



# CARIBOO CHILCOTIN COAST

TRAVEL GUIDE

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# WELCOME TO A LAND WITHOUT LIMITS

As you turn these pages, we encourage you to open your mind and soul to the endless travel adventures available in this wild place within British Columbia.

Your ideas and travel plans take shape as your eyes and mind navigate this land of breathtaking beauty, ruggedness, incredible wildlife and outdoor adventure opportunities. You are about to enter a region that truly is “A Land Without Limits”.

We're delighted to share this snapshot of our diverse world and its distinctive landscapes. Where evergreen timber, ocean fjords, deserts, arid canyons, deciduous woodlands, alpine mountains and glacier ecosystems are the perfect setting for all you can experience in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon. Since our boundaries embrace virtually every kind of terrain and climate, we boast the most diverse range of activities of any B.C. region; our wild lures visitors from around the world.

Many of the region's resorts, guest ranches, festivals and events take advantage of our exciting wild west past, which includes the history of our First Nations peoples, the fur trade, the gold rush, ranching and agriculture. We offer a world where aboriginal cultures and contemporary lifestyles exist harmoniously, where both ancient traditions and modern life have an integral role to play in a vast, dramatic land.

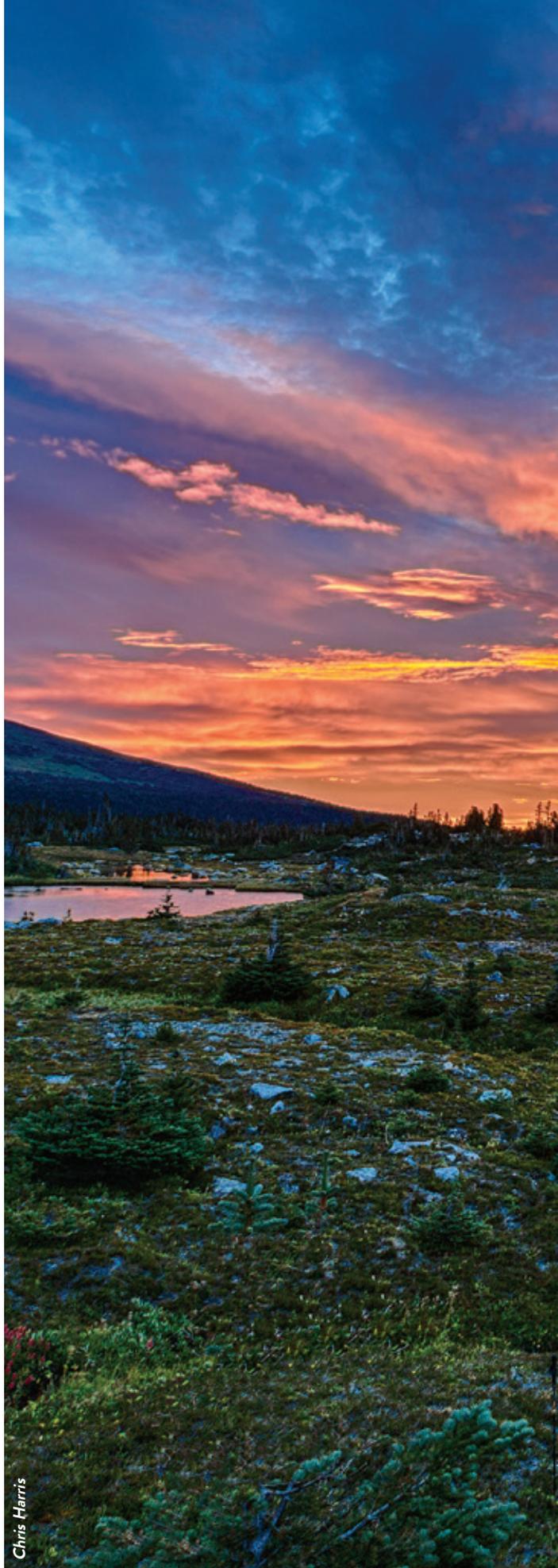
Travel thousands of kilometers of coastline in the Great Bear Rainforest, including secluded coves, fjords, inlets, pristine beaches and rocky shores, where you'll find world-class saltwater fishing and eco-adventures, with opportunities to view bears, seabirds, whales and porpoises up close. Welcoming First Nations villages offer a rich and storied heritage that residents are pleased to share. If you time it right, you may even witness one of nature's most remarkable feats: salmon migrating back to their birthplace, to spawn in many of the rivers and streams on the Coast, throughout the Fraser Canyon and into the Cariboo and Chilcotin.

We proudly embrace and showcase our open skies and rustic side, but, of course, we have much more to offer: sophisticated wilderness and eco-resorts, championship golf courses and a wide range of cultural, intellectual and adventure experiences.

Photographers, mountain bikers, skiers, hikers, snowmobilers, golfers, campers, fishermen and sailors all find nirvana in this geographically diverse region. We're a land of small cities, towns and villages, where you can explore our richly storied past while enjoying present-day activities and 'wild' outdoor adventures.

As you immerse yourself in this guide, we hope you are encouraged to experience your adventures with us soon. Whether you travel the Gold Rush Trail or escape to a hidden paradise we look forward to sharing our legendary hospitality with you, your friends and family.

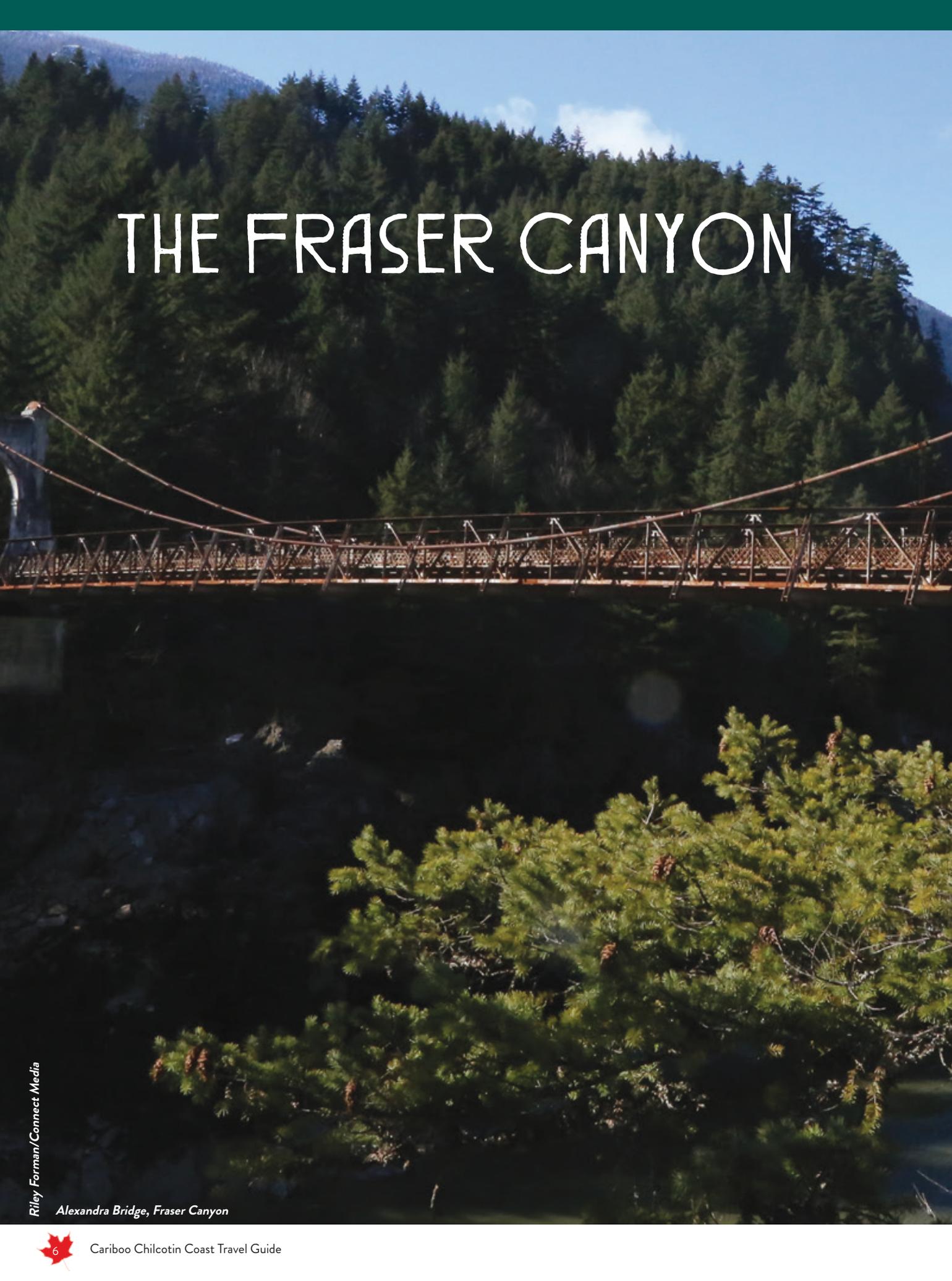
## OUR LAND WITHOUT LIMITS WELCOMES YOU!



Chris Harris



# THE FRASER CANYON







The Fraser River carved its spectacular canyon on the border of the Coast and Cascades mountains thousands of years ago, leaving steep rock faces split by numerous high waterfalls and a panorama of dusk landscape. The rushing waters of the Fraser River surge through the canyon, reaching one of its most impressive points at Hell's Gate – the deepest and narrowest point on the river, where water surges through a mere 33m/108ft-wide channel. As you venture through Sto:lo (stoh-lo), Nlaka'pamux (ing-khla-kap-muh) and Secwepemc (shihuep-muh-k) territories along Hwy. 1, the Gold Rush Trail, you enter a majestic land stretching from Hope to Hat Creek.

Have you ever wanted to pan for gold where thousands before have sought their fortune? Ever wondered what a pictograph looks like? Have you golfed everywhere in the province and now you're ready to take on the toughest 9-hole in B.C.? Do you know what a culturally modified tree looks like? Whether you are looking for a history lesson or a present-day adventure, you will find what you are looking for in the historic, scenic Fraser Canyon. Walk in the footsteps of legends along the banks of one of the greatest salmon rivers on earth this summer. You will not regret it.

The Fraser Canyon has long been an important transportation corridor – as a trading route for First Nations, then as a trail for fur traders, a rough road for prospectors to the goldfields of the Interior and a cliff-hugging path for Canada's national railways. Today the canyon is a destination unto itself. Thrill-seekers flock here to raft the Nahatlatch River's churning rapids, fly fishers hook onto the Thompson's trophy-sized steelhead, western buffs kick back at Ashcroft's old-time rodeo, hikers search out the Nlaka'pamux (*ing-khla-kap-muh*) First Nation's Stein River Valley and golfers to take a shot in Cache Creek at one of the toughest nine-hole courses in the province.

First Nations have lived in the Fraser Canyon for over 10,000 years, traversing its rivers and in areas where the waterways were impassable, constructing narrow, elevated paths. Traditional fish camps and these paths used to bypass particularly treacherous sections of the river are still visible today. A robust trade system from the Interior to the Coast existed by the time Simon Fraser became the first European to navigate the Fraser Canyon. Local guides ensured Fraser a successful trip from Prince George to present-day Vancouver when he and a group of voyageurs undertook the journey in 1808.

After Fraser's trip, Europeans made limited use of the Fraser Canyon between 1808 and 1858. Hudson's Bay traders stopped at isolated Hudson's Bay Company outposts on the journey

along the trails from Fort Kamloops to Fort Langley with their furs. In the spring of 1858, Governor Douglas sent 800 ounces of gold from the Interior to the San Francisco Mint knowing what word of the gold's arrival would trigger, as there are no secrets in a gold town. By late spring prospectors began arriving and traveling inland up the Fraser River on their quest for riches. A major gold find near Fort Yale sparked the Fraser River Gold Rush, and boom towns sprang up virtually overnight as an estimated 30,000 gold seekers flooded the banks of the Fraser River from Hope to just north of Lillooet. This initial gold rush had faded by 1860, but with prospectors fanning out across B.C. they soon discovered other deposits in the province's Interior, most notably near Barkerville in the Cariboo.

The massive influx of people, supplies and gold made it necessary to improve transportation through the Fraser Canyon. Thus, gold fever was the catalyst for the building of early roads, the creation of many towns and the founding of the province of British Columbia. The Cariboo Wagon Road was the first continuous road through the Canyon and parts of it remain today.

The Fraser Canyon is a major transportation corridor for the Trans-Canada Highway and iron tracks of the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways. Seven highway tunnels carved through the rocky canyon walls make today's travel along Hwy. 1 much easier and enjoyable. Train spotters will revel in the network of tunnels and trestles that enable train travel through the canyon. And although the river is no longer the primary means of transportation, it is a primary adventure option with some of the finest whitewater rafting conditions in North America.

Rafting on the Fraser River and its tributaries (the Thompson and Nahatlatch) is a rite-of-passage for both residents and visitors. Experience the continuous rapids of the jade-green Nahatlatch, which descends via a chain of lakes into the Fraser north of Boston Bar, with 37 rapids over





a 12km/7.5mi stretch rated three, four and four-plus. Cool off between rapids on the crystal-clear Thompson River, on a 36km/22mi stretch between Spences Bridge and Lytton where 18 major rapids are ranked from one to five, or hold on while descending through Hell's Gate on the mighty Fraser. Further exploration of the lakes in the Nahatlatch is ideal for water enthusiasts, as you canoe the area's placid lakes, float in backwater pools or fish from its lakeshores. Backcountry hiking, birdwatching, wildlife viewing and camping in rustic splendor are also popular pastimes here.

West of Lytton, those who prefer land-based action can explore Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park, an integral ecosystem within the last unlogged intact watershed in southwestern B.C. Completely surrounded by mountains, the valley encompasses three small glaciers, four major lakes, picturesque alpine meadows and, though there are no roads and few camping facilities, there are several trails suitable for day, overnight or weeklong hikes. Just south of the Stein Valley, Mehatl Creek Provincial Park – recommended for seasoned outdoor adventurers – features alpine ridges, more lush subalpine meadows and pristine old-growth forests. Hikers can also explore the Tikwalus Heritage Trail, a recently restored 10km/6mi section of one of the elevated canyon paths built by the Nlaka'pamux 50km/31mi north of Hope, with spectacular canyon views.

Scientists and environmentalists also cite the ecological importance of the canyon's mighty Fraser River – a major artery in one of the largest salmon-producing river systems in the world, where millions of fish return each year to spawn. This phenomenon can be viewed up close from the Hell's Gate International Fishways. As well, both the Fraser and the Thompson River between Lytton and Spences Bridge, offers plentiful salmon fishing, best from early August to mid-September, followed by a legendary steelhead season that begins in October. The Fraser is also home to white sturgeon, and anglers travel from near and far to do battle with these enormous, prehistoric fish. The communities and people who live along the banks of the Fraser River are ready to welcome you.



## Hope

The stunning community of Hope sits at the southern end of the Fraser Canyon – where the Fraser and Coquihalla Rivers meet and the Coast Mountains give way to the Cascades. Sitting at the junction of four major highways (1, 3, 5, and 7) and two railways (Canadian National and Canadian Pacific) Hope has long been a transportation hub and a main supply point for the Fraser Canyon.

Before the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Hope in 1848, the Sto:lo village of Ts'qol:s (*ts-khalll-s*) held the primary position in and out of the Fraser Canyon. Today, Hope remains a strong transportation hub and is a growing adventure recreation area. It is here that exploration of the Fraser Canyon and Cariboo Chilcotin Coast begins.

There is abundant opportunity to cycle, mountain bike, camp, ski, hike, boulder, and rock-hound in and around the community. In addition to self-propelled adventure, Hope boasts the glorious Othello Tunnels in Coquihalla Canyon Provincial Park. This decommissioned section of the Kettle Valley Railway is lauded as the most expensive section of track ever laid, while the tunnels themselves are an engineering marvel that opened in 1915.

Hope – also known as the “Chainsaw Carving Capital” – is home to 60+ chainsaw carvings. Spend the afternoon exploring the green-spaces in downtown Hope and marvel at the cedar blocks that have been carved into amazing art using only chainsaws. Be sure to stop by the Hope Visitor Centre and Museum Complex for maps and more information.

## Yale

The small town of Yale, B.C. was once the largest city north of San Francisco and west of Chicago. Originally established in 1848 as a Hudson's Bay Trading Post, Yale grew to an estimated 30,000 people during the 1858 gold rush. In the 1860s, with

the construction of the Cariboo Waggon Road, Yale became the terminus for one of the largest sternwheeler routes in North America and in the 1880s Yale saw the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Today, only a few of the original buildings remain in what was once a booming gold rush town. At the Yale Historic Site you can visit the museum where artifacts and collections from Yale's historic past are on display in the Creighton House, an original home built in the 1870s. St. John the Divine, built in 1863 is one of the oldest churches in B.C. and houses original altar pieces, as well as ‘Enduring Threads’, a collection of antique linens hand stitched by the students of All Hallows girls school. Step back in time with a visit to the 1858 Living History ‘Tent City’ and stroll the boardwalk with stops at the General Store, Saloon, Gold Commissioner, Doctor's Office, Jail House, Blacksmith, and Chinese Boarding house. Tour through the Ward House, another of Yale's original buildings, that is open during the summer months with lunches and beverages served in the garden. There are lots of opportunities for gold panning, as Yale has one of the few public panning areas on the Fraser River with gold pans and guide books available locally.

For history buffs, take a walking tour of the old town sites or Pioneer Cemetery. Self-guide books are available at the Yale Historic Site. Spirit Caves trail is located directly across from the Pioneer Cemetery on Hwy. 1, one of several day hikes in the Fraser Canyon; it offers a spectacular view of Yale. A historic way to traverse the canyon is to ride the river. Whether on a day trip or a multi-day adventure, come experience the mighty Fraser River with majestic views and challenging rapids that will leave lasting memories.

## Alexandra Bridge

One of the oldest spans on the Fraser, this historic walking bridge is located 22km/14mi north of Yale, adjacent to the Alexandra Provincial Park. Established in 1984, the park



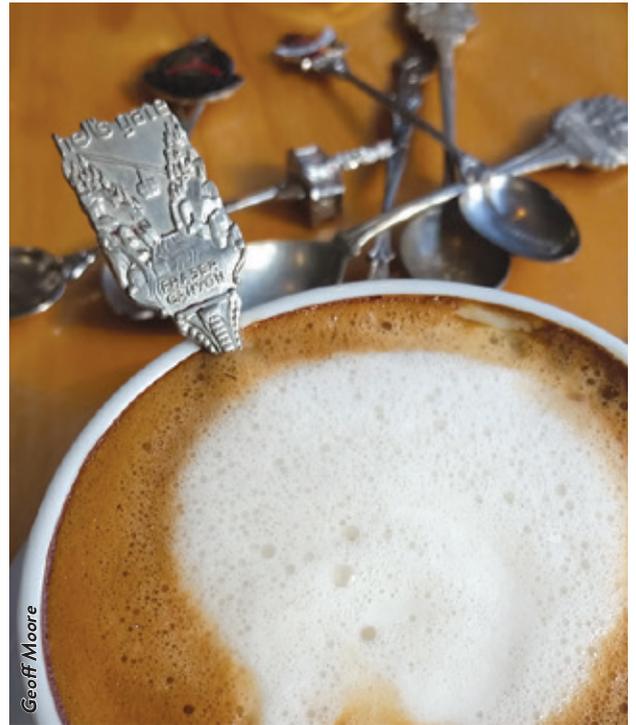
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Geoff Moore



Geoff Moore



Riley Forman/Connect Media

provides a rest stop and picnic facilities for travelers. The site of the original Gold Rush Trail crossing over the Fraser River, you can access the historic bridge from a walking trail through the day-use area.

## Hell's Gate

About 27km/17mi north of Yale is the deepest, most dangerous and fastest-moving section of the Fraser River, where sheer rock faces rise to heights of 1,000m/3,280ft and, down below, the boiling river smashes its way through a constricted channel. At the river's narrowest point, 757ML/200Mgal of water per minute thunders through a 33m/108ft-wide passage - prompting the first European to explore the region, Simon Fraser, to describe the gorge as "the gates of hell", after he and his men inched their way along its cliffs in 1808 using rope ladders made by their aboriginal guides.

Today, Hell's Gate is one of the province's most unique and popular draws, with visitors 'flying' over the gorge in a gondola for a bird's eye view of churning rapids and the fishways installed to help migrating salmon on their upriver journey to spawn. Sightseers can also watch award-winning videos at the onsite Fisheries Exhibit, sample the chowder at Simon's Café and linger at the Fudge Factory, which boasts more than 30 mouth-watering flavors.

## Boston Bar

Boston Bar was a bustling roadhouse stop during the 1860s gold rush. A gold-bearing sandbar, or sandy riverbank, is known as a 'bar,' and the sandbar slightly downriver and opposite Boston Bar in the 1860s was heavily populated by American prospectors who were mostly from Boston. This prompted local First Nations to refer to the Americans as Boston men; hence the town name, Boston Bar.

Directly across the Fraser River from Boston Bar is the small town of North Bend, which only became accessible by road in 1986, when a bridge was built to replace North Bend's one-car aerial ferry (now housed at Francis Harrington Park, on Hwy. 1).

Travelers can take West Side Road from North Bend to explore the pastoral

Nahatlatch River Valley and the Nahatlatch River itself, which features one of B.C.'s most exciting stretches of whitewater rafting.

Another local attraction, just 5km/3mi south of Boston Bar, is Tuckkwiowhum (*tuck-we-ohm*) Village, where guests overnight in a teepee next to the thundering Fraser River to experience the pre-European Nlaka'pamux way of life, with classes in First Nations drum and jewelry making, salmon preparation and leather working.

## Kanaka Bar

Located 32km/20mi north of Boston Bar and named for the gold-bearing bar that was mined by Hawaiians or 'Kanakas' in 1858, Kanaka Bar is home to the main offices of the Kanaka Bar First Nations of the Nlaka'pamux people. Also home to the Kwoiek Creek hydroelectric project, this 49.9MW run-of-river includes a partnership with the Kanaka Bar Indian Band. At the south end of the community you will be welcomed by the historic namesake café.

## Lytton

Situated at the confluence of the Fraser and Thompson rivers, Lytton was originally a First Nations village, known as *A'q'emcín* (*rivers meeting*) later anglicized to *Camchin* (*kum-sheen*). The area has been inhabited by the Nlaka'pamux people for over 10,000 years and due to the Fraser Canyon Gold Rush of 1858 is also one of the earliest communities settled by non-natives in the southern Interior of B.C. Conflict between First Nations and a few of the thousands of white settlers seeking gold led to the Fraser Canyon War of 1858; which was narrowly averted by Chief David Spintlum. Camchin chief Cxpentlum (*Spintlum*) argued for a peaceful resolution and co-existence, as he had a good relationship with Governor James Douglas, during the peace council.

Thanks to the community's prime location, Lytton has earned the title of "Whitewater Rafting Capital of Canada," first-class rafting companies navigate whitewater through the local rapids, and those seeking slower-paced activities opt for camping, fishing and hiking close to town. Lytton also boasts one of the few

reaction ferries left in B.C., a turn-of-the-century river transport that uses the power of a river's current to propel the craft from one riverbank to another - and well worth experiencing. This free ferry provides access to the Stein River Valley's main trailhead, while the nearby campground in Skihist Provincial Park is a base camp for exploring the awe-inspiring Thompson River Canyon and for picturesque strolls along remnants of the original Cariboo Wagon Road on the historic Gold Rush Trail.

As you stroll through town on your way to the confluence, some great stops include the Chief Spintlum memorial, Lytton Museum and caboose, Georgia Lesley's art gallery or for something more creative take a quick drive up Botanie Creek Road to view Ken Glasgow's unique sculptures, starting with a 60 foot replica of a Winchester rifle over the gate.

Every fall on Labour Day, Lytton celebrates its two great rivers with a family-oriented River Festival. Activities begin on Friday evening, continue until Sunday afternoon, and include many First Nations events including a Pow Wow and First Nations demonstrations. The Two Rivers Farmers Market welcomes travelers every Friday during the summer season with locally grown produce. From Lytton you may continue north on Hwy. 1, along the Thompson River to Spences Bridge or follow the Fraser along Hwy. 12 to Lillooet.

## Shaw Springs

Named for its first water rights holder, W.H. Shaw in 1930, the natural spring itself sits on the far side of the Thompson River. First utilized by the Canadian Pacific Railway as a camp (called Drynoch) for workers in the 1880s, Mr. and Mrs. William Hugh and Rose Shaw originally homesteaded Shaw Springs in the late 1920s using the spring water to irrigate gardens and provide drinking water to develop a resort. The resort was operated by the family until 1962.

The area around Shaw Springs is a well-known rock hounding location,



“I had the great fortune to admire this wonderful phenomenon a few years ago, indescribable.”

~ *Cindy Jacome*

“Canada's mightiest River, the Fraser. Rounding the final bend at the end of the day.”

~ *Yale Historic Site*

“Yale may be a small town, but it sure packs a punch! So much history here.”

~ *urbanfigphotography*

“I have hiked this! Straight up for an hour or so to find a massive giant rock pile on top with caves under it.”

