



Marine Conservation Society

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# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Changes for the better in Tod Inlet**

*Central Saanich, B.C.*—What do jellyfish, salmon and underwater debris have in common?

Mapping of the seabed of Tod Inlet (SNIDØEL) shows that it is littered with numerous bits of debris—metal, cement and brick from the old cement factory (now Butchart Gardens) as well as sunken derelict boats. Moon jellyfish love places like this, where there are low oxygen levels and shaded surfaces where the polyps (young jellies) can grow. Good news for moon jellyfish, which can be found in large numbers in the Inlet, especially during the summer. Bad news for the salmon, because the jellyfish eat large quantities of plankton, meaning less is available for the small fish that would otherwise feed the salmon. (And there are few species that like eating jellyfish.)

SeaChange Marine Conservation Society, in partnership with the Tsartlip First Nation and BC Parks, is beginning a project to remove the underwater debris. An underwater survey last summer provided information that will guide decisions on the best approach to removing the debris, some of it quite large. This project is funded in part through a grant from the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and the Pacific Salmon Foundation. Removing debris from the seabed will increase habitat and food supplies for the marine life in the Inlet.

This clean-up will benefit boaters by removing some navigational hazards. Boaters are asked to keep well clear of the barges and cranes that will be working in the Inlet over the next couple of months, and people visiting the Provincial Park at Tod Inlet should avoid the SeaChange dock area and debris piles next to the Nature Float. While the debris is being

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removed from the site, a monitor will be available to answer questions and ensure the safety of Park visitors.

The debris removal work is part of a larger restoration project. Visitors to the area will have seen crews removing invasive species and replanting sites with the native species once found here. The next stage will be a beach restoration project. Some of the contaminated backshore will be removed, and replaced with clean sand and gravel along the shore in front of the signboard—providing a healthy base for plants to grow. This work will provide erosion protection from rising sea levels, and gives one example of how individual homeowners can use these “softshore” techniques to protect their foreshore areas in low wave energy areas without resorting to damaging methods such as rock walls along the waterfront.

To learn more, check out the SeaChange website at [www.seachangesociety.com](http://www.seachangesociety.com). Or, head out for a walk down to the Inlet to watch the progress in action.

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### **Backgrounder: Tod Inlet Beach Enhancement Project 2017**

**Who:** The lead proponent is SeaChange Marine Conservation Society (a not-for-profit society with a focus on marine conservation, education and restoration ([www.seachangesociety.com](http://www.seachangesociety.com)))

**Where:** Tod Inlet Beach is in Gowlland-Tod Provincial Park. It is the site of the marine division of the Vancouver Portland Cement Company’s former cement manufacturing facility that operated from 1906 –1921. Subsequently there were other industrial ventures at the same site including clay brick and tile manufacturing. The area was highly valued by the Saanich (W̱SÁNEĆ) First Nations for shellfish and fish harvesting.

The Tod Inlet beach area is a heavily used part of the Gowlland-Tod Park system. There are thousands of visits per year by walk-ins as well as hundreds of boats that anchor or use the public dock. There is interpretive signage and a Nature Float operated by SeaChange Marine Conservation Society.

**Why:** The beach and Inlet are polluted by past industrial activities, as well as contaminants that formerly washed out from the Hartland landfill. The beach foreshore is comprised of old fill that has elevated levels of heavy metals within it. The seabed of Tod Inlet has large chunks of metal and concrete, as well as sunken vessels. Removing sources of contamination will increase the chances of recreating healthy natural habitats on land and in the water.

**What and how:**

**Invasives removal and replanting:** Crews have removed large quantities of invasive plants, such as blackberry. They are replanting the area with native species such as willow, flowering red currant and maple.

**Underwater debris removal:** An underwater survey in summer 2016 mapped the location of the debris. In January–February 2017, cranes and divers will remove the debris, bring it to shore on barges, and place it on the land. It will then be disposed of appropriately.

**Beach enhancement:** Currently, the material for the beach comes from the backshore, which is old fill that is contaminated by heavy metals. The first stage of this project was completed in 2015 with the creation of a conceptual design by SNC Lavalin. The second stage included sampling and testing the foreshore and subtidal sediments for contaminants resulting from the cement manufacturing operations and the leachate run-off from the CRD Hartland Landfill until the early 1990's. Next steps are:

- The upper beach/backshore area will have the historical 'fill' removed and stockpiled until contaminant analyses determines its disposal strategy.
- Clean, washed gravel and sand sized to engineered specifications will be transported to Tod Inlet by barge.
- A conveyor will unload beach enhancement material onto the beach area as per engineered design, with final placement by loader/excavator on shore to surveyed topographical levels.

This project is planned to occur between February 8 -15<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Planning and implementation includes the following: Watershed Ecological Services Ltd., SNC Lavalin, Ryzuk Geotechnical Ltd., SLR Consulting (Canada), Lehigh Hanson Materials Ltd., All-Terra Spider Excavating Ltd. Oversight is provided by BC Parks and DFO. Tsartlip, Tsawout and Tseycum First Nations have all expressed support.