

New Heritage Markers For the Sechelt Waterfronts

Five new heritage markers celebrating the history of the area have been placed throughout Sechelt. Funding for the signs was provided by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Tourism Program, announced by Premier Gordon Campbell at the 2004 UBCM Convention. The program provided a one-time grant of \$25 million to the UBCM to allow communities to share their history and points of interest with visitors, enhancing tourism.

Ann Watson from the Sechelt Community Archives and Gary Little, a realtor and local history enthusiast, assisted the District with the creation of this series of heritage signs which are all located on the waterfronts of Sechelt. The following is a feature summary of the new signs:

José María Narváez

Location: South end of the Davis Bay Seawall

This marker recognizes the underappreciated Spanish explorer who, in 1791, entered Georgia Strait, sailed along the Sunshine Coast and, after anchoring off Mission Point near the mouth of Chapman Creek, became the first European to touch the shores of mainland British Columbia.

Early Explorers of the Sunshine Coast

Location: North end of the Davis Bay Seawall

This marker summarizes the activities along the Sunshine Coast of the early Spanish (José María Narváez, Dionisio Galiano, Cayetano Valde) and British (George Vancouver) explorers in 1791-1792.



The Union Steamship Era

Location: Trail Bay esplanade at the foot of Trail Avenue

Union Steamship was the lifeline for the European settlers who first came to the Sunshine Coast. It was later responsible for successfully promoting the area as a desirable tourist destination, using tantalizing descriptions such as the "Gulf Coast Riviera".

Origins of Present-Day Sechelt

Location: Trail Bay Pedestrian Pier

This marker illustrates the buildings that were constructed on Sechelt's waterfront in the first quarter of the 20th century, many which were built by Bert Whitaker, one of Sechelt's first entrepreneurs.

Porpoise Bay

Location: Porpoise Bay Wharf

This marker summarizes the early development of industries relating to Sechelt's natural resources: logging, fishing, mining, and farming.

Our Rich History a Matter of Record at the Archives

The Sechelt Community Archives, housed in the Sechelt Public Library, opened to the public in 1997 and is managed by archivist, Ann Watson. The collection began when Helen Dawe, the granddaughter Sechelt pioneer Thomas J. Cook, bequeathed thirty metres of documents, photographs, maps, newspapers and artifacts of historical significance to the District of Sechelt. Since opening, over twenty metres of additional records have been donated.

Recently, Sechelt received a grant from the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at the University of British Columbia to digitize the over 5,000 historical photographs in the archives. These will be displayed on a website shortly. The Archives is open to the public on Thursdays or by appointment. For more details see <http://sechelt.bclibrary.ca/about/sechelt-community-archives>.

Spirit Square is Officially Open!



On December 31st, 2008, Sechelt's new Spirit Square on Block 7 was officially opened during the New Year's Eve First Night event.

Adjacent to the Seaside Center, this area will serve as a park and public gathering place.



Completed with a BC government grant of \$52,000 plus matching funds from the District of Sechelt, this project was part of the province-wide BC150 celebrations.