



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH

THE PEOPLE OF THE INLET



Time Immemorial

In the Tsleil-Waututh **Creation Story**, the Creator, Cicaʔ siʔem, transformed a wolf into the first Tsleil-Wautt man, who traveled the territory learning from his relatives, including the birds, black bear, and salmon, all he needed to know to live and look after the land and water. When it was time for him to have a mate, Cicaʔ siʔem gave him a vision to dive off one of the tallest cliffs in Indian Arm, grab two handfuls of sediment from the floor of the Inlet, and bring them back to the beach. Through ceremony, our first grandmother was transformed from that sediment into the first Tsleil-Wautt woman – our first grandmother came directly from the Inlet.



The Transformers moved through the Coast Salish world, changing living beings into their contemporary forms and teaching people how to live in accordance with their environment.



The Tsleil-Waututh Nation developed a **sophisticated system of self-governance** within the Coast Salish culture over millennia. The relationship between the people and their territory is rooted in the Creator's guidance of the Nation as stewards of their lands and the interconnectedness of social, ceremonial, economic, and spiritual considerations.



The Tsleil-Waututh people sustain **mask origin stories** rooted in Burrard Inlet and surrounding territory.



The Tsleil-Waututh belong to a language group of three core dialects: hənq̓minəm, Halqeméylem and Hulqumínun. **Tsleil-Waututh's mother tongue is hənq̓minəm** and is common across the downriver portion of the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet.



10,000+ years ago

Tsleil-Waututh ancestors **survived massive flood events in the Pacific Northwest at the end of the Ice Age using a large ocean-going canoe tethered to Mesliloet Mountain with a long cedar rope.**



~3000-4000 years ago

Tsleil-Waututh people maintained a **rich and varied diet** from the marine environment for thousands of years. Finfish like salmon, herring, smelt, anchovy, and eulachon, clams, and ducks were a consistently plentiful source of food in Burrard Inlet and the Fraser River.



~3000 years ago

Tsleil-Waututh had an **intricate suite of fishing, hunting and woodworking technologies** during the archaeological period of the Locarno Beach Phase (3500-2500 years ago)



AD 569 to AD 809

The remnants of an intertidal wooden fish trap can be observed on the Maplewood Flats. Similar traps were common in Burrard Inlet and owned by Tsleil-Waututh families and houses.



Pre-contact Times

There are many instances of stla'leqem or supernatural beings in Tsleil-Waututh territory. One of these includes when a doubled-headed serpent blocked off Indian Arm, preventing Tsleil-Waututh people from accessing Indian River. A young Tsleil-Wautt man who lived at tamtamix*ʔtan was taken away by a giant seal to train for almost a decade to gain the spiritual power required to defeat the serpent. He trained in the water, learning to dive deep and swim far in the cold, travelling across the Pacific Ocean. After many years he returned fully grown and killed the serpent, allowing Tsleil-Waututh people to once again travel up to Indian River. Geological formations in Indian Arm marked with tumulh (red ochre) rock paintings preserve knowledge of the locations where the serpent's heads were lodged, one on either side of Indian Arm, and the pathway this stla'leqem followed as it made its way to die in Buntzen Lake.



Prior to European contact in 1792, **the Tsleil-Waututh occupied their territory in recognition of their birthright granted by the Creator.** Careful stewardship of lands, waters, and resources, entrenched by Coast Salish protocols, laws, and governance, supported thousands of Tsleil-Waututh people across multiple villages along the shores of Burrard Inlet. The communities defended the territory from raiders and warring Nations, while integrating relatives and people from other friendly communities into Tsleil-Waututh.



Salmon and herring were so abundant they turned the clear waters of Burrard Inlet into a writhing black sea of fish. Tsleil-Waututh canoe pullers struggled to navigate through the crowds of fish and thick blades of kelp. Marine birds flocked in numbers unimaginable today, as Tsleil-Waututh people gathered at the communal kitchen tables of clam gardens during low tide meals.



1750

All Tsleil-Waututh people today are descendants of the **Tsleil-Waututh Chief Waut-salk**, and TWN genealogy traces named ancestors back to at least 1750. This includes the only named individuals described in recorded oral histories known to have occupied Burrard Inlet in pre-contact times.



1763

The King of England issued the **Royal Proclamation** acknowledging Aboriginal title and recognising First Nations as sovereign. British colonists were directed to enter into Nation-to-Nation treaties to legally formalise settlement and occupation under British Law. Despite directives, British government agents did not engage with treaty processes throughout most of B.C., resulting in unresolved land claims. The Tsleil-Waututh entered the B.C. Treaty Process in 1995 but has never formalised a treaty with the Crown.



