

2025 SPATIAL INVENTORY OF LANDS TAKEN UP IN THE BURRARD INLET CATCHMENT



səlilwətat

Tsleil-Waututh Nation

PEOPLE OF THE INLET

Mapping the footprints of colonial land-use and development in and around Burrard Inlet to consider the impacts on Tsleil-Waututh rights.

Photo Credit: ShoreZone

We cannot fully measure the impacts of colonization on Tsleil-Waututh Nation, but many impacts leave a clear footprint on our lands and waters. As colonial development has marched through our territory, the footprints have layered upon each other, and the impacts have trampled on many of our rights. This map series visualizes some of those footprints and considers the impacts on Tsleil-Waututh Nation's rights.



A Spatial Inventory of Lands Taken Up in the Burrard Inlet Catchment

Cumulative effects of colonial development in and around səliłwət (Burrard Inlet) have profoundly infringed upon Tsleil-Waututh Nation's (TWN) rights, title, and interests. TWN has experienced ongoing and significant loss of use of its traditional territory since European contact through innumerable impacts, including from urban and industrial development, resource extraction, pollution, land-use decisions, and restrictive laws and regulations. This has left our people with no meaningful ability to exercise many rights, including harvesting important food sources or safely using Burrard Inlet for cultural and subsistence purposes.

While comprehensively measuring these impacts on TWN and Nation members is impossible, many can be mapped. This map series compiles publicly available spatial data that represents different land- and water- uses and other impacts that limit or prevent the practice of TWN's constitutionally protected rights as one way to visualize cumulative effects in TWN's core territory. This demonstrates that diverse and seemingly unrelated land-use decisions by the Crown and others leave almost no places for TWN to freely access undisturbed lands and waters.

Principal Conclusion

When all the layers of terrestrial and marine impacts included in this analysis are taken together, it shows that at least 93% of lands have been impacted by colonial development in ways that diminish, limit or prevent exercise of TWN rights (see Figure 2). Put simply, cumulative land-use decisions and impacts infringe on TWN rights.

Potential Applications

Demonstrate that cumulative effects infringe on TWN rights

- Public education tool in relationships with Crown agencies and proponents
- Identify priority work and opportunities to heal TWN rights

Demonstrate that even projects with a small footprint contribute to the larger issue of land alienation

- Support TWN's referrals process to ensure projects are not viewed in isolation

Demonstrate how specific Crown agencies, land-uses or policies prevent TWN from accessing the territory

- Support subject-specific negotiations
- Informs priorities on policy or regulatory changes or legal action

Essential Context

The map series starts with a map of historical Tsleil-Waututh Use and Occupancy (Figure 1). While this does not convey the full extent of our use, occupancy, and relationships within the territory, it gives a glimpse into some of the ways that Tsleil-Waututh people live in, around, and throughout Burrard inlet. Tsleil-Waututh ancestors travelled, used, and held relationships with the entire territory. Our first grandmother came from the sediments of the bottom of the inlet; our Ancestors harvested mountain goat from the tops of the mountains; we travelled and used every inch of the lands and waters in between. Our relationship with the lands and waters cannot be captured in a map, but for this exercise we must demonstrate and start from the perspective that Tsleil-Waututh people use the entire territory.

The remaining maps illustrate various land- and marine-based impacts throughout the Burrard Inlet Catchment Area. These maps are based on readily available information and public data. They are not a comprehensive analysis of all the different ways that colonial developments impact TWN's lands and rights. Still, the information included draws a clear picture: there are almost no places left for TWN people to harvest or use their lands and waters.

Limitations

This is a living document and is intended to be amended and refined over time. It is not an expression of the location of Tsleil-Waututh Aboriginal title or other rights and interests. The study area is the Burrard Inlet Catchment Area, which is part of Tsleil-Waututh Nation's larger Consultation Area (<https://twnation.ca/our-departments/treaty-lands-resources/>). We focus on the inlet because it is culturally and spiritually central to TWN. The catchment area has also been used for other relevant TWN work such as the Burrard Inlet Water Quality Objectives.

The layers are based on readily-available data from BC, Canada and other sources and are presented without prejudice. This data does not represent the full scale of potential impacts on Tsleil-Waututh's rights, title and interests, or the total loss of use or lands taken up in the Burrard Inlet Catchment Area. It has not been evaluated for comprehensiveness by TWN and is likely an underrepresentation of total impacts in the catchment area. An absence of data layers from this map series should not be interpreted as absence of impact, knowledge, or information. Specific data limitations are provided in the list of data sources at the end of the document.

In areas where this analysis did not find direct impacts of colonial development or activities, there may still be impacts that limit or prevent TWN's use of these areas. This may include historical impacts without readily available data (e.g., logging activities before data was available), secondary impacts from development (e.g., landslides resulting from logging), impacts from unregulated or unmonitored activities (e.g., recreational use), impacts that cannot be shown spatially (e.g., restrictive licensing requirements for harvesting), or impacts that were not uncovered through this work.

LEARN MORE

An interactive version of much of the spatial data can be found: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/17665281aa8341e0bfdd32e4d950a9e5>

Tsleil-Waututh Nation's Assessment of the Trans Mountain Pipeline and Tanker Expansion, which includes additional information on TWN's relationship with Burrard Inlet and rights, title, and interests can be found: <https://twnsacredtrust.ca/>



List of Maps (Total: 11)

