

May 9, 2012

Explore the Baikie Island Nature Reserve

The birds are singing, the bugs are buzzing and the shrubs are blooming at Baikie Island nature reserve this spring.

“There’s no better time to stroll through Baikie Island and nearby Raven Park to explore the Campbell River estuary environment,” says Ross Milnthorp, the City’s general manager of parks, recreation and culture. *“This Baikie Island restoration has transformed a former industrial hub into an exquisite and tranquil natural space,”* Milnthorp says. *“The change in the estuary is breathtaking, and people will be able to enjoy this for years to come.”*

Four new interpretive signs provide spectacular images and interesting information about the transformation of this area. A nature reserve is an area of land that is protected and managed to preserve a particular type of habitat and the plants and animals that live there. Often rare or endangered species are found on nature reserves. The Baikie Island Nature Reserve protects a significant portion of the Campbell River Estuary, an extremely important and productive area for salmon, waterfowl, migratory and shore birds, mammals and native plants. Extensive restoration measures have transformed this once-industrialized area back to a natural setting in the estuary.

Over the past year, the City of Campbell River implemented the final phase of the Baikie Island Restoration project to re-establish the riparian forest zone in the central area of the island. Invasive plant species, industrial debris and degraded soils were removed, topsoil was spread and contoured, large woody debris was placed in piles or erected as snags for habitat, two wetted areas were created, a short loop trail was constructed, and more than 5,000 native plants and trees were installed. Greenways Land Trust provided a planting crew.

This phase of the project is expected to be completed over the next few years, at a cost of up to \$400,000 once all invasive plants are removed, native plants established and park signs and furniture are in place. Funding was provided by the federal government’s Community Works Fund, BC Hydro Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, Tree Canada and the City’s Parks Parcel Tax.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) purchased Baikie Island in 2000 thanks to generous donors and wide-reaching community support. In 2001, the NCC transferred ownership of the property to the City of Campbell River, under a conservation covenant to protect and manage the property as Baikie Island Nature Reserve.

For more information about the park, please call the City Parks Department at 250-286-7275.

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Photo: Robin Williams checks out the new Welcome Sign she helped create at Baikie Island.