

Sep 16 - North to Port McNeill

Yesterday was a "chore" day in and around Campbell River. We had some things that needed attention before we headed north today.

We broke camp early this morning, hit Save-on Foods for some supplies, then turned north. The first rest stop we saw overlooked a lake but the picnic tables were in the shade. Brrr, not warm enough yet. We continued on and found another rest area in the sunshine. Yes!, time for a coffee!



We must have seen a million trees, maybe a couple of million, but not much else until we pulled into Alder Bay RV Park, just east of Port McNeill.



I was quite content not to do any more driving today but when Jen suggested a brew at Telegraph Cove, 12 kms east, I perked right up!

On the way to Telegraph Cove, we passed this large log sorting operation, with an active railroad.



WFP Western Forest Products Inc. Englewood Forest Operation

Welcome to Beaver Cove, the terminus of the Western Forest Products Nimpkish Valley logging railroad. The railway extends approximately 95 km to the southern end of the Nimpkish Valley. The railway's construction began around 1920 and continued south of Nimpkish Lake in the 1940's.

What happens at the dryland sort?

Logs arrive at the sort yard by rail or truck and are off-loaded with log loaders capable of carrying 60 tons of logs.

Pre-designated sample loads are taken to a government scaling area on the sort yard to determine stumpage payment to the province. All other loads are spread in rows where log graders mark logs for specific sorts. Up to fifty log sorts are set up for specific mills or customers according to species, size, quality, and value. The primary species harvested are western hemlock, amabilis fir, Douglas fir, western red cedar, and yellow cedar.

After the logs are graded, tracked log loaders set logs of similar sorts into small piles for pickup by wheeled front-end loaders.

The logs are then taken to strapping bunks where metal straps are applied to keep the bundle together. The bundles are weighed and put into the water for booming. Bundles of the same sort are grouped together to make a raft (boom) measuring 21 metres wide by 121 metres long. When twelve booms are accumulated, they are towed by tugboat to the appropriate mills.

Most of the logs sorted at Beaver Cove are shipped to Western Forest Products mills on the south coast of British Columbia to produce lumber, as well as chips for pulp and paper. Some logs are shipped by truck to local customers.

The coarse wood debris generated at the log sort is used to make chips and hog fuel at the local chipping plant next to the dryland sort. The fine debris is composted along with waste from a local fish processing plant to make consumer garden soil amendment products. This reduces the need for land filling and burning of debris.

Here we are approaching Telegraph Cove. This looks interesting!



We drove past a full parking lot over to the campground then down to the waterfront. Paid parking



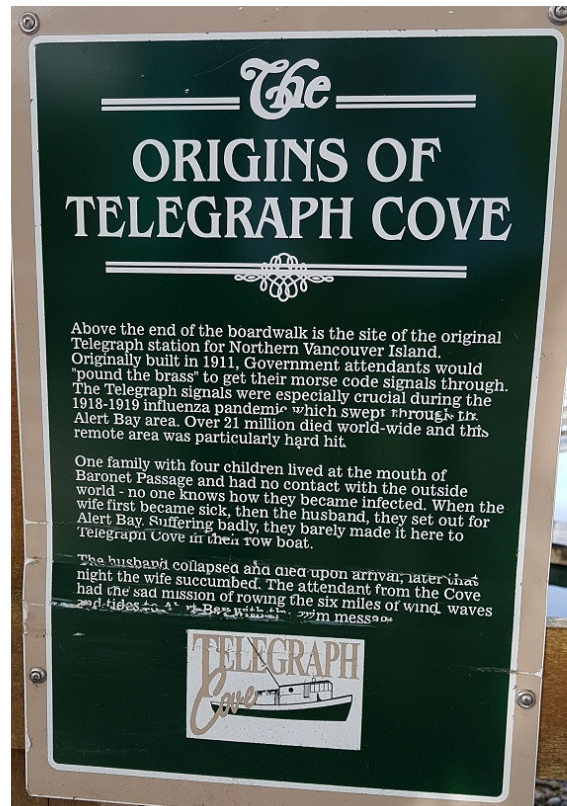
We decided to go back to the main lodge area and park there.



We began our walk clockwise heading to the pub - it's beside the restaurant in the large building straight ahead.




There's a lot of history in these boards.