~ *Buck Ranger*

“Spent a lot of summer days at Alexandra Lodge as a young child.”

~ *Nancy Czigany*

“Used to go sit up at the top of the lake and look down on it, and watch the goats/sheep navigate the mountains.”

~ *Vernus Buss*

“The way you bend...the way you move along with the water...Oh Fraser Canyon how do I love thy curves!! I can never get enough of you.”

~ *Bill Mandair*

“The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast's the perfect and majestic place to get away from it all”

~ *Art\_BC*

“So cool! This is where I grew up...riding my horse on those (Painted) hillsides!”

~ *Wendy Bell*





Geoff Moore

specifically for agates and opals. Many amateur clubs and enthusiasts visit annually and there are formally staked claims throughout this stretch of the Thompson River. South of Shaw Springs, Goldpan Provincial Park offers easy public access to the Thompson River and potential agate pieces. The park is a popular stop, not only for rock hounds and guests traveling the Gold Rush Trail, but as a fishing destination with ample rainbow trout, steelhead and salmon to tempt your rod.

### Spences Bridge

The fishing around scenic Spences Bridge attracts anglers from around the world during peak season (September to December), with hard-fighting steelhead the major lure. On the Thompson River at Goldpan Provincial Park, for example, it's possible to catch and release these sport fish – prized for their size, stamina and tremendous strength – like there's no tomorrow.

The community's world-class whitewater rivers are a major draw supporting operators from Lytton to Yale. While its' agricultural history continues to flourish with locally grown vegetables and fruits sold at stalls beside the highway, in town

and at wayside stops, a visit to the historic Widow Smith packing house will add some flavor to your stop.

Wild herds of California bighorn sheep wander the community year-round (watch for them on the highway) and the now-defunct Kettle Valley Railway right-of-way that runs east from town through the Nicola Valley to Merritt has incredible views for rail-trail enthusiasts. The two-tier Murray Creek Falls just west of town, in a picturesque desert canyon gorge, and the famous Widow Smith gravesite provide great photo opportunities and may sport a hidden geocache treasure.

The three-day *Desert Daze Music Festival* each August at the old school grounds includes over 20 musical performances, a child-friendly play zone, workshops, First Nations demonstrations, vendors and more.

At the junction of Hwy. 1 and 8 (access to Nicola Valley and Logan Lake), Spences Bridge provides great circle tour choices. Motorcyclists rave about the Hwy. 8 - Hwy. 97C to Logan Lake route, reconnecting to the Gold Rush Trail in Ashcroft; while those on tighter timelines continue directly north on Hwy. 1.

### Ashcroft

A desert haven for artists, artisans and recreationists, Ashcroft recently adopted the slogan "Ashcroft – Wellness Awaits You" as a nod to its clean air, fresh water, locally produced foods and new age health studios. The image is a far cry from the town's origins as a teeming transfer point where, in the 1880s, freight and mining supplies were unloaded off Canadian Pacific railcars and hauled north to the Cariboo goldfields primarily by the famous B.X. or Barnard's Express stagecoach, later known as the British Columbia Express Company. Yet, the Ashcroft Museum, housed in the town's



## WHAT THE LOCALS SAY

The Gold Rush Trail is unique in that it passes through multiple communities and regions, has helped shape our country and throughout its 150+ year history has maintained its pioneering, multi-cultural, entrepreneurial, 'help thy neighbor' spirit.

- *Tanya Wong, Gold Rush Trail Project Manager*

Connect Media does business in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast because we live what we do and we love how we live. Turn your vacation into a lifestyle, visit the CCC and never go back!

-*Riley Forman, Connect Media*

It's quiet and peaceful and a great way to de-stress. The community of Boston Bar is great and looks out for each other often.

- *Amanda Miller-Westerlund*

I love raising a family in this small desert like community; surrounded by opportunities with nature, fresh produce, friends and family. Being a small town there is always activities organized that we hear about through each other supporting one another.

- *Michelle Haller Antoine*

The Historic Fraser Canyon and Cariboo is saturated in Gold Rush, ranching and farming history. Live, work or visit a part of the province that makes you feel you are part of something unique and nothing like anywhere else.

- *Adam Clarke*



1917 post office, brings such stories alive with exhibits of regional railway, ranching, mining, farming and Chinese and First Nations history. Another draw is the village's Heritage Place Park, for unique historic attractions specific to Ashcroft, such as an authentic sod house, a still-operational waterwheel and a railway caboose outfitted with an antique newspaper-printing press.

Just south of town on the Trans-Canada Hwy., visitors can also explore Ashcroft Manor, a popular stopover for travelers heading north to the goldfields in the 1800s, and later the district's first courthouse - presided over by Judge Matthew Begbie, the infamous 'hanging judge' - and now a teahouse, museum and art gallery. Don't forget to check in at the Ashcroft Museum to learn about events that may be happening during your visit. Thrill-seekers can check in for a day of zip lining or mountain biking in the hills above Ashcroft, while local operators offer horseback riding, guest ranch stays, hiking or guided wildlife and birdwatching tours. Additional highlights include Ashcroft's self-guided 'history' walk

(wheelchair accessible), geocaching, the annual car show or drag racing at the nearby Nl' Akapxm (*ing-khla-cappum*) Eagle Motorplex and, in winter, ice racing with cars at Barnes Lake. One unique stop includes a visit to Desert Hills Ranch, including greenhouses, a farm market, and child-friendly area. The community draws avid fishers to the Thompson River for rainbow trout and late season steelhead, as well as to the many surrounding lakes stocked with rainbow and brook trout.

### Cache Creek

The origin of Cache Creek's unusual name is still in dispute. Some claim it is derived from the fur trade of the 1800s, when supplies were stored or cached at the valley junction. Others contend that it came from a gold-rush stagecoach robbery, when bandits buried their loot along the creek bed.

Whatever the true story, Cache Creek today is known for its distinctive attractions, including Horsting's Farm market garden and historic Hat Creek Ranch, a B.C. Heritage Site that offers a



rare opportunity to explore one of the region's original gold-rush roadhouses. At the junction of Hwys. 97 and 99, historic Hat Creek Ranch also includes sections of the original Gold Rush Trail, guided tours, stagecoach rides and a First Nations village, where members of the Shuswap Nation will share their fascinating history and culture.

As a modern supply hub, set ideally at the junction of Hwys. 1 and 97, you will find accommodations, camping, vehicle services, restaurants, gift shops and supplies to outfit your adventures. The community is an ideal base for some of the best rock hounding in B.C., as well as canoeing, horseback riding, fishing and hiking in a setting of dry grasslands, working ranches, market gardens and dramatic desert landscapes. One popular draw is the growing sport of geocaching, with many modern treasures to be found both in the community and surrounding area; including the local Gold Country GeoTourism program that will guide you to themed caches and reward your perseverance. Cache Creek is also home to one of the toughest nine-hole golf courses in the province at Semlin Valley; try this semi-arid course for something a little different.

Renowned in car circles for the annual Graffiti Days nostalgia weekend, all visitors are welcomed as Cache Creek comes alive each June to celebrate the 50s and 60s. Since 1987 Graffiti Days has attracted competitors and spectators from the Pacific Northwest for a weekend of car shows, smoke shows, drag racing, poker runs and sock hop dance. ♣

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## GREAT LOCATIONS IN THE CARIBOO CHILCOTIN COAST

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**Denny's** SHARK CLUB sports bar grill

# THE CARIBOO







THE CARIBOO SENTINEL

PHOENIX BREWERY

© Richard Wright 2015

Barkerville



*The Cariboo, stretching from Lillooet and Cache Creek in the south to Hixon and Stoner in the north, is bordered by the Cariboo Mountains in the east and the Fraser River to the west. From arid grasslands, pine and aspen forests to tranquil lakes and rushing rivers, the Cariboo's distinctive landscape is as diverse as its mix of recreational and cultural attractions. In a landscape seemingly airlifted out of an old western, the Cariboo of today remains firmly rooted in cowboy culture. B.C.'s Cowboy Hall of Fame and premier ranch and rodeo museum, as well as one of Canada's largest rodeos, are all found here alongside the largest percentage of guest ranches in B.C.*

**N**amed after the once-abundant woodland caribou, this was the first region in B.C.'s Interior settled by non-indigenous people. It played a significant role in early European settlement of the province, as the hub of the 1860s gold rush that lured prospectors from around the world and saw mining towns and roadhouses spring up almost overnight. Today, that same sense of frontier adventure lives on in the pioneering spirit of those proud to call the Cariboo home, and in legends that still echo in its historic communities and revived ghost towns, most of which are linked by Hwy. 97 – the legendary Gold Rush Trail.

In fact, many communities along this historic route are still signposted according to their distance from Lillooet, or Mile 0, marking where early roadhouses provided food, drink and accommodations for miners, pack-train operators, wagon trains and stagecoach travelers who could afford the \$130 for a one-way ticket. One of the largest roadhouses to survive is Historic Hat Creek Ranch, 11km/7mi north of Cache Creek amid rolling sagebrush hills at the junction of Hwys. 97 and 99. This B.C. Heritage Site showcases the Cariboo's compelling history: fur trading, ranching, the gold rush and First Nations culture.

## Lillooet

“Guaranteed Rugged” describes both the mountainous terrain around Lillooet and the year-round active lifestyle this setting inspires. The landscape is wild, rocky and steep, roads are carved out of mountainsides with ever-changing views of the Fraser River, and both locals and visitors alike revel in the thrill of living life here to the fullest.

Easily accessible from north or south, Lillooet offers a compelling blend of cultural and recreational opportunities, with a range of restaurants and lodging. Boating, mountain biking and back-packing are just a few of the outdoor adventures possible spring through fall, along with unparalleled ice-climbing, heli-skiing

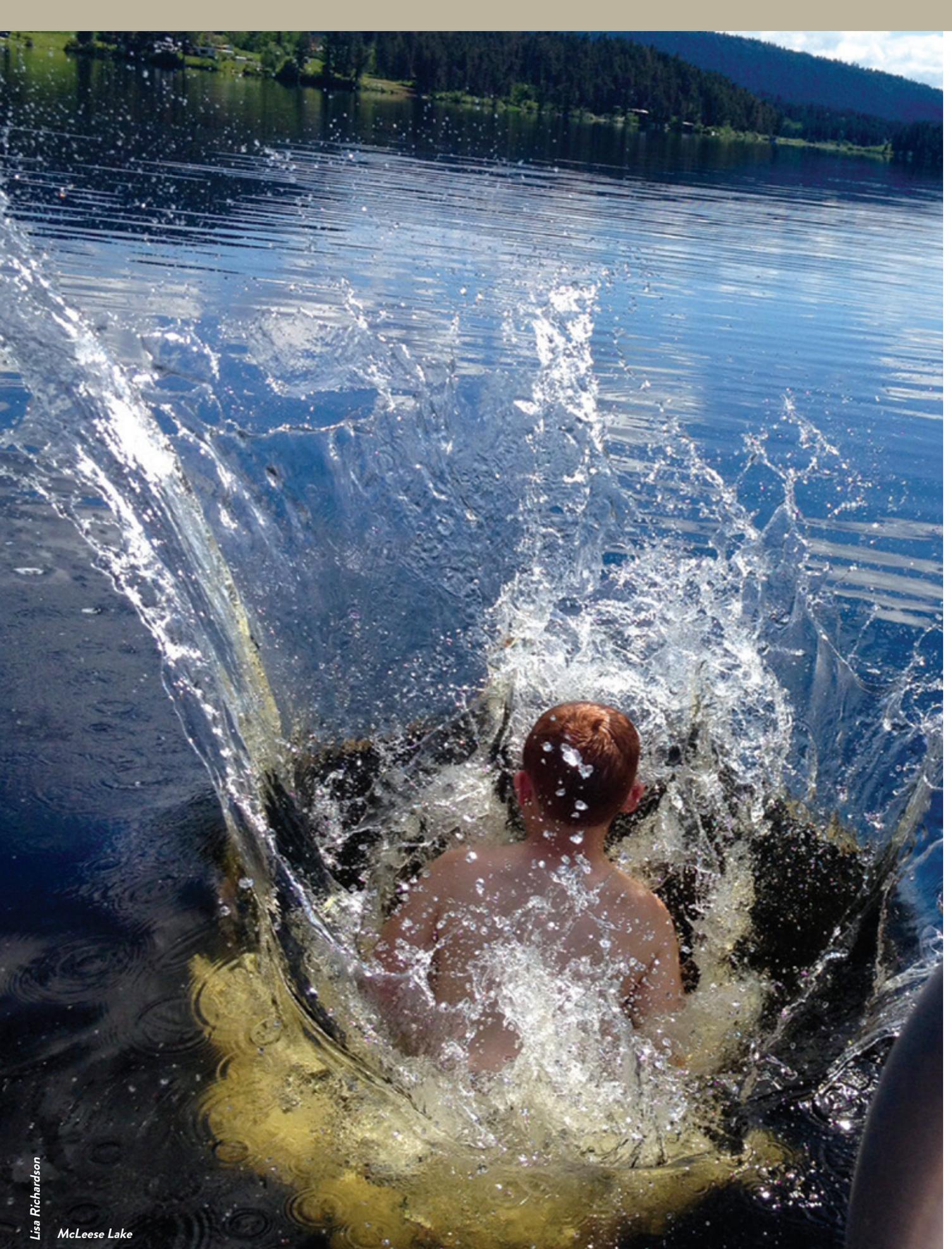
and snowmobiling in winter. Lillooet embraces the ways of the St'at'imc (*stat-lee-um*) First Nation, which offers award-winning cultural tours in history, traditions and authentic cuisine through its Xwisten (*hoyshten*) Experience Tours; July's popular Apricot Tsaqwen (*cho-com*) Festival also celebrates local culture.

Geocachers can search out more than 100 caches in the trails around Lillooet or pick up local hiking guidebooks on wildlife viewing and birdwatching. More leisurely pursuits include golfing at the Sheep Pasture Golf Course (featuring resident sheep as live hazards!), a rock-hounding stroll along the banks of the Fraser River, a tour of downtown's 'Jade Walk' (a tribute to Lillooet's jade-mining history) or a Friday rail journey on the Kaoham Shuttle, which skirts the turquoise waters of Seton Lake en route to Seton Portage (via the same tracks the internationally renowned Rocky Mountaineer travels). Historians can drop by the museum and visitor centre to view Gold Rush exhibits or take self-guided tours of turn-of-the-century architectural gems such as Miyazaki House, featuring 1890s architecture and Dr. Miyazaki's original office. Friday nights in July and August, Miyazaki House hosts summer concerts, while the award-winning Fort Berens Winery lures wine connoisseurs.

## Clinton

Stay and play in Clinton's backyard, with endless opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast. Explore the Limestone Quarry, a haven for fossil hunters and rock hounds; or the Marble Range, where cliffs, caves, disappearing streams and wildlife trails lure climbers, cavers, hikers and horseback riders. Hike to what some locals call the “hole in the wall”, a unique limestone formation; or visit Kelly Lake, famous for NASA's exploration of its rare black coral deposits, for a great picnic stop. Enjoy a refreshing swim, fish for feisty rainbow trout or try a relaxing kayak or canoe trip around one of the many nearby lakes. After a busy day of activities, come enjoy the hospitality in this quaint historical town, and unwind with a quiet evening among friends.





Lisa Richardson

McLeese Lake



Chris Harris

The village of Clinton is routinely referenced for its Wild West ambience, Gold Rush and pioneer history, exemplified by its original western store fronts, historical walking tours, popular antique shops, and excellent museum archives and exhibits (located at the village's 1892 schoolhouse). Equally significant is the diversity of the surrounding landscape's unique geological variations, including Chasm Provincial Park's Painted Chasm. Northeast of Clinton, this 8km/5mi-long bedrock-box canyon features rock layers in shades of orange, pink, yellow and lavender.

As B.C.'s "Guest Ranch Capital", Clinton is a community hub for many guest ranches, including an award-winning Thai-influenced spa and ranch

or more traditional family-focused outfits offering trail riding, horsemanship classes, gold panning and sleigh rides. With 60km/37mi of Nordic ski trails, Clinton is a popular winter locale. Clinton's Annual Ball, held every May long weekend since 1868, and the annual Jamboree in August are also big draws.

### 70 Mile House

Picturesque 70 Mile House is a key junction for accessing the Green Lake Recreation Area, one of the Cariboo's most popular destinations for water sports; along with nearby Watch Lake, a habitat for thriving waterfowl and raptor populations. No doubt when 70 Mile House was established in 1862 as a hostel for Cariboo Waggon Road work crews, residents had no idea the area would

evolve into a thriving guest-ranch and outdoor-recreation hub. The area hosts a diverse network of hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, Nordic and snowmobile trails, plus canoeing, kayaking, birding, wildlife viewing, ice fishing and angling.

As well, nearby Big Bar Lake Provincial Park is easily accessible and boasts spectacular lake views, great fishing, plus excellent boating and swimming. Set in typical Cariboo ranch country, on the southern edge of the Fraser Plateau, this area was formed from lava flows over five million years ago. Visit the day-use area to picnic and unwind or settle in for a camping stay to explore the surrounding welcoming guest ranches and numerous pristine lakes.



Michael Bednar



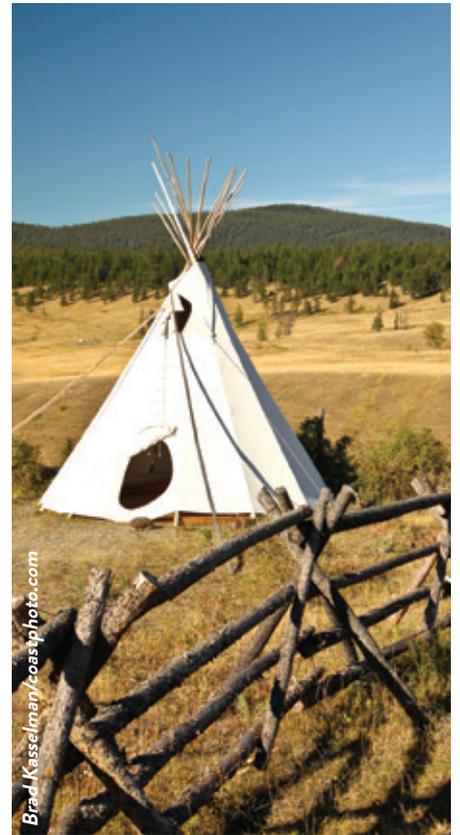
Geoff Moore



Destination BC/Chris Harris



Louise Christie



Brad Kassel/maasphoto.com



Geoff Moore



Destination BC/Grant Harder

## The Fishing Highway/Interlakes

Hwy. 24, between 93 Mile House and Little Fort, and its junctions with Hwy. 97 and Hwy. 5, is today known as “The Fishing Highway”, a touring route which connects Whistler to Jasper & Banff National Parks. Tracing sections of the old Hudson’s Bay Company Fur Brigade Trail, it accesses 100-plus lakes where fly-fishing, spin casting, trolling and ice fishing yield big fish, with month-long fishing derbies in June and September. While Horse, Sheridan, Bridge, Deka and Lac Des Roches Lakes may be commonly heard names, the abundance of water and wildlife is limitless.

Near the highway’s western end is Lone Butte, a peaceful village named for a solitary volcano plug that inspires invigorating hikes up “the Butte”. Horseback riding, snowmobiling, water sports and ATV excursions also draw enthusiasts to the area. Interlakes Saturday evenings Music at the Lakes summer series is free for visitors; watch for upcoming acts. With restaurants, cafés, shops, resorts, farmers’ markets and guest ranches dotting the length of Hwy. 24, along with man-made natural highlights such as the Lone Butte Water Tower, West Sheridan Trail System, Huckleberry Butte and Bridge Lake Provincial Park, the only challenge here is what to enjoy first.

## 100 Mile House

100 Mile House claims lofty titles, including “Handcrafted Log Home Capital of North America” and “International Nordic Ski Capital.” The latter reflects the fact that 100 Mile House has one of the most active Nordic ski clubs in B.C. with access to one of the longest groomed-trail networks in Canada, a distinction it celebrates by displaying the “World’s Tallest Pair of Cross-Country Skis” outside its Visitor Centre. Another highlight is the community’s prime location on the Gold Rush Snowmobile Trail, a maintained, signed route and home base for local snowmobile clubs. Spring through fall, these Nordic and other backcountry routes are also ideal for mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, photography and wildlife viewing, while numerous lakes attract fishers, canoeists and swimmers. Birding is also a major draw, with viewing sites such as the wheelchair-accessible 100 Mile Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, with parking at the Visitor Information Centre.

Art lovers appreciate the Parkside Art Gallery, located at the entrance to Centennial Park, community events, while theatre and music aficionados are rewarded with many community events at Martin Exeter Hall. History buffs can explore the village’s origins as a fur-trading station as well as its key role as an 1860s stagecoach stop on the Gold Rush Trail. Stroll past outdoor murals honouring the area’s early-pioneer families in the downtown core and a photo opportunity featuring an original Barnard Express Stage Coach.

## Forest Grove

The community of Forest Grove is situated northeast of 100 Mile House on the Canim-Hendrix Lake Road. Named by early settler, Oliver Philips, after a town by the same name in Oregon, Forest Grove attracted small family farms and those living off the fur trade prior to World War I. By 1917 the

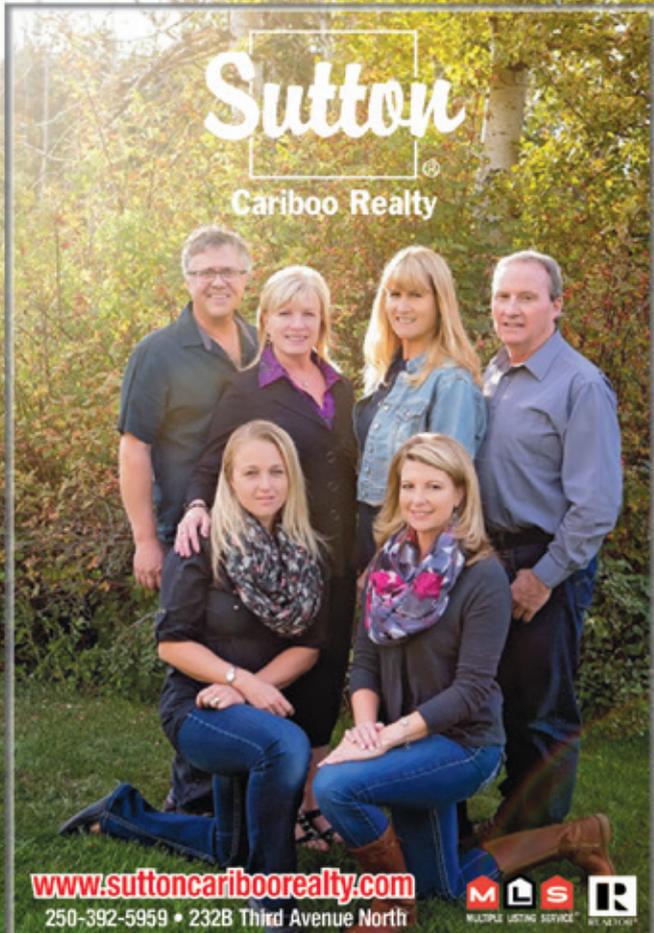
community hosted a lodge, general store, post office, billiard hall, trading post and large barn. Like many Cariboo towns, forestry once played an economic role; however, today’s Forest Grove is home to family farms and residences supported by tourism and recreation. Surrounded by a multitude of lakes and campsites, Forest Grove offers a stop to stock up on your supplies.

## 108 Mile House

Tens of thousands of dollars in gold nuggets are believed to be buried in the countryside here, reportedly the ill-gotten gains of hotel proprietors, the McVeEs, in the late 1800s. Indeed, stashes of gold have been unearthed at several local modern-day construction sites. A more tangible attraction, however, is the village’s 108 Mile Ranch Historic Site: a collection of lakeside heritage buildings that includes the largest log barn of its kind in Canada (built in 1908 to house a herd of 200 Clydesdales); 105 Mile roadhouse; 108 Mile telegraph office; an 1867 hotel and store; a trapper’s cabin; the 134 Mile schoolhouse; and period implements and tools. The adjacent 108 Mile Rest Area is a popular access point for the area’s hiking, biking and cross country ski trails.

## Canim Lake

Canim is one of the larger Cariboo lakes, located 35km/22mi northeast of 100 Mile House, past the community of Forest Grove. In a provincial park, Canim Lake is surrounded by lush



A group photo of the Sutton Cariboo Realty team, consisting of seven people (four men and three women) standing and kneeling in a grassy area with trees in the background. The Sutton Cariboo Realty logo is overlaid on the top of the photo. Below the photo, the website [www.suttoncariboo.com](http://www.suttoncariboo.com) and phone number 250-392-5959 are listed, along with the address 2328 Third Avenue North. The MLS and REALTOR logos are also present.

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meadows, mountains and forested hills; this is an incredibly scenic spot, with resorts dotting the lake's vast pebble-beach shoreline (a remnant of the glacial age). Summertime is idyllic, with endless blue-sky days of canoeing, kayaking, swimming, hiking, boating and fishing back dropped by magnificent waterfalls, volcanic cones (near Spanish Creek) and ancient pictographs and pit houses (at Deception Creek). In winter, opportunities for snowmobiling, ice fishing, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing abound.

