



**Archaeological Report for an Investigation into Compliance
with the Heritage Conservation Act Involving
Archaeological Site s.18 a:s.22 GROUP 1
NEW WESTMINSTER DISTRICT, PID: s.22**

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Compliance with the Heritage Conservation Act	4
3. Provincial Heritage Registry Records for Archaeological Site s.18	5
4. Methodology	8
5. Investigation Results	9
5.1 An Area 150 m North of the Shoreline in the South-Central Portion of the Subject Property	9
5.2 An Area Along the Southeast Shoreline	11
5.3 An Area Along the Shoreline Between the Access Road and a Small Hill.....	11
5.4 An Area in the Southwest Portion of the Subject Property.....	12
5.5 An Area on the South Slope of a Small Hill in the South-Central Portion of the Subject Property	13
5.6 Top of a Small Hill in the South-Central Portion of the Subject Property	14
6. Boundary of Archaeological Site s.18	16
7. Conclusion	19
8. References Cited	20

List of Figures

FIGURE 1. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE s.18 (RED POLYGON) LOCATED AT EMMONDS BEACH, BETWEEN POWELL RIVER AND LUND.	5
FIGURE 2. PREVIOUSLY RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE s.18 ON THE SUBJECT PROPERTY, PID: s.22 NOTE: YELLOW POLYGON = SUBJECT PROPERTY, RED POLYGON = ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE	6
FIGURE 3. LOCATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED UNDER HCA PERMIT 1995-0275.	7
FIGURE 4. NORTHERN PART OF THE PROPERTY.	17
FIGURE 5. SOUTHERN PART OF THE PROPERTY.	18

List of Photos

PHOTO 1. AREA AROUND A PREVIOUS HOUSE/TRAILER AND YARD 150 M NORTH OF THE SHORELINE SHOWING GROUND ALTERATION. PHOTO: P1000031.	10
PHOTO 2. MODERN SHELL IDENTIFIED IN AN AREA AROUND A PREVIOUS HOUSE/TRAILER AND YARD 150 M NORTH OF THE SHORELINE. PHOTO: P1000026.	10
PHOTO 3. A PILE OF PACIFIC OYSTER SHELL ALONG THE SHORELINE IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PORTION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY. PHOTO: P1000036.	11
PHOTO 4. POSSIBLE ROCK SHELTER CONTAINING A SINGLE OSTEOLOGICAL SPECIMEN. PHOTO: P1000038.	12
PHOTO 5. RECENT GROUND ALTERATION IN THE SOUTHWEST PORTION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY SHOWING GROUND ALTERATION AND HISTORIC DEBRIS. PHOTO: P1000041.	13
PHOTO 6. SOUTH SLOPE OF THE SMALL HILL DISPLAYING RECENT LEVELLING. PHOTO: P1000043.	14
PHOTO 7. RECENT SHELL AT THE TOP OF A SMALL HILL IN THE SOUTH-CENTRAL PORTION OF THE STUDY AREA. PHOTO: P1000045.	15

1. Introduction

On March 18, 2021, Natural Resource Officers (NROs) CARROLL, FISHER, SCOTT and SLOOS entered s.22 GROUP 1, NEW WESTMINSTER DISTRICT, PID:s.22 (subject property) to execute a search warrant for exhibits related to an alleged contravention of Section 12.1 (2) of the *Heritage Conservation Act (HCA)* for damage to archaeological site s.18 This archaeological report presents the results of the search for exhibits related to the alleged contravention.

On February 25, 2021, consulting archaeologists s.15; s.22 submitted a Natural Resource Violation Report of a possible violation of the *HCA* at the subject property (NRIS #165261). s.15 indicated in the report that s.1 had visited the subject property earlier that day to conduct a preliminary field reconnaissance to collect information in order to advise the landowner on *HCA* permitting requirements considering proposed development of the subject property s.15; s.22 report indicated that s.15 observed, "several areas of the property both within s.18 and immediately adjacent have been recently disturbed by grubbing, tree removal and building demolition."

On March 3, 2021, NRO CARROLL attended the subject property and observed, timber felling, stump removal, grubbing of soils, digging and general disturbance of in the property area outside of the site boundary (s.18). He observed shell midden in this area. Within the site boundary s.18, NRO CARROLL observed soil removal as well as digging related to construction of a yurt as well as house renovation allowing for the replacement/installation of pipes.

On the basis of the February 25, 2021 report by consulting archaeologists s.15; and the March 3, 2021 observation by NRO CARROLL, an *HCA* Section 16.1 Stop Work Order was issued by the Archaeology Branch for the subject property on March 3, 2021.

