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The trail passes many lakes and streams, as well as coastal shorelines and mountain peaks. The many access points allow hikers flexibility in planning the length of their trips.

# Hiking the province's unknown other trail

**POWELL RIVER:** B.C.'s hidden gem worth the trek

CATHERINE ROSCOE BARR  
 SPECIAL TO PNG

Most British Columbians have heard of the 78-kilometre West Coast Trail, but when I told friends and colleagues I was setting out for a hike along the 180-kilometre Sunshine Coast Trail (which runs from Desolation Sound to Saltery Bay), I was surprised that hardly anyone had heard of it — even though both trails are the same travel time from Vancouver, about five hours by car and ferry.

The trail's story began in 1992 when Sunshine Coast resident Eagle Walz, an author, elementary school teacher, father and avid outdoorsman, came across a cut block.

Along with a small group of friends he founded the Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society (PRPAWS) and, as its president, has spent the last 20 years overseeing the creation of a trail that links a variety of landscapes from pristine lakes and gurgling creeks to coastal shorelines and mountain peaks, and lobbying for the creation of protected areas along and around the trail including Malaspina Provincial Park, Inland Lake Provincial Park, and



The hut at Manzanita Bluffs is one of nine currently completed on the trail.

trail is for people to use it," declares the new Sunshine Coast Trail website, "so please do, and be sure to sign any guest books you come across so that we can keep track of trail usage."

Many of those guest books are located in huts along the trail, which were the brainchild of founding PRPAWS member Scott Glaspey and his wife Margot, who got the idea after hiking the Milford Track in New Zealand, a 54-kilometre trail with huts spaced one day's hike apart.

This year will see the completion of nine huts along the trail so you can nearly hike from end to end without a tent — and where the trail passes near residential and commercial areas, hikers have the option of over-nighting at a bed and breakfast, guest house, hotel or resort.

My husband Aaron, my dog Charlie and I arrived at the seaside Historic Lund Hotel on a sunny Friday afternoon, with provisions for three days. Aaron would hike with us for the first day and night before heading back to work, and then Charlie and I would carry on for another two days for a total of 50 kilometres.

Duck Lake Protected Area.

The trail's many access points give hikers flexibility for planning day trips, weekend jaunts, multi-day excursions, or to complete the whole trail in 11 days or less, encouraging locals and visitors alike to experience it for themselves, and be inspired to take an interest in its safekeeping.

"The best way to protect the

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The trail crosses a wide variety of terrain along the Sunshine Coast, and some climbs can be very tough slogging.



# Some challenges bring with them big rewards

From Page C2

The next morning we met Christine Hollmann, a superb environmental educator and owner of Terra-Centric Coastal Adventures, for our zodiac charter to the start of the trail at Sarah Point in Desolation Sound — a dramatic arrival to the Sunshine Coast Trail.

Our first day on the trail was spectacular. The weather was perfect, the smell of pine needles toasting in the sun divine, and the undulating climbs and descents were more challenging than anticipated but so were the rewards.

At the 12-kilometre mark, we came upon a bench on a rocky outcrop above Wednesday Lake, liberated ourselves from our clothes, and jumped into the cool, unspoiled water.

We dried off while eating cold cans of chili and then set off for the four-kilometre slog up to the Manzanita Bluffs hut, a two-level structure with counter space and a picnic table for preparing and eating food on the first floor, and a large sleeping loft on the second floor. All of the huts, bridges and benches along the Sunshine Coast Trail were built by PRPAWS and other volunteers, including the indefatigable BOMB Squad (Bloody Old Men's Brigade), a group of outdoor enthusiasts who have been building and maintaining trails in the area for over 20 years.

The next morning, trail pioneer Walz, who is extraordinarily gracious in helping people experience the trail, met us around the 26 kilometre mark at Southview Road to pick up Aaron and drive him back to our Jeep in Lund.

I marched on towards Rieveley's Pond, where Charlie and I would stay in a hut next to the water, serenaded by a symphony of frogs. Before climbing the last hill to the hut, I stopped at a small creek to pump water for dinner and breakfast the next morning.

