



Sugarloaf Marina launches 'Clear Your Gear' initiative

Port Colborne, ON (Aug. 6, 2021) – Sugarloaf Marina is excited to launch the 'Clear Your Gear' initiative that aims to prevent improperly discarded fishing line that could potentially cause entanglement concerns for people, boats, and wildlife.

The 'Clear Your Gear' initiative originated in Iowa, U.S.A. before making its way to Canada. The goal is to collect and recycle used fishing line by providing cannisters throughout marinas and boat docks to prevent fish, shorebirds, water wildlife, scuba divers and boat propellers from getting tangled in it. Most fishing line bought today is made of non-biodegradable monofilament, and if not disposed of properly, can remain in the environment for years.

With the help of local avid fisherman and community environmental advocate, Mike Cooper, the 'Clear Your Gear' initiative is now available at Sugarloaf Marina. Mike first approached the City about this project in the new year, emphasizing the importance of being environmentally conscience and proposed alternative recycling solutions. With a little help from volunteers and City staff, four cannisters have been strategically placed at Sugarloaf Marina, the public boat ramp, and H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park, to allow for easy recycling of used fishing line.

"We all have a role to play in keeping this waterfront community clean and safe for wildlife," said Mike Cooper, Port Colborne resident and project lead. "This was a collaborative effort by many organizations, including Clear Your Gear, Bass Pro, Cabela's Canada, local volunteers and City of Port Colborne staff. I'm so thankful the City recognized the importance of 'Clear Your Gear' and moved forward with this initiative."

When fishing line is disposed of in one of the 'Clear Your Gear' cannisters, it is cleaned of hooks, leaders, weights, and trash and then shipped to Berkley Conservation Institute located in North Carolina. Once there, the fishing line is melted down into raw plastic pellets and made into other products such as tackle boxes, spools, and fish habitats.

"We're committed to finding ways to be more environmentally friendly," said Mark Minor, Sugarloaf Marina supervisor. "There was absolutely no hesitation when Mike approached us about this idea; we immediately jumped on board. Now that the recycling units are available, we can begin to promote this in the community and do our part to keep used fishing lines out of waterways to prevent wildlife entanglement."

Marina staff are consistently finding used fishing line around the boat launch, harbour and park. Beginning this summer, public education and communication will start on the City's website and social media channels, encouraging fishermen to be mindful of where they discard used fishing line and encourage them to use the 'Clear Your Gear' recycling cannisters.

For more information on the 'Clear Your Gear' initiative, please visit www.clearyourgear.ca.

About City of Port Colborne

Located on the south coast of the scenic Niagara Region, Niagara's Port of Call has found the perfect balance – successful industrial and commercial sectors, comfortable and scenic residential areas, white sand beaches, unique culinary choices, the world class Sugarloaf Marina, fishing, golfing, trails, shopping districts along the historic Welland Canal and an energized festival and entertainment scene that includes live theatre – truly a community that adds to the overall Niagara Experience.

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