

A8 TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2016 VANCOUVER SUN

CITY



Lauren Noon, Riki-Kay Middleton, Will Pursell and Chris Anthon enjoy Maple Beach. It is part of 76 hectares of federal lands managed by Parks Canada. PHOTO: LARRY PYN/PSU

PARK LIFE AND SULPHUR PILES

Larry Pynn explores Burrard Inlet, where residents coexist with port industry

WATER'S EDGE

May 9: West Vancouver: The most expensive waterfront real estate in Canada
Monday: Inner Harbour: Can nature and Port of Vancouver live together?
Today: Eastern Burrard Inlet: Industry and residential homes share the oceanfront
Wednesday: Stanley Park to Wreck Beach: The postcard face of Vancouver explored
Thursday: The Fraser River delta: Bird habitat on a global scale
Friday: Robert Banks, Deltaport: Ecological footprint of port expansion
Saturday: Tsawwassen/Point Roberts/Boundary Bay: Hands across the border
May 10: Crescent Beach and White Rock: Toxic rail traffic leaves lingering concern on oceanfront

■ TO SEE VIDEO OF LARRY PYN'S JOURNEY, VISIT VANCOUVERSUN.COM/TA/WATERS-EDGE

For 15 minutes I pinball around the offices of the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation — “People of the Inlet” — until a decision is made allowing me to launch my kayak from a small rocky beach next to the canoe shed on Dollarton Highway in North Vancouver.

The band's director of administration, Dale Komunichuk, even writes a note of authorization on the back of his business card in case anyone challenges me, and allows me to park my pickup truck overnight behind the community centre.

I launch over several dozen dead prawns visible on the ocean floor then paddle toward Maplewood Flats Conservation Area, a haven for birds featuring 96 hectares of intertidal area and 30 hectares of uplands.

The late novelist, Malcolm Lowry, wrote *Under The Volcano* while living in a squatter cabin near here, but there'll be no investigating literary ghosts today. I can barely skim across the exposed mud on a receding tide, even staying 200 metres off shore, and wisely decide to reverse course and continue eastward through the inlet.

Passing the reserve, I spot a small pebble beach with a Canadian flag draped over a stump. One ramshackle abandoned house has no fewer than four derelict boats outside — a far cry from the imposing mansions of the West Vancouver waterfront.

EARLY EXPLORERS

When George Vancouver plied these waters in 1792, natives in canoes accompanied him up the inlet, where he spent the night near the entrance to Indian Arm.

The crew tried sea-fishing without success and allowed one native to fire a musket “with much fear and trembling.” The natives were fascinated by the sailors' white skin and “gave us reason to conclude that we were the first people from a civilized country they had seen,” Vancouver wrote in his journals.

He named the inlet after Sir Harry Burrard, a Royal Navy officer.

Some stretches of Burrard Inlet have changed relatively little since Vancouver's visit, especially Indian Arm, protected on both sides by 6,499-hectare Indian Arm (Sey Nuth Khaw Yun) Provincial Park. In contrast, the portion between Port Moody and Second Narrows has undergone a major transformation.

Today, it is defined as the Metro Vancouver ocean frontage where residential neighbourhoods coexist with heavy industry, including oil tankers capable of causing a human and environmental catastrophe. It is also home to some of the region's most popular, and vulnerable, green spaces.

More than four-fifths of the oceanfront in Port Moody alone is parkland — the highest percentage in Metro Vancouver.

The Tsleil-Waututh have been here for thousands of years and feel they have more to lose than anyone due to their continuing connection to the land and its wildlife.

Their main reserve is within sight of both the Chevron Canada refinery and Kinder Morgan's Westridge terminal.

“The relationship is tenuous,” says Carleen Thomas, the band's intergovernmental relations manager. “We understand what



While parts of Burrard Inlet are much as George Vancouver would have found them in the 18th century, others see residential neighbourhoods looming just behind industrial cargo, including yellow piles of sulphur. LARRY PYN

where he spent the night near the entrance to Indian Arm.

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industry provides to the Canadian economy and society. But the Tsleil-Waututh have always protected our homeland and waters.”

The band has just released a report by engineering consultants Kerr Wood Leidal on ways to restore much of Burrard Inlet's former habitat and health by 2025. Their plan includes identifying pollution sources (not just industrial sites, but storm drains from residential areas), creating 50 hectares of estuary habitat, the phasing out of polluting creosote on wood pilings, eliminating sewage discharge from vessels and reducing shipping engine noise.