Figure 1: Tsleil-Waututh Use and Occupancy

Figure 2: Total Lands Taken Up

Figure 3: Undisturbed Lands Potentially Available for TWN Use

Figure 4: Urban or Built Up Areas

Figure 5: Road, Rail and Linear Infrastructure

Figure 6: Terrestrial Industry and Industrial Infrastructure

Figure 7: Port and Marine Infrastructure and Vessel Impacts

Figure 8: Outfalls and Contaminated Sites

Figure 9: Land Ownership

Figure 10: Colonially Established Parks and Recreational Areas

Figure 11: Terrestrial and Marine/Shoreline Impacts

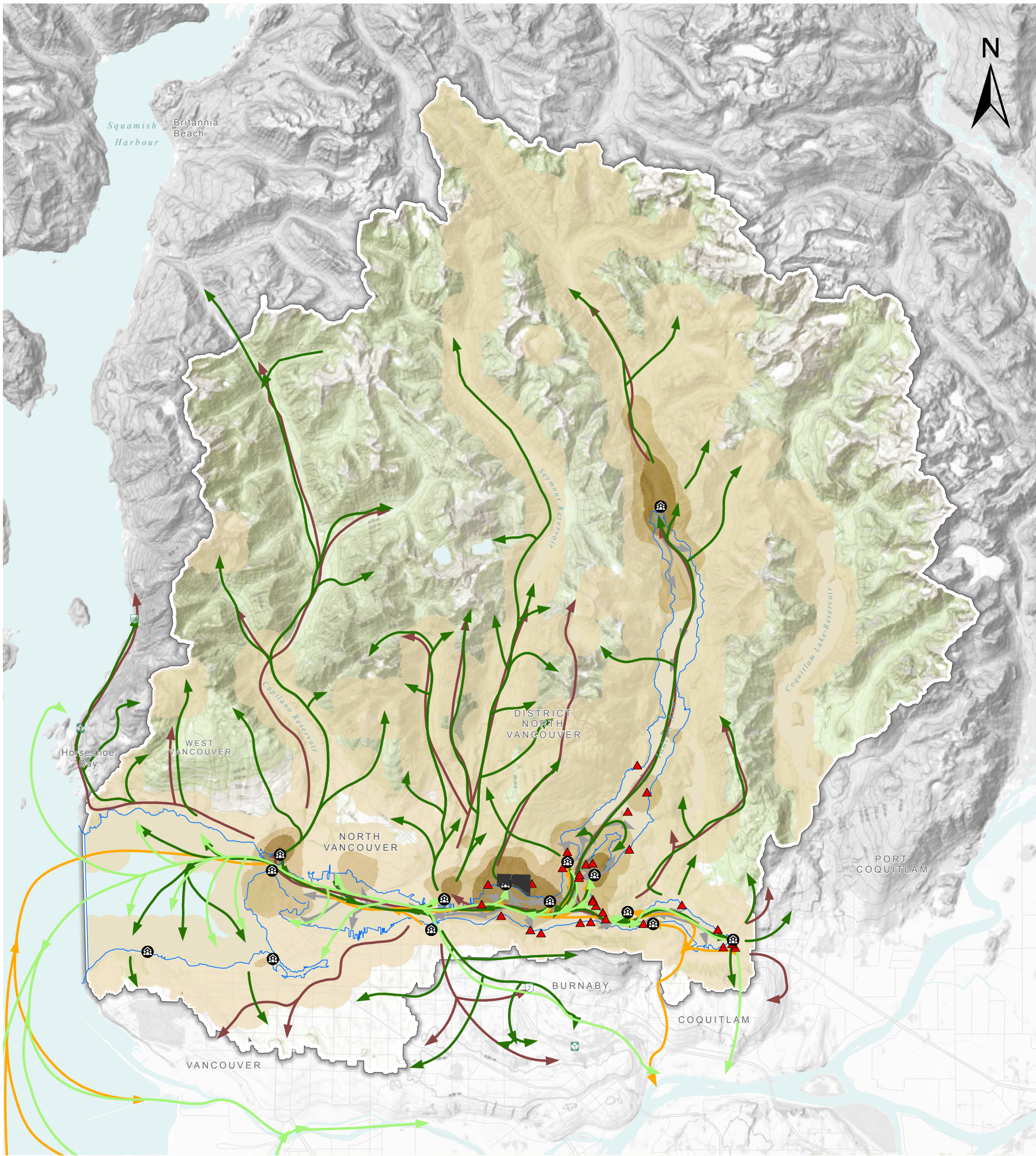


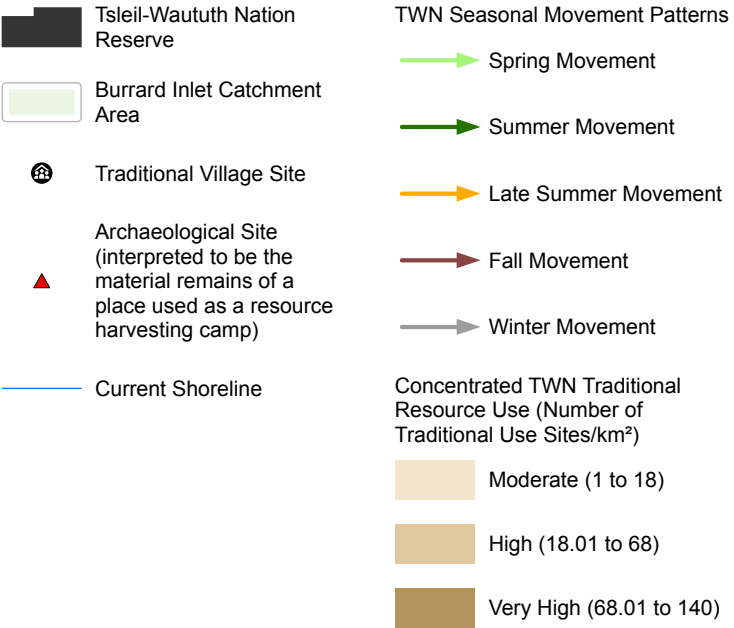
Figure 1: TSLEIL-WAUTUTH USE AND OCCUPANCY

Key Message:

We have a deep connection to our entire territory. Our first grandmother was made from sediment collected from the bottom of the inlet. Our people hunted mountain goats at the tops of the highest mountains. Different parts of our lives relied on every inch in between. Our relationship with the lands and waters cannot be captured in a map, but we must start from the perspective that Tsleil-Waututh people continue to use the entire territory.

The TWN Traditional Resource Use layer on this map is based on various Tsleil-Waututh traditional use studies carried out in 1998, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014. These studies have important limits to consider. They were focused on the lived experiences of TWN members at the times when the studies were conducted and consequently only document practices in the 20th century, decades after many impacts had already reduced harvesting opportunities in the territory. Additionally, many of these studies were conducted within a specific scope and therefore represent only a part of Tsleil-Waututh's use of the area. This map is intended to illustrate Tsleil-Waututh's widespread use of the catchment area but is not a comprehensive representation of Tsleil-Waututh's practices or relationships within the territory.

More about Tsleil-Waututh Nation's History, Culture and Aboriginal Interests in Burrard Inlet can be found <https://twnsacredtrust.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Morin-Expert-Report-PUBLIC-VERSION-sm.pdf>



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION

Spatial Inventory of Lands Taken Up in Burrard Inlet Catchment

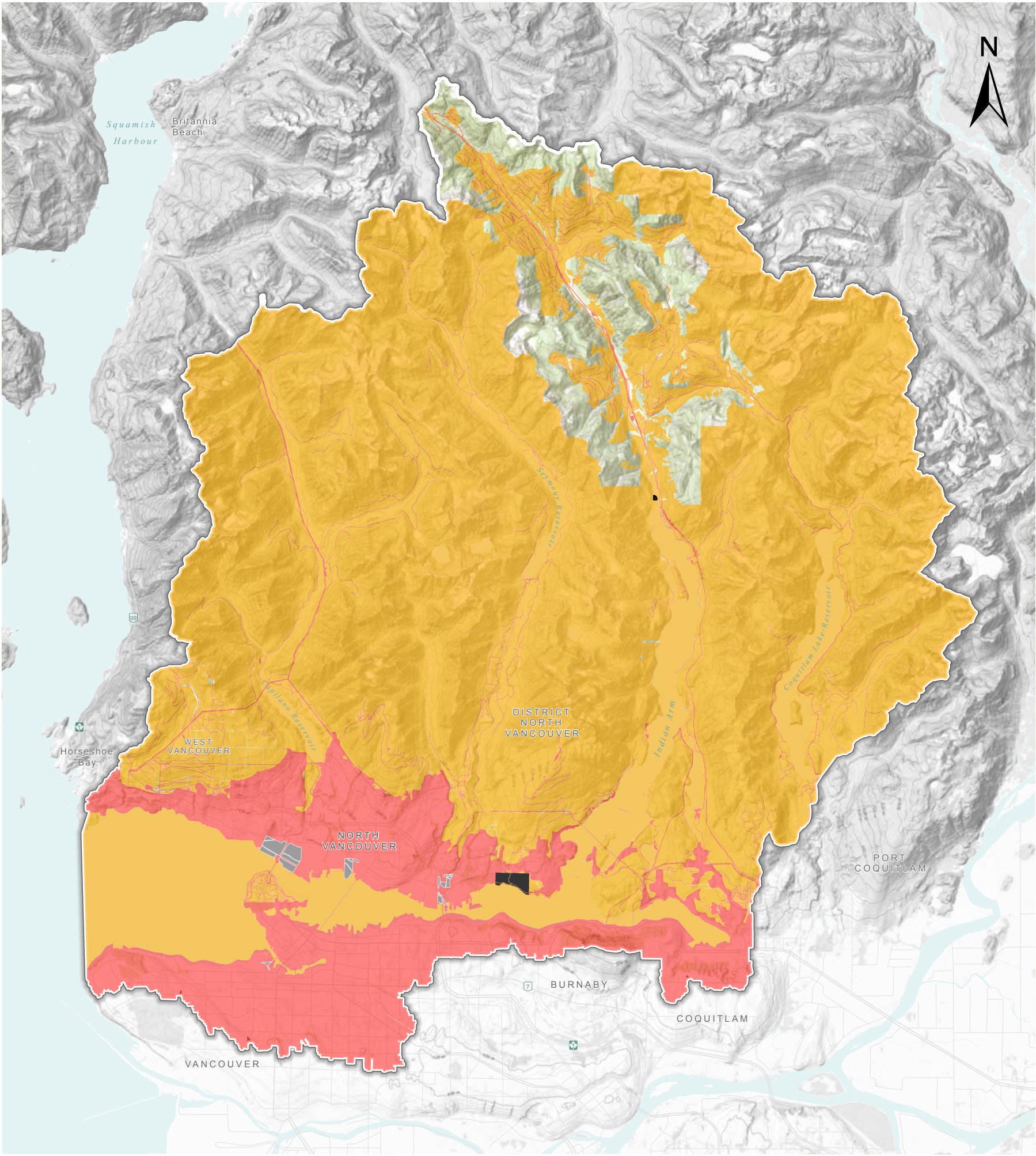
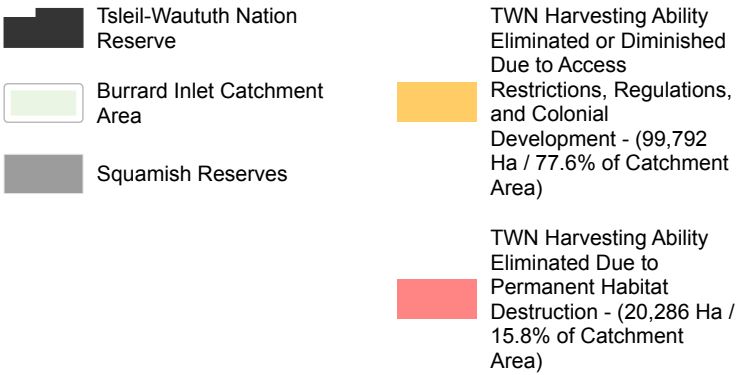


