

Freshwater Institute

Small Craft Harbours

The Small Craft Harbours program of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) operates under the *Commercial Fishing and Recreational Harbours Act* and Regulations. The program provides a network of safe, public harbours serving commercial fishing and recreational boating. The facilities range from simple launching ramps to full-service commercial fishing harbours and marinas. Many communities have benefited significantly from their small craft harbours.

DFO's Central and Arctic Region includes Ontario, the Prairie Provinces, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Small Craft Harbour offices are located in Burlington, Ontario and at the Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Since the late 1980s, Harbour Authorities have signed lease agreements with Small Craft Harbours to assume responsibility for the day-to-day management and maintenance of local **commercial fishing harbours**. A Harbour Authority is typically a non-profit, locally controlled organization with strong links to both the fishing industry and the community. Local management is an efficient and economical way of offering services, strengthening public investment and providing opportunities for communities to participate fully in the planning, operation and maintenance of harbour facilities. In return, Small Craft Harbours staff

offer guidance and advice to directors, monitor the harbour's overall physical condition and provide funding and project management for major repairs.

Prior to 1995, over 500 Small Craft Harbours were located across the Region, with most in Ontario. In the face of the economic crisis that struck the Government of Canada in the 1990s, DFO began transferring responsibility for recreational harbours to those more directly involved with tourism and recreation. Federally owned **recreational harbours** are now being transferred, or divested, to local municipalities for continuing public use. Over 250 harbours have already been divested, with approximately 250 remaining.

It has also been decided that DFO will reduce the number of its fishing harbours, keeping only the **active harbours** that meet present and future industry needs. It is estimated that there will be fewer than 1,000 fishing harbours in the national Small Craft Harbours inventory by 2001, down from 1,308 in 1994.

For more information about the Small Craft Harbours program, contact DFO at 3027 Harvester Road, Burlington, ON, L7R 4K3; by phone at (905) 639-4330; or visit our national website at: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch/index.htm

