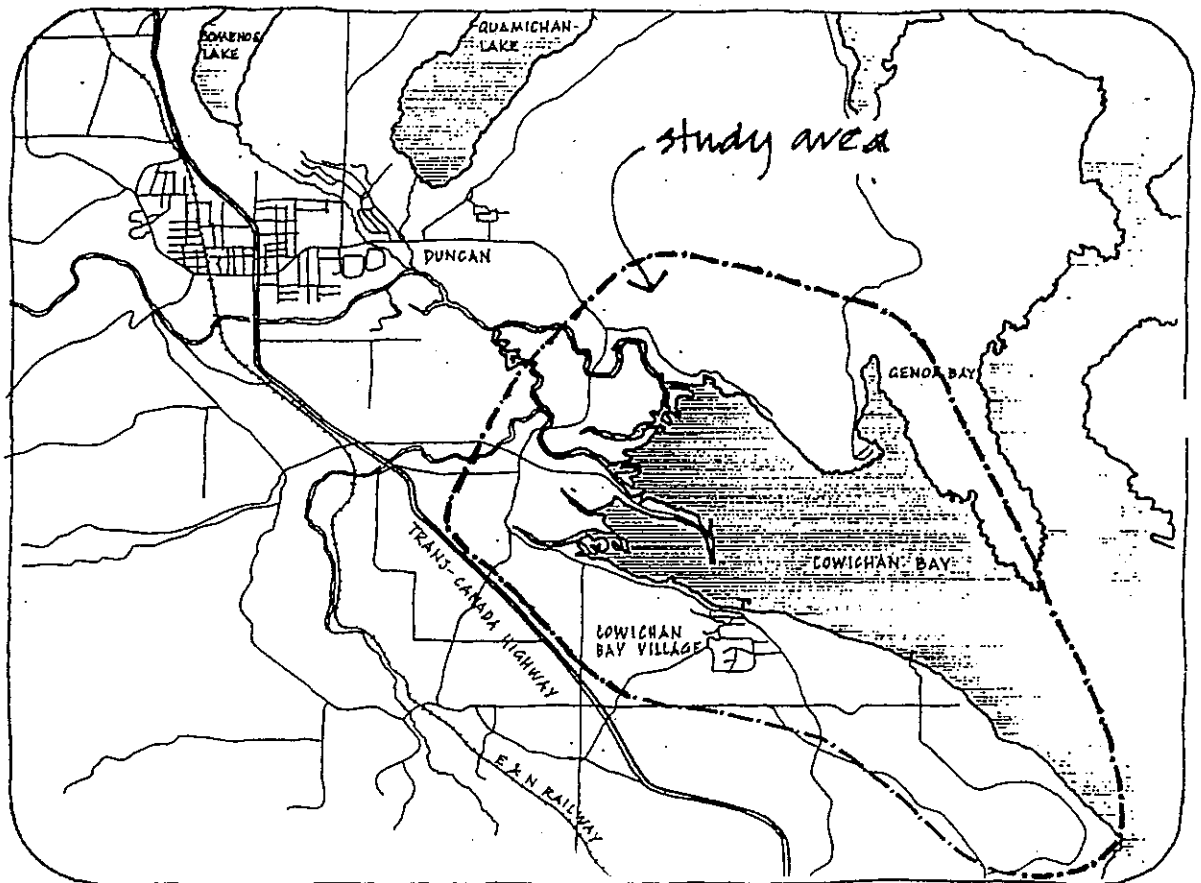


1. SUMMARY

The Cowichan Bay Improvement Association [hereafter referred to as the Association] was formed in 1990 to bring about improvements to the Bay Area. This Action Plan has been drawn-up to discuss issues of concern to the community and to propose initiatives for dealing with these issues. The Action Plan area is defined approximately on the following map:-



The following gives a brief summary of each section of the Action Plan but does not represent priority of order:-

- Section 1 **SUMMARY**
- Section 2 **INTRODUCTION**
- Section 3 **THE HARBOUR** commences the Action Plan by emphasizing the historical role of the harbour as the area's economic generator. The major issues of economic growth and employment are examined and means of maintaining and improving employment opportunities are proposed through the drawing-up of a Harbour Plan.

