

**Recreational Boating Advisory Council – Maritimes
Wednesday October 19, 2011
Conference Call**

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Deborah Stover	Co-chair: Paddle Guide / GSAR
Scott Kennedy	Co-chair: Regional Director, Transport Canada Marine Safety
Aileen Nauss	Canadian Red Cross
Frank Denis	NSYA
Pat Nelder	AMTA
Neil Parnell	RCMP Coastal Watch
Brian Moss	RCMP Coastal Watch
Scott Murray	RCMP FES
Robbie Phillips	Quartermaster Marine
David Estey	CPS – Atlantic Region
Paul Rudden	CCG Maritimes Region
Shannon Sellers	Transport Canada – OBS
Erin Tretiak	Transport Canada – OBS

Regrets:

Roland Michaud	NB Wildlife Federation
Tony Rodgers	NS Federation of Anglers
John Mombourquette	NS Department of Natural Resources

Opening Remarks

On behalf of the co-chairs, who were running late, Shannon Sellers called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and welcomed all participants. We are hoping to have a face-to-face meeting in the spring and will keep everyone posted as to when and where.

Review of Agenda

Call for any other agenda items. Nothing to add.

Minutes/Action Items Last Meeting

Previous meeting was a teleconference on October 14, 2010.

- Pat Nelder: Too bad that there weren't many at that meeting and it is unfortunate that there hasn't been a meeting since then.
- Aileen Nauss: The arrangements for that meeting bounced around a bit and that could have been a contributing factor to the attendance of the last meeting.
- Shannon Sellers: Agree that the sooner we can set the date and time, the easier it is for people to plan around.

- Deborah Stover: Need to emphasize the commitment to RBAC.
- No comments, errors or omissions identified for last meeting minutes.

NRBAC Update (Deborah Stover)

NRBAC is a pulling together of all of the regional RBACs. It was held in January in conjunction with the boat show in Toronto. Roundtable updates across the country were given. Interesting to hear what is going on in other regions. Sending out minutes from regional meetings gives RBACs better idea of what is happening across the country. For example, in BC there are specific concerns with vessels in protected areas and the issue of gray water. Flare issue is ongoing. At the CSBC symposium, when the task force on PFDs presented, Donald Roussel (co-chair NRBAC) said that both sides of the discussion need to be heard from - for mandatory wear and against. From personal survey, there are fewer against mandatory wear. Will continue with regional campaign and would like to hear more from police, Parks Canada etc. If anyone has any comments etc. to take to NRBAC, send them to Deborah at dmstover@gmail.com

OBS Updates (Shannon Sellers)

Pleasure Craft Licensing

Since November 1, 2010, licensing has been a mail in system. Face-to-face service at Service Canada sites is no longer available. It is often a challenge for the public to fill out the forms and they are contacting OBS for assistance. Dealer e-licensing has been going well with several more dealers on board now than last year. Dealer participation was encouraged through AMTA, boat shows and site visits. The licensing database contains all licence data and was made accessible to enforcement this boating season.

- Pat Nelder: During CSBC there was a presentation that stated there were 183,000 licensed vessels in Atlantic Canada. Where did this number come from – is this only counting those that were in the database since it was developed or is it also including the paper copies? **ACTION:** Shannon to determine what this number is comprised from. **RESPONSE:** There are more than 183,000 small vessels licensed and registered in the Atlantic Region and more than 90 percent of those are pleasure craft. The current combined totals for the 4 Atlantic provinces for pleasure craft are:

Licensed Pleasure Craft – 168,075

Registered Pleasure Craft – 1414

The other vessels to make up the 183,000 were small commercial vessels and fishing vessels less than 15 tons

- Pat Nelder: When will dealers be able to do transfers online? Shannon Sellers: Right now transfers are all done through the mail. **ACTION:** Shannon to get update from HQ as to status of expanding to transfers. **RESPONSE:** HQ is continuing the work to make online licensing available (e.g. used boat transfers, general public, etc.). The plan is to have this system ready for the next boating season.
- Robbie Phillips: Have been doing the e-licensing since mid-winter and it has been very successful.

