

## Introduction

The Sechelt Branch of the Gibsons Paddle Club (GPC), is a not-for profit community organization established in 1997. We currently have 126 members who paddle out of Gibsons Harbour and Sechelt Inlet and are very much part of the paddling and canoe culture here on the coast. Canoeing is primarily a team sport, our club offers both recreational and competitive paddling on different days of the week/times and locations. In Sechelt, recreational paddling takes place Thursday and Saturday mornings and on Monday afternoons. We paddle Hawaiian outrigger canoes with 4 or 6 person crews. We host and participate in many community events, i.e. the Keats Chop race in Gibsons (see Appendix A: Figure 6); 'Learn to paddle program' that we offered in Sechelt; and Indigenous youth paddling programs in both Gibsons and Sechelt, in partnership with School District 46. We consider ourselves good community members who also engage in ocean and beach stewardship through ongoing cleanups and safe disposal of ocean and beach litter (see Appendix A: Figure 7).

## Launch Sites

Our club has a launch site and storage compound in the Gibsons Marina that was granted to the club on an ongoing basis by the Town of Gibsons in 1997, however, here in Sechelt we have been struggling to establish and maintain an ongoing storage and launch area for our paddlers.

## History on Sechelt Inlet

Our current location in Sechelt Inlet is adjacent to Halfmoon Sea Kayaks, where we store 2, 6 person outrigger canoes and 1, 4 person canoe (see Figure 2).

We sub-lease this site from Harbour Air, but as you know, Harbour Air has experienced some big changes to its business plan and has given up its lease with the owners of the Lighthouse Properties and subsequently its sublease to us.

- In short we have been asked to leave our current location by the end of this month December 31<sup>st</sup> 2024
- Prior to this, we had a storage area, compound and water launch on the grounds of the 'Sechelt Sustainable Community' (SSC) but when the zoning fell through, and the property was sold, within a few weeks we were asked to move.

Despite these struggles over the years with securing a launch and storage area, club members have been paddling on the Sechelt Inlet for about two decades and enjoy the relatively calm waters and the beauty of the natural environment. We paddle 3 times per week throughout the year and often this is followed by a social time at the coffee shop. We see paddling as an excellent way to stay fit, create lasting friendships and engage with our local water and environment. Our club provides an opportunity for people of all walks of life, ages and abilities to make use of their local water.

## Safety and Training

We provide direct instruction to new paddlers to teach them effective paddling and/or steering techniques, and we engage in an annual safety training drill called a 'Huli drill' to ensure that all of our members are certified to safely right a capsized outrigger canoe and/or assist in a water rescue of a capsized outrigger canoe. As part of our safety protocols, we also wear life jackets and pack dry bags in the winter with additional personal safety supplies. Our club maintains its own insurance (A General Commercial Policy of \$5million that includes 3rd party liability insurance). We are self-organizing and look after our own canoe and equipment purchases and maintenance.

## Our Request

We are requesting that Sechelt Mayor and Council support the establishment of an outrigger canoe storage area and hand launch site *at a District of Sechelt (DOS) Beach Access location.*

## Continuity

To ensure an ongoing presence in the Sechelt area we would like to obtain a Land Use Occupancy Permit (or the equivalent permit) to occupy approximately 116 m<sup>2</sup> (50' x 25') of beach access operated by the District of Sechelt (DOS). Our preference is at Lambs Brook Bay Beach Access site if this is deemed acceptable by the Sechelt Corporate

Officer and staff or another viable alternative site based on the criteria of **safety, parking, suitable storage and launch space** (see Figure 1: Location Map of Entry to Lamb's Brook Beach Access. Taken from BC imaps). At a permitted location we propose to store 2 6 person canoes and a 4 person canoe to be used by our club members.

To operationalize this, we would like to continue to work with the Sechelt Corporate Officer and her staff to identify a suitable area for outrigger storage and launch. Approval of our request will ensure that our paddlers can continue to engage in this recreational pursuit with the security of a permanent home/location on Sechelt Inlet.