## Lac la Hache

This village is often referred to as the "Longest Town in the Cariboo", reflecting how its resorts, ranches, restaurants and vacation homes are scattered along the lake's 19km/12mi-long shoreline. Before European fur traders came into the area, the Secwepemc (*shi-huep-muh-k*) established pit houses here and the Chilcotins (*chilko-teens*), who travelled through the region, named the lake Kumatakwa, "Queen of the Waters".

With a strong history of ranching and agriculture, today Lac la Hache is one of the most popular lakes along Hwy. 97, particularly with water skiers, anglers and power boaters. Foodies love its South Cariboo Garlic Festival, held in late August, while winter brings crisp, sunny days ideal for ice fishing, snow shoeing, pond hockey, skating and for skiing at nearby Mt. Timothy's slopes.

## 150 Mile House

150 Mile House is a quiet ranchland community known for the Gold Rush, pioneer history and log homes. It is also home to the Little Red Schoolhouse, the oldest functional school building in the Cariboo Chilcotin. Constructed in 1896 beside the original Cariboo Waggon Road, the wood-frame, one-room building is now a historical site and classroom open to the public in summer. Another local lure is The Yellow Umbrella & Thyme for Tea, an old-fashioned English-style teahouse and gift shop off Hwy. 97, just north of town, serving meals and 100-plus

blends of tea. Several guest ranches can be found nearby, with horseback riding being a popular summer pastime. From 150 Mile House, travelers also generally decide whether to continue north to Williams Lake and Quesnel or head northeast along the Gold Rush Trail to the resort lakes of Horsefly and Likely, or continue on the "Backroad to Barkerville".

## Horsefly

A close-knit community of 1,000 people in the foothills of the Cariboo Mountains, Horsefly is the Gold Rush Trail's scenic gateway to Quesnel Lake, Horsefly Lake, Crooked Lake, Ghost Lake and the Cariboo Mountains. As such, it makes a unique home base for artists and outdoor adventurers exploring the area's hundreds of small, picturesque lakes, creeks, rivers and waterfalls – whether camping, hiking, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, mountain biking, backcountry skiing, snowmobiling or ice fishing.

Horsefly plays year-round host with lively community events, including spring's *The Horsefly Follies*, July's *Arts on the Fly Music Festival*, a Fall Fair and September's *Horsefly River Salmon Festival*. The village attracts a substantial contingent of history buffs to its Pioneer Museum and Visitor Centre, with exhibits highlighting how the first gold discovery of the Cariboo Gold Rush took place on the Horsefly River; guided by native Long Baptiste, the prospectors collected an astonishing 2,835g/100oz of nuggets in a single week, and, in the process, triggered the gold rush of 1859.

## Likely

Likely is located about 85km/53mi northeast of 150 Mile House at the west end of Quesnel Lake, the deepest fjord-lake in North America. The community was originally called Quesnelle (*kwe-nel*) Dam, after the dam built nearby in 1898 to provide mining access to the Quesnel River. The name was changed in 1923 in honour of prospector John "Plato" Likely.



"Just hanging out with my family, got back from a camping trip to the Cariboo yesterday and the Fall Colors were beautiful just like in your picture!"

- Edeltraud Holzmann

"Makes me want to move back to the Cariboo, but I live somewhere really nice now in the Okanagan, but I did wish I was back in the Cariboo with all my family who lives there"

- Jay Robert Clark

"We call that "the pretty way" we take that route on our way home from town through the Onward Ranch."

- Joseph Munden

"I agree with that....we are so lucky to live here in B.C., for me its definitely Cariboo country.....love it up here."

- Bruce Henderson

"Ever tried kite skiing? Try it on B.C.'s famous Bowron Lakes"

- RT

"Was out there last summer... love riding in the Cariboo!"

- Cari Burkosky

"Just too beautiful for words, ride like the wind."

- Pat Coster

"Every January, there's a historic dogsled race in Barkerville B.C."

- MT

"Skip Main Street #Disneyland and head to #BarkervilleBC. You won't be sorry."

- Diana Stevan

"Yay!! Quesnel Forks recognized as a Chinese Canadian historic place! Visit the Forks, and check out the back road to Barkerville and Wells."

- Joan Sorley

Today, the local economy is driven by tourism, forestry and mining, with intriguing examples of past mining ventures showcased at the nearby Bullion Pit Mine and in Cedar Point Provincial Park, home to the community's Cedar City Mining Museum and Bullion Mines' giant 1906 Vulcan steam shovel. The park provides access to old mining trails, tourist information, a public boat launch to Quesnel Lake. Likely is also known as the gateway to the scenic "Backroad to Barkerville," a gravel forestry road that winds past stunning waterfalls and the Cariboo River in an alluring backcountry landscape of sub-alpine meadows. The route can be accessed by motorcycles, trucks and campers; driving access to Quesnelle Forks from Likely is also possible, though the road is unpaved. Paddle on glacier fed lakes, back dropped by snow-covered mountain ridges, and photographically capture the postcard perfect vistas. Hike or snowmobile up nearby Yanks Peak for panoramic views of the Cariboo Mountains. (Seasonal backcountry road conditions vary; be sure to check with local visitor centres prior to travelling.)

## Quesnelle Forks

Quesnelle Forks is a hauntingly striking ghost town accessible to the public by a dirt road out of Likely (just 9km/5.5mi away), featuring a late-1800s graveyard and pioneer log cabins. There are no entrance fees or employees, no souvenir shops or cafés, just fragments of the town's 1860s heyday when gold fever was rampant at the confluence of the Quesnel and Cariboo rivers, where "the Forks" quickly grew into a rowdy camp of 5,000-plus residents. Even after the gold seekers moved farther north, the town's prime location ensured that it remained a major gateway into the goldfields. But when the Cariboo Wagon Road was completed in 1865, the community was bypassed. By the mid-1870s, most residents had left, though a community of Chinese prospectors and merchants temporarily remained to support a widely dispersed mining community.

## Williams Lake

Located at the junction of Hwy. 97 and Hwy. 20, Williams Lake has been a major Cariboo Chilcotin crossroad for centuries. Even prior to the arrival of

the first white settlers, the Williams Lake valley was a traditional meeting place for the Secwepemc First Nation; in fact, the city is named after a local Secwepemc (*shi-huep-muh-k*) chief of the 1800s.

Today, the region's "Hub City" is the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast's largest urban center with a distinctive western-frontier personality showcased at its Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin - B.C.'s premier ranch and rodeo museum and home to the B.C. Cowboy Hall of Fame. The City hosts one of Canada's largest pro-rodeo festivals, second only to the Calgary Stampede in size but not spirit. The Williams Lake Stampede held on the Canada Day-long weekend (July 1), features Canadian Professional Rodeo Association action, with rodeo stars from around the globe competing in traditional and unique homegrown events, including the Mountain Race and Ranch Challenge.

More leisurely pursuits include strolls among the city's quaint shops and art galleries, several featuring local art including the works of First Nations artists, and the restaurants and cafes found on nearly every side street. The City's three golf courses, impressive log tourism Visitor Centre and 1919 Railway Station House (now the Station House Gallery) are also popular attractions. With heritage murals displayed on buildings throughout the downtown core, "The Mural Capital of the Cariboo" is an excellent home base for Chilcotin and Bella Coola Valley excursions.

Backcountry dirt biking is a key attraction, along with rock climbing at the Esler and Alkali Bluffs and stock-car racing at Thunder Mountain Speedway. Rated one of B.C.'s premier mountain-biking destinations, Williams Lake boasts unique, dedicated trail systems - Westsyde Ridge, Desous Mountain and Fox Mountain - with a diverse mix of routes, from double-track beginner to epic cross-country and steep, gnarly downhills. From the city centre, the scenic 12km/7.5mi River Valley Trail leads bikers, horseback riders, walkers and runners around a variety of geological features that shelter deer, beaver, birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl and the occasional bear. For wildlife viewing and spectacular views of the surrounding



©Richard Wright 2015

plateaus, hikers can also tackle “the Dome,” while birders find avian haven at Scout Island, a trail-laced sanctuary for birds and small wildlife located right on Williams Lake.

### McLeese Lake

This picturesque resort community, just 30 minutes north of Williams Lake, was originally known as Mud Lake. It was renamed in the 1880s in honor of nearby Soda Creek’s Robert McLeese, a member of the Legislature who owned a sternwheeler, hotel and store and who was postmaster of Soda Creek for

25-plus years. Today, travelers here enjoy water sports, trout fishing and August’s B.C. Metis Music Festival & Jamboree, plus hiking, camping and off-roading. In winter, hiking trails welcome snowmobilers and Nordic skiers, while the lake is transformed into a skating and ice-fishing wonderland.

### Quesnel

Quesnel is situated at the confluence of the Fraser and Quesnel rivers with surrounding outdoor adventures including mountain biking, horseback riding, camping, fishing, cross-country

and downhill skiing, and snowmobiling getaways with wide-open trail touring. At the Dragon Mountain Trail Network south of the city, mountain bikers weave through a unique Douglas fir ecosystem to tackle the only slick-rock riding in the Cariboo. West of Quesnel, hikers in Pinnacles Provincial Park overlook 12-million-year-old hoodoos en route to panoramic views of the city, while throughout the area foodies hand-pick fresh vegetables and strawberries, sample boreal amber birch syrup, navigate a corn maze or hike with llamas on a North Cariboo farm tour.

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## WHAT THE LOCALS SAY

The history and vitality of the ‘old west’ lives in the shadows of these Cariboo hills, with its majesty and lore; bringing those with adventure in their hearts to settle its land still.

~ Amber, *Big Bar Guest Ranch*

The beautiful countryside is a haven for outdoor activities including boating, river rafting, kayaking, fishing, hunting, quading, hiking, snowshoeing, biking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling and the reason why we choose to be a part of the Likely, B.C. community.

~ *Likley Lodge*

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~ Peggy & Gary Zorn, *Eco-Tours BC*

Living in the south Cariboo is like living a dream. Rolling sage hills, fantastic sunny summers, abundant wildlife, no traffic congestion, and great people! After seven years in the area, I can't think of anywhere else I have enjoyed life as much.

~ Don Pearse,

*Historic Hat Creek Ranch*

Having travelled the world, river rafting in places like the Grand Canyon, Africa, Ethiopia, China and learning how business is conducted elsewhere it has been important to come “home” to the CCC to put that experience to work. Our rafting culture began right here in the Cariboo. There is no place we would rather be.

~ Tyler Dinsdale, *Big Canyon Rafting*



Settlers flocked here by the thousands during the Cariboo Gold Rush and today, the North Cariboo's main urban centre is popularly known as the ‘Gold Pan City’. Many reminders of the City's gold rush heyday are scattered throughout downtown's 30 heritage sites including the original 1862 Hudson's Bay Company Trading Post. The Quesnel and District Museum and Archives, next to the Visitor Centre, is rated one of the top community museums in B.C., with one of North America's most significant collections of Chinese artifacts. Quesnel's ‘living history’ is on display during its famous Billy Barker Days, commemorating the rowdy era of the 1860s, which includes the Quesnel Rodeo, the largest amateur rodeo in B.C.

Abundant urban green spaces include Alex Fraser Park, the ‘Petunia Mile’ and the Heritage Rose Garden's 200-plus floribunda and tea roses. There are over 12 km of walking trails including the Riverfront Trail System which provides a scenic tour through downtown. From the world's longest wooden truss pedestrian bridge built in 1929, catch a unique view

of the Fraser River. Enjoy a personal walk visiting these and other sites - ask at the Visitor Centre. Modern marvels capture spectators' attention during the bi-annual Quesnel SkyFest Airshow where aerial performers dazzle the audience with tricky maneuvers. The Canadian Snowbirds, Canadian Forces F-18 demo team and many others have been part of the Quesnel SkyFest Airshow.

Just 26km/16mi east of Quesnel, Cottonwood House Heritage Site is an 1861 roadhouse with barns, animals, stagecoach rides, an old-fashioned candy store, the ultimate root cellar and a great picnic spot. In winter, January's Quesnel-to-Wells Gold Rush Trail Sled Dog Mail Run features dogsled teams joined by avid, energetic cross-country skiers.

### Hixon

Hixon Creek is named for prospector Joseph Foster Hixon, who found gold in the Fraser River near here in 1866. Situated 60km/37mi north of Quesnel on Hwy. 97, the community offers accommodation and supplies for adventurers exploring Hixon Falls and



Three Sisters Lake Provincial Park at Stone Creek. Local hiking opportunities abound, along with horseback riding tours and great camping and RV sites.

### Wells

The mountain town of Wells, an 82km/51mi drive east of Quesnel and the jumping off point for the Bowron Lakes canoe circuit, was built as a company town for Fred Wells' Gold Quartz Mine. The promise of more gold in the Cariboo gave many an opportunity to escape the great depression of the 1930s in what was then northern B.C.'s largest community and cultural centre.

While there are fewer than 300 year-round residents in Wells today, many of its heritage buildings have been restored, including the Wells Hotel and Sunset Theatre. Other architectural landmarks sport rainbow colours in a nod to the town's vibrant arts scene. The Island Mountain Arts Society's celebrated arts school, offers classes in the visual, literary and performing arts, while the popular ArtsWells Festival of All Things Art (held the first weekend in August) features an



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Outdoor adventures here are steadily garnering acclaim, with excellent trail systems available for mountain biking, hiking, snowmobiling and ATV-ing. The surrounding landscape has hundreds of kilometres of stunningly scenic trails – many accessible from the town centre. Nearby Jack of Clubs Lake features tranquil canoeing. In winter, hut-to-hut cross-country getaways in the Mt. Murray Area are available, and, straddling the Trans Canada Snowmobile Trail, the Wells network of “sled” trails links to Likely, with access to the Prince George snowmobile clubhouse.

### Barkerville

Although many boom towns sprang to life during the Cariboo Gold Rush, Barkerville’s collection of multi-purpose buildings squeezed against the bank of a mountain creek at the terminus of the Gold Rush Trail, was the largest and proved the most resilient. By 1958, when government declared the community a B.C. Heritage site, the town was virtually deserted; the last residents were relocated as work began on restoring the town’s “heyday splendour.”

Now one of Canada’s National Historic Sites, Barkerville is B.C.’s best known heritage destination and the largest historic site in western North America. Full of colour and vitality with stagecoach rides, live theatre, saloons serving quaffs of

sarsaparilla, a photo studio, café and bakery, a well-preserved 19th-century Chinatown and intriguing cemetery tours, families love to visit. Interpreters roam the streets as historical characters, greeting newcomers as if they’d just arrived on a Barnard Express stagecoach. 135 restored buildings are on display as ‘locals’ set off to work at the mine or otherwise bring a bygone era to life. As well, the Barkerville Museum houses one of the largest and most important collections of ancient Chinese artifacts outside China. See and hear what it was like to be a blacksmith, a school teacher, a seamstress - or a precocious child - 150+ years ago.

### Bowron Lake Provincial Park

It’s *big* (149,207hec/368,698ac), as are the snowcapped Cariboo Mountains that rim this wilderness expanse. But it is the park’s most unusual physical feature that is key to its popularity: a rectangular-shaped water system and wildlife sanctuary that forms a 116km/72mi canoe circuit. Where else can one paddle for 10 days without backtracking and end where one began? No other canoe circuit boasts the same combination of mountain scenery and wildlife, including osprey, eagles, moose, mink, beavers and bears. The former home of the southern Carrier, Athabaskan and Dene First Nations, who built kekulis (*kik-will-ees*), or pit houses, close to Kibbee Creek, is now an international attraction, one so popular that canoeists must reserve their “paddle slots” well in advance. ♣

Welcome to Quesnel where adventure awaits you, any time of year. Family-friendly events, outdoor activities in our natural playground, unique shops, top-notch family dining, and live music will make for a get-away to remember and repeat. Make yourself at home.

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# THE CHILCOTIN







*Unlike the Cariboo, the vast, spectacular landscape of the Chilcotin – framed by the Coast Mountains to the west and Fraser River to the east – was never invaded by swarms of gold-crazed prospectors in the 1800s. The result is a world of fewer roads, little industry and barely a scattering of residents, the majority of them First Nations – plus a diversity of wildlife, including populations of rare white pelicans, trumpeter swans, long-billed curlews, bears, lynx, moose and wolves, Canada’s largest numbers of bighorn sheep and one of the only herds of wild horses in the country. The Chilcotin remains a wild and natural landscape, welcoming you to experience nature and hospitality as it once was.*

This is B.C.’s real-life Wild West, where the outdoor thrills range from aerial tours of glaciers and ice fields and deep-powder heli-skiing adventures, to multi-day hikes of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park and horseback riding and photography treks in the scenically stunning Charlotte Alplands. No wonder bucket-list adventurers flock here, whether it’s to tackle one of the most challenging whitewater rivers in North America, the Chilcotin – and its tributary, the Chilko, which boasts the longest continuous stretch of Class 3-plus whitewater on the continent – or to pit dry flies against feisty native rainbows in the Blackwater and Upper Dean rivers’ fast-action fisheries, or to fly into remote lakes in the fly-fishing nirvana of the West Chilcotin. Of course, for those so inclined, there are ‘soft adventure’ white water and adventure excursions available as well. Every direction you look will bring more wonder.

The Chilcotin is linked to the B.C. Interior by Hwy. 20, which crosses the Chilcotin Plateau and Coast Mountains – stretching 456km/283mi from Williams Lake to Bella Coola. En route the highway connects wildly different landscapes, from alpine meadows and biodiverse grasslands to dramatic canyons and mountain peaks, with not a single traffic light breaking its length, though brief stops may be required for free-range cattle and wandering moose or bears. Excellent views of the Coast Mountains are also afforded by roads leading off the highway, with access to backcountry lakes, fishing resorts and specialty lodges.

Much of the Chilcotin, though, is composed of the high-elevation 50,000sqkm/19,305sqmi Chilcotin Plateau, where thousands of cattle roam amid tremendous geographical diversity: from hot, dry, native grasslands to ice-covered heights of more than 4,000m/13,123ft, where glaciers descend to azure-blue lakes. The rolling hills and terraces of the Chilcotin Ark grasslands, in particular, have supported livestock grazing for more than 130 years. In addition, the Chilcotin Ark continues to support an estimated 40 per cent of B.C.’s at-risk wildlife species plus rare

plant species and ecologically significant, but threatened, habitats. Towering over these ice-carved plateaus and valleys is Mt. Waddington, at 4,016m/13,176ft the highest peak to lie entirely within B.C., while three major river systems, the Homathko, Klinaklini and Dean, run westward through the Coast Mountains. The southeast is drained by the great Chilko, Chilcotin and Fraser river systems, where grassland canyons feature desert landscapes similar to those in the southwestern U.S.

Nothing reflects the spirit of the Chilcotin more than Hwy. 20. Known as the “Freedom Road” after its completion in 1953 finally made road access to the Central Coast possible, the highway originally ended at Anahim Lake – just 137km/85mi short of Bella Coola on the Pacific. Still, the provincial government refused to extend the route, claiming that the area’s mountainous terrain made doing so impossible. So, working from opposite ends, with just two bulldozers and supplies purchased on credit, local volunteers finished the job with the same determination and independent spirit that remain integral characteristics of Chilcotin and Coast residents today. And indeed, those who settled this isolated region had to be tough – such as Nellie Hance, who in 1887 became the first white woman to travel into the Chilcotin, riding sidesaddle on horseback for 485km/301mi to reach her husband Tom’s trading post near Lee’s Corner (also known as Hanceville).

Other Chilcotin pioneers were not only tough, but, some would say, a little crazy. The rancher after whom Lee’s Corner is named, for example, Norman Lee, set off from the Chilcotin with 200 head of cattle on a 2,500km/1,553mi trek to the Klondike goldfields in May 1898. None of his cattle survived. Thankfully Lee did, arriving in Vancouver five months later with a roll of blankets, a dog and one dollar. After borrowing enough money for the train to Ashcroft and a horse to ride from the train station home, Lee was soon ranching again, and by 1902 was well on the way back to prosperity (his descendants still ranch in the area today). Lee was not the only rancher





Destination BC/Grant Harder

Ptarmigan Lake



Chris Harris

in the late 1800s eager for new markets. Cattle spreads in the Chilcotin were primarily established to provide beef to the Cariboo Gold Rush towns of the early 1860s, including the iconic Gang Ranch, founded in the region's southeast by two American brothers in 1863 and the largest ranch in North America in its heyday. By 1870, though, the Cariboo Gold Rush was waning and the demand for Chilcotin beef was fading along with it. It would be another 15 years before the Canadian Pacific Railway reached B.C. and opened up new beef markets in eastern Canada and the U.S., south of the B.C. border for Chilcotin ranchers such as Lee. At the turn of the century, the country's new national rail service had, by most accounts, arrived just in time to salvage the cattle industry.

Today, ranching remains a key economic driver in the Chilcotin, with cowboy boots and belt buckles standard apparel. Tourism is also an important mainstay, and often goes hand in hand with cattle ranching for the region's numerous working ranches, many of which host vacation adventures, pack trips and trail rides. As for that rustic road that officials refused to call a highway, even after its

completion, its existence eventually convinced provincial authorities to take over maintenance and improvements in 1955. Known today as Hwy. 20, the former Freedom Highway is now a key link in the region's world-renowned Discovery Coast Circle Tour route – the communities of the Chilcotin strung along its length like beads on a necklace, each with its own story and general store. These hospitable and historic community landmarks also continue to play a vital role in the region as community centres and meeting hubs, while still functioning as multi-purpose shops. One iconic example is the A.C. Christensen General Store in Anahim Lake, where a sign for shoppers states: “If we don't have it, you don't need it!”

With the bulk of the Chilcotin accessed off Hwy. 20, its southern wilds are most easily approached from Vancouver and Whistler via Lillooet on Hwy. 99, or via Lytton and the Fraser Canyon on Hwy. 12. The communities of Dog Creek and Alkali Lake also have backcountry access, via Big Bar-Jesmond from Clinton or from various points along Hwy. 97. Those with a serious thirst for adventure can follow the west side of the Fraser

River north from Lillooet via a series of particularly scenic back roads to Hwy. 20, east via the Big Bar ferry to Hwy. 97, or westward to the Bridge River Valley communities of Gold Bridge, Bralorne and nearby Tyaughton Lake.

The northeast Chilcotin, (historically known as the northwest Cariboo), including Nazko is accessed via the City of Quesnel. Adventurers may cross the Fraser River at Quesnel and follow gravel roads south through Marguerite to Hwy. 20 at Meldrum Creek or head east at Rudy Johnson Bridge to Williams Lake. Before journeying off main highways into the unspoiled wilderness of the Chilcotin backcountry, sufficient fuel, accurate and detailed maps and tires suitable for gravel roads are required for both safety reasons and peace of mind.

## Nazko

Nazko is a small First Nation community 100km/62mi west of Quesnel, nestled in the iconic northeast Chilcotin, where the main draw is the surrounding valley, lakes and rivers. This area is popular for hiking and horseback riding through spectacular meadows, plus excellent fly-fishing, canoeing, snowmobiling,



Michelle Norfje



Destination BC/Grant Harder



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Destination BC/Blake Jorgenson



Geoff Moore



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Nordic skiing, snowshoeing and “trapper cabin” retreats. The valley lies within the traditional territory of the Carrier people, who in 1793 guided explorer Alexander Mackenzie on his way to the Pacific Ocean. Historical sites in the valley include the Nuxalk-Carrier (Alexander Mackenzie) Grease Trail, Blackwater Homestead, Krestenuk Trading Post, Old Red School House and Chuntezn’l and Homesteader cemeteries.

## Blackwater

While the legendary Blackwater River attracts dry fly-fishers, it is but one of the northeast Chilcotin’s hidden secrets. Wade from the front door of your cabin or float the Blackwater to experience this aggressive strain of native rainbow trout and you will see why this unique river has captured the imaginations of fly fishing enthusiasts the world over.

Kluskoil Lake Park provides a variety of back country only recreational opportunities, and protects valuable wildlife habitat in sub-boreal pine-spruce forest and wetlands. Noted for the Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail (Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail), the park encompasses only a short portion of the trail where Mackenzie and his party of nine men camped beside the Blackwater River west of the lake, on July 8th, 1793. The park supports numerous wetlands in a rolling landscape, and contains important habitat for moose, fisher, lynx and aquatic furbearers. It also encompasses two small untouched watersheds located 100km/62mi northwest of Quesnel, near the Euchiniko Lakes.

Finger-Tatuk Provincial Park surrounds Finger and Tatuk lakes and extends south to include the smaller Turff, Vance, Cory, Bodley, and Harp lakes south of the Tatuk Hills. Located 80km/50mi south of Vanderhoof or 115km/71mi southwest of Prince George, this beautiful series of lakes hold abundant rainbow trout and kokanee. Guided and resident hunting and boating are also popular pursuits. The diverse, high-value habitat in the park provides for a range of animal species including grizzly and black bear, ungulates, small fur-bearers, waterfowl, shore-birds and eagles; all which can be seen from the two resorts within the park. The Batnuni Waggon Trail runs

through the southeast corner of the park and author Rich Hobson’s books account for the cattle drives that once crossed this section of the plateau.

