



North, No South

Friday July 5th – After 4 nights at Roche we pointed the bow north headed for Nanaimo in Canada. If you are cruising north through the Gulf Islands you have to go through a passage called Dodd Narrows to get to Nanaimo. This is a narrow passage where the current can run up to 8 knots and it's best if only one boat at a time passes through the narrowest spot.

We timed our arrival for slack tide so we wouldn't have much current, but so does everyone else. It was packed with boats lined up trying to go through the passage both north and south. It's good practice to announce your passage through the narrows on the radio so any opposing traffic knows what you are doing. As we got close a tugboat with a log boom announced they were headed through in about 10 minutes. I couldn't see them, but we waited while the boats stacked up behind us. Soon they came through, all squirrely in the current. All the boats hugged the shoreline just south of the narrows to give them plenty of room. After it was clear we announced our passage north on the radio and headed through. About 20 seconds later another boat announced they were heading north as well, no big deal, they must be behind us. Then 3 seconds later they corrected that saying they were heading south. At this point we were committed to the passage and I really didn't have any

idea what they were actually doing, so I got on the radio and told them not to go through until we were clear. Thankfully we did not encounter another boat and I still have no idea who they were.

We hadn't cleared customs yet and never have in Nanaimo, so we searched for the customs dock which ended up being full of boats. The fuel dock was right next to customs and the nice customs agent at the dock allowed us to clear customs there and fuel up at the same time. Once cleared, we made our way to our assigned slip in the Port Authority Marina. The weather continued to suck (and the 10-day forecast wasn't any better) so we decided to stay 2 nights in Nanaimo.

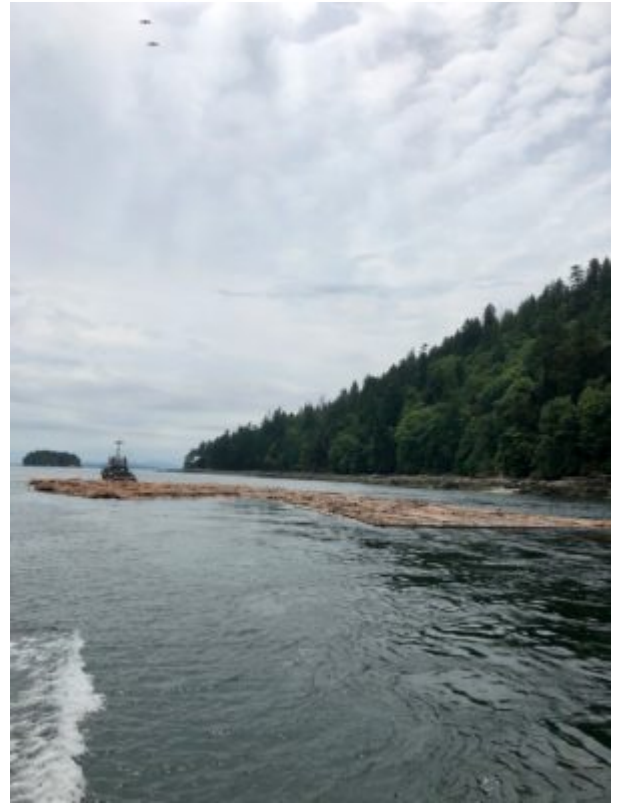


The fireworks boat left the dock right in front of us





Tug pulling log boom



Large log boom



Entering Dodd



Spectators show up on the shore to watch boats go through



Ava made a shot glass of
carrots



This seagull is having a
hard time getting the food

down



Lucky Day

Tuesday July 2nd. About 10am the rain started to come down and at the same time we vacated our slip at Roche Harbor. Roche Harbor said they don't take reservations for the 4th and they kick everyone out of the marina on the 2nd then it's a 3-night minimum. Fortunately, we were able to get on the wait list the day before, but we had no idea if we would be able to get back in.

With the rain pouring down we anchored in the bay and waited for Roche to call us back in. A couple hours went by before we started hearing other boats calling in on the radio with "reservations". Never did figure out what the deal was, except that it sounds like if you were "in" somehow with Roche, or you have been coming there for years on the 4th, you could make reservations. We were not so lucky.