Figure 2: TOTAL LANDS TAKEN UP

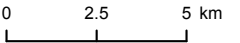
Key Message:

When all the layers of terrestrial and marine impacts are taken together, it shows about 93.4% of lands have been impacted by colonial development in ways that diminish TWN rights. Of this total, about 77.6% is due to access restrictions, regulations, or potentially reversible colonial development (e.g., Metro Vancouver Watershed lease areas and industrial logging) and 15.8% is due to permanent habitat destruction (e.g., shoreline infilling and urban development). This does not account for areas that are inaccessible due to geography, elevation and topography.



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION
Spatial Inventory of Lands Taken Up in Burrard Inlet Catchment

Map Produced January 2026 by Tsleil-Waututh Nation
Map Scale: 1:210,000
Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N



This map is a living document and is intended to be amended and refined over time. It is not an expression of the location of Tsleil-Waututh Aboriginal title. The data used to produce this map originate from many sources and are presented without prejudice. This data does not represent the full scale of potential impacts on Tsleil-Waututh's rights, title and interests, or the total loss of use or lands taken up in the Burrard Inlet Catchment Area. This map is the property of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and may not be reproduced without written permission.

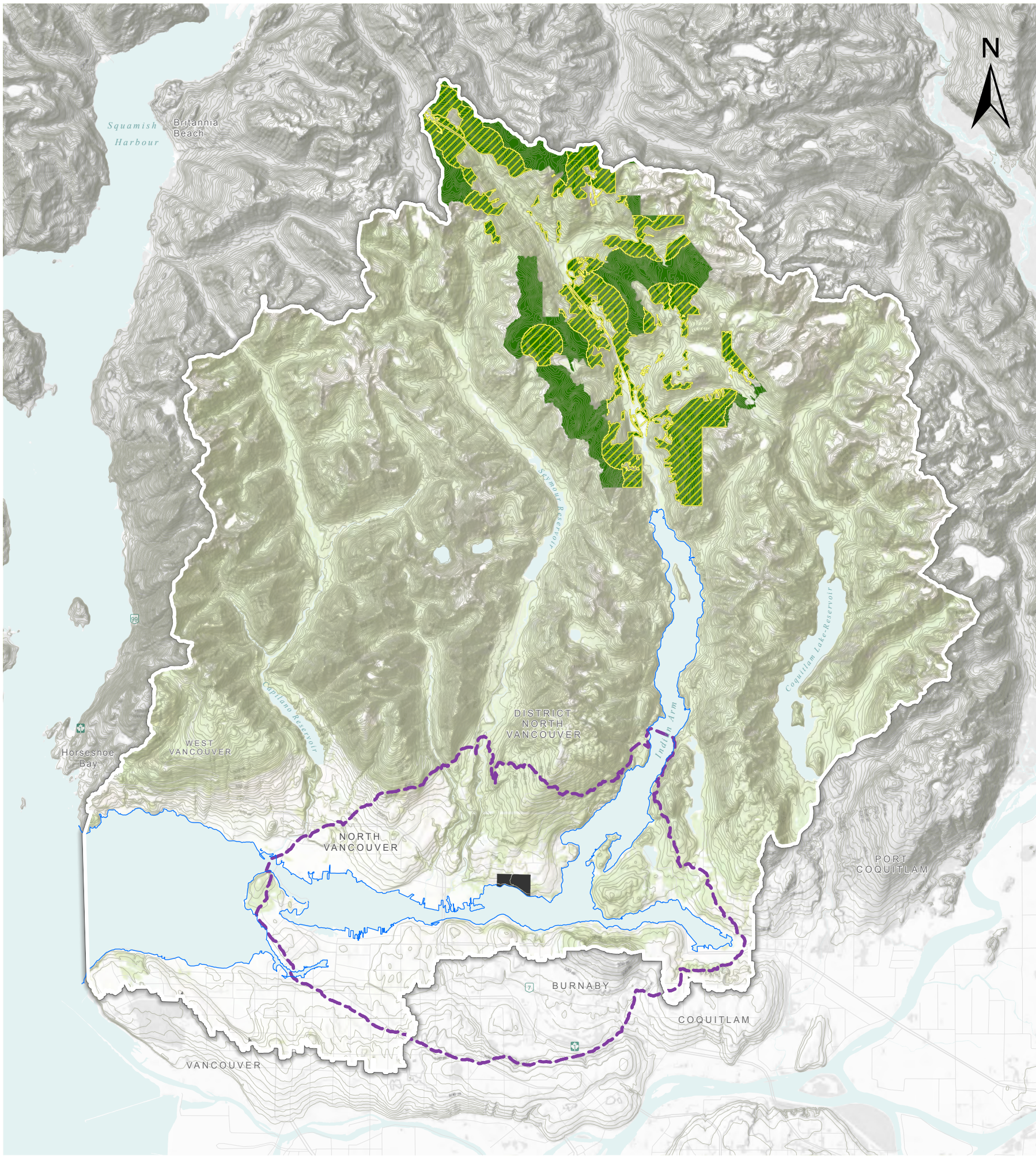


Figure 3: UNDISTURBED LANDS POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE FOR TWN USE

Key Message:

When we highlight areas that include no terrestrial or marine impacts, there are almost no places left for TWN people to freely use or harvest traditional foods. Only 6.5% of the catchment area has no known disturbance or colonial restrictions. These remaining “available” areas have little overlap with TWN’s important harvesting locations based on traditional use and occupancy data, and do not consider inaccessibility due to elevation, topography or ecosystem type. These areas are almost exclusively within the Indian River Watershed, illustrating the distance TWN people must travel to harvest in their territory, and the critical importance of the watershed to TWN today.

Although this analysis did not find direct impacts of colonial development or activities in these areas, there may still be impacts that limit or prevent TWN’s use of these areas not captured in the data. This may include impacts from unregulated or unmonitored activities (e.g., recreational use) or impacts that cannot be shown spatially (e.g., restrictive licensing requirements for harvesting), as examples. These areas are also marked by an extensive history of impacts such as industrialized logging that drastically disrupted TWN’s ability to use or harvest traditional foods. This map does not provide guidance on where Tsleil-Waututh people can harvest traditional foods in the catchment area.

