

We are pleased to announce that during a meeting with BC Ferries, the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) and LAWG earlier this week, BC Ferries presented a new proposal for private boat and water taxi access to the Langdale terminal. In exchange for some restrictions on access, BCF has offered to attach a new small-boat float directly to the existing Langdale Route 13 (Stormaway) dock. The float will be separated from the existing float by a gate which will remain open during the daytime except for specific and well defined periods of time.

The restrictions are that the float will be closed and the gate locked 10 minutes before the Queen of Surrey (or alternate) arrives and then be re-opened 10 minutes after she departs. During that approximate 40 minute closure period no private boats will be allowed to dock for the purpose of embarking or disembarking passengers. The gate will be managed by BC Ferries personnel and an illuminated red signal light will signify that the small-boat float is closed. For the first sailing at 6:20 AM the new float and its gate will be open for a short period even though the ferry is docked. Similarly, following the arrival of the last evening ferry, the float will again be open for access.

The small-boat float will be closed overnight, as is currently the case for the entire terminal. Existing arrangements for emergency access will remain in place. Thus at night, **for emergencies only**, call 604-886-4403 to have the gate opened to transfer a patient to an ambulance, for example. The sole purpose of the small-boat float is to pick up or drop off passengers. Under no circumstances may a boat be moored there. For improved boating safety, BC Ferries will install a line of marker buoys to delineate a channel for private boats, water taxis and Stormaway III/IV so as to separate these vessels from the big ferry's channel into Langdale Terminal.

This proposal is contingent upon completion of a Liability Agreement between BCF and the SCRD. The SCRD will represent private users as distinct from BC Ferries users who would normally arrive via the Stormaway. There are subtle liability issues related to private boat users who are delivering or receiving passengers to or from BC Ferries. The primary concerns have to do with liability of BC Ferries for potential incidents related to their own passengers, versus liability of SCRD for the community issues such as private boaters who use the float for passenger access to/from the parking lot, to/from the bus stop, or more generally to/from the Sunshine Coast.

Overall this new proposal seems to be a positive outcome for the boating community of West Howe Sound. You may recall that the option prior to this new proposal had relied upon SCR D obtaining federal and provincial grants to build our new small-boat float. Both of these grant applications have always been subject to considerable risk and uncertainty with the worst case being islanders having to carry the entire capital and operating costs of a new dock. Under the new proposal there will no longer be a need for SCR D to put to a vote a proposal to increase our island property taxes should the worst case materialize. Our concern was that a tax-hike motion may not be approved by the majority of island voters, thus leaving us without small boat access to Langdale Terminal. Instead, BCF will now absorb all costs for installation and will maintain control of the new system.

It is likely that LAWG or its successor will evolve into an Advisory Committee to BCF to deal with any long term issues or concerns and to work with BCF to ensure that this new arrangement works well for both BCF and for our community. Clearly there will be some challenges during the transition to the new system which will require the full support and cooperation of the

boaters who will use the dock. LAWG has assured BCF that they have our full commitment to make this system work for the benefit of all.

Joe Wright, Chair

West Howe Sound - Langdale Access Working Group