

Public Access to BC Shorelines... A Right Guaranteed by the Province

Under long-standing provincial statute, the foreshore area below the ordinary high tide line is public land, and anyone may enjoy the free use of the province's beaches and shorelines. To ensure access to the shoreline, shore access routes are dedicated at regular intervals during time of subdivision. These public lands, usually 20 metres wide and marked as "Road" on the subdivision plans, are held by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Local Management for Island Communities

In 2006, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure granted the Capital Regional District a license of occupation to develop, manage, and regulate accesses to water in the Southern Gulf Islands for public recreational purposes. Within the framework of this agreement, the CRD and MoT work in partnership to satisfy the public demand for reasonable public recreational access to the foreshore. The CRD manages these accesses through its delegated parks and recreation commission on each island.

"Public access is a public right."

Former Senator Pat Carney, Saturna Island

Improving Access for Safety, Enjoyment

When improving a shore access, the island's Parks and Recreation Commission follows a well-defined process that includes consultation with neighboring property owners. The aim is to provide the community with safe and pleasant access to the shoreline while minimizing the impacts on adjacent

properties. Improving an access can result in fewer impacts on private property because the property boundaries can be clearly marked and the footpath can direct the public along a defined route.

The Commission marks the accesses with signs, constructs trails, and often builds steps at the shoreline, all with the intent of making the shore access safe. In some cases, the shore access ends at a bluff, with no safe access to the shore; these accesses are developed and marked as viewpoints only.

After improving a shore access, the Commission maintains the access on a regular schedule. The Commission also welcomes adjacent property owners to act as volunteer "stewards" to keep up the access and alert the Commission to any problems.

Treasured Natural Areas

Though dedicated as "Road", the island's shore accesses are typically remnant strips of natural vegetation surrounded on either side by residential land. Under local stewardship of the Commission, these natural areas are managed to protect environmental amenities as well as to provide

recreational access to the shore. Part of the work of the Commission is education, letting people know not to cut trees on public land and encouraging respect for the natural flora and fauna.

Safe Routes On and Off the Island

In times of emergency, some shore accesses serve as escape routes, either pointing a way to shore from the water or a way off the island.

Sharing Our Shore

Residents and visitors alike value the ability to access the waterfront. A visit to the beach or quiet time contemplating an ocean view is integral to life on the islands. While urban areas have formal parks and sidewalks, the islands have dedicated shore access: public paths that lead to the water.

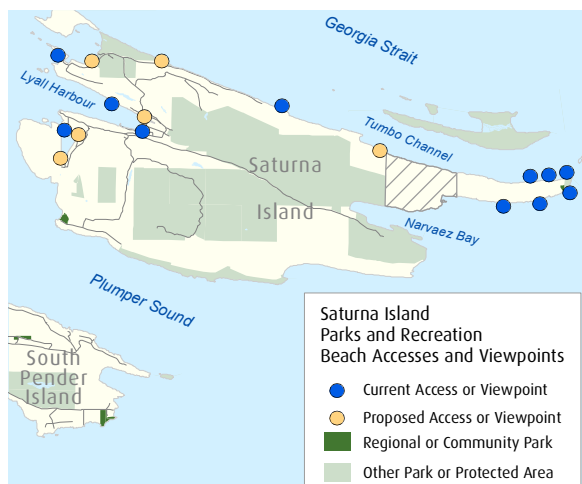
**Island Shorelines...
There to be shared
and enjoyed.**



On Saturna Island...

To date, the province has designated 50 shore access routes on Saturna Island. Whether or not they are marked with signs, the accesses are Crown Land and all are open to the public.

Saturna Parks and Recreation Commission has improved 11 of the island's shore accesses as of 2011 and has plans to improve more in the next few years. The Commission is comprised of local volunteers and is accountable to the Capital Regional District.



If you own property next to a shore access...

Please remember that shore access is public land, dedicated to allow people to get to, or view, the shore. The Commission encourages courteous use of the accesses and strives to ensure that shore access users are respectful of nearby private property. The Commission is committed to addressing shore access issues that arise. We also welcome neighbours to play a stewardship role in helping maintain the trails.



Saturna Island Parks and Recreation

Commission was established in 1995 as a Commission of the CRD to develop, maintain and operate community parks on Saturna Island and to organize and support recreation programs for the community. As part of its activities, the Commission develops and maintains improved trails to shore accesses and viewpoints.

For more information:

Saturna Island Parks and Recreation Commission
General Delivery
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www.crd.bc.ca



Capital Regional District
Parks & Community Services
www.crd.bc.ca

Sharing the Shoreline

Shore Access in the Southern Gulf Islands

CRD Parks & Community Services

Saturna Island