More on the history of impacts on TWN’s ability to harvest and use Burrard Inlet can be found https://twnsacredtrust.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/3454051_Timeline_20240615.pdf

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Tsleil-Waututh Nation Reserve |  No Permanent or Ongoing Disturbance or Colonial Restriction (8,375 Ha / 6.5% of Catchment Area) |
|  Burrard Inlet Catchment Area | |
|  Current Shoreline | |
|  2 Hour Travel by Canoe or Foot from selilwetat |  Potential Available Areas for TWN Harvest that are Considered Areas of TWN Traditional Resource Use (5,043 Ha / 3.9% of Catchment Area) |



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION
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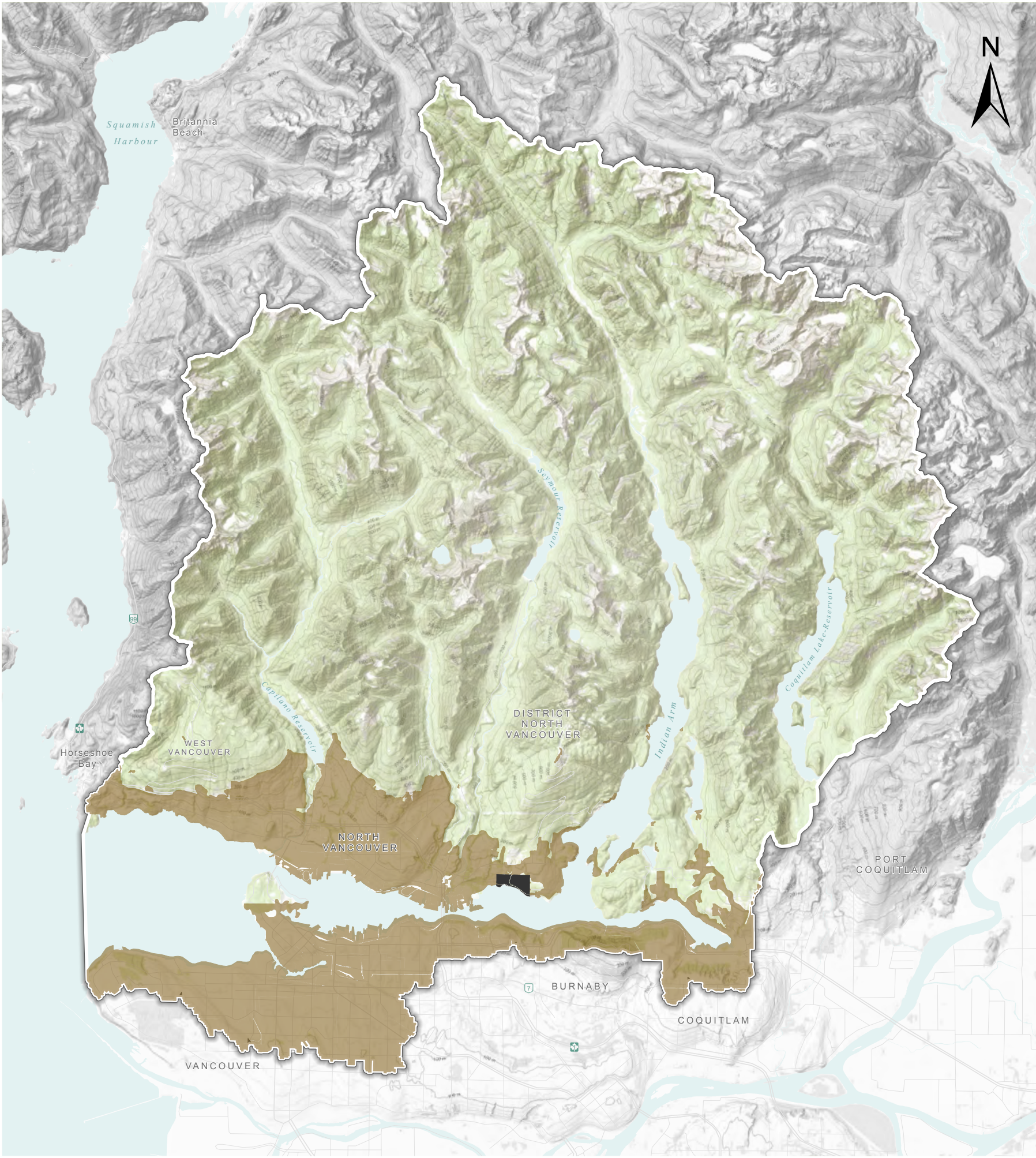


Figure 4: URBAN OR BUILT-UP AREAS

Key Message:

The area around Burrard Inlet is enveloped by extensive urban and industrial development, with 2.5 million people living in the eight municipalities around the inlet. The built up areas around Burrard Inlet are the most visible sources of impact on TWN's ability to use and harvest from the lands and waters.

- Tsileil-Waututh Nation Reserve
- Burrard Inlet Catchment Area
- Urban or Built Up Areas - Includes urban and residential agricultural mixtures (17,391 Ha / 13.5% of Catchment)



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION
Spatial Inventory of Lands Taken Up in Burrard Inlet Catchment

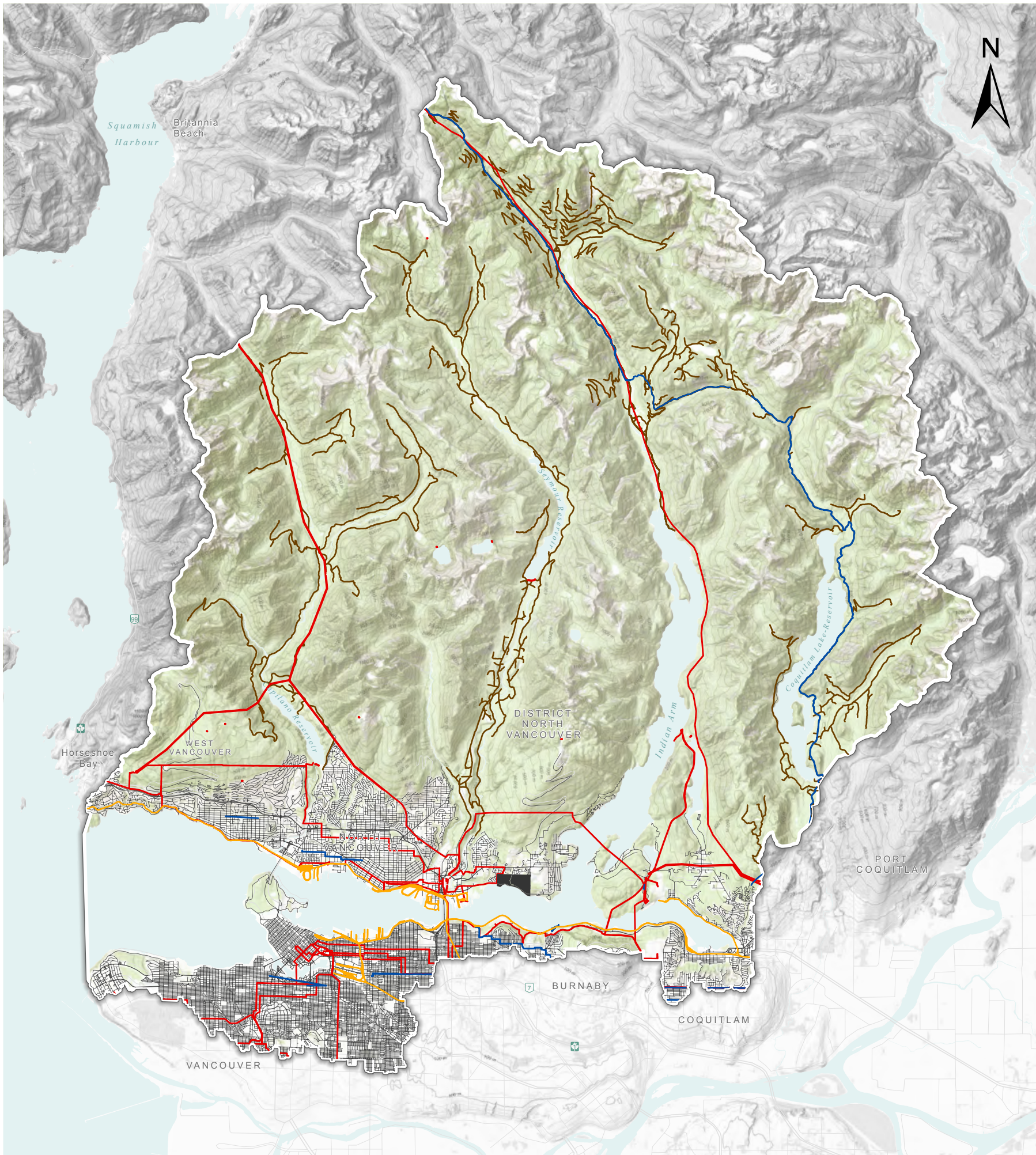


Figure 5: ROAD, RAIL AND LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURE

Key Message:

Linear disturbance from roads and rail infrastructure reveals another layer of impacts directly tied to the extensive urban and industrial development in the catchment area. These include logging roads in more remote areas that contribute to landslides, increase sedimentation in waterways, fragment habitats, degrade ecosystems and potentially induce more development and activity in these areas.

