

TOWN OF LADYSMITH AND STZ'UMINUS FIRST NATION: WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD OUR RELATIONSHIP

STZ'UMINUS HISTORY IN THE HARBOUR

The Stz'uminus First Nation people are descendants of the first inhabitants of what became known as Oyster Harbour and is now called Ladysmith Harbour. For thousands of years, the Stz'uminus people have harvested from the harbour, its creeks and rivers and surrounding watersheds and forests, the Salish Sea, the Fraser River valley and beyond. As Hul'qumi'num people, they are stewards of the rich source of fish and shellfish in their traditional territory.

However, following the E&N Railway Grant, and when coal baron James Dunsmuir formed the Town of Ladysmith around 1900, the Ladysmith Harbour became a shipping port for coal and other industries. Tons of coal wash (slack) and wood debris were left behind by over 86 years of coal and forestry industrial activity.

The Stz'uminus, despite their continuing and irrevocable presence since time immemorial, became increasingly alienated from the management of their lands for harvesting, cultural, spiritual and economic use. This was a result of settler-colonial processes, which divided and sold the land without the input of its original owners and imposed an oppressive reservation and forced residential school system.

Recognising the legacy of past misdoings, the Stz'uminus First Nation and Town of Ladysmith are committed to working together to restore the cultural values, improve the ecological health and create economic opportunity on the waterfront and in the harbour.

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY IN THE HARBOUR

As a result of past coal and forestry use, a large part of the waterfront area, including the water lots and Slack Point, is now a brownfield site. To better understand the impact for future development, the Town of Ladysmith participated in provincial studies to look at the environmental and geotechnical conditions of this area. Released in 2012, these studies tell us that the greatest impact from the historic industrial use is on Slack Point and in the harbour. Depending on the land use scenarios selected, costs for clean-up costs, stabilization and dredging could be in excess of \$30 million. While daunting, these realities will need to help shape our plans but not stop us from moving forward with our waterfront goals.

THE FUTURE OF THE WATERFRONT

In 2008, during the Community Sustainability Initiative, citizens expressed a strong desire for a wide range of experiences along the waterfront. These include natural areas, recreation, marina and marine activity, waterfront development and services, and a working waterfront of traditional industrial and related uses. The community has made great strides with Transfer Beach Park and the LMS Community Marina.

The Town of Ladysmith and the Stz'uminus First Nation want to do more to restore the waterfront into an even more vital part of the communities!

We have been working together for a shared future since 2007. Council members of the Stz'uminus First Nation and the Town of Ladysmith have signed two Community Accords in which they have pledged to strengthen their relationship and work together on matters of common interest. Working together on the waterfront is one of those commitments.

Visit the [Waterfront Area Plan](#) section of our website to learn more about the overall project.