2. Compliance with the Heritage Conservation Act

British Columbia's heritage includes archaeological sites – the physical evidence of how and where people lived in the past. For most of the time that people have lived in British Columbia no written records were made. Archaeological sites and oral tradition are the only traces of a rich history. Some of the oldest archaeological site in the province may be as much as 14,000 years old. Protecting and conserving this fragile legacy and non-renewable natural resource is valuable to First Nations, local communities and the general public.

The scientific, cultural and historical study of the physical remains of past human activity is essential to understanding and appreciating cultural development in British Columbia and the Provincial Government recognizes the importance of archaeological sites through the *Heritage Conservation Act*. The purpose of the *Heritage Conservation Act* is therefore to protect and conserve archaeological sites in British Columbia.

Archaeological sites in the province, whether located on Crown or private lands, whether previously recorded or not, whether intact or disturbed, are protected by the *Heritage Conservation Act* and must not be damaged or altered without a heritage permit issued by the Archaeology Branch.

The Archaeology Branch is responsible for maintaining and distributing archaeological information and deciding if permits can be issued to allow development to take place that will alter archaeological sites.

Property owners and developers can request archaeological site information from the Archaeology Branch. Information provided will include: all previously recorded archaeological sites, the potential for additional archaeological sites, management direction regarding the requirement for heritage permits to be compliant with the *Heritage Conservation Act* and how to retain a professional consulting archaeologist in order to address their archaeological concerns.

Archaeological sites can be altered as a result of impacts associated with a range of activities from private residential development to commercial development. In order to issue a heritage permit to alter an archaeological site, the Archaeology Branch requires information about the archaeological site and impacts to it as a result of the proposed development. This information is often provided through an archaeological impact assessment by a professional consulting archaeologist under a heritage inspection permit.

Once the Archaeology Branch has sufficient information, the proposed development may alter the archaeological site in accordance with the conditions of a heritage permit authorizing alteration. A professional consulting archaeologist is often included in this process. Conditions of heritage permits, both heritage inspection permits and heritage permits authorizing alteration, require archaeological information to be recorded and presented to the Archaeology Branch in a rigorously controlled format. Pertinent information about the archaeological site is then entered into the Provincial Heritage Registry, the permit report into the Provincial Archaeological Report Library and collected and analysed artifacts to a provincially approved repository.

3. Provincial Heritage Registry Records for Archaeological Site s.18

Archaeological site s.18 is registered as a heritage site pursuant to Section 3 (1)(d) of the *Heritage Conservation Act* and is protected pursuant to Section 12.1 of the *Act*.

According to the Provincial Heritage Registry, archaeological site s.18 (see Figure 1) is an expansive prehistoric shell midden with burials and is located at s.18 between Powell River and Lund. s.18 is recorded on the southern portion of the subject property along the shoreline (see Figure 2).

*The Boundary of s.18 as of March 18, 2021, based on Provincial Heritage Registry records.
s.18

Figure 1. Archaeological Site s.18 (Red Polygon) Located at s.18

According to the Provincial Heritage Registry, as of March 18, 2021, there have been four recorded visits to archaeological site s.18

Archaeological site s.18 was first reported to the Province by L. Webster of Powell River in 1974. In addition to the shell midden, artifacts identified included a number of chipped points, ground slate points and knives, a bone awl, adzes and a possible smoking pipe stem. Box burials on the rocky point to the west and flexed burials in the shell midden were also reported.

* The Boundary of s.18 is of March 18, 2021, based on Provincial Heritage Registry records.
s.18

Figure 2. Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites s.18 on the Subject Property, PID s.22 . Note: Yellow Polygon = Subject Property, Red Polygon = Archaeological Sites s.18

s.18 was first formally recorded by s.22 in 1976 as part of a provincial survey for archaeological sites in the Powell River and Sechelt Regional Districts. The site was reported as 204 m along the shoreline from a rocky point at the western end to just past a small creek at the eastern end and 16 m back from the shoreline. A rectangular trench feature with the shoreline being one long side was identified in the center of the midden. Three holes in the ground within the trenched area were reported as containing a greasy substance and possibly whale bone. s.22 also noted that s.18 included a number of burials. A box burial of a woman and child was reported as originally located on the rocky point at the western end of the site but had been removed at some time prior to 1976. Two additional partially exposed burials in the midden were identified at the western end of the site, close to the rocky point. Lastly, they reported a burial with rocks at the eastern end of the site. The site was noted in 1976 as having been disturbed due to bulldozing and building activity.

