Welcome everyone to the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association’s first official newsletter!!! These newsletters are meant to provide members of the E&N Division CRHA with content related to events, projects and railway operations that the group is currently, previously, or will be involved with, in the future. Newsletters are an excellent source of information for those members that are not directly involved with the group but may still want to know the activities within the group being a member. Copies of each issue will be emailed to members and mailed directly to those without an email address. Please enjoy issues of “The Whistle Post” as they are put together to benefit you as members of the E&N Division. Any questions, comments or positive feedback is more than welcome and can be answered via email or socially online. Contact information is listed at the bottom on page 5 of this issue. Thank you all as members for your continued interest and support within the E&N Division as group effort it what it takes to establish the group we have today. Thank you, everyone.
The Port Alberni Subdivision is a branch line off the Victoria Sub in Parksville and runs 39.0 miles from here to Port Alberni BC. The entire line is a very scenic rail journey and well worth experiencing! After leaving Parksville westbound, the railway travels through the areas of Errington, Coombs, Hilliers, and Whiskey Creek before passing through Little Qualicum Falls Provincial Park and the scenic ride along Cameron Lake with its many trestles. Once past the lake, the railway is cut high above MacMillan Provincial Park (Cathedral Grove) gradually rising through the pass up and over the Alberni Summit. From here the line passes Summit and Loon Lakes, gradually descending for a winding ride down into the Alberni Valley. The subdivision has been known to have more unimagined scenery than the WP&YR in Alaska! From the right of way, there are many scenic views of lakes, rivers, mountains, and valleys as the railway twists its way through mountain passes, along and over many rivers and streams down into the Alberni Valley only to arrive in Port Alberni BC. All E&N trackage was previously owned and operated by the Canadian Pacific Railway and later RailAmerica. The Port Alberni Subdivision was the most westerly point on the CPR; still having both a lot of Canadian and railway heritage and importance. All E&N trackage is now owned by Vancouver Islanders after being donated by CP. The railway is operated by Southern Railway of Vancouver Island (SVI) and managed by the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF). Alberni Pacific Railway (APR) have trackage rights on the Port Sub from the Port Alberni Station (MP 39.0) to the McLean Mill spur at MP 33.33. Read on to the next page for more information of current operations and activities over the Port Alberni Subdivision of Vancouver Island’s very own, Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway.
Since late April, early May 2009, the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association has been closely involved with the Port Alberni Subdivision and Alberni Pacific Railway from Parksville, to Port Alberni BC (39.0 Miles). Work began in 2009 to clear the right of way of brush overgrowth from Parksville to Smith Rd at MP 33.33 (end of APR trackage rights). The Port Alberni Subdivision has been unused since 2001 when service on the line was discontinued; since then brush has grown significantly. Near the end of 2009 the division created the East End Track Gang to maintain the Port Sub from MP 0.0 to MP 22.2 (Loon Lake) at the Alberni Summit. APR maintaining the west side of Loon Lake and the E&N Division (East End Track Gang) to maintain the east side. The E&N Division has been involved since 2009 to the current date with regular track upkeep, repairs, maintenance, and the continuous removal of trees, rock slides, etc. Reopening the subdivision from MP 0.0 to MP 33.33 for work crews and maintenance of way equipment has been a great success and very rewarding accomplishment for all involved! This is a large and sometimes difficult project with rock slides and ongoing maintenance with the attended difficulties of transporting equipment to rural areas without using a railcar. We cannot use large rail equipment at the moment due to tie and trestle conditions. In August 2010 a website was created specifically to host all information and photos related to work done on the Port Alberni Subdivision by the E&N Division since the start of the Port Sub project in April / May 2009. See links to the site at the bottom on page 5 of this issue.
The E&N Division CRHA’s Railroad Equipment

The E&N Division has, over the years, acquired two boxcars and a transfer caboose donated by Class 1 railroads; particularly CN and CP. VIRX GP9-RM #7059 and the 80’ express car are privately owned. The two 40 ft. boxcars belonged to CP and were in use in the Revelstoke area until donation of the equipment to the E&N Division. Both railcars have been fully restored to their original looks. The ex CN #76695 transfer caboose was used to transport rail crews over CN. The caboose was then donated to the E&N Division and has since been fully restored to operating conditions with an exterior E&N Division green and custom decals. The 35’ caboose is a fully functional crew dormitory including an electric generator, sink, heat, lights, toilet (with holding tanks), desks, lounge, fridge, stove, and storage. This makes our caboose a great meeting place and dormitory for all members as well as a welcoming lounge for all of our very hard working, dedicated, and truly commendable volunteers!
Past Events Since 2009

September 2009 was E&N Railway Days at the Victoria Roundhouse. The successful event was a great day for all who attended; with train rides and equipment displays. The E&N Division’s equipment was present and VIA Rail / SVI provided round trip train rides from Victoria to Langford and back. In July 2010, the E&N Division in part with the Arrowsmith Potters Guild and Southern Railway of Vancouver Island (SVI) hosted Island Railway Days at the Parksville train station to celebrate the stations 100th anniversary. Displays of the division’s equipment, speeders, and SVI 119 locomotive were all present. The event was very successful and lasted over the weekend of July 10th and 11th. Hopes are to have a similar event in 2011 in celebration of the E&N Railway’s 125th anniversary. In early 2011 the E&N Division attended a model train show at Beban Park in Nanaimo. With a table hosting information on the Port Alberni Subdivision, membership, E&N Railway decals for sale, displays, and a slideshow of photos taken on the Port Sub since the start of the project in 2009 made it a very productive and fun event for all who attended the two day weekend occasion.

In Closing...

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Over all events the E&N Division have participated in since 2009; the involvement with the Port Alberni Subdivision and the East End Track Gang has been the main priority and overall commitment since the beginning of the Port Sub project; in late April, early May 2009. Hard working and dedicated volunteers is a key to getting the job not only done, but have great success within it.

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