

British Columbia

## Bringing long-buried streams to light a part of urban renewal in Vancouver



Part of CBC's The Early Edition new column about urban design and city living 'About Here'

CBC News · Posted: Apr 28, 2019 10:00 AM PT | Last Updated: April 28



Long-buried streams are being uncovered through the process of daylighting in the City of Vancouver. (Uytae Lee/CBC)

[comments](#)



You might be familiar with False Creek, but underneath the city of Vancouver are dozens of streams and creeks, buried long ago and diverted through a network of pipes.

Now, some of these streams are making a comeback.



There are dozens of buried streams in Vancouver. (Uytae Lee/CBC)

Still Creek, which runs through Burnaby and into East Vancouver, is one such example, said Uytae Lee, a columnist with CBC's The Early Edition. Parts of it were buried and now parts of it are being restored.

"Streams such as Still Creek and others like it were once considered a nuisance," Lee told CBC's Stephen Quinn.

"They would often get in the way of road construction or buildings ... They were also these dumping grounds for garbage, so there was really this incentive to bury them and that's kind of just what happened."

- VIDEO [Why Darmouth, Nova Scotia is unearthing a river buried under the city](#)

## Environmental benefits

Lee says the process of uncovering long-buried streams — called daylighting — can have environmental benefits that go beyond becoming a natural habitat for wildlife or park space

for humans.

- **Salmon make a miraculous reappearance in East Vancouver**

Currently, the city's sewer systems collect rainwater through a system of drainage pipes. This mixes with raw sewage and the collective product ends up at the waste treatment centre, where it is treated and released into the ocean.



Rainwater is collected in the city's storm drains where it is mixed with sewage and heads to a water treatment centre. (Martin Diotte/CBC)

The problem is, rainwater does not need to be treated in the same way as sewage, and during storms, the volume of rainwater entering the sewer system can overwhelm water treatment plants and cause major problems.

Uncovered streams can help absorb rainwater, and take it back to the ocean in a much more efficient — and natural — manner.

- **'Burying rivers is not a great idea:' Cities work to uncover their hidden waterways**

"We're sort of finally realizing that nature has a lot more value than we often give it credit for and that you know our concrete and engineered solutions often kind of suck compared to

them," Lee said.

"In the future I think we'll be seeing more and more city planners, engineers and architects sort of work with and learn from nature instead of well burying it underground."

***To learn more about Vancouver's stream network and the process of daylighting, watch the video below:***

*Uytae Lee uses his background in urban design to rethink the city in a column with CBC's The Early Edition.*

CBC  Radio-Canada

©2019 CBC/Radio-Canada. All rights reserved.

Visitez Radio-Canada.ca