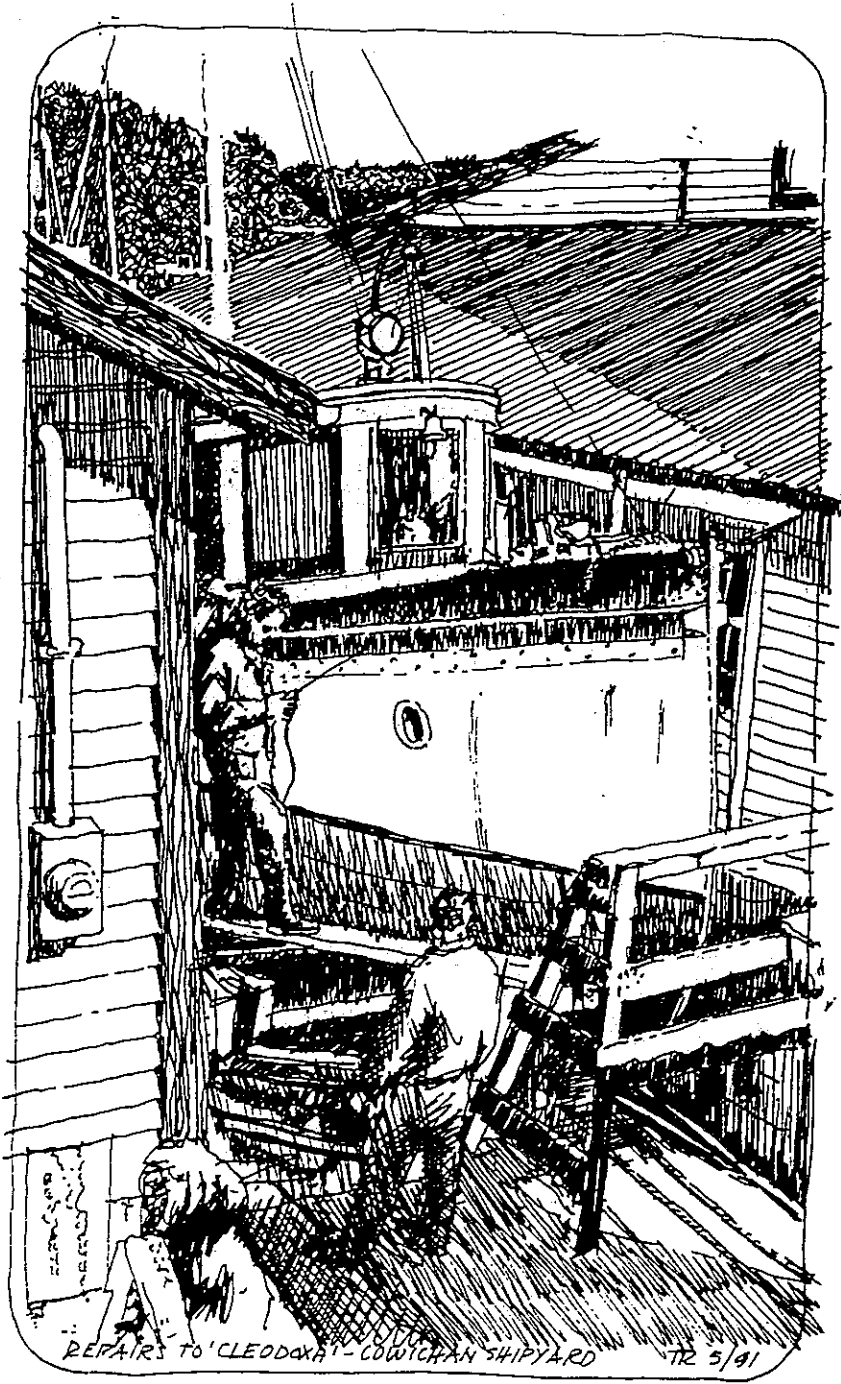
- Section 4 **COWICHAN BAY VILLAGE** ; population growth, tourism and external investment are some of the pressures contributing to the need for a **Village Plan** which will propose means of catering for this growth in a manner sympathetic to the physical surroundings and the aspirations of the community.
- Section 5 **THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** describes the extent to which the quality of the environment has deteriorated over recent years and stresses the need to **maintain and enhance the ecosystem.**
- Section 6 **TOURISM AND RECREATION** ; growth in the local tourist industry and its importance as a means of diversifying the economy suggest that it would now be appropriate to draw-up a **Community Tourism Action Plan.** The lack of pedestrian access within the Bay area and connecting adjacent areas of interest identifies the need for a **comprehensive footpath system.**
- Section 7 **LIQUID WASTE POLLUTION** records the major concern of local residents. The ban on clam and commercial crab harvesting is a clear indicator of the extent to which the Bay has become a dump for our society's waste products. Lobbying for the **sustainable recycling** of these wastes is a key long-term goal of the Association.
- Section 8 **MANAGEMENT AND SETTLEMENT PLANS** ; Government planning processes tend to be slow, reactive and lacking in public participation. By ensuring the Association's **representation on government planning bodies** it is hoped to make the planning process more responsive, proactive and representative of the community's needs.
- Section 9 **OTHER ISSUES** ; this section includes issues that are relevant to the Action Plan but for which initiatives have not, as yet, been developed.