“It's a matter of protecting what's left and finding ways for the marine ecosystem to recover,” Thomas says. “What we're feeling now is that the inlet is at a real tipping point.”

The port has started to hunt Roosevelt elk again in the Indian River watershed thanks to a transplant by the B.C. government in 2006. But they consume the shellfish on their doorstep at their own risk, since it is officially considered contaminated. A \$700-million upgrade of Metro Vancouver's Lions Gate sewage treatment plant from primary to secondary treatment by 2020 should go a long way toward improving water conditions.

Herring stocks — food for humans, birds, other fish and marine mammals — are also showing tentative signs of recovery.

The port is conducting a pilot field study at seven sites where herring are thought to have historically spawned. The sites are monitored weekly, but to date have detected nothing.

“Just in the last few years we're seeing herring return,” says John

Konovsky, the band's natural resources planner, citing several habitat restoration initiatives for estuaries in Burrard Inlet. “That will be a watershed event. You can't have a healthy inlet without herring.”

Up ahead, I paddle toward a 75-metre barge, Burrard Cleaner No. 18, anchored just offshore and operated by the industry-funded Western Canada Marine Response Corporation. It offers accommodation, an office and pumping capabilities and sits alongside the Burrard Cleaner No. 5, a 7.5-metre crew boat.

I shout: “Hello, anyone home?” Eventually, a maintenance worker hangs his head off the side to tell me that he can't talk and that I should contact media relations for a tour on another day. Even out here, the docks rule.

GOING CRABBING

At Cates Park pier, eight men and women are busy tossing out crab traps and sifting through their catch for legal-sized catches.

A ninth man, Antonio Lopez, stands to the side and watches because he has no federal fishing permit. He tells me he is a painter who just finished a job nearby and accompanied a friend to the oceanfront for the afternoon. Lopez came to Canada from Chile 14 years ago, settling in Montreal, then moving to B.C. one and a half years ago, and lives in east Vancouver.

“All the people said it is so expensive (here) and raining all the time,” he says. “But I wanted to be for myself. I like Vancouver; the weather is so good, especially last winter. I don't miss the snow and minus temperatures.”

SEE BURRARD INLET ON A9



Tattoo artists Riki-Kay Middleton and Chris Anthon hold hands at Maple Beach, a stretch of federal land within Belcarra Regional Park.

BURRARD INLET FROM AS

The properties along Dollarton Highway feature relatively modest homes on expensive lots, with the prices ranging up several fold as I round the corner of Cates Park along Beachview.

At Deep Cove, I pull ashore for a bathroom break and a brew-celery soup lunch, and stock up with food for dinner and breakfast. I am the only kayak on the water this afternoon, but the cove is home to a popular kayak and standup paddleboard rental operation in summer.

BELCARRA

Twenty minutes later, I am scooting directly eastward across open water to Belcarra, a community of about 700 tucked away near the end of the road close to Saumut Lake. A sudden brisk wind foretells a squall in the distance toward Second Narrows.

A bridge leads to private Hamner Island, once owned by the B.C. lieutenant-governor Eric Hamner. Plans for an architecturally designed home on the 12-hectare island never materialized and the bridge looms as an eyesore on the oceanfront plastered with no trespassing signs.

Far more pleasing to the eye are seven cabins from around the 1940s — remnants of the area's cottage past — peeking out from the forested shoreline in Belcarra Regional Park. Metro Vancouver leases the cabins for less than \$600 per month per cabin, but has indicated it wants them gone.

Port Moody council has granted the cottages, expropriated in 1971, heritage status, though it carries no legal weight.

Jo Ledingham has lived here since 1964 and says the rents don't include extra costs of insurance and maintenance.

"It's hard," she says. "You need a new roof or hot water tank and you don't know where you're at. But we're still here. It's the price of living in paradise."

A short distance away, a father and daughter are angling off the rocks.

"Catch anything?" Jack "Rocks," he says. "But it's beautiful."

The bottom limbs on the shoreline trees are trimmed as neatly as hedges, reflecting the tide line.

Around the corner, I pull onto an exquisite pocket beach and make camp on a bordering trail near sunset. Crystal-clear waters caress the fine pebbles draped in cedar boughs. There is even a bear-proof garbage can and an outhouse stocked with toilet paper.