-  Tsileil-Waututh Nation Reserve
-  Burrard Inlet Catchment Area
-  Road (2,700 km)
-  Forestry Road (600 km)
-  Rail and Infrastructure (227 Ha / 0.2% of Catchment Area)
-  Power and Transmission – Includes linear dams and transmission lines (727 Ha / 0.6% of Catchment Area)
-  Oil and Gas Linear Infrastructure – Includes pipelines and ancillary features (204 Ha / 0.2% of Catchment Area)



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION
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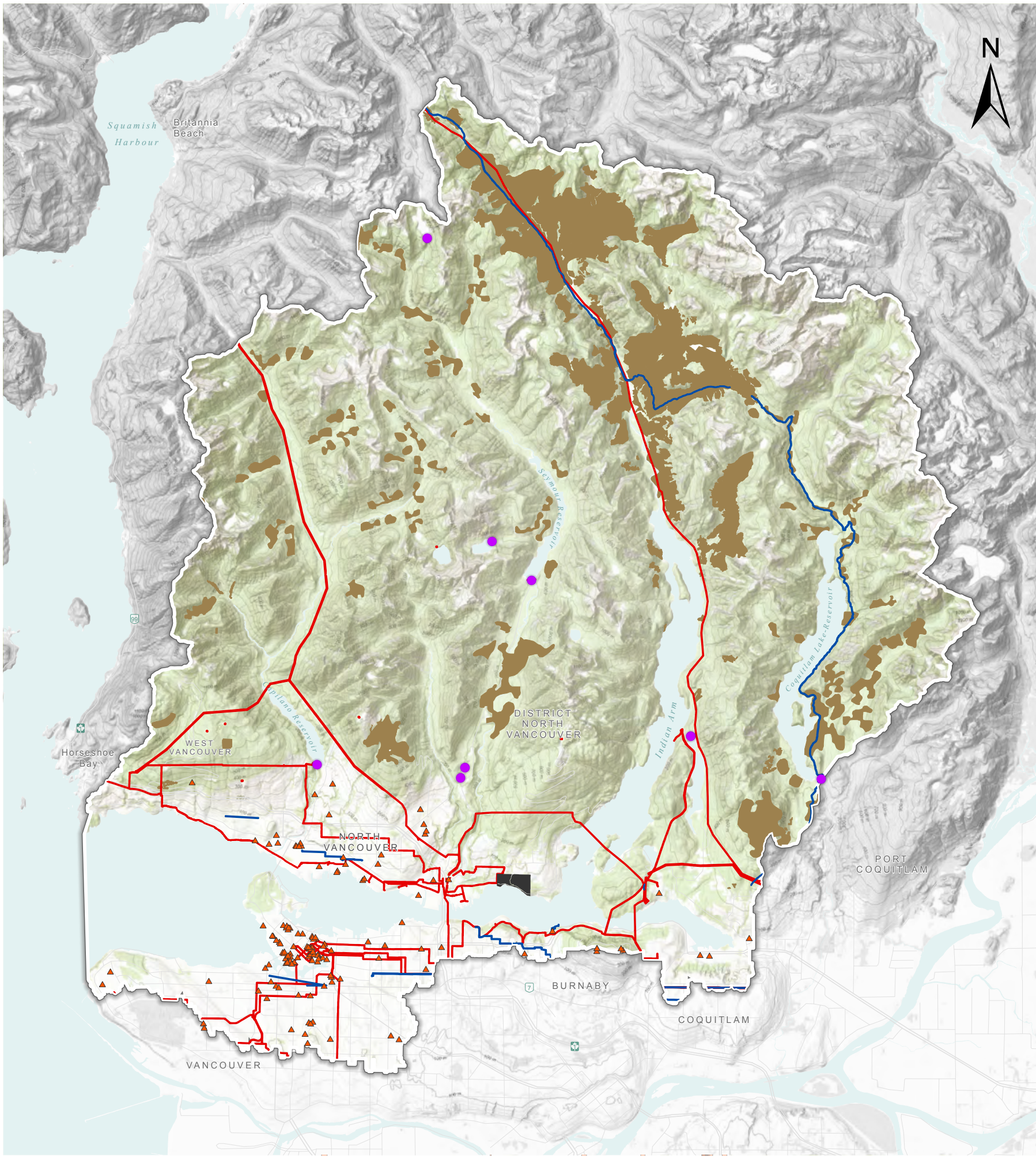


Figure 6: TERRESTRIAL INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Key Message:

Multiple industrial sectors operate within the catchment including forestry, oil/gas, energy, port development, water infrastructure, and other major industrial projects. Though most of this activity is concentrated around the shorelines of Burrard Inlet, nearly the entire catchment has been logged at some point since industrial logging began in the 1860s.

-  Tsleil-Waututh Nation Reserve

 Burrard Inlet Catchment Area

 Cutblocks from 1900 to 2023 excluding select reserves (10,559 Ha / 8.2% of Catchment Area)
This layer does not represent all the forestry activity in the area.
-  Power and Transmission – Includes linear dams and transmission lines (727 Ha / 0.6% of Catchment Area)

 Oil and Gas Linear Infrastructure – Includes pipelines and ancillary features (204 Ha / 0.2% of Catchment Area)

 Major Projects – Includes construction projects with estimated capital cost of \$15 million (CDN) or greater.

 Dam or Related Metro Vancouver Infrastructure



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION Spatial Inventory of Lands Taken Up in Burrard Inlet Catchment

Map Produced January 2026 by Tsleil-Waututh Nation
Map Scale: 1:210,000
Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N

0 2.5 5 km

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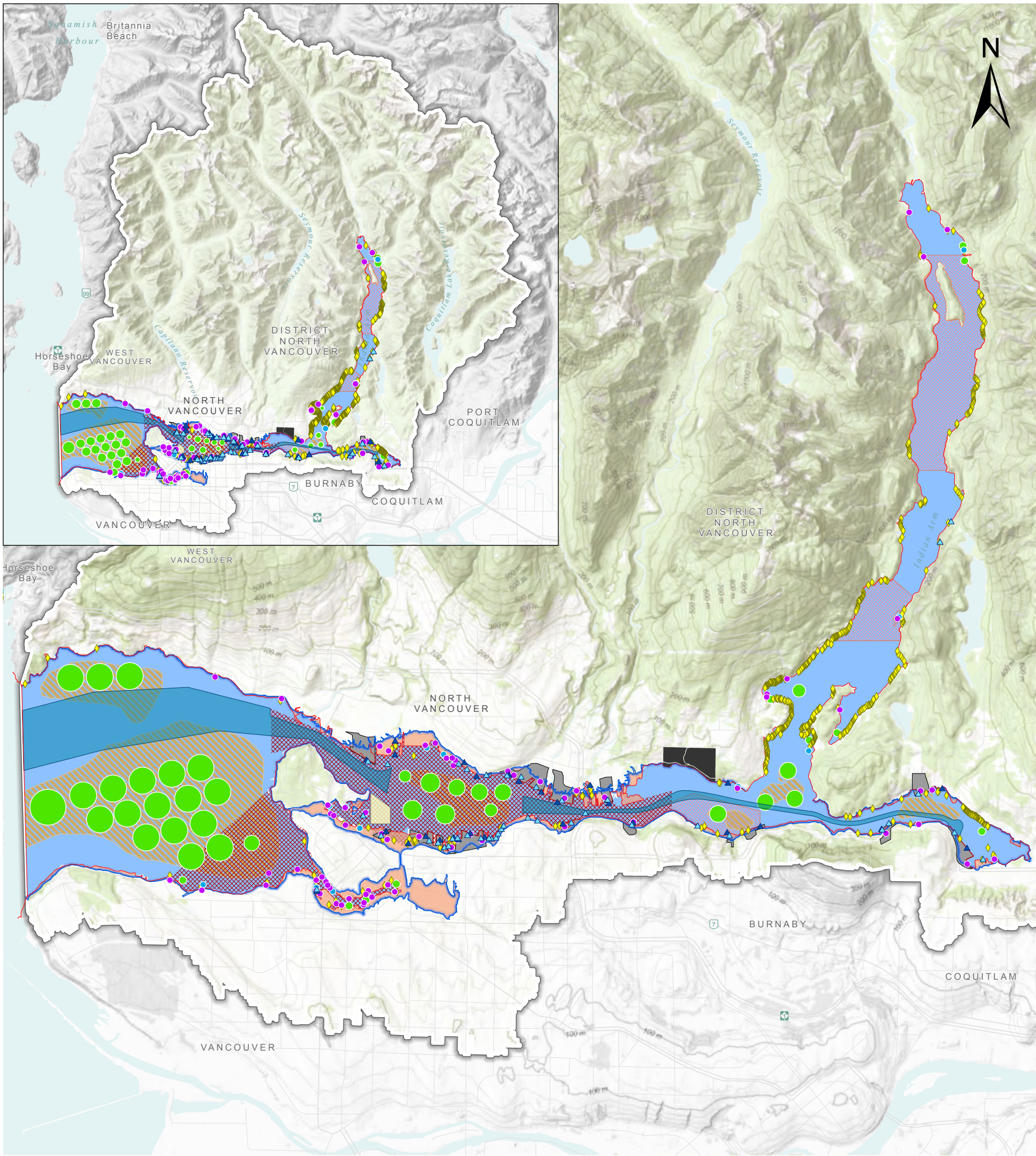