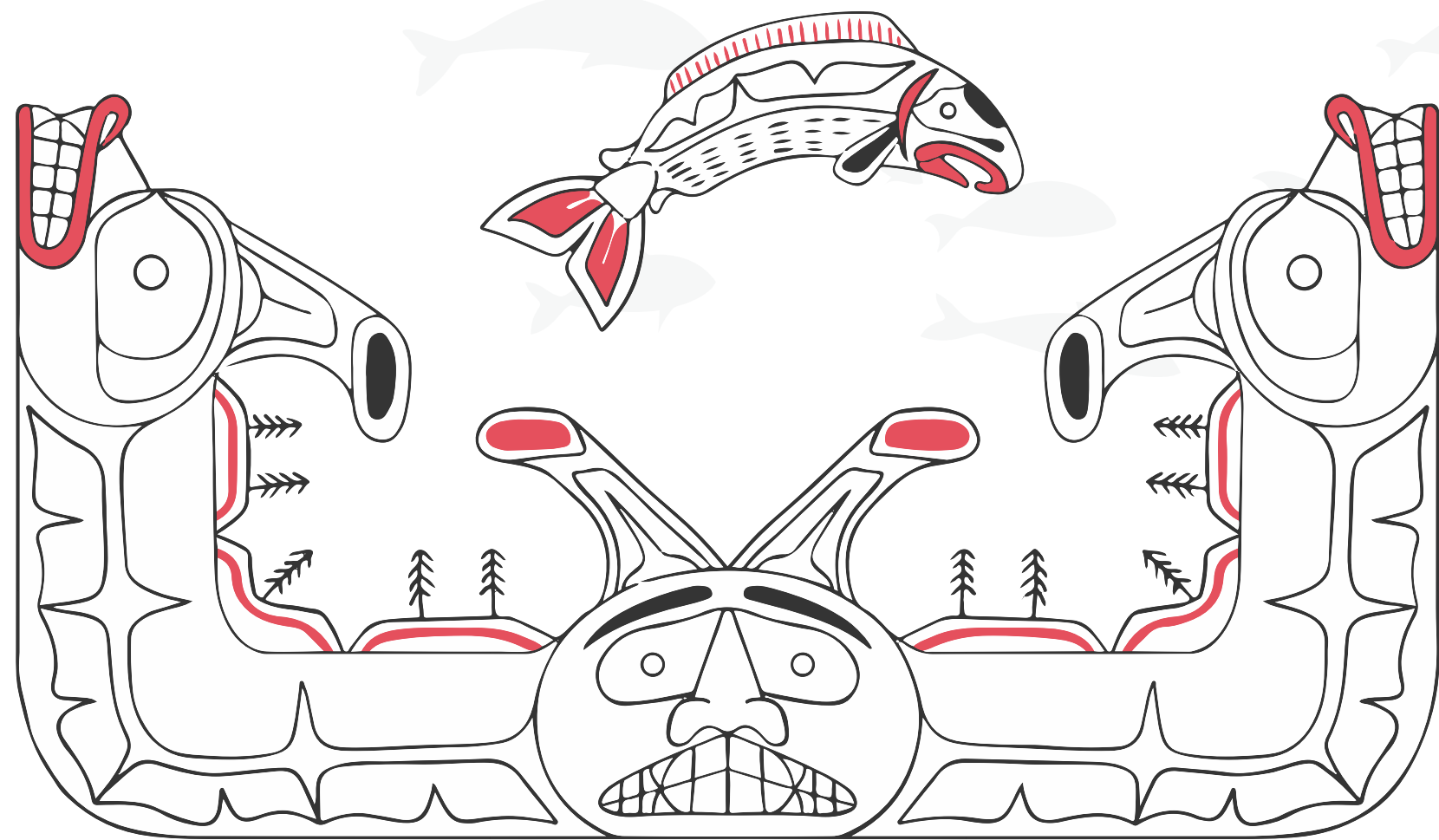
1782

Arrival of smallpox on the shores of Burrard Inlet. This wave of the disease killed 50-90% of Coast Salish people.



1790s

Oral histories describe **Tsleil-Waututh stewardship laws** and reflect entrenched moral obligations to sustainability of resources. One story recounts the punishment of two boys by a great Chief with a deep spiritual connection to the salmon. Upon discovering the salmon had been mistreated by the boys, the Chief instructed the salmon to disappear until proper respect was demonstrated. These accounts highlight the cultural and historical importance of salmon and assert the active role of the Tsleil-Waututh as stewards of their territory.



WHERE WE CAME FROM (Pre-contact era)

● Benefits

● Impacts



Our Lands and Water



Our Economic System



Our Laws and Teachings



Our Culture



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH
THE PEOPLE OF THE INLET



1792

British and Spanish ships first visit Tsleil-Waututh territory. Captain Vancouver reports that his crew received "smelt" through gifting and trading from the people in Burrard Inlet, indicating Tsleil-Waututh's abundant marine resources and the importance of forage fish. Tsleil-Waututh Elder Abraham George recalled hearing the boom of cannons in the inlet. It is said that Chief Waut-salk was the first to meet Captain George Vancouver and passed the surname "George" to his descendants.



1846

British Crown's **assertion of sovereignty** through the signing of the Oregon Treaty with the USA.



Pre-contact to 1850s

Tsleil-Waututh used a **system of lookouts and defensive sites** to protect their people from raiders. In post-contact times this included raids by the Lekwiltok (Yuculta) and Haida.



1859

The **first settlers** began to colonise Burrard Inlet to explore coal deposits and harvest timber. Large areas were pre-emptively claimed by colonial officials before any Indian Reserves were established.



1858 - 1862

Second smallpox epidemic almost wipes out salilwata⁺ people living at təmtəmix*⁺tən (Belcarra peninsula), the main Tsleil-Waututh Nation village site at the time. The few survivors (13-36 people) move to the Sleil-Waututh village site, where the main Tsleil-Waututh reserve is today.



1860s

Whale populations are abundant in Burrard Inlet until European settlers established a **commercial whaling industry**. Few records indicate the species of whales hunted in the Inlet, but one instance describes a black and white whale, indicating an Orca. Other records indicate settlers hunted whales with "rocket driven harpoons".



1860s

Extensive logging began throughout Burrard Inlet's watersheds. The first sawmills on the Inlet opened in 1863, providing the economic basis for the settler communities of Hastings and Moodyville.



1866 - 1869

British Columbia's Colonial Government opened "Crown land" for settlement, but an ordinance excluded Indigenous people from the process. The B.C. government unilaterally **established Indian Reserves** throughout the Lower Mainland and restricted Indigenous settlement to these small tracts of land. This, along with earlier land policies, excluded Indigenous people from the vast majority of their territories in order to secure exclusive and unfettered access for settler communities to lands, waters, and resources. This process established Tsleil-Waututh's Indian Reserve #3.



1870

The earliest colonial settlement in what would become Vancouver was established as Granville Townsite with 50 colonial (non-indigenous) residents in 1870 CE, growing to 300 a decade later.



1870

The commercial whaling industry in Burrard Inlet collapsed within a decade, likely due to overharvesting. Extensive industrialisation in Burrard Inlet dissuaded continued migration to the area and whales are a rare presence, with periodic visits that often coincide with important Tsleil-Waututh community events, such the passing of community leaders and members.



