



Final Portal Unveiled on Newcastle Island

For Immediate Release

March 13th, 2009- The final of the three 'Portals to Our Heritage' was unveiled on Newcastle Island Provincial Park today. The installation completes the series of public art pieces created by local First Nation artists. Snuneymuxw Chief Wyse and Mayor Ruttan spoke at the event. The initiative involved the collaborative efforts of the Snuneymuxw, Ministry of Environment; BC Parks and Protected Areas, and the City of Nanaimo as a part of the 2008 Cultural Capitals of Canada program.

The portals share the legends and mark the significance of the traditional sites in which they are located. The third portal was unveiled on the island in the bay known to the Snuneymuxw as 'Qulastun' meaning 'backwards bay facing wrong way.' The portal consists of an intimate semicircle of cedar benches carved with various native designs, where people can gather to hear the stories and history of the Snuneymuxw. Visitors to the park will find the site directly to the right of the ferry dock as they arrive on shore.

The other portal sites are Departure Bay and Jack Point. The portals and the ability to experience a canoe journey between them will provide anchors for the Snuneymuxw and other First Nations, helping to preserve their cultural practices and traditional knowledge. The community of Nanaimo and all who visit will also be enriched by that knowledge, deepening a respectful relationship with our First Nation's neighbours.

For more information about the 'Portals to Our Heritage' project please contact Suzanne Samborski, Senior Manager Recreation and Culture Services 250 755 7518.

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