

Denman Island Residents Association Marine Guardians Committee

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Annual Report for the April 10th, 2017 DIRA AGM

The DIRA MG's continue "To communicate and work with all other organizations, ministries, local residents, agencies or Governments to protect and preserve Denman Island beaches, and foreshore areas."

As well as working toward protecting fish habitat in the upper regions of our beaches by prohibiting unnecessary driving, we are now faced with another threat to not only habitat, but recreational use of our few sandy beaches.

DFO has just released it's geoduck framework available at- <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/management-gestion/2017/geoduck-panope/geoduck-panope-igmf-cgip-2017-eng.html> . The maps show very clearly the targeted areas which are either sandy beaches or sandy sub-tidal regions which often support sea grasses necessary for fish habitat. Denman has already seen first hand evidence of an inter-tidal geoduck tenure just north of Hinton Rd. that is now adding more plastics to the marine environment and more debris floating up on our beaches. More plastics (PVC pipe and nets) create more microplastics which attract toxins which bio-accumulate and make their way up the food chain to humans. PBDE's or flame retardants are commonly used to increase the life span of plastic used in aquaculture and are possible human carcinogens.

The geoduck "plan" has several environmental damaging components. There will be inter-tidal cultivation which will see our few sandy beaches such as Henry Bay, Metcalfe Bay and Tree Island "planted" with PVC tubes that contain the baby geoducks for 3 years. To keep predators away, nets will be placed over top. When the tubes are removed, the geoduck grow for another 4 years and harvesting is done using high pressure water jet hoses (stingers) will be used to liquify the sand. The substrate will look like a moonscape when they are done and the "planting" in tubes will begin again. Needless to say, all other species will be displaced or harmed in the process and for the 3 years the tubes are used, recreational use of that area of the beach will not be possible.

Then there is the sub-tidal geoduck cultivation (at deeper depths) shown on the map going from north of Tree Island to Fillongley where firstly, under water harvesters will "purge" the area of all the wild geoduck. This will be done between March (herring spawning season) and September. Again, stinger hoses will turn the substrate into a moonscape and uproot any sea grasses (including herring spawn). Next, the successful tenure applicant will plant and attempt to contain (using more plastic) their hatchery geoduck juveniles. Once the geoduck mature (7-9 years), stinger hoses will be used again to make harvesting easy while inadvertently releasing any toxins such as cadmium, lead, arsenic, PBDE's etc. that have been lying dormant in the substrate.

This geoduck plan is in direct conflict with the Fisheries Act and both the DIRA MG's and ADIMS are working in tandem to find a way to protect our shores and surrounding waters from this threat. There will be more information coming out soon and we will need Denman residents to take a stand once again.