Locating, pumping and packing my own water gave me a new perspective on the importance of having access to clean resources and how



**Charlie was an enthusiastic companion during the three days on the trail.**

blessed I am in my regular life not to give my next glass of water much thought.

Before getting off the trail and arriving at Footprint Nature Exploration's guest house the next night, I passed by numerous sources of fresh water including the magnificent cascading waterfalls at Appleton Creek.

My wonderful hosts, Footprint owners John Hermsen and Christy Krebber, moved to Powell River from Holland because of the area's unspoiled waters and wild backcountry, and started their sea kayaking and hiking tour company so they could share their love of the outdoors with others.

They bridge one of the gaps between huts. Towards the opposite end of the trail, Herondell Bed and Breakfast, a sprawling property on nearly 43 acres, bridges the other gap between huts and is the final destination for a three-day hike starting from Salt-ery Bay.

I eagerly anticipate completing this section of the trail next — with Mount Troubridge's 4297-foot summit being one of the highlights — and then plan to tackle the lengthy, challenging middle section, which passes by Confederation Lake and Fiddlehead Landing, and scales 4000-foot Tin Hat Mountain.

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#### TSAWWASSEN - SWARTZ BAY

**Leave Tsawwassen**

6:00 am	11:00 am	4:00 pm	9:00 pm
7:00 am	12:00 pm	5:00 pm	10:00 pm
8:00 am	1:00 pm	6:00 pm	
9:00 am	2:00 pm	7:00 pm	
10:00 am	3:00 pm	8:00 pm	

**Leave Swartz Bay**

6:00 am	11:00 am	4:00 pm	9:00 pm
7:00 am	12:00 pm	5:00 pm	10:00 pm
8:00 am	1:00 pm	6:00 pm	
9:00 am	2:00 pm	7:00 pm	
10:00 am	3:00 pm	8:00 pm	

▲ Aug 4 & Sep 1 only.  
 ↓ Fri, Sun & Aug 2 & 4 only, except Jul 27 & Aug 5.  
 ● Fri, Sun & Aug 2, 4 & Sep 1 only, except Aug 5.  
 ○ Fri, Sun & Aug 2 only, except Aug 5.  
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 ◆ Except Sep 1.

#### TSAWWASSEN - NANAIMO (DUKE POINT)

**Leave Tsawwassen**

5:15 am	10:15 am	3:15 pm	8:15 pm
7:45 am	12:45 pm	5:45 pm	10:45 pm

**Leave Duke Point**

5:15 am	10:15 am	3:15 pm	8:15 pm
7:45 am	12:45 pm	5:45 pm	10:45 pm

#### HORSESHOE BAY - NANAIMO (DEPARTURE BAY)

**Leave Horseshoe Bay**

6:20 am	10:40 am	3:10 pm	7:30 pm
8:30 am	12:50 pm	5:20 pm	9:30 pm
10:05 am	2:30 pm	6:55 pm	11:05 pm

**Leave Departure Bay**

6:20 am	10:40 am	3:10 pm	7:30 pm
7:45 am	12:15 pm	4:40 pm	9:05 pm
8:30 am	12:50 pm	5:20 pm	9:30 pm

■ Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat & Aug 7 only, except Sep 1.  
 ☉ Thu to Mon & Aug 7, 14-15, 21-22 & 28-29 only.  
 ☆ Mon, Thu, Fri, Sun & Aug 7 & 28-29 only.  
 ☉ Sun only, except Sep 2.

### LOWER MAINLAND - SUNSHINE COAST

#### HORSESHOE BAY - LANGDALE

**Leave Horseshoe Bay**

7:25 am	12:00 pm	4:30 pm	8:40 pm
9:00 am	1:35 pm	5:50 pm	9:50 pm
9:40 am	2:15 pm	6:35 pm	10:35 pm
11:10 am	3:45 pm	7:55 pm	

**Leave Langdale**

6:20 am	10:50 am	3:25 pm	7:35 pm
7:55 am	12:30 pm	4:45 pm	8:55 pm
8:30 am	1:05 pm	5:30 pm	9:40 pm
10:05 am	2:40 pm	6:55 pm	

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