5pm we finally got a call that they had really good spot for us. They put us on the outside of the breakwater with 2 other

boats. The best view in the house for watching the fireworks! Turns out we were lucky!

We spent the next fun filled 3 nights at Roche surrounded by some seriously festive boaters. They were all decked out, especially on the 4th, almost everyone was dressed up in celebration of Independence Day! Super fun to see, but we should have been much more prepared. We did the loop hike a couple more times, but our biggest adventure was a 10.2-mile hike Julie, Ava and I did around Lake Roche Harbor. We didn't think it would be that long but once we were in it there was no turning back. Ava did especially well, the girl can hike!

We had a nice time meeting up with some friends who were staying at the Seattle Yacht Club docks, then at 10:30pm the show started. The fireworks barge was right in front of our boat. It was incredible, we sat on top of our boat with an unobstructed view of a long, loud and brightly lit show. Super fun and a great way to celebrate Independence Day!



The rain coming down right
as we left our slip





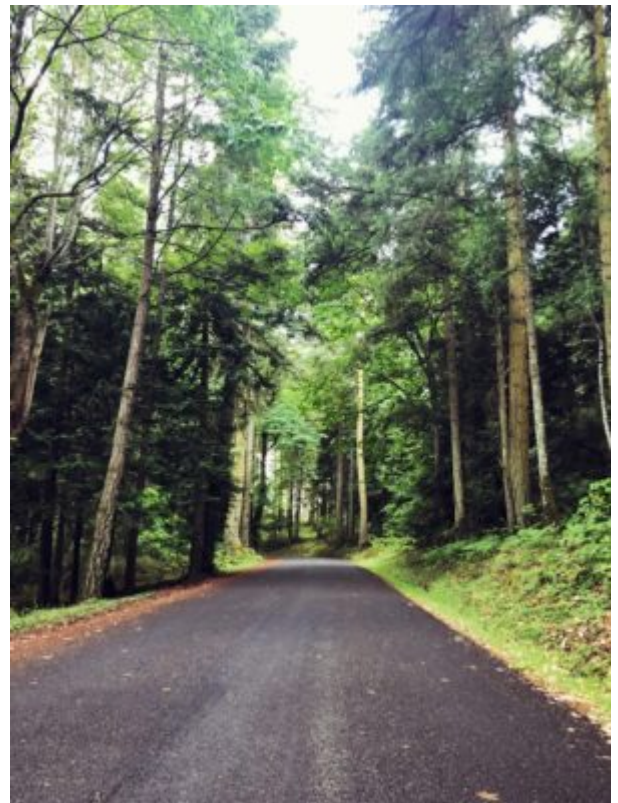
Our new Spot on the dock





Roche Harbor Lake





Loop hike road



Mobile Fireworks boat







Long Day

Monday July 1st, 5:50am Julie and I leave the Edmonds dock to our stern and head north for the start of a very long day! We have to make it to the south end of the Swinomish Channel before the extremely low -3 tide. At 9:15am we arrive at a zero tide and start through the channel. Our depth sounder read 5.4' in some spots, thankfully we were not any later or we may have been grounded!

LaConner Maritime Services was waiting to haul us out of the water to have our underwater lights fixed. While the boat was on the hard, we had a great lunch at Seeds. The crew at American Tug installed new lights and fixed a bunch of other little things in quick fashion. So quick in fact that at 2:30 we were back in the water heading north again to Roche Harbor. Another 3.5-hour cruise and we arrived at Roche just after 6pm, a very long day! Our plan was to stay at Roche for the 4th but they don't take reservations and they have a 3-night minimum which means if you get in on the 2nd you have to stay until the 5th. We got a slip assignment for the 1st but they said we would have to leave in the morning and anchor out until our name was called off the waiting list. Their system is crazy, we asked multiple people how it works, and everyone

gave us a different answer.

We were all very tired but after dinner we did the “Loop Hike” to get some exercise then early to bed.







This section of train track rotates so boats can pass when the track is not in use. As we approached a train was passing, so we had to wait.



