Good Management Practices: Ten Recommended Clean Marina Practices for La Paz, Mexico

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GOOD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES [GMP]

All marinas and boats have impacts on the environment. The greatest negative impacts occur as a result of siting and construction. These can be reduced or mitigated through good planning. Some impacts can have positive impacts such as increasing habitat in a breakwater, increasing flushing, adding social and economic values to the community.

Fortunately once the marina is operating most of the negative impacts are relatively small and easily prevented or controlled with good planning and management practices.

Three fundamental strategies exist for operating marinas and boatyards to prevent or reduce environmental harm:

- **Pollution prevention** - Avoiding use of a dirty practice or chemical, minimizing pollution released to the air, land and water. Often the best and least expensive way to control pollution is to prevent it.

- **Source reduction** - Preventing the transport and movement of pollutants on the land from getting into the water is the second line of control; once pollution is created and enters the land environment, it can be filtered or treated to reduce impacts. These practices usually cost more and are less effective than prevention.

- **Containment and recovery** - Controlling a spill after it happened and entered the water; harm to the marine environment has begun before control begins. These options are the last choice and are the least effective and most costly alternatives.

TEN RECOMMENDED CLEAN MARINA PRACTICES FOR LA PAZ

After visiting six marina and boatyard operations in La Paz and based on experiences protecting water quality elsewhere, the following practices are recommended for this area:

1. **Sewage control** - Black water discharge must be controlled with combinations of an onboard sanitation treatment system, onboard holding tank, marina pumpout system, restrooms, off site sewer disposal, and onsite treatment/disposal system. No discharge designation for the harbor can be considered, including requiring pumpout stations and all boat sewage through hulls be closed. Boating law enforcement officers seeking to enforce no discharge can use dye tablets to test boat holding tanks for overboard discharge. Most boaters staying in docks will almost always use the marina's restrooms and showers because they are larger, have hot water, and are more comfortable.

2. **Liquid waste management and spill control** - Liquids, such as engine oil, waste oil, coolants, solvents, paints, detergents and boat hull cleaners are used in marinas. Small quantities will spill from time to time, and these must be prevented, minimized and cleaned up. Use of detergents to "dissolve and hide" the spills should be discouraged. Collection by marina and recycling is recommended for waste oil, solvents and other liquids.

3. **Fuel station design** - Planning for spill prevention and recovery is essential for leaks that can occur in the fuel storage tanks [above and below ground] and pipe/hose system. Very minor spills will happen during fueling boats and overflow through air vent. Fuel spill booms and absorption "pampers" must be available at all fuel docks. Annual staff training in spill containment and absorption is essential. Floating booms can also help prevent spills outside the site from entering the marina.

4. **Solid waste collection** - Trash, garbage and other solid wastes from boat and marina use must be collected frequently to prevent falling into the water. Many covered trash containers need to be conveniently available for use by marina staff and boaters and in all boat maintenance areas.

5. **Boat maintenance and repair management** - By locating work areas back away from the shoreline and using appropriate technology most contaminants can be easily controlled, such as from boat bottom cleaning, painting, fiberglass repair and engine work. Boat paint removal is fast and very clean using dustless vacuum sanders.

6. **Boat operation and cleaning** - Boater education, signs and effective enforcement are the best ways to reduce problems, including boat wake causing shoreline erosion, hull cleaners entering the water, untreated sewage discharging, trash littering waterways, and using oil absorption pads to stop inboard engine oil drops from pumping overboard with bilge water.

7. **Storm water runoff control** - Rainwater runoff is a major source of land pollution movement into the water. Often contaminated runoff comes from the city runs through marinas. As much as is possible the initial and dirtiest runoff can be redirected and filtered with landscaping, vegetated buffers, screens or traps.

8. **Clean marina education** - People at all levels of the government, marina, and boating communities can benefit from clean marina and boating educational programs, signs and publicity to inform what issues and concerns are, why good management is beneficial, where and when potentially polluting activities can be done. They need to know what alternative clean practices are allowed and approved. All marina managers and staff need clean marina training using a written good practices manual adopted by the marina owner. All boaters in or entering La Paz should receive clean boating information and guidance.

9. **Environmental contracts** – Immediately after a marina adopts a clearly written manual of good management practices, all outside contractors who enter the marina to work on boats and all boating clients must also be informed of and follow the marina's clean practices through the use of an environmental contract to be read and signed at their next entrance to the marina.

10. **Habitat protection** - Boats give people easy access to nearby waters, shores and islands that are sensitive and protected. Some activities of concern include anchoring over bottom grasses and living coral, navigating in very shallow water hitting bottom habitats, scuba diver removing coral, depleting fishery, landings at sensitive habitats, boat traffic disturbing mammal breeding. These all need control through education, signs showing places where to anchor, dive, land ashore, walk, and with proper enforcement.