The Provincial Heritage Registry references a regional ethnography by Kennedy and Bouchard in 1983 that includes reference to s.18

s.18 was revisited in 1995 by consulting archaeologist s.22 under HCA permit 1995-0271 in order to conduct an archaeological impact assessment for s.22 a private property lot just to the east of the subject property, that was subsequently subdivided into smaller lots (see Figure 3). A small 3 m² area of anthropogenic soil (shell-less midden) and no artifacts was identified on the first terrace above the shoreline. This cultural deposit was recorded as having been

disturbed and reworked. The 1995-0271 report s.22 1996) includes a map of s.18 for the entire site, although s.22 did not indicate in his report that he observed the site on properties outside of the permit study.

s.18



Figure 3. Location of Archaeological Impact Assessment Conducted under HCA Permit 1995-0275.

4. Methodology

NRO FISHER acted as the search coordinator and after entering the subject property conducted a reconnaissance in order to determine a search plan. NRO FISHER confirmed with Team Leader NRO CARROLL that the search would be for exhibits of ground alteration causing damage to previously recorded archaeological site [s.18](#) and for exhibits of damaged significant archaeological materials such as lithic and/or organic tools or osteological specimens including both ancestral remains or faunal remains. NROs CARROLL, FISHER, SCOTT and SLOOS searched that portion of the subject property starting at the T-junction of access roads in the southwest corner of the property and moving north and then east to an area 150 m north of the shoreline that contained the remains of a house/trailer foundation and yard, before traversing south, back to the shoreline, west along the shoreline access road, north again to the base of a small hill and east along the south face of the small hill and then completing the search at the top of the hill. The search covered the southern 150 m of the subject property that contained recent developments and ground alteration. NRO FISHER noted areas of interest and interpreted them relative to archaeological site [s.18](#) while NRO CARROLL lead the team and took notes, NRO SLOOS photographed exhibits and NRO SCOTT assisted in the search.

5. Investigation Results

The results of the search identified six areas of interest on the subject property.

5.1 An Area 150 m North of the Shoreline in the South-Central Portion of the Subject Property

Search of the subject property included an area approximately 150 m north of the shoreline and on the eastern side of the subject property that, according to ESRI World Imagery, once contained a house or house trailer and yard (see Figure 4). This part of the subject property displayed evidence that the house/trailer structure had recently been removed and the surrounding yard had been grubbed and vegetation removed (see Photo 1). The remains of modern habitation debris were found throughout this area and included building materials, household items, and various pieces of metal and plastic.

Dotted throughout this area was small concentrations of whole, moderately crushed and finely crushed shell. Shell identified included modern Pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*) (see Section 5.2). None of the shell observed had black greasy soil adhering to any of the shell nor was black greasy soil observed in the area; either on the surface or in soil exposures (see Photo 2). The shell was not mixed in the soil, but rather on top of the soil, which indicates a recent deposit. The native soil in this area is predominately a reddish-brown silty soil with medium to large size clasts. No archaeological artifacts were identified.

The identification of modern, imported Pacific oyster combined with the absence of any black greasy soil and fire-crack rock indicating midden and the indication that the shell in this area was recently deposited all support an interpretation that this shell is not archaeological, but rather modern.



Photo 1. Area Around a Previous House/Trailer and Yard 150 m North of the Shoreline Showing Ground Alteration.
Photo: P1000031.



Photo 2. Modern Shell Identified in an Area Around a Previous House/Trailer and Yard 150 m North of the Shoreline.
Photo: P1000026.

5.2 An Area Along the Southeast Shoreline

The search of the subject property included an area along the southeast shoreline. Identified in the grass and shrubs along the shoreline was a large pile of unbroken Pacific oyster shells (*Crassostrea gigas*) (see Figure 4 and Photo 1). This area is outside of the recorded boundary of s.18 . The oyster shells appear to be very recent, displaying no decay and comprising only unbroken shells that have not been scattered about. Morphologically, Pacific oyster has large rounded radial folds, is concave and a relatively large shell. The only indigenous oyster on coastal BC that could be archaeological is the Olympia oyster (*Ostrea lurida*) which is, compared to Pacific oyster, much smaller, has a flatter body and much less pronounced radial folds. Pacific oyster was introduced to coastal BC from the Pacific coast of Asia in the early half of the 20th Century for aquaculture production. During the period from the 1940s to the 1960s, Pacific oyster began appearing outside of oyster farms and is now found throughout the Strait of Georgia. Having been introduced to BC after 1900, Pacific oyster shell post-dates 1846 and as faunal material is not considered archaeological.



Photo 3. A Pile of Pacific Oyster Shell along the Shoreline in the Southeastern portion of the Subject Property. Photo: P1000036.

5.3 An Area Along the Shoreline Between the Access Road and a Small Hill

Search of the subject property included an area in the south-central portion of the property along the shoreline between a dirt access road to the south and a small hill to the north. This area included some older buildings that are in the process of being renovated. These buildings are within the recorded boundary of s.18 . A search around and under the buildings, did not result in the identification of damaged archaeological materials or ground alteration damaging the shell midden.

