

The Oban Times (Sept 2003)

The Marine Resource Centre (MRC), located approximately 12 miles north of Oban, is fast becoming the most important commercial development campus of marine resources on the west coast of Scotland. With features that combine industrial development potential, large high quality freshwater supply, a deep water pier, slipways and an unrivalled range of existing facilities, it makes the site particularly suitable for servicing the aquaculture industry and presents a diverse opportunity for industry and academia to work together on one site. Martin Waterhouse, chief executive of MRC, said:

One of its kind >

"The benefit of MRC is that there is nothing similar. Certainly the west coast of Scotland needs a facility like this, both from the point of view of access and infrastructure, and also the opportunities it provides. With all the different companies located on-site that are effectively feeding off each other, it is mutually beneficial." He continued: "The majority of the people here at MRC have previously been employed in the aquaculture Industry and the Lithgow Group have been involved in fish farming for more than 22 years, so we have a wealth of aquaculture experience to draw on."

Comprehensive services >

There are several aquaculture-related activities taking place at the MRC site. The centre has its own power generation, which generates 350kw of power for the whole site as well as the export of electricity to the National Grid. The hydro-electric scheme was installed as part of the development of a large state of the art Smolt production unit, capable of producing up to 8-10m juvenile salmon and with the hatchery running, it will be the newest and most up-to-date fish farm that has been built in Scotland." Other core business at the site includes, distribution, seaweed storage and milling, and yacht storage (indoors and out). MRC also has an engineering team, which provides technical services to the tenants on site. "We have a fully-tooled machine shop, which can provide manufacturing services to the industry whether it be fabrication or cold galvanizing."

The revolutionary "Zinga" >

Martin added "When cold galvanizing, MRC uses Zinga, for which MRC are agents. Zinga is a one-component cold-applied, anti-corrosion zinc coating. It has a unique formula that provides environmentally safe protection. It can be applied onsite as well as in the workshop, so its suitable for application to new and exiting metalwork, promising long term corrosion protection."

Unrivalled yacht storage >

MRC offers excellent and unrivalled storage facilities for yachts. This year has seen the provision of 60,000 sq. ft of indoor storage able to accommodate up to 100 boats. MRC started secure indoor and outdoor yacht storage in 1999 and the demand has been so great, the group has increased space allocation to now make it the largest indoor yacht store in the West Highlands. Martin said "We feel our prices are competitive and have been encouraged by the number of customers who have returned every year since we started 4 years ago – in fact, we now offer a loyalty discount." To compliment this service is Peter Caldwell, Marine Engineering Services who has a fully equipped workshop on site and also offers a boat repair service. Since the conversion of the former alginates buildings to give full work facilities for boats, MRC has also built the aforementioned slipway, which allows easier launching and retrieval of craft as well as access to its existing deep-water pier facility. Martin is keen to develop MRC to become a centre of excellence for marine resources in western Scotland. He said "We offer good service and there is certainly a strong demand for our facilities. An important facet is the opportunity to diversify on this site, which has a unique range of features and services." MRC still has office space left for interested parties and can offer warehouse facilities and outdoor storage for large equipment, such as fish farm cages. Access to the sea is no problem so moving them to a new location is easy.

Available space >

MRC has 6-acres of covered facilities available on a 12-acre site. It's a big site, which offers a great deal of space. Martin is open to suggestion as to how this space can be used by the industry and welcomes any interested parties to discuss their ideas with him on 01631 720291.