1871

British Columbia joined Canada, but adopted the position that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 acknowledging Aboriginal title and directing colonisers to the Nation-to-Nation treaty process was not in force in Western Canada. As a result, B.C. allotted 10-acres of land per family instead of the prescribed 80 to establish Indian Reserves, and acted to reduce the size of existing Reserves.



~1874

What is now known as Boulder Island was once a sacred resting place and held the remains of revered Tsleil-Waututh leader, Waut-salk II. Motivated by their recent conversion to Christianity and the pilfering of burial boxes by settlers, **Tsleil-Waututh leader James Sla-holt collected the remains of Waut-salk II** and others, delivering them to the cemetery at Sleil-Waututh for reburial. As the canoe carrying Waut-salk's remains left Boulder Island, two blackfish (orca whales) appeared and escorted the canoe to Sleil-Waututh. The whales remained at the beach until the work was done and then backed away, facing the cemetery. Some accounts speak of the whales backing all the way out of the inlet. To this day, Tsleil-Waututh people associate blackfish in Burrard Inlet with death in the community.



1876

The Indian Act comes into effect, dismantling Indigenous governance and stewardship systems. Cultural practices and ceremonies were banned, land was seized, and laws were passed to eliminate Indigenous rights, title, status, and culture. The pass and permit systems later restricted Indigenous people's movements and the sale of goods off reserve lands.



Mid to late 1800s

Invasive softshell clams (*Mya arenaria*) were introduced to the Pacific Northwest from the Atlantic ocean.



1881

Vancouver's City Wharf was used as a dumping ground for waste, and garbage soon filled the intertidal zone to be exposed at low tide. The wharf was later extended to deeper water, but the problem persisted. By 1881, a scow was built with a capacity of 50 tons to dispose of city garbage once a day in deeper waters in Burrard Inlet.



1880s - 1900

Marine birds, waterfowl, and ducks were a significant part of the Burrard Inlet ecosystem. August Jack Khatsahlano recalled life at sənəʔq⁺ and reported so many ducks that "at night, on False Creek, they made such a noise you could not sleep." Local settlers working at Hastings Sawmill described "two or three acres of ducks swimming off the Hastings Mill wharf eating the herrings; the water was just black with them". Vancouver's first archivist, Major James Skitt Matthews, described an "enormous number of waterfowl and fish available for food on False Creek. Ducks rose in clouds as recently as 1900 from False Creek". Marine birds are often dependent on forage fish as a food source, and their abundance in Burrard Inlet was likely related to this presence.



1885

The Indian Act introduced the Potlatch Ban, outlawing traditional ceremonies and spiritual practices. **Any Indigenous person discovered performing a ceremony could be jailed. The Potlatch Ban was not repealed until 1951.**



1875 - 1886

Herring was harvested with dynamite as early as 1875. By 1881, a facility called Spratt's Oiley opened in Coal Harbour to render herring into oil to be used as an industrial lubricant in forestry operations. Once oil was extracted from the fish, the remains of the herring were dumped into the Inlet. By 1884, herring did not return inside the First Narrows of Burrard Inlet in large enough quantities to justify a fishery. In 1886 CE, Spratt's Oiley burned down and was not rebuilt, and no other operation was developed to replace it.



1886

The transcontinental **Canadian Pacific Railroad** arrived at Burrard Inlet, greatly stimulating colonial development around the region.



1886

Sturgeon used to live in Burrard Inlet, especially False Creek. In 1886 and 1887, settler fisheries harvested **4,545 kg and 11,363 kg of sturgeon from the Inlet, with accounts of individual fish up to 12 feet long**. This likely did not include Tsleil-Waututh harvests for community consumption, sale, and trade.



1886

Settlers established a commercial **surf smelt fishery** in Burrard Inlet



1887

After herring populations collapsed east of First Narrows, the **fishery shifted west** to English Bay, but did not experience the same abundance.



1888

The creation of Stanley Park excluded Tsleil-Waututh people from a vital and spiritually important village site. The City of Vancouver evicted local Indigenous inhabitants from Stanley Park and constructed a mock Indigenous village that included totem poles from northern Indigenous cultures, like the Haida.



1889

The herring fishery shifted west again from English Bay to Point Grey after the English Bay populations collapsed. The fishery at Point Grey continued until it too collapsed around 1914.



1898

Sand was added to English Bay Beach. Despite its recreational benefits, the sand covered important forage fish spawning habitat.



1899

St. Paul's residential school opened in North Vancouver. Saint Mary's Residential School in the Fraser Valley (Mission BC) opened in 1863.



1899

The collapse of the eulachon fishery in Burrard Inlet was attributed to overfishing, unfettered industrial pollution, and habitat destruction.



1899 - 1902

Salmon harvests from the Fraser River peaked by 1902, with sockeye runs of up to 100 million fish, followed by decreasing returns as a result of overfishing.



~1900

Industrial development in the Seymour River Estuary, now the Maplewood Flats Conservation Area, began with impacts from logging around the turn of the 20th century.



1900

Several Indian Agents from the New Westminster Agency were assigned to Tsleil-Waututh with a mandate to control all aspects of culture and politics with oppressive policies sanctioned by the Indian Act and the residential school system.



1900

The Port of Vancouver in Burrard Inlet developed into a significant international port, exporting timber, fish, and other goods around the world. With new canning technology, abundant salmon, and access to a global market, around 20 industrial salmon canneries were established on the lower Fraser River.



1900

The last report of sturgeon in Burrard Inlet. Today, sturgeon are considered extirpated from the Inlet, representing a 100% loss from their pre-contact abundance.



1905

The Emerson Lumber sawmill was built on the Port Moody waterfront. While ownership changed hands several times, it remained operating as a sawmill until 2020. Construction of a residential development is currently planned for the site.



1906

Coast and Interior Salish Chiefs **gathered in Cowichan to discuss mutual complaints regarding land rights and title issues and likely included Tsleil-Waututh community leaders.** A delegation traveled to London to bring their collective issues directly to King Edward, who told them to deal directly with the Canadian government.



