

Vanier Boat Launch 2023

Site Information and Background:

General Information:

Name: Vanier Boat Launch

Location: 1600-1606 Whyte Ave, Vancouver, BC V6J 3J9

Year of Identification: 2023

Responsible Authority: Vancouver board of parks and recreation

Monitoring Points: See figure 1 and 2 for a map of the sampling locations and the zone of influence

Waterbody Information:

Waterbody type: Marine environment, coastal salt marsh, sheltered fjord

Watershed: See figure 3 for a map of the watershed

Annual Precipitation for Watershed (mm): 253mm

Surrounding Land Use:

- Industrial
- Residential
- Recreational
- Parkland
- Urban

The Vanier Park boat launch is located on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations. It is located at the mouth of the False Creek inlet.

False Creek, known as səh' aʔqw (Sen' ákw) in Halkomelem, one of the traditional languages of the Coast Salish Peoples, translates to “the place inside the head of False Creek.” Since time immemorial, False Creek has been an important gathering place for the Xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. The protected, shallow waters offered an optimal location for fishing and foraging amongst the intertidal zone.

After colonization, Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from their land and False Creek experienced rapid alteration, pollution, and urbanization. In 1912, False Creek's easternmost tidal flats were filled in to build Vancouver's main railway station, Pacific Central Station. After the construction of the railway, up until the 1950's, False Creek was the industrial epicenter of Vancouver.

The area now known as Vanier Park was previously owned by the Royal Canadian Air Force until it was turned over to the Park Board by the federal government in 1966. The park is known for its open fields, ponds, and paths overlooking English Bay and the north shore mountains. There is also a public marina and launching ramps for small pleasure crafts.

According to Vancouver Coastal Health, False Creek is not recommended for primary contact with water (including swimming), and advises only secondary contact recreational activities “that result in regular wetting of limbs, but swallowing of water is unusual” be permitted in False Creek. Recommended recreational activities include canoeing, kayaking, sailing, or fishing.

The spaces nearby include the following:

- False Creek Rowing Club
- Bard on the Beach
- Vanier Park Bike Skills Track
- Canadian Coast Guard Station Kitsilano
- Museum of Vancouver
- Teatotaler Beach
- Vancouver Maritime Museum

Upstream Pollution Risks:

There is a CSO located in False Creek that could affect the boat ramp since it is right at the mouth of the Inlet. The city does monitor the end of the CSO to keep track of the impacts on the water quality.

As well, stormwater runoff from the nearby residential houses, urban areas, and parkland could also impact the water. This could include pesticides and fertilizers from gardens, as well as animal waste.

Due to the fact that Vanier Park is located in English Bay, it can be influenced by many sources. English Bay sees heavy boat traffic, from recreational boating to large shipping freighters. This could include chemical pollution like oil, heavy metals, gasoline, and introduction of invasive species. As well, the boat ramp is located right beside the Burrard bridge which sees heavy recreational boating usage.

The watershed for Vanier park would have to contain False Creek and the mouth of the Burrard Inlet. The Inlet is fed by many mountain rivers and streams, and so the watershed contains the Capilano river watershed. The watershed is large, but most of the terrestrial area is undeveloped forested regions with no risk of hazards.

Due to the twice daily changing of the tides, pollution that impacts the site is unlikely to sit for very long.

Potential Sources of Pollution:

1. Microbiological Hazard Assessment

There is a CSO located in False Creek, and since flow only occurs in one location in and out of the Inlet, the Vanier Park boat launch could be affected by contamination from it despite not being nearby. As well, there would be many stormwater drains that empty into the Inlet which could have an impact.

There is no agriculture in the area, and all residences are on the city's sewer system. However, there is a wastewater treatment plant across the Inlet near sunset Beach.

Dogs are not frequently seen at the boat launch, however there are many birds. One of the docks is usually covered in bird waste.

Overall Risk from Microbiological Hazards:

Combined Sewer Outflows (CSOs): **MEDIUM**

- There is a CSO located in False Creek, but it is not within the immediate vicinity of the boat launch.

Stormwater drains/discharge: **MEDIUM**

- No stormwater drains were found in the immediate area, but there would be some nearby that would empty into the Inlet.

Septic waste systems: **LOW**

- All nearby residences and industry are on the city's sewer system, so there are no individual septic systems nearby.

Stormwater runoff from agricultural areas: **LOW**

- There is not much in the way of agriculture near Vanier Park.

Stormwater runoff from areas receiving sewage sludge: **MEDIUM**

- There is a wastewater treatment plant located across the mouth of the Inlet from Vanier Park.

