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ISSUE #11 JUNE - JULY, 2000

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Next Issue
August-September, 2000

Adventure Resorts & Lodges
Hiking Guide to Strathcona Park

**Deadline for editorial and
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www.wildislemagazine.bc.ca/advertising

EDITORIAL



Listening to CBC Vancouver today, a discussion ensued about the state of Canada's National Parks. Just what wilderness value do these areas still hold when constantly pressured by soaring numbers of visitors, relentless development, airborne pollutants and a whole host of global ills? Having just returned from a jaunt in Strathcona Park where the drive up Highway 28 and Western Mines Road is looking worse and worse with each passing year and each additional cutblock, the debate struck a chord.

The proliferation of cutblocks lining our highways and ringing our parks is reaching a shameful state. As the multinationals strip the last of Vancouver Island's old growth we, the public, are being robbed of an irreplaceable landscape and ecology. All the indicators point to the increasing value of tourism in our provincial economy. You don't hear of displaced sea kayak guides undertaking retraining for forestry jobs do you? Yet, a highly mechanized onslaught continues to clear our forests at an unprecedented rate. Ask anyone whose travelled or worked in the Nimpkish valley lately.

Timberwest's recent harvesting of their private land along Buttle Lake (and road infraction) is a pathetic site. Strathcona Park bears many scars from its

ongoing struggle with industry but the heartless hand of greed won't seem to stop. Hard to believe that an area once considered on a par with Banff could be so abused. Even harder to believe that no one can be held accountable for the damage to the ecological integrity of British Columbia's oldest Provincial Park.

While we celebrate the thrill and rejuvenation the wilderness affords us in Wild Isle a quick reality check does not go amiss once in awhile. This issue we profile Nootka Island as a destination for some of the finest coastal hiking, sea kayaking and surfing on the west coast. Nootka Island has been continuously overlooked for some level of protected status. Yet the island has some of the most significant historic and cultural sites in Canada. It has one of the most stunning beaches on the coast at Bajo, made all the more spectacular by the old-growth-cloaked hillsides that overlook it. News is however, that road construction is creeping closer and closer. If you've never written a letter before Nootka Island is a place worthy of starting.

My apologies for beginning this exciting issue of Wild Isle with these weighty thoughts. I suppose it was inevitable as a cog in the great media wheel that at some point we'd have to decide just where in the machine we fit. So there we are, looking for a world in which there remains enough wilderness that we can continue to call our isle wild.

Philip Stone

Keep Those Stories Coming

Wild Isle welcomes editorial submissions in the form of feature articles, trip reports, gear reviews, essays, safety & technique, how & where to's, press releases, artwork, photography etc... We offer \$100 for the best each issue!

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions should emphasize self-powered and self-reliant 'adventure-recreation', ideally but not exclusively taking place in a wilderness setting. This includes: sea-kayaking, backpacking, surfing, skiing/snowboarding, rock & ice climbing, mountaineering, caving, whitewater paddling, and so on. We publish 5 times annually so keep the coming season in mind, we will hold items for future issues.

Environmental issues are inseparable from a love of wilderness experiences and items on local issues are invited but please present an unbiased, factual, & well researched viewpoint.

As for geography, Vancouver Island, the Southern Gulf, Discovery and Queen Charlotte Islands, the mainland coast and the northwest U.S. as accessed from Vancouver Island are all within our "sphere of influence". Stories by Islanders on their travels elsewhere in BC and even the world at large may be considered.

Feature articles should be 1000-1500 words in length. Whenever possible articles should be accompanied by a map, photographs or artwork.

Photographs may be submitted as: colour slides, black & white prints, colour negatives, colour prints and black & white negatives in order of preference. Please include a S.A.S.E. to ensure return of your work.

Don't forget to correctly caption & credit all photographs and artwork.

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LETTERS

Why Log Around Horne Lake? A Logger's Perspective

Dear Editor,

Sunny skies and clean west coast air greeted me when I arrived home from a month vacation in Thailand. There, the weather had been hot and sunny, and the climbing was superb. Thai people were friendly and understanding, particularly with our language barrier.

Although I had a great time in Asia, I was happy to be back on Vancouver Island. Born and raised in the Parksville area, this is my island, my home! I couldn't wait to get back to my beautiful local crag at Horne Lake. Since the good weather followed me home, I called my climbing partner, Martin, (a fellow logger) and suggested a trip to the lake. He immediately agreed, and within ten minutes I was out the door to meet him. Within an hour, we were both merrily on our way!

I should mention that during my trip to Asia, one of the main topics of conversation with fellow climbing enthusiasts had been how wild and untamed the mountains of BC were. The climbing possibilities in BC are endless and excellent.

Another common topic of conversation was logging practices in BC. The people I met did not understand why so many trees had to be cut down. Being a dedicated climber and a proud logger, I took the time to attempt my best at describing the economic needs for the logging industry. I also explained that in the last few years there have been many environmental changes that have taken place in the industry. I made mention that logging is the second largest industry in BC and feeds many families. After discussing this in depth with my Thai friends, I felt confident that they had come to a clearer, more accurate understanding of BC logging practices.

On our way up to the lake that day, I noticed several logging trucks. They were hauling full loads of logs out from the area surrounding the lake. I thought this was strange because it is all second growth in that area. Just as I was thinking this, Martin said, "No way! They're logging the crag!"

We crested the hill to find that the logging operation had already wiped out all the trees and had moved onto the next log setting. The entire area had been logged, i.e. the beginning of the trail, in the main drainage where the water drains in the winter, right up to where the hillside starts to get steep.

A sign was posted on one of the lonely trees left standing in a clump. It read, "NO TRESPASSING, NO PARKING, NO HIKING, and NO ROCK CLIMBING". We couldn't believe what had happened. All the trees were gone, plus no climbing was allowed. We were dumbfounded and didn't know what to do next. Should we leave and go home, find the people responsible for doing this or just go climbing anyway? It didn't take long to choose the latter. We parked, grabbed our gear, and hiked what was once a trail. The remainder of the day was spent ripping up some world famous limestone.

Returning home from a day of fun in the sun and playing on limestone, I felt depressed and disturbed. Depressed because I had passionately described this beautiful area to my friends in Thailand. Disturbed because of the nonsensical logging practice that had been used at the lake. Maybe even more disturbed by just how ugly it now looked. The entire lower face had been destroyed, plus other areas surrounding the lake. It just felt wrong. There was no need for it. I work in the helicopter logging industry. The environment doesn't need to be raped and plundered for profit.

At present, there is a battle going on just to get access to the climbing at Horne Lake. I hope when the climbers show up this season, the dispute will have already been resolved. I know the trees will not have grown back, and the land will remain scarred for years to come. However, I hope climbers will have access to the area and new routes will be forged.

What I told my new friends in Thailand will never change. Climbing in BC is fantastic. I just hope that when fellow climbers show up, they, too, will understand the situation and be allowed to climb.

I no longer feel proud of what I have been doing all these years working in the logging industry. I am also not proud of the logging stories I shared with people in Thailand. I can understand somewhat what went on up at the lake; business is business, and it is private land where the logging companies can and do get away with murdering the environment. I remain disillusioned and angry. What happened at the lake can't be undone. However, it should have never happened in the first place. I know - I am a faller working in the industry.

David Gemmell

Horne Lake Rules...

Dear Editor,

Horne Lake for those who have not heard is a large mass of limestone located 30 mins North of Nanaimo. It is quickly becoming one of the hotspots in Canada. At present most of the route activity as been on the upper end of the scale, but thanks to few a people it is starting to develop for the average climber. Of course the big issue here is access, although it is not officially open. The new and present owners of the area seem to know that we are there and have not been enforcing their trespassing rights. It is up to us to maintain a low profile when we are there. So the following have been set up as guidelines.

Now I know there is no one around to enforce these rules so we well just have to police ourselves.

No camping in and around the cliffs. Please park down by the Adventure camp and walk to the cliffs. If all goes well with the access we plan to put signs up for each sub area. Absolutely no fires. Pack it in, pack it out. This includes cigarette butts. No cutting of trees for any purpose even if it is the best route in the world.

Unless your route can be accessed from the top, which is about 15% of the whole cliff, all routes established at the lake are ground up ascents. This gives the first ascensionist the option of placing a bolt where they feel they need them. So all future ascensionists will have to climb with the same level of boldness.

Rap bolting: The only reason to place a bolt on rappel is to make a perfect sport route. Routes should be well cleaned and rehearsed on top rope to work out the best clips, and keep your height in mind. There is no reason for a dangerous Rap route.

Most of the emphasis is on sport climbing, although there are several routes that are going up as trad routes so please respect the first ascensionists. This means no retro bolting. Bolts should be 3/8" or larger in diameter. Bolts should be at least 3 1/2" long and made of stainless steel. Install a good rap system at each station. The Fixed rings are the way to go. No squeeze jobs.

Do not chip, glue and manufacture or bolt on holds.

Make sure you mark your projects with a red tag. Work on your project regularly, if you're not working it anymore, give it to someone else. Take your tag off when you are finished.

Remember access has not been actually granted by the present owners so please keep a low profile. We are looking for a long time solution, not a quickie.

For any further information or to submit new route info please contact Greg Sorensen at 250 751-1154 or at 751-7625 or email us at outerlimitsexcur@home.com

Greg Sorensen and Andrew Boyd

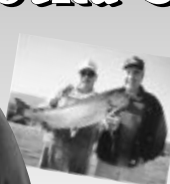
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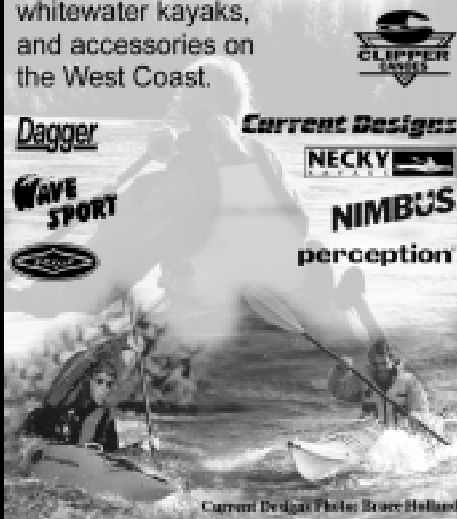
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FROM THE FIELD

Great Bear Nature Tours

Beginning this August Port Hardy-based Great Bear Nature Tours is offering one day Grizzly bear tours to Seymour Inlet, an area with one of the highest population densities of the "Great Bears" on the coast. Tours feature an early morning flight into the coastal mountains on a Pacific Coastal Airlines Grumman Goose, a grizzly viewing exploration of the Seymour River estuary by boat and foot led by a wildlife biologist, and a gourmet picnic lunch. The scenic late afternoon return trip to Port Hardy is aboard a high-speed Sea Legend Charters launch and features a trip through Nakwakto Rapids, the highest velocity tidal rapids in the world, grey and orca whale watching, and afternoon tea. Reservations available at the North Island Adventure Centre: 250-902-2232



Horne Lake Status Update

Over the last four years Horne Lake has been developed as a "must visit" area to climb, with its overhanging limestone caves and chert bands. The issue of access has always been a problem. Under the ownership of Texada Logging, they knew we were there and after posting signs prohibiting people from climbing, they basically just turned a blind eye and did not do much to enforce the issue. Now with the present owners, Texada Land Corporation, things have changed a bit. It seems they do not want us there at all, but once again there has not been much in the way of enforcement. They have offered to sell the land to climbers but have not offered a price as of yet. The newest development is the creation of The Horne Lake Society. They are a group of 357 land leasers around the Lake who have offered to buy the land from Texada Land Corporation and apparently have the means to so. The details of this deal are not currently available to the public. We are not sure yet whether this will include the Cliffs or not, but it has been talked about. If this goes through how it will affect the situation depends entirely on how this group deals with access issues. Liability is of major concern as are fires. So in the end the official status is Horne Lake is closed; unofficially no one seems to be actively stopping climbers. So Happy Climbing, keep it safe and keep a low profile.

CASBC - Skaha Projects

The Climbers' Access Society of B.C. is happy to report that our spring Skaha projects are now well under way. Over the last few weekends, with over 120 person-days of volunteer time, we flew in and built a solar composting toilet, and are in the process of finishing a second, pit, toilet. We also did considerable trail work.

The solar composting toilet is on the bench between Red Tail Wall and Doctor's Wall, and is quite an impressive structure. The pit toilet will be just below Grassy Glades; unfortunately, the hole we pre-dug wasn't big enough for the culvert!

The flying toilets made the front page of Monday's Penticton newspaper, together with a picture of Sheilagh Seaton, the "power behind the throne". Sheilagh Seaton (CASBC's Penticton director), Nic Seaton, Audrey Perry, Sean Dougherty, Howie Richardson, and other Skaha climbers put a big effort into organizing the project and making sure it happened.

Main donors to the project were

Mountain Equipment Co-op (\$7,500), Alpine Club of Canada Environment Fund (\$1,600), Black Diamond, and Metolius. A variety of Penticton-area businesses made generous donations of materials and services. All volunteers and donors will be thanked in the next issue of Access News.

CASBC is now the lessee/operator of the Braesyde parking lot. Our plans for Skaha for the rest of 2000:

1. Finish the Grassy Glades toilet.
2. Maintain both toilets.
3. Place small directional signs at key points on the Skaha trail network.
4. Build and place an information sign at Braesyde.
5. Thank all volunteers and donors, in the newsletter, a newspaper ad, plaques on the toilets, etc.

There will probably be a work/promotion day at Skaha on the May long weekend - details tba.

Thanks to everyone who has helped!
Anders Ourom (CASBC)

Coast to Coast Adventure Race

The Vancouver Island Challenge, the Island's first "Coast to Coast" Adventure Race will take place this summer on July 15th and 16th. Participants will run, bike, canoe, mountaineer and most likely get lost and be found between Vancouver Island's rugged West Coast and the Comox Valley.

It is an exciting multi-discipline outdoor- race in one of the most stunning settings. While the final route will not be released until the night before the race, a rough course has been charted from Tofino to the Comox Valley. The fastest teams are expected to cover the entire distance in less than 30 hours, while the official maximum duration of the race will be 36 hours. Each of the main disciplines - run, bike, canoe - will take about 10 hours, while the "adrenaline" elements of rapelling, traversing and orienteering will bring the race time up to 36 hours.

Teams consist of four members (at least one female and one male) plus one or two support people and one support vehicle. Each team covers the entire race together and passes the finish line together. Excellent condition, orienteering skills and team spirit are most likely the key to success.

Detailed race information and entry forms will be available on May 1st, 2000. The race is limited to 40 teams and sign up is on a first come first serve basis. To receive your information package by email, please contact the race organizer Bernard Zirkl at (250) 339-9693

Email: bzirkl@island.net

Kayaks in the Rainforest!

Dan Lewis and Bonny Glambeck are celebrating the new millennium by launching Rainforest Kayak Adventures in Tofino, British Columbia, this summer. The new company will offer sea kayaking courses and guided tours.

The owners have lived and paddled year-round in Clayoquot Sound for a decade. Clayoquot Sound was recently designated as a United Nations Biosphere Reserve.

Glambeck and Lewis are both expert kayakers, with a combined 25 years leading sea kayak trips in Clayoquot Sound. They are also veteran rainforest conservation activists, with a wealth of knowledge about the local flora, fauna, and politics.

Their courses are hands-on learning adventures designed to teach people the skills to paddle safely on their own. Courses range from Basics & Beyond for beginners, to Surf & Open Coast for intermediate paddlers. A day is spent honing new paddling and navigation skills, which are then applied in the wilderness environment.

The tours are for those who want a guided sea kayaking adventure. Kayaking is an excellent way to view wildlife—from gray whales to moon snails. Participants can ponder the mysteries of the ancient cedar giants, experience the magic of a tidepool, or simply rest and relax on the beach!

Women's courses and tours are also offered. Custom trips can be arranged, as well as lodge-based staff/board retreats.

For more information, check out their website at www.rainforestkayak.com, or call toll-free at 877-422-WILD.

Robertson Delivers Pledge to Freeze Sea Kayak Camping Fees

VICTORIA - Agriculture Minister Corky Evans ensured that Kayaking operators will not experience any increase in annual rental fees for campsites in response to a question from North Island MLA Glen Robertson in yesterday's Question Period.

"I have a growing number of sea kayaking tour operators within my constituency," said Robertson. "They are concerned that BC Assets and Lands Corporation staff are talking about raising the annual rental fees on camping sites from \$500 to \$2000 a year, and possibly even making them retroactive."

Robertson then asked Evans: "Does the minister responsible for BCAL want this industry to grow? And what is he going to do about my constituents' concerns?"

Evans answered that he had recently met with the Sea Kayak Guide Alliance, arriving at an agreement that fees would remain at \$500 and that no further fee increase would be implemented without full consultation with the kayakers.

"The Premier has told me to use BCAL for community economic development, rather than getting in people's way," said Evans. "So I told the sea kayak industry that I'd meet them this fall in Alert Bay, and Glen Robertson and I will try to solve the problems."

The Alliance had been concerned that a raising of fees would not result in increased access to land, which remains an important safety concern for kayakers. In recent years, sea kayaking has developed into an important tourist attraction for economic diversification, notably in northern Vancouver Island.



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View Point

- the view is not always clear -

There's a new buzz phrase on many people's lips these days - "Ecological Integrity". So what is it and why should you care? Ecological Integrity (E.I.) lies at the core of everything we do or perhaps not do when it comes to managing the environment. You will note that the word "environment" was used rather than "parks or protected areas", because Ecological Integrity extends well beyond simple park boundaries and can involve districts, regions and even extend across provincial or national borders. While there are many definitions of E.I. it could be simply thought of as a state of the environment when all parts of an ecosystem exist, living and evolving together, unimpeded or restricted by unnatural impacts.

Although BC Parks has always managed protected areas by considering the impacts on natural resources and restricting use or development accordingly, parks and ecological reserves cannot be managed as islands. This introduces the first problem which is recruiting cooperation from adjacent land owners while working together with other agencies to strive for ecological integrity as a common goal.

First things first, however, and that is to ensure all park staff, from management to operations, including administration and field personnel, all have an understanding of E.I. It has become a high priority of the agency, supported by the Parks Legacy Panel recommendations, to develop and implement a personnel training program this year. It is through the development of this program that staff are identifying issues and problems which may block the goal of reaching complete ecological integrity. Such hindrances include among others, the collection of base line data for all protected areas (it is tough to manage something using incomplete information), setting the goal posts in terms of what point in time should E.I. be geared to (present time or 10, 100

ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

or 1000 years ago?), deciding whether to change present, stable ecosystems by reintroducing species, setting acceptable limits of change if full E.I. is not realistically attainable, how to manage recreation while striving for E.I. developing policies and enforcing firm regulations and of course, developing public awareness and support for achieving Ecological Integrity.

It is easy to see that E.I. is a complex issue and one that requires a willingness and cooperation from everyone. As recreationalists, whether you are hikers, climbers, bikers or divers etc. it is important that you become aware of what Ecological Integrity is and what stresses your activities may place on an ecosystem.

Although most readers fully understand the reasons behind park establishment and protection, while comprehending the need for restrictions, I hope this article broadens your perspectives about E.I. as a whole, both within park boundaries and beyond. As we move ahead you will undoubtedly here the buzz of Ecological Integrity again and again and hopefully while the "view" is not clear at this time, it will become both common and attainable in the future.

If you have some thoughts, pro or con concerning this issue and would like to express your viewpoint, please contact Andy Smith at:

BC Parks, 1812 Miracle Beach Drive, Black Creek, B.C. V9J 1K1
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Mt Rosa, Nootka Island: When it comes to Ecological Integrity, just how close is too close?

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CLIMBING OUT

There was a long pause over the telephone line. Gavin asked again, "So, have you been climbing much?" I hesitated again and drew a long, slow breath. "Well, I have been bouldering quite a bit." There was another awkward pause, this time initiated by my climbing partner. "Bouldering eh," Gavin trailed off, "You don't own a crash pad, do you?" "Oh no, don't worry," I was quick to the defence. "It isn't that serious, I mean it's just for the training."

The person on the other end of the phone was Gavin, my usual climbing partner. Gavin lives in Calgary, the city where I grew up. Prior to moving to Victoria a year ago, I had spent my adolescence and adulthood in the Canadian Rockies. Literally in the Rockies. As a child I had always hiked and camped with my family, but by the time I was 13, hiking with the old man just wasn't cool anymore.

I started rock climbing in grade 8 and found the sport that would shape my life. By the time I was in high school I was climbing three times a week. I was more concerned with routes than homework and my marks showed it. In college I began ice climbing and soon branched out into alpine climbing. This colder side of climbing became my passion. Obsession is a more accurate term for it.

My friends and I took pride in the fact that we climbed ice. Most of the climbers our age were sport climbers and boulderers who spent their winters (and summers) in the climbing gym. We didn't have time for these so-called climbers. We called them names, had bumper stickers that read, "Sport Climbing is Neither" and generally made fun of them on a regular basis. The fact that they were exponentially stronger than us on pure technical rock climbs didn't matter. We didn't care, we were mountain men. Our heroes were Don Whillans and Walter Bonatti, alpine gods of my dad's generation. Meanwhile, the gym crowd idolized 15-year-old sport climbers who could do 50 one-arm pull ups in a row. Regularly, we pointed out, "That kid can't even get into the pub to brag about it, so what's the point?"

For us the pub was key to the whole lifestyle. We would sit and B.S. drinking Scotch and smoking cigars. We didn't drink Scotch because we liked it. We actually all thought it was vile. We'd never admit this; the scotch was paramount for our image, or at least the image we wanted to show. We were alpine hardmen. We would sit long into the night planning future adventures and laugh about our near-misses.

On occasion we would venture into the climbing gym. This was, only for training we told ourselves. We'd often see 16-year-old kids climbing two full grades higher than our best. We would remark to each other, "Bahh, try that with a pack on kid."

My negative attitude towards bouldering and sport climbing continued for quite some time. Even as I gained some maturity, my attitude continued. In some ways this state of mind prevails even today. The maturing process does do wonders in liberalizing one's feelings. And as I have grown older I have been able to see bouldering for what it is: climbing in its essence. Perhaps my decision to move to the Island, away from my Rockies helped to finally put everything into perspective. With the abundance of little rocks to climb, I have been able to strip away all of the useless elements of climbing. I have been able to distil climbing into its purest form: the kinaesthetic movement of hands and feet over rock. Without the trappings of the rope and the other baggage of traditional climbing I am able to fly; to soar. I am able to push myself and to harness the power from within.

My evolution as a climber and as a person continues each and every time I move over rock or ice. I grow both physically and more importantly spiritually. It is of little consequence whether I am 2000 feet off the deck or 3 feet above Flemming Beach. Bouldering has evolved from a means to train and get physically stronger to a mental exercise that reminds me why I started climbing in the first place.

I think my hero was right all along: "The mountains are the means, the man is the end; The idea is to improve the man, not to reach the top of the mountains." -Walter Bonatti **WI**

I have been able to see
bouldering for what it is:
climbing in its essence

by Scott Kennedy

OF THE
CLOSET

Craigh Hyslop, Skaha

Photo: Scott Kennedy



PRINCESS LOUISA INLET



by Al Keith

Above: Max Keith at Killam Bay.

Photo: Al Keith

Finally! It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon that grey September afternoon when my brother Max and I pushed off from the Egmont marina in our kayak. My wife Joyce, who had chauffeured us all the way from Vancouver, put on a brave face as she waved goodbye, hiding her fear that some serious mishap might befall her 'over-aged adventurers' in some far-off corner of the coast. As we approached the north shore of Sechart Inlet it started to drizzle, but even that couldn't squash our gung-ho mood. As we turned north, into Jervis Inlet, I began mulling over the strange chain of events which had brought us on this kayak safari to Princess Louisa Inlet in the first place.

It started four months earlier with a phone call from my brother Max in Germany, who announced that he was going to celebrate his imminent retirement with a visit to Canada's Pacific province and an excursion to see some of BC off the beaten path.

After giving the matter some thought, I bought a 2-seater folding kayak - which I would be able to store easily in the Vancouver highrise we then lived in - signed up for some kayaking lessons, and then called Max back: "How would you like to go on a kayak trip to Princess Louisa Inlet? It's definitely off the beaten path!"

Max who, as an accountant, puts faith in figures, shot back with, "Princess Louisa Inlet? How far is it?"

I took a deep breath. "No more than 140 kilometers. Round-trip that is."

His whistle came clearly over the phone. "That sounds like a lot of paddling, Bruderherz! The last time I sat in a kayak was 25 years ago." Then followed more questions. "How long will it take us? How are the winds in the fjords? What about the currents? And how busy is that inlet?"

He's hooked, I thought, and replied. "If we schedule the trip for early September, there won't be all that many boats. And we'd probably manage that distance - both ways - in 10 days. But I've added a couple of extras, just in case. We'll be paddling up Jervis Inlet, one of B.C.'s most scenic fjords. And I've always wanted to see Princess Louisa Inlet!"

...and here we were, heading north, though I was glad that our first stopover, Killam Bay, was less than 3 hours paddling away. I had been warned that Jervis was not camping country, with the mountains rising dramatically to towering peaks on both sides of the inlet. The moment we reached Killam Bay, somewhat worse for dampness, we set up our two small tents in record time, and for supper made do with Joyce's tuna sandwiches. Then, tuckered, we hit the sleeping bags, while the rain beat a soft tattoo on our tents.

However, things did look much better the next morning, with the bold contours of the mountains outlined against a cheerful blue sky. While waiting for the tide to change, we hung

our gear up to dry, and by early afternoon were underway again. And before long we were becoming attuned to the rhythm of sea and paddling, and it felt as if Max and I had been kayaking partners for years.

We reached the Indian Reservation at Vancouver Bay by early evening, and were directed to a large campsite by a hospitable custodian. Max was attending to the boat, while I heated our supper of spaghetti and meatballs, when a white-capped eagle dove down from a tall pine and made two slow circles over our camp. Then it gained altitude and headed out toward the far shore. A good omen, I thought. "Probably looking for supper, like me": my brother brought me down to earth as we sat down to enjoy our meal.

Next morning, since our next planned stopover was Brittain River on the other (west) side of Jervis Inlet, and the winds were in our favor, Max hoisted the little sail Joyce had sewn for us on my make-shift mast, and we enjoyed the sight of the friendly red square blowing above our heads as we ghosted across the inlet. That evening, while Max was concentrating on his journal, I enjoyed watching four great blue herons, who had spaced themselves out in the shallows and were now patiently fishing for their supper. As darkness fell, just as I was about to drift off to sleep, the hoot of an owl rose clearly over the soft whisper of the surf, and the hubbub of the city seemed a million miles away.

"We must have reached the rapids already!" I yelled and kicked against the left rudder...

While we had selected our overnight stops carefully in advance, there was one time when it didn't work out. We had planned to make Patrick Point our next overnight stop, but by afternoon patches of fog started to drift over the inlet, sometimes obscuring the shoreline altogether, and we passed blindly right by Patrick Point. When it finally occurred to us that we must have missed our designated stopover, we had little choice but continue paddling, and that we did until darkness set in. Yet still we hadn't found a place to haul out the kayak and set up even a small camp, and our backs and arms were really beginning to tell on us.



Malibu Camp

Photo: Al Keith

Discouraged, we held a confab to consider our options. It was then that Max noticed several lights blinking in the distance, but from the far, eastern shore, and at least some 4 kilometers distant. I didn't relish crossing Jervis Inlet in the dark, but our options were limited, so we set a direct course for those beckoning 'beacons'. The crossing cost us the last of our remaining strength, and when we reached the other side, we ran out of steam. Resting our paddles and taking a welcome breather, all I could make out ashore were some cottage-like structures, several with outside lights on. But nary a sign of people!

Then, suddenly, I had the feeling of our kayak being pulled sideways, and let the beam of my flashlight play over the dark water. I caught my breath when I saw that we were moving among some very lively, white-capped swirls, and the truth finally struck me.

"We must have reached the rapids already!" I yelled and kicked against the left rudder, while digging in with the paddle. Max quickly followed suit. The Malibu Rapids guard the entrance to Princess Louisa Inlet, and right now they were exerting a growing force on our small craft. According to our charts, these rapids were supposed to be crossed only at slack tide, and this certainly wasn't it! But our desperate effort

paid off and we managed to free ourselves and make for a small patch of sand near one of the cottages, where we beached our kayak. Then we went looking for people.

I remembered reading that this complex at the entrance to Princess Louisa Inlet was Malibu North, a Christian Youth Camp, run by the Young Life Organization. Each year hundreds of youngsters from the U.S. and Canada spend a memorable week in these spectacular surroundings. However, this being September, the place was empty, and when we finally located the caretaker, he graciously offered us one of the cottages for an overnight stay. It was an offer we really appreciated after our long, exhausting haul. When we later checked our chart we found that we had paddled more than 30 kilometres that day, a feat which left us old-timers suitably impressed.

The next morning we navigated the rapids safely at slack tide, and entered Princess Louisa Inlet. As we paddled slowly past the mountains which frame the small Inlet and rise to heights of over 7,000 feet, an observation by one of its earlier admirers came to mind. Mystery writer Erle Stanley Gardner had written, poetically "...there is a calm tranquility which stretches from the smooth surface of the reflecting water straight into infinity." We were no less awed by the inlet's beauty.

We tied up our kayak at the dock near Chatterbox Falls, where the Marine Park is located, and went exploring. Later we set up camp, and since we were well ahead of schedule and the surroundings couldn't be more idyllic, we spent an extra day in Princess Louisa Inlet, before reluctantly saying goodbye. Enjoying good weather the next few days, we took our time on the return trip, never expecting that the weather god still had a little surprise in store for us.

It was on our last full travel day, while crossing Killam Bay on the way to our 'old' camp spot, that a capricious, gusting wind came up. Already struggling against a contrary tide, we zipped up the spray sheet and pulled our hats down tight, as the darkening sky unleashed a torrent of rain on us with an ominous roar, driving the downpour against us in hard, slanting sheets. For a while it seemed as if the waves were standing on end, without distinct pattern or direction, yet somehow all aimed at our tiny craft.



At Chatterbox Falls

Photo: Al Keith

It was not a sight to inspire confidence, and when one wave broke against our little craft and doused Max, he turned and yelled, "Shouldn't we better turn back?"

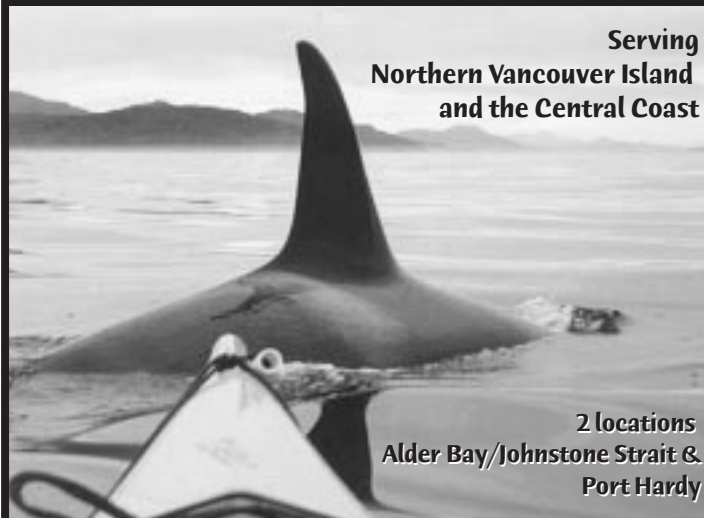
But since we were already past the centre of the bay, and turning might get us in deeper trouble, we continued. And for what seemed like hours, we battled for every foot we gained, until we finally reached the shallows on the far side and the quieter water. My brother Max turned, relief on his face, and lifted his right arm, thumb upwards. And grinned. Then we continued slowly to the familiar campsite.

It was noon the next day when we rounded the last point and turned into Sechelt Inlet, where we made for its southern shore. As Egmont Marina gradually hove into view, it wasn't long till we could make out the lone figure of Joyce, standing at the far end of the dock, her waving arm welcoming her 'adventurers' back.

WI

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NOOTKA ISLAND

West Coast Paradise



Photos, clockwise from top left: Old growth cloaked hillsides above Skuna Bay; Hiking near Calicum Creek; Kayaking among the Nuchatlitz archipelago, Crawfish Falls.

by Philip Stone

A casual look at a map of Vancouver Island won't immediately reveal Nootka Island's location. But on closer inspection Tahsis Narrows, linking Esperanza Inlet to Tahsis Inlet, appears, betraying the autonomy of Vancouver Island's largest island satellites.

It takes extra effort and planning to visit Nootka Island but those who do are rewarded with superlative kayaking around Nuchatlitz Inlet and Catala Island, a moderate and spectacular coastal hiking route, reef & point breaks to surf at Bajo and powerful encounters with First Nations people, their long history & culture.

The chief points of departure to reach Nootka Island are, by air or water, from Tofino, Gold River, Cougar Creek (Nootka Sound), Tahsis and Zeballos. The shortest put ins for paddling are either Cougar Creek for Yuquot at the south end of the island or Little Espinosa Inlet, west of Zeballos on the Fair Harbour road, to reach Catala Island and Nuchatlitz.

Nootka Sound

The protected waters of Nootka Sound between the southeast shore of Nootka Island and the entrances to Tlupana and Muchalet Inlets are a very popular recreation destination. The buzz of power boats however does little to the experience of paddling in Nootka Sound. Visit Yuquot, Burdwood, Escalante River and the Spanish Pilot Group for the best of Nootka Sound.

Catala Island Marine Park

Wide open to the fury of the winter sou' easters, this larger island lies northwest of Nootka Island on the north side of Esperanza Inlet. It is a perfect destination for paddlers in the Nuchatlitz area with fresh water, beaches for camping, trails and a rugged coastline to explore. The east tip is a First Nations Reserve and should be avoided by visitors.

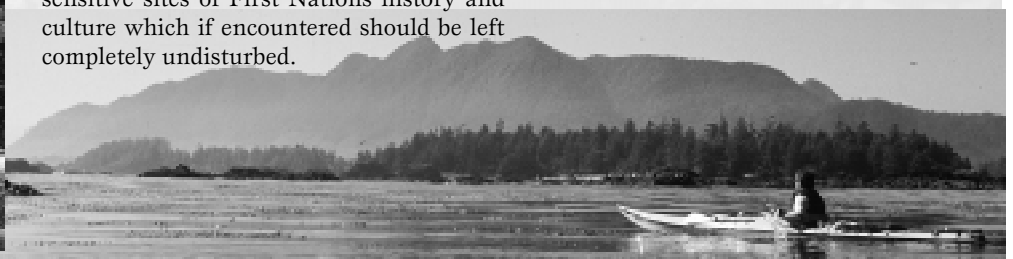
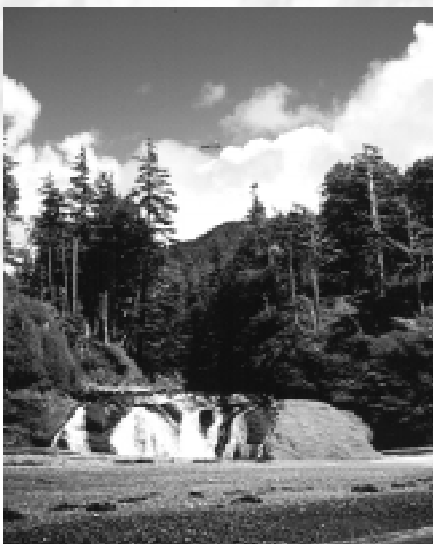
Nuchatlitz Marine Park

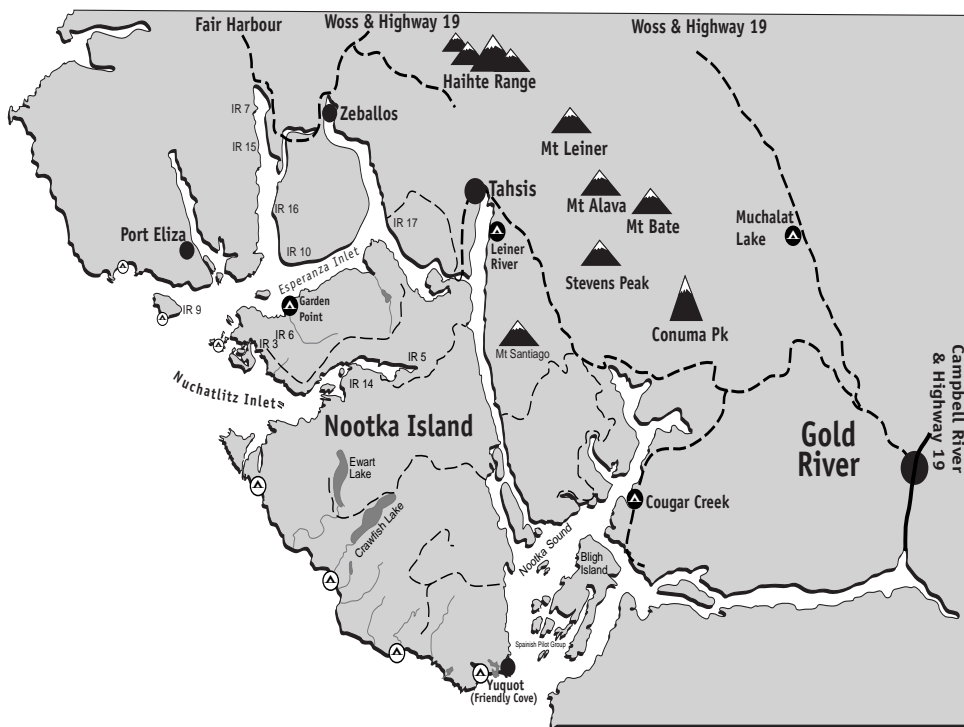
A labyrinth of reefs, lagoons and islets make up the archipelago clustered at the north west tip of Nootka Island on the south side of Esperanza Inlet's mouth. There are some summer cabins and even a few residents in 'downtown Nuchatlitz'. The islands are particularly suited to kayaking, with little swell making its way through the offshore barrier of reefs and rocks but all the beauty of paddling on 'the outside'. There are many sensitive sites of First Nations history and culture which if encountered should be left completely undisturbed.

West Coast Hike

Best done as a five day (four night) trip north to south from a dropoff at Louie Bay on the south side of the mouth of Nuchatlitz Inlet to the south end of Nootka Island at Yuquot (Friendly Cove). A short trail leads through dense rainforest from Louie Bay to Third Beach on the outside coast. It's usually best to camp here, unless you get a very early dropoff, before tackling either the rocky shoreline or the tangled salal inland for the first couple of hours. Once through the early obstacles it is clear sailing down the beach to Skuna Bay and the spectacular freshwater Crawfish Falls for camp two.

At Bajo Point there is a sensation of turning the corner, from the white sand beaches of Bajo to the boulders & pebble beaches on toward Beano Creek for night three. At the south end of Beano Creek Beach a slick scramble leads into the forest. From here to Yuquot the route follows a well worn trail through the salal returning to the occasional beach or cliff edge. Watch for sea caves around Maquina Point. Great camping for the last night on any one of a number of beaches just west of Yuquot. The M.V. Uchuck III stops in at Yuquot around noon on Wednesdays & Saturdays or arrange for pickup with Nootka Air or one of the water taxis.





Accommodation

Gold River

Ridge View Motel
250 283-2277

Tahsis

Tahsis Motel
250 934-6318

Zeballos

Masons Motor Lodge
250 761-4044
Zeballos Hotel
250 761-4275

Nootka Island

Yuquot Cabins & Campground
250 283-2054
Nootka Island Lodge
250 752-0455

Transportation

Gold River

Maxi's Water Taxi & Charters
250 283-2282
Air Nootka
250 283-2255
Nootka Sound Service/MV Uchuck III
250 283-2515

Tahsis

Tatchu Adventures
250 934-6602

Resources

Charts & Maps

Marine Charts: #3675, 3676, 3682
1:50,000 Topo: 092E10 Nootka
092E15 Zeballos

Coast Water Recreation Maps
info@coastalwatersrec.com
www.coastalwatersrec.com/maps



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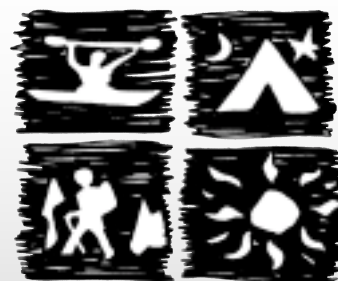
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Looking down Tahsis Inlet with Nootka Island to right from Rugged Mountain.

DOWN AND

by Matt Powsey

It's raining. No, it's raining hard, and the phone is ringing. I want to get Nathalie to answer it, but I know it's my call.

My Mom & Dad wouldn't be calling me to go to church, they hadn't done that since I was sixteen. It was a reminder of plans made the night before. Every Saturday after work, even if it was so busy your head is still spinning, one of us pops the question. "You ridin' tomorrow?"

I crawl away from my bed and make my way downstairs and answer the phone. The voice on the other end is obviously that of a madman. He sounds like he's from some Mississippi trailer park. He rambles something about sheep, bikes, the weather and j.f.p

Nathalie comes downstairs. "Dan?" she asks. "Yep", I reply.

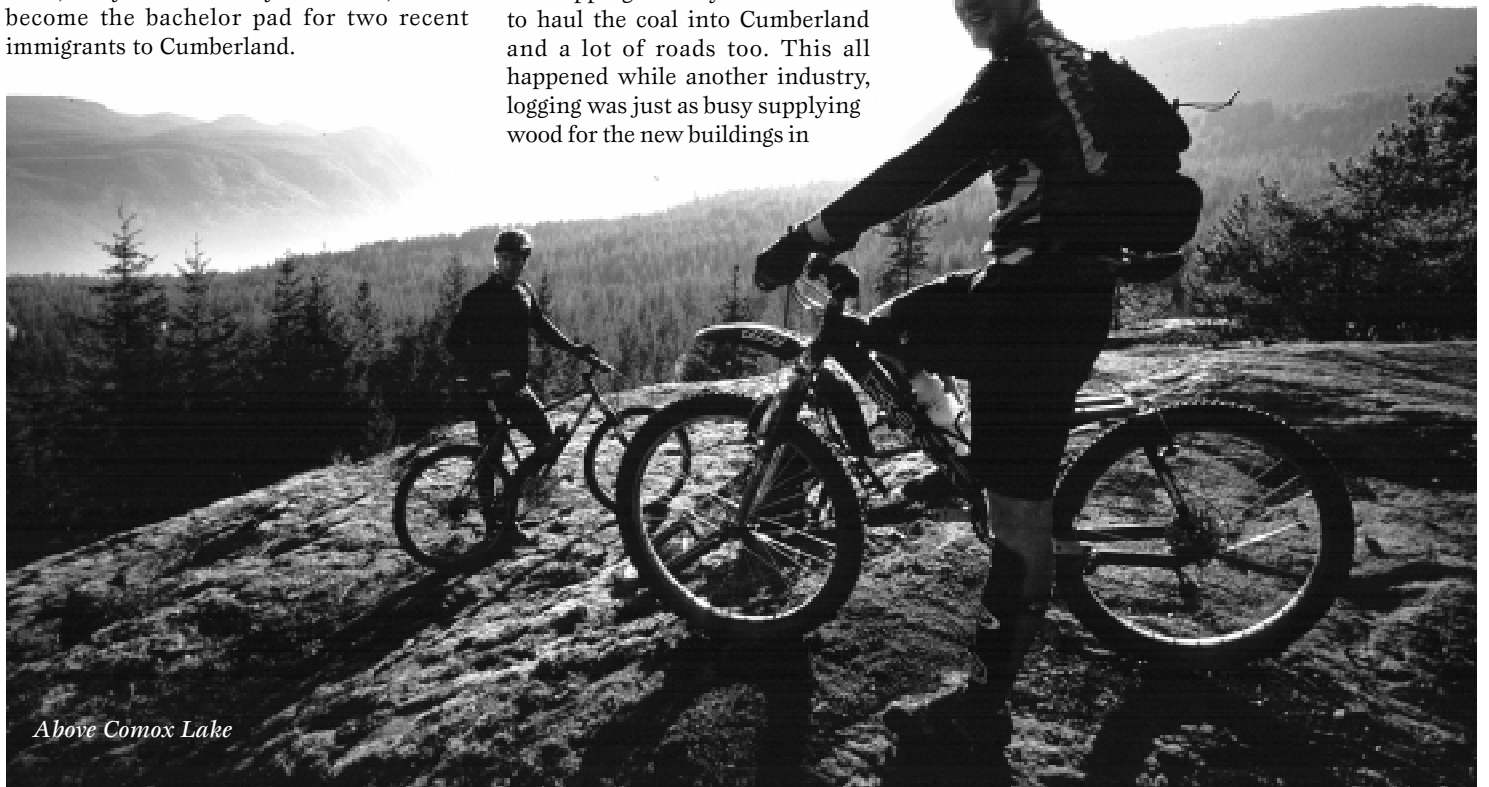
We get our riding gear on and distract our dog with hidden "scoobie snacks" for long enough to get our bikes out the front door. We jump on our alloy steeds and head up the road a few blocks. It's hard to believe that the voice that I had just spoken to had come from a provincial police office. That's right, a cop shop. Anyone who has seen or heard Dan at work slinging wrenches can understand the weird irony of it all. You see Nat and I are riding up to Dan and Kyle's. They live in what was once the provincial police office. Now, only a hundred years later, it has become the bachelor pad for two recent immigrants to Cumberland.

We ride up to the side door, knock and drag our bikes into the kitchen. Klyle's got java spewing forth black elixir from a battered stovetop espresso maker. Dan has obviously left bread in the toaster too long or at least that's what it seemed like as the kitchen was full of smoke - it just smelled different. After the usual ten-minute last minute search for "misplaced" gloves, helmet, alien tool & jacket we finally started our ride. We pointed our bikes down 2nd Street and made for the trees. Four hundred yards and one minute later we were riding an old road bed behind someone's backyard. Soon the road bed turned single-track and we were on our way.

Welcome to Cumberland, probably the only town on Vancouver Island where a pro baseball player could throw a ball onto some of the kindest, sweetest single-track from the main street. Cumberland's roots go deep into the old coal mines and shafts that run underneath this "sleepy village in the forest". In the late nineteenth century coal was discovered around Cumberland. Soon the town and adjacent area was home to a good half dozen mines that produced some of the finest coal in the British Empire, and the mines didn't stop producing coal for another seventy years! Coal had to be transported from the mines to the main railway for its trip to the ports for shipping. So they built rail lines to haul the coal into Cumberland and a lot of roads too. This all happened while another industry, logging was just as busy supplying wood for the new buildings in

this booming little coal town. This meant more roads, more skidder paths, horse paths, & foot paths. Eventually it all slowed down and the forest was left to grow once again.

It wasn't until the late 1980s and early 90s that these rail lines & roads saw daylight again as the first "mountain bike trails" in Cumberland were being hacked out of the forest's cloak. A group of locals, mainly treeplanters, but all mountain bikers, began creating single-track trails on the foundations of these old roads. Soon a little labyrinth of trails existed in the area near the Pigeon Lake landfill (see map). These trails became the "Stinky Pigeon" trails. The "Stinky Pigeon" trails are the best trails for beginner bikers as they are predominantly built on old road and skidder paths. There are no long climbs, which means not much downhill but they flow oh-so-well. Unfortunately the area has seen some recent logging so there are a few roads that cross trails in certain spots, but crossing the road should put the trail right under your rubber on the other side. Fortunately the landowners, Hancock Investments of Boston, allowed mountain bikers to buffer the main trails and set machine free zones so we could continue riding our favourite trails after they've harvested. One trail that hasn't seen the faller's saw is "Bear



Above Comox Lake

DIRTY IN DODGE CITY

Highway", a classic example of old school single-track. "Bear Highway" has tight trees, lots of logs and deep brown dirt path flowing through the lush green second growth forest. Following "Bear Highway" will lead you to a road. Hang a left to head back to Comox Lake Road and Cumberland. Taking a rightie will lead you to a fork in the road-go either way but if you go right make sure you go left at the gravel hills and "drop in". Going right at the bottom of the hills will lead you to Whytes Bay. Whytes Bay was home to the Number Four mine. There remains an almost BMX track-like circuit of motorbike trails around Whytes Bay, and it's the perfect spot to practice your jumps. In the summer it's also the best spot to enjoy some sunshine and go for a mid-ride swim in Comox Lake.

The newest area to ride in "Dodge City" as Cumberland is known to most, but not all Comox Valleyites, is directly behind the downtown. The best place to park if you're visiting is at the local recreation centre parking lot at the end of the main drag. Head out the parking lot and follow the sign to Comox Lake. At the hairpin turn there is a yellow gate. Going beyond the gate will take you to traffic-free fire roads. There are many, many trails back there (see map). All the trails below China Creek are great x-country single-tracks, again tight trees and lots of roots and logs. Mining history is seen on many of these trails. At the far entrance to the "Black Hole" trail is an old bore hole. It's well flagged and should definitely be looked into as it's pretty weird to have on a bike trail. The hole is well over a hundred years old and was dug, by hand, to find coal seams. It's about 30ft deep so it's best to not fall in, especially if you're alone. The "Bugged Pig", which is by the way much more pleasant a trail than it sounds, actually has a mine shaft off to the side of the trail. Half way down the trail is a neatly stacked group of logs about three high, to your right is a hillside. Look up that hill side and you'll see some flagging tape.



Nathalie Fustier, log ride on "Tied Knot"
Photo: Boomer Jerritt

Hike up the hill and you're at the oldest mine in Cumberland. You can peek into the collapsed entrance but unless you have a flashlight you may not see much. If you have a light you'll be able to see inside. There's no rotting corpses or skulls and treasure but you'll get that "Hardy Boys/Nancy Drew" feel if you crawl in just a few feet (don't get any ideas that you can actually crawl down the shaft, because you cannot. We've tried, it's caved in. Plus it smells like pee.)

Those seeking the new style of trails

"You'd be smart to even carry some armour on you for the downhills"

with natural and man made obstacles will find climbing in their future. The great thing about Cumberland is that you cannot shuttle any of the descents. You'd be smart to even carry some armour on you for the downhills.

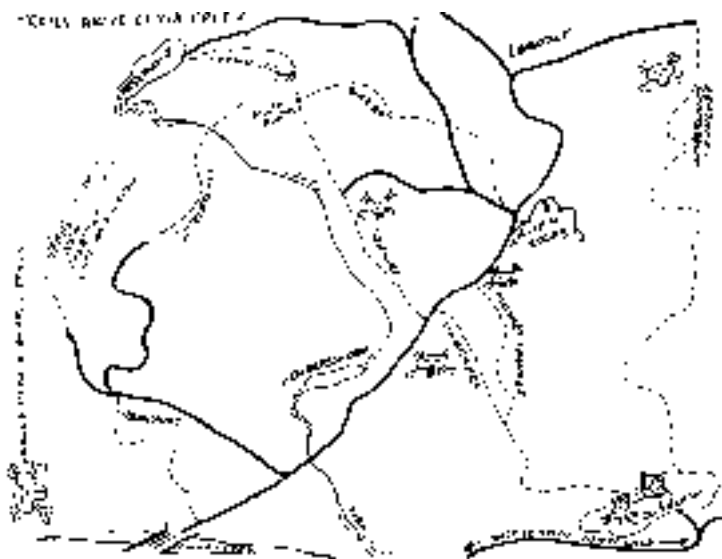
Climbing the road past the creek will take you to the lookout. The view from the lookout is great on a clear day. You get a real feel of how close Cumberland is to the forest and the trails from up here. You can also see the tip of Denman Island and the mainland Coast Mountains. Going to your right will take you to the "Cumberland Cruncher", the oldest trail in this area. As you follow the road, cross a big-ass blowdown (it's kept there to keep the throttle twisters out), until you get to the log crossing the gully. Get off or if you're an absolute fool, ride across the log and directly to your right is the entrance. The trail is really steep and a real gas to ride. Halfway through the trail is a very technical climb that's going to blow your lid off unless you're some sort of genetic mutant. The trail ends in a cut block, go straight and you'll get to Comox Lake Rd. Turn right and you'll be back in town.

A favourite ride of the locals is the climb to the lookout. But before you reach the lookout turn left and head up higher (see map). Take your next right on an old road that turns ugly quick. It's all "do-able" but it's a real grunt. You should see a trail cross the road after about 500 yards. The trail is called "Bike God" but don't take it, the best is up even higher. The road comes to a really washed out

section of land and as of yet it is unrideable. Take a left turn and follow the road to a river at the top. Just before the river is a left turn on yet another road that takes you to a lake. On the left hand side of the road is an old pile of lumber, behind is the entrance to the "Upper Miners" trail. The trail is a fast steep descent on single-track that follows a ridge along a small river. That little river falls into a gorge. The bluffs here are known as the "Puff Bluffs" as they are most excellent spot

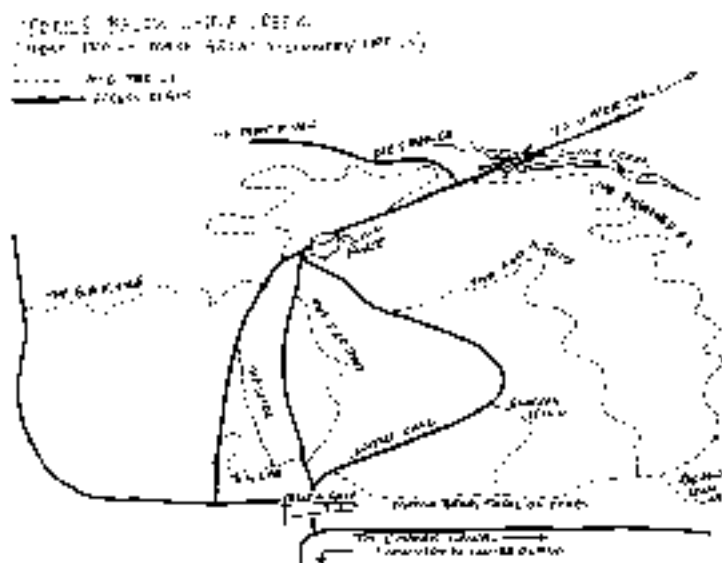
to stop and "chat with Bob" awhile. The trail turns to old road but stays very steep. At the bottom of a real "slider" is the entrance to "Lower Miners". This is where things get hairy. The trail is an old path that follows the same gorge but at the bluffs

the trail falls down what may have been some sort of slough for water. The slough is actually carved into the rock and falling could result in some serious injury (thus the recommendation of armour). Coming down



“Lower Miners” will bring you to the road you climbed to get to the lookout. Cross the road and you enter “Knuckers”. This is the newest trail built by a local group called “trail harvesting crew”. The entrance is a bit of a hike-a-bike up the hill but you should be on your bike in under a minute. This trail starts easy but after the first log ride it becomes really gnarly. There are several “wheelie drops” and lots of log rides, a bridge and too many sweepingly steep switchbacks to remember. The trail is over in ten to fifteen minutes but there aren’t a hundred yards of trail before the next “move”. “Knuckers” ends in the same cut block as the “Cruncher” so it’s really easy to make your way back to town.

There are so many trails surrounding the town that you can easily get lost. No worries though, as the trail riding areas are all separated by fairly regularly used roads. Don’t be too worried about taking a wrong turn-if it’s not a bike trail it will peter out pretty quickly. Just make a quick about face and get back on the beaten path. There is probably a good 40-50 km worth of single track directly around Cumberland and even more single-track can be accessed from Cumberland. The Courtenay side of Comox Lake has gobs of great riding opportunities, it’s just a little out of town. But a half hour jaunt on some old logging roads and double-track can have you there ready for more riding. **W**



The Dirt on Dodge

How to get there:

The new inland island highway is right at Cumberland’s front door. It’s an hour’s drive north from the Departure Bay ferry terminal. And about forty-five minutes south of Campbell River. Follow the signs to downtown Cumberland. Park and ride.

Food:

The nice thing about Dodge is the food. Breakfasts of the greasy spoon sort should be had at the Miner Deli. (2699 Dunsmuir Ave. 336-8856). They offer great homestyle breakfasts for really reasonable prices. Lunches can be had at two of the three pubs in town. The Cumberland Hotel (2714 Dunsmuir Ave. 336-8844) is home to the “Dodge burger”, the life breathing god of all burgers. The menu is mainly pub fare with some vegetarian selections (eat in the bar as it’s the best place to mingle with the locals. Plus the bartender might be Bert. This guy has three noses and two sets of ears, you gotta check him out.) The Waverly Hotel (2692 Dunsmuir. 336-8322) has the most selection of the two pubs and the cook Jonothan could very well make the best food in the valley. Lots of vegetarian and Mexican dishes. For on the go Mexican style hit Taco Linda (2730 Dunsmuir. 336-8586.) Get some from the take out from the window and sit your tired ass down on a coalcart bench and chow. Curry? Try the Wayside Dhaba (2697 Dunsmuir. 336-2011) They make the most kick ass curry in the Valley. Plus you get a belly dance when your meal comes (sweet!)

Coffee:

Other than bar coffee the only place to get the legal drug is from the fresh pasta shop. The lady makes a good Americano and you can buy homemade goodies, not to mention fresh pasta. (2756 Dunsmuir. 336-2011)

Bike shop:

Yes, Cumberland now has it’s own bike shop. Satellite Simon’s is the place to get the lowdown nitty gritty on the trail conditions. No bike trip to Dodge should be finished until you have visited the boys at the store. The store is conveniently located behind the Waverly Hotel in the old Catholic church. There is a great deck outside for hanging out and complimentary bike washing stands and hoses outside.

They also have a fleet of rental bikes and a full service shop to handle any breakdowns you may have. Regular group rides, including ladies only rides, leave from the shop. Most of the employees build trails around town so the most current scoop on new trails is available. Guided tours are available for all levels of riders but must be booked two weeks in advance.

(Satellite Simons 336-2260 or Comox location 339-6683)

Accommodation:

Slim pickin’s on this one. The Waverly Hotel has a half dozen nicely done up rooms (seriously). At \$35.00 it’s not super expensive and it’s just upstairs from the pub so it’s easy to crawl to bed after a few wobbly-pops. If camping’s your thing, Comox Lake campground is a fifteen minute bike ride to town. Plus it has a nice sand beach. If you bring the kids this might be your best bet. If you’re doing it on the cheap don’t be afraid to stop by the bike shop to ask for directions to some secluded van camping spots. They’ll point you away from the obvious spots inhabited by horny teens in mom and dad’s cars.

Photo: Boomer Jerritt

THE ULTIMATE MOUNTAIN BIKE DESTINATION

by Dan Clemens

Before you start to dismiss me as some raving lunatic, overindulged on caffeine, please note: the average working person's holiday is two weeks. Two weeks is a short time, too short to waste time driving to some faraway place. And while many a riding destination can offer excellent trails, Vancouver Island offers more trail density and diversity within a three and one half-hour drive than anywhere else on the planet. Add to that 365 days a year rideability and for a riding vacation, Vancouver Island has no equal.

Between Victoria at the southern tip to Campbell River on the east coast about halfway up the island, there are 15 major riding areas. Hook up with a knowledgeable local and you can explore many more playgrounds for the fat tired. That's over one riding destination per day, if you're up to it.

Beginning at the southern tip, the trails of Victoria's now famous "Dump" area prove high trail density need not sacrifice trail quality.

E x t r e m e l y diverse, this area has something for the beginner to the wheelie-drop-hero looking for something to

huck themselves off. A compact area with little elevation gain, The Dump should keep most riders happy for at least two days worth of exploring. Rarely talked about nowadays, "The Highlands" area is my Victoria favourite, perhaps because it is where I learned to ride trails over ten years ago, mind you there were few trails then. I have never learned the names, come to think of it I don't believe they had names in the early days, but I like them all: good roly-poly fun on the slopes of Skirt Mountain and Mt. Finlayson.

Next up island is "Burnt Bridge" near Shawnigan Lake, previous site of the Burnt Bridge Classic mountain bike race. Trails here are mostly cross-country and are the perfect setting for some early season epics. Classic trails like Can-Am and The Cable Trail lie almost forgotten except for some old schoolers from the south island. A pity as the area has fine riding for those with the legs and lungs to endure the climbs, and ripping fast descents that last longer than almost anywhere else on the island.

Duncan, the next stop, offers two areas: Mt. Prevost and Mt. Zoohalem I have never visited either and I have been told by many that I am missing much. Mt. Zoohalem sounds

especially awesome with long super buffed descents. A speed balls paradise I am told!

Continuing north to Nanaimo we find two areas of note: "The Abyss" and "Dumont Rd" The Abyss is a strange place. Grippy conglomerate rock abounds just below the surface, and where a trail is made traction is almost certain with rolling moderate terrain, the Abyss is just so much fun, don't miss this area. Where the Abyss is sort of old school, Dumont Rd. is new school. Steep chutes and wheelie drops are strewn throughout the area, creating an excellent setting for Team Puke's Barf Bash mountain bike race each spring. Big tires and big balls rule here.

Skipping the excellent riding in Parksville (with the excellent little play area "the mountain bike park" and extensive trails by Englishman River Provincial Park campground) and Port Alberni, we hop a couple ferry rides over to Hornby Island, home of artisans and the legendary trials barn. Strange that such a stronghold of the eccentric sport of

trials riding also offers possibly the finest cross-country race trails. But you don't have to

race to enjoy these trails. Try what is perhaps the most famous mountain bike trail in BC, No Horses. I guarantee a smile on the face of any true bike lover.

Back on "The Big Island" we head on to Cumberland or "Dodge City". Previously a coal mining giant, Cumberland is beginning to enjoy a rebirth in which mountain biking is playing a part. The number of trails here is growing quickly, perhaps more quickly than anywhere else on the island, but what sets Cumberland apart is the trail accessibility. Less than 2 min. from the downtown Rec. center you are on glorious single-track. It's so varied in style and difficulty there is something here for everyone. Trails to check out include Broadway, Bugged Pig and Tied Knot, built by the local riding community as a wedding gift for a young riding couple (see Down & Dirty in Dodge City for the full scoop on Cumberland). Only a short ride (or drive) around the end of Comox Lake is the "Comox Lake/Bevan/Nymph" trail area, one of the larger riding areas on Vancouver Island. For the most part the trails here based around the Comox Lake Dam and the old Bevan town site. The best trails are mostly long climbs on old logging road leading to superb descents

"more trail density and diversity within a 3 1/2 hr drive than anywhere else on the planet"



*Corrie Wright,
Beaver Lake Trail, Quadra Island*

over lots of rock bluffs. My personal favourites are Tomato Creek, Puntledge Plunge and Arbutus. Seek out and ride these for sure. For those seeking a leisurely ride or possibly some hot weather swimming check out Bears Bait or Bevan Trail along opposite sides of the Puntledge River.

One hour north of Courtenay/Comox, our final destination, Campbell River, is the home of the largest network of single-track. Located about 5km from town, the main riding area-the Snowden Demonstration Forest-can be accessed by vehicle or by single-track which begins near the edge of town and winds through Elk Falls Provincial Park (yes these are mountain bike trails in a Provincial Park, built by bikers and maintained by bikers through agreement with BC Parks and The Campbell River Sprockets Cycling Club.) The trails of Snowden have been used for events such as The Canadian Single-Speed Championships. You can easily ride 50 km without touching road. For typical examples try trails such as Vlad the Impailer, Scott's Trail, Demon Seed or the little known Intellect. The trails here will test your power, balance and endurance on some of the most continuously technical trails around.

For most of us the objective of a vacation is relaxation and recreation, not driving, and we all need a rest day away from our bike. But with so many excellent riding areas, how do you rest? Well how about world class rock climbing on limestone at Horne Lake or basalt at Crest Creek, Tyee salmon fishing at Campbell River, surfing on Long Beach, mountaineering or hiking in Strathcona Park or maybe just walking the sandy beaches of Parksville.

There you have it, a two-week riding vacation on Vancouver Island with less than an hour driving per day! All Island towns boast excellent bike shops, with friendly staff who will be happy to point you in the direction of local trails, restaurants and pubs. Maps are available for some of the areas from local bike shops for nominal fees (be sure to ask about any recent trail additions).

REVIEWS

by Dan Clemens

Hayes Disk Brakes



For two and a half years now I have been using Hayes disk brakes, and I couldn't be happier. When I first assembled my bike, a Trek 8900, I discovered that the front brake had leaked fluid (Dot 3, nasty stuff) and ruined the pads. After a thorough investigation and another ruined set of pads, I found that the piston seal had rolled and was no longer sealing. Two years ago no one had parts for Hayes brakes and there was no Canadian distributor yet, so I contacted Hayes and they requested I return the whole front brake assembly for quality check. About one week later I received my

new brake, promptly installed it, then hit the trails. Now don't get caught up in the typical "grab the brakes in a shop" and judge their performance by their ability to lock up the wheel. Trust me, when you need to stop they will do the job, but compared to Linear-pull (the correct term for V-brakes, other than Shimano brand brakes) they feel weak. Disk brakes require a short break-in period. During this time the pads and rotor will become scuffed and "bed-in" together allowing greater contact between them and delivering greater stopping power. While I have heard many extol the unbelievable stopping power of

disks, I don't find their power to be greater than linear-pull breaks. No, for me stopping power is not their greatest virtue. The deal with Hayes brakes is you just don't notice they are there. They always feel the same, whether in wet, dry, snow or mud, stopping power is always there. This allows the rider to learn to modulate the brakes very well because the feel at the lever is constant and never changes. The other thing that will convert any naysayer is the lack of maintenance required. Two and one half years and I have replaced the front pads once, and the rear twice with no other problems. Well there was one small problem, not really with the brake, the problem was with me. Once when cleaning my bike I removed the pads from the rear caliper. Upon installing the rear wheel I neglected to install the pads. That was a problem because when I applied the brake the pad retention pin on the piston was removed by the rotor and pads could no longer be installed. A pity, as this happened on Monday and I had a race on Sunday, and as yet there were no parts available in Canada. So!! I called Hayes directly. It was 6:15 pm in Wisconsin but I got an answer and the employee said they would send me out some new pistons at no charge. Great!! But it meant I had to use V-Brakes on Sunday, bad!! Imagine my surprise when Tuesday morning at 11:30 a package arrived from Hayes-incredible! They sent it courier via air and overnight, all no charge. Needless to say I am a Hayes fan. If you try them I am sure you will be too. **WI**

NRG Super Heat Tires

First, I will come right out and tell you I am not one for huge drops. I have to open my shop in the morning, and at 42 I quit thinking about running away to join the Circus about 20 years ago. What I am is a traditional cross-country rider, with a sadistic twist. I am always up for a four to six hour non-stop epic adventure. I hate stopping.

Now seeing that we live in a rain forest, I choose my tires for wet conditions on my favorite trails, the continuously technical intermediate/advanced terrain of Campbell River. Here we can ride for over 50 km on single track without contacting road, gravel or otherwise. The thing is the trails in Campbell River are more rooted and rocky than anywhere I have ever ridden, and I wanted more traction.

It comes the Super Heat tire advised by Paul, and given to me to sample by my late friend Patrick. The tires are distributed in Canada by NRG out of Nelson. Laidback would best

describe the sales approach of their reps, and why be pushy when your product works so well. And oh boy the Super Heat works. Available in a 2.1 or 1.95 front design and a rear specific 1.95, I use the 2.1 front tire on both the front and rear of my bike. This tire is big (bigger than most claimed 2.5's) and is one of the few tires I have measured that actually is as big as claimed, so check clearance before buying. Another aspect of tire size not measured is aspect ratio or the height of the tire from bead to tread. Again the Super Heat is bigger than your average 2.5.

If you look at tires you can classify them into two basic categories: square profile and round profile. The Super Heats are round, and as such, have the most predictable handling in all conditions. Round profile tires tend to have a more gradual loss of traction in the turns when pushed to their limits, where square edged tires tend to give away with no warning. I run low tire pressure in winter conditions.



I am a fan of low pressure and with the Super Heats I run as low as 22 psi on the rear and even with my 175 lbs of bacon facilitated girth I have not suffered a pinch flat in over two years! I don't recommend pressure this low for most riders but it is an indication of how much volume this tire has. That is not to say the Super Heat is a slug though, if inflated to 40 psi it rolls along with little resistance thanks once more to the rounded profile. A great tire and at 49.95 for a Kevlar bead not a bad deal! Number one. **WI**

HAPPENINGS

DIRECTORY

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| June 4 | Port Alice Rumble Mtn. Rage Mtb XC 250 284-3391 |
| June 10-11
1122 | Disabled Paddlers Symposium Camp Squamish 604-597-1122 |
| June 10 | The Cowichan Bay Boatfest Eco-West at 250 748-0511 |
| June 11 | Victoria Mtb Downhill at The Dump 250 595-1937 |
| June 17-18 | Int'l Dragon Boat Race - Vancouver 688-2382 |
| | Okanagan Paddle Fest Peachland - Wendell 250-767- 2225 |
| June 24-25
6340 | Campbell River 12 Hrs Of Phat Fun Mtb Relay 250 286-6340 |
| 7400 | Willow River Paddfest-Prince George Rick 250-964-7400 |
| June 24 | Island Iron - Victoria - Ocean River 250-381-4233 |
| | WC&K Demo Day Sat. 9:30 to 11:00 Mill Lake 604-853-9320 |
| July 1 / 2 | Lotus Iron - Vancouver - Peter 464-5859 |
| July 1-2 | M P G Race - Prince George - Faye 250-963-8704 |
| July 5
8500 | Watersports Fest Disabled Vancouver- Bonnie 604-257-8500 |
| July 8-9 | Mamquam River Fest -Squamish- Don 898-5498 |
| July 9 | BCMTA Ocean Kayak Mthn -Vancouver- 689-7575 |
| July 15-16 | Howe Sound Iron -Gibsons - Mel 871-0006 |
| July 22-23 | River Spirit Challenge- Kamloops- Daryl 250-828-1967 |
| Aug 19 -20 | Victoria Dragon Boat Fest Victoria -Colleen 250-472-2628 |

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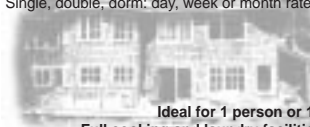
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