

Quamichan Lake loop

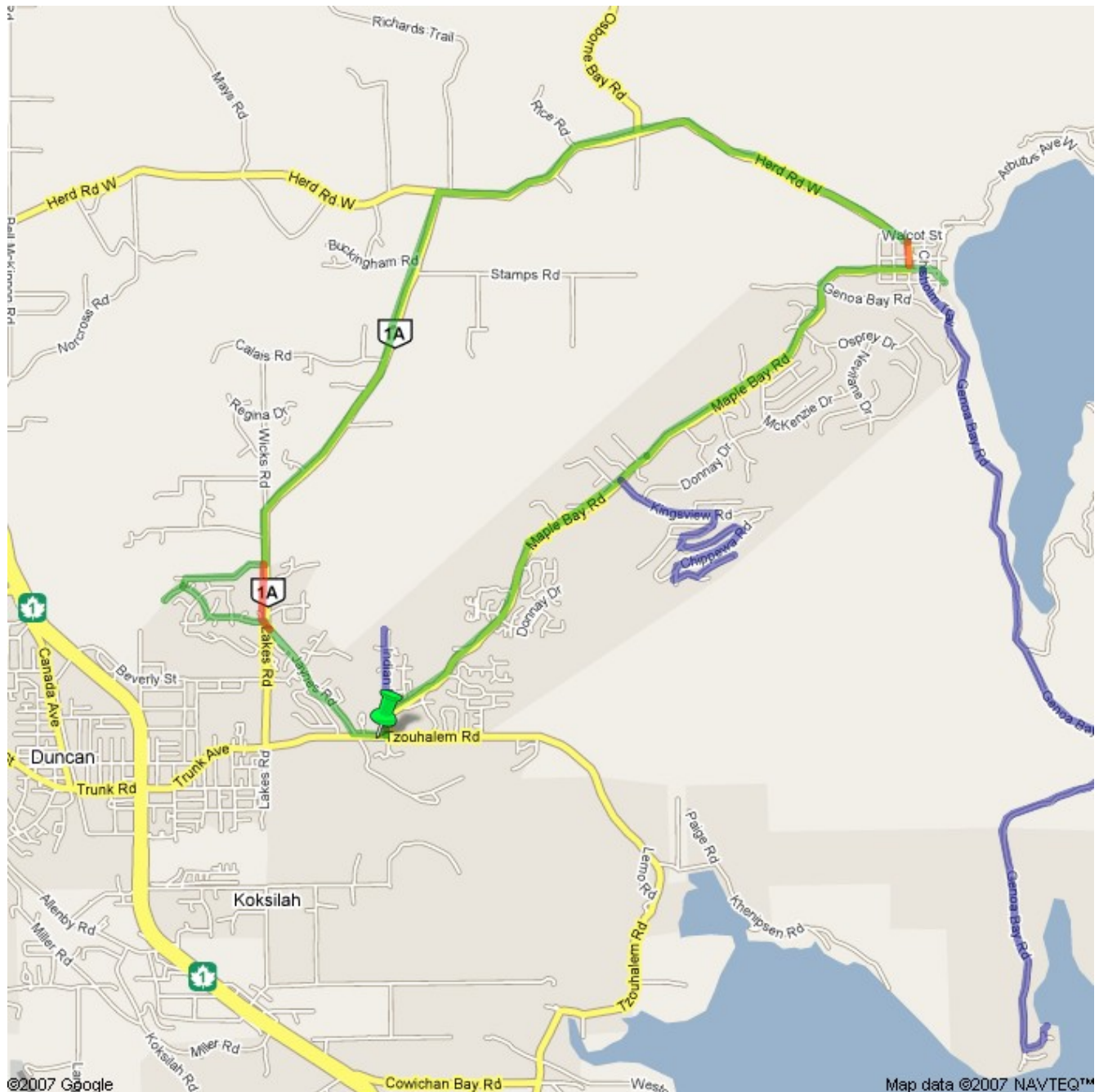
ride by John Scull, February 2008

Distance: 18 km **Estimated Time:** 1 hour to all day

Terrain: Moderate Rolling **Safety:** Safe with a few hazardous sections **Surface:** Mostly paved.