On the slope of the small hill directly behind and to the north of these buildings is a large boulder that has a small cavity underneath it. A search of this cavity identified the presence of a single osteological specimen. The bone appears to be old, but was not removed from under the rock for further identification. It is possibly human and could therefore

represent a rock shelter burial. Although the building being renovated is approximately 5 m away, the rock does not display signs of recent disturbance.



Photo 4. Possible Rock Shelter Containing a Single Osteological Specimen. Photo: P1000038.

5.4 An Area in the Southwest Portion of the Subject Property

The search included an area in the southwest portion of the subject property; in the corner where the access road comes down from the north and splits east to west along the shoreline (see Figure 5). This area straddles the northern recorded boundary of **s.18** and includes a recent deck structure with a yurt on top. A search around the base of the structure identified ground alteration that included O and A horizon soils comprising a mix of sod and topsoil. The mixed soils do not contain blobs of black greasy soil mixed with shell, fire-cracked rock or shell that would indicate shell midden from a disturbed context.

Mixed in with the disturbed soils was household debris including: a saw-cut mammal long bone, plastics, and various metal fragments and a heavy concentration of 20th Century building material debris including: modern wire-drawn nails, glass, fragments of lumber and pieces of old gypsum board (see Photo 5). The gypsum board fragments are from medium to very small size. These very small pieces of gypsum board could be confused with shell fragments.



Photo 5. Recent Ground Alteration in the Southwest Portion of the Subject Property Showing Ground Alteration and Historic Debris. Photo: P1000041.

5.5 An Area on the South Slope of a Small Hill in the South-Central Portion of the Subject Property

The search included an area in the south-central portion of the subject property along the south face of a small hill (see Figure 5). This area also straddles the northern recorded boundary of **s.18**. The area has been partially leveled and the northern slope up to the top of the hill partially stripped down to bedrock (see Figure 5 and Photo 6).

A systematic search of the area did identify a small concentration of moderately crushed shell on the ground surface, including on top of vegetation, outside of the recorded boundary of **s.18**. This shell was without any black greasy soil adhering to it or mixed in the ground around the shell with fire-cracked rock. Given the lack of disturbed or redeposited midden association and the fact that it appears to have been recently deposited, this shell is interpreted as non-archaeological.

The bulldozed portion of the south slope of the hill directly above the possible rock shelter burial noted in Section 5.3 is set back 5-10 m from the edge and has not damaged the area immediately above the rock.



Photo 6. South Slope of the Small Hill Displaying Recent Levelling. Photo: P1000043.

5.6 Top of a Small Hill in the South-Central Portion of the Subject Property

The search included the top of a small hill in the south-central portion of the subject property (see Figure 5). This area is outside of the recorded boundary of **s.18**. The area has been partially levelled and grubbed and contains whole and medium crushed shell (see Photo 7). Among the shell is a number of whole and large fragments of modern Pacific oyster shell (*Crassostrea gigas*) (see Section 5.2). None of the shell observed had black greasy soil adhering to any of the shell nor was black greasy soil observed in the area; either on the surface or in soil exposures (see Photo 7). There is topsoil and A horizon organics mixed in with some of the shell, but this is likely as a result of the ground alteration and grubbing activities.

The identification of modern, imported Pacific oyster combined with the absence of any black greasy soil indicating midden support an interpretation that this modern shell and not archaeological shell midden.



Photo 7. Recent Shell at the Top of a Small Hill in the South-Central Portion of the Study Area. Photo: P1000045.

6. Boundary of Archaeological Site ^{s.18}

This report recommends the Archaeology Branch revise the boundary of ^{s.18} The site boundary recording of 204 m long by 16 m back from the shoreline by ^{s.22} in 1976 seems to be appropriate for the subject property. No midden was identified in the disturbed soil in the area of the yurt construction or along the south slope of the small hill in the south-central portion of the subject property or underneath the building structures being renovated on the north side of the access road running parallel to the shoreline. Additionally, ^{s.22} 1995 report seems to be the basis for the current boundary of ^{s.18} but there is nothing in his report to substantiate the increased size from ^{s.22} ^{s.22} site dimensions.

Page 17 of 20 to/à Page 18 of 20

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.18

7. Conclusion

According to the Provincial Heritage Registry, archaeological site **s.18** has been previously recorded on **s.22** **s.22** . GROUP 1, NEW WESTMINSTER DISTRICT, PID **s.22** . As a result of the search under warrant conducted by Natural Resource Officers CARROLL, FISHER, SCOTT and SLOOS on March 18, 2021, no exhibits of damage to archaeological site **s.18** were identified.

NRO FISHER will additionally recommend to the Archaeology Branch revision of the boundary of **s.18** based on observations during the search and interpretation of records in the Provincial Heritage Registry.

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8. References Cited

s.22

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