1909

The Wigwam Inn at the head of Indian Arm is built as a luxury resort, bringing tourists and steamships to the heart of Tsleil-Waututh Nation territory. It endures a long and notorious history, and is currently owned by the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club.



1910

Settler surf smelt fisheries in Burrard Inlet peaked with over 100 tonnes harvested in 1910. By this time, many important species had undergone dramatic decreases in number, including forage fish, sturgeon, and whales, with remarkable cascading effects throughout the ecosystem.



1912

Increasing industrial development contaminates the local ecosystem. A B.C. Fisheries Department report describes an ongoing leak from an oil refinery in Port Moody Arm that had exterminated wildlife for three quarters of a mile around the site. The report notes this would be illegal in most countries, implying that Canada had not sufficiently addressed the issue.



1914

The Imperial Oil Company (IOCO) was built in 1914 on the north shore of Port Moody Arm and began operations in 1915. By 1919, the refinery processed 2,000 barrels of crude oil a day, increasing to 25,000 by 1953. The facility ceased refinery operations in 1995, but continues to export heavy fuel and other petroleum products today.



1912- 1917

Massive dredging occurs in the First Narrows of Burrard Inlet to facilitate large commercial ships. A specialized dredging vessel worked 24 hours a day, 6 days a week from 1912 to 1917 to expand the channel width from 270 m to 430 m. Substantial areas of important habitat in and around the Capilano River estuary were permanently destroyed.



1913- 1916

The Royal Commission on Indian Affairs occurred, known as well as the McKenna/McBride Commission. Tsleil-Waututh leader, Chief George Sla-holt, stood before the Commission and voiced the need for clear title to the Nation's land.



1915

Pacific Elevators, currently owned by Viterra, was built in 1915 as one of the original grain elevators at the Port of Vancouver.



1916

Construction of the Stanley Park Causeway disconnected Lost Lagoon, a former intertidal area, from the rest of Coal Harbour. It was previously an important habitat for many marine species, including herring, salmon, shellfish, and marine birds.



1917 - 1925

Eastern False Creek, which extended to present-day Clark Drive, was infilled to create land for rail infrastructure and industry. In total, urban and industrial development in False Creek has destroyed 286 ha of intertidal habitat and 25 ha of subtidal habitat since European contact.



1918

By this time, pollution and physical impacts had destroyed many kelp beds throughout the Inlet, but Tsleil-Waututh still relied on marine resources for daily sustenance.



1920

The Suncor Energy Burrard Products Terminal was built in Burnaby as a fuel products terminal. Today the terminal includes tank farms, fuel blending, truck and rail facilities, and marine tanker terminals.



1920s

The Indian River valley was extensively logged beginning in the 1920's. Logs were driven down the Indian River to the estuary, decimating what was once dense eelgrass beds. Historic clearcuts, roads, and woodwaste continue to contribute to cumulative effects impacting the health of the watershed and estuary today.



Benefits



Impacts



Our Lands and Water



Our Economic System



Our Laws and Teachings



Our Culture

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN *(Colonial era 1792-1990s)*



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH
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1920s

TWN began hosting **annual canoe festivals** in Burrard Inlet that continue today.



1920s

Pacific oysters were introduced and gradually replaced the Olympia oysters once common around Burrard Inlet.



1922

Alliance Grain Terminal is built and remains one of the oldest grain terminals at the Port of Vancouver today.



1923

The Vancouver Port Authority established its operations with the opening of Ballantyne Pier.



1923

In response to inadequate recognition of rights and title granted by the Crown, chiefs and delegates of 16 villages united to amalgamate as the Squamish Nation. Tsleil-Waututh participated in the **vote and voted to not amalgamate with their Squamish relatives**, as they had always been culturally and linguistically distinct from Squamish.



1925

The first bridge over the Second Narrows is completed, servicing vehicle and rail traffic. It was a major navigational hazard and was struck by ships several times. In 1930, a barge collided with the bridge, breaking a span that sank to the bottom of Burrard Inlet. The bridge was subsequently closed for 4 years.



1927

The Greater Vancouver Water District obtained a 999-year lease for all Crown land and timber rights in the Capilano and Seymour watersheds for one dollar per year per watershed, and subsequently prohibited public (and Tsleil-Waututh) access to 32,280 ha (79, 765 acres) of core Tsleil-Waututh territory. Access remains prohibited today.



1927

Commercial shipping facilities that eventually became Canada Place were constructed. Today, this is the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's headquarters, a convention center, cruise ship terminal, hotel, and business centre.



1927

The Indian Act was amended to deny First Nation Peoples access to legal recourse and resolution of land rights and title disputes with British Columbia or Canada.



1927

The first Seymour River dam was constructed. The ecological impacts and disruption to natural systems, such as reduced sediment supply to Burrard Inlet's shorelines, continue to be revealed today. The Seymour River, along with Lynn Creek and other small streams, once fed sediment and nutrients to a 284 ha intertidal estuary complex before European contact. Today the Seymour River drains into the inlet through an industrialised, confined channel, and over 55% of the estuary habitat has been destroyed.



1927

Construction of the Lions Gate Bridge destroys much of the Capilano River estuary. Prior to 1927, the river drained to the east and west of the First Narrows, but the bridge restricted flows only to the west. Since European contact, development has destroyed 187 ha, or 80%, of intertidal habitat in the Capilano estuary.



1929

B.C. introduced Game Regulations, evolving into the present day provincial Hunting and Trapping Regulations that prohibit the discharge of firearms in Burrard Inlet and the Tsleil-Waututh's access to subsistence hunting.



1930s

The smelt fishery collapses in Burrard Inlet as a result of overfishing and industrialisation.



Canada establishes record keeping of salmon returns to the rivers draining into Burrard Inlet, decades after many severe impacts had already devastated salmon populations across southern BC. This contributed to a shifted baseline of salmon populations, as the earliest official records of many salmon populations represent a baseline that is significantly below pre-contact populations.



