

Neck Point, Hammond Bay and Pipers Lagoon

Resource Site

Hammond Bay area was an important seasonal resource site for the Snuneymuxw. In the early spring and summer months the Elders recall moving here from their winter villages at Departure Bay and Nanaimo Harbour to fish and gather shellfish. The first fish to arrive here was herring in early March. Herring and herring roe were harvested and smoked here. Herring runs were large and brought other fish such as salmon. Blue backs, as young coho were known, springs and cod arrived shortly after the herring appeared. Black ducks were also plentiful feeding off the herring and shellfish. Shellfish such as butter clams and little neck clams were abundant on the beaches. Large pits were built here to steam the clams. Plant foods of various types were also found here. Berries were plentiful. Seaweed was gathered and dried on the rocks. Behind the bay and on Neck Point, deer was hunted in the clearings. Snuneymuxw hunters came here to hunt deer as late as the 1960's. Several hunting trails crisscrossed the region linking Brannen Lake.

Seasonal camp

Season camps were spread out throughout this area but by the 1930's the Snuneymuxw remember small cabins on Shack Island and on both sides of a small creek that fed into Hammond Bay. This small creek has an Indian name, *xwtaluwnuc* meaning "a small branch of a river." The Snuneymuxw were regular visitors to this site until the late 1950's. The Elders also mention a fresh water spring that is located on the beach at Pipers Lagoon.

Weather Forecasting Rock

There is a large rock at Hammond Bay that according to Snuneymuxw legend controls the weather. This rock is the face of a man that was transformed to rock by Haals. The name for this man or location is *culuxw*, meaning "straight, high bluff." This rock has the ability to change the weather. As the story goes, if one puts water into the eye of the face, the wind will blow north. If water is put into the other eye the wind will blow you home to Departure Bay. *There is story about this rock recorded by Jenness.*

Lookout

Neck Point is an important lookout site for the Snuneymuxw during times of warfare. From this point the large ocean going canoes from the north could be seen for many miles out in the Strait. A young man was posted here to keep watch. Once he saw these canoes he would run the length of the beach back to warn the village at Departure Bay. Neck Point was one of a series of important lookout sites. It was linked to lookouts at Taylor Beach and Jack Point.