This is Maple Beach, about a half-hour hike from the Belcarra Bay picnic area. It is part of 76 hectares of federal lands managed by Parks Canada, though not a national park, and includes Admiralty Point and Burns Point.

I share the beach with two couples, one, from Port Moody; the other, friends visiting from Ontario. Rick-Kay Middleton and Chris Anthon are tattoo artists from Guelph and they agree to be photographed holding hands, she winning the battle to be on top.

Minutes later, the four are headed back and I have the place all to myself, wondering exactly where some of Captain Vancouver's men decided to spend the night on shore during their visit to this area.

"Some of the young gentlemen, however, preferring the stony beach for their couch, without duly



Rick Nott, a concrete company retiree from Maple Ridge, polishes his 1975 Dodge Dart Swinger in the parking lot at Rocky Point Park in Port Moody.

considering the line of high water mark, found themselves incommoded by the flood tide, of which they were not apprized until they were nearly afloat," he wrote in his journals.

I hear the din of traffic on the Burnaby and Port Moody. Flaring from the Chevron refinery is reminiscent of the Olympic flame on the waterfront. I see a natural spot to go out for fish and chips.

One train after another whistling from across the inlet makes for a restless night. It's cold, too. I awaken to the sound of an early morning visitor to the park walking past my tent and finding a cake on the kayak hull. A kingfisher catches a small fish and retreats to the top of a pile to swallow it while a gentle mist hovers above the ocean surface.

After a cup of drip coffee, I continue eastward along the northern shoreline to B.C. Hydro's building gas-fired Refining Thermal Plant, a political football that no longer produces electricity but serves a support role for electricity for the greater grid system. Signs warn of underwater electrical hazards.

Two dozen Barrow's goldeneye ducks and a harbour seal patrol just off the facility. Next door, a pair of Canada geese take up residence on the booms outside the Imperial Oil townsite — the loco refinery heritage property that shut down in 1995 and is, in part, scheduled to be redeveloped as a residential village.

Up ahead in the residential neighbourhood of Pleasantville, I stop to chat with George Otto working in his backyard. The former owner of the Burnet Motor Inn has lived here for 20 years and accepts industry and its historical presence in the inlet.

"I don't have a problem with it," he says. "It was here when we arrived. It's kind of interesting to watch all the activities, the boats coming in. We go swimming here all the time, do a bit of crabbing. It's nice having the outdoors right in your backyard."

Just around the corner, below Alderside Road, I find Scott Stubbs of Kerr Wood Leidal, an engineering consultant firm, at the water's edge doing infrastructure location

and assessment work for the City of Port Moody.

This is a 450-millimetre-diameter concrete pipe, gathering up water from the roads, creeks and drainage basins," he explains. From here, it's a short paddle to the end of the inlet in Port Moody. Highrises pop up in the background behind 40-hectare Shoreline Park, frontal tidal mudflats with a waterfront trail extending three kilometres through forests and across two salmon-bearing streams. A public wharf off Rocky Point Park downtown seems a natural spot to go out for fish and chips.

Rick Nott, a concrete company retiree from Maple Ridge, is in the parking lot polishing up his 1975 Dodge Dart Swinger. He could do that anywhere but chooses here, on the waterfront. "It's like brand new, inside and out. I get lots of compliments."

Nott used to take his kids swimming here, back in the '60s. "There's been a lot of changes. There used to be nothing and now all the highrises. I don't think the small-town feel anymore."

As I head westward along the south side of the inlet, I observe piles and piles of sulphur — a by-product of refining of natural gas — at Pacific Coast Terminals. The bulk-loading facility also handles canola and ethylene glycol, and is in the midst of a \$200-million-plus expansion to handle potash starting in late 2016.

PARK-LIKE ATMOSPHERE

"We consider as good as can be expected when you have residential and industry butting up," says Wade Leslie, Pacific Coast Terminals vice-president and general manager. "We are almost in a park-like atmosphere here at the end of the inlet. It's beautiful and gorgeous and we work hard to keep it that way."

Of critics that the port should not be ruling on environmental assessments on its own properties, he said. "The port recognizes they wear two hats. It's not easy all the time. But going through their permitting process, I don't know if it could be more rigorous."

The end of today's journey is not far ahead at Burnet Marine Park in Burnaby.

It is preceded by some rude belching on an industrial scale.

