Pacific Rim
National Park Reserve

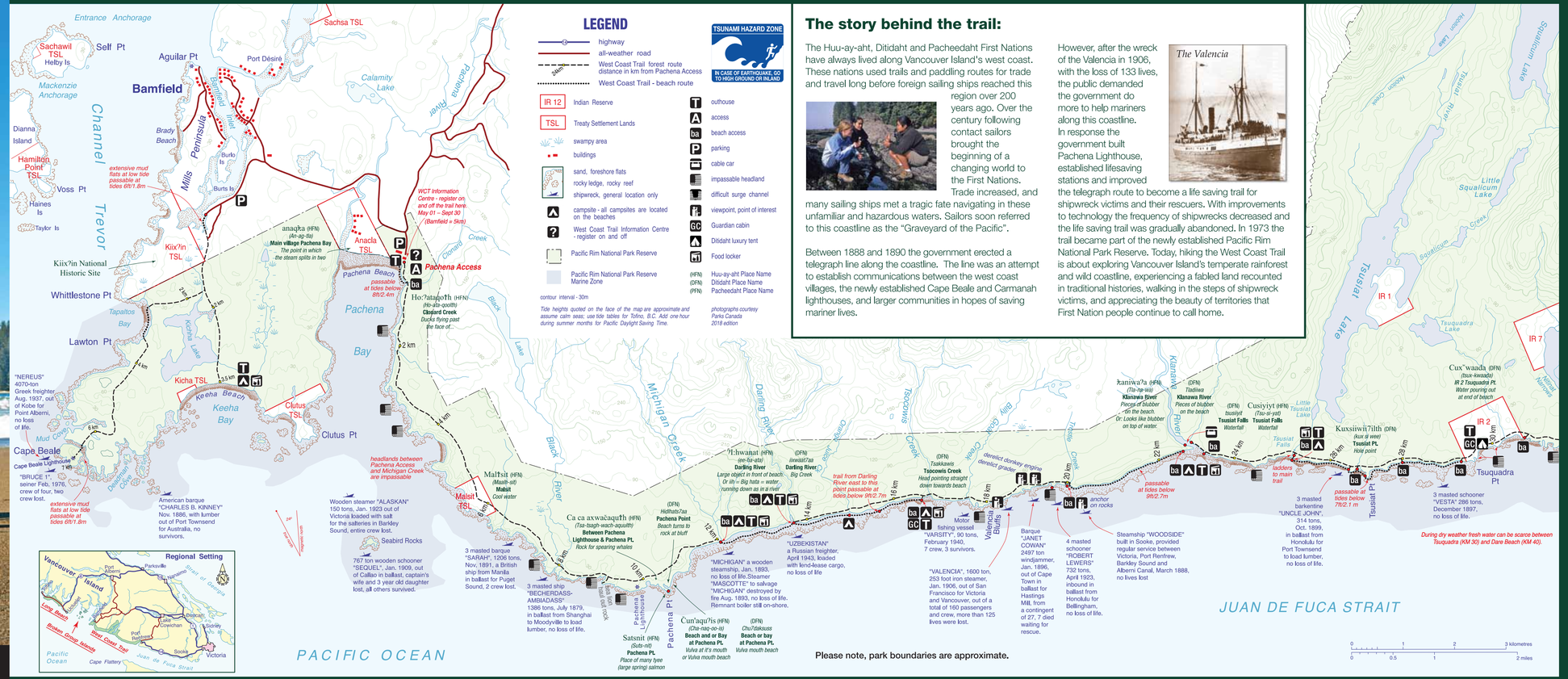
West Coast Trail Map

Bamfield to Port Renfrew, Vancouver Island

The West Coast Trail is recommended for experienced backpackers only.

Parks Canada Parcs Canada

Canada



LEGEND

- highway
- all-weather road
- West Coast Trail forest route (Sand) distance in km from Pachena Access
- West Coast Trail - beach route
- IR 12 Indian Reserve
- TSL Treaty Settlement Lands
- swampy area
- buildings
- sand, foreshore flats
- rocky ledge, rocky reef
- shipweck, general location only
- campsite - all campsites are located on the beaches
- West Coast Trail Information Centre - register on and off
- Pacific Rim National Park Reserve
- Pacific Rim National Park Reserve Marine Zone
- outhouse
- access
- beach access
- parking
- cable car
- impassable headland
- difficult surge channel
- viewpoint, point of interest
- Guardian cabin
- Ditidaht luxury tent
- Food locker
- (HFN) Huu-ay-aht Place Name
- (DFN) Ditidaht Place Name
- (PFN) Pacheedaht Place Name

contour interval - 30m

Tide heights quoted on the face of the map are approximate and assume calm seas; use tide tables for Tofino, B.C. Add one hour during summer months for Pacific Daylight Saving Time.

