOGETHER

Thanks to goodwill and extensive consultation, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal fishers who work out of the harbour in Richibucto, New Brunswick, are working together to keep their communities thriving.

“What was done there could be seen as a role model for the rest of Canada,” says Maurice Girouard, Director of Aboriginal Harbour Development in Maritimes Region. He led a team of representatives from Small Craft Harbours, other parts of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the local Member of Parliament’s office and the fishers’ union that worked with community members to restructure the harbour authority and develop lines of communication between the various stakeholders.

Difficulties began for the community after the Marshall decision of September 1999, which granted Aboriginal fishers the right to fish for food and to generate a moderate income. The food fishery starts several weeks before the commercial fishery opens, which raised concerns among non-Aboriginal fishers about competition for limited fish stocks.

After the Marshall decision, the size and composition of the Richibucto fishing fleet changed dramatically. By December 2001, the original fleet of 47 fishing vessels (42 skippered by non-Aboriginal fishers and 5 skippered by Aboriginal fishers) had grown to 63 boats, 22 of which were skippered by non-Aboriginals.

These changes in the fleet and growing tensions in the community made it apparent that equal representation on the harbour authority board was necessary to better reflect the identities of harbour users, says Mr. Girouard. In addition, the board saw a growing need and requirement for services in three languages: English, French and Mi’kmaq.

Today, the Richibucto harbour is functioning smoothly, even as the fishing fleet has grown still further to 86 commercial fishing boats and approximately 50 pleasure craft, says Big Cove resident Cyril Polchies, a fisher and the new president of

the Richibucto Port Authority. A restructured harbour authority board reflects the interests and concerns of all the harbour stakeholders. Much needed construction to expand and improve the harbour is under way.

What turned the situation around? “Cooperation and good will from everyone,” says Mr. Girouard. “Everyone wanted to avoid confrontation, but not at any cost.” There was a clear understanding that any solution to the community’s problems had to be a balanced one, one that wasn’t seen as favouring one group over another, he says.

As an example, Mr. Polchies explains that “provincial ministry and federal department assurances that both the

Native and non-Native fishing activity were subject to regulations and would be closely monitored went a long way towards calming the situation.”

Restructuring the harbour authority board was key to achieving a solution.

The board now comprises three Aboriginal and three non-Aboriginal members from the fisher group, two members representing pleasure boat users, one member each from the chamber of commerce, the business development association, the harbour-based business operators, the Town of Richibucto and the Aboriginal communities of Big Cove and Indian Island. The new by-laws require the board’s executive to have a 50-50 split between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members.



New Homes for Old Bells

Historic St. Nicholas Anglican Church in Torbay, Newfoundland and Labrador, will soon be graced with a new 2.5 m steel tower frame housing the Lord’s Cove buoy bell, which was donated by the Canadian Coast Guard in 2000 after it was damaged during Hurricane Michael that same year. “Traditional buoy bells are being replaced with electronic chimes,” explains Gerry Hayes, Director of Operations and Development for the Town of Torbay, who arranged the donation of the bell. “It seemed a shame to just send these historical bells to the scrap yard.” A similar project is under way in Fogo Island. Photo by Ben Hansen.

WELCOME TO THE LOWER NORTH SHORE AND LABRADOR!

The skies were bright and sunny for the tour of the Lower North Shore of the St. Lawrence River and Labrador harbours that took place from September 16 to 20, 2002. Robert Bergeron, Director General, Small Craft Harbours, Gervais Bouchard, Regional Director, Quebec Region, and Bill Goulding, Regional Director, Newfoundland and Labrador Region, had an opportunity to visit facilities in these harbours and meet the members of their harbour authorities.

“Most of the harbour authorities in these areas function in isolation created by geography and the absence of highway infrastructure,” Mr. Bergeron explains. “We wanted to go there to meet the people and discuss their concerns with them.”

Messrs. Bergeron, Bouchard and Goulding traveled mainly by helicopter. During the first two days, they toured the Lower North Shore harbours, including Rivière-au-Tonnerre, Mingan, Havre Saint-Pierre and the four harbours that make up the new global harbour authority in the eastern sector of the Lower North Shore (Old Fort Bay, Middle Bay, Baie de Brador and Blanc-Sablon). Richard Chénier, Program Officer for the North Shore, accompanied them on the tour.