SUMMARY OF INITIATIVES

| INITIATIVE | POSSIBLE KEY ORGANISATIONS | PROGRAM FOR IMPLEMENTATION | SECTION REFERENCE |
|---|---|--|-------------------|
| HARBOUR PLAN | Cowichan Band Min. of Oceans & Fisheries Min. of Transport local industry Pacific Trawlers Assoc. | immediate start phased medium and long term completion | 3.0 |
| COWICHAN BAY VILLAGE | Local Commercial Enterprises CVRD Min. of Municipal Affairs | immediate start early completion | 4.0 |
| MAINTENANCE & REHABILITATION OF ECOSYSTEM | CEEAC Maritime Centre Gov. and Environmental Organisations | continuous | 5.0 |
| COMMUNITY TOURISM ACTION PLAN | Min. of Tourism, Recreation and Culture CFC | immediate start early completion | 6.1 |
| COMPREHENSIVE FOOTPATH SYSTEM | Cowichan Band PECP Mun. of North Cowichan various landowners | immediate start phased medium and long term completion | 6.2 |
| SUSTAINABLE RECYCLING | Min. of Environment Cowichan Valley Regional District Mun. of North Cowichan Maritime Centre | process has been started continuous | 7.0 |
| C.E.E.A.C. REPRESENTATION | Min. of Environment | process has been initiated | 8.1 |
| OSP & OCP REPRESENTATION | Cowichan Valley Regional District Mun. of North Cowichan | process to be started immediately continuous | 8.2 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|------------|---|---|
| C.E.E.A.C. | - | Cowichan Estuary Environmental Assessment Committee |
| OSP | - | Official Settlement Plan |
| OCP | - | Official Community Plan |
| CVRD | - | Cowichan Valley Regional District |
| CFC | - | Community Futures Committee |
| PECP | - | Pacific Estuary Conservation Programme |



REPAIRS TO 'CLEODAXA' - COWICHAN SHIPYARD

TR 5/91

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

In recent years several West Coast communities have carried out extensive improvements to the physical infrastructure of their waterfronts. This action has been in response to the steady decline of the communities' primary industries such as lumber processing and export or to shifts in methods of production and marketing. Although this is happening in the Cowichan Bay area, the trend towards decline is balanced by the growth in the tourism industry and by the growing demand for retirement homes.