Features: Opportunities for wildlife and nature viewing, a wonderful shingle beach, and a ride through attractive farmland with beautiful mountain views. Access to Genoa Bay spur.

Map legend: Safe sections in green, hazardous sections in red, spurs in blue.



The trip begins at the Tzouhalem (tzoo-HAY-lem) Road Roundabout, where it intersects the Tzouhalem Road-Cowichan Bay loop. Except for a few short sections, this is a very safe and peaceful ride in spite of moderate traffic on some of the roads. It is recommended that riders go in the counterclockwise direction described below, as about 5 km of Lakes Road, which can be very busy, only has a bike lane on one side.

0.0 km. Tzouhalem Road Roundabout. Go north on Maple Bay Road.

0.1 km. **Spur.** Maple Bay Road curves to the right, but get in the left turn lane and go straight on Indian Road for a 0.7 km spur to Art Mann Park. The park features a playground and picnic tables. It is a great place for birding (ducks, geese, swans, coots, and many others) and has a view of beautiful Quamichan Lake. Return to Maple Bay Road and turn left.

0.2 km. **Spur.** Right turn for a short spur to St. Peter's Churchyard where you will see old Oregon Ash trees and, in the spring, many wildflowers.

2.9 km. Kingsview Road. Turn right for the steep ride to the Mt. Tzouhalem Wildflower Reserve and hiking trails. See the [Bus and Bike guide for details](#).

3.3 km. Quamichan Inn Restaurant and Bed & Breakfast

3.4 km. Penfold Farm Bed & Breakfast

4.4 km. Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve. This is a great place to view native plants, insects, and birds, but it is not open to the public. You can get a good view of the wildflowers and trees from the viewing platform by the road or by backtracking to Aitken Road and walking along the periphery of the preserve. The preserve features frequent volunteer work parties and sometimes offers tours to the public, see www.naturecowichan.net for current information. Acquisition of the preserve was a joint project of the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Cowichan Community Land Trust, a member of Nature Cowichan.

5.4 km. Genoa Bay Road. Ignore the sign that says Genoa Bay 8 km and continue on Maple Bay Road.

6.1 km. **Spur.** At Herd Road, continue down the hill 0.1 km. Turn right on Chisholm Trail for the [Genoa Bay spur \(see separate description\)](#) or continue 0.2 km straight down the hill to Maple Bay beach. The shingle beach features a memorable view, a government dock, and the Grapevine Restaurant. To the north is a small park with change rooms and a swimming float (in the summer) and a waterfront pub, the Brigantine.

6.1 km. Left on Herd Road. There is no bike lane for about 200 metres, so use caution.

6.3 km. Small park with a playground, tennis courts, and a dog park. The bike lane begins again here.

8.8 km. **Junction.** Osborn Bay Road to Crofton and the ferry to Saltspring Island. This is a narrow winding road with lots of traffic and an almost non-existent bike lane, so use caution.

9.5 km. North Haven Bed & Breakfast.

10.3 km. On the left is the Cowichan Rugby Club, on the right is the Pacific Northwest Raptor Flying Centre.

10.5 km. **Junction.** Richard's Trail. This is a beautiful and quiet ride which bypasses Crofton, so it provides an attractive route to Chemainus. A great place for birding.

10.6 km. Left on Lakes Road.

14.1 km. Right on Townend Road, a firm dirt road.

14.7 km. Left on a small short path, then right on York Road.

15.1 km. Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area. This is the same endangered Garry Oak ecosystem which is protected by the Garry Oak Preserve, but you are allowed to enter this one. A walk through the Area will be rewarded by views of native wildflowers and birds. Two members of Nature Cowichan help to protect this area: The Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society cares for the adjoining wetlands and the Cowichan Community Land Trust supports volunteers who patrol and care for the Area.

15.1 km. Backtrack on York Road to Trillium Terrace.

15.3 km. Right on Trillium Terrace.

16.1 km. Right on Lakes Road. There is no bike lane and lots of traffic here, so ride on the sidewalk or use extreme caution.

16.5 km. Left on Jaynes Road. Use extreme caution in making this turn.

17.3 km. Left on Tzouhalem Road.

17.6 km. **Junction.** Tzouhalem Road Roundabout.