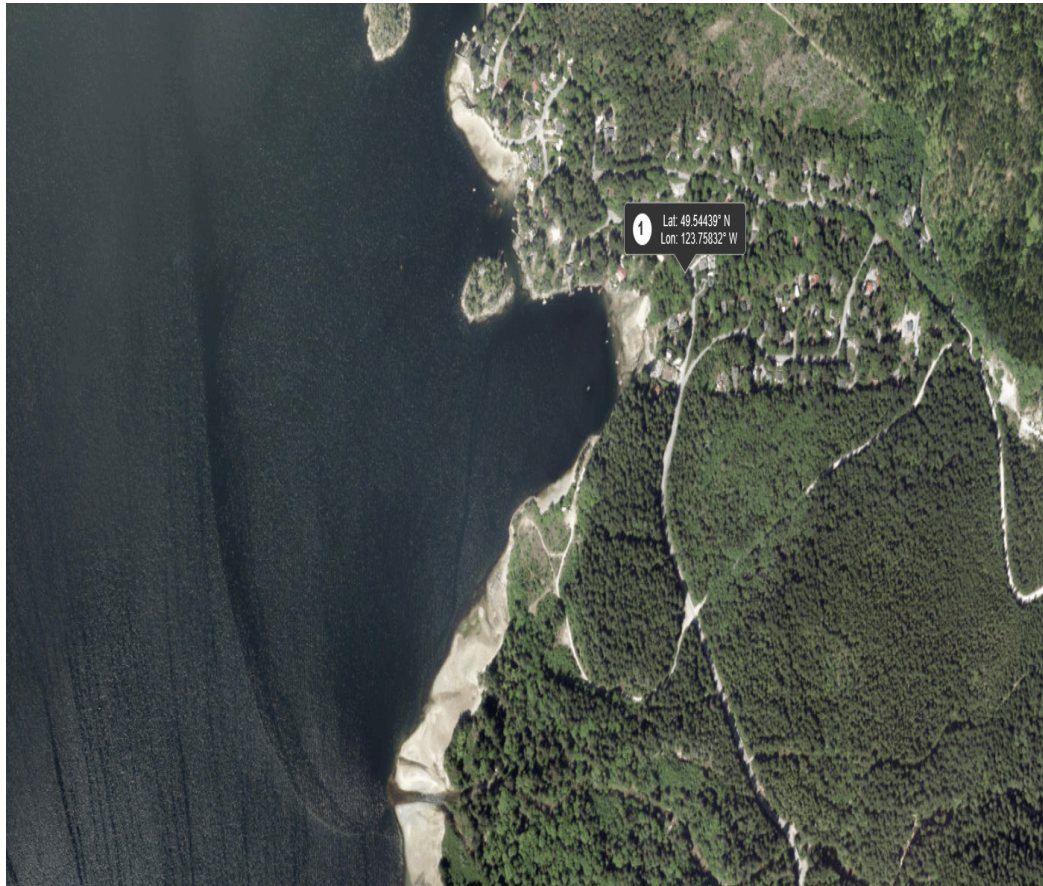


Figure 1: Location Map of Lamb's Brook Bay Beach Access



Figure 2: Canoe Storage of Outrigger Canoes at our current location





Figure 3: Ama Resting Post

As shown in Figure 2, when not in use, the canoes will be neatly stored on cradles (gunnel side down) and only turned over only when in use. To launch the canoes, a group of 4-6 people are required to turn and lift the canoes and place them on a dolly with beach wheels. Each canoe weighs approximately 500 lbs. The canoe and ama are then balanced at the mid point and rolled down and into the water.

Three times a week (throughout the year), Sechelt GPC paddlers will park in an existing parking lot to take out the canoes from a designated area, lift them on to our dollies and wheel them down to the water to launch them. We typically paddle for about two hours and then return the canoes to the storage area. Our launch procedures involves sliding the canoes from the dollies into the water and returning the dollies to shore. In addition to the parking and canoe storage and launch, at the Lamb's Brook Bay access we would also make use of the existing port a potty. Our storage hand launch procedures do not require any changes to the existing beach area, and **we are not proposing any significant changes to the built or natural environment.**

#### **Environmental Stewardship**

Any fiberglass repairs to the canoes will *not* occur on beach access/parks grounds. Any sanding and varnishing to the iakos will *not* occur on beach access/parks grounds.

Occasionally the canoes are re-rigged, that is, the lashings connecting the amas to the iakos or the rachets connecting the iakos to the canoes are replaced, (see below Figure 4: Ama lashing and maintenance). This is usually done annually or biannually and would cause no damage to the area where the canoes are stored or to the surrounding area. All replaced material will be recycled or removed.





Figure 4: Ama Lashing and Maintenance

### **Changes to the Built Environment**

We have fencing materials stored from our previous boat compound at the Sechelt Sustainable Community (SSC) site. When we were asked to leave that location, we disassembled the fencing and have it stored and ready for use if the DOS prefers that we have our canoes stored in a fenced compound. At the Lamb's Brook Bay site we feel that a fully fenced compound is not necessary and are proposing that the canoes be stored gunnel side down on cradles as shown in Figure 2.

We propose to erect a 4x4 post that will be used to rest one of the amas (see Figure 3: Ama Resting Post). This is an optional structure we have included in this proposal to minimize the area we will use for canoe storage. This improvement will be semi-permanent. It could be easily taken out of the ground and the ground smoothed over if not needed or desired. The post will be dug into the ground with a shovel and tamped in. No machinery will be used, all the work will be done by hand. We propose to erect the post immediately after obtaining the Occupancy Permit and before moving the canoes to the beach access/park from the water (paddling over from our existing temporary site). For security purposes, we can also lock our dollies together so that they are not interfered with or moved.

To initially store the canoes, the dollies and ama post will be transported by a pickup truck to the site. Crews of paddlers will paddle the canoes from our temporary site on the inlet and bring them up to the proposed location. We don't anticipate any environmental damage or safety concerns during this transition.

### **Launch Procedures and Impact to the Beach**

As shown below in Figure 5, impact to the beach during the launch procedures will be mitigated using wide beach wheels that will limit compaction to the grounds and beach area during the launch.



Figure 5: Beach Wheels for our Launch Procedure

Beach wheels are effective in minimizing compaction and environmental damage to the beach habitat. The sand and gravel beach is host to many organisms but by using beach wheels we will effectively minimize damage to vegetation and wildlife. Tides will vary, but our launch procedures will not interfere with any watercourses or water bodies. Our outrigger canoes will always be stored neatly on cradles with amas stacked to minimize the area occupied. Paddling is an activity that is consistent with traditional practices of the Shíshálh Nation on Sechelt Inlet and we respect the lands and waters that we are using.



Appendix A  
List of Figures



Figure 6: Keats Chop Small Boat Race hosted annually by Gibsons Paddle Club attracting visitors and paddlers from the lower mainland and interior who come to race and visit the coast





Figure 7: Ocean Stewardship from beach cleanups. Several members are certified to dispose of beach waste at Dusty Rd transfer station (part of the Ocean Legacy Program)





Figure 8: Winter Paddlers enjoying a calm day on the waters of Sechelt Inlet