Figure 7: PORT AND MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE AND VESSEL IMPACTS

Key Message:

Both physical infrastructure and policies imposed by others (e.g., VFPA) impact TWN's ability to use and harvest traditional foods from the waters within the catchment. This map does not include information on vessel traffic in Burrard Inlet, although this is a major impact on TWN rights. For example, a total of 2,700 commercial and large vessels visited Burrard Inlet in 2021, spending 6.1M hours in its waters. Smaller and recreational vessels are not included in this number.

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Tsileil-Waututh Nation Reserve

Burrard Inlet Catchment Area

Pre-Contact Shoreline (from the year 1792)

Lost Intertidal and Marine Habitat Due to Infilling (998 Ha / 8.7 % of Burrard Inlet)

Current Shoreline

VFPA Navigational Water Jurisdiction

Navigational Fishing and Harvesting Closure (2,699 Ha / 23.6 % of Burrard Inlet)

Anchor Scour Zone (3,603 Ha / 31.5 % of Burrard Inlet)

Aircraft Operation Zone (45 Ha / 0.4 % of Burrard Inlet)

Deep-Sea Terminal

Deep-Sea Transit Route (1,592 Ha / 13.9 % of Burrard Inlet)
- 

Fishing Restrictions Within Rockfish Conservation Areas (1,455 Ha / 12.7 % of Burrard Inlet)

Anchorage – Includes deep-sea vessel anchorages and recreational anchorages (43 Sites) (1,366 Ha / 11.9 % of Burrard Inlet)

Shipyard or Terminal – Includes marine ports, terminals, shipyards, and harbours (28 Sites)

Marine Industrial Site (41 Sites)

Coastal Moorage (13 Sites)

Marina (71 Sites)

Floating Dock (571 Sites)



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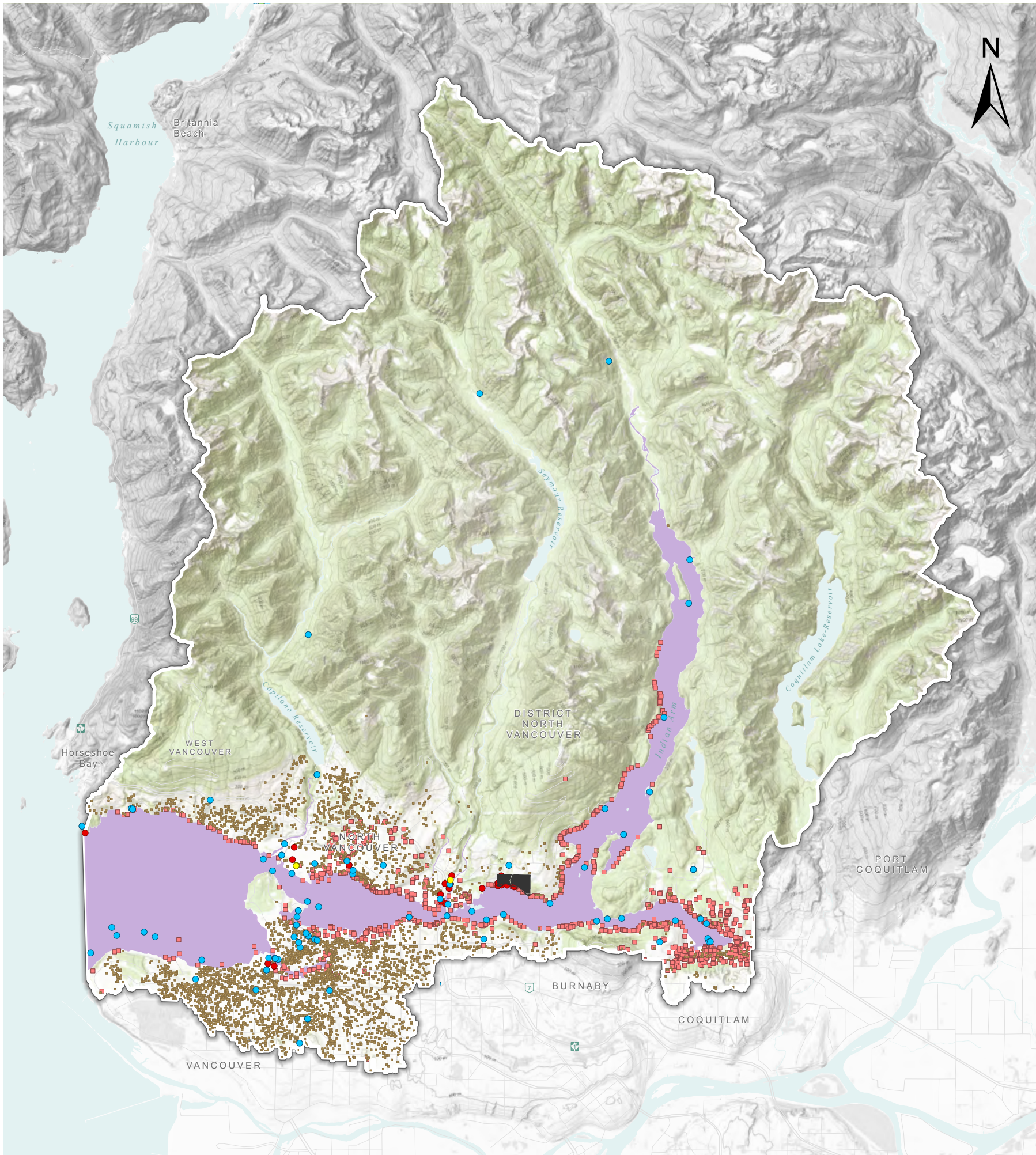


Figure 8: OUTFALLS AND CONTAMINATED SITES

Key Message:

TWN people have not been able to safely harvest shellfish from our waters since 1972 due to contamination. Over 600 pollution sources and at least 700 different contaminants have been identified in Burrard Inlet since 1971. Dozens of combined sewer outflows and hundreds of storm sewers continue to contribute to this issue. This map does not capture all the impacts from pollution and contamination – many outfalls are unauthorized, there are unknown pollution sources, and vessel discharge is not accounted for.

More information about the Burrard Inlet Water Quality Objectives can be found <https://twnation.ca/tlrstewardship/>

- Tsleil-Waututh Nation Reserve
- Burrard Inlet Catchment Area
- Bivalve Harvesting Closure
- Provincial Environmental Remediation Sites (4,659 Sites)
- Outfalls (~1,206 Sites) – Includes active sewer overflow, provincially authorized wastewater discharges, sanitary sewer outflow, and stormwater outfalls

Federal Contaminated Sites

- Active (29) Further assessment work is required to confirm whether the site is considered a "contaminated site."
- Closed (88) No further action is required.
- Suspected (3) Active sites are confirmed contaminated sites where remedial action is or may be required.



