

## The BC Ale Trail reveals Vancouver Island's "beer belt"

### *A passion for craft beer now connects Cowichan, Nanaimo, Parksville & Qualicum Beach*

**Aug. 15, 2017, Victoria, BC** – Apart from being blessed with natural beauty, agricultural splendor, and some of BC's spectacular beaches, central Vancouver Island showcases thriving craft beer culture.

A new BC Ale Trail now connects the Cowichan valley with the city of Nanaimo and the communities of Parksville and Qualicum Beach, offering beer-loving visitors an easy way to tour the area's best breweries.

"We are proud to be part of this excellent initiative promoting the craft beer movement that has swept the country," says Karen Elgersma, executive director, Tourism Cowichan. "Our breweries are top-notch and we're excited to be able to share our best-kept beer secrets with visitors."

In addition to craft beer hotspots, this region of central Vancouver Island has an array of attractions. From Nanaimo, explore the communities of Parksville and Qualicum Beach to the north, and the Cowichan area to the south. Diverse activities are easily accessible within less than an hour's drive, including restaurants, farm markets, provincial parks, beach resorts, and Indigenous heritage sites.

Nanaimo, the largest city north of Victoria on Vancouver Island, is home to four breweries, including the handsome **Longwood Brewpub** and its separate production facility, Longwood Brewing, as well as **Wolf Brewing** and **White Sails Brewing**. Enjoy the urban vibe at the city's many restaurants and shops and then work off all the tasty treats you sampled by snorkeling with the seals or hopping on a mountain bike, stand-up paddleboard, or kayak.

The sheltered stretch of coastline above Nanaimo is home to some of the province's most spectacular beaches. When the tide is out at Parksville's Rath Trevor Beach, the ocean recedes almost a kilometre, revealing clean sand and fascinating tidal pools that teem with marine life. As the tide rolls in over sun-warmed sand, the shallow water is perfect for swimming and splashing. When it's time to dry off, visit Parksville's own craft brewery, **Mount Arrowsmith Brewing**, or drop by **Love Shack Libations** in laid-back Qualicum Beach. If you're looking for a unique experience, explore the mysteries and magic underground at Horne Lake Caves.

The Cowichan region, south of Nanaimo, takes its name from, "Quw'utsun'," an Indigenous word that means, "the warm land." And, it is warm indeed: the region's maritime Mediterranean-style climate boasts the warmest year-round temperature anywhere in Canada.

Sounds like a great place to drink craft beer, right? Well, the Cowichan Valley has that covered, too, with **Riot Brewing** in Chemainus, as well as **Red Arrow Brewing** and the **Craig Street Brewpub** in Duncan.

For more information about the BC Ale Trail, visit <https://bcaletrail.ca/>.

**Social media:**

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- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCAleTrail/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKTgNmr7K3nhVoz-E2wj9wQ>

**About the BC Ale Trail**

In partnership with Destination British Columbia and the BC Craft Brewers Guild, the BC Ale Trail emphasizes how a visit to or around British Columbia is enhanced with a pint of craft beer culture. With an increasing preference for local craft beer in BC and growth of artisanal beer in North America, the BC Ale trail embraces the “buy local” movement, helps showcase independent breweries, and connects visitors with the unique culture at the heart of communities all over the province.