During the last three days, area chiefs Jim Cheeseman and Wayne Bungay, who are responsible for southern and northern Labrador respectively, joined the group for the tour of the harbours in their areas, including L’Anse-au-Clair, Forteau, L’Anse-au-Loup, St. Lewis, Makkovik and Nain.

During their stay in Blanc-Sablon, the visitors were invited to attend a dinner with members of the global harbour authority for the eastern area of the Lower North Shore and the L’Anse-au-Clair, L’Anse-au-Loup and Forteau harbour authorities. It was an evening marked by conviviality, relaxation and interregional exchange.



From left to right, Wayne Bungay, Robert Bergeron, Bill Goulding and Gervais Bouchard stop to take in the scenery on their tour of Quebec’s Lower North Shore and Labrador. They are pictured on a bridge over the Pinware River in Labrador.

PAINTINGS OF THE PAST

The community fishing stage building in Portugal Cove South stands out from its neighbours along the eastern Newfoundland coast. Five 1.25 m by 2.5 m paintings depicting typical scenes of the early 20th century



grace its walls. “They look like windows to the past,” explains Charlene Power, Secretary of the Harbour Authority of Portugal Cove South. Created by Nora Coombs in 2000 as a job creation project, the paintings bring a sense of pride to the small community. They also attract tourists, up to a 100 a day, curious to learn more about the life of Newfoundland fishers and their families. “I’ve even had people come to my house looking for prints,” says Mrs. Coombs.



Five paintings depicting typical scenes of the early 20th century grace the walls of the fishing stage building in Portugal Cove South, Newfoundland and Labrador.



FHAAC AIMS FOR CLOSER TIES WITH CCG

The Freshwater Harbour Authority Advisory Council's (FHAAC) five-point mandate (described in the October 2002 issue of *Harbour Authorities Forum*) includes the intent to develop closer ties between harbour authorities and the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) to improve boating safety and ensure each harbour in Central and Arctic Region has adequate navigational aids.

"Our region is vast," explains Bruce Benson, President of FHAAC. "Cutbacks and the growing practice of tendering out maintenance work to independent contractors mean that many harbours in Central and Arctic Region never see a Coast Guard representative." Many may not be aware that the services and assistance of CCG are available to them, he adds.

What kind of services and assistance can CCG provide? "The Coast Guard is always available to respond to harbour authority questions and concerns, provide advice and recommend suppliers for

navigational aids and replacement parts," says Bob Jackson, CCG's Superintendent of Marine Aids to Navigation in Central and Arctic Region. Navigational aids inside harbour limits (as defined by the harbour authority lease) are the responsibility of the harbour authority, explains Mr. Jackson, while those outside the harbour limits are CCG's responsibility. (For information on how this works in practice in Newfoundland and Labrador Region, see page 3 of the July 2002 issue of *Harbour Authorities Forum*).



MARITIME HARBOUR AUTHORITY CONFERENCE

The fourth Maritime Provinces Harbour Authority Conference was held on March 4 and 5 in Charlottetown. Described as a great success, the conference was a good opportunity for members, Small Craft Harbours staff, provincial agencies and industry partners to meet and discuss issues facing harbour authorities, and highlight the important contribution that dedicated volunteers make to the program. One of the initiatives discussed was a plan to make the harbour authorities program more visible both within and outside of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and renew interest and pride in these groups within the communities. For more conference coverage and other stories from the Maritimes, please see the next issue of *Harbour Authorities Forum*.

HA MEMBER RECOGNIZED AS COMMUNITY HERO

Steward May, Secretary of the Harbour Authority of Belleoram, was honoured for his many years of volunteer service at the annual Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities convention in November 2002. Mr. May received a Municipal Service Award from the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs and the Confederation Volunteer Service Medal from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. May's history of service to his community spans more than 20 years. One of his greatest accomplishments, while mayor of Belleoram, was to set up a library for the town and acquire books for libraries and schools along the south coast of Newfoundland. He currently volunteers with 18 local organizations, including St. Lawrence Anglican Church, the Loyal Orange Lodge and the Belleoram volunteer fire department, as well as the harbour authority.

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL FACT SHEETS FOR HARBOUR AUTHORITIES

Introduced at the Pacific Region annual conference in January, a new series of environmental fact sheets developed by Small Craft Harbours, Pacific Region, supports the region's clean harbour initiatives, promoting environmental awareness and management in Pacific Region harbours.

