

## Lopez Marina Cleaned Up, Soon to be Expanded

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It was three years ago that part-time Lopez resident DeWitt Jensen made the decision to fulfill his father Anchor Jensen's dream.

Anchor purchased Spencer's Landing Marina back in 1968, and ever since then he dreamed about restoring and expanding the marina, which is at Lopez's Shoal Bay. Anchor even obtained many of the necessary permits, but that was as far as he got when he passed away in 2001.

DeWitt, the owner of Jensen Motor Boat Company in Seattle, went into the venture with his eyes open. The Spencer's Landing Marina "had become a little backwater in the San Juans," according to shipwright Stewart McDougall, and it was desperately in need of a massive cleanup.

Much of the work would be carried out by the two businesses located there: Tanbark Marine, which is owned by Kim and Michele Smith; and McDougall Marine, which is owned by McDougall.

The task was enormous. "We carted away dozens of truckloads of debris, and at least eight truckloads of nets," McDougall said. They also got rid of derelict boats that had been in the marina for years.

But DeWitt wasn't satisfied with the cleanup, and therefore he is taking a number of measures to improve the environment in and around the marina. Among them will be seeding the shoreline with indigenous baby oysters, each of which will filter between 50 and 70 gallons of water every day.

DeWitt has already installed a reverse osmosis water system that converted salt water to fresh, thus assuring that no water would be taken from the island itself. The steps are part of a broader effort by the marina to adhere to the list of "Best Management Practices" required by the State of Washington.

While the cleanup work was proceeding, DeWitt oversaw the effort needed to obtain the necessary permits. It required him to get the okay from more than 30 county, state, and federal agencies.

Public hearings had to be held before some of the permits could be issued. Several local citizens came to the meetings, wanting to hear DeWitt's plans and how they might impact the community.

DeWitt's plans were reassuring. Even though the marina would be expanding from 40 to 115 slips, the slips would be for permanent moorage only. Moreover, they were needed. "There is a lack of moorage in the San Juans," McDougall said, noting that even though all of them will be filled, there continues to be a waiting list of local boaters who are looking for moorage.

Residents were also assured that there would be no upland development; "not even any latte stands," McDougall said with a smile. And, finally, the marina would create more year-round employment for local residents. Already, there are seven Lopezians working at the marina, "and we anticipate more," Michele said.

About half of the additional slips are all but ready for occupancy today, as construction of Pier One has just been completed. Work on Pier Two will have to wait a few months because of restrictions on pile driving due to migrating fish, but the work should be completed by September.



COLLEEN SMITH PHOTO

Pleased about the newly renovated Spencer's Landing Marina are, from left, Stewart McDougall, Kim Smith and Michele Smith.

Spencer's Landing Marina was created by Ray Spencer, an early homesteader who also donated the land for what has become Spencer Spit State Park. During its early days, the marina was used almost exclusively for fishing and logging. Today, however, in keeping with the changes in island life, the marina is used almost exclusively by recreational boaters.

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