TSUNAMI HAZARD ZONE
IN CASE OF EARTHQUAKE, GO TO HIGH GROUND OR INLAND

photographs courtesy Parks Canada 2018 edition

The story behind the trail:

The Huu-ay-aht, Ditidaht and Pacheedaht First Nations have always lived along Vancouver Island's west coast. These nations used trails and paddling routes for trade and travel long before foreign sailing ships reached this region over 200 years ago. Over the century following contact sailors brought the beginning of a changing world to the First Nations. Trade increased, and many sailing ships met a tragic fate navigating in these unfamiliar and hazardous waters. Sailors soon referred to this coastline as the "Graveyard of the Pacific".

Between 1888 and 1890 the government erected a telegraph line along the coastline. The line was an attempt to establish communications between the west coast villages, the newly established Cape Beale and Carmanah lighthouses, and larger communities in hopes of saving mariner lives.

However, after the wreck of the Valencia in 1906, with the loss of 133 lives, the public demanded the government do more to help mariners along this coastline. In response the government built Pachena Lighthouse, established lifesaving stations and improved the telegraph route to become a life saving trail for shipwreck victims and their rescuers. With improvements to technology the frequency of shipwrecks decreased and the life saving trail was gradually abandoned. In 1973 the trail became part of the newly established Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. Today, hiking the West Coast Trail is about exploring Vancouver Island's temperate rainforest and wild coastline, experiencing a fabled land recounted in traditional histories, walking in the steps of shipwreck victims, and appreciating the beauty of territories that First Nation people continue to call home.

The Valencia

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve

WEST COAST TRAIL

The West Coast Trail (WCT) is one of the three units of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve (PRNPR), administered by Parks Canada. PRNPR protects and presents the coastal temperate rainforest, near shore waters and cultural heritage of Vancouver Island's west coast as part of Canada's national park system.

WEST COAST TRAIL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The WCT is open from May 1 to September 30. The trail is closed October 1 to April 30 due to frequent and prolonged periods of heavy rain, strong winds, high tides, large waves and short days. The national park superintendent may close the WCT at any time to address public safety, environmental or operational concerns. Due to the popularity of the West Coast Trail we suggest that you make your reservation as early as possible. Reservations are typically made available through our reservation system in early January.

Reservations can be made:

Online: **reservation.pc.gc.ca**

Phone: **1-877-737-3783** (Canada and USA)
1-519-826-5391 (International)

Standby: The WCT is 100% reservable and there is no standby list at the trailheads. All visitors to Pacific Rim National Park Reserve are required to have a valid national park entry pass while visiting the national park reserve. Hikers on the WCT are required to have a valid WCT Overnight Use Permit in addition to a valid national park entry pass.

Entrance and exit points: Pachena Bay, Nitinaht Village, and Gordon River. Entrance or exit at any other point is not permitted unless an evacuation is required.

Ferry crossings are operated throughout the hiking season at Gordon River and Nitinaht Narrows (fees apply). If applicable, the water taxi on Nitinaht Lake can take you from Nitinaht Village to Nihitinaht Narrows (fees apply).

Maximum group size: 10 hikers

Pets and firearms are prohibited on the WCT

Contacting a commercial operator: please visit http://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/pacificrim/activ/activ13

For essential planning information access our preparation guide at:
http://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/pacificrim/visit/brochures or call 1-250-726-3500 all year long.
During the hiking season call 1-250-647-5434 to reach the Gordon River trailhead or 1-250-728-3234 to reach the Pachena Bay trailhead.

For information on how to make a reservation for a school, non-profit group or commercial operator please call 1-250-726-3500.

Email: pacriminfo@pc.gc.ca

Website: www.pc.gc.ca/pacificrim

Park Emergencies: 1-250-726-3604

PROTECTING, PRESENTING AND PRESERVING

Vancouver Island's west coast has provided abundant resources to the Huu-ay-aht, Ditidaht and Pacheedaht First Nations, which supports and sustains their social, cultural and economic livelihood. For these three First Nations the West Coast Trail is home, an area they have occupied since time immemorial. These nations collaborate with Parks Canada illustrating the philosophy of "Hish uk tsa wak" meaning "all is one" along with "Iisaak" meaning "respect". The First Nations Guardians encourage visitors to understand this philosophy by sharing their nation's culture and history.