## Seton Portage

Seton Portage is a historic rural community located between Seton and Anderson lakes, just 25km/15.5mi by boat (78km/48mi by road over Mission Mountain) west of Lillooet. Beginning during the Fraser Canyon Gold Rush of 1858, thousands of prospectors – following what was then known as the “Lakes Route” from the Lower Mainland – swept through this narrow strip of land and across a wooden rail link built to connect the community’s two fjord-like lakes, as they pushed north to the Cariboo goldfields.

In addition to fishing, hiking and boating, Seton Portage’s main attraction today is the Kaoham Shuttle train, which snakes along the shores of turquoise-hued Seton Lake, through the third-longest tunnel on the Canadian National Rail line and alongside the nearby Bridge River hydroelectric development.

## Bridge River Valley

Surrounded by the towering peaks of the South Chilcotin Mountains, 105km/65mi west of Lillooet in the Bridge River Valley, the communities of Gold Bridge and Bralorne sprang to life during the Great Depression with the 1932 opening of a large gold mine. The Bralorne Pioneer Mine would produce more than four million ounces of gold (124 metric tons) before its closure in 1971, making it the richest gold mine in Canadian history while prompting construction of the towns of Gold Bridge and Bralorne, with schools, churches, homes, offices, recreation halls and rustic hunting lodges. After lying abandoned for many years, the mine re-opened in 2011 in response to rising gold prices, and is again producing gold.

History buffs can still enjoy poking around Bralorne’s mostly dilapidated buildings (a few are being redeveloped for recreational purposes), along with other local ghost towns and their abandoned mines, while outdoor lovers will appreciate the valley for its fishing, hunting, rock hounding, numerous alpine lakes

and rugged mountain vistas. In addition, resorts are scenically situated on the shores of several local lakes, with air-assisted mountain biking a popular activity, along with snowmobiling on spectacular glaciers and phenomenal heli-skiing. The service-and-supply hub for the valley’s upper basin, Gold Bridge also makes an excellent home base for outdoor expeditions into the wildlife-rich Southern Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park and the Bender Range, a particularly popular destination for alpinists. Stop in at the Haylmore Heritage site for a taste of the early history and tips on what is happening in the valley during your visit.

## Alkali Lake

Although geographically located in the Cariboo, the communities of Alkali Lake and Dog Creek, which embrace several fishing lakes between them, are linked to the Chilcotin by proximity and landscape. Both are also the source of one of the most touching stories in B.C.



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Chris Harris

For 40 years the Esk'etemc (*es-ket-em*) First Nation has invited Alcoholics Anonymous members from around the world to its annual Pow Wow Arbor rodeo and conference to share inspirational stories. Alcohol addiction almost destroyed the Esk'etemc a half-century ago. And the account of how this First Nation community saved itself, through members taking control of their lives and the nurturing of dignity and hope, was brought to the screen in the 1985 film *The Honour of All*, a film still shown at international festivals.



Geoff Moore

In 1858, B.C.'s oldest ranch was established in this picturesque valley by German-born settler Otto Bowe, who built a "stopping house" here alongside a river trail that once wove its way through the Cariboo to the northern goldfields. Bowe also married a daughter of the Alkali Band chief, had four children with her, and the couple's 10,117hec/25,000ac ranch stayed in the family until 1908, when it was purchased by Englishman Charles N. Wynn-Johnson – grandfather of Charles N. "Chunky" Woodward. (The multimillionaire owner of B.C.'s iconic Woodward's department store chain and a world champion cutting horse rider in his own right). In its glory days, the Alkali Lake spread boasted more than 4,000 head of cattle and horses and employed dozens of working cowboys. Now an impressive 14,973hec/36,999ac, it continues to operate as a working cattle ranch today.



Geoff Moore

## Riske Creek

Riske Creek is a small community set amidst sweeping grasslands on the Chilcotin's eastern border, 47km/29mi west of Williams Lake. The community is named after Polish pioneer and entrepreneur L.W. Riske, who built a sawmill and flourmill here during the 1860s, from which he sent supplies and produce to the Cariboo goldfields.

Today, the history of the area can be lived by visiting the community's Chilcotin Lodge, a 1940s hunting lodge and one of the last examples of authentic pioneer-style log construction in the Chilcotin. Just south of Riske Creek near the confluence of the Fraser and Chilcotin rivers, on Farwell Canyon Road, is Junction Sheep Range Provincial Park –



Fraser Culbert

a 4,573hec/11,300ac preserve sheltering some 500 California bighorn sheep, one-fifth of the world's population. Hikers may spot the animals among the hoodoos or scaling the preserve's steep sandstone riverbanks; in the surrounding area, black bears, coyotes, foxes and cougars are also found. At nearby Farwell Canyon, once the site of a native village, the desert-dry canyon's limestone and sandstone walls feature hoodoos and other intriguing water-carved formations. Hikers can also view ancient pictographs on the cliff faces here and observe traditional First Nations fishers dip-netting for salmon in the late summer and fall.

## Hanceville

About 50km/31mi west of Riske Creek, a roadside plaque describes the legendary Yukon cattle drive of Norman Lee, who, as mentioned in the introduction to this region, set out from his Chilcotin ranch in 1898 with 200 head of cattle on a disastrous trek to Dawson City. Lee later wrote a chronicle of the misadventure that became a book entitled *Klondike Cattle Drive*, and set up shop at Lee's Corner. Today, Lee's "town", is known as Hanceville (though the Corner Store & Restaurant still bears his name), and travelers can venture southwest from here into the Tsihqot'in (*tseelh-coht-een*) Title Area's Nemiah Valley for wild-horse and wildlife viewing opportunities, or to Taseko Lake, a four-season wilderness playground offering camping, hiking, wildlife viewing and snowmobiling.

## Big Creek

South of Hanceville, on what is now a popular backcountry circle tour to Riske Creek through Farwell Canyon, stands the unincorporated community of Big Creek – home to the Chilcotin district post office from 1907 to 1975. Today there is little evidence of the former town, but lodges and guest ranches in the area offer popular revitalization and recreational getaways for those keen to escape the beaten path. Tellingly, nearby Fletcher Lake's healthy population of fat rainbow trout, for example, ensures its small campground is popular every holiday long weekend.

## Nemiah Valley

The Nemiah Valley, which lies within the traditional territory of the Xenigwet'in (*honey-koteen*) First Nation in the Tsihqot'in Title Area, shelters one of the last remaining herds of wild horses in North America. In fact, results of recent DNA tests suggest that the bloodlines of these mustangs are linked not only to Canadian horses, but to a small horse native to Russia and to horses brought to the North American continent hundreds of years ago by the Spanish. With no road access to the rest of the Chilcotin until 1973, the valley itself has remained relatively undisturbed, and the landscape here is pristine and truly spectacular. Home to members of the Xenigwet'in First Nation and assorted ranchers, the valley supports a number of wilderness hunting and fishing lodges, and, while there are no



“Learned to waterski in the 60s while staying with Grandpa Musser on Little Gunn Lake! The area has its own magic!”

~ Candice McKittrick

“Fall in the Chilcotin, Farwell canyon. Best time of the year!”

~ Stephanie Fenner

“Tatlayoko Lake, place of my dreams.”

~ Beverley Campbell

“I think we were known as “Townies” since we came from North Vancouver, but I can say that our cabin for 22 years set one of our boys on the path of working outdoors ... I am from Scotland, and The Chilcotin is the only place in Canada that has touched my soul!”

~ Isabelle Procter

“Going down the centre of Alexis Creek on a homemade bob sled my dad made on a Sunday night with all the other people in the community joining in. We used to have about 10 people on the sled at once. And would we ever go. Thank you to the RCMP who would stop traffic for the great times we had with all the other people in the Alexis Creek Community joining in.”

~ Elaine Butler

“Yes, we had a cabin for over 10 years in the 50s to 60s. We had a lovely tour of the lake this September. It's as beautiful as ever. I'm glad to see you're spelling the name Gunn not Gun. That's how we always spelled it.”

~ Pat Montgomery

officially scheduled tours, the local First Nations, ranches and B&Bs can assist with the coordination of wild-horse and wilderness adventures.

## Alexis Creek

Just 20km/12.5mi west of Hanceville is the namesake community of Chief Alexis, the local Tsilhqot'in (*tseelhcot-eeen*) leader who ruled here during the Chilcotin War. Just outside Alexis Creek are two historic sites where fierce intertribal battles were fought between the Chilcotin and invading Shuswap and Bella Coola nations: Bull Canyon and Battle Rock. But today, the former site of the Chilcotin Plateau's eastern Hudson Bay trading post is a tranquil and picturesque spot. One that continues to function as a service centre for the area and for travelers who stop here for basic snacks, supplies and travel tips from its tourist info booth (full washroom facilities also available) – before journeying west or into the backcountry alongside the waters of the Chilcotin River.

## Redstone and Puntzi Lake

Redstone Reserve is a small First Nation community 36km/22mi west of Alexis Creek on Hwy. 20, where the Redstone store is a key stop for fuel and supplies. The community's Redstone Rodeo, held annually in August, as part of the Chilcotin Tour Series, is also an excellent opportunity to visit with the locals and explore the area, well known for its network of biking and hiking trails and excellent canoeing, kayaking, fishing and hunting. Just outside of the reserve on Hwy. 20, the recently opened Kinikinik Restaurant and Store serves certified-organic vegetables and meats – including grass-fed beef, pork, lamb and poultry – sourced from its adjoining ranch and abbatoir. The owners also operate a popular organic meats store in Vancouver called “Pasture to Plate”.

As well, just 21.6km/13.4mi west of Redstone, Puntzi Lake is a major draw for birdwatchers. The American white pelican uses the lake as a food source in early spring and throughout the summer, while trumpeter swans feed here in the fall until the lake freezes over. Fishing resorts and serviced RV campsites are also found lakeside, with local activities typically spring-, summer-

and fall-focused, the lake's kokanee and rainbow trout get a welcome reprieve in snowmobiling season.

## Tatla Lake

Tatla Lake is located on the western perimeter of the Chilcotin grasslands, 108km/67mi west of Alexis Creek – where Irish pioneer Robert Graham jumpstarted a ranching legacy. In 1902, Graham and his wife purchased the Tatla Lake place from Benny Franklin. The couple then built a fine new house and, in 1930, a store. Today that house – adjacent to the Tatla Lake Manor – is the Graham Inn, which specializes in serving excellent meals while the community provides access to stellar mountain hikes, Nordic ski trails and several backcountry resort and guiding operations that showcase the grasslands biodiverse ecosystem.

Tatla Lake also acts as the gateway to three major mountain valleys: West Branch, Chilko and Tatlayoko, which extend south via secondary roads. (Before venturing off the main road, please be aware of the Tsilhqot'in Title Area boundaries.) Nearby Bluff Lake is a fixed-wing flight-seeing and helicopter-tour access point for a number of impressive wilderness destinations, including the massive Homathko Ice Field and Mt. Waddington, the highest peak in B.C. set in the Coast Range. As well, anglers find fat rainbow trout and Dolly Varden, while several lodges offer wildlife viewing and horseback riding.

## Kleena Kleene

This tiny settlement is just 31km/19mi west of Tatla Lake on Hwy. 20 and minutes away from Clearwater Lake, a departure point for float-plane excursions to remote fishing lakes and rivers and the region's celebrated alpine wilderness. Backcountry enthusiasts enjoy stunning vistas from the lookout point at Perkins Peak (2,819m/9,249ft), hikes to Klinaklini Falls and heli-hikes in the massive Pantheon Range. Local guest ranches and lodges, some with canoe-to-your-door chalets, also offer boat touring, photography treks, working ranch holidays and excellent horseback riding excursions, from guided daytrips to multi-day camping trail rides in the Charlotte Alplands Alpine Wilderness Area, where highlights include 75 lakes,



Destination BC / Grant Harder

numerous alpine ecosystems and the headwaters of one of B.C.'s purest and most important salmon-river systems, the Atnarko.

Both anglers and recreationists also find that Big Stick, Clearwater and One Eye lakes all offer excellent, pristine wilderness canoeing and fishing, while hunters can embark from Kleena Kleene on guided expeditions for moose, bears, mountain goats and wolves.

### Charlotte Lake

Located 11km/6.8mi southeast of Nimpo Lake, 16km/10mi-long pristine Charlotte Lake is a haven for fly-fishers who appreciate trophy rainbow trout as well as loons, bald eagles, osprey and trumpeter swans – one of the heaviest living birds still capable of flight. A most idyllic setting, the surrounding wilderness is laced with hiking, mountain biking and winter sledding trails, while the nearby Charlotte Alplands features rare wildflowers, alpine lakes and an incredible diversity of wildlife, all of which only enhances the unique day treks and multi-day guided horseback riding,

hiking, photography and wildlife-viewing excursions available.

For exploring this exceptional landscape, most of the local lodges and B&Bs are similarly situated in idyllic settings. With certified guides available for many of the region's wilderness forays, you will want to book your adventure in advance.

### Nimpo Lake

Affectionately known as the "Float Plane Capital of B.C.," Nimpo Lake is a major launch point for flight-seeing tours and fishing fly-ins to the West Chilcotin's wilderness lakes and rivers, and for adventurers accessing isolated cabins nestled in dramatic backcountry settings. Backdropped by towering Mt. Kappan, Nimpo Lake itself also features terrific rainbow trout fishing, while its wilderness trails provide both rugged workouts and excellent birdwatching and wildlife-viewing opportunities.

Local ranches offer horseback riding and hiking tours, pack trips, fly-in fishing, yoga classes – plus organic meals featuring locally sourced produce, fish,



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## WHAT THE LOCALS SAY

We picked the South Chilcotin Mountains in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast to operate our wilderness and nature adventure business because it is in a biogeoclimatic transition zone which has a wide diversity of flora and fauna with our 13 big game species and 150 species of wild flowers. Our dry climate has a big amount of sunshine, as well as the glaciated friendly mountain ranges holding many treasures from fossils to grizzly bears.  
~ *Kevan, Chilcotin Holidays*

Looking out of the "office" and seeing wildlife surrounded by snow topped peaks and breathtaking scenery every day was a dream and that's why I'm living and working in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region.  
~ *Andre Kuerbis*

Born and raised in the Cariboo area and love it. Now I am in the Chilcotin and loving it, best place to feel safe here! No big city life for us, this is as good as it gets.  
~ *Linda-Lou Howarth*

Born & raised here and love the area. When I got my first degree I made one application and was very fortunate to be hired. My first language comes from this area. You can drive in any direction with good roads, fresh air, lots of good fishing.  
~ *Joan Gentles*

The Chilcotin is still wild and free, offering privacy and amazing scenery. There's nothing better than fresh air, wide open spaces and being surrounded by the mountains.  
~ *Clint Ellis & Cordy Cox*



fowl and game. In winter, entertainment options include sleigh rides, snowshoeing, skating, festive Nordic skiing and a range of lake-based snowmobiling adventures.

### Anahim Lake

Located just 135km/84mi east of Bella Coola, Anahim Lake is the site of a long-established Chilcotin settlement that expanded when the Carrier people moved here from remote villages in the 1940s and 1950s. Today, the community is the eastern gateway to the rugged southern wilderness of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park and its phenomenal recreational opportunities.

Anahim Lake Airport is the main airport for the Chilcotin, with regular scheduled Pacific Coastal Airlines service to Vancouver. As well private and chartered flights depart from Anahim to local lodges and resorts – catering to both guided and self-guided fishers, hunters and hikers, plus those who prefer organized pack trips and mountain heli-excursions.

In addition, float planes can be chartered for backcountry adventures, while guided horseback and hiking treks are just as easily arranged for exploring the surrounding

Itcha and Ilgachuz mountains and the dramatic Rainbow Range of Tweedsmuir Park, where peaks of eroded lava and fragmented rock display a spectrum of vivid red, orange, lavender and yellow hues. Anahim Peak, a spectacular pillared cone of volcanic rock rich in obsidian, was once an important trading commodity for members of the Carrier First Nation, who used it for weapon making. In fact, First Nations history permeates this region, as exemplified by the remains of large wooden “culla culla” houses at Ulkatcho on Gatcho Lake and at Natsadalia Point on Anahim Lake, all open to the public.

The town's most famous attraction, of course, is the Anahim Lake Stampede, staged every July since 1938 – where the most celebrated competitor is the star goaltender of the NHL's Montreal Canadiens and a Team Canada Olympic Gold Medalist who grew up in Anahim Lake: Carey Price.

Located west of Anahim Lake, at Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is a winter adventure playground with groomed Nordic trails, back country snowmobile access, a small ski hill with handle bar tow and day use cabin. ♦



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# THE COAST



Stephen Harrington/All Canada Photos

Great Bear Rainforest





*The wild, rugged beauty of B.C.'s central Pacific coast has long drawn artists, naturalists, scientists and travellers – all in pursuit of their passions and adventure, plus the freshest seafood, of course. Even those who simply love to fish, hike, ocean kayak or explore via guided eco-tour, find it almost impossible to do so without experiencing some of the region's natural wonders and wilderness thrills. For whether one is an ecologist or anthropologist, an artist or a world traveller, the Great Bear Rainforest represents that rare travel opportunity: the chance to experience one of the few places on Earth where an incredibly diverse and unique mix of pristine ecosystems, exceptional wilderness opportunities and authentic, arts-rich indigenous cultures still exist.*

**R**enowned Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl became a household name seemingly overnight for his Kon-Tiki rafting expedition across the Pacific, from Peru to Polynesia, in 1947. Yet just six years earlier Heyerdahl had intensively explored B.C.'s central coast in a two-year effort to confirm the origins of the region's indigenous peoples. That early research eventually helped reveal many similarities between the Coast's First Nation peoples and the indigenous populations of far-removed Pacific islands – findings that would fuel all of Heyerdahl's legendary future explorations as well as his much-debated theories, including the proposition that all indigenous peoples with access to the Pacific can trace their ancestry to a common source.

Of course, Heyerdahl was not the first non-native explorer to “discover” B.C.'s central coast. In 1793 an intrepid 29-year-old Scotsman named Alexander Mackenzie, accompanied by seven French Canadian voyageurs and two First Nations porters, paddled into Dean Channel near present-day Bella Coola – a seemingly unremarkable event. However, the expedition's arrival marked the first complete crossing of North America to the Pacific, and before returning east Mackenzie scrawled a historic inscription on a nearby rock using a reddish mixture of bear grease and vermilion: Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, 22nd July, 1793 (words later permanently inscribed by surveyors following in his footsteps).

Mackenzie could not have found a more spectacular spot to end his epic journey. The mist-draped coastline off the Dean Channel is lined with towering snow-crowned peaks, massive icefields and some of the world's longest fjords. Even today, it remains a remote, pristine place, where old-growth stands of cedar and spruce carpet the landscape, and streams filled with migrating salmon weave through valley basins, providing food for the Coast's most magnificent creatures: killer whales, eagles, wolves and bears, including the province's unique “marine wolf” and mysterious white Spirit Bear, or Kermode. The local indigenous peoples'

way of life may have changed significantly since Mackenzie's historic landing on the Coast and Heyerdahl's anthropological exploration of its misty fjords. But, without question, the same magical wonders that captivated both explorers still call to even the most casual of travellers today, most of whom consider themselves incredibly fortunate simply to step ashore here.

## The Great Bear Rainforest

The landscape northwest of Bella Coola is some of the most isolated in B.C., including the Great Bear Rainforest, the largest contiguous tract of unspoiled temperate rainforest in the world. One of the most endangered forest-types on the planet, this 64,000sqkm/25,000sqmi wilderness expanse features some of the largest and oldest trees on Earth, several ancient First Nations cultural sites and thousands of species of plants, birds and animals, many of which are rare or unique to the region. Offshore, the ocean teems with killer whales, porpoises, humpback whales, seals, sea lions and dozens of seabird species, while the preserve's forests are filled with black-tailed deer, “marine” wolves and three species of bears: grizzly, black and Kermode, a rare, white-coated variation of the black bear sacred to B.C.'s First Nations, also known as the Spirit Bear. Indeed, the Kermode's main haunt, *Princess Royal Island*, is a primordial expanse of lush wilderness accessible only by boat or air that few humans have entered, aside from the Tsimshian (*sim-she-an*), who once inhabited a coastal village here. Today, however, eco-sensitive interpretative tours led by bear experts and other naturalists offer unique touring options for kayakers and boaters hoping to catch a rare glimpse of this majestic animal.

As boating gains popularity you will not want to miss a chance to experience the Great Bear Rainforest by water. Operators offer a variety of services from scientific missions to relaxing sailboats traversing the protected channels. Depending on the size of your boat or the package you choose to book, this area will require over a week, minimum, to explore, or stay to immerse yourself for several weeks.





Geoff Moore

The Great Bear's Fiordland Conservancy, a provincial marine park set deep in the inner channels northeast of Klemtu, is equally remote. Dotted with pristine beaches, including particularly picturesque stretches near Lady Douglas Island, the conservancy encompasses Kynoch and Mussel inlets (two glacially gouged fjords where sheer granite cliffs rise more than 1,000m/3,280ft) and Higgins Passage, an intricate waterway with traditional First Nation sites set amidst a multitude of maze-like islands, sinuous passageways and cascading waterfalls. Unforgettable sea

kayaking and wildlife-viewing can also be experienced in the myriad of inlets, tiny coves and narrow passageways around Bella Coola, while to the south, just 10km/6mi west of Namu, the 123,000hec/303,940ac Hakai Luxvbalis (*looks-bal-ease*) Conservation Area offers some of the finest kayaking on the coast, with twisting passages, intriguing island clusters and white sandy beaches perfect for strolling and camping. Fishing enthusiasts who journey southwest of Hakai Luxvbalis will find luxurious lodges and some of the largest chinook salmon in the world along Rivers Inlet and Knight

Inlet – two of B.C.'s most renowned sport-fishing destinations. From Rivers Inlet to Princess Royal Island, more names associated with iconic fishing include Hakai Pass, Milbanke Sound and Shearwater. (Local coho are in the 9kg/20lb range, with consistent catches of chinook, pink, chum and sockeye; giant halibut weighing up to 91kg/200lb cruise the floors of each inlet, and ling cod weighing up to 27kg/59.5lb are caught near the reefs.)

It is also important to note that for centuries prior to the arrival of

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Europeans in the mid-1700s (when fur traders entered the area to harvest sea otter pelts), and well before a single European cast a rod in the waters off the coast of the Great Bear Rainforest, First Nations thrived along the central coast living off land and ocean and trading with tribes in the province's Interior. As well, approximately two-thirds of the Coast's residents today are indigenous, as in Bella Coola, where the Nuxalk (*nu-halk*) are well known for their carvings, masks and paintings, displayed throughout the Bella Coola Valley.

Equally fortunate for modern-day travellers is the fact that exploring the Great Bear Rainforest is now much easier than it was in the last quarter of the 18th century, when Mackenzie was paddled into the Dean Channel, or even in the early 1900s, when Heyerdahl sailed the central coast for his anthropological research. BC Ferries, for example, transports passengers and vehicles from Port Hardy on northern Vancouver Island to the Central Coast each summer, navigating a series of dramatic fjords to dock at smaller communities en route, such as Bella Bella, McLoughlin Bay, Shearwater, Klemtu, Ocean Falls and Bella Coola. Passengers can then continue their Discovery Coast Circle Tour from Bella Coola via Hwy. 20, up "The Hill" and across the Chilcotin Plateau to the Cariboo and beyond.

Accessing the central coast from the east by road is an equally novel experience, with Hwy. 20 leading out of Heckman Pass and down the historic Hill, a 30km/19mi descent featuring hairpin turns, switchbacks and grades of up to 18 per cent. The road is not as dangerous as it sounds, though; it is generally quite wide, narrowing only on the hairpins, with good sight lines.