Designed with harbour authorities in mind, the fact sheets convey environmental concepts, best management practices and guidelines for harbour projects in one-page handouts, and cover issues such as environmental management plans, harbour wash-rooms, vessel pump-out facilities and storm water management.

TALL SHIPS, BIG CROWDS

Steveston Harbour, on the outskirts of Richmond, British Columbia, is the largest commercial fishing harbour in Canada, home to more than 600 commercial fishing vessels. Even so, harbour authority personnel found their resources stretched to the limit when 24 Tall Ships arrived in early August for the City of Richmond's Tall Ships 2002 event.

"We had more than 400,000 visitors in four days," exclaims Bob Baziuk,

Operations Manager. "The most the village of Steveston had seen before that was 40,000 for our annual salmon festival!"

Several measures preserved the normal working operations of the harbour during the onslaught of visitors. "Keeping harbour service open to fishers was my main responsibility," says Mr. Baziuk. Since the harbour is quite large, he was able to keep most of the event activity away from the commercial section of the

harbour. Except for space for the Tall Ships themselves, no additional moorage was available for visitors. Access roads were kept clear and part-time harbour authority employees worked extra hours to assist with security. As a final measure, fishers were given identifying necklaces to allow them preferential movement in and out of the harbour.



Above, crowds gather at Garry Point Park in Steveston to watch the Parade of Sail of 24 Tall Ships last August. More than 400,000 people attended the four-day event. Left, the *Nippon Maru*. Photos by Bob Baziuk.

Labrador's Short Summers

A BUSY TIME FOR HARBOUR AUTHORITIES

Short summers make for busy summers at harbours in Labrador. All fishing, construction, repairs and delivery of food, fuel and other supplies must take place in the short four-to-six-month period between the ice leaving the harbours as late as mid-July and freeze-up in early December.

"We [Small Craft Harbours and the harbour authorities] are always looking for ways to get as much as possible done in the time available," explains Wayne Bungay, Area Chief, Central Newfoundland and Labrador.

A recent wharf extension and renovation project in Makkovik on the east coast

of Labrador is an example of work that incorporated several measures to ensure fast and efficient construction. The addition of close-faced fender piles to the wharf brought much needed wave protection (previously, waves would swamp boats at the wharf). The use of concrete deck panels sped up construction and improved the surface of the wharf.

"We pre-made as many of the components as possible," says Gordon Spencer of Waterworks Construction of Halifax. Pre-made components included a steel pile-driving template, 3.0 m by 3.7 m concrete deck panels and concrete pile cap forms. The company also pre-mixed 400 tonnes

of concrete, packing it into 1400 kg bags ready to mix with water in a concrete mixer.

All this pre-constructed material, including a completed electrical building — ready to connect to the local electricity system and provide electrical service at the wharf — was loaded onto a barge in Halifax and moved to Makkovik. It arrived in time for the start of the area's construction season on August 1, 2002. Work on the 68 m dogleg wharf finished at the end of November. "And the harbour iced in the first week of December," says Mr. Bungay.

SAVING TIME, MONEY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Recent advances in dredging and marine construction are not only reducing environmental damage but also are often saving harbour authorities time and money.

In the past 10 years, fewer cranes have been used in dredging, reports marine engineer Brian Riggs of Riggs Engineering Ltd. in Ontario. There's been an increase in the use of backhoes for dredging and skilled crane operators are becoming scarce. Some backhoes, called long-stick backhoes, are equipped with arms up to 18 m long, giving them nearly the same reach as cranes.

Hydraulic dredging is also becoming more common. This method, which sucks water and sediment off the bottom, was formerly only seen in large-scale dredging operations. Depending on the composition of the dredged material and its possible contamination from the run-off of agricultural pesticides or heavy metals, it is either pumped back into the water some distance from the harbour or pumped on shore and filtered to catch the sediment. The water is returned to the harbour and the dredged material trucked away.

To lessen a dredging operation's impact on the environment, the use of silt curtains is becoming more common, adds Mr. Riggs. A silt curtain (a fine-mesh fabric suspended from floats) is frequently placed around the dredging area to contain sediments disturbed during the dredging operation.