The
**SHARPE
HOUSE**

This house was built by Jim Sharpe in the 1930's, when he left a flourishing boat shop and marine ways in Alert Bay to help his brother-in-law, Marmaduke Wastell with the fledgling sawmill at Telegraph Cove. He was the mill's millwright and through his ingenuity made wooden pulleys, friction drives, and the two-wheeled lumber carts you see on the boardwalk. Because of the isolation of Telegraph Cove and replacement parts coming from Vancouver by boat, Jim was a valuable person to have living at the Cove in the early days.




Still in bloom!




The
**FARRANT
HOUSE**

Marvin Farrant came to Telegraph Cove as a boy of ten in 1944. His dad, Charlie was a steam engineer for the sawmill, but Charlie's most important asset was his family of five kids, who were needed to bolster the attendance of the one room school, which required a minimum of six students to qualify for a teacher.

Marvin left home in the early 50's, working at various jobs from Texada Island to Toronto. He returned to the 'Cove in 1961 with his new bride, Evelyn. They built the house on the boardwalk, and lived here for 42 years. They had two boys, Brian and Barry.

Marvin worked in the sawmill, and Evelyn was the secretary at Cheslakees School in Port McNeill. They spent their early years of retirement at the 'Cove as grounds keepers, Evelyn tending the flower beds, and Marvin grooming the grass.






The

BUNKHOUSE


The first bunkhouse on this site featured an oil drum for heat. The outhouse was a plank over the water on the edge of the boardwalk. Cold draughts coming in from the Cove kept visits to a minimum. Finally, infrequent showers were taken next to the steam boiler in the sawmill. In 1942, this new bunkhouse was erected. With a flush toilet, furnace and shower, it was hailed as a virtual palace by grateful employees.



The

WW II TELEGRAPH LINE


The onset of hostilities in 1942 forced the construction of a new, more secure telegraph line to the North Island. This second line was hung between posts from Campbell River to Port Hardy. The main line passed through the campground. Relay watchmen walked the line on a daily patrol to protect against enemy sabotage.



The

AIR FORCE MESS HALL


The Air Force conscripted the mill and manned the machinery with airmen in order to cut lumber to help build bases up the coast in Port Hardy, Coal Harbour and Bella Bella. After the war, the local mill used this building as its cookhouse. In the 50s, this building doubled as the community hall. Friday night was 'Movie Night', with the Old Union Steamship Line ferrying in the features. Saturday night the old pilings were shaking as the local community held frontier dances until the wee hours.




The

FLOATING HOSPITAL

Originally a floating hospital at O'Brien Bay off Simoon Sound, it was under tow to Fender Harbour on the Sechart Peninsula when a sou'easter blew up and this building slipped off the barge. The year was 1930 and Fred Westell was short of cash, but he did need accommodation for his partner, Alec McDonald. So Fred towed the hospital into the Cove with 'The Mary W', the company boat. It was jacked up into its present position. The small addition to your right was added later. Under this boardwalk at 6 a.m. on November 15, 1936 a cougar trapped the steam engineer's collie dog. The sounds of yelping dog and growls of the cougar caused Alec McDonald and Al Gauthier to come on the run. They jumped on to the beach, but had no weapons. In desperation, they began to throw stones at the mountain lion. Incredibly, they did succeed in killing the cougar, almost burying it under the barrage of stones. The dog survived with a few nasty scars to show for the ordeal. The government was offering a \$25 00 bounty for cougar pelts at the time, a hefty sum in 1936. However, neither Al nor Alec could collect. It seems you needed a cougar hunting permit to qualify for the bounty, something that neither had previously had any use for.



We arrived at the end of the boardwalk and a wedding that was about to begin.



We turned around and headed to the pub, only to find it closed because of the wedding. Ahhh, but the restaurant is still open, so we headed there.



TELEGRAPH COVE

TELEGRAPH COVE RESORTS LTD.

The Fishes

The ocean under the dock of Telegraph Cove is home to both native and migrating creatures. Huge octopus, some over 10 feet in diameter, live within a fishing line of where you stand. Masses of wild Salmon migrate down the Coast of Vancouver Island, just past our door. The fish pass through a narrow gap of water that concentrates the numbers into mountainous schools of delectable Salmon, tasty for Killer Whales and humans alike.

The Old
SALTERY
Pub

Sitting outside in the glorious sunshine on this September day, we enjoyed some wings and a Killer Whale Pale Ale or two.



Walking back to where we started, it's hard to imagine what life was like back in the good old days.





For more information, check out www.hellobc.com/telegraph-cove/culture-history.aspx and be sure to add Telegraph Cove to your list of places to visit.

Tomorrow's forecast is for rain so you'll have to wait and see what we get up to.