Parks Canada and the First Nations Guardians work towards a common goal of protecting and presenting the natural and cultural history of the region. We need you to help us achieve this goal. Respectful behavior by hikers will lead to a safe and rewarding experience and contribute to a healthy ecosystem for present and future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

BACKCOUNTRY ETIQUETTE

- Respect other hikers and protect the quality of their experience.
- Use outhouses when possible: human wastes outside outhouses must be buried in a 20 cm (7 inch) hole a minimum of 30 m (100 feet) from waterways and trails. Deposit toilet paper in the next outhouse or burn it. Pack out hygiene products.
- Use a stove: minimize fires.
- Small driftwood fires are permitted below the high tide-line on beaches: fires are not permitted in the forest.
- Camp on the beach at designated campsites: the forest environment is sensitive to damage.
- Wash dishes and bathe in the ocean: never contaminate fresh water sources.
- Pack it in: pack it out (orange peels, food packaging, tarp ropes, wet clothes etc).
- Indian Reserves and private property: stay on the main trail and obey signs.

Under the Canada National Park Act, it is illegal to collect, remove, or damage, any natural and cultural resource within the national park (e.g. marine life, shells, fossils, artifacts, and plants).

SAFETY

The West Coast Trail is for hikers who are:

- able to walk long distances through rough terrain with a heavy pack;
- prepared to have an isolated wilderness experience and adhere to low impact back country camping policies.

The West Coast Trail should not be considered by:

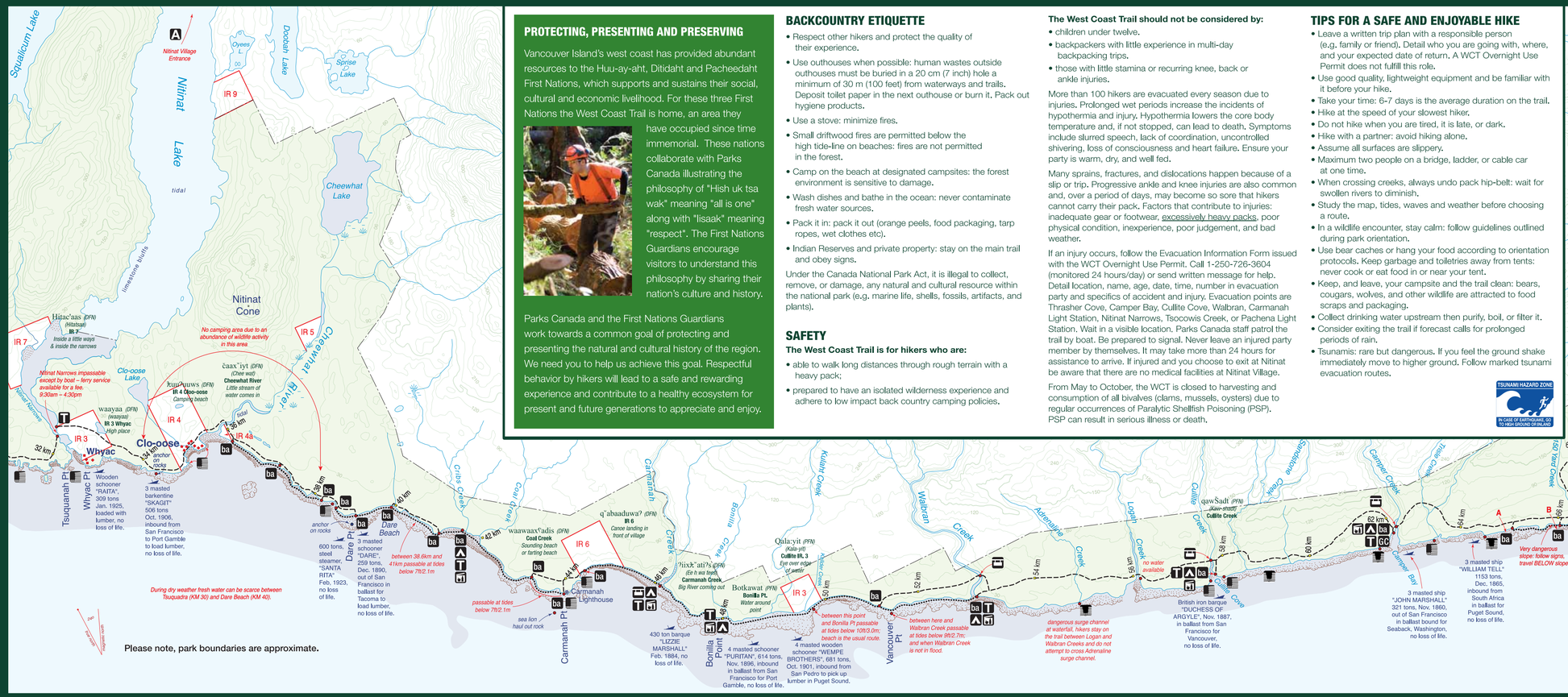
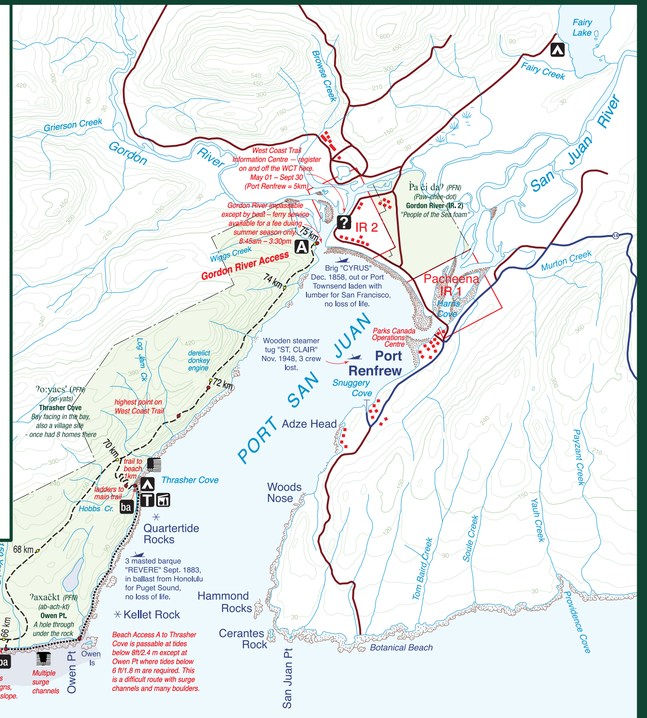
- children under twelve,
- backpackers with little experience in multi-day backpacking trips,
- those with little stamina or recurring knee, back or ankle injuries.

