

Ghost Gear Update - November 2022

prepared by Mike Ernst for Titan Maritime



In early 2022 Titan Maritime in Mahone Bay contacted South Shore MPs, MLAs, municipalities and local conservation groups regarding the Federal Ghost Gear Fund that was terminating on March 31, 2022. (Formally known as the Sustainable Fisheries Solutions and Retrieval Support Contribution Programme - SFSRSCP)

Titan's objectives were:

1. Follow up with all interested parties about the Fund and projects completed on the South Shore.
2. Highlight problems that Ghost Gear poses to the fishing industry and environment.
3. Gather local information on the implications of Ghost Gear.
4. Request letters of support for the Fund's continuance for 2022-23.

Update on recent developments

- First, our thanks to those at all government levels who met with us, and also to Mahone Islands Conservation Association and Region 6 Waste Management Committee, your feedback and letters of support were appreciated.
- Your interest confirms there is a need to clean up this source of marine pollution.
- In Budget 2022 the Government of Canada allocated \$10 million to renew the Ghost Gear Fund for one year. This is for all three coasts of Canada.
- DFO has yet to announce 2023 funded projects, but monies will be allocated again in 2024-25.
- DFO has just awarded us a contract for cleaning up Ghost Gear debris resulting from hurricane Fiona. Follow this link for more information- <https://www.canada.ca/en/fisheries-oceans/news/2022/11/government-of-canada-announces-funding-to-clean-up-hurricane-fiona-ocean-litter-to-make-waters-safer-healthier-and-return-fishing-equipment-to-harv.html>
- Titan Maritime will continue to advocate for the Fund's continuance on a long term basis, and pursue other avenues to deal with this marine pollution source.
- A report is included on a visit to the Ocean Legacy Foundation's recycling depot in Richmond, BC. This centre could be a template for recycling Ghost Gear in Nova Scotia.
- The article below is from The Gibsons Way, published by the Town of Gibsons ,on BC's Sunshine Coast. Could a similar initiative be taken by Nova Scotia's coastal communities to raise public awareness around Ghost Gear ?

Thanks for your interest, Michael Ernst for Titan Maritime.

The Town of Gibsons is one of 10 governing bodies that has officially declared June 7, 2022 to June 8, 2023, "The Year of the Salish Sea" (YoSS).

"YoSS" is a youth-led effort that aims to bring together local First Nations, municipalities, organizations, and individuals in the Salish Sea ecosystem region to strengthen existing efforts working towards a healthy Salish Sea. At its heart is a belief in collective action and love for the Salish Sea ecosystem.

One easy way to contribute to the health of the Salish Seas is by reporting marine debris sightings. When you are out on the water in the Átl'ka7sem/Howe Sound, look for marine debris, such as electronics, propane tanks, chemicals, bulky plastics, scrap metals, large appliances, batteries, mattresses, fabrics, tires, or books, and report your sighting to the Marine Stewardship Initiative (MSI) via this [Google Form](#).

Reported sightings helps MSI collect geographic information on marine debris and to identify areas in need of clean-up activities.

Site Visit to the Ocean Legacy Foundation

3300 Chatham Street # 61 Richmond, B.C, V7E 3K1

by Michael Ernst for Titan Maritime, Monday July 18, 2022



Section of the OLF Centre Mural

My thanks to Chloe Dubois OLF's Co Founder and President for her time and the information provided.

When the Ocean Legacy Foundation started in 2013 their initial work was beach clean ups, but In 2016 they started diverting and processing collected material. In 2021 they moved to their present facility in Richmond. The Foundation has Ghost Gear collection depots at Powell River, Uclulet and Cumberland with plans to add more sites. There are also six collection teams working at coastal locations.



In one of the site's processing areas there was an enthusiastic team removing tires from an inner core of polystyrene. These were previously buffers on wharves and boats, but the polystyrene was degrading and causing an environmental risk to marine species.



In the yard were neat piles of high density plastic, polystyrene, polypropylene lines awaiting processing, along with bags of shredded material.



Markets are being developed for processed material and one promising area is its inclusion in the manufacture of outdoor recreation and sporting goods.

This Ocean Legacy Foundation runs the first Ghost Gear recycling facility in Canada. This year they celebrated diverting a million pounds of plastic debris from landfill.

'For reference, that's the weight of about 17 adult humpback whales!' (August, 2022 OLF Newsletter)

Recycling is a labour intensive and challenging business. Supporting organizations like the Ocean Legacy Foundation could be an efficient and cost effective manner all levels of government can use to tackle problems created by Ghost Gear.

Michael Ernst, M. Ed.

