

National Recreational Boating Advisory Council – Spring 2014

This meeting was co-chaired by Jean Murray and Sylvain Lachance. Members represent all areas and organizations in Canada. Sylvain noted that user fees were coming and would be used solely to fund the operations of the OBS. As well TC is going to make electronic vessel licensing available to anyone beginning in April 2015. He also expressed pleasure that the safe boating message was being heard as evidenced by the continuing demand for the PCOC.

Larry Spears provided a review of the Lifejacket work for those not present at the previous session.

Regional reports followed, which varied in their depth and the number of people attending regional RBAC's. This is a cause of some concern. Pacific was first, with Owen Bird of the BC Sport Fishing Institute reporting as the new co-chair. He noted great interest in the proposed Recreational Boating School Standard and also brought up flares! Designated sewage discharge areas are also presenting a lot of issues to West Coast boaters.

Prairie and Northern have split into two RBAC's, one for the south and one for the north. This allows better discussion of issues and helps with travel costs which are a concern. The media have increasing covered the safe boating message and the Calgary Fire Department on the Bow River has joined as a partner. Membership is an issue for PNR and they are working on renewal.

Mike Vollmer of Sail Canada reported on their last Ontario RBAC noting membership stood at 21 and was very positive. Issues ranged from the usual to Asian Carp, boating restrictions, NWPA, Office of Boating Safety concerns, changes at CCG and a review of boating fatalities in the province.

Quebec outdid Ontario with 23 members and again reported a committed, positive group looking at a variety of issues. Concerns included repeat usage of the Rental Craft Checklist instead of getting a PCOC. They proposed limiting use of the Checklist to prevent abuse.

Atlantic reported a distinct drop in TC emphasis on recreational boating with a shift to small vessels and a general lack of communication on TC's part. Membership was also an issue as there were no representatives from PEI or New Brunswick. A Newfoundland RBAC continues and was meeting shortly after CMAC. Another concern was the use of the Safe Boating Trailers. Local volunteers were able to access these

but, due to their cost, they couldn't be given to organizations and lending was being restricted. A spate of early season drowning brought some focus to Cold Water and the slogan "Not thinking – Still Sinking" seemed appropriate.

The OBS report was reprised from Tuesday but with new players in the room. The general sense was that the few people working on OBS issues were overstretched and there needed to be a review of the structure and especially consultation with the small vessel community. Communications is a key issue across the board and funding and staffing follow close behind. TC committed to including education in the core interests for OBS and agreed to review the issues raised.

NRBAC will meet again at the November CMAC.

Michael Vollmer

Edited