More than 100 hikers are evacuated every season due to injuries. Prolonged wet periods increase the incidents of hypothermia and injury. Hypothermia lowers the core body temperature and, if not stopped, can lead to death. Symptoms include slurred speech, lack of coordination, uncontrolled shivering, loss of consciousness and heart failure. Ensure your party is warm, dry, and well fed.

Many sprains, fractures, and dislocations happen because of a slip or trip. Progressive ankle and knee injuries are also common and, over a period of days, may become so sore that hikers cannot carry their pack. Factors that contribute to injuries: inadequate gear or footwear, excessively heavy packs, poor physical condition, inexperience, poor judgement, and bad weather.

If an injury occurs, follow the Evacuation Information Form issued with the WCT Overnight Use Permit. Call 1-250-726-3604 (monitored 24 hours/day) or send written message for help. Detail location, name, age, date, time, number in evacuation party and specifics of accident and injury. Evacuation points are Thrasher Cove, Camper Bay, Cullite Cove, Walbran, Carmanah Light Station, Nitinat Narrows, Tsocowis Creek, or Pachena Light Station. Wait in a visible location. Parks Canada staff patrol the trail by boat. Be prepared to signal. Never leave an injured party member by themselves. It may take more than 24 hours for assistance to arrive. If injured and you choose to exit at Nitinat be aware that there are no medical facilities at Nitinat Village.

From May to October, the WCT is closed to harvesting and consumption of all bivalves (clams, mussels, oysters) due to regular occurrences of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP). PSP can result in serious illness or death.

TIPS FOR A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE HIKE

- Leave a written trip plan with a responsible person (e.g. family or friend). Detail who you are going with, where, and your expected date of return. A WCT Overnight Use Permit does not fulfill this role.
- Use good quality, lightweight equipment and be familiar with it before your hike.
- Take your time: 6-7 days is the average duration on the trail.
- Hike at the speed of your slowest hiker.
- Do not hike when you are tired, it is late, or dark.
- Hike with a partner: avoid hiking alone.
- Assume all surfaces are slippery.
- Maximum two people on a bridge, ladder, or cable car at one time.
- When crossing creeks, always undo pack hip-belt: wait for swollen rivers to diminish.
- Study the map, tides, waves and weather before choosing a route.
- In a wildlife encounter, stay calm: follow guidelines outlined during park orientation.
- Use bear caches or hang your food according to orientation protocols. Keep garbage and toiletries away from tents: never cook or eat food in or near your tent.
- Keep, and leave, your campsite and the trail clean: bears, cougars, wolves, and other wildlife are attracted to food scraps and packaging.
- Collect drinking water upstream then purify, boil, or filter it.
- Consider exiting the trail if forecast calls for prolonged periods of rain.
- Tsunamis: rare but dangerous. If you feel the ground shake immediately move to higher ground. Follow marked tsunami evacuation routes.