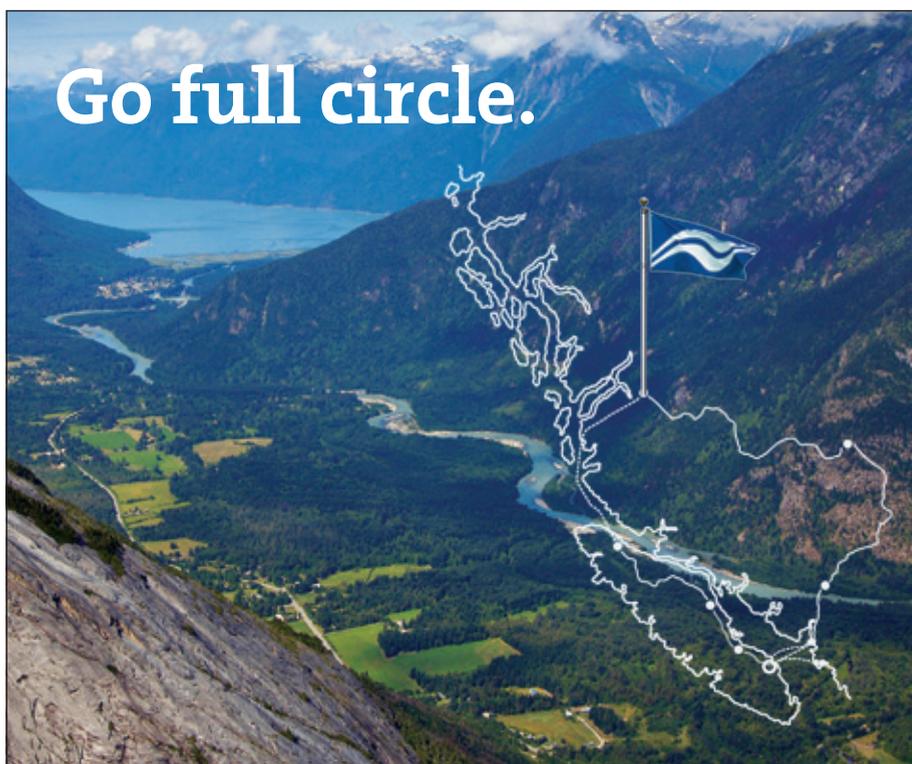
Whether journeying east from the Coast or approaching from the east down the infamous Hill, coastal travellers also find easy access to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park. This rugged 980,000hec/2,421,632ac expanse is a recreational magnet for outdoor lovers, with top-notch fishing, hiking, heli-skiing, camping and wilderness horseback riding, plus the Turner Lake Chain canoe circuit and Canada's third-highest free-falling

waterfall, Hunlen Falls, which plunges 260m/853ft from the northern end of Turner Lake into a cloud of spray before entering the Atnarko River. Tweedsmuir Provincial Park also boasts stunning terrain, notably the multi-hued peaks of its Rainbow Range, an astonishing spectrum of reds, oranges, yellows and lavenders created by heavily mineralized volcanic lavas and sands. The weathering effects of glaciers on these volcanic mountains, combined with the warm and wet influence of the Pacific Ocean, has in turn generated lush alpine meadows and a tremendous abundance of wildflowers. (Note: Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is a true wilderness park; visitors need to be experienced backcountry adventurers or employ the services of one of the areas professional guides.)

Heading west beyond Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, Hwy. 20 threads through the Bella Coola Valley by shadowing the "grease trail," the ancient First Nations trade route followed by Alexander Mackenzie on his way to the Pacific in 1793. Home to the Nuxalk

First Nation, the Bella Coola Valley was an important link in this trading corridor, where the furs, obsidian and leather goods of the province's Interior First Nations were exchanged for the Coast First Nations' salmon and eulachon oil – the latter obtained from the rendered fat of the small herring-like eulachon (*oo-lick-an*) and valued for its high calorie and vitamin content.

Today, the Bella Coola Valley boasts two main towns, located 17km/10.5mi apart at the west end of Hwy. 20: Hagensborg, a community settled by Norwegian Lutherans from Minnesota, and Bella Coola, the area's service hub. This stretch of the valley also features ancient petroglyphs, historic hiking trails, a salmon hatchery, art galleries specializing in West Coast native art and outdoor-adventure companies offering grizzly bear tours, eco river-drifts and aerial sightseeing excursions. As well, the valley is the hub of a regional farming



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revival spearheaded by the Bella Coola Community Supported Agriculture Project, including an immensely popular Sunday farmers' market where, June to September, visitors mingle with locals to purchase regional specialties such as "new" heritage fruits and veggies, honey, homemade jams and jellies and outstanding arts and crafts. Local farms also welcome travellers for specialty tastings and educational tours, and, as throughout the Coast, foodies can sample world-class spot prawns, Dungeness crab, halibut, Pacific cod, several species of salmon and other local seafoods.

## Hagensborg

In 1894, some 100 Norwegian colonists journeyed from Minnesota to the Bella Coola Valley and they founded a settlement called Hagensborg, located on Hwy. 20 just 16km/10mi east of Bella Coola. With its long fjords snaking to the sea, the striking landscape around the new community reminded the settlers of their Norwegian homeland, and before long the region's first non-native farming, lumber and fishing industries were up and running, followed by the town's first school, which opened in a large communal tent in 1895.



Boomer Jerritt

Today, travellers can still catch a glimpse of Hagensborg life in the 1800s by touring the town's Norwegian Heritage House. Built at the turn of the 20th century by settler Andrew Svisdahl, the site is a late-1800s time capsule furnished in traditional Norwegian fashion and displaying the household tools of more than a century ago. Augsburg United Church, built in 1904 as a Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, is another local historic building worth exploring, and one where parishioners are still welcomed - alongside a cemetery that poignantly memorializes the history of those who journeyed so far to realize their dreams of a new life. The local hiking trails offer a sense of the valley's profound impact on its early settlers, including excellent vistas of the valley and Nusatsum Mountain from tiny Lost Lake's picnic site (accessed by following the Lost Lake Trail on the north side of the Bella Coola River), and the well-marked wheelchair-accessible Saloompt Interpretive Trail's scenic meanderings alongside the Bella Coola River to an old-



Geoff Moore



Elana Rabin

growth forest, picnic tables and benches. Bella Coola Airport, just outside Hagensborg, provides scheduled flights daily to and from Vancouver and charters to local glaciers, fishing areas and coastal destinations.

## Bella Coola

Cradled on the western edge of the valley, Bella Coola is a community of approximately 900 residents, with a thriving economy based on fishing, logging, tourism and the supplying of services to the area's tiny outer settlements. Its bracing mountain air, glacier-fed rivers, wild mountain streams and abundant wildlife attract a steady stream of naturalists, artists, explorers and photographers, many of whom find themselves captivated by the town's eclectic collection of fishing and pleasure boats, cannery sites and tidal flats. The town's history as a Hudson's Bay fur-trading post and the western terminus of Alexander Mackenzie's epic 1793 trek to the West Coast is also reflected in historic buildings such as the Kopas Store, currently popular for its folksy ambience and diverse selection of B.C. books, First Nations jewellery and giftware; other art galleries and gift shops can also be explored downtown.

In addition, the Bella Coola harbour serves as the grand entrance to the world-renowned 64,000sqkm/24,710sqmi Great Bear Rainforest, and is the only port between Vancouver and Prince Rupert that provides road access to the B.C. Interior. Until the late 1860s, the harbour was also the heart of the Nuxalk First Nation's traditional territories. But when smallpox decimated the population, those who survived gathered on lands closer to the mouth of the river and its Hudson's Bay post – an area that now comprises the non-reserve part of the community. Art history buffs can

delve into this chronology with a guided tour of the Nuxalk Nation's impressive petroglyph site: ancient rock carvings illustrating Nuxalk culture and mythical beliefs. Also worth a visit is the modern-day Nuxalk community of 4 Mile and its school, an innovative, three-dimensional work of art designed in the traditional longhouse style, with a series of totem poles arrayed at the school's entrance (the school is located just a few minutes east of Bella Coola on Hwy. 20).

Just 5km/3mi west of town, the Clayton Falls Recreation Site is the only oceanfront park in the Bella Coola area, as well as a gathering place for salmon in major spawning years, with waterfalls accessible from the road along a short walking trail. Other local points of interest include Snootli Creek Park's meandering nature trails off Hwy. 20, adjacent to Walker Island Park and featuring an ancient cedar grove with an almost impermeable forest canopy of massive, interlocking cedar branches. Walkers on these easy trails stay relatively dry even when it rains.

## Namu

At the confluence of Burke Channel and Fitz Hugh Sound, 95km/59mi southwest of Bella Coola, the village of Namu – a Heiltsuk (*hel-sic*) First Nations word meaning “whirlwind” – stands as a stark reminder of past successes and misplaced optimism. Between the 1930s and 1980s, when B.C. Packers operated a cannery here, Namu was a major hub for commercial fishing along the central coast and boasted a population of up to 400 cannery workers, fish processors, maintenance personnel and their families. However high transportation costs and low fish prices in the 1980s forced a shift, from canning to fish processing, and Namu fish were



“My favourite place on the Central Coast is Koeye Bay, near Hakai Pass in the Heiltsuk Nations traditional territory. It is a very magical and special place.”

- Shane Gunn

“A rare picture, of a rare animal, in a rare place with rare people as your host.”

- Clarence Moore

“I would love to fly around the Bella Coola area and see Hunlen Falls and all the backcountry not accessible by road. I know I'd better buy a large SD for my camera!”

- Kimberley Watkins

“It's a great place to hear the traditional stories, told to the young ones by the elders, the kids tell them to visitors. Living traditions can be experienced here in a wonderful way.”

- Elke Schotmann

“Cooking freshly caught spot prawns on the boat #BellaCoola. #explorebc #bcgrizzlytours”

- MT JackieKaiEllis

“In an ancient cedar forest in the Bella Coola Valley: Doug Baker explains culturally modified trees to a group of travel writers from the US, Australia and Canada. Thanks for bringing this group to us so we can show them how awesome the BellaCoola valley is!”

- Tweedsmuir Park Lodge

soon being shipped south to Vancouver and west to Japan.

In the 1990s, B.C. Packers sold the cannery, and an attempt was made to establish a hotel and resort on the site, with no success. Today Namu is largely a crumbling ghost town, though it is still explored and used as a stopover point by coastal travellers and fishers. Because of its ancient shell midden - a mound containing shells, animal bones and other refuse indicating human settlement in the past, Namu also remains a continuing source of curiosity for archaeologists, who have discovered evidence here of cultures dating back nearly 10,000 years. In fact, Namu is considered one of the earliest radiocarbon-dated sites on the central B.C. coast.

## Rivers Inlet

Rivers Inlet, a scenic fjord 125km/78mi southwest of Bella Coola and 65km/40mi north of Vancouver Island, is about 45km/28mi in length from its head at the community of Rivers Inlet, a logging and fishing settlement and home of the Wuikinuxv (*O-we-keeno*) First Nation to the mouth at the Pacific Ocean. Named by George Vancouver when first charted in 1792, the inlet today boasts several world-renowned fishing resorts, catering to sportfishing enthusiasts from around the globe. Eco-lodges welcome bear viewing fans and avid photographers. Dawsons Landing, located in a protected bay near the entrance to Rivers Inlet, has hosted fishermen, cruisers, scientists, and pleasure and commercial craft, for more than 55 years. Daily scheduled float plane service connects with Port Hardy. Dawson's Landing is the only location between Port Hardy and Bella Bella where travellers will find fuel, a general store, post office, liquor store and rental cabin accommodations.

## Hakai Pass

South of Bella Bella, the exceptionally scenic waterways of Hakai Pass are known internationally for their rare diversity of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and for the sport fishing that results. Anglers find some of the biggest catches on the Coast here: huge runs of chinook, coho, sockeye, chum and pink salmon. Fishers can also drop a line for halibut, snapper and ling cod, while wildlife viewers can

capture on film orcas, humpbacks, grey whales, dolphins and eagles migrating through the pass alongside sea lions and seals, and, onshore, deer and B.C.'s genetically unique “marine” wolves. Understandably, resorts and floating lodges here host excellent guided wildlife-viewing tours as well as fishing packages, with accommodations ranging from rustic to luxurious. Equally noteworthy is the local Hakai Institute's world-class ecological research and education centre, known for its innovative field programs, satellite facilities and initiatives dedicated to increasing scientists' understanding of the region's hydrography, geology and ecology; the long-term measurement of environmental change and the testing of theories to explain the Hakai's extraordinarily productive ecosystems.

## Bella Bella

The large eagle head painted on its Native Cultural Centre marks the fishing community of Bella Bella, located on Campbell Island about 3km/2mi north of McLoughlin Bay and the BC Ferries dock. Also known as Waglisla, the town is the former site of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort McLoughlin, (established here in 1833 - and the ancestral home of the Heiltsuk First Nation. With a population of 1,400, Bella Bella is also the largest First Nations community on B.C.'s west coast. Services include a bank, general store, police station and the island's only hospital and pharmacy. In the heart of the Great Bear Forest the Bella Bella airport is the primary arrival point for destination visitors with daily scheduled service from Port Hardy and Vancouver on Pacific Coastal Airlines.

## Shearwater

Some 60 full-time residents live in Shearwater, located on Denny Island just 5km/3mi from Bella Bella by water. Originally built for use by an anti-submarine bomber-reconnaissance unit in 1941, the town site was purchased and developed into a full-service marina and fishing resort when that unit disbanded in 1944 - and all that remains of the original air force base is the hangar, airstrip and a few bunkers. Today though, there is also a B&B, resort lodgings, fishing-charter operators, moorage for pleasure boaters, a grocery store, post office and regular water-taxi service to Bella Bella, all of



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which help support the community's excellent eco-adventure tours and its major economic asset: sport fishing. For with its calm, protected waters on all sides, Shearwater is home to all five species of salmon, including local chinook topping 32kg/70lb and coho reaching 9kg/20lb, in addition to abundant local bottom fish such as ling cod, red snapper, rockfish, and halibut weighing up to 91kg/200lb.

## Klemtu

Klemtu is an isolated community located in a pristine cove on Swindle Island, 228km/142mi northwest of Bella Coola within the Great Bear Rainforest preserve. The village is also on the doorstep of Princess Royal Island, home of the legendary white Spirit Bear, the Kermode. Equally noteworthy is the fact that Klemtu's population of 420 is composed of two First Nation groups, that speak completely different languages: the Kitasoo (*kit-ah-soo*), the southernmost tribe of the Tsimshian First Nation, and the Xai'xais (*hay-hace*), the northerly branch of the Heiltsuk First Nation. The reason for this linguistic juxtaposition is that, by 1875, the population of the two groups had declined so precipitously due to B.C.'s smallpox epidemic that its survivors joined together to establish a settlement nearer the region's main shipping routes. The new community underwrote its fledgling economy with earnings from cutting cordwood for coastal steamers, for which Klemtu became a refuelling stop.

Today, Klemtu's key economic driver is fishing, and most residents live along the waterfront and its wooden boardwalk – the longest in North America when it was built in the 1960s.

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## WHAT THE LOCALS SAY

Our region is a gift to be part of; it is truly untamed, untouched, and unbelievable.

~ Mike Maenck, *Shearwater*

Rivers Inlet is a remote, undisturbed wilderness located on the Central Coast of BC, and is the perfect place to fish and unwind from our fast and sometimes jaded society, with relatives & friends.

~ Barbara Kelly

*Owner/Operator*

*Rivers Inlet Sportsman's Club  
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Amazing people, amazing location, and amazing opportunities are all right here in the Bella Coola Valley.

~ Caitlin Thompson,

*Bella Coola*

*Music Festival*

Freedom, I think living and working on the Coast is all about Freedom.

~ Leonard Ellis,

*Bella Coola Grizzly Tours Inc.*

It's a special place, full of friendly people, and magnificent wildlife.

~ Joy MacKay,

*resident of the*

*Bella Coola Valley*

The world is full of unique and beautiful places. This one is unique and beautiful in a way that means I can see fish hatch, mature, and die, take pride in a homegrown tomato, and watch a bear from my living room window, not as someone from away, but as part of a larger whole.

~ Sara Wells,

*resident of the*

*Bella Coola Valley*



Destination BC/Pete Ryan

Commercial activities here are centered around the public Transport Canada wharf, where services include a general store, cafe, post office, community health clinic and modern fuel facility (with a full range of marine and auto fuels). But the most important community hub is Klemtu's monumental Big House. Constructed of red cedar and emblazoned with the village's clan emblems (raven, eagle, wolf and killer whale), the facility is used for celebrations, traditional dances and memorials that allow residents to reconnect with their past and bring ancient traditions alive.

In addition, the landscape surrounding Klemtu offers incredible scenery and superb wildlife-viewing, fishing and kayaking, with experienced paddlers bringing their own equipment to explore a labyrinth of inland fjords. A local First Nations touring company operates the stunning, modern Spirit Bear Lodge visitors offering cultural, eco- and wildlife-viewing tours of Princess Royal Island and Fiordland Conservancy marine park, where kayakers visit with a hereditary chief as they ply the ocean waters and learn the coastal story of creation. Swindle Island is inaccessible

by road, check the BC Ferries website for current schedules. Pacific Coastal Airlines also offers convenient flights to Klemtu from Vancouver, Port Hardy and Campbell River (via Bella Bella).

### Ocean Falls

Ocean Falls is often cited for its abundance of rain, some 4,390mm/172in annually. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, this community is sometimes referred to as the Land of the Rain People – after the Heiltsuk, the First Nation peoples who have inhabited the coastal region surrounding Ocean Falls for more than 9,000 years. Accessible only by private boat, BC Ferries or float plane, Ocean Falls is also a remote community, one that is situated around the waterfall of the same name, churning over the cliffs from Link Lake directly into Cousins Inlet, 88km/55mi northwest of Bella Coola.

In fact, it was this easy access to fresh water that, in 1912, prompted the largest pulp and paper mill in the province to be built here. In addition, Ocean Falls brought in workers from Japan, China and East India to meet the demand for local Sitka spruce



in the manufacture of fighter planes during World War I and II. In turn, the mill in its heyday supported a thriving town with a population of close to 4,000, its own school system, an orchestra, a musical and dramatic society, a hospital, one of the province's largest hotels and a swimming pool where several champions trained before the closure of the mill in 1980. The town's swimming club sent seven swimmers to the Olympic Games between 1948 and the 1960s, including resident Ralph Hutton, who won silver in the 400-metre freestyle at the 1968 Mexico City Games; as well, the club won the Canadian National Men's Championship four years running between 1962 and 1965.

Today, Ocean Falls has excellent hiking, wildlife viewing and freshwater and saltwater fishing. Its town centre also supports a small residential community and is a popular stop for boaters and BC Ferries travellers, with a good-sized government dock, fresh water for boating traffic and much to explore downtown. Accommodation is also available, though due to the much smaller ferry now servicing Ocean Falls, *early* reservations are highly recommended. And take note: as the ferry – or other watercraft – nears the dock, travellers get an up-close and striking look at the impressive town centre's massive, now-deteriorating hotel, other businesses along its main street as well as the town's large hydroelectric dam. One can't help but wonder what it must have been like to live here during the Falls' heyday. ♣

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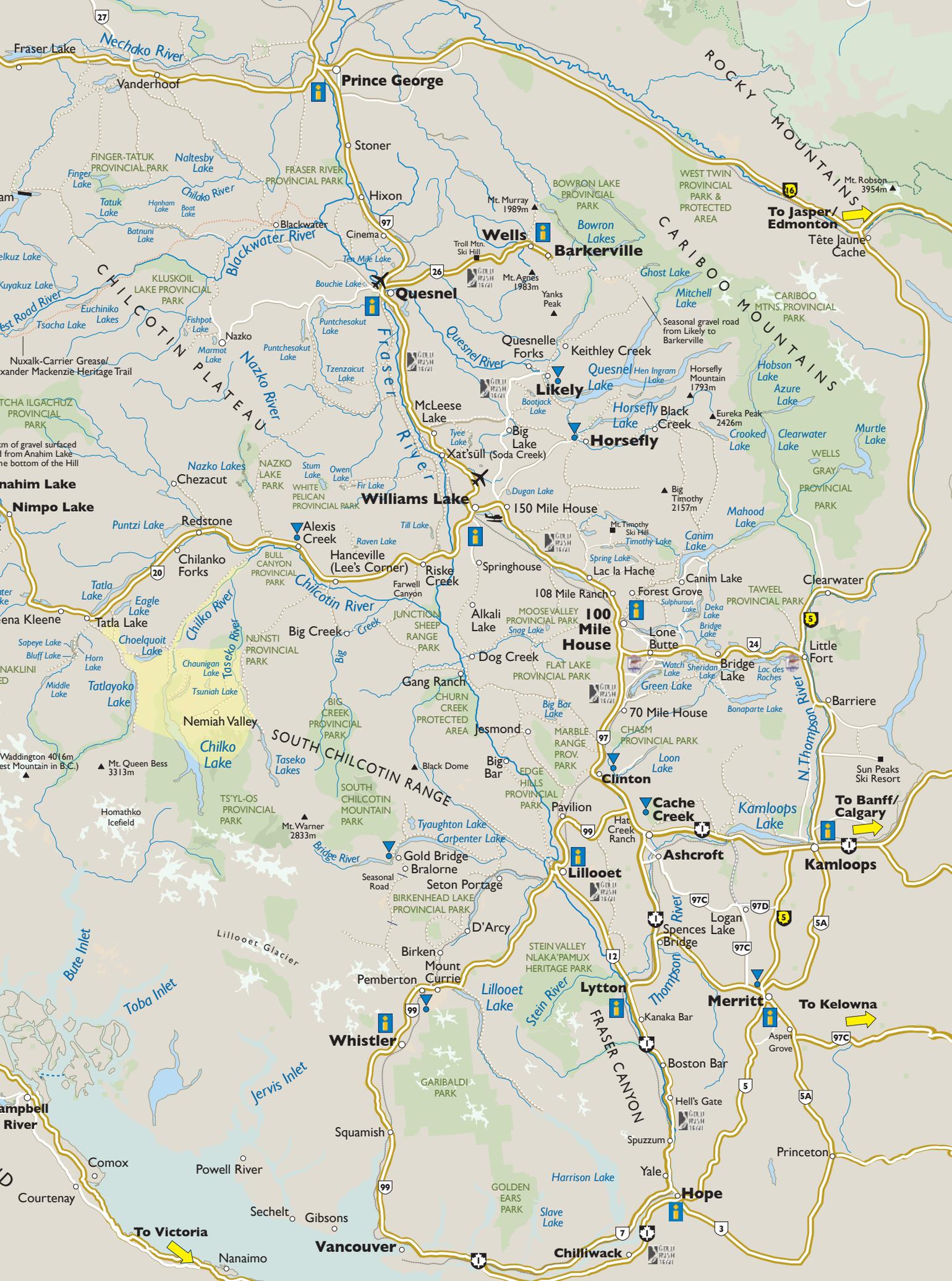
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Little Fort

Nemiah Valley

Chilko Lake

Big Creek

Gang Ranch

70 Mile House

Bridge Lake

Barriere

Chilko River

South Chilcotin Range

Black Dome

Big Bar

Edge Hills

Loon Lake

Kamloops

Chilko River

South Chilcotin Mountain Park

Gold Bridge

Seton Portage

Lillooet

Ashcroft

To Banff/Calgary

Chilko River

Lillooet Glacier

Birkenhead Lake

Birken

Lytton

Merritt

To Kelowna

Chilko River

Whistler

Pemberton

Mount Currie

Squamish

Hope

Princeton

Chilko River

Vancouver

Whistler

Squamish

Chilliwack

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Chilko River

To Victoria

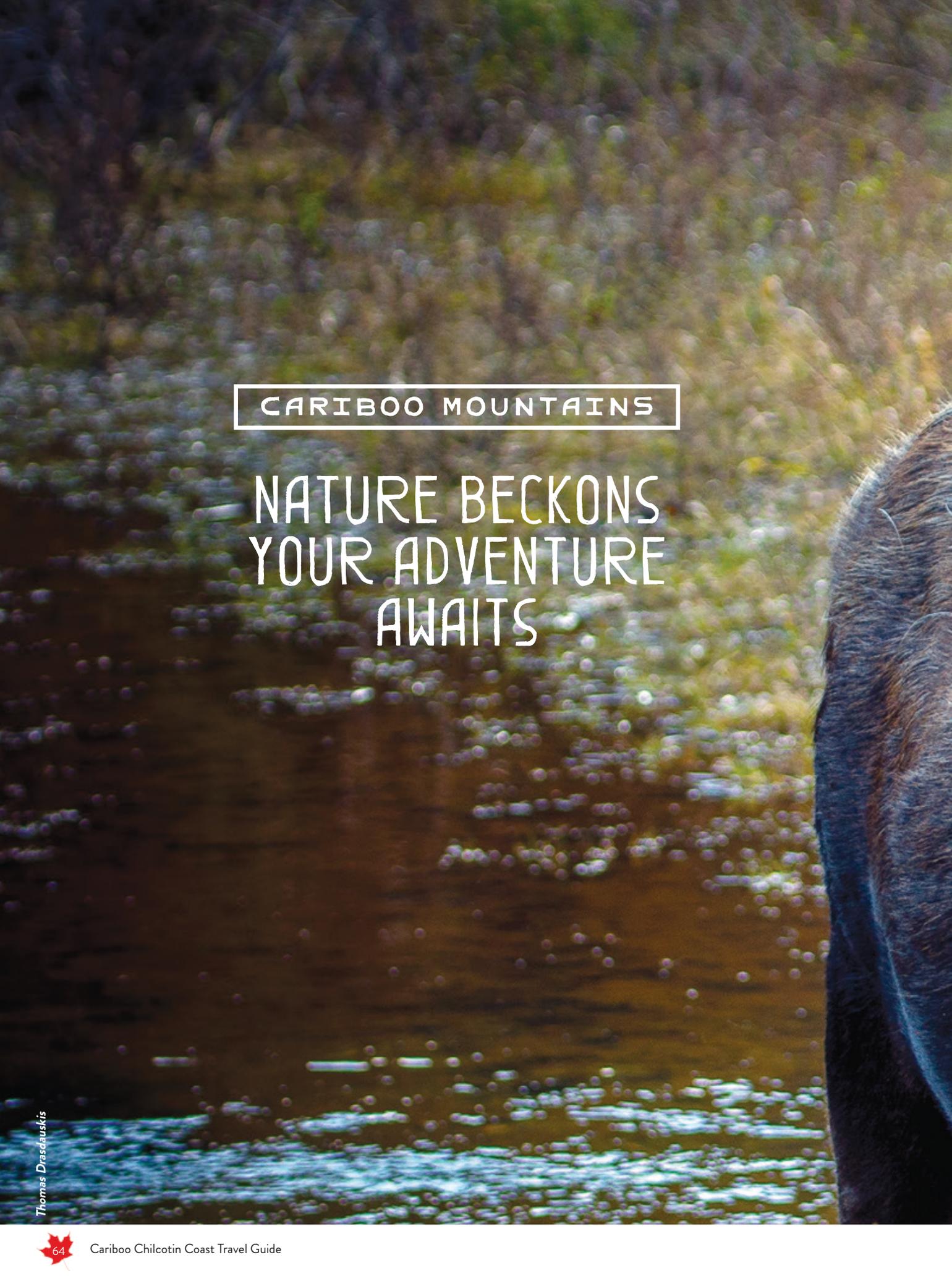
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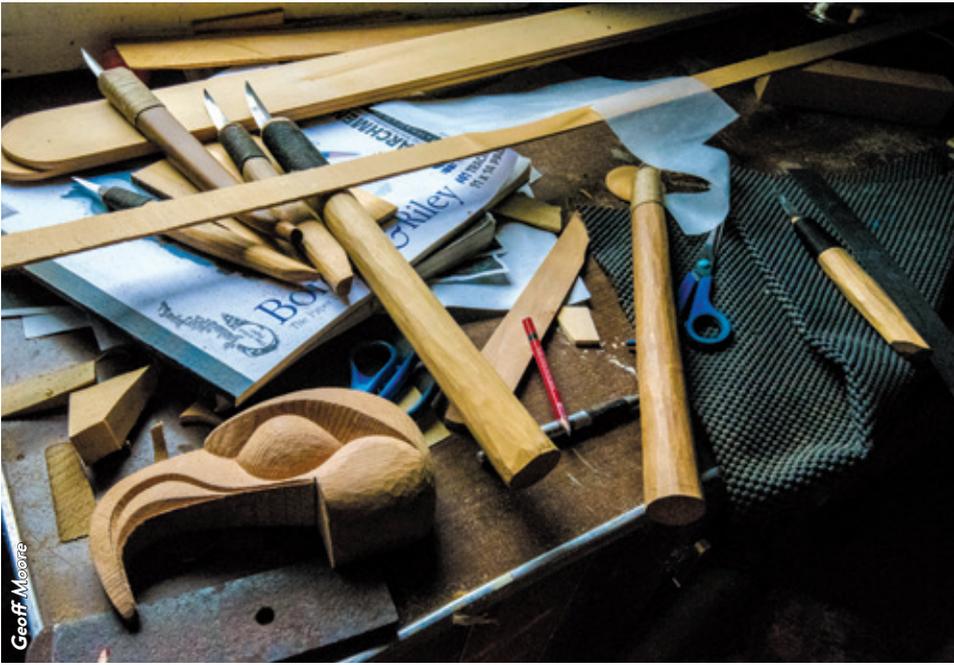
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CARIBOO MOUNTAINS