Stormwater runoff from beach and surrounding area: **MEDIUM**

- There would be a risk of contamination from the runoff from the surrounding parking lots and other facilities.

Dogs: **LOW**

- Dogs are not allowed off-leash in the area and are rarely seen on the beach since the boat launch is used for recreational boating.

Birds: **HIGH**

- The beach is home to many birds like crows, seagulls, and geese. The dock is frequently covered in waste from the geese.

Other wild animals: **LOW**

- There are not many other animal species that frequent the area beyond birds and a few fish, mussels, and oysters.

Discharging rivers/streams: **LOW**

- There are no discharging rivers or streams in the area.

2. Chemical Hazards

Vanier Park is located near some industry around False Creek, but it is primarily in a very heavily developed residential area. As well, it is situated right on English Bay and at the mouth of False Creek. This means that water quality at the site is influenced by the ship traffic coming in and out of the harbour as well as by the personal watercraft that frequent the area. The water would also be impacted by runoff from the residential housing and the few local parks.

Overall Risk from Chemical Hazards:

Commercial/Industrial discharges: **MEDIUM**

- There is a lot of industry located around False Creek, which would impact the waters around the boat launch.

Motorized Watercraft: **HIGH**

- Due to being close to the harbour, there are frequent cargo ships in the area. Runoff from the ships could lead to oil contamination in the water. As well, there are boats frequently entering and exiting False Creek so the site sees heavy ship traffic from recreational watercraft.

Stormwater runoff from urban areas: **MEDIUM**

- Due to all of the urban residential housing in the area, runoff is likely to contaminate the water.

Stormwater runoff from areas subject to fertilizer application: **MEDIUM**

- Both the park itself and the residences nearby would likely be areas where fertilizer is applied, and runoff from these areas would contaminate the water at the beach.

Stormwater runoff from areas subject to pesticide application: **MEDIUM**

- Both the park itself and the residences nearby would likely be areas where pesticides are applied, and runoff from these areas would contaminate the water at the beach.

3. Other Biological Hazards

Occasionally English Bay can be affected by a red tide algae bloom, which can be encouraged by nutrient loading in the water body through things like fertilizer and other nutrient rich run-off. While the red tide is not directly harmful to humans, eating shellfish affected by it can lead to paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP).

Overall Risk from Other Biological Hazards:

Red Tide: **LOW**

- English Bay is not affected by red tide more than once every few years.

Swimmer's Itch: **LOW**

- English Bay does not have much of a history of swimmer's itch so the risk is low.

4. Physical Hazards and Aesthetic Considerations

The Vanier Park boat ramp is a heavily populated site, with many people walking past or using the site for recreational purposes. Because of this, there is a moderate amount of litter found at the site. It also includes long standing waste such as tires, fishing line, ropes, etc.

The boat launch itself is on a steep edge of False Creek, which allows people to quickly and easily get their recreational watercraft into the water.

Overall Risk from Physical Hazards:

Depths greater than 4.5m: **MEDIUM**

- The boat launch is quite deep off the edge of the dock. Visitors would need to use caution when walking around the edges.

Steep slopes: **MEDIUM**

- The boat launch does have moderate inclines which might be hazardous to visitors. The gradient is helpful for launching boats, however.

Strong currents: **LOW**

- There are no strong currents offshore or onshore at the boat launch.

Slippery/uneven bottom: **MEDIUM**

- The beach floor is covered in uneven rocks. It would be potentially hazardous to navigate.
- As well, some algae on the beach and some parts of the ramps does make the ground quite slippery.

Aquatic plants: **LOW**

- There is some seaweed growth in the area, but it is not in significant quantities.

Large rocks: **MEDIUM**

- There are a few larger rocks covered in barnacles and mussels which could be a hazard for people visiting the site. These are not near the ramps themselves, but on the beach areas nearby.

Litter on beach: **MEDIUM**

- There is frequent litter found near the path and grassy areas at the boat ramp, as well as on the ramps themselves.

Facilities and Provisions:

Facilities:

Toilets: 2 gender neutral washrooms

Showers: There are no showers on site

Drinking Water Fountains: There are no water fountains located at the boat ramp

Litter Bins: 2

Recycling Bins: none

Access for Persons with Disabilities: The incline to the water can be quite steep, but there are no stairs or other obstacles.

