# Abandoned Floating Docks Prompt Cleanup

Wednesday, 27 March 2013

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A pair of floating docks that washed up on shore in Womens Bay have caused some concern. Andy Schroeder is the executive director of Island Trails Network and said he was informed that strange pieces of foam, most likely from a floating dock, were washing ashore in the bay. The foam was traced back to Zaimka (Zam-ka) Island, just offshore from Cliff Point.

-- (Floating Dock 1 :47 “And what we found was two … Bay really worried.”)

Schroeder said he thinks the dock may have actually originated in Womens Bay, and might have been tied to a derelict vessel, mooring buoy or anchored by itself. He said abandoned vessels or floats aren’t uncommon in the area, which is fairly sheltered and often used for storage. However, all too often he said the items are left in the water for years and either forgotten or left to break down in the surrounding waters. In fact, Schroeder said this isn’t even the first time one of has broke free and washed ashore.

-- (Floating Dock 2 :46 “We did a clean up of Womens Bay … clean it up.”)

Schroeder said Womens Bay has become a marine dumping ground of sorts in part because people can get away with it. Floating docks don’t have titles and deeds, so there isn’t a paper trail to lead back to a responsible party. He said it would be nice to remove abandoned floats before they break free and wash ashore, because even if they are still moored they can be a ticking time bomb of potential pollution.

-- (Floating Dock 3 :33 “But the problem is that … a really inconvenient spot.”)

Schroeder said the two floating docks currently stranded on Zaimka

Island will be difficult to remove, partly because it will cost a lot of money.

-- (Floating Dock 4 :41 “Well we hope we’re not going to … of dollars.”)

He said he doesn’t expect to find the docks’ owners, and it has been difficult to track down stakeholders that are willing to get involved.
He said the Department of Environmental Conservation currently has a mandate to deal with marine debris from the Japanese tsunami, but not marine debris in general. On top of that, ITN’s traditional funders, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Marine Conservation Alliance, have calendar-based funding cycles, so there’s no pot of money to deal with sudden events like the stranded docks. He said Zaimka Island is a part of the Alaska Maritime Wildlife Refuge, but that doesn’t necessarily guarantee a source of funding.

For now, Schroeder said he’s been impressed by the good Samaritan effort to clean up the foam on the beaches in recent days, and said ITN has been monitoring and helping with the effort. Other than that, he said he’ll continue trying to find funding for the removal. However, the longer the docks sit onshore the more likely contaminants from treated wood will be released and more foam can break free.