

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

BCTC restoring local habitat by removing abandoned barges

VANCOUVER – BC Transmission Corporation (BCTC) announced today that it will remove two abandoned barges off of Parker Island as part of a Habitat Compensation Plan for the Vancouver Island Transmission Reinforcement project (VITR).

“BCTC is committed to being an environmentally responsible neighbour, and helping Parker Island residents restore local marine habitat is a great opportunity for us to put this commitment into action,” said Jane Peverett, BCTC President and CEO.

Local residents have been working to clean up debris and remove the barges for a number of years and are pleased that BCTC will complete the work they started.

“Islanders and nearby residents on Galiano are very pleased BCTC will be removing the barges,” said Sheila Midgley, a Parker Island resident. “We’re looking forward to regaining a scenic and environmentally healthy bay and shoreline. It will be wonderful to see BCTC working in concert with the local community to clean this site.”

The habitat restoration work will restore seabed and may also enable the recolonization of an eelgrass bed, providing habitat for young fish and invertebrates.

“This has been a long-standing concern for us, and it’s great to hear that it will be resolved,” says Linda Adams, Chief Administrative Officer of the Islands Trust. “We have a provincially legislated mandate to protect the Islands, and the removal of these barges is essential to fulfill that mandate.”

The Islands Trust participated in the environmental assessment process and recommended the removal of the Parker Island barges as part of the overall Habitat Mitigation and Compensation Plan for VITR. The project underwent a harmonized review under the BC *Environmental Assessment Act* and the Canadian *Environmental Assessment Act*. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans signed off on the plan.

The two barges are located on Parker Island across from Montague Harbour on Galiano Island and have been derelict for more than two decades. Removal of the barges and related debris is scheduled to start in early August and is estimated to take four days. The work will be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations and by-laws, including those pertaining to noise.

B.C.'s population and economy are growing and so is our need for electricity. Over the next 20 years, the demand for electricity in BC is expected to grow by as much as 45 per cent. The VITR Project will help to ensure a reliable supply of power for over 700,000 residents and the businesses on Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands.

The VITR project will replace and upgrade the existing 138kV overhead transmission lines and submarine cables connecting southern Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands to the Lower Mainland with new 230kV infrastructure.

BC Transmission Corporation is the Crown corporation that plans, operates and maintains the province's publicly owned electrical transmission system.

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