The Cowichan Bay area is situated in the Cowichan Valley Regional District [CVRD] which has a population of over 52,000 people of which approximately 1500 live within one mile of the shores of the Cowichan Bay area and although population levels in the region remained fairly stable between 1981 - 1986, recent growth rates suggest that the population of the Cowichan Valley will increase to 70,000 by the year 2000.

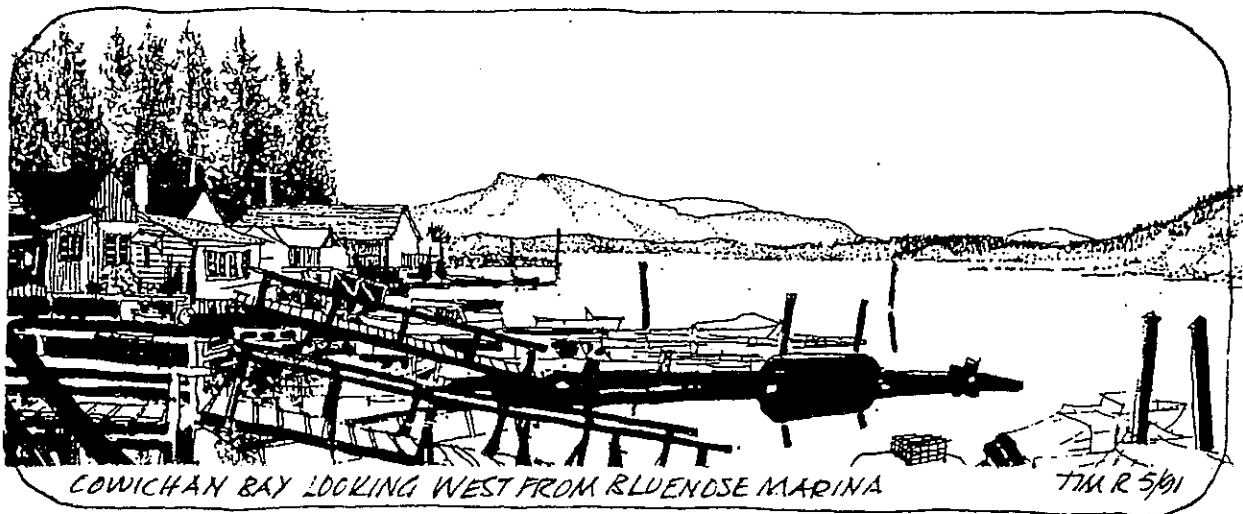
The area is comprised of many local government jurisdictions including the Municipality of North Cowichan, the Cowichan Indian Band and Electoral Area 'D' CVRD [Cowichan Bay]. Transport Canada is accountable for the waters of Cowichan Bay and the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans is responsible for the Government Wharf. Ministry of Crown Lands has jurisdiction over water leases in the Bay and the Ministry of Environment has jurisdiction over the Cowichan Estuary Area.

As the formal government process at all levels tends to be reactive rather than proactive to the needs of a small community such as ours, the Association has been formed to examine issues of concern to people that live or work in the Cowichan Bay area and to initiate necessary action.

2.2 GOALS AND POLICIES

The goal of the Association is to improve the Cowichan Bay area through consultation, education and participation, to make it a better place to live and work.

The policy of the Association is to provide a forum to facilitate public participation in the discussion, planning and promotion of initiatives aimed at meeting this goal. Funds available to the Association are to be used for administrative purposes. The financing of independent enterprises or projects is not within the present mandate of the Board of Directors. Appendix 1 sets out the present structure of the Association.



2.3 WHY AN ACTION PLAN ?

This Action Plan has been produced to increase the community awareness of the issues involved and to increase community participation in decision making processes that affect the future of the area.

The Action Plan method is to identify broad initiatives requiring attention, provide background to these initiatives, summarise issues contained within the initiatives and outline action already taken or to be undertaken.