NATURE BECKONS  
YOUR ADVENTURE  
AWAITS





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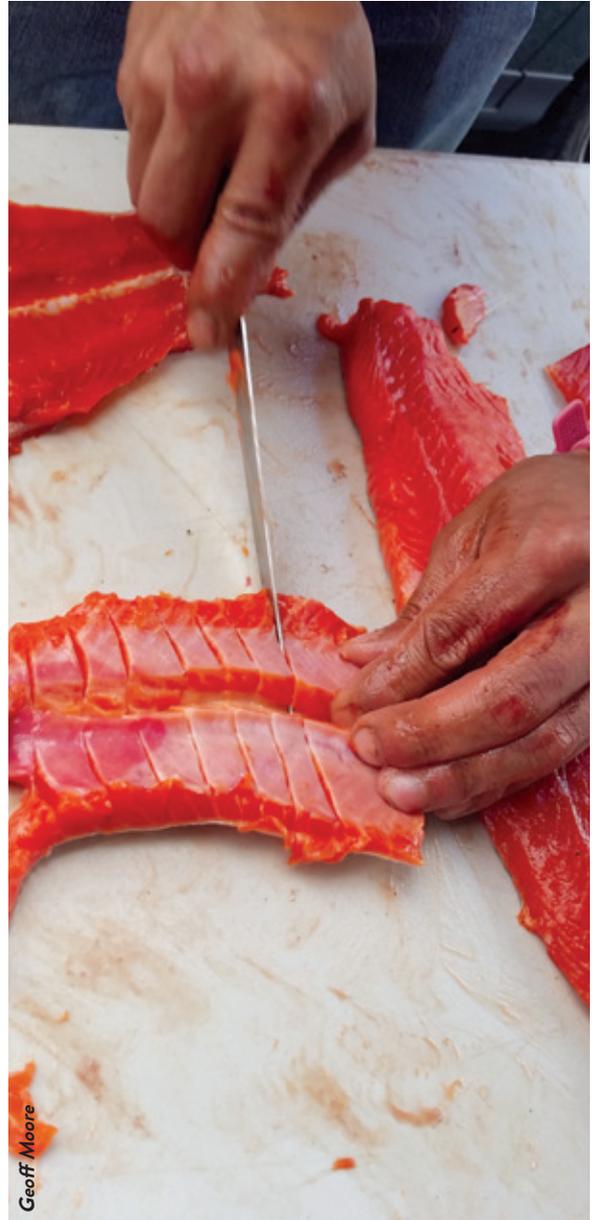
Michael Bechner



Quesnel and District Museum and Archives



Thomas Drasdauskis



Geoff Moore



Bella Coola Museum and Archives

For thousands of years, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast has been the ancestral home of several different yet interdependent aboriginal societies. Tribal groups of the region include the Tsilhqot'in (*tseelh-coht-een*), whose traditional territory is the high-altitude plateau of the Chilcotin (*chil-ko-tin*); the St'at'imc (*stat-lee-um*), from southwest of the Fraser; Nlaka'pamux (*ing-khla-kap-muh*) of the southern Fraser Canyon; the Carrier, who occupied the sub-boreal northern area of the Cariboo Chilcotin, and the Secwepemc (*shi-huep-muh-k*), whose historical lands lie east of the Fraser River. On the Pacific coast, the major First Nations groups are the Nuxalk (*nu-halk*) of the Bella Coola Valley, the Tsimshian (*sim-she-an*) of the outer coast and the Heiltsuk (*hel-sic*) of the coastal area near Bella Bella.

Although little of their centuries-long history of habitation in the region has been recorded, all of these First Nations played a well-documented and essential role in the province's development, including providing canoes, food, guides, translators and information to early explorers and European settlers in the 1700s through 1800s. Explorer Alexander Mackenzie, for example, could not have completed his historic 1793 trek if local indigenous peoples had not directed him along the Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail, from the northern Cariboo to the shores of the Pacific near Bella Coola. The route was also used for centuries by coastal natives to trade valuable eulachon oil with the province's Interior tribes. Distilled from the small, herring-like eulachon fish, the oil was transported in cedar boxes, and the trail got its name from the oil that dripped from the boxes en route.

## Fur Trading and Gold

In the early 1800s, fur-trading companies built the first forts in the region to facilitate trade with local bands. Prior to this, First Nations in the B.C. Interior participated in the fur trade by bartering pelts with natives on the Coast, who, in turn, traded them to Europeans arriving by sea. After the forts were established, local First Nations then brought their furs directly to the trading posts to bargain for goods and supplies.

However, the start of the gold rush and subsequent influx of European settlement in the region signalled the end of the fur-trade era, and by the mid-1800s relations between the two cultures were greatly altered. For as more and more land was used for settlement, farming, logging and mining by new Canadians, it became increasingly hard for First Nations to maintain their traditional life based upon subsistence use of the land. Smallpox epidemics and other European diseases devastated the native population, resulting in a further loss of control over the majority of their traditional lands. Still, there was surprisingly little bloodshed. The few conflicts that did occur were

## HIGHLIGHTS

Usher in the New Year with a St'at'imc pow wow in Lillooet. Festivities usually highlight traditional grass- and hoop-dancing plus hand-drumming competitions.

Experience the culture of the Xat'sull community and take part in an educational tour at Xat'sull Heritage Village on the bank of the Fraser River.

The B.C. Elders Gathering will be held in Williams Lake July 11 – 14th. Kicking off the event in true Cariboo style with the Wild West Rodeo on July 11th. Featured will be many old time rodeo events including a mountain race.

Capture a BC-only "marine" wolf and rare Spirit Bear on film by taking a Kitsoo/Xai'xais (*kit-ab-soo-hay-hace*) First Nations tour of the Central Coast's Great Bear Rainforest.

Embark on a historical adventure to a site first inhabited by First Nations 5,000 years ago. The Tuckkwiowhum (*tuck-wee-ohm*) Heritage Interpretative Village, near Boston Bar, with cedar-bark summer lodges, sweat houses, a smoke house, food caches, earth ovens and pit house.



Amy Thacker

short-lived, and several Chilcotin communities were eventually named after local chiefs, including Anahim Lake, Alexis Creek and the Nemiah Valley. Local First Nations were also involved in the early days of the region's key industries, particularly in ranching in the Chilcotin and southern Cariboo, where native horsemanship and wilderness survival skills were highly prized.

## First Nations Today

Many Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon First Nations continue to work in ranching and remain key participants on the local rodeo circuit, particularly at the Anahim Lake Stampede and Bella Coola and Redstone rodeos. Modern-day aboriginal groups also remain highly involved in the region's fishing, logging, transportation and tourism industries. In fact, B.C.'s aboriginal tourism sector is the most sophisticated of any of the province's aboriginal-driven tourism industries, with huge growth potential. One such local success, for example, is the award-winning Xat'sull (*hat-sull*) Heritage Village, located just north of Williams Lake on a grassy bench above the Fraser River canyon. Here, members of the Secwepemc, or Shuswap, First Nation, share storytelling by village elders, cleansing sweat-lodge ceremonies, educational wilderness walks, salmon lunches and overnight accommodation under the stars in pit houses and teepees. (Contact Xat'sull ahead of time for reservations, to ensure a complete, traditional experience.)

Also near Williams Lake, but in a completely different landscape, jet boats journey over rapids and past bizarre hoodoo formations to explore ancient village sites, 8,000- to 10,000-year-old pictographs and petroglyphs, native fishing spots and abandoned mining sites, with aboriginal guides sharing traditional First Nations practices involving medicinal plants, flora, fauna and local lore. And in the Chilcotin: on the last weekend of July the Nemiah Pow Wow features a colourful display of regalia and dancing, just one of several powwows occurring locally throughout the year, while the Xeni Gwet'in (*honey-ko-teen*) host an annual summer gathering where elders and youth come together to teach and learn traditional games, stories and hunting and gathering skills.

At Bella Bella, the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre is the place to delve into the research and preservation of the language and culture of the Heiltsuk, who, along with other coastal peoples such as the Kitasoo (*kit-ah-soo*) and Xai'xais (*hay-hace*) at the village of Klemtu on Swindle Island, grew rich and powerful on the bounty of the sea. In the Thorsen Creek Valley near Bella Coola, ancient petroglyphs honouring the power and mystery of nature are still visible on rock faces near waterfalls and caves, with guided tours now offered by the Nuxalk. As well, Bella Coola's Acwsalcta (*ex-sals-ta*) grade school is a showcase for another sector of the indigenous arts, including a magnificent totem pole carved by three students and one of the school's teachers; erected in 2002, it is the first Nuxalk totem pole to be raised onsite here in 38 years. Or, if indigenous fine art is of interest, plan a visit to Bella Coola's Petroglyph Gallery, for works by world-famous Silyas "Art" Saunders and his son Skip. The Petroglyph Gallery also sells prints, paintings, carvings, clothing and other artwork and gifts by both Nuxalk and other First Nations artists, as well as gallery

staff, can arrange workshop visits with renowned local carver and hereditary chief Noel Pootlass.

Meanwhile, hikers with historical interests can traverse the Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail, also known as the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail. Three weeks are required to navigate the entire route, but various sections can be accessed for shorter jaunts; the scenic 80km/50mi portion across Tweedsmuir Provincial Park reportedly takes less than a week.

For more detailed trail information refer to heritage trail guidebooks, available available at local bookstores and some visitor centres. As well, some 100km/62mi northwest of Bella Coola, in the wilds of the Great Bear Rainforest, Kitasoo and Xai'xais First Nations guides lead multi-day boat and kayak tours of this spectacular, remote preserve, complete with comfortable lodge accommodations.

In the southern Chilcotin, no fewer than 11 different communities make up the St'át'imc First Nation, whose traditional territories were located in and around an ancient gathering place now known as Lillooet. Here today, Xwisten (*hoyshten*) Experience Tours offers award-winning guided excursions that include walks along the banks of Fraser to view “fishing rocks” and the traditional wind-dried method of preserving salmon, as well as guided explorations of the



Geoff Moore

extensive Xwisten archaeological site's 80 pit houses, dating back thousands of years. As well, the neighbouring Cayoose Creek Band offers interpretive walks of the beautifully restored Lower Seton spawning channel, while just five minutes from downtown Lillooet is the site of a traditional *s7istken* (*shesh-ken*), or pit house, built by the T'it'q'et (*tlee-ticut*) community. Constructed with only earth and timber, such structures once housed up to 20 people and featured two entrances: one on ground level, one in the roof (which also released smoke from cooking fires). Also not

to be missed is the Seton Lake Band's Kaoham Shuttle: a travelling window into the past and a convenient way to view local wildlife. The train runs Fridays (with a scheduled double-run), skirting the shores of Seton Lake past numerous historical sites, including a First Nations cemetery precariously located between the tracks and the crystalline shores of the lake. In the northern Chilcotin, the Nazko lands are known for celebrated Carrier First Nation artists working in leather (buckskin and moose hide) and beadwork, watercolour, wood, stained glass and cross-stitch. ♣

## GOING TO A POWWOW?

Attending a pow wow is an opportunity to share a unique and memorable First Nations experience. Watch for highway signboards and local event postings about upcoming opportunities during your next visit to the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Gold Rush Trail. The positive energy of a pow wow rejuvenates and inspires, and all are welcome. Visitors are asked only to be respectful of this time-honoured spiritual celebration and to experience First Nations traditions with an open heart and mind. For upcoming events information visit [www.landwithoutlimits.com/events](http://www.landwithoutlimits.com/events) or [Facebook.com/CaribooChilcotinCoast](https://www.facebook.com/CaribooChilcotinCoast)

### Tips

- Listen to the host and follow instructions
- Stand and remove head coverings during grand entry, flag, invocation and closing ceremonies
- Request permission before taking photographs
- Do not record drumming without the consent of the head singer
- Refer to the dancers' clothing as “regalia”; it is not a costume
- Refrain from touching the dancers' regalia
- Do not turn down an invitation to participate, particularly an invitation from an elder
- Note that no alcohol or drugs are permitted



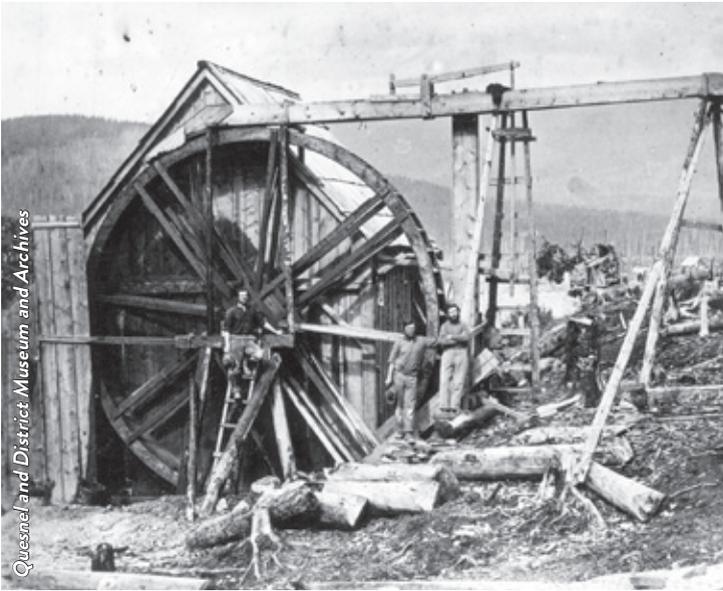
Michael Beahar



Pioneer Log Homes of British Columbia



Bella Coola Museum and Archives



Queensland District Museum and Archives



Fran MacPherson



Bella Coola Museum and Archives



Scott Horley



Quesnel and District Museum and Archives

The region's commercial logging industry began in the Cariboo in the 1860s – with sawmills producing lumber for gold-rush boom towns. However, it could be argued that forestry has been around much longer on the central coast; for this is where B.C.'s First Nations developed a system for peeling planks from still-standing giant cedars to construct their “longhouses” (examples of these “culturally modified trees” can be seen today around Klemtu and the Bella Coola Valley). Today, local industry resource extraction companies are leaders in innovation and environmentally sustainable practises.

In terms of value-added industries, the region's highly successful log-home building industry also creates employment and stable economics for the region. Movie stars, international politicians and Internet moguls have all commissioned custom log homes from local log-home builders. In fact, products from the region's many log home companies – such as Pioneer Log Homes, featured on TV's *Timber Kings* and *Carver Kings* shows dot the globe; the world's largest “complete log structure,” a 114,000sqft dream home for example is owned by a Colorado publishing and Internet multi-millionaire, is a \$28 million Cariboo success story.

Abundant high-grade spruce, pine and fir products also make the region one of the biggest lumber-producing areas

in Canada. And although infestations of the mountain pine beetle have had a significant impact on the industry, imaginative ways have been developed to utilize the resulting “blue” or “denim” pine. As for sustainable forestry practices overall, the region also boasts the largest biomass power plant in North America – the Williams Lake Power Plant, which consumes more than 544,310 tonnes of local sawmill wood waste to generate 67 megawatts of electricity a year.

It is important to note that mining jumpstarted the rush to explore B.C.'s Interior – with the discovery of gold in the Cariboo in the 1800s. Modern-day prospectors can still live the dream, panning for nuggets in creeks and streams throughout the region. Gold Bridge, near Lillooet, is a particular favourite with the amateur pan-and-swish crowd. Numerous regional museums also offer fascinating ways to relive the storied past of local mining and forestry industries now with excellent archives and exhibits that vividly capture the pioneering spirit of those early days. Avid rock hounds in search of jade and other semi-precious stones can also explore the South Chilcotin, and Lillooet, in particular – home of B.C.'s first jade mines.

Of course, mining extraction has changed significantly since Billy Barker struck pay dirt in 1862. Today, some of the world's largest open-pit mines are now found in the region. This includes

Taseko's Gibraltar copper mine near McLeese Lake, Canada's second-largest, and the Mt. Polley gold mine near Likely, where an estimated one million ounces of gold is still to be extracted. As well, more gold has recently been found in the Chilcotin Mountains' Camelsfoot Range, while the Bralorne Mine was re-opened in 2011. Undeveloped gold placer-mining claims also still exist along the Fraser River and throughout the Cariboo and gold-panning adventure tours can be found near Barkerville and in Quesnel. Want to learn more? Travellers are invited to tour working mines and local forestry operations after checking in with the Chamber of Commerce or Visitor Centre in each community for current touring schedules. ♦

## HIGHLIGHTS

Hike historic mining trails and forest Service roads near Likely, where the old Bullion Pit Mine is an astonishing manmade canyon well worth exploring. The nearby Quesnelle Forks ghost town is a great daytrip.

Walk the Walk. A series of stunning jade boulders mark key stopping points on Lillooet's “Jade Walk” – perfect for strolling while exploring downtown shops and the town's superb museum.



Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin



Rocky Mountaineer



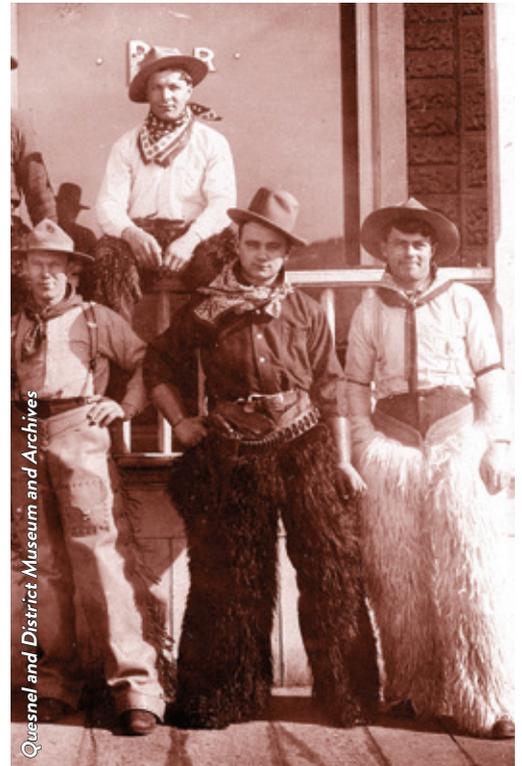
Kim Taylor



Rocky Mountaineer



Kim Taylor



Quesnel and District Museum and Archives

A. Westerlund Photography



Our cowboys are said to combine a Mexican vaquero’s skills, equipment and clothes, a U.S. frontiersman’s grit and resourcefulness, a First Nations’ respect for nature and a British gentleman’s manners and sense of law and order – all topped off with a cowboy’s unique brand of humour. The description may sound more like that of a mythical figure than real-life flesh and blood, but there is no doubt that the North American cowboy – as a romantic icon – is interwoven within the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon’s history and culture.

The first white settlers spread across the region in the 1860s, when cowboys worked as “drovers,” driving herds of cattle north from the U.S. to supply miners in the goldfields around Barkerville. Some of these hardy souls quickly realized it made more sense to raise cattle closer to market and established great sprawling ranches on the grassy rangelands near the Fraser River, where more than one third of B.C.’s beef cattle are raised today.

Most of the drovers and cowboys in the region’s frontier days were also First Nation, many of whom were related to Caucasian ranchers through marriage. The natives were superb horsemen and knew the territory better than any outsider, and both ranchers and natives spoke Chinook (a First Nations trade language perfected during fur-trade times). Unlike in most other ranching

areas in North America, B.C.’s natives were also treated as equals and key partners in the cattle industry. The same holds true today.

Ranchers struggled in the years after the gold rush faded, but the industry was reborn when railway tracks were laid in 1919, giving ranch owners in the Cariboo and Chilcotin easier access to in the more heavily populated southern markets. Communities, such as Williams Lake, then a sleepy backwater, suddenly boomed when the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (now Canadian National Railway) established a local train station. Seemingly overnight it became a central shipping point, with stockyards that could hold up to 2,400 head of cattle at a time.

Today, that historic train station in Williams Lake houses a delightful art gallery – and ranching continues to thrive in the Cariboo Chilcotin. But it’s a tough business and the cowboys who work these ranches, like their frontier forbearers, are a hardy breed with a mantle of freedom and independence barely diminished with time. The cowboy’s aura of romance has only grown in recent years, too, with the increasing popularity of cowboy poetry and country music – showcased throughout the region at festivals organized by B.C.’s Cowboy Heritage Society and celebrated, along with the cowboy lifestyle, in several TV programs and books, including those of once local cowboy Rich Hobson.

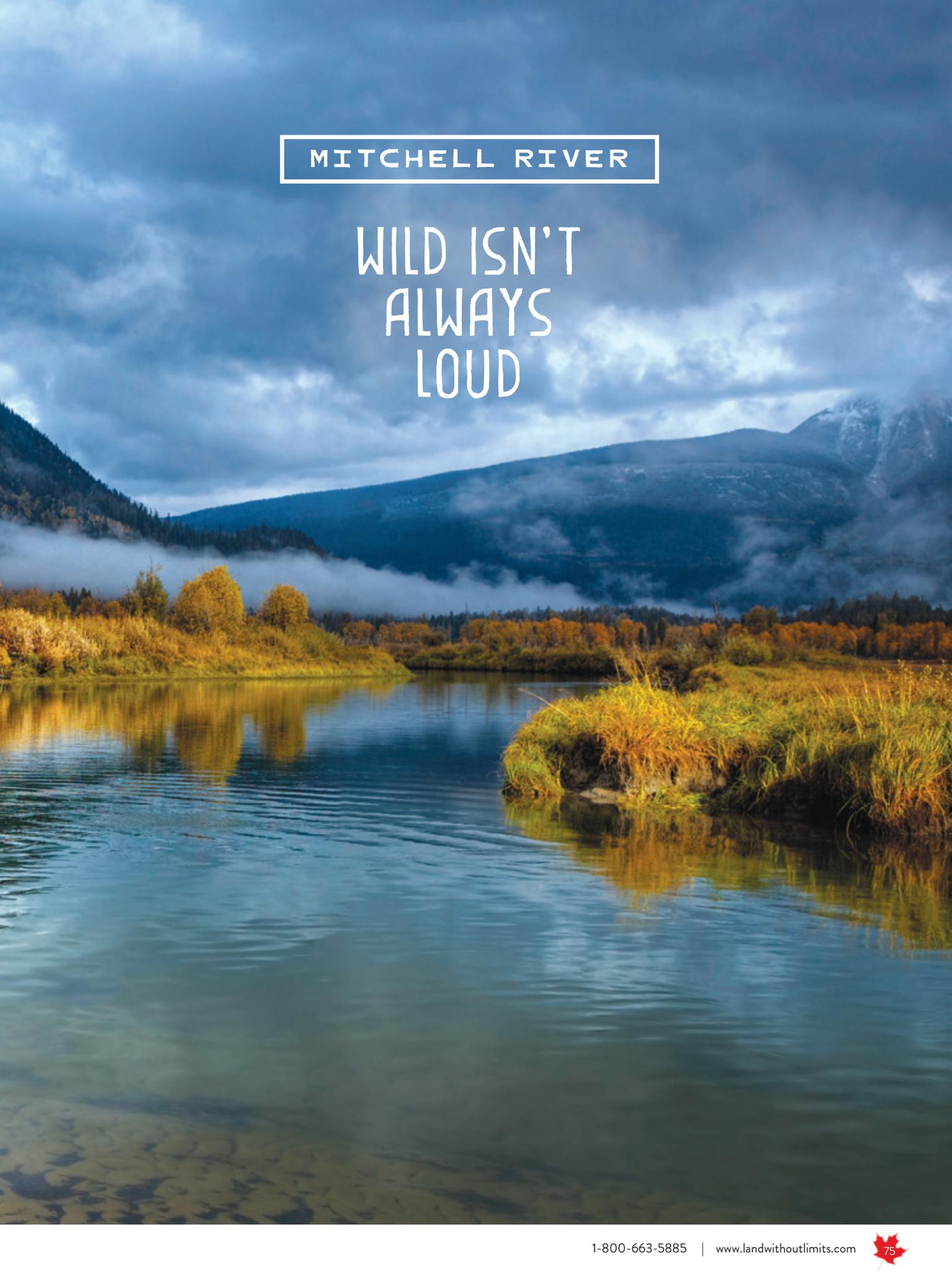
As for what is thought to be the first formal rodeo in B.C., it was an impromptu event staged in Williams Lake by local cowboys showcasing their horsemanship to celebrate the construction of the railroad in 1919. Today, the Williams Lake Stampede is the cornerstone of the region’s thriving rodeo and festival circuit, attracting thousands of western and rodeo buffs to watch professional competitors from Canada, the U.S. and as far away as Australia. ♦

## HIGHLIGHTS

All Aboard! Travel the rails between Vancouver and Jasper, with an overnight in Quesnel, on the Rocky Mountaineer’s “Rainforest to Gold Rush” route – for stunning views of coastal rainforest, desert landscapes and ranch lands.

