

Article

Safe haven; Floating docks enhance safety for boaters, opens Woods Island up to more people

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CORNER BROOK — Recreational boaters in the Bay of Islands now have a safer place to tie up when looking for refuge from the weather and the sea.

About a week and a-half ago the Bay of Islands Yacht Club completed a project on Woods Island that saw the construction and installation of a new floating-dock system.

Commodore Llew Hounsell said the club has had floating docks out on Woods Islands for the last 10 to 12 years and over time they've become dilapidated and there was some concern they were no longer safe to use.

"So what we've built out there is similar, but not the same," said Hounsell.

He said the new floating docks are attached to three fixed cribs and are much more substantial than what was previously in place. The old docks measured about four feet wide but the new ones measure six and eight feet.

The docks were built at the marina in Curling and towed out to Woods Island.

Depending on the size the docks can accommodate up to 10 boats in individual spaces with the potential for another three or four to tie up side on.

Woods Island can be a busy spot for boaters and Hounsell said there's always people coming into the island's harbour.

Even before the project was complete, Hounsell said boaters were making use of the new docks.

"I've been out there twice since the docks have been functional and both times we were crowded."

Hounsell said having the project completed and seeing the docks in use is "marvelous."

"Because it means it's something that people wanted, that they enjoy and that they are going to make use of."

"Nothing worse than building something and not having them come."

He said the project was important to the club because the Bay of Islands doesn't have all that many safe places to pull in to.



"And for recreational boaters safety is always a major issue. And by doing this, by putting these docks out in the Woods Island harbour, which is a very safe harbour, we just made it that much more safer, because now you have somewhere you can tie up."

Having the floating docks in place will also open the island up to more visitors.

"The island is a great place for hiking," said Hounsell. "And people can now simply walk ashore and enjoy themselves. Spend the day there."

He said the docks are built, owned and maintained by the Bay of Islands Yacht Club, but there is no charge to use them.

The total cost of the project came in at \$95,000.

The provincial government approved funding of about \$50,000 for the project with some of that money coming from the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment to hire people to build docks and the rest from the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development for supplies.

With the club footing the rest of the bill, Hounsell said "it means that we have to be frugal with what we do and be careful with our use of money."

The club also carried out an upgrade on its electrical service at the marina this summer and Hounsell said it won't be taking on anything else until next year.

The floating dock system will be available for use until about the last weekend in September. Hounsell said they'll then be pulled in and secured somewhere safe for the winter.



Keith Chadderton

Boats tie up to the new floating dock system on Woods Island.



Keith Chadderton