At this stage the Action Plan does not identify sources of funding nor how each initiative should be implemented. These tasks constitute the next stage of the Association's work.

3. THE HARBOUR

3.1 INITIATIVE

The Association will initiate a Cowichan Bay Harbour Plan

For the purposes of this Action Plan "initiate" means to "start off", not necessarily to "carry out".

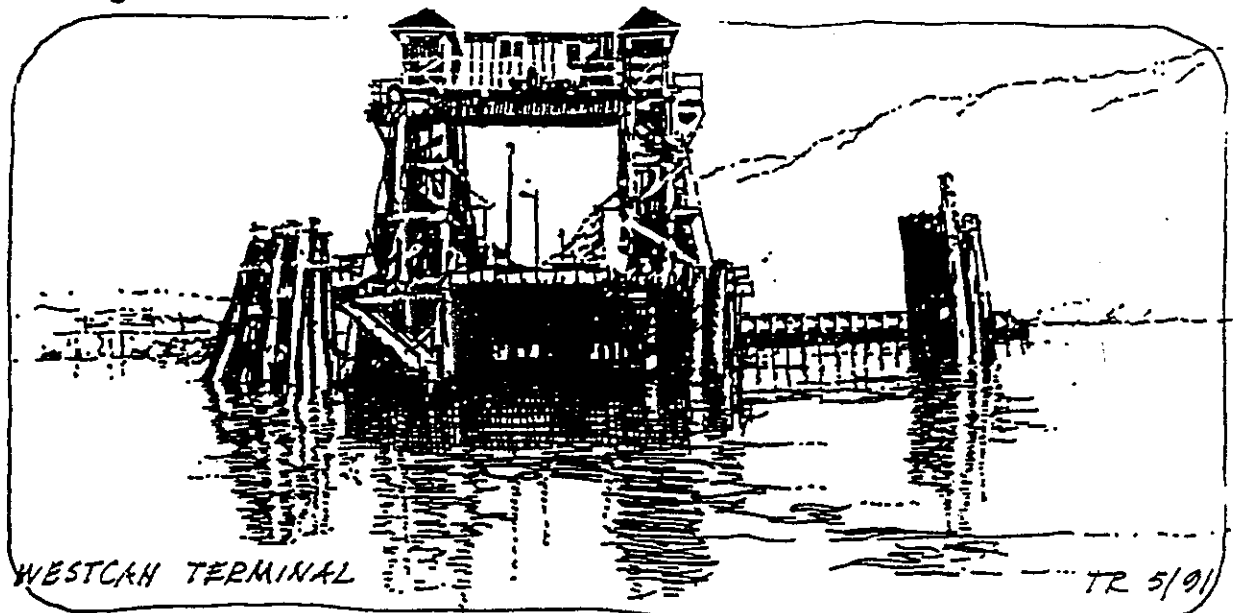
3.2 BACKGROUND

For the purposes of this Plan the Harbour is considered to be the complete water mass below high tide level and includes land based facilities associated with Harbour activities.

Prior to large scale immigration from Europe and elsewhere, the area was inhabited for thousands of years by communities that lived by hunting, fishing and trading with similar indigenous communities up and down the west coast.

Since large scale settlement began, the Harbour has played a major role in the opening up of the Cowichan Valley and its hinterland, primarily for farming and the export of lumber. The advent of the railways in the early part of this century supplanted the Harbour's role as a prime mover of people and general goods and now the Trans Canada Highway has replaced the function of the railway.