Operator Competency

There have been a number of amendments to strengthen the program. TC is modernizing parts of the current program, including new requirements which make course providers accountable to the Canadian public. As of April 15, 2011, the course manuals and tests have changed. The tests are generated from the TC databank of test questions. Tests are made up of 50 questions and have expiry dates to decrease chances of getting out to public. (Tests are valid for 6 months.) The test questions are designed to test a person's knowledge more fairly. Those course providers who have not revised their manuals are not accredited. The number of course providers has decreased with 24 currently accredited course providers and between 8 and 10 working on their manuals. Monitoring of testing procedures is done by OBS. We conduct on-site visits, random monitoring sessions and complaint investigation. Major issues identified are dealt with by HQ. If anyone hears of concerns or testing taking place, please let us know. Last year, there were some issues raised, that we followed up on. Online testing process has also changed significantly. A person can no longer simply go online and write the test. They must spend a minimum amount of time completing 5-7 mandatory study modules with quizzes at the end of each module, before accessing the TC test. If they don't pass the test, they must go back and complete the study modules again. The public can still challenge the test, but only through paper copy. There were 300,000 online tests done since April.

- Neil Parnell: There is still no way to go into a private home to verify the identity of the person completing the modules and test.
 - Shannon Sellers: HQ worked with online testing professionals who said that the best way to decrease the incentive for cheating was to create this mandatory module model.
- Deborah Stover: Are the prices still not regulated for the testing?
 - Shannon Sellers: No. The course length is not regulated either. It is a matter of the public finding the right fit for them.

There has been a lot of work done on this program at the HQ level and there have been vast improvements. HQ has reviewed the databank test questions and the course providers have provided input. Any issues identified with the first round of tests have been corrected. The information for over 3 million card holders is in the TC operator card database. OBS receives numerous calls regarding lost cards and now, most of the time we can find them in the database.

- Frank Denis: From CYA perspective, the number of PCOC tests is down and the money is in issuing replacement cards.
 - Shannon Sellers: OBS is receiving more calls about replacement cards than where to write the test and many seem to be choosing the online option where they can learn and write the test on their own schedule.
- Neil Parnell: From an enforcement perspective, there are some areas where the boating public is very good at producing proof of competency. For example, Bras d'Or and North Shore there is high production rate, whereas in Chester/Mahone Bay area there is a low level of production. However, don't have access to database to verify operator competency.
 - Scott Murray: 80% of the boaters in St. Margaret's Bay area who had a motorized vessel (many sailing vessels in area don't have an engine) had proof of competency.

- Pat Nelder: There are still some areas outside of main areas where there is no Internet access and literacy can be an issue.
 - Shannon Sellers: Course providers offer courses based on demand and can make arrangements to do an oral test.

Pleasure Craft Courtesy Check (PCCC) Program

The number of courtesy checks done this year is down. OBS didn't have summer students and although full time staff did conduct PCCCs, it wasn't the main focus of work. There were less than 200 done in the Maritimes by the IRB and OBS. We don't have the statistics for CPS at this time as the forms are sent directly to HQ.

- David Estey: The final reports for CPS activity haven't been compiled yet. There are some areas where there is a lot of activity and some areas where there is not. The members that have been active continue to be.

OBS has an MOU with the IRB for conducting PCCCs, but there are some geographical areas with gaps. Our office doesn't receive the final PCCC report until it comes back from HQ after all the forms are scanned. In Atlantic, OBS again had a promotional campaign to encourage participation in the program. Boaters that participate are entered into a draw for safety equipment. There are 4 prize packages (one per province) and one handheld VHF radio. In NL, the recreational food fishery is still going on, so we are still waiting for ballots from that province. The draw will be in mid-November.

Incidents/Fatalities

Through monitoring media and search and rescue reports, there were 7 fatalities in the Maritime Provinces this year – 3 in NS, 3 in NB, 1 in PE. All were male with an average age of 57. Two of the fatalities were coastal waters and 5 were on inland waterways. One of the fatalities was on a sailboat and the rest were on small boats. Fatalities started in May and the last one was in mid-September. **ACTION:** Shannon to find out the fatalities statistics for Newfoundland and Labrador. **RESPONSE:** To November 1, 2011, the number of recreational boating fatalities in NL is 2.