B.C.’s early history was carved out of the wilderness by thousands of hard working cowboys. Visit the BC Cowboy Hall of Fame at the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin in Williams Lake, where memories of these iconic figures are on display and their stories shared – alongside those of B.C.’s living cowboy legends.



A scenic landscape featuring a calm river in the foreground, reflecting the sky and surrounding vegetation. The middle ground is filled with dense trees in autumn colors (yellows, oranges, and browns). In the background, large, rugged mountains rise under a dramatic, cloudy sky with patches of blue light breaking through. The overall mood is serene yet powerful, capturing the beauty of a wild natural environment.

MITCHELL RIVER

WILD ISN'T  
ALWAYS  
LOUD



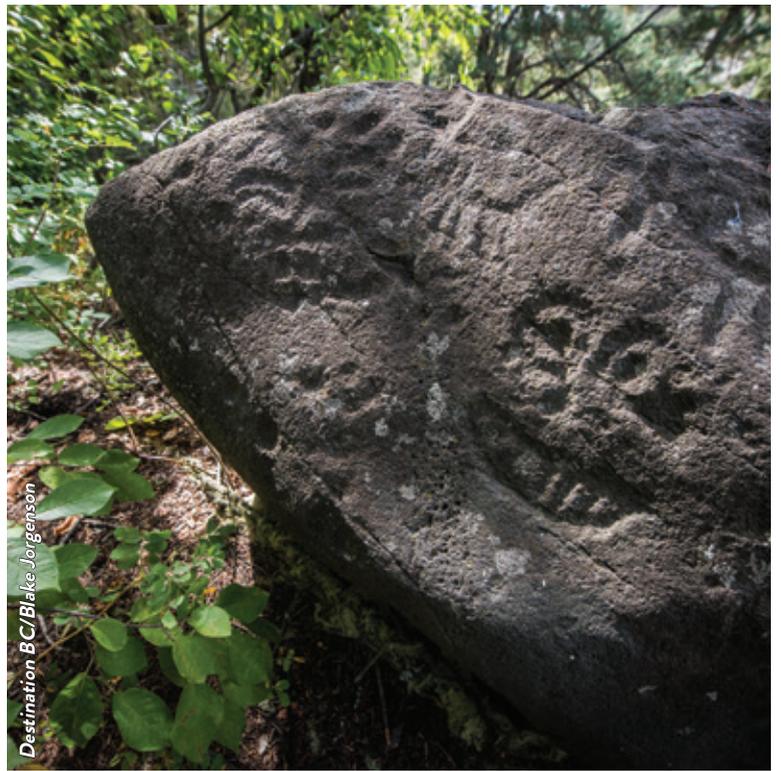
Louise Christie



Thomas Drasdauskis



Destination BC/Blake Jorgenson



Destination BC/Blake Jorgenson



Thomas Drasdauskis



Destination BC/Blake Jorgenson



Chris Harris

A little more than 150 years ago, the future of B.C. shifted irrevocably when a major gold find near Fort Yale in 1858 brought an estimated 30,000 gold seekers to the banks of the Fraser River from Hope to just north of Lillooet. This was followed, on August 17, 1862, by prospector Billy Barker striking gold at Williams Creek in the north Cariboo. Gold fever spread like an epidemic as news of the strike filtered out, and the wood-planked town of Barkerville grew rapidly to join the “towns” of Richfield and Camerontown. Mining crews toiled around the clock to haul golden ore from the earth, and by 1865 a major wagon road had been carved through the Fraser Canyon and Cariboo’s rugged terrain to connect the southern part of the province with the Cariboo goldfields.

Many of those early miners and fortune hunters were Chinese immigrants, who worked white prospectors’ abandoned mines and tailings by washing sand and gravel from rocks that were then neatly piled on the Fraser River’s shores. Known as “Chinese rocks,” these stacks are still visible today. In fact, by the mid-1860s, thousands of Chinese were living in Barkerville and many of the region’s other gold rush towns, including Stanley, Van Winkle, Quesnel, Antler, Quesnelle Forks, Lytton, Ashcroft and Lillooet, where Chinese miners alone took millions out of Cayoosh Creek. Mining was not these immigrants’ only labour, either.

Chinese entrepreneurs also operated corner stores, laundries and lodging houses, and worked as cooks for others or as owners of the province’s original “Chinese restaurants.” The latter were eventually established even in remote B.C. communities and, along with the province’s Chinese-run general stores, are now a cultural reference point for historians tracking small-town life in B.C.

In the Chilcotin Mountains, another gold rush followed in the 1930s as the Bralorne-Pioneer Mine near Gold Bridge became the richest gold claim in Canada. Bralorne can still be visited today, along with those in Wells, once a company town of the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine.

One of the era’s last surviving Barnard Express stagecoaches is displayed in 100 Mile House. Clinton, which celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2013, showcases its museum in a colourful red-brick building that once served as a schoolhouse and later as a courthouse. At the 108 Mile Ranch Heritage Site, pioneer buildings include a 1908 log barn built to house a herd of 200 Clydesdale horses. The former gold rush supply centre of Quesnel hosts Billy Barker Days, a four-day July festival commemorating the region’s most famous gold seeker. Provincial historic sites at Yale and Hat Creek share local stories, including First Nation connections to our history and the Gold Rush Trail’s terminus is the restored heritage town of Barkerville, a

Canadian National Historic Site where guided tours bring the lore of the gold rush to life.

Though only a handful struck it rich finding the precious metal, many of these early pioneers helped to build roads, railways, bridges and establish the great cattle ranches and timber enterprises in B.C.’s early history. There are countless unique activities from New Westminster to Barkerville. Experience a rafting expedition down the mighty Fraser River, a hiking trip into ancient valleys, fishing in one of hundreds of pristine lakes, visiting the many museums and historical sites, and trying your luck panning for gold. We invite you to take in the magic and mystery that we call the Gold Rush Trail. ♣

## HIGHLIGHTS

Gussy up for the fancy-dress Clinton Annual Ball, the longest continually running event of its kind in North America. The dance kicks off Clinton’s Western Heritage Week on the Victoria Day weekend.

Visit one of the last remaining roadhouses. Cottonwood House once provided provisions to those travelling the Cariboo Wagon Road. Today, this B.C. Heritage Site provides guided tours, carriage rides and the chance to explore its 1800s-era buildings.



Geoff Moore



Ian McAllister/Pacific Wild



Ian McAllister/Pacific Wild



Ian McAllister/Pacific Wild



Destination BC/Tom Ryan



Ian McAllister/Pacific Wild

Getty Images/Flickr

The largest contiguous tract of unspoiled temperate rainforest in the world and one of the most endangered forest-types on the planet, this 64,000sqkm/25,000sqmi wilderness expanse features some of the largest and oldest trees on Earth, several ancient First Nations cultural sites and thousands of species of plants, birds and animals, many of which are rare or unique to the region.

First Nations, tourism operators, conservation groups and residents have united to protect the Great Bear Rainforest and today, approximately 30% of the land base, including many key salmon-run river valleys, is protected under various conservancy designations. The preserve's forests are filled with black-tailed deer, "marine" wolves and three species of bears: grizzly, black and Kermode, a rare, white-coated variation of the black bear sacred to B.C.'s First Nations, also known as the Spirit Bear. Grizzly and Kermode bear viewing has become an important economic generator for several central coast First Nation communities.

Stretching from Smith South to Princess Royal Island, the Great Bear Sea is one of Canada's marine hotspots of biodiversity, containing critical habitat for threatened humpback whales, northern resident killer whales, transient killer whales,

porpoises, seals, sea lions and dozens of seabird species. The Great Bear's Fiordland Conservancy, a provincial marine park set deep in the inner channels northeast of Klemtu, is one such sanctuary. Dotted with pristine beaches, including particularly picturesque stretches near Lady Douglas Island, the conservancy encompasses Kynoch and Mussel inlets (two glacially gouged fjords where sheer granite cliffs rise more than 1,000m/3,280ft) and Higgins Passage, an intricate waterway with traditional First Nations sites set amidst a multitude of maze-like islands, sinuous passageways and cascading waterfalls.

Unforgettable sea kayaking and wildlife-viewing can also be experienced in the myriad of inlets, tiny coves and narrow passageways around Bella Coola, while to the south, just 10km/6mi west of Namu, the 123,000hec/303,940ac Hakai Luxvbalis (*looks-bal-ease*) Conservancy offers some of the finest kayaking on the coast, with twisting passages, intriguing island clusters and white sandy beaches perfect for strolling and camping. The Hakai Institute is a scientific research institution that advances long-term research at remote locations on the coast of B.C. The Institute's Calvert Island field station occupies an isolated 87hec/215ac site on Calvert Island, surrounded by the Hakai Luxvbalis Conservancy, which is the largest marine

conservancy on the B.C. coast. The local landscape has been sculpted by the hurricane-force storms and fierce Arctic outflow winds that lash the site during much of the year. In the summer, however, Calvert Island's spectacular beaches, vistas and rich intertidal life make it a natural meeting place where people have congregated for millennia. ♣

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Dean River is renowned as a world-class Steelhead fishing destination. There are several lodges and guides in the area that will help take this adventure "off" your bucket-list and add to your most memorable of lifetime experiences.

Calvert Island is a sparsely populated gem, offering spectacular kayaking off white sand beaches in turquoise waters. North of the island, in Hakai Pass, is the Hakai Luxvbalis Conservancy Area. It is the largest provincial marine protected area on the B.C. coast.

Rivers Inlet has an impressive history of producing some of the largest chinook salmon in the world. These and trophy coho, pink, chum, sockeye, ling cod, steelhead, and giant halibut are prizes to be caught when you hook up with one of several operators in the area.



Karl-Hans Kern



Cameron L. Martindell/offyonder.com



Geoff Moore



Cameron L. Martindell/offyonder.com



Caterina Wood



Michael Bednar



Geoff Moore

Whether adventurers prefer the high-tech flexibility of the latest tenting gear or road tripping via luxury RV with all the comforts of home, the four distinct sub-regions of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon offer some of B.C.'s most stunningly scenic and ecologically unique landscapes – plus a tantalizing roster of experiences en route.

At the heart of Nuxalk (*nu-halk*) and Carrier First Nations territory in the Coast Mountain range is Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, a vast, rugged preserve boasting four distinct vegetation zones, two vehicle access sites and remote wilderness camping. Along the central coast's 15,000km/9,320mi of pristine shoreline, several ecological preserves and conservancies encompass no less than six marine parks, and at Hagensborg in the Bella Coola Valley, a local tour operator maintains a nature-conservancy trail for RV guests, ensuring that the valley's terrain is accessible to explorers of all ages and physical abilities.

Bull Canyon, on the banks of the Chilcotin River, features shallow caves off a riverside interpretive trail, while the West Chilcotin's Nimpo and Anahim lakes are filled with rainbow trout and include popular guided flight-seeing tours coordinated through local RV parks and fishing lodges to Hunlen Falls, the Monarch Icefields, the Rainbow Mountains and other stunning sites. The

Puntzi Lake area offers great camping and fishing for Kokanee. Excellent facilities are also available at Green Lake in the Cariboo northeast of 70 Mile House, where crystal-clear summer waters ensure idyllic swimming and water sports. At Lac la Hache, beach access is available at both private and provincial campgrounds off Hwy. 97.

For tranquility, parks are tucked away near Lone Butte at Hathaway Lake – as well as east of Williams Lake on Horsefly and Quesnel lakes. In fact, some 65 private and public campgrounds and RV parks are found throughout the region, including east of Quesnel near Wells and Barkerville. At Bowron Lake Provincial Park campsites offer dramatic views of the Cariboo Mountains, with canoe and kayak rentals available to tackle one of the world's top canoe circuits. Guided backcountry experiences are also offered by outfitters on the Bowron's frozen lakes in winter, plus year-round float plane fly-in adventure services.

Geocaching is another great way to uncover "hidden" wilderness vistas while touring, with adventurers using GPS devices to find hidden containers called geocaches. One such cache – a metal cylinder with a logbook and pencil enclosed – is hidden at Clayton Falls near Bella Coola. In Likely, a "cacher" has stashed "treasures fit for a kid" in a location where trappers once gathered and historic machinery is now

displayed. Perhaps the most creative geocaches, though, are those found through Gold Country's GeoTourism program – featuring caches in Lillooet and throughout the South Cariboo. In the West Chilcotin, the new Freedom Highway series of caches is also popular with geocaching enthusiasts. ♣

## HIGHLIGHTS

Puntchesakut Lake Provincial Park includes a beautiful stretch of sandy beach, easily accessible from Quesnel. Angling for trout is productive in the spring and fall and other popular activities include swimming, sunbathing, canoeing, boating, water skiing and picnicking.

Goldpan Park, on the banks of the Thompson River, is a convenient overnight camping spot for travelers on Hwy. 1. A destination site for fishermen during peak fishing times it is also popular with rock hounds as an area rich in geological and human history.

Take a short hike along a maintained accessible trail to view two spectacular waterfalls, Canim-Mahood Falls. The trail begins near Canim Lake on the west border of Wells Gray Provincial Park, and is accessed off Hwy. 24.



Geoff Moore



Eric Berger



Eric Berger



Eric Berger



Geoff Moore



Eric Berger



Geoff Moore

There is no better way to enjoy the visual delights of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon than from the seat of a touring motorcycle. All the sights and scents of the road, the feel of the wind and the look of the sky become clear and immediate as you motor through the countryside. Ranking high on the list of attractions for motorcyclists is the huge diversity of landscapes. The topography ranges from forested lake country to golden, rolling grasslands to red-rock canyons and twisted hoodoos, and the vistas are awesome, with plunging cliffs, immense cloud banks and long descents into river-lined valleys. As an added bonus, many roads have pullouts where you can pause for a few moments and take it all in.

Each route offers something different. Dramatic scenery takes center stage on Hwy. 1, where the cliff-hugging road twists through the Fraser Canyon past sheer rock walls and along perilous ledges jutting hundreds of metres above the rushing Fraser River. Meanwhile, in the South Cariboo, Hwy. 24 (The Fishing Highway) bisects a rustic tableau of old homesteads, meadows and wooden Russell fences while providing access to more than 100 lakes, superb fishing and a host of guest ranches and lakeside resorts where you can chill after a long day on the blacktop. Hwy. 26 in the North Cariboo runs a tight-turning course that features spruce-scented air from Quesnel to Barkerville as it winds

past a restored Gold Rush roadhouse and the historical curiosities of Mexican Hill, Robber's Roost, Blessing's Grave and Devil's Canyon. In contrast, Hwy. 20 cuts a lonely line through big-sky country, from Williams Lake across the Chilcotin Plateau all the way to Bella Coola on the West Coast. Dotted with small communities, old-fashioned general stores and panoramic vistas, the road stretches 456km/283mi without a single traffic light.

Bikers will also revel in this region's lack of traffic. Once off the main arteries, the lanes empty out and there are few RVs or trucks to slow you down. Even sweeter, the roads curve like giant snakes as they cut through the wilderness, imparting a sense of righteous flow to a ride. In fact, in many places you are more likely to see wild animals – black bears, deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, eagles and trumpeter swans – than vehicles. Dual sport enthusiasts also delight in the extensive network of gravel roads that lead into the backcountry to connect with remote lakes, glittering waterfalls and brooding mountain peaks. There will be little vehicle traffic on these rib-rattling roads, but plenty of hairpin turns, scenic climbs and time for peaceful reverie.

Wherever you choose to ride you will experience unusual sights and sounds, such as sharing a river crossing with nothing but cowboys and softly nickering horses on the Big Bar Ferry.

As well with unique opportunities include the chance to take a float plane tour of Mt. Waddington, the highest peak in the Coast Range, and the massive Homathko Icefield. You will also meet friendly locals who gladly offer directions and impart tips on such things as the best lake for landing rainbow trout or the best place to enjoy a cappuccino. They may also direct you to such unpublicized gems as the Bear's Paw Café in Wells, a cozy diner that garners rave reviews, or the Log Cabin Pub, a classic biker bar in the town of Spences Bridge where a sign posted above the front door reads, "Please leave your hurry at the door – our goal is to slow you down." ♦

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Dual Sport** The gravel surface "Hurley River Road" connects Lillooet to Pemberton via the Bridge River Valley. Usually open 'seasonally' from June – October, it's a dual sport ride through the wild you will never forget and the scenery is breathtaking!

Highway 12, is a twisty asphalt treasure, its "low" traffic route connects the Trans-Canada Hwy 1 at Lytton with Lillooet and Hwy 99. Arid air and the scent of sage accent this semi-desert ride.

A scenic mountain landscape. In the foreground, a rocky shoreline leads to a calm, turquoise lake that reflects the surrounding mountains. The middle ground is dominated by a large, rugged, grey rock formation with a sharp peak. In the background, more mountain ranges are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a high-altitude, alpine environment.

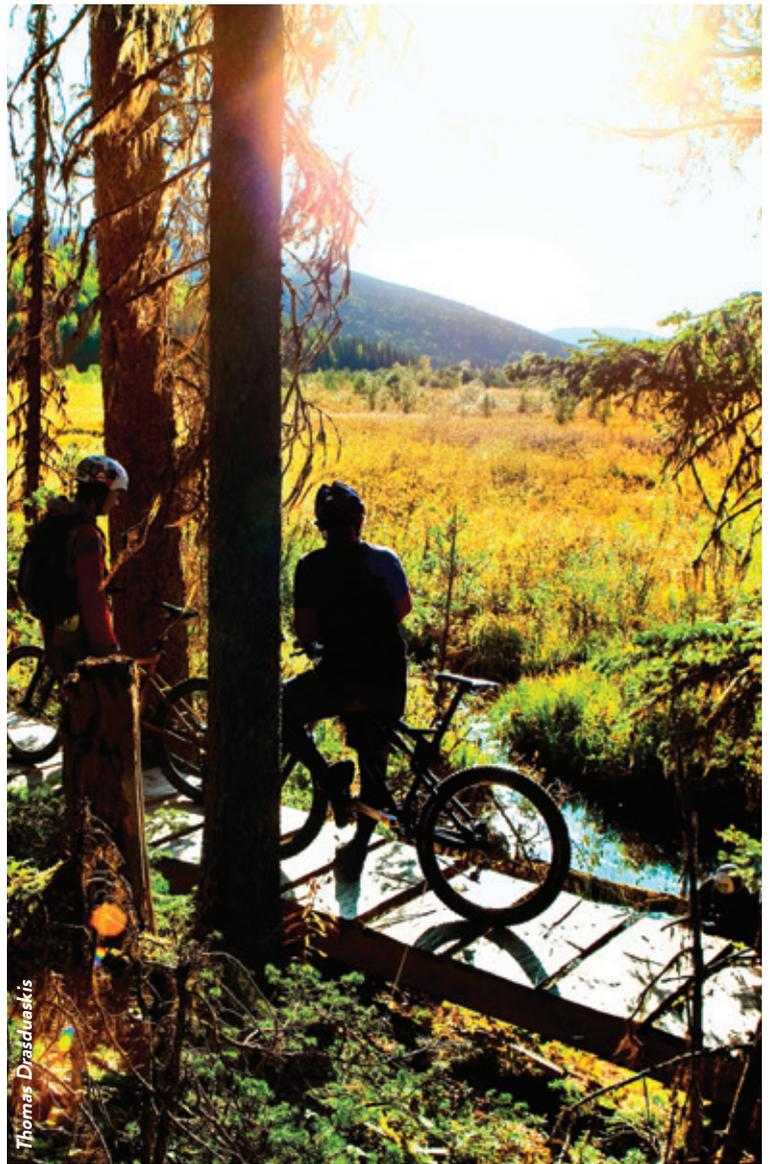
NIUT RANGE

NATURE  
HIDES HER  
SECRETS  
IN THE  
MOUNTAINS





Scott Horley



Thomas Drasduaskis



John Wellburn



John Wellburn



Geoff Moore



Destination B.C./Grant Harder

Many in the North American mountain-biking community consider this region the “unofficial mountain biking capital of Canada,” with unlimited riding for leisure bikers and adventure-seeking free riders. The terrain and quality trail systems offer distinct, unique experiences that encompass river valleys, rugged canyons, mountain peaks, logging roads, steeps, ramps and single-track ridges. It’s possible to spend an entire summer here without setting a wheel in the same place twice. Indeed, Red Bull’s 2012 feature film *Where the Trail Ends* showcases the world’s top free-rides, with James Doerfling of Williams Lake, in search of virgin terrain in five countries around the globe – including the canyon walls of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coasts’ Fraser and Chilcotin rivers.

Quesnel biking buffs call “Pins” route a “flowy” ride, with amazing views of Baker Creek and the hoodoos that dot the valley floor. Quesnel Adventure Skills Bike Park includes a freestyle section, pump track, kid’s area and features that challenge riders of all skill levels. The Wells-Barkerville area offers some of the most extraordinary trails in B.C., from gentle boardwalk trails through quiet wetlands to day-long mountain expeditions in stunning alpine terrain. As well, Bike magazine refers to Williams Lake as North America’s “Shangri-La of mountain biking.” The 200-plus tracks and trails around the city offer the choice

of tackling technical loops; or “Aflo,” the Lake City’s most popular trail due to its awesome, flowy banked turns, or hours of exploring on many easy-riding trails. The city’s downtown Boitanio Bike Park covers more than 4hec/10ac and is the largest of its kind in B.C.’s Interior, with six major jump lines, flow trails, log work and a pump track and drop zone.

The 100 Mile House area has hundreds of kilometres of marked and unmarked backcountry trails criss-crossing the plateau, with trails accessible around 108 Mile Ranch and from downtown. Trails beginning at Centennial Park take mountain bikers up a ski hill, and provide easy access to routes in the nearby hills. On the 99 Mile trail network south of town, riders can opt to stay on the trails or venture off onto single track for more amazing riding. This area appeals to all skill levels and age groups.

In the South Chilcotin, Spruce Lake has epic grassland riding through alpine and sub-alpine meadows, skirting spectacular freshwater lakes. The classic 26km/16mi single-track Gun Creek Route gains elevation through a conifer forest mixed with aspen and cottonwood. Also popular are the South Tyaughton Lake’s 28km/17mi Taylor-Pearson loop and the 44km/27mi High Trail Loop into Windy Pass. Adventurous backcountry mountain-bikers can also opt for float plane and helicopter entries or packhorse-assisted and guided tours.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Ice climbers come from far and wide to tackle the thrilling frozen challenges of Marble Canyon, including the waterfall that freezes solid in mid-winter. It’s officially known as Crown Lake Falls, but to climbers it’s “Icy B.C.”; easy access is available off Hwy. 99, just between Lillooet and Cache Creek.

Stein Valley Nlaka’pamux Heritage Park is an area of cultural significance with amazing hiking trails such as Stryen Creek, Brimful Lake and Blowdown Pass.

Plan a waterfall hiking tour in the South Cariboo where several beautiful cascades can be accessed via moderately easy trails. Visit the 100 Mile House visitor centre for details.

Hiking and walking tours of the trail network in the Bella Coola Valley are a great way to exercise while enjoying the magnificent beauty of this serene rainforest playground.

