

Old Albion Ferry dock attracts partiers, problems



The aging Albion Ferry dock, which back in its day saw thousands a day driving over it as they loaded and unloaded off the ferry, now needs to be removed, according to Kwantlen First Nation. They are paying security to prevent more problems.

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As the ferry grew busier and busier, with more and more drivers using it to cross the river, it became less and less popular with the Kwantlen members who lived along the the roadway where drivers lined up to wait for the boats.

The speed and volume of traffic made it hard for members to get into and out of their homes.

Some drunk passengers or drivers even urinated or defecated in Kwantlen front yards over the years.

So when the ferry shut down for good in

2009 and the Golden Ears Bridge opened, the locals were looking forward to quieter lives with less disruption.

Unfortunately, Knights and KFN member and educator Drew Atkins said the now-vacant dock got a new kind of negative attention.

"It really did become a catalyst for negative use," said Atkins.

There have been wild parties, including one a few years ago in which a Facebook post about a grad party drew 200 teenagers to the dock and road, with some residents confronting the kids before they were

dispersed.

There has also been a lot of illegal dumping in the parking lot area near the dock, including drug lab waste, said Atkins.

And there have been fires – including one in which someone tried to set fire to timbers directly under the mostly wooden dock, said Knights.

After some two-by-fours were nailed across the dock ramp to try to stop people from heading down towards the water, Atkins found, a few weeks later, that they had been sawed through and used to build yet another bonfire.

"We had some com-

munity members that were assaulted," said Atkins.

After the 2015 grad party, the KFN put up some sawhorses as a partial barricade across Glover Road at the entrance to the reserve lands, warning that it was private property, with prominent No Trespassing signs.

That hasn't stopped everyone.

Atkins said he had to prevent a couple of guys on motorcycles from pushing aside fences and riding onto the old dock just a few weeks ago.

He said he's worried someone will be hurt or killed on the slick, decaying dock.

The financial impact on the band is also becoming considerable.

The KFN currently pays for security guards for the dock from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. seven days a week.

"This comes at a huge cost to Kwantlen," said Atkins.

As far back as 2011, the KFN met with Langley RCMP about what they could do with regards to community safety around the dock, said Knights.

"The main message we received from them is this needs to be cleaned up and removed," she said.

But Knights said the province has delayed taking action for years.

"They keep telling us every year that they're going to do something about it," she said. "But come on, 10 years is ridiculous."

With the Kwantlen working to expand the band's economy, they're also finding the structure frustrating because it blocks the potential expansion of another dock that's nearby.

A federal dock is just to the east, and the KFN took over management of it and had it completely rebuilt to modern standards in recent years.

But any further upgrades would be to the west – where the old Albion dock still sits.

A new business office for seym was built in the last year at the end of Glover Road, directly overlooking the dock site.

Having a big, occupied building there has helped cut down on trespassing and vandalism somewhat, but it also leaves the KFN's new professional building overlooking what Knights called "an eyesore."

The Langley Advance Times has reached out to the provincial government for comment on the future of the dock or a timeline for its removal.



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