Though only environmentally appropriate in certain locations, another extremely economical dredging method is the "prop wash," says Adrian Rowland, Regional Engineer with Small Craft Harbours in Pacific Region. This technique uses the current or "wash" from a tug boat's propellers to move fine sand out of the harbour and back into the natural sediment regime. Fast, easy and economical, prop wash dredging can be done annually, moving only as much material as necessary to maintain safe harbour conditions. "Like sweeping off the walkway, this approach can replace methods that — due

to their high costs — are done less frequently but with much higher volumes and impact," Mr Rowland explains. "The tendency with more expensive methods is to overdredge, which can have a higher impact than necessary on the environment."

INNOVATIVE FLOATING BREAK-

WATER CONSTRUCTION KITS

USING RECYCLED 1 M

DIAMETER GAS PIPELINE HAVE

BEEN DESIGNED FOR PACIFIC

REGION HARBOUR AUTHORITIES.

Marine construction techniques have evolved, too.

"To the best of our knowledge, the use of pre-cast concrete deck panels in the Makkovik, Newfoundland and Labrador, wharf extension project was a first for both Public Works [and Government Services Canada] and the Newfoundland and Labrador coast," comments Gordon Spencer, Vice-president of Waterworks Construction in Halifax, the company that carried out the work. The project showed similar costs to that of conventional

methods, but delivered much better quality, says Mr. Spencer.

"Pre-construction of the deck panels allowed quality control not possible on site," explains Mr. Spencer. The concrete for each 3.0 m by 3.7 m panel was poured onto a large vibrating table, which settled the wet concrete more effectively than tamping. The 20 cm thick panels were then steam-cured and finished to exact specifications. This ensured correct alignment and connection of an electrical conduit inside each panel (for electrical jetty mounts and wharf lights) once on site.

Lately, construction or repair of wharf decking often includes the addition of catchment systems for potentially contaminated run-off from wharves and work areas, says Mr. Rowland. The water is directed to a drain that allows interception and treatment of spills and contaminated sediment.

Innovative floating breakwater construction kits using recycled 1 m diameter gas pipeline have been designed for Pacific Region harbour authorities, says Mr. Rowland. Simple and inexpensive, the pipes are assembled in continuous pairs, like a catamaran hull, with the option to place decking on top.

New Dredging Techniques Put to the Test

New dredging techniques are ensuring safe passage for the vessels of two small craft harbours on Lake Erie. Recent low water levels in the Great Lakes combined with normal sediment accumulation made the work necessary.

At Wheatley, a silt curtain kept dredged silt from drifting and spreading away from the dredging site during a dredging operation in the fall of 2002. The three-basin harbour is located at the mouth of Muddy Creek. The silt posed a possible risk of contaminating the surrounding waters with heavy metals and agricultural pesticides. The dredged material, removed by long-stick backhoe, was trucked to a nearby municipal landfill site in leak-proof dump trucks.

At Eriean-Rondeau harbour, a hydraulic pumping system will move a 25-year accumulation of sand that has reduced clearance in the channel to 1.5 m in some places, according to George Melton, Harbour Manager. The removed sand will be cast back into the water some distance to the east of the channel. This work is planned for this spring.

GRANDE-ENTRÉE HARBOUR GETS A NEW LOOK

In 2002, the dream of the Grande-Entrée harbour authority finally came true: its fishing harbour has been enlarged.

The Grande-Entrée harbour was developed in the early 1970s to accommodate 60 boats whose dimensions at that time were approximately 9 m x 3 m. Thirty years later, the harbour was accommodating up to 125 modern boats that could reach 13 m x 5 m. According to Luc Boucher, Area Program Manager with Small Craft

THE ENLARGEMENT ALLOWED

FOR A NEW BASIN THAT

INCLUDES 52 ADDITIONAL

BERTHING SPACES.



What a difference! The Grand-Entrée harbour before (left) and after (right) its enlargement.

Harbours and Real Property in the Quebec Region, “congestion of the basin was compromising circulation and catch landings in the harbour.” The enlargement allowed for a new basin that includes 52 additional berthing spaces. Most of the work will be finished in time for the opening of the 2003 season. Some minor work will need to be finished in September.

The Grande-Entrée harbour authority has played an important role in designing and carrying out the project. As its president, Roland Cyr, explains, “as well as collaborating closely with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, we got all the users together to choose the development plan that was best suited to their needs.”

Where There's Smoke ...