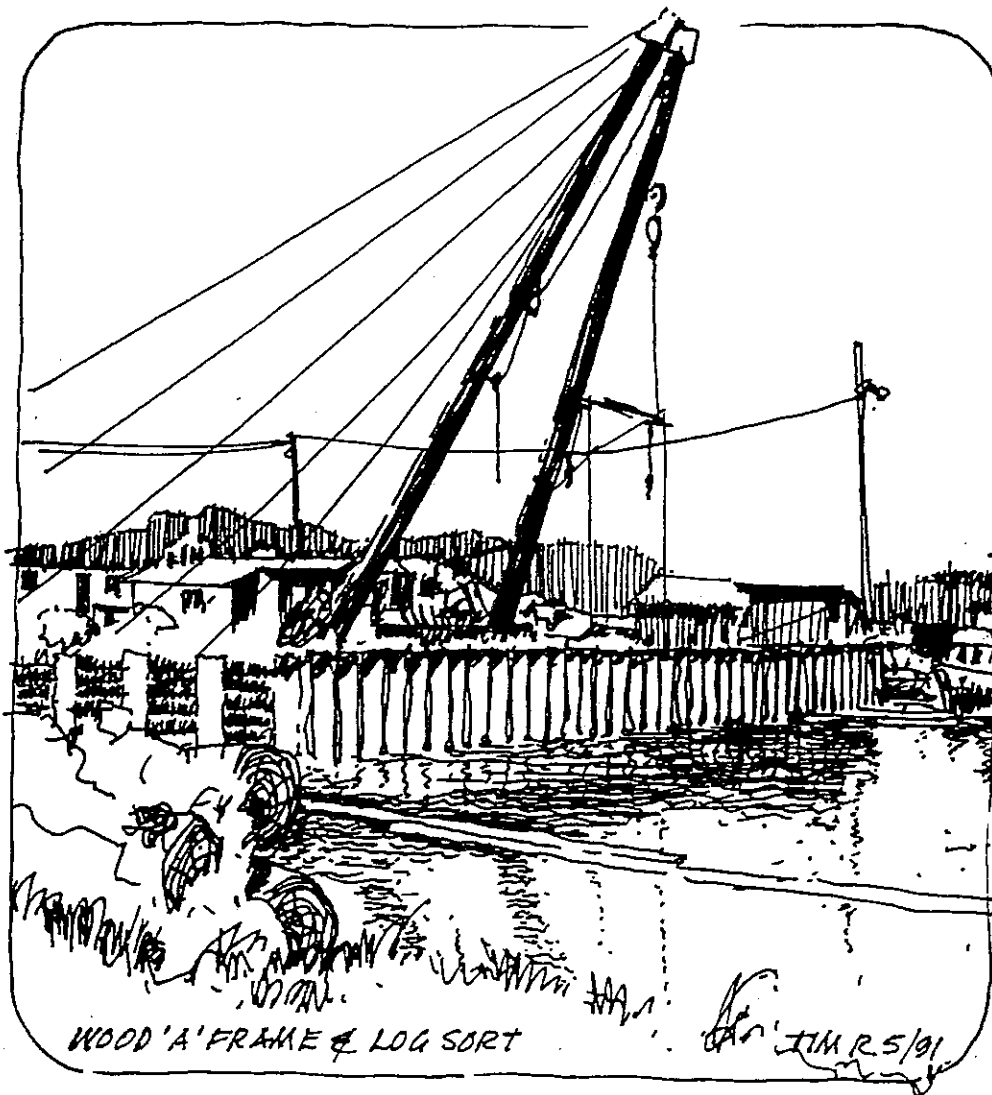
A substantial fishing fleet grew in response to rich local fish stocks and the protected moorage.



The processing and export of lumber remains the primary dominant economic activity of the Harbour. Associated with this activity is log towing and log sorting. The Harbour is also the base for a moderately sized fishing fleet. Smaller primary activities include fish processing, and boat charters for fishing and sight-seeing. These primary activities can be classified as having a **direct impact** on the regional economy.

Generated from these primary activities are secondary activities having an **indirect impact**. These activities include boat building and repair, boat handlers, welding shops, construction and transportation.

Subsidiary activities arising from the above primary and secondary activities and having an **induced impact** on the economy would include services purchased by primary and secondary activity employees such as housing, transportation and consumables.