1932

Shell's original Shellburn Refinery was constructed in North Burnaby in 1932, expanded in 1945, and closed in 1993.



1934 - 1941

Canada's Department of the Environment **estimated an average of 19,000 chum returning to the Indian River per year** and an average of 7,000 chum returning to the Capilano River per year, representing impacts on salmon populations from fisheries, habitat loss, logging, and industrial development.



1935

Chevron's Burnaby Refinery was built in 1935 and sold to Parkland in 2017, and is still in operation. It was built on an important Tsleil-Waututh harvesting site, indicated by archaeological deposits impacted during construction.



1936

Mount Seymour Provincial Park is established, alienating the Tsleil-Waututh from key hunting, gathering, cultural, and spiritual sites.



1938

A condition of Confederation with Canada is fulfilled by **B.C.'s transfer of identified Indian Reserve land titles to the federal government.**



1939

The District of North Vancouver constructed the **Dollarton Highway** without Tsleil-Waututh Nation consultation or consent, bisecting the main reserve and cutting off direct access to the beach and inlet for many households.



1940s - 1960s

A **gravel operation** conducted by barge was established at Maplewood Flats and included major dredging for extraction.



1942

The Greater Vancouver Water District obtained a 999-year lease for the Coquitlam watershed, and prohibited public (and Tsleil-Waututh) access to 20,461 ha (50,560 acres) of Tsleil-Waututh territory. Access remains prohibited today



1947 - 1957

The number of **chum salmon returning to rivers around Burrard Inlet show a sharp decline.** Regulatory records show that between 1947 and 1957 chum returns to the Indian River ranged from 1,500 to 35,000 fish and from 35 to 3,500 on the Capilano River.



1949

Tsleil-Waututh and other First Nations people are **allowed to vote in B.C. provincial elections for the first time.**



1950

Tsleil-Waututh harvesters were still able to regularly use the bounty of the Indian River Watershed (IRW) and Indian Arm as it had endured fewer colonial impacts than the rest of Burrard Inlet, even with extensive logging and affected salmon habitat.



1951

Amendments to the Indian Act saw some of its most **harmful provisions repealed, including the Potlatch ban.** Tsleil-Waututh Nation members could now hire lawyers and practice ceremony.



1950 - 1970s

Urban development **infilled many small salmon streams throughout metro Vancouver** while exposure from loss of adjacent trees and modification effects from culverts damaged others.



1953

The **Trans Mountain Pipeline** was built between Edmonton, Alberta, and Burnaby, B.C. to ship crude oil to refineries in the Lower Mainland and Washington State.



1954

The Cleveland Dam was built on the Capilano River, damaging salmon stocks and ecological processes.



1956

Westridge Marine terminal was built to service the Trans-Mountain Pipeline.



1958

The port terminal Centerm was built. It was operated by Canadian Stevedoring before the Port Authority assumed management. Expansion began in 2020 to increase capacity.



1959

St. Paul's residential school in North Vancouver closed. The genocidal practices and policies of the residential school system inflicted severe intergenerational trauma on Tsleil-Waututh survivors and their families.



1959

Vancouver Wharves becomes operational. Vancouver Wharves is located on the North Shore, with imposing stockpiles of bulk mineral concentrates, sulphur, agri-products and other liquid bulk commodities.



Pre - 1960s

Tsleil-Waututh members regularly hunted ducks from Nation reserve land to Indian Arm until the 1960s when access was limited by hunting regulations and property privatisation.



1960s

"Sixties Scoop" removed Indigenous children from their homes and communities to be placed in foster care and adoption services instead of providing local community resources and supports.



1960

The Iron Workers Memorial Bridge is completed. Nineteen people were killed during construction when a span of the bridge collapsed.



1960s

Manila clams were intentionally introduced to the B.C. coast for commercial reasons, displacing native clam species. Manila clams continue to propagate throughout the Strait of Georgia and along the west coast of Vancouver Island.



1960

Indigenous people are **allowed to vote in federal elections for the first time.**



1960

Pacific Coast Terminals (PCT) expanded to Port Moody and is one of the world's largest sulphur, potash and bulk liquids marine terminals.



1961

Burrard Generating Station - a natural gas-fired power plant - was constructed in Port Moody.



1960s - 1980s

The Main and Northeast Basin of **Maplewood Flats were used for log sorting and storage** operations beginning in the 1960s up to the early 1980s, resulting in the accumulation of woodwaste debris in intertidal and subtidal habitat with legacy impacts today.



1961

Present day **Seymour Falls Dam** constructed.



1961

The Lions Gate Wastewater Treatment Plant began operations. It is a Primary Treatment facility and removes 30-40% of waste before releasing effluent into Burrard Inlet. Previously, wastewater was discharged directly into Burrard Inlet.



1964

West Coast Reduction begins operations as a rendering plant of fat and oil products. In 2015, it faced charges relating to a 2013 spill of two tonnes of canola oil into Burrard Inlet.



1967

Construction of **Neptune Terminals** began in North Vancouver. Neptune Bulk Terminals is one of North America's largest multi-product bulk terminals and handles Canadian metallurgical coal and potash for export.



1967

Chief Dan George's "Lament for Confederation" vocalised and shone a powerful light on the impacts of colonisation on First Nations people and the environment. Geswanouth Slaholt Dan George (1899-1981), Tsleil-Waututh Chief from 1951-1963, worked tirelessly to change embedded perceptions of First Nations people and to protect and sustain traditional dances, ceremony, and culture. He formed the Children of Takaya Dance Group, now the oldest and longest-running traditional Indigenous performing arts group in B.C.



1968

Clearing for the **BC Hydro electric transmission line** in the Indian River Watershed began in 1968, and the line was operating by 1971. It includes 75 towers through the entire length of the watershed and Indian Arm, with many towers constructed directly in the river. The project was completed without Tsleil-Waututh consent or consultation and Tsleil-Waututh retains significant concerns regarding placement of energy infrastructure in the watershed as cultural and environmental damage continues today.