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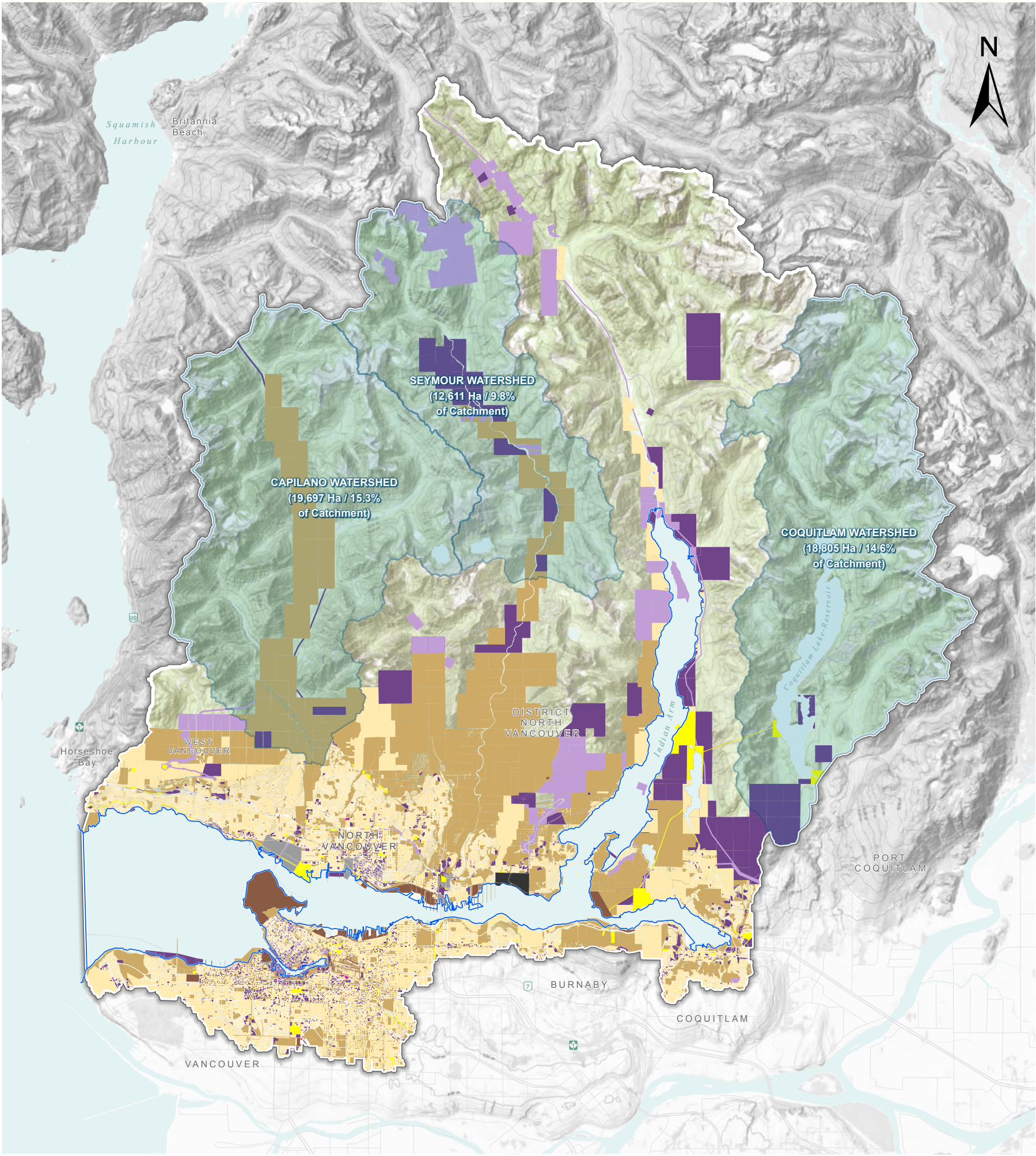
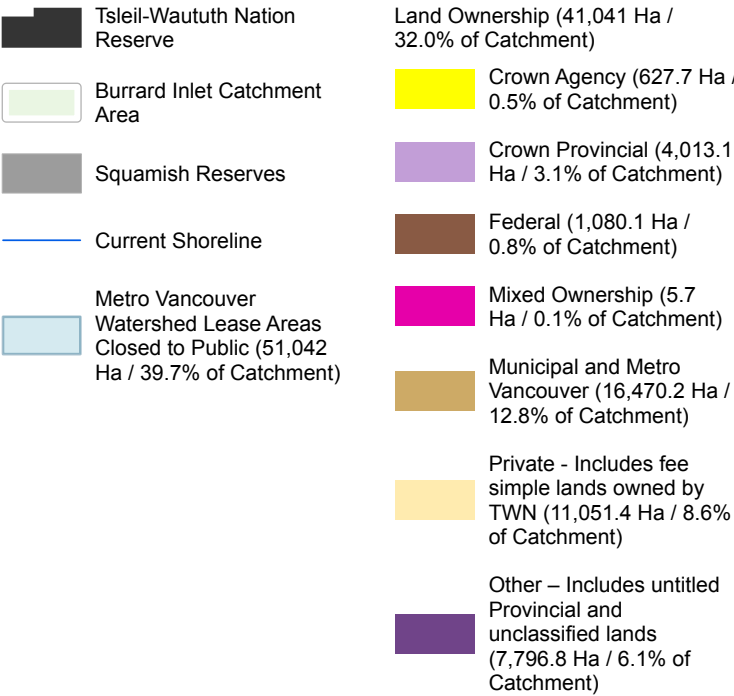


Figure 9: LAND OWNERSHIP

Key Message:

Over 70% of land in the Burrard Inlet Catchment is leased or owned by the Crown, Crown agencies, municipalities, private individuals or other groups external to TWN and therefore unavailable for TWN harvesting. This includes 999-year leases held by Metro Vancouver for the Capilano, Seymour, and Coquitlam Watersheds, which are closed to public access. The Metro Vancouver Watersheds represent the largest single land-use category in the catchment (39.7%). This map does not capture that the Province of BC asserts jurisdiction over the Burrard Inlet seabed, while the water above is under federal jurisdiction.



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION
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Map Produced January 2026 by Tsleil-Waututh Nation
Map Scale: 1:210,000
Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N

0 2.5 5 km

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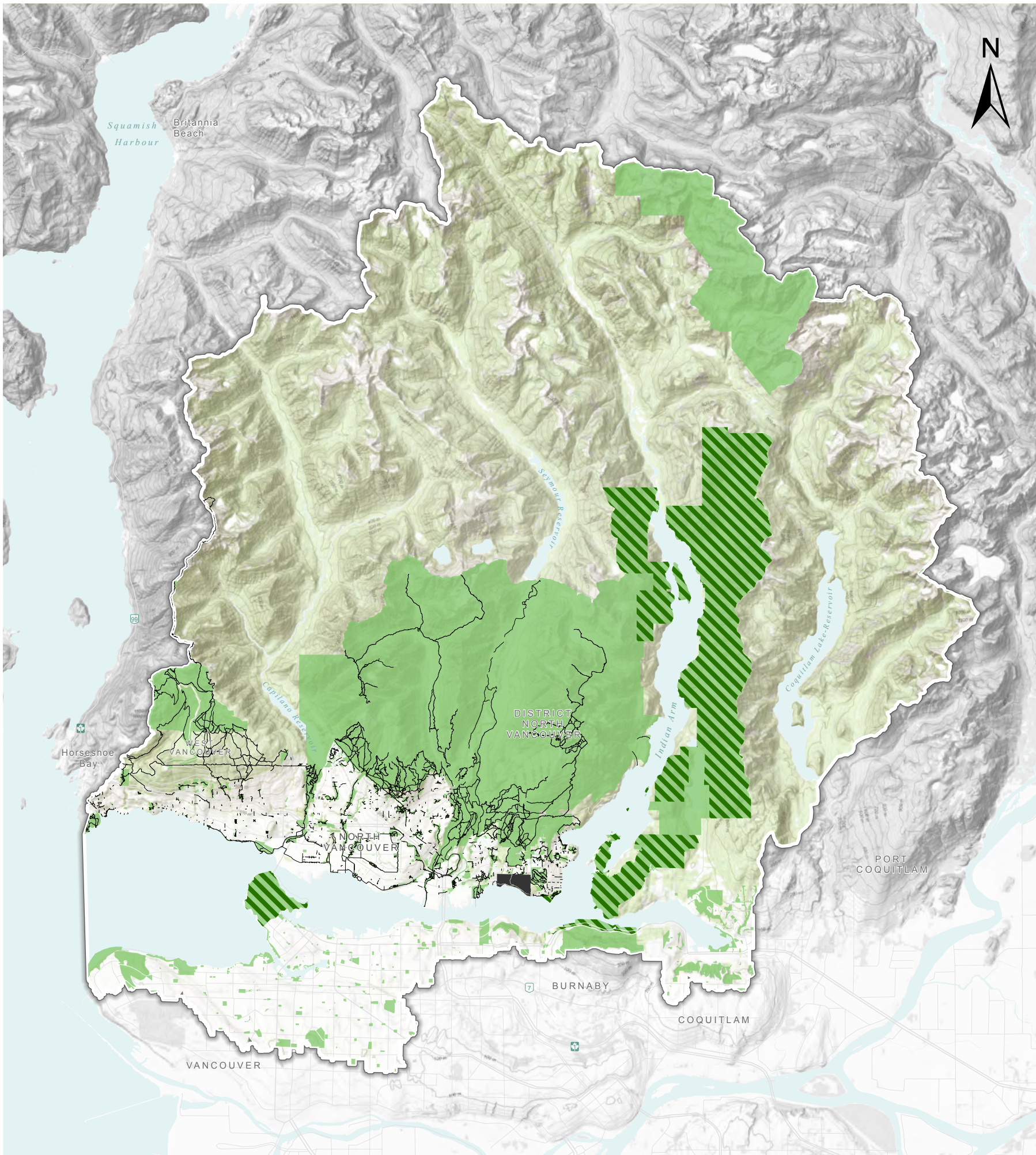