The source is a female Steller sea lion in a caged pool on the end of a dock. She is one of four sea lions that are part of a research program funded by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, involving the University of B.C. and Vancouver Aquarium, aimed at finding potential causes behind a decline in the species in remote western Alaska.

The four are routinely taken out into the inlet to perform experiments that measure expenditure of energy during foraging.

I take a few photos and soon biological technician Rob Marshall walks out of an office to chat.

"That's Hazy, and she has only one eye," he says. "She is one of our most vocal animals." Several wild male California sea lions cruised by recently for a visit and, who knows, to size up the goods.

Marshall grew up in Port Moody at a time when the city did not enjoy today's desirable reputation. He realizes the city was founded on industry, but argues that the value of the oceanfront to the public and environment cannot be underestimated.

Burnard Thermal's closing, the loco development, and conversion of Flavelle sawmill to a mixed urban development next to Rocky Point Park all make for big changes for the area. "Come back in 10 years and you'll hardly recognize the place," he says.

lynn@postmedia.com

Oceanfront by the numbers

The vast majority of homes that have ocean views are condos, not houses. Curious to see the biggest, fanciest and most expensive condos? Visit vancouver.com/tag/waters-edge for interactive maps plotting out oceanfront properties throughout the region.

Of the 8,206 seaside residences, 6,400 (78 per cent) are condominiums or duplexes/townhouses



Metro Vancouver has 200 oceanfront condos worth more than \$5 million

The top 10 are in Vancouver:

In millions	Address
\$22.3	3101-277 Thurlow St
\$16.9	2901-430 Beach Cres
\$14.9	3000-1139 Cordova St W
\$14.8	2300-1169 Cordova St W
\$14.1	2000-1560 Homer Mews
\$12.3	PH15-1717 Bayshore Dr
\$12.2	2200-1169 Cordova St W
\$12.2	2900-1139 Cordova St W
\$12.1	1301-1169 Cordova St W
\$11.8	3501-1281 Cordova St W

The 10 biggest are also in Vancouver

Square feet	Number bedrooms	Number bathrooms	Address
8,013	3	4	2901-430 BEACH CRES
8,009	3	5	3101-277 THURLOW ST
7,318	3	3	2000-1560 HOMER MEWS
6,714	4	1	2601-1000 BEACH AVE
6,328	4	4	2501-1383 MARINASIDE CRES
6,026	3	3	3000-1139 CORDOVA ST W
5,988	4	1	PH15-1717 BAYSHORE DR
5,890	3	3	1301-1169 CORDOVA ST W
5,797	3	1	2300-1169 CORDOVA ST W
5,356	3	3	2900-1139 CORDOVA ST W

Port Moody & Belcarra by the numbers

Of the 1,238 seaside acres ...

83 per cent in parks and green spaces 12 per cent is residential

But of the 284 oceanfront properties ...

236 are residential 33 are parks

Oceanfront land value is \$636 million

Top 10 Port Moody & Belcarra waterfront houses:

Millions	Address
\$5.9	3240 RED GATE RD. Port Moody
\$4.2	1256 ALDERSIDE RD. Port Moody
\$4.1	3400 RED GATE RD. Port Moody
\$4.1	1122 ALDERSIDE RD. Port Moody
\$3.9	5225 COOMBE LANE. Belcarra
\$3.9	185 TURTLEHEAD RD. Belcarra
\$3.8	1008 ALDERSIDE RD. Port Moody
\$3.7	5063 WHISKY COVE LANE. Belcarra
\$3.5	5269 COOMBE LANE. Belcarra
\$3.4	5065 WHISKY COVE LANE. Belcarra

Trippin' the inlet

The east end of Burrard Inlet is the realm of affluent residential communities, heavy marine industry and oceanfront parks.



SOURCE: LANDCOR DATA CORP MAGGIE WONG / POSTMEDIA NEWS ANALYSIS: LORI CULBERT, VANCOUVER SUN

In an effort to define our oceanfront, The Sun asked for help from Landcor Data Corp., a New Westminster-based firm that specializes in analyzing real estate data. Landcor matched B.C. Assessment data with other shoreline data sets to create a spreadsheet of 9,518 oceanfront properties between Lions Bay and South Surrey. Landcor excluded all addresses that were separated from the coast by another property, a road or railway (with the exception of the BNSF Railway in White Rock). The Sun analyzed this data to produce the maps and graphics for this series.



Rob Marshall is a biological technician at a sea lion research facility funded by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.