

Council opposes marina

By **QUENTIN DODD**

Island News Service

The Campbell River Environmental Council has come down against a proposal to develop a yacht marina in Oyster Bay.

The split decision was made at last week's regular monthly meeting of the organization, which is comprised of representatives of several different groups in the area — including the fish and wildlife association, the Steelhead Society, and the local labor council.

Father Charles Brandt, who is a director of the Oyster River Enhancement Society and represents it on the group, said Tuesday that he personally put together a proposal that the organization take a stance against the Campbell River Yacht Club's marina plan and the motion was put by ORES president Gordon Merrick as his alternate as he was unable to attend the meeting.

Brandt said the ORES directors have not discussed the marina proposal as a group and have not adopted a position on it on behalf of the organization as a result.

He said that the approach was made on a personal basis due to a number of concerns which he has over the marina.

The motion which the council passed — by one vote according to Brandt — says the organization "favors the preservation of the Oyster Bay area as prime habitat and is opposed to the alienation of public land in that area."

Brandt said that a part of his objective in having the matter put before the group was to try to guide the Comox-Strathcona Regional District board, which has already given two readings to a bylaw rezoning the bay area for marina purposes, into finally deciding not to proceed further with the bylaw. It has already been put before a public hearing, as required by law, and is expected to decide on a third reading and final adoption of the bylaw at its monthly meeting Sept. 25.

"I was at that (public) meeting and I opposed it (the yacht club proposal) on the count that basically there had been no impact study done and it's prime habitat for migrating birds," he said. "Even when the tide is in, there are hundreds of birds and ducks and so forth in there."

Brandt said he is particularly concerned about what he sees as the gradual but continuous erosion of public-access foreshore to the point that he feels there is a shortage of public shoreline which is readily accessible in this general area.

"This is the last piece of shoreline beach where people can go and walk, between Campbell River and Qualicum, or certainly in the immediate area," he claimed.

Brandt said he feels that the marina should be a matter of concern especially to people for about eight kilometres on either side of the proposed site, and that includes all of Oyster River.

"I think this has to do with anybody who lives five miles on either side," he said. "It's a bit of pristine coastline that hasn't been exploited and everybody should be concerned."

Brandt also questioned whether there is truly a need for the marina, which the yacht club says it needs to give it a suitably deep and protected base for sailing south of Discovery Passage and into Desolation Sound.

"Is there an absolute necessity for this to go in?" he said. "Isn't there sufficient moorage at this time?"

Brandt said that as far as he's concerned the variety of shore birds which moves through the area shows the area is "really a very fine migrating habitat", and one which is worth preserving.

Brandt acknowledged that the public meeting showed that there is a notable amount of support for the marina proposal. He estimated that perhaps 40 per cent "or something like that" of those present seemed to support the project.

He said, however, that unless action was taken to halt the development of public shoreline "there's going to be nothing left".