At the behest of the Estany des Peix sport fishermen's club, CiF chairman Jaume Ferrer, deputy chair and rural affairs councillor Bartomeu Escandell, and environment councillor Daisee Aguilera hosted an information session today to talk to islanders about the proposed project to regulate watercraft anchored at estany des Peix.

Ferrer said regulation was about improving the situation of the lake—a landmark celebrated for stunning vistas—and maintaining its use as a traditional fishing site and refuge for small boats.

According to Aguilera, the Council has already prepared a draft project for installation of floating pontoons and environmentally-friendly mooring points which accommodate a maximum of watercraft in those places ecological and heritage statutes allow for them.

The draft project was sent to the Govern's environment ministry, which enlarged upon it, conducted related environmental studies, capped the official capacity at 285 boats and forwarded the document to the coastal authority (*Demarcació de Costes*, or simply “Costes”) for review and approval. Under a deal struck yesterday at the signing of a partnership between Formentera and the regional environment ministry, the Council will be responsible for managing the new equipment and regulating how it is used.

Ferrer said that the most pressing concern—how to pay for and manage the equipment—was at the origin of a bid to tap the “Sustainable Tourism Levy” for €652,154 in funding.

Escandell confirmed it: “We've got the partnership deal, the project plan and the funding. All we're waiting on is the go-ahead from Costes, and we'll be through with the first phase. We're looking ahead to phase two now, which will be a communal effort here on Formentera to create a regulatory backbone and submit it to Consell d'Entitats for approval”.

Questions from islanders

Some one hundred turned up for the meeting. The first question dealt with commercial activity at the lake, a possibility the CiF chair dismissed, explaining that “estany des Peix statutes prohibit it and this particular project doesn't allow for it”. According to Ferrer the Balearic port authority (APB) has been contacted with a request that arrangements be made for certain for-profit activities in the port, but not in the lake”.

Other questions turned on the cost for individual islanders, the kinds of boats that will be permitted to anchor and preferential seniority...and all received a similar response from Escandell. “The time to figure out the details and come up with a directive for the scheme starts now”, he said. “We'll be building this thing from the ground up, and doing it all together”.

Faced with questions regarding dry-dock ramps and parking, the CiF chair said such issues required their own respective projects, which, in turn, would need the approval of Costes. “More projects will emerge on the fly based on the needs of islanders who use the lake”, he stressed. “For now, regulating watercraft mooring will be centred on the permits to install environmentally-friendly buoys and pontoons”.

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