1970

Chief Dan George is nominated for an Academy Award for his role in the film Little Big Man with Dustin Hoffman and Faye Dunaway.



~ 1970s

Local salmon stocks continue to decline to at alarming rates. Efforts to restore populations are focused on hatchery production rather than habitat protection or ecological methods of fisheries management.



1970s

The port terminal Lynnterm Terminals is constructed and consolidates forest products, steel, and other breakbulk commodities.



1972

Concerns over water quality and pollution lead to the **closure of bivalve harvesting in Burrard Inlet.** In the ensuing years, Canada has demonstrated no intention to address the inlet-wide closure and continues to treat Burrard Inlet as permanently closed to bivalve harvesting. The closure has measurable and continuing physical, cultural, spiritual, and economic impacts on generations of Tsleil-Waututh families. The shellfish closure was a clear indication of that the cumulative effects of urban, commercial, and industrial development around Burrard Inlet had exceeded what is allowable under Tsleil-Waututh law.



1972

The lowest four kilometres of the Indian River changed course as a direct result of electric transmission line construction. Significant erosion and increased sedimentation damaged culturally important sites and greatly reduced populations of salmon species while affecting sensitive habitats.



1973

Calder v. Attorney General - British Columbia. The Supreme Court ruled that Aboriginal title had existed at the time of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, marking the first instance of the Canadian legal system acknowledging title and its eistence outside of, and not derived from, colonial law.



1975

The port terminal Vanterm was built, covering 34.6 hectares between the First and Second Narrows.



1980

Constitution Express - The Constitution Express was a movement organised in 1980 and 1981 to protest the lack of recognition of Aboriginal rights in the Federal government's proposed patriation of the Canadian Constitution. The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs chartered two trains from Vancouver to transport approximately one thousand people, including Tsleil-Waututh members Chief Dan George, Herb George and Carleen Thomas, to Ottawa to publicise concerns around lack of protections of Aboriginal rights in the proposed Constitution.



1981 - 1985

Total recorded adult salmon returns to the 17 remaining spawning streams in the Burrard inlet averaged 1,200 Chinook, 26,000 chum, 32,000 coho, 25,600 pink, 13 sockeye, and 840 steelhead.



1982

Aboriginal rights and title reaffirmed in the Canadian Constitution Act (1982).



1987 - 1988

DFO implemented **fish habitat restoration** projects in the IRW.



1990

R. v. Sparrow is a seminal Indigenous rights case recognising that Aboriginal rights include fishing for food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) purposes. The case established a test and the conditions in which a First Nation's FSC rights could be limited, and prioritised FSC fisheries over commercial fisheries.

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Early 1990s

The **varnish clam**, native to Southeast Asia, is unintentionally introduced to Burrard Inlet through ballast waters. Varnish and softshell clams are ubiquitous and more common than native species in the Inlet today.



1991

Fortis BC natural gas pipeline constructed in the Indian River Watershed to connect natural gas infrastructure in the Lower Mainland with other parts of BC. Tsleil-Waututh maintains significant concerns regarding the placement of energy infrastructure in the watershed. The projects were built without the Nation's consent and concerns were ignored during planning and permit processes, resulting in cultural and environmental harm.



1992

The **Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)** comes into effect with BC's Environmental Act following in 1994 to assess environmental impacts of major industrial and urban projects. Earlier iterations of environmental guidelines, beginning in 1973, were non-legislative and based on self-assessments. CEAA was replaced by the Impact Assessment Act in 2019. The legislations have particular influence within Tsleil-Waututh territory as they inform development of Burrard Inlet and Fraser River estuary; however, **First Nations continue to be largely excluded from project-related decision-making.**



1992

Tsleil-Waututh creates Takaya Developments to build residential developments on reserve land to sell as lease-hold properties to the general public. Sales support TWN's economic development and longterm financial sovereignty. This economic strategy was founded by late Qutsame-t Leonard George (1946-2017), son of Geswanouth Slaholt, a respected spiritual and cultural leader, negotiator, economic visionary, and Tsleil-Waututh Chief from 1989-2001.



1994

Whales visited Burrard Inlet upon the passing of the late Paddy George, TWN war veteran and championship canoe puller. Twntseil-Waututh did not see orcas east of the Second Narrows again until 2019.



1995

Tsleil-Waututh forms a Treaty, Lands, and Resources Department (TLR) to prepare for Treaty negotiations and to protect, assert, and advance the Nation's rights, title, and interests throughout the territory. The early vision, mandate, and contributions of late Leonard George, late Richard George, late Ernest "Iggy" George, late Herb George, Leah-George Wilson, Micheal George, Ed Thomas, Ernest "Bones" George, and Matt Thomas continue to be the foundation of TLR's work and accomplishments. Late Elder Iggy George dedicated years as an advisor to TLR's stewardship initiatives.



1996

R. v. Van Der Peet - Established the test under Canadian law to determine what Canada recognizes as constitutionally protected Aboriginal rights. Multiple subsequent rulings limit First Nations' rights, and the case deemed it illegal to sell Food, Social, Ceremonial fish, negatively impacting Tsleil-Waututh's contemporary economy.

Canada introduced the **Firearms Act** in 1995 with B.C. following with provincial legislation in 1996. This further limited Tsleil-Waututh's ability to hunt in its territory, now largely developed and surrounded by an urban population.



1997

Delgamuukw v. British Columbia defined Aboriginal title as a special right arising from prior occupation of the land by Indigenous people and affirmed Indigenous communities' intimate relationship with the land. Affirmation of aboriginal title included the exclusive right to use title lands for various purposes.



1998

Tsleil-Waututh signs an agreement with B.C. to jointly manage Say Nuth Khaw Yum Provincial Park/Indian Arm Park. The collaboration was a result of conflict with the province as they prepared to unilaterally declare the area protected as Indian Arm Provincial Park without TWN inclusion. Tsleil-Waututh leaders interrupted the process, endeavouring to secure a "seat at the table". While Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) are a growing trend in Canada today, this early iteration was groundbreaking at the time.