3.3 ISSUES

3.3.1 Economic Future; the viability of the Harbour's primary activity of lumber processing and export is subject to the international demand for dimensioned lumber and the region's ability to continue meeting that demand at the right price. In addition, the continuing reduction in fish stocks and prohibition of local clam and crab harvesting threatens the long-term future of the fishing industry.

Further diversification of the Harbour's economy is necessary to establish alternatives to diminishing primary economic activities with an aim to sustain and increase employment.

3.3.2 Opportunities; economic diversification of the Harbour is constrained by the limited land-based space available for additional activities and by the unacceptability of environmental degradation in the Estuary. This shortage of space could, however, be ameliorated to some extent by more intensive use of existing areas already designated for these purposes.

Apart from expanding existing industries the following activities are possible examples of appropriate additions to the Harbour's primary activities:-

- Transportation services: Cruise Ships
BC Ferry Service
Air Service [float planes]
Water Taxi.
- Marine Ecology Centre
- Moorage for boats of greater draft than those able to use the Government Dock - e.g., dragger fishing vessels.
- Additional pleasure craft moorage to cater for seasonal peak demands.

The feasibility of each of the above would depend on their individual financial viability and their sensitivity to the physical environment.

3.3.3 Harbour Breakwater; within the context of the Harbour Plan and the Cowichan Bay Village Plan [Section 4] a Harbour Breakwater Feasibility Study should be undertaken to find means of

- reducing storm damage to marinas and craft
- providing additional moorage in deeper waters
- sustaining and increasing commercial and tourist activity.

The feasibility study for a breakwater would be undertaken by the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans, Small Craft Harbour Division. This study should be made within the broader context of the Harbour Plan and the Cowichan Bay Village Plan and the Association would participate especially on socio-economic and environmental impact issues.

A pre-condition of the Ministry for having this study done is that the Harbour acquire Harbour Authority status. This has been applied for by a group of Cowichan Bay Fishermen and a reply is awaited. It should, however, be noted that a Harbour Authority would only have authority over the Government dock and this is only partially related to the breakwater issue.

3.4 ACTION

Individual initiatives and investments that may help the economy and create jobs are now carefully scrutinized and often opposed by the environment lobby. The Association, which includes representatives of all interest groups, hopes to resolve conflicts that may arise and to avoid the delays to improvement that result from such conflicts.

The Harbour Plan will be an early and continuous test of the Association's ability to achieve improvements that reflect the aspirations of the whole community.

4 COWICHAN BAY VILLAGE

4.1 INITIATIVE

The Association will initiate a Cowichan Bay Village Plan.

4.2 BACKGROUND

4.2.1. Location; the plan area contains the commercial and residential development along Cowichan Bay Road;

- from Theik Reserve to the west and Kil Pah Las Reserve to the east
- from northern extent of water leases to residential boundaries to south of Cowichan Bay Road

4.2.2 Administration; the Kil Pah Las and Theik reserves are administered by the Cowichan Band and the remainder by the Cowichan Valley Regional District. Foreshore land and water also come within the jurisdiction of the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan.

4.2.3 History; changing economic activities, population growth in the hinterland and development pressures dictate the necessity for a detailed look at the village and especially the augmenting and upgrading of existing infrastructure.

The Cowichan Bay Official Settlement Plan states,

- "a detailed plan of the Cowichan Bay Village/Harbour area should be prepared in order to provide direction for the enhancement of the area's commercial, tourist and residential potential" [part 5 clause 2]

Implementation of the Cowichan Bay Village Plan will take into account initiatives already developed by the Association and detailed under Issues [4.3]