Safety Provisions:

Lifeguard Station: None

Life Saving Equipment: None

Emergency Telephone: No

First Aid Station: No

Beach Postings/Suitability for Swimming:
No

Emergency Contact Information: No

Other Information:

Reporting Mechanisms:

- Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation: (604) 873-7000

Where to find the water quality results:

- Water quality results can be found in the Swim Guide:
<https://www.theswimguide.org/beach/10819>

Contact Details for EHSS information: Madison Scott, 1-902-818-2329

Appendix:

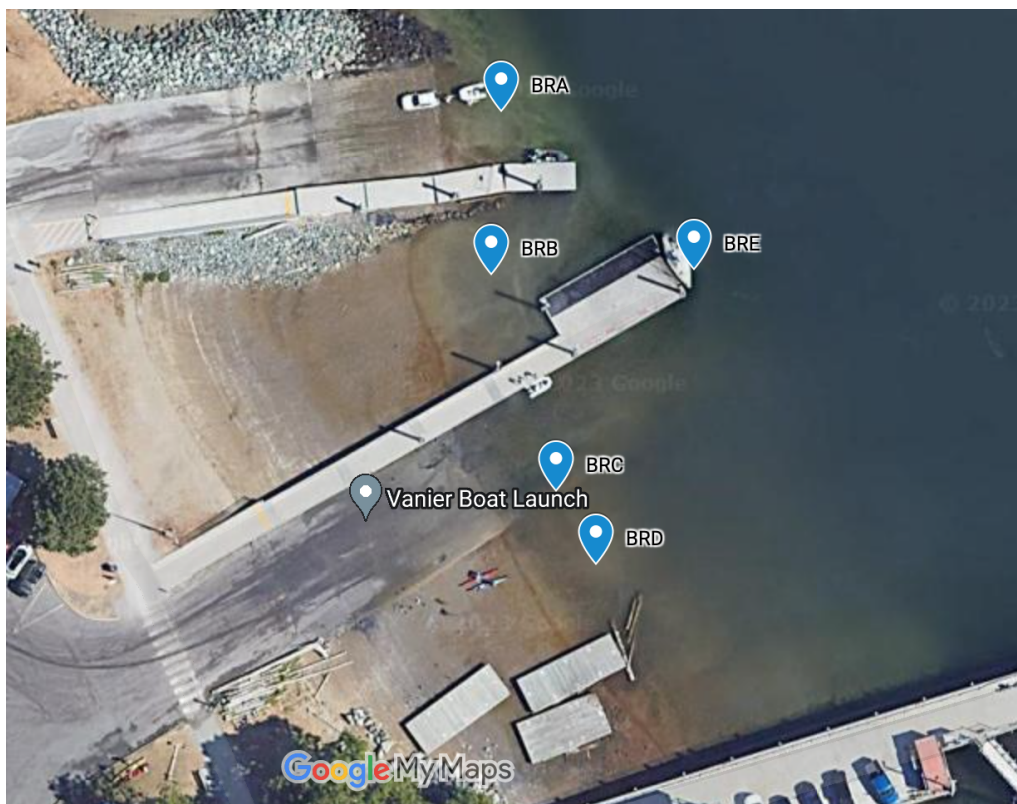


Figure 1: Map displaying the sampling points at Vanier Park Boat Launch.