1998

TWN members engaged with **use and occupancy interviews** to identify thousands of sites on which resources were harvested or cultural work was performed in living memory.



2000

Our Land to Share was written, providing the foundation for TLR work and establishing a comprehensive vision of a sustainable and socially just future for Tsleil-Waututh.



2001

Co-management Agreement signed between Tsleil-Waututh and District of North Vancouver for Whey-Ah-Whichen/Cates Park (WAW). WAW is a significant Tsleil-Waututh village site and the agreement continues to be a significant milestone in the exercise of the Nation's jurisdiction over its lands and waters, fortifying management of cultural, spiritual, and archaeological values within an urbanised context.



2005

Tsleil-Waututh published a **Marine Stewardship Plan**, establishing goals for the Burrard Inlet that continue to guide TLR's work today. These goals are distilled to 1) restore Tsleil-Waututh's ability to harvest healthy, wild marine resources from the inlet, 2) Empowerment of Tsleil-Waututh to practice cultural and ceremonial activities in clean waters; 3) Emphasise the Nation's presence as integral in the territory.



2006

In 2014, a partnership with B.C. allows Tsleil-Waututh to conduct its **first elk hunt in the territory in 125 years** following successful reintroduction of the species. Annual elk hunts continue today.



2007

An excavator working on a sewage line ruptured the Trans Mountain Pipeline in Burnaby, spilling 250,000 litres oil with 40% reaching the shores of Burrard Inlet.



2007

The United Nations General Assembly adopts the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** (UNDRIP) establishing basic human rights for Indigenous Peoples such as self-determination, the right to culture, and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Canada abstained from adoption of UNDRIP until 2016.



2008

1 million pink salmon returned to Indian River.



2008

Tsleil-Waututh establishes **Inlailawatash Limited Partnership** as an arm's-length business, providing cultural and renewable resource services.

TWN launches **Takaya Tours**, an eco-tourism company.



2009

Tsleil-Waututh Stewardship Policy is published to document the Nation's stewardship laws and goals and to establish a consultation process for projects taking place within Nation territory.



2010

The **2010 Winter Olympics** in Vancouver was the catalyst for the establishment of the Four Host Nations, leading to several advances in Tsleil-Waututh's assertion of rights and title as well as Nation-led governance, economic, social, cultural, and environmental stewardship initiatives.



2011

650,000 litres of untreated sewage was discharged into Burrard Inlet through a combined sewage outfall near Brockton Point in Stanley Park. The pollution from combined sewage outfalls continues to be a significant issue in Burrard Inlet, an area with 3 sanitary sewer overflows, 24 combined sewer overflows, 76 provincially authorized wastewater discharges, and 407 stormwater outfalls.



2012

The federal government announced **new regulations requiring Canadian wastewater treatment facilities to provide secondary treatment** by 2020. Upgrades to Lions Gate Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) missed the 2020 deadline and the schedule for completion remains uncertain.



2012

Tsleil-Waututh Chief and Council, with unanimous support from the community, announce the Nation's **opposition to the proposed Trans Mountain Expansion Project (TMX)**. TWN established the Sacred Trust Initiative with the mandate of stopping TMX.



2012 - 2016

Tsleil-Waututh signed several international treaties and declarations to protect their territory from the threats of fossil fuel expansion in accordance with TWN laws, governance, and legal systems and include the following: 1) The Protect the Salish Sea Declaration; 2) The Save the Fraser Declaration; 3) The International Treaty to Protect the Sacred; 4) The Treaty to Protect the Salish Sea, which declared the pipeline project illegal under Coast Salish Law; and 5) The International First Nations Treaty Alliance to Stop the Tar Sands.



2013

Tsleil-Waututh initiates a **language revitalisation program** to teach hanqəminəm in the community.



2013

Tsleil-Waututh implemented a **habitat restoration plan for Maplewood Mudflats**.



2013

Kinder Morgan Canada filed an application with Canada for the **Trans Mountain Pipeline and Tanker Expansion (TMEX) Project**. Plans include twinning the pipeline to triple the volume of crude oil shipped through the existing route, and a seven-fold increase in tanker departures from the pipeline's terminal from once a week to once a day.



2013 - 2016

Annual **Tsleil-Waututh-led fish habitat restoration projects** in the Indian River Watershed and Burrard Inlet, in partnership with DFO and other groups. Habitat restoration projects occurred in the Lynn Creek estuary, Seymour River estuary, Seymour River rockslide, MacKay Creek, and McCartney Creeks.



2014

Tsilhqotin v. BC - The Tsilhqot'in case was the first time a Canadian court recognised a First Nation's Aboriginal title to its territory. It affirmed the territorial nature of Aboriginal title and rejected Canada's position that title could apply only to "small spots" or site-specific occupation. As a result, consultation and accommodation is required throughout the territory and not limited to specific locations, such as village sites. The decision also clarifies how governments may justify infringement on Aboriginal title.



2014

Tsleil-Waututh Nation Skills Centre opened to support TWN employment.



2015

Tsleil-Waututh releases the landmark **independent Trans-Mountain Pipeline Assessment**. The assessment is rooted in Tsleil-Waututh law, knowledge, stewardship policies, and evidence-based science and reports an unacceptable environmental risk from approval of TMX. The assessment concludes that TMX violates Tsleil-Waututh law.



2015

Tsleil-Waututh Nation's History, Culture and Aboriginal Interests in Eastern Burrard Inlet Report completed, demonstrating the strength of TWN's claim to title in eastern Burrard Inlet.



2015

The MV Marathassa spills 2,700 litres of fuel in English Bay. Initiation of a response takes over 18 hours despite early reporting.



2016

TWN Burrard Inlet Action Plan completed. The report summarises available scientific knowledge about Burrard Inlet and identifies key issues, knowledge gaps and research needs, and recommends priority actions to improve the health and integrity of Burrard Inlet by 2025.