Enforcement

OBS continues to work closely with enforcement partners through classroom and on-water training. Also, provide support for regulatory questions. This year, we trained RCMP in HRM, New Glasgow Police and Miramichi Police. There were a limited number of joint enforcement patrols – Porters Lake/Lake Charlotte with DNR, Richibucto with RCMP, Bras d'Or with various partners and Tracadie-Sheila/Caraquet with RCMP. To date, we have received more than 200 Small Vessel Requirements Deficiency forms from enforcement partners indicating a 37% compliance rate. The top two deficiencies were licence/registration and operator competency. Preliminary findings show that number of vessels deficient in lifejackets/personal flotation devices has been knocked out of the top 5 deficiencies. There were 9 tickets issued this year in Nova Scotia (lifejackets and operator competency) and 1 ticket issued in New Brunswick. We had our meeting with enforcement partners yesterday in Sackville, NB.

- Neil Parnell: Coastal Watch was very active this season starting with the commercial fishery in April. The weather this year meant that boaters were later

getting on the water. Patrols were conducted on North Shore (Pictou to Canso), Shelburne, Bras d'Or, and South Shore (Chester). FES did a number of patrols in St. Margaret's Bay. There were some inland patrols this year which was good to see. The operational hours for the vessels and the number of checks done in the season were up this year.

- Frank Denis: Complaints were received from the Bras d'Or Yacht Club saying that every vessel was boarded and some were sent to shore during August weekend patrol.
- Neil Parnell: Baddeck has their own boat and could have been conducting other patrols, but during Bras d'Or patrol all partners were aware of regatta and were not stopping participants.
- Pat Nelder: Information regarding regattas is on the CYA website so that enforcement is aware.
- Scott Murray: Enforcement is aware of when events are going on and we are looking for the biggest bang for our buck, so we go where the volume events are.
- Brian Moss: If there are issues identified with respect to enforcement activity the individual can approach the RCMP.
- Pat Nelder: What is enforcement looking at with respect to licensing?
 - Neil Parnell: From a Coastal Watch perspective, generally coming across vessels that were brought up from the United States into Canada and have not obtained a Canadian licence.
 - Pat Nelder: Vessels with engine less than 10hp don't require a licence. But do people know that they need to have paperwork on board. Seems like this has been a more recent focus (in last 5 years?). Then there is the 90 day transfer period.
 - Shannon Sellers: During PCCC's, there are still people who don't seem to be aware of the requirement to have the paperwork on board. However, it can simply be a copy and the enforcement officer does need to see it. In terms of the 90 day grace period, the person could produce paperwork, such as a bill of sale, for an officer. The individual can't wait until day 89 to do the transfer. OBS has produced public notices and our publications state that paperwork needs to be on board.
 - Scott Murray: It is the same for a vessel as it is for a vehicle when it comes to paperwork.
 - Pat Nelder: Plan on doing a publication regarding licensing. Also potential for social media to disseminate this information. People don't want to licence because of taxes.
 - Neil Parnell: The enforcement side is making a difference in the level of compliance for licensing as enforcement officers are giving a warning for the \$250 fine. Coastal Watch was also involved in a Breakfast Television segment that promoted this messaging.
 - Shannon Sellers: Any way that these messages can be shared with the public etc. is encouraged.

Waterway Issues/VORRs

OBS has received a variety of calls regarding waterway management. We work with the public and officials on alternatives to try to solve the waterway conflict/issue without needing to implement a new restriction under the VORRs. For example, we participate in public meetings to discuss regulations and waterway usage. For generic complaints that can be addressed by current regulations, we refer the individual to enforcement and/or councilors in the area. There are no new applications for restrictions.

Contribution Program

The contribution program is a way for organizations to obtain funding for boating safety activities. Applications for next fiscal year are due November 1, 2011. The OBS website (<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-contrib-prgm-menu-2273.htm>) has more information on the program including target demographics. For example, CPS has received funding through this program.