Trails galore! Visit the Tourism Discovery Centre and biking hub at Williams Lake to learn more about the 300km/187mi of trails available for all skill levels in the surrounding hills and valleys of the city.



Geoff Moore

In the central coast region of the Great Bear Rainforest, the Snooka Trail System sports leisurely riding through second-growth rainforest, with awesome alpine views the reward for reaching the network's Purgatory Lookout. A series of trails between Bella Coola and Hagensborg offer various levels of difficulty. The East Loop Trail is an easy-grade circle route of 5.5km/3mi, with only a 50m/164ft elevation gain; the West Trail is more challenging, with an elevation gain of 500m/1640ft over this 3.8km/2.4mi one-way trek. These trails also link to other wilderness routes that lead deeper into the Bella Coola Valley backcountry.

The Cariboo Mountain Bike Consortium actively promotes all of the mountain biking trails in and around Wells, Quesnel, Williams Lake and 100 Mile House. Given the range of trails suitable for all skill levels around these communities, most riders feel as if they've arrived in biking paradise.

This region is also a delight for hikers and walkers. Lillooet is home base for many scenic hiking trails that feature historic connections to the gold-rush era and Lytton's Stein Valley is an iconic destination for day, weekend or week long treks. Amateur geologists use topographic quadrangle maps (topos) in the Marble Range near Clinton, an area noted for limestone karsts, wooded groves and alpine ridges. The 11.3km/7mi Sepa Lakes Trail near 108 Mile Ranch meanders past bays and lagoons filled with waterfowl. And Canim Lake offers three majestic waterfalls while Whale Lake boasts good fishing at the end of a 4km/2.5mi hiking trail.

Family-friendly hikes include Williams Lake's popular River Valley Trail and Quesnel's delightful Riverfront Trail. The Mount Agnes Trail network near Barkerville follows the original Cariboo Waggon Road to wildflower-strewn alpine meadows below Summit Rock. In the Chilcotin, the 12km/7.5mi Tchaikazan-Yohetta Trail connects the Tchaikazan and Yohetta valleys via Spectrum Pass and picture-perfect Dorothy Lake. Hikers with a high fitness level can tackle the 420km/261mi Nuxalk-Carrier Grease/Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, which generally requires 25 to 30 days to complete. Meanwhile, urban-area climbers are discovering the region's untrammelled



John Wellburn

local mountaineering scene. Hot spots include Williams Lake, where the Esler Bluffs boast 44 routes, Hunlen Falls is generating serious excitement with the rope-and-rack set thanks to its heart-pumping routes, bouldering, and single-pitch climbs ranging in difficulty from “no sweat” (5.6) to “sweat and nothing but” (5.11+). Bella Coala boasts such classics as the nine-pitch Airport Wall (5.9-10+).

Popular heli-assisted hikes and climbs can also be arranged by many local operators. Mountaineers come from around the world to tackle the 3,000m/9,842ft-plus peaks of the Coast Range, including

4,016m/13,176ft Mt. Waddington, B.C.’s highest peak. Ice climbers seek out the frozen Crown Lake Falls at Marble Canyon Provincial Park, where popular routes include Car Wrecker Gully and the spectacular five-pitch Tokkum Pole. Ice climbing adventures are also common west of Lillooet along the D’Arcy-Anderson Lake Road, which stretches 33km/21mi along the west side of Anderson Lake from Seton Portage.

In an ongoing bid to expand wheelchair-accessible options in the Cariboo, two new trails were added to the region in 2014. The 99 Mile Accessible Trail winds

through verdant forest and features four viewpoints, one overlooking a wetland and another providing a broad view of 100 Mile House and Stephenson Lake and ends at the Nordic Beanstalk cabin site. The other extensive wheelchair-accessible trail was recently completed at Hallis Lake near Quesnel. Extending 760m/5,280ft and featuring a packed, crushed gravel surface, the Hallis Lake Low-Mobility Trail tracks through the woods down to a lookout with a bench on the shore of the lake before looping back to the Hallis Lake Cross Country Ski Lodge. ♦



Geoff Moore



Thomas Drasdauskis



Thomas Drasdauskis



Thomas Drasdauskis



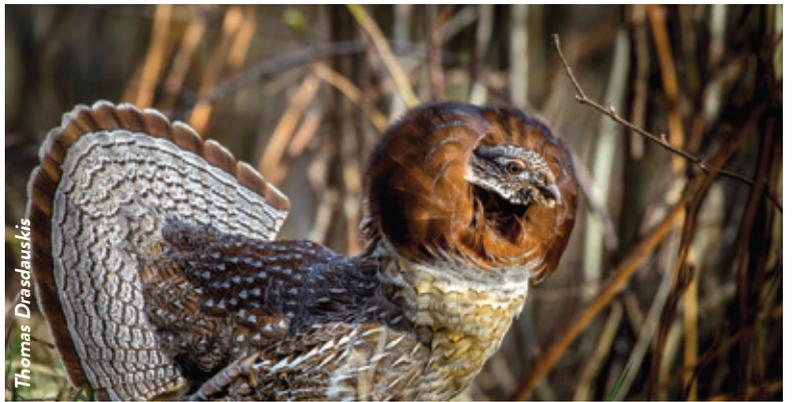
Elana Rabin



Thomas Drasdauskis



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Geoff Moore

Zodiac tours of wild Pacific estuaries, birding in a rare grassland ecosystem, snorkelling with salmon, 4x4 tours in a land of mountain goats – plus backcountry pack-horse treks, canoe safaris and much, much more. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon is like a wildlife preserve without cages, featuring a constantly changing menagerie. From Cariboo mountain goats to coastal orcas and Chilcotin caribou to Fraser Canyon bighorn sheep, the abundance and diversity of wildlife in the region makes for one of the greatest outdoor shows on earth.

Yet exactly how, where and when does one find all those moose and caribou? Is spotting a grizzly foraging along a riverbank a matter of luck? Is it dangerous? The region's eco-tour guides, outfitters and naturalists address such questions and ensure everyone has a good time, with minimum risk to humans, wildlife and habitat. These highly experienced, certified guides also provide expertise on where and when to find specific species, viewing options that help ensure the ideal experience for each guest and guidance on a broad range of accommodation and guiding options.

This is a place where wildlife safaris feature luxurious waterfront lodges and the only drive-by traffic is an endless parade of eagles, wolves, dolphins and whales. Local biologists lead eco-raft adventures on the Bella Coola and Atnarko rivers

where songbirds congregate and otter, mink, fox and deer forage. Amateur and professional ornithologists join birdwatching tours into the Cariboo Mountains, home to kingfishers, hawks, owls, warblers and woodpeckers, while self-guided birders wander Scout Island Bird Sanctuary at Williams Lake in search of rare white pelicans, swans and songbirds. Alpine mule trekking is another popular low-impact option for exploring game trails blazed by caribou, mountain goats and wolves.

In the Chilcotin, the wild and remote Yohetta Wilderness area not only shelters mountain goats, bighorn sheep, bobcats and wolverines, but also one of the last remaining wild horse herds in Canada. The southern Cariboo around Lillooet is desert country. Etched by the wind, scorched by the sun, this is a land of rattlesnakes and prairie dogs, where eagles soar in search of prey.

B.C. is also rated one of the planet's top three grizzly-viewing destinations, with significant grizzly populations native to the central Coast, the Chilcotin Mountains and the northeastern Cariboo plateau. Certified bear experts lead tours of these areas' rugged fjords and inlets, grassy estuaries and riverbanks, the grizzly (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) and black bear's (*Ursus americanus*) natural habitat – while detailing the bears social hierarchy and body language. Viewing options range from roadside sightings and

alpine excursions to fully guided single and multi-day river drifts to photograph grizzlies dining on salmon. As well, the Great Bear Rainforest is the only place in the world where the legendary white Kermode, or spirit bear, can be found. ♣

## HIGHLIGHTS

B.C.'s legendary Kermode, or spirit bear is found only on B.C.'s central coast, where operators such as Spirit Bear Lodge lead authentic cultural journeys in search of the elusive, rare white bear.

Commune with your inner fish at August's Salmon in the Canyon, where the Lillooet Naturalist Society and local First Nations celebrate nature and the importance of the salmon to all.

Kayak the Hakai Luxvbalis Conservancy, B.C.'s largest marine park - an expanse of lagoons and tidal rapids teeming with life.

Birding? Break out the binoculars at the Chilcotin's Chilanko Marsh Wildlife Management Area; Scout Island in Williams Lake, the Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary at 100 Mile House, or the Bella Coola Estuary.



Chris Harris



Michael Bednar



Geoff Moore



Caterina Wood



Thomas Drasdauskis



Geoff Moore



Echo Valley Ranch and Spa

**W**ater sports, spa escapes and golf – welcome to a refreshing, idyllic summer in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon. With the highest concentration of lakes and rivers in Canada, it's no surprise the region is a haven for swimmers, water skiers, wake boarders, canoeists – in fact, anyone who loves to hop into a boat or play in the water. The South Cariboo's Green Lake, for example, is particularly popular with swimmers and water skiers. The consistent afternoon thermals on the Chilcotin's Tatlayoko Lake lure sailors and windsurfers. Ocean kayakers paddle with whales and dolphins in the protected waters off Bella Coola, Shearwater and Klemtu. White-knuckle rafters and kayakers can pick and choose from a multitude of top white-water routes in the Fraser Canyon, Cariboo and Chilcotin, while canoeists flock to the world-renowned Bowron Lake Canoe Circuit, one of North America's most spectacular wilderness-lake adventures.

In a region renowned for the diversity and expanse of its wilderness a growing number of unique and luxurious day spas and wellness centres are also found. One working ranch specializes in custom therapeutic, assessment and spa services. Another valley site takes guests on a journey to the Far East, with authentic Thai spa treatments with several remote retreats offer specialty yoga, fitness and healing escapes. Travellers can also rejuvenate at community day spas with

specialties from around the world: from Japanese Sumishi to Indian Ayurveda, all combined with yoga, fitness and nutritional programs. Numerous inns, remote lodges and resorts also offer massage services and a variety of wellness and fitness programs – all designed to keeping our mind and body in balance, including on the road.

Imagine your perfect golf experience in a natural setting of sage and rolling hills, where fairways extend into contoured canyons with water accents and greens run true with spectacular views. Well, imagine no more. Three championship 18-hole courses will delight you and your pocketbook. The Stan Leonard-designed 108 Golf Resort boasts 6,800 yards of tree-lined fairways and greens that both inspire and challenge; while the scenic Williams Lake Golf & Tennis Club's 6,272-yard layout, set against the rolling Cariboo hills, plays out over rolling terrain with amazing views of both the lake and the city's downtown core. The 6,340-yard Quesnel Golf Course, straddling a former heritage orchard, is a valley-based design with a wide-open front-nine and shorter but demanding back to hone that swing. Unique family-friendly nine-hole courses are found throughout the region, too. Try your luck at Coyote Rock, a First Nations-developed course above Hwy. 97 overlooking the south end of Williams Lake; at Cache Creek's desert-gem Semlin Valley Golf Course, or at the Lillooet Sheep Pasture Golf Course,

where golfers receive a free mulligan if their shot is blocked by sheep. ♦

## HIGHLIGHTS

Unwind at an urban day spa and wellness facility, or escape to one of the region's wilderness guest ranches for a unique, off-the-beaten-track massage, spa or yoga experience.

Soar into the sky at Lime Mountain, where the hang-gliding conditions are some of the best in North America.

Take a paddler's dream vacation on the world-renowned Bowron Lake Canoe Circuit, one of the most unique, scenic and pristine wilderness experiences in the world.

Tee up on golf courses in Quesnel, Williams Lake, Cache Creek and 100 Mile House, all within a 2.5-hour drive of each other; and, for a fun twist on the game, stroll the fairways near Lillooet while dodging sheep.

Windsurf or kiteboard Tatlayoko Lake. The word "Tatlayoko" is derived from the local Chilcotin language, and means "lake of big winds" – what it's all about for windsurfers and kayakers.





MIGHTY FRASER RIVER

# NATURAL BALANCE



Chris Harris

## HIGHLIGHTS

Order a custom-made classical guitar from one of Canada's top luthiers, at Tatlayoko Lake in the Chilcotin. Guitar maker Fritz Mueller is just one of several local, talented artisans located just off and along Hwy. 20.

Photograph totem poles and other cultural landmarks – including ancient Nuxalk (*nu-balk*) First Nation petroglyphs – in Bella Coola, a community dubbed “the friendly village.”

Ken Glasgow's philosophy park is full of larger than life curios and lessons for us all. From a 60 ft replica Winchester to Ken's 10,000 lb Harley Davidson sculpture and more! Visit Ken on your way through Lytton.



Geoff Moore



Scott Horley



Geoff Moore



Thomas Drasdauskis



*It is a land of striking contrasts . . . a land that drew me like a magnet into its soul."* Author Richmond P. Hobson wrote those words in the first installment of his classic trilogy, 1978's *Grass Beyond the Mountains: Discovering the Last Great Frontier on the North American Continent* – words that mirror how the landscape of this vast region is so often reflected in the region's culture and the works of numerous, talented local artists.

Of course, First Nations compositions have been sung and danced around local campfires for thousands of years, and, along with their totems, beadwork and other arts, they often reflect this region's powerful sense of place. Then in 1904, Emily Carr roamed the region by "cowpony" and was inspired to paint several landscapes and to write: "I can never love the Cariboo enough for all she gave me." Touring the region in 1914 the Group of Seven's A.Y. Jackson was equally infatuated, returning in the 1940s to produce works now displayed in galleries worldwide.

Modern-day painter Mark Hobson has also long been inspired by the Chilcotin landscape and central coast locations such as Calvert Island, which he painted to raise awareness about keeping the coastline pristine for generations to come. To this end, he and more than 50 of Canada's most celebrated artists, including painters, poets and writers, published a book titled *Canada's Raincoast at Risk: Art for an Oil-Free Coast*.

Modern day art and nature lovers will want to experience the region's many galleries, including the Quesnel Art Gallery, one of central B.C.'s hidden gems, and the city's ARTrium, featuring many works of award-winning artists in the region. Sometimes galleries are also works of art in their own right, such as the Central Cariboo Arts Centre, which houses a number of artisan groups in a decommissioned fire hall, and the Williams Lake Station House Gallery, a lovingly restored 1920s railway station showcasing pottery, weaving and other visual arts.

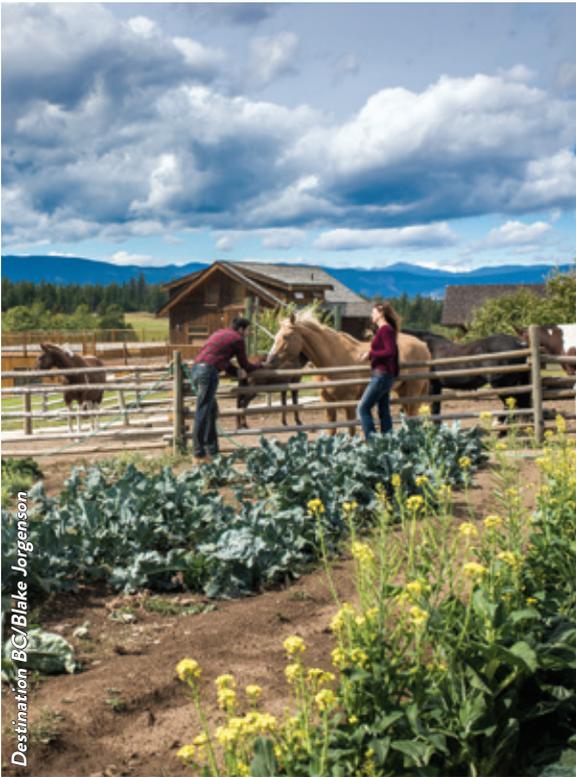
Siska Art Gallery, south of Lytton, features local First Nations art, crafts, jams and teas; while Boston Bar's The Zoo Art gallery is housed in an unusual white-washed concrete building featuring recycled materials and rescued stained glass windows. Murals depicting historical figures and pioneer life are displayed on buildings in 100 Mile House and the Stone Bear Gallery features carvings in alabasters, soapstones, slate, chlorite and Kissi stone. The annual Ashcroft Art Show is held in April and is a great opportunity to meet local artists and the Chris Harris Gallery at 108 Mile features beautiful photographic works of the region.

Another arts and culture highlight is the town of Wells itself a renowned artist retreat with studios and galleries housed in colourfully painted heritage buildings and a celebrated art school where vacationers can enroll in folk-art and music classes.

The town's restored Sunset Theatre offers a host of professional music, film and theatre retreats. And on the first weekend in August, Wells hosts its very popular four-day ArtsWells Festival of all Things Art, with performances such as *Cariboo Buckeye* by Quesnel native Matthew Payne – about an 1860s cattle drive – that is equal parts magic and mystery. Musicians and talent from many other artistic disciplines are also on display throughout the community event, including workshops with nationally recognized artists.

Meanwhile, Barkerville's Theatre Royal features costumed interpreters so convincing they create the illusion of travelling back the 1860s. The Studio Theatre Society in Williams Lake has staged live theatre (October to June) for the past 60 years. Horsefly's Arts on the Fly Festival presents music, dance, food and fun in equal measure, while *Clinton's War* is a weeklong costume pageant dedicated to re-creating the Middle Ages "as they ought to have been." Ashcroft's Winding Rivers Arts and Performance Society showcases creative talents in music concerts, festivals and art displays.

As well the Cariboo is also home to "Camel" Dave Howell, who performs at festivals throughout the West, as does Frank Gleeson, the "Fastest Cowboy Poet in the West" and official cowboy poet of Williams Lake. ♦



Destination BC/Blake Jorgenson



Brad Kasselman/coastphoto.com

## HIGHLIGHTS

Rally round a communal table for organic pasture-to-plate steak or artisan sausages. Chilcotin ranches continue to pioneer humane livestock management and sustainable ranching practises that replenish grazing lands while protecting wildlife and habitats.

Shop for farm-fresh fruits and vegetables at roadside stands along Hwy. 97. Spences Bridge is known for its legendary tomatoes, melons and apples heralding from the Widow Smith days.

Reminiscent of the original Barkerville Brewery and Brewery Hotel of the 1860s, today's Barkerville Brewing Company utilizes local ingredients unique to the Cariboo in their award winning brews. Each bottle pays homage to this historic region.



Brad Kasselman/coastphoto.com



Brad Kasselman/coastphoto.com



Brad Kasselman/coastphoto.com



Chris Harris



Brad Kasselman/coastphoto.com



**F**armers and specialty producers along the Fraser Canyon and in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast welcome the chance to share the art, science and dedication involved in raising livestock and growing crops, including their efforts to maintain sustainable farm and ranch ecosystems featuring healthy soils and free-range pasture lands. We are increasingly aware that local, sustainably grown foods are vital to health and well-being. Reducing the environmental impact of long-distance shipping, the need for food stabilizers and other preservatives is key to sustainability.

In the north Cariboo, organic producers entice with the uniquely sweet taste of birch syrup tapped fresh from the tree, including a novel birch syrup BBQ sauce. The central Cariboo features such delicacies as the Marguerite and Soda Creek areas' sweet corn on the cob. From July through October, don't miss the unique experience of the Cariboo Corn Maze at the Australian Ranch on Hwy. 97. In the Chilcotin, guests can overnight on a 1,600hec/3,954ac property serving home-grown organic produce, as well as grass-fed meats processed in the ranch's own abattoir.

The south Cariboo is young in terms of grape production, but the B.C. Grapegrower's have been conducting test vineyards for several years in the Lytton and Lillooet area. The vines at Fort Berens Estate Winery in Lillooet

dig deep into soil enriched by 150 years of melon, tomato and alfalfa production – a factor, perhaps, in why the winery continues to make the headlines. Since 2012 the B.C. vineyard has won many gold, silver and bronze medals at international competitions, including at the prestigious Los Angeles International Wine and Spirits Competition. Lillooet has also evolved into a hotbed for hop growers who are helping fuel the rise of B.C.'s burgeoning craft-beer industry. In 2013, the organic hops grown by Lillooet's Bitterbine Hop Company were used by Vancouver's Powell Street Craft Brewery to produce the Canadian Brewing Awards' Beer of the Year. The presence of local hop farms also enables B.C. brewers to craft new, trend-setting products such as "fresh-hopped" beer, made by adding hops to brews within 24 hours of harvest. Barkerville Brewing Co. in Quesnel uses local hops to pay homage to this historic region and tell its stories through beer.

In the Fraser Canyon the saying goes, "add water to this sun-drenched land and you can grow anything", this is proven by the abundant orchards, vegetable growers and ranch lands. For over 150 years produce grown here has been world renowned, from Widow Smith apples in Spences Bridge to giant potatoes and tasteful tomatoes from Ashcroft. The community of Lytton has become a destination for organic and heirloom production with several

farms growing fruits and vegetables, including onions, garlic, squash, melons, peppers, tomatoes, carrots, beets, and over 50 varieties of apples. Other ranches produce rare heritage poultry or heirloom open-pollinated seeds to ensure food diversity. Visit Siska Traditions to learn about wild and traditional First Nation food harvest including wild herbs, teas, Saskatoon berries, huckleberries, nodding onions and wild pine, porcinis, and morel mushrooms.

Many communities host weekly farmers markets, often with local arts and crafts showcased. At the Bella Coola market, for instance, travellers can stock up on fresh produce and sample regional specialties such as honey, giant prawns, Dungeness crab and salmon; gourmands can keep their eyes peeled for farm-gate offerings of sweet Walla Walla onions, Russian red garlic and sun-loving Kentucky wonder yellow beans. Other operators in the region, open their barn doors so visitors can appreciate the fine art of "farming with the season" while sampling and purchasing local delicacies.

Many local fairs showcase 4-H competitions highlighting the rewards of raising livestock and growing crops while acquiring life skills. Mentored by local ranchers and farm producers, children between the ages of 9 and 19 years "Learn to do by doing" in projects on with beef, horses, lambs, hogs, sewing, mechanics, photography, bees, gardening and more. ♣





Geoff Moore

The cultural and historical diversity of the Fraser Canyon and Cariboo Chilcotin Coast is illustrated in the range of culinary experiences offered here. From traditional First Nations and cowboy campfire cuisine to tastes of the Orient, the culinary offerings of these small communities is somewhat undiscovered. Fueled by a strong agricultural community focused on sustainable growing and heirloom varieties you will uncover new flavours for your palate.

The fresh culinary perspective gained in exploring regional flavours is further honed with visits to agricultural fairs and festivals. At Quesnel's Fall Fair the ambience is rambunctious (those chili and beer-can chicken competitions are fierce), while August's South Cariboo Garlic Festival in Lac la Hache sees both serious and casual foodies lining up for garlic poutine, panini and gyoza against a backdrop of family fun, live music and a Master Garlic Chef Cook-Off. Lillooet's popular Apricot Tsaqwen (*cho-com*) Festival gives a nod to the Saskatoon berry and local culture.

Local restaurants and eateries are similarly diverse, from popular food chains along Gold Rush Trail routes to sophisticated dining options scattered throughout the region, where tempting meals are lovingly made with, of course, fresh, indigenous ingredients. For example, don't be fooled by the name at Fat Jack's Diner, where

underground chef Todd Baiden creates delicious combinations. Fort Berens Estate Winery provides meals prepared from locally grown produce, and of course, paired with their award-winning wines. Kinnikinnik Restaurant on Hwy. 20 in the Chilcotin features Pasture to Plate locally produced beef, humanely processed in the ranch's abattoir and Nimpo Bakery & Café boasts the best home-made breakfast sandwiches in B.C.

For something further afield 70 Mile House's Sugar Shack will give you a taste of Quebec, with their poutine fast becoming legendary. A refreshing break at UniTea in Ashcroft provides for an organic experience of the senses, creating a healthier community one cup at a time.

Coastal cuisine is nothing short of succulent with fresh Dungeness crab, enormous spot prawns, fresh Halibut and more. If you aren't headed west this trip, drop in at Big H's Fish and Chips in Wells for a taste of the sea gold rush style. Bakeries with 'secret' family recipes, home-style café like Grandma used to make, eateries set in historic buildings with their own tales to tell and outfitters that can deliver gourmet flavour on a mountain top are dotted across this region - riches awaiting your discovery. Trip advisor ratings and local tips begin with such starters as 'what an amazing surprise' and 'unbelievable meals and superb service'.

First Nations rodeos and pow wows are a chance to nibble fresh, hot bannock and slurp hooshum, a traditional aboriginal "ice-cream" made from Soopolallie berries. First Nations heritage sites at Tuckkwiowhum (*tuck-we-ohm*), Xatsúll (*hat-sull*) and Xwisten (*hoyshten*) offer traditional culinary experiences if booked in advance. ♦

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Gecko Tree Café in Williams Lake is known for its clean meals made from natural ingredients, fresh herbs and real cream, including vegetarian, gluten free and vegan choices and delicious fresh in-house baking.

Eagle's Nest Resort is but one of the exceptional dining experience the region boasts. Dine with a beautiful view over Anahim Lake while you enjoy dinner items such as wild west coast salmon, delicious Bella Coola scallops, or authentic Austrian schnitzel, along with homemade breads and tempting deserts.

Step back in time and enjoy a dish recