PRESENT AND HISTORICAL USES
WITHIN THE SOUTH COAST HARBOURS
OF THE CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

PREPARED FOR

Capital Regional District, Engineering Division
534 Yates Street
Victoria, B.C.

PREPARED BY

R.W. Drinnan and T. Couch
Aquatic Science Consultants Ltd.
Victoria, B.C.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Capital Regional District (CRD), as part of its responsibilities in developing a Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP), is reviewing the environmental quality of the south-coast harbours. To assist in this process, an assessment of the shoreline and water uses within these harbours has been carried out. The acquisition of such information, especially that pertaining to historic industrial activity, facilitates the assessment and interpretation of observed environmental impacts such as trends in sediment chemistry data. The compilation of information on harbour use also serves to generate baseline information which may be consulted in the future as part of any coordinated management scheme which would review possible conflict of interests with respect to shoreline and water activities within the Capital Regional District harbours (eg. dock facility development impacting herring spawning grounds). In essence, the background information presented may be utilized to assist in the planning, management and regulation of harbour uses and activities.
2.0 METHODS

In the first component of this study, information was collected on present and historical uses of the shoreline and water within the harbours of the CRD: Esquimalt Harbour; Esquimalt Lagoon; Victoria Harbour; the Gorge Waters; and Portage Inlet. The collated information is presented in moderate detail on sets of computer-generated maps provided by the Mapping Division of the CRD. The sets of maps produced include the following categories:

- current land and shoreline use
- historic industrial land use
- current public use and water activities
- fisheries resources.

Each of the four map sets is accompanied by an explanatory legend.

A wide variety of information sources was consulted for the derivation of the map sets. The bulk of the information originated from published documents or through direct contact with the personnel of various government agencies, augmented by personal observations of the study team.

The majority of information on current land and shoreline uses was obtained from the municipal planning departments of Victoria, Saanich, View Royal and Esquimalt, together with current city street maps.

Information on historic industrial activity was derived chiefly from archival material at the British Columbia Provincial Archives and the City of Victoria archives. Outdated city maps and fire insurance plans were especially useful sources of historical information.

Information on public and other water uses was obtained from current city maps and through discussion with individuals at CRD Parks and District Health, as well as with staff at local dive and windsurfing shops.

Information presented on fisheries resources in the harbours was based on discussions with local staff at Fisheries and Oceans, along with Environment Canada's Coastal Resources folio (1982).

A complete listing of contacts made and references utilized is provided in the Reference Section of this report.
3.0 DISCUSSION

3.1 Overview of Harbours

The earliest colonial settlement on the West Coast of Canada occurred in Victoria Inner Harbour, with the Hudson's Bay Company developing a fort in 1843 in the area of Wharf Street (City of Victoria, 1991). By the early 1900's, activity in the Inner Harbour was mainly shipping and industrial, in nature. Gradually, however, the shipping trade declined as the automobile and aircraft emerged as key transportation modes, and as competition increased from the industrial harbours of Vancouver and Seattle (City of Victoria, 1991).

Victoria Harbour

Because most of the activity along the Victoria Harbour waterfront, up to the Gorge, was industry-based, the decline in importance of the Harbour as an industrial port led to the disuse and dilapidation of considerable waterfront areas. By the late 1960's, Victoria Harbour was regarded as an industrial slum (City of Victoria, 1988) (Appendix I).

Over the last 30-40 years there has been a continued steady decline in industrial activity in Victoria Harbour. Heavy industrial plants once surrounded the Harbour, such as Sidney Roofing, Bapco Paint, Capital Ship Yard, Ocean Cement, Oakland Fish, McCarter Shingle, Victoria Machine Depot (VMD), Capital Iron and Seaspans. As a consequence of a fundamental shift in the economy, all of these firms have either relocated elsewhere, changed the nature of their operations, or have gone out of business (City of Victoria, 1988). Over this same period, the function of the Inner Harbour began to shift from waterfront industry to a revitalized contemporary role as a "people port", with waterfront property being redeveloped for transportation, residential, tourist, and recreational uses (City of Victoria, 1993) (Appendix I).

The Upper Harbour, in contrast, has remained a functional industrial area, making an important contribution to Victoria's economic base (e.g., Point Hope Shipyard, Ocean Cement, United Engineering Ltd., Island Paving and Asphalt, Lafarge Cement) (City of Victoria, 1992) (Appendix II).

Key areas of aquatic habitat and harvesting sites for finfish and shellfish (excluding bivalves which cannot be harvested because of potential bacteriological contamination) tend to be scattered throughout the Victoria Harbour, the Gorge Waters and Portage Inlet.

The transition of Victoria Harbour to its contemporary function as a "people port" has been accomplished for the most part with tremendous growth in the service sector, especially in
the Inner Harbour. The new character of the Harbour (land and water) results from intensive commercial and recreational activities in the Inner Harbour, and mixed commercial and industrial activities in the Upper Harbour/Selkirk Water area (Appendix II).

**The Gorge and Portage Inlet**

Shoreline land use has remained primarily residential/recreational in nature throughout The Gorge and Portage Inlet, with scattered commercial activities. Water use in the region is predominantly recreational, consisting chiefly of kayaking, canoeing and other small pleasure craft activities (Appendix II).

As in the Victoria Harbour, finfish and shellfish harvesting primarily occurs at public access points, namely the Tillicum and Craigflower bridges, and along the associated walkways. Herring and Dungeness crabs are the main resources harvested. Important herring spawning sites occur adjacent to both bridges and at the terminus of Christie Point in Portage Inlet. In addition, Colquitz River and Craigflower Creek serve as spawning grounds for small runs of searun cutthroat trout and coho salmon.

**Esquimalt Harbour and Esquimalt Lagoon**

Most of the waterfront land in Esquimalt Harbour is occupied by the Department of National Defence (DND) or is part of the reserves of the Esquimalt and Songhees Bands. Both of these landowners have been present since the turn of the century. Similarly, the sawmill and cannery activity at Thetis Cove has not changed significantly over the years. The shipyards at Constance Cove have been active for more than a century. A wide variety of industrial activities has occurred at the shipyard and military drydocks at Constance Cove, such as metal foundry and forge activities, sandblasting, applying of anti-fouling paints and fuel transferring.

There is a current proposal to convert the Thetis Cove industrial area to tourist commercial zoning (Town of View Royal, 1992). There is also a small residential area along the north shores of the harbour (Appendix I and II).

Recreational water use (some crab collecting, boating and beach walks) is concentrated at the north end of the Harbour. The main park is Portage Park at Thetis Cove; a second park area is adjacent to Parson's Bridge. At the mouth of Esquimalt Harbour, along the west shore, is the National Historic Fort Rodd Hill Park. Further west is Esquimalt Lagoon and the Coberg Peninsula, the latter being a popular beach area for walking, diving, small pleasure crafts, and crab fishing.
Both Esquimalt Harbour and Esquimalt Lagoon provide important fish and wildlife habitat, and the latter is designated as a wildlife sanctuary. Herring spawn at several locations within the Harbour, particularly along the western side between Rodd Point and Yew Point, Constance Cove, Lang Cove and at the northern end. Some commercial crab fishing occurs in Esquimalt Harbour and in Esquimalt Lagoon. Recreational salmon fishing (chinook and coho) occurs in Esquimalt Harbour in late summer, especially at Constance Cove.

3.2 Future Directions

There is increasing public demand for greater access to the shoreline. This may take the form of waterfront pathways for both pedestrians and cyclists, boat launching ramps, viewing platforms (in more restricted industrial areas) and linear parks. There is also pressure for environmental rehabilitation, such as the landscaping of existing industrial sites and the redevelopment of industrial waterfront sites offers the most potential for increasing public access. Many industrial users only utilize a limited portion of the shoreline (e.g., a single barge dock) even though they may have extensive shoreline leases. However, in some cases, (e.g., B.C. Hydro property) the redevelopment of industrial sites may require extensive cleanup action to eliminate potential environmental risks for future users (City of Victoria, 1992).

The members of the Victoria and Esquimalt Working Harbours Association (VEHWHA) are concerned that residential zoning and public use of the shoreline will severely restrict opportunities for commercial and industrial enterprises (VEHWHA, 1993). At a time when the nature of shoreline uses, especially industrial uses, are being reassessed and plans for increased public access are being made, planners are encouraging and promoting marine-related industries such as boat building and fishing. Such efforts are aimed at retaining an active waterfront, consistent with historical uses.

Waterfront industries contribute significantly to the economy and create many jobs. In addition, the relocation of many of these operations elsewhere in the Capital Region is not feasible as they require shoreline access for barges. The demand for light industrial use sites is increasing. Multi-faceted, integrated business parks are replacing traditional industrial parks. Future developments in the Victoria area are tending toward mixed land uses, such as the Fletcher Challenge site which is tentatively slated for a mixture of industry, retail, restaurants and housing (City of Victoria, 1992).
4.0 REFERENCES


District of Saanich. 1993. Tillicum local area plan. Prepared by the Planning Department of The Corporation of the District of Saanich, B.C. (with structure map and zoning map)

Drinnan, R.W. 1993. An evaluation of the shoreline sensitivity associated with potential sewage bypasses along the south coastal shores of the Capital Regional District. Report prepared for the CRD by Aquatic Science Consultants Ltd., Victoria, B.C.


Reimer, G.A. 1991. One of the great cities of the Western world. Custom Drafting Ltd. (map)

PLANNING DOCUMENTS

- Downtown Victoria Plan, 1990, City of Victoria, B.C. 42 p.
- Town of View Royal Official Community Plan. March, 1992

MAPS

- Land Use Map series, City of Victoria:
  - Commercial Land Use Map, July 1990
  - Public and Institutional Land Use Map, May 1985
  - Residential Land Use Map, April 1990
  - Industrial Land Use Map, May 1982
  - Zoning Map, 1990

- Victoria and Island Publicity Bureau, 1950 Map of Greater Victoria
- Zoning bylaw schedule A for Esquimalt (March, 1993 zoning map)
- Town of View Royal Zoning map. March, 1992
- Canadian Hydrographic Service Navigation Charts (Fisheries and Oceans):
  - Victoria Harbour (No. 3415)
  - Esquimalt Harbour and Approaches (No. 3417)
LIST OF CONTACTS

Planning Departments:

City of Victoria
- Brian Sikstrom, Senior Planner (361-0382)
- Fred Wingfield, Planning Technician

Saanich Municipal Hall
- Neil Findlow, Senior Planner (386-2241)

View Royal Town Hall
- Theresa Woodworth, Planning Office Clerk (479-6800)

Esquimalt Township
- Michelle O'Doherty, Planning Officer (385-2461)

Archives:

Esquimalt
- Marlene Smith, Archivist (385-1021, branch library)

Victoria
- (361-0375)

Department of Fisheries and Oceans:

- Ron Kehl, Fisheries Officer, Community Services, Victoria (363-3252)

Capital Regional District Health:

- Christine Bender, Environmental Health Impact Consultant (360-5107)
- Shelly Harnadek, Water Program Consultant

Capital Regional District Parks:

- Brad Drew, Park Planning Assistant (478-3344)

Miscellaneous:

Ocean Centre - Ken Clarke (386-7528)
Ocean Wind, School of Boardsailing (658-8171)
APPENDIX I

Historical Industrial Land Uses of Victoria and Esquimalt Harbours (1940 - 1970's)

NOTES:

- the following map set is labelled with those areas of historic industrial activity that are most suspect of generating some type of contaminating waste
- the labels do not denote the exact site locations, rather the general area of each activity
- the labelled sites do not necessarily co-exist temporally
LEGEND

GENERAL REGIONS OF
HISTORIC INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY

REFERENCES:
- Davenport; 1946, 1957, 1969 Maps
- Waterfront – City of Victoria, 1972
- B.C. Underwriter's Assoc. Insurance Plan of Victoria, 1957
- Victoria and Island Publicity Bureau Map of Victoria, 1950
- Public Works Canada Report, 1992
- Department of National Defence, 1993

FOOTNOTE:
- Maps labelled with these areas of historic industrial activity that are most suspect of generating some type of contaminating waste.
- These sites do not necessarily co-exist temporally.

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT ENGINEERING
VICTORIA AND ESQUIMALT HARBOURS
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAM (VEHEAP)
HISTORICAL INDUSTRIAL USES (1940-1972)

REVISION DATE: THE GORGE/VICTORIA ARM

FIGURE 2
FOR LEGEND SEE FIGURE 2

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT ENGINEERING
VICTORIA AND ESQUIMALT HARBOURS
USES (1940-1972)

REVISION DATE
THE NARROWS/SELKIRK WATER/ROCK BAY
FIGURE 3
FOR LEGEND SEE FIGURE 2
APPENDIX II

Current Land and Shoreline Uses of Victoria and Esquimalt Harbours
FIGURE 2

LEGEND

RESIDENTIAL
PARK (RECREATION)
INDUSTRIAL
COMMERCIAL/GOVERNMENT/
SCHOOLS/MARINAS

PORTAGE INLET

VICTORIA AND ESQUIMALT HARBOURS ENVIROMENTAL ACTION PROGRAM (VEHEAP)
PRESANT LAND USE

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT ENGINEERING

PORTAGE INLET

DATE: DEC. 1993 FILE: 8-M033-2

FOR CONTINUATION SEE FIGURE 3
FOR LEGEND SEE FIGURE 2

FOR CONTINUATION
SEE FIGURE 2

FOR CONTINUATION
SEE FIGURE 4

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT ENGINEERING
VICTORIA AND ESQUIMALT HARBOURS
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAM (VEHEAP)
PRESENT LAND USE

REVISION DATE
GORGE/VICTORIA ARM

FIGURE 3
FOR LEGEND SEE FIGURE 2

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT ENGINEERING
VICTORIA AND ESQUIMALT HARBOURS
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAM (VEHEAP)
PRESENT LAND USE

REVISION DATE
THE NARROWS/SELMKIRK/WATER ROCK BAY

FIGURE 4