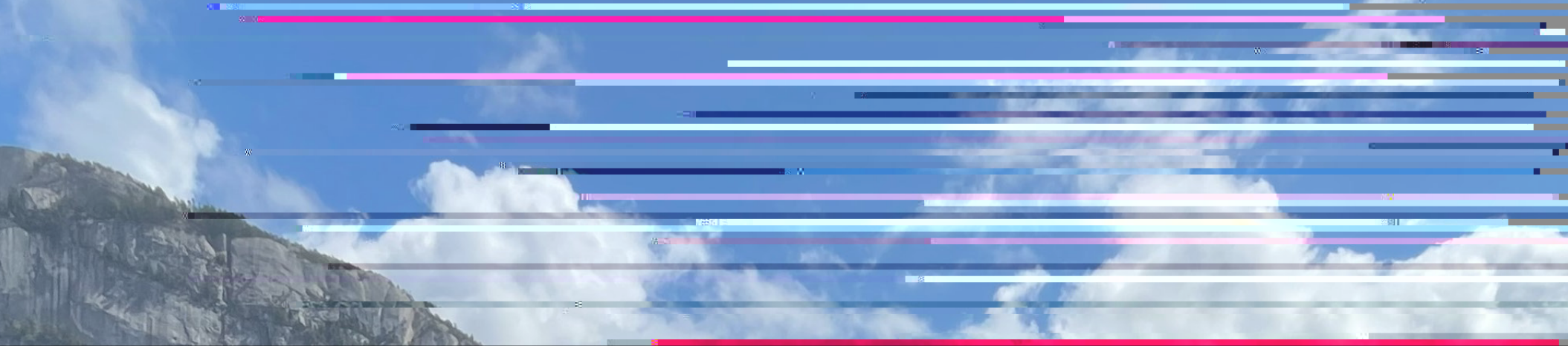


# Cultural Restoration

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Community visions collaborate to reclaim cherished landscape.



**LOCATED AT THE CONFLUENCE** of mountains and ocean, Squamish, B.C. is surrounded by a breathtaking backdrop in an area renowned for its trails, adventure sports, and diverse wildlife populations. Coupled with the thriving art and culture scene, Squamish is growing.

Starting in the 1960s, a mercury cell chlor-alkali plant operated on the Oceanfront Peninsula just south of downtown Squamish. It produced caustic soda, hydrochloric acid, and chlorine for the pulp and paper industry. The historical plant operations resulted in the release and deposition of mercury contamination from the plant's chemical manufacturing processes. After the plant ceased operations in the 1990s, the province of British Columbia for residential use issued in 2005 for one-third of the land. An Approval-in-Principle was issued for the remaining lands and included long-term monitoring of the site.

Until 2004, the front community of Squamish who had limited direct local access to Howe Sound. But in 2004, the lands were transferred to the District of Squamish and a master plan for the redevelopment of the plant area was created.

STANTEC DIVER PREPARING FOR  
SEDIMENT SAMPLING IN HOWE SOUND.  
PHOTO CREDIT: CONOR MCCRACKEN



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One of the primary keys to success was to follow a risk assessment targets. Another key to success was the lifting of the Remediation Order and therefore property redevelopment.

One of the major remediation focuses was to eliminate exposure pathways of human and ecological receptors to mercury in the environment. Tracking, predicting, and assessing the risks of the various forms of insights for data collection and evaluation.

The Stantec team of toxicologists, scientists, and engineers worked closely to investigate the mercury distribution and behaviour, remediating the residual mercury contamination through detailed risk assessment using risk mitigation and robust environmental management

plans. Stantec experts collaborated with external scientists and regulatory acceptable limits based on de novo toxicity reference values, while coordinating with international laboratories to ensure compliance and effectiveness. Stantec's team completed investigations, risk assessment, and obtained a permit for a recreation center and brewery. Additionally, Stantec completed the risk assessment that led to the opening of the Sp'akw'us Feather Park.

The park was envisioned by the community and created in collaboration with countless community members including the Squamish Nation elders, youth, and cultural knowledge holders. Collaboration and support from Squamish Nation and Skwxw̓ú7shən and ongoing presence as stewards of this territory.

Collaboration with the project ethnobotanist and the Squamish Nation was

pivotal to the ecological and cultural restoration of Sp'akw'us Feather Park. This included the construction of a root garden to pay respect to the Indigenous traditional agricultural practices, designed to capture tidal debris that nourishes perennial roots for consumption, which both enhances environmental sustainability and serves to preserve and share the cultural practices of the region. The park is a genuine step in acknowledging Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw as stewards of the land through the presence of their culture, knowledge, and teachings woven into the selection of artworks, design of the playground, cultural gardens, and plantings with the community at large.

The park also included input from the adventure sports community, environmental groups, artists, trail societies, as well as much public input over the years. As a result, the park boasts two beaches and watersport launch sites, a restored saltwater marsh bench, open lawn space for community festivals and events, washrooms, an Indigenous designed and themed playground, public art from local indigenous and non-indigenous artists, slacklines and more.

Sp'akw'us Feather Park stands as a generous gift to the community of

Going forward, Stantec continues to support Matthews West with pursuing Cer-  
es, including with environmental site investigations, human health ecological  
eas, contract administration, environmental monitoring. The next redevelop-  
ment phases include site preparation, construction, and landscaping. The next redevelop-  
ment phases include site preparation, construction, and landscaping.

Although Matthews West, the Squamish Nation, and the District of Squamish have come a long way on the project, redevelopment continues. However, it is evident that the ongoing transformation is the tangible culmination of stakeholders including landowners, municipal government, provincial government, and the Squamish Nation productively working together to achieve a shared vision.

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**Stantec**