



Saanichton Bay has historically been, and continues to be significant to the Saanich peoples of Tsawout. The bay provided shelter from the prevailing southeast gales of winter, a year-round source of food, as well as playing an integral role in the Tsawout economic, societal, social, and spiritual life. Because of these reasons Saanichton Bay was *one* of the main winter village sites of the Saanich peoples, and that is why Tsawout “Indian Reserve” is located there today

Saanichton Bay becomes the focal point of a court battle, *Claxton v. Saanichton Bay Marina* in 1987. Louis Claxton and the Tsawout peoples were awarded a permanent injunction in the BC Supreme Court against the construction of a marina in the bay. Mr. Justice Meredith ruled that James Douglas “implemented a policy to protect the Indians in their right to pursue their traditional economy of hunting and fishing” and so concluded “that they had the right to resist....the proposed marina at Saanichton Bay as it would diminish in the extent the fishery contractually reserved to predecessors” of the original signatories to the Douglas Treaty.

It is important to mention that the people of Tsawout were not stationary at Saanichton Bay year-round, though this was our “headquarters”. The Saanich peoples territory includes the Saanich Peninsula, south to Mount Douglas, across to Mount Finlayson and Goldstream. In addition, the Southern Gulf Islands, reaching to Point Roberts, and San Juan Islands constituted what is the Saanich Peoples traditional territory. The Tsawout and Saanich people’s traditional territory is the lands and seas that we traditionally used throughout every season. Names were given to all places we knew, every bay, every stream, every village, every mountain, every lake, every inlet, and island has a name in our language, the SENCOTEN language. Our Language, place names, stories, history is what defines our territory and speaks to our long standing relationship to the land and waters.