THERE SHOULD BE A FIRE-FIGHTING PLAN

A major harbour fire in Tofino, British Columbia, in the summer of 2001 did more than destroy one fishing vessel and seriously damage two others. “It was quite a wake-up call,” says Mike Doutaz, Small Craft Harbours Area Chief for Vancouver Island. “The debriefing session showed us quite clearly that there was a lack of fire-fighting knowledge, preparedness and coordination among harbour stakeholders.”

In light of this, Pacific Region Small Craft Harbours personnel developed a fire response training workshop, reports Mr. Doutaz. The first of these workshops, called Marine Fire Fighting for Land-Based Fire Fighters, was held in Tofino shortly after the harbour fire. It was such a success that Small Craft Harbours decided to continue offering the workshop.

The second workshop was held on the last weekend of November 2002 in Port McNeill, British Columbia. Twenty participants from Port McNeill, Port Hardy, Alert

Bay and Sointula (representing harbour authorities, local fire departments and Town of Port McNeill public works employees) attended.

The two-day workshop curriculum was developed and taught by Captain John Lewis of SeaFire Training, a Surrey company specializing in marine fire-fighting training. The workshop teaches fire-fighting skills and encourages harbour authorities, local fire departments and harbour-based business operators to work as a team.

The course first covers various vessel types, areas where fires are likely to start, and techniques for locating and controlling fires on board a boat. Participants then practise what they've learned in a tabletop exercise simulating a fire in a real harbour. During this exercise, they also begin to appreciate the necessity for quick and appropriate decision making and teamwork in an emergency situation, explains Captain Lewis.

Despite the wintery air and frigid waters, participants enthusiastically finished the course with some simulated fire situations in the Port McNeill small craft harbour. These simulations included not only billows of smoke, panicked shouting and faulty equipment but also fire victims and fire fighters falling into the water.

“Everything that could go wrong did!” exclaims Hiltje Binner, Harbour Manager of the host harbour. “It was a great learning experience that highlighted areas needing improvements in our harbour.” Among the improvements planned for the Port McNeill harbour, Ms. Binner says, are ladders at the end of docks, more fire extinguishers, an enlarged detailed harbour map for her office (which would be the command centre in an emergency situation) and regular practice sessions with the Port McNeill Fire Department.

STUDY LOOKS AT AQUACULTURE AND HARBOURS

A study commissioned by Small Craft Harbours in Maritimes Region identifies the impact of the rapidly growing aquaculture industry on harbour usage and harbour authorities in southwestern New Brunswick and makes several recommendations for the future.

The study found that the aquaculture industry has evolved into a major client group for harbours and harbour authorities over the last 15 years, with an expected continued growth rate of 10 to 15 percent per year. For example, more than 300 aquaculture vessels currently use the 24 small craft harbours of southwestern New Brunswick alone.

THE STUDY FINDS THAT

INDUSTRY CONSOLIDATION IS

OCCURRING AND RECOMMENDS

THAT AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY

REPRESENTATIVES JOIN

HARBOUR PLANNING

COMMITTEES.

In addition to problems of congestion in these harbours and a lack of adequate berthage for boats larger than commercial fishing boats, heavier than anticipated use of harbour facilities increases the frequency of maintenance.

“Yet, all these considerations aside, aquaculture is a reality and we need to understand it,” says Benson Milner, Area Chief, Small Craft Harbours and Assets in Maritimes Region. Though there are still many questions to be answered, he welcomes the study’s findings as a first step in helping the two industries work together.

In other regions, the aquaculture industry — since it uses different areas of the coastline — has little impact on the traditional fishery. “Though the industry is larger today, it’s been around for a long time,” explains Gary Sooley, Area Chief for Eastern and Southern Newfoundland.

“But since their operations are in the smaller coves and bays, and they’re not looking for extra wharfage, there’s been little impact or problem in our area.”

The study notes that Small Craft Harbours’ mandate, role and relationship with the aquaculture industry should be reviewed to determine questions of funding, construction and ownership of specialized facilities and continued planning. It also recommends that industry and government study the need for specialized

harbour facilities to respond to concerns about bio-security.

Finally, the study finds that industry consolidation is occurring and recommends that aquaculture industry representatives join harbour planning committees and take a stronger role in the management of harbours. The study also recommends that fee structures be redesigned to reflect vessel berthing, the volume of material shipped over the wharf, and the use of wharf deck space and of other services.

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING ESSENTIAL

A harbour authority’s lease with Small Craft Harbours states, among other things, that the board of directors is “responsible for the safe operation of the harbour.”