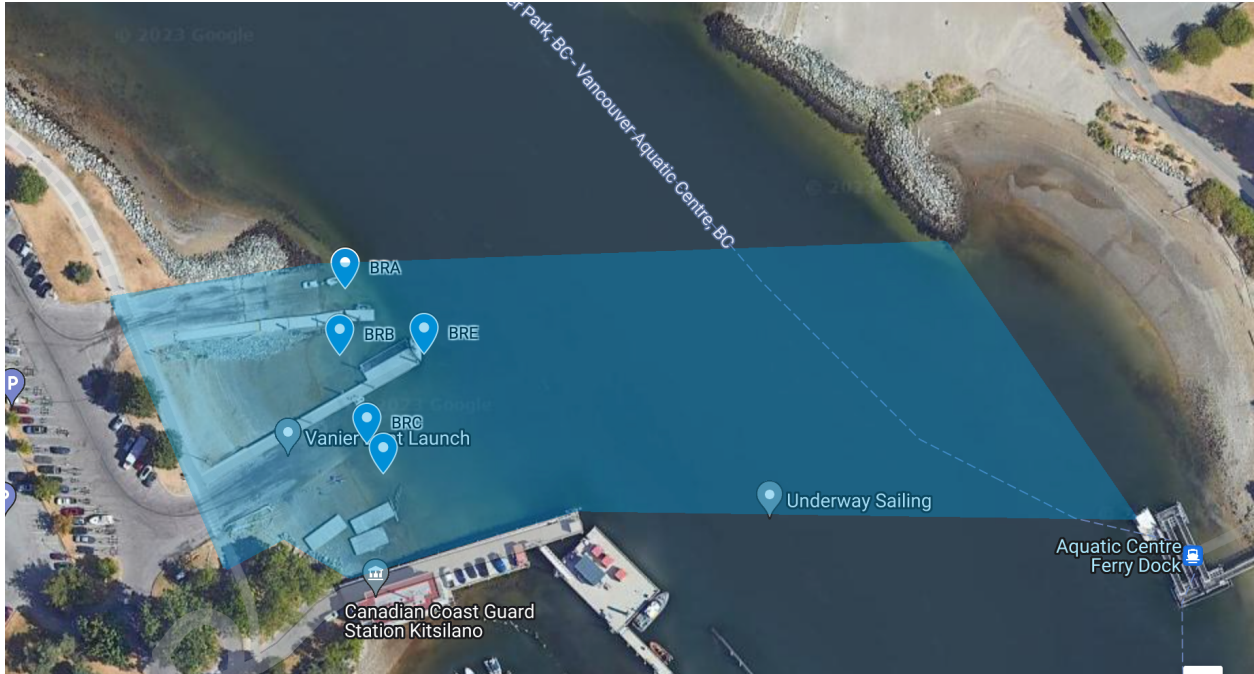


Figure 2: Map displaying the Zone of Influence for Vanier Park Boat Launch, including the sampling points.

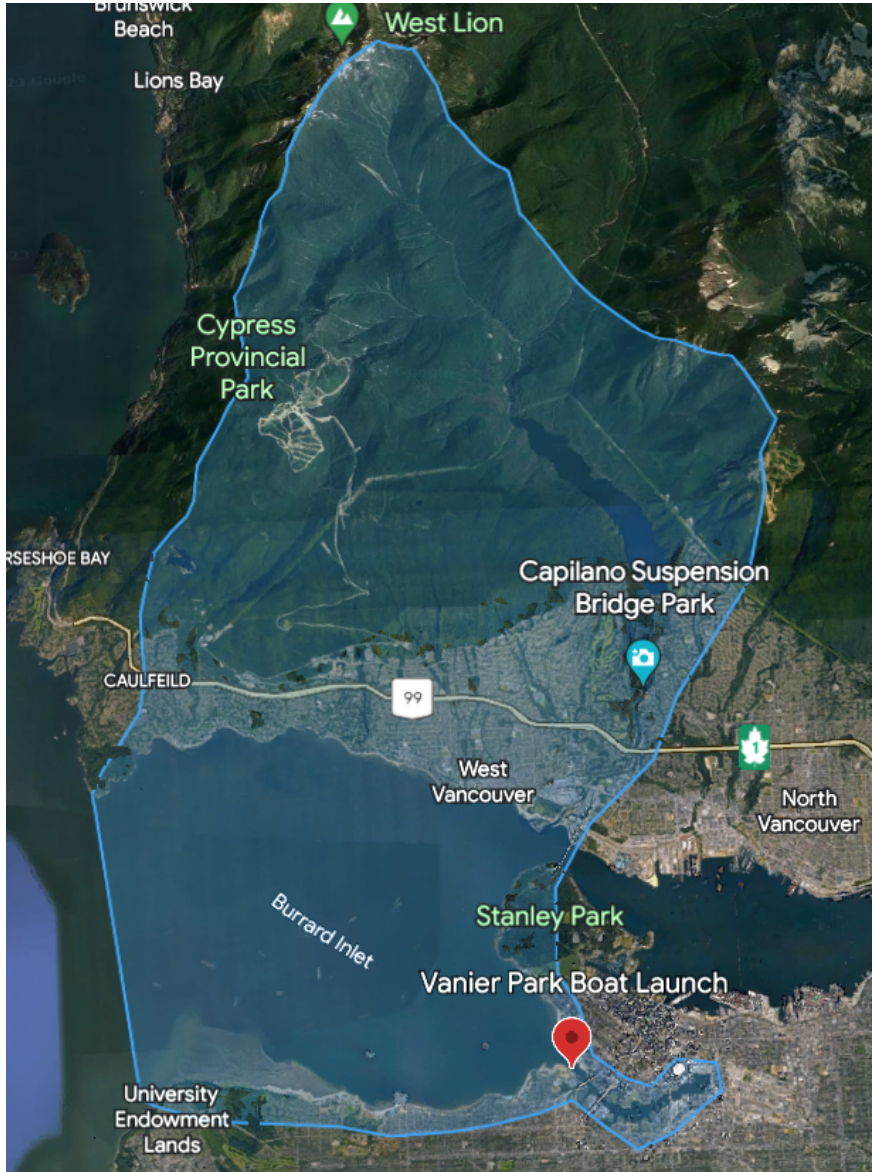


Figure 3: A map displaying the watershed for Vanier Park Boat Launch.