Kil Pak Las Reserve

Inn at the Water

Government Wharf

Windjammer Pub

Masthead Restaurant

Cowichan Shipyard

Anchor Marina

Bayshore Seafoods

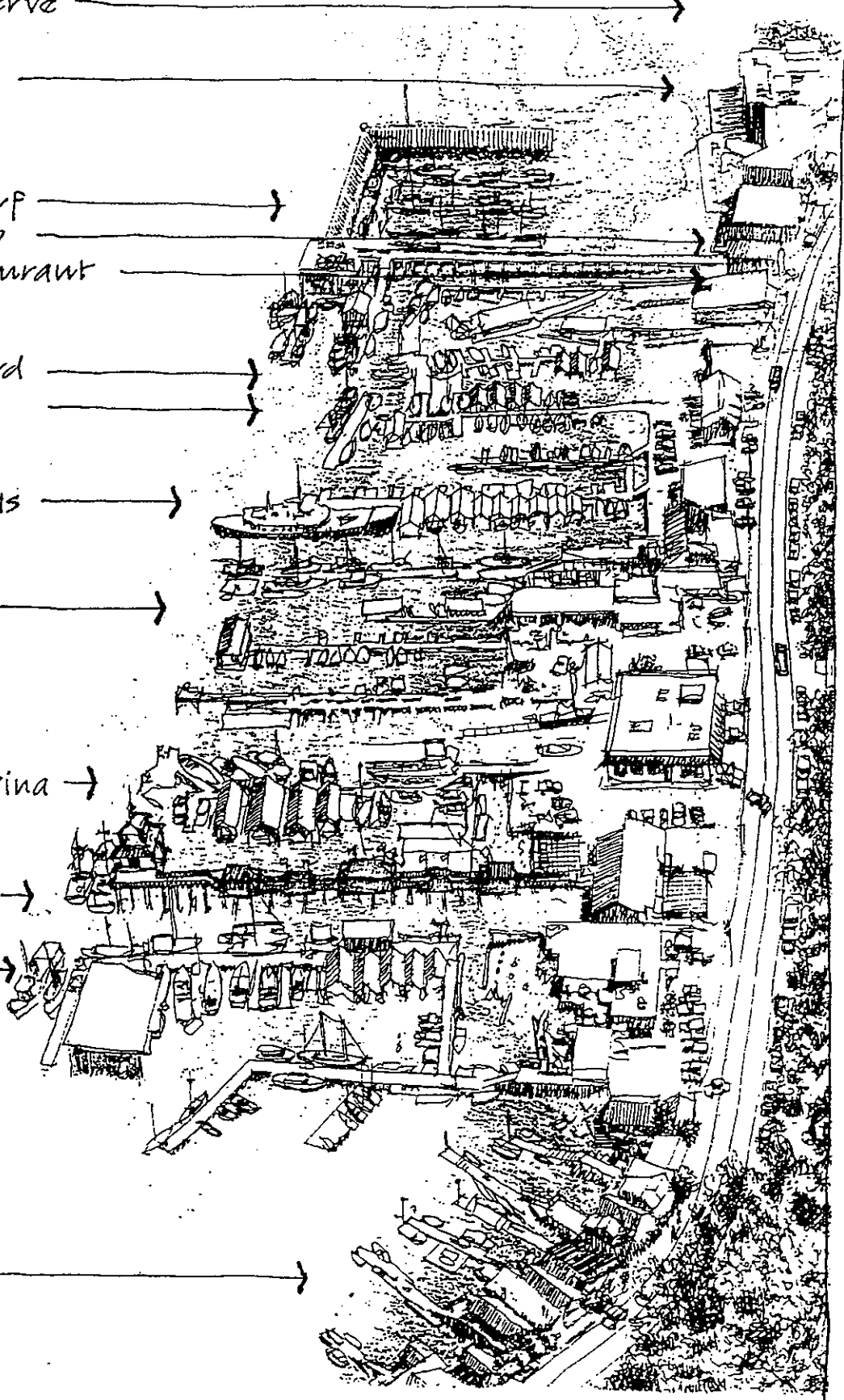
Pier 66 Marina

Beachcomber Marina

Maritime Centre

Emerose Marina

Residential



Cowichan Bay looking east (from etique aerial photo circa 1985)