As the activities around a harbour diversify beyond commercial fishing to include aquaculture, tourism and environmental clean-up, the variety of hazards and probability of accidents increases. Health and safety training helps keep everyone informed and safe.

“Health and safety training serves as a tool to help harbour authorities become good stewards of harbour properties and to meet their leasehold obligations respecting a safe working environment,” explains Adrian Hynes, Chief of Property, Small Craft Harbours, Newfoundland and Labrador Region.

Ultimately safety is everyone’s job; however, legislative jurisdiction is not always clear. Typically, a harbour consists of federally owned land and improvements leased to a harbour authority whose activities and those of its clients (harbour users) fall under provincial legislation and regulations. This means that a harbour authority may have to comply with two laws: the *Canada Labour Code* and provincial health and safety legislation. Mr. Hynes recommends that, when in doubt, harbour authorities should consult their Small Craft Harbours representative. As a minimum, harbour authorities are advised to use health and safety training and practices that follow provincial guidelines.

Some provincial governments offer health and safety training courses to their residents. In other provinces, independent health and safety training companies provide this training. In either case, provincial occupational health and safety offices across the country can offer advice on finding a suitable training program (for a listing of the provincial offices and contact information, check the Small Craft Harbours Web site). Training companies offer a wide variety of courses, from half-day to full, week-long seminars, says Jackie Manuel, Director, Occupational Health and Safety, Department of Labour, Newfoundland and Labrador.

When looking for a training program, Ms. Manuel recommends checking the company’s reputation with other harbour authorities and businesses as well as asking for references and the qualifications of the trainers.

A WINNING “ECOLLABORATION”



What would you do if your harbour's access road and winter storage basin were slowly turning into a beach?

Faced with damage caused by dune erosion in Millerand harbour, Quebec's Havre-Aubert harbour authority asked the same question. The answer was in the form of collaboration between the harbour authority and the municipality of the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, a collaboration facilitated by Department of Fisheries and Oceans officers.

The Îles-de-la-Madeleine are connected by dune ridges that are kept in repair by the municipality's engineers and technicians. The municipality put this vast dune repair experience at the service of the harbour authority to help it solve its silting problem.

Together, the members of the harbour authority and municipality personnel determined that the beach next to the harbour lacked marram grass, a plant that ensures dune stability. From there, they developed and implemented a three-part action plan. They first replaced the sand deposits in the winter storage basin with gravel. They then extracted part of the marram grass contained in these deposits to restore the slope of the small dune that borders the access road to Millerand harbour. Finally, they installed a sand catcher to prevent sand from encroaching on the access road.

Thanks to this collaboration, the harbour authority found an ecological solution to its silting problem, and the municipality was able to use the remainder of the deposits for its own dune repair work.

The members of the National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee will be able to see these results during their next meeting, which will be held in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine.



The encroaching sand at Millerand harbour hindered access to harbour facilities.



DEAR HARBY

Fee collection is a major problem at our harbour. Have you any suggestions on how we might deal with delinquent accounts?

This is an excellent question. Harbour fees may seem to be an unwelcome or arbitrary charge for a traditional community resource; however, since 100 percent of the fees stay in the community, they are vital to the management and maintenance of the harbour and, by extension, the life of the community.

Some harbours are fortunate enough to have little or no problem collecting fees, while others face severe economic difficulties because of unpaid fees. The National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee (NHAAC) has discussed this matter and identified some of the following practices that harbour authorities have found to be effective in collecting harbour fees.

- ▶ A discount incentive for advance payment can be beneficial to both fishers and harbour authorities, creating savings in time and money.
- ▶ A person who is at the harbour full time and who can collect fees can be a positive influence for those who, embarrassed by their delinquent status, try to avoid meeting other harbour users and harbour authority members. While having someone at the harbour on a full-time basis is not always practical or feasible, it is an option worth considering at fee payment time.
- ▶ Posting the names of users as they pay their fees, on a public bulletin board at the harbour, might encourage those who are delinquent yet capable of paying.
- ▶ For those who genuinely cannot afford to pay harbour fees, arranging work in lieu of payment is a good option. This “barter system” has proven to be highly successful in the past in a variety of situations.

If you have any ideas on how to facilitate fee collection or have success stories you can share, please pass them on to your regional advisory council or association.