2016

Tsleil-Waututh hosts the first of several **Burrard Inlet Science Symposiums**.



2016

Tsleil-Waututh begins work to update the marine **Water Quality Objectives** for Burrard Inlet in partnership with B.C.'s Ministry of Environment, with initial objectives signed into B.C. and TWN policy in 2021. A new standard of water quality in Burrard Inlet is defined, centring Tsleil-Waututh values and rights.



2016

Tsleil-Waututh identified an **ancient clam garden structure in Burrard Inlet**, a tangible representation of Tsleil-Waututh's traditional stewardship and governance of resources.



2016

Tsleil-Waututh begins **mapping and restoring eelgrass and kelp** in Burrard Inlet.



2017

The **first Tsleil-Waututh shellfish harvest** occurs in compliance with Tsleil-Waututh and Canadian health standards since 1972. Since, harvests have occurred approximately once per year in a single location in the Inlet and are dependent on extensive ongoing monitoring and safety testing.



2017

Significant landslide events in the Indian River Watershed damaged fish habitat, restoration sites, and infrastructure. The event was triggered by significant precipitation, but impacts from historical forestry operations and logging roads in the watershed continue to contribute to landslide risks today.



2018

Federal Court of Appeal **quashes approval of the TMX pipeline and finds inadequate consultation by Canada with the six First Nations responsible for its legal challenge.**



2018

Tahlequah the orca, a member of the Southern Resident Killer Whale J Pod, carries her dead calf for 17 days through the Salish Sea in an act of mourning. A spotlight is placed on the mounting cumulative effects impairing Southern Resident Killer Whales, including contaminants, marine shipping impacts, and prey availability.



2019

Tsleil-Waututh field crews find herring eggs in Indian Arm for the first time in over 100 years and observe significant associated orca activity in eastern Burrard Inlet and Indian Arm for the first time since the 1990s.



2019

The Province of B.C. passed the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act** (DRIPA).



2020

Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Metro Vancouver Regional District sign a historic **co-operation agreement for Təmtəmix'ʔən** (Belcarra Regional Park).



2020

Ernest "Iggy" George is remembered (1940-2020). Ernie grew up on Tsleil-Waututh's reserve where his family taught him the Nation's obligations to the land and water from a young age. He contributed greatly to the collective knowledge in TLR as an Elder, and was a steward of the Inlet, respected Knowledge Keeper, and champion across the Coast Salish Canoe circuit.



2020

The global COVID-19 pandemic results in many social, economic, and cultural impacts for Tsleil-Waututh people and sees an increase in the effects of recreation in the Indian River Watershed.



2021

Tsleil-Waututh Nation's on-reserve school, siʔám̓θət, opens.



2021

Tsleil-Waututh works with the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority on Maplewood Mudflats to restore 4 hectares of habitat.



2021

Tsleil-Waututh and Sea Change Conservation Society remove nearly 50 creosote piles from numerous sites in Burrard Inlet as the first step to address the adverse effects on the marine ecosystem, particularly for salmon, herring, and clams.



2021

Burrard Inlet Environmental Science and Stewardship Agreement signed with four federal ministries. The historic, 10-year agreement provides long-term funding for Tsleil-Waututh stewardship initiatives in Burrard Inlet and enables increased coordination with relevant federal agencies.



2021

A severe summer **"heat dome"** causes temperatures to reach 40° C, killing billions of sea creatures in the Salish Sea, including mussels and barnacles. An unprecedented forest fire season followed by severe flooding demonstrated the province's vulnerability to climate change.



2021

The B.C. Supreme Court ruled that the Crown had infringed on **Blueberry River First Nations'** rights by failing to manage cumulative effects in their territory. The Court ordered B.C. to cease authorisation of projects and activities in the Nation's territory contributing to adverse outcomes and compelled the parties to jointly establish enforceable management and mitigation mechanisms.



2021

Federal government passess **UNDRIP Act** to bring Canadian law into alignment with the resolutions.



2022

Tsleil-Waututh begins **climate change vulnerability assessment and resilience planning.**



2022

Tsleil-Waututh publishes a review of data compiled through the Burrard Inlet Water Quality Objectives and identifies over 600 pollution sources in Burrard Inlet. At least 700 different contaminants have been identified in Burrard Inlet since 1971 with at least 24 exceeding human health thresholds related to seafood consumption for coastal Indigenous people.



2022

Tsleil-Waututh publishes a reconstructed pre-contact shoreline, identifying the high- and low-tide lines throughout Burrard Inlet at the time of European contact in 1792. Shoreline alteration and development is shown to have eliminated 1,214 ha (3,000 acres) of intertidal and subtidal habitat and includes 55% (945 ha) of intertidal habitats in Burrard Inlet.



2022

TWN and Environment and Climate Change Canada reach a seminal agreement to co-manage ECCC's **Disposal at Sea Program** at a Point Grey site immediately west of Burrard Inlet.



2022

TWN and BC finalise the **Indian River Watershed Integrated Stewardship Plan**.



2022

Many people convicted of **illegally harvesting crabs** in Burrard Inlet on a commercial scale.



2022 - 2023

Tsleil-Waututh-led fish habitat restoration projects and monitoring programs are implemented in the IRW in partnership with DFO.



2023

A second **FortisBC natural gas pipeline** is approved in the Indian River Watershed. Tsleil-Waututh consent was not obtained in accordance with the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent standard established under UNDRIP. Upon provincial approval, Tsleil-Waututh entered into a Project Agreement, approving the project with certain conditions that outline environmental protection measures, restoration, decision-making authorities, and dispute resolution clauses.

● Benefits

● Impacts

● Our Lands and Water

● Our Economic System

● Our Laws and Teachings

● Our Culture



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH
THE PEOPLE OF THE INLET

WHERE WE ARE NOW *(Beginnings of Treaty, Lands and Resources - Now)*