Figure 10: COLONIALY ESTABLISHED PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS

Key Message:

Parks can be a positive use of land; however, these areas are often established on important Indigenous places and restrict Indigenous access and harvesting. Historically, they were formed unilaterally by Crown governments and at times, used to deliberately sever Indigenous communities from their lands. In fact, the unilateral decision by the Province to establish Indian Arm Provincial Park arose as a key issue during treaty negotiations between TWN, BC, and Canada. Since 1998, TWN has signed co-management agreements for five parks in the catchment, including Indian Arm Park which is now rightfully named Say Nuth Khaw Yum Park.

-  Tsleil-Waututh Nation Reserve
-  Burrard Inlet Catchment Area
-  Hiking and Cycling Trails in Parks (only shown for the District of North Vancouver)
-  Parks and Protected Areas (25,078 Ha / 19.5% of Catchment Area)
-  Parks Co-managed with TWN (8,140 Ha / 6.3% of Catchment Area)



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION
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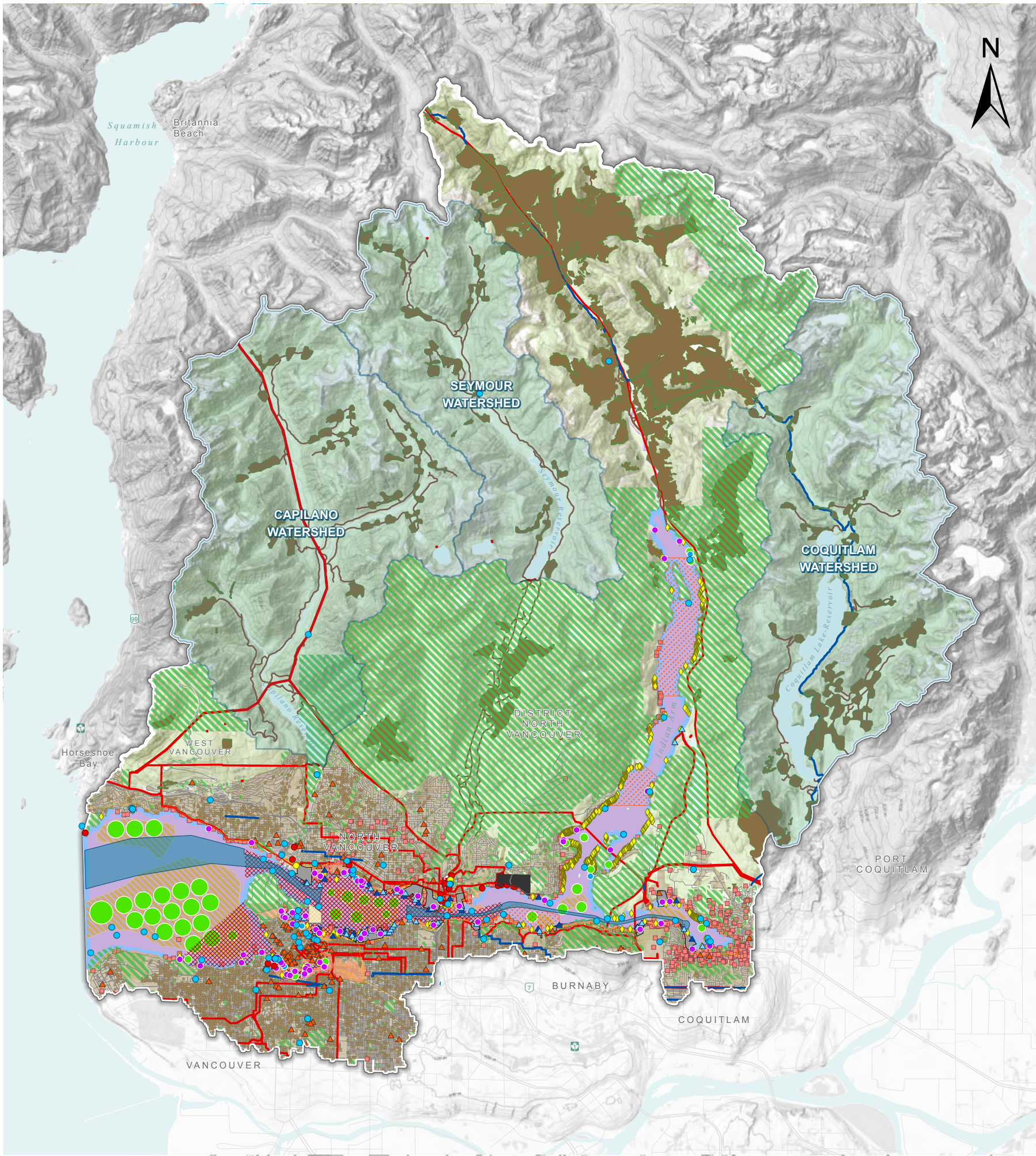


Figure 11: TERRESTRIAL AND MARINE/SHORELINE IMPACTS

Key Message:

Although this map clearly illustrates TWN's loss of use of its territory from colonial impacts, this is not a comprehensive analysis of all the different ways that colonial development impact TWN's lands and rights and underrepresents total impacts in the area. Our people no longer have a meaningful ability to exercise many rights including harvesting food or safely using the inlet for cultural purposes.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Tsileil-Waututh Nation Reserve | Power and Transmission |
| Burrard Inlet Catchment Area | Oil and Gas Linear Infrastructure |
| Urban Areas | Major Projects |
| Bivalve Harvesting Closure | VFPa Navigational Water Jurisdiction |
| Outfalls | Navigational Fishing and Harvesting Closure |
| Provincial Environmental Remediation Sites | Lost Intertidal and Marine Habitat Due to Infilling |
| Active Federal Contaminated Sites | Anchor Scour Zone |
| Suspected Federal Contaminated Sites | Aircraft Operation Zone |
| Closed Federal Contaminated Sites | Deep-Sea Terminal |
| Forestry Road | Deep-Sea Transit Route |
| Road | Fishing Restrictions Within Rockfish Conservation Areas |
| Rail and Infrastructure | Anchorage |
| Metro Vancouver Watershed Lease Areas Closed to Public | Shipyard or Terminal |
| Parks and Protected Areas | Marine Industrial Site |
| Cutblocks from 1900 to 2023 excluding select reserves | Coastal Moorage |
| | Marina |
| | Floating Dock |

Map does not include land ownership layers.



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