TC Update (Scott Kennedy)

Plan is to continue with one face-to-face RBAC meeting per year in the spring and one phone call in the fall. This is not an attempt to diminish the work of RBAC but simply to make it more efficient. Atlantic is one region and interaction between the RBACs is necessary. The RBACs are not two independent groups. It is important that there is discussion and linkages between co-chairs in order to gain a whole regional perspective. We are the only region that gives two updates at NRBAC and there are other big regions such as PNR.

All government departments are undergoing a strategic review in which the government is looking for \$4 billion worth of savings. Business lines have been reviewed and recommendations have been made to TMX for efficiencies. The Minister is to make the decisions and say what is going to happen in Feb/March 2012.

- Pat Nelder: The last economic report that was conducted for recreational boating was done in 2006. This isn't a good reflection of numbers etc. for the Minister to make decisions. The only current numbers that are available are for drowning and licensing, but these are not representative. This is worrisome. Does the Minister realize this? Is there going to be an opportunity for industry to provide statistics etc. in order to make sure that the decisions made about OBS are the right ones?
- Deborah Stover: Is there any form of recourse if the decision is an unwanted one?

Publications/Printed Materials (Shannon Sellers)

OBS has a limited budget for printing materials and will not be printing the Safe Boating Guide this year. We do, however, have a reasonable amount of publications, but distribution will be strategic. All of the publications are available electronically and online.

- Pat Nelder: For the publications, is there a URL that we can send? The current URLs are too long.
- Frank Denis: tinyurl.com is a resource for shortening URLs.

ACTION: Shannon to see if TC has a tool for shortening URLs. **RESPONSE:** External partners are welcome to link to Transport Canada websites and materials, however, partner sites should clearly indicate that TC is the source. TC has its own URL shortener, and here is the shortened URL for the Safe Boating Guide – <http://www.tc.gc.ca/wdqig>. You are also welcome to create shortened URLs for any pages you may want to share.

Miscellaneous/Other (Shannon Sellers)

Boat Shows: OBS will be participating in the boat shows but in a limited capacity with smaller booth sizes.

Events: With no summer students this year, the number of events that OBS participated in was reduced dramatically. We did a few key events – Ready, Set Inflate in May as part of Safe Boating Week, MEC Paddlefest, Saint John Port Days, Cambridge Narrows Community Days, PEI Youth Waterfowl Day.

- Deborah Stover: For Ready, Set, Inflate, there were 15 PFDs inflated and 4-5 traditional PFDs at event. Up 45% from last year. Communication for event was conducted through Facebook and CBC radio (2 weekends prior to event). The Olympic medal paddler, Karen Furneaux, was on site and is pro-PFD. Participating organizations included Coast Guard, CPS, Halifax SAR, OBS, Boating News, Helly Hansen, Red Cross and AMTA.

Marine Information Awareness Program (MIAP): Boating safety officers conducted outreach through our MIAP program to many partners in the field including marine retailers, yacht clubs, and government offices. Rental agencies were also visited to ensure compliance with regulations for renting boats to public.

Flares: HQ is still working with NRCAN on life cycle management plan for flares. There are no new updates.

CASBA: Nominations are open for the Canadian Safe Boating Awards. There are various categories, including rescue of the year, marine professional of the year, top volunteer dedicated to boating safety etc. If you know someone that should be nominated, nominations are due by November 4th.

- Deborah Stover: Someone was nominated for a rescue of a near drowning and that person asked to be taken out of the running, so make sure you ask the person before nominating them.

Canadian Safe Boating Council Symposium

The CSBC symposium held in St. John's in September was very successful. There was good participation, interesting presentations, great tours of the Marine Institute etc.

- Pat Nelder: Difficult to attend this type of event as don't have the money for own work. Did go to the reception. Good people that do good work. Heard that the cold water boot camp went well.

Coast Guard Update (Paul Rudden)

As Scott Kennedy mentioned, all government departments are being reviewed and there have been some cuts. The SAR subcentres have been closed and the work is being consolidated in Trenton, ON and Halifax, NS. There is no risk or reduction in SAR service. The Coast Guard Auxiliary has received extra funding for exercise training and recruitment. In terms of SAR this year, it was a typical boating season. May and June were quiet and things were slow for the IRB during this time, but with the good weather SAR incidents increased.

- Robbie Phillips: For the IRB in Charlottetown, with the closing of the CCG bases in Charlottetown and Saint John, where will the IRB be located?
- Paul Rudden: There will be no change in the level of service; we are currently looking for a home for the IRB in Charlottetown.

Round Table

Deborah Stover (Paddle Guide/GSAR)

-Mandatory Wear: Have received many letters/emails. The Chamber of Commerce in HRM is interested in supporting, as is the Saint John Board of Trade. Busy initiating discussions with coroner's offices, Canadian medical and nursing organizations, and the Canadian Insurance Bureau.

- Aileen Nauss: Red Cross does a lot of work with coroner's offices and they don't usually know the details of the incident, they just get a body.

-Have withdrawn from CSBC, but will continue to stay in touch with the task force.

-Thanks to David for joining RBAC as CPS representative.

Aileen Nauss (Red Cross)

-Working on the contribution agreement application.

-PFD loan program was hugely successful this year with over 2,000 PFDs across Atlantic.

Frank Denis (NSYA)

-Had a safety review program for the "Learn to Sail" program this year which was successful. There were 11 clubs visited from South Shore to Cape Breton. Some work that needs to be done. There was some confusion amongst staff about why visiting and we have to be careful that not seen as duplication of service amongst different organizations. Need to open lines of communications about when visiting clubs.

- Deborah Stover: How many yacht clubs are there in PEI?
Robbie Phillips: 15

Pat Nelder (AMTA)

-Participated in Ready, Set, Inflate. Interesting to note that the name was changed to Ready, Set, Inflate and Wear it! in the US.

-Getting ready to print the 2012 version of the Maritime Guide.

-Halifax Boat Show from Feb 23-26 – if anyone has suggestions for seminars.

-Have connection to Atlantic Boating News – planning on putting an article on licensing in publication.

- Also, have connection to Boating Industry Canada magazine that can be utilized for getting messaging out.
- Encourage people to get out and see the construction of the Bluenose.

Robbie Phillips (Quartermaster)

- New boaters this year. Doing best to keep them safe and provide with safety messaging.

David Estey (CPS)

- CPS is noticing a decrease in the number of requests for the operator card.
- Supportive of enforcement out there and educating on penalties.
- Have their national meeting this week and on Saturday will have the Atlantic district meeting.
- Will exploring areas where our mandate would fit.

Neil Parnell (RCMP)

- Appreciate the feedback from members regarding enforcement activity. Enforcement will continue to work to increase levels of compliance and safety on the water. If there is a real safety issue, we issue a ticket, but for some deficiencies will bring to the boaters attention and have them correct.
- We have marine resources and we work closely with the Federal Enforcement Services (FES).
- Will have a booth at the CPS conference.

Meeting adjourned at 1130

List of Acronyms

AMTA – Atlantic Marine Trades Association
 CCG - Canadian Coast Guard
 CG – Coast Guard
 CMAC – Canadian Marine Advisory Council
 CPS – Canadian Power and Sail Squadron
 CSA 2001 – Canada Shipping Act, 2001
 CSBC – Canadian Safe Boating Council
 FES – Federal Enforcement Services
 FRC – Fast Rescue Craft
 FSWEF – Federal Student Work Experience Program
 GSAR – Ground Search and Rescue
 IRB – Inshore Rescue Boat Program
 MCTS – Marine Communications and Traffic Services
 NOTMAR – Notice to Mariners
 NRBAC – National Recreational Boating Advisory Council

OBS – Office of Boating Safety
PCCC – Pleasure Craft Courtesy Check Program
PCOC – Pleasure Craft Operator Card
RBAC – Recreational Boating Advisory Council
SAR – Search and Rescue
SBG – Safe Boating Guide
SVR – Small Vessel Regulations
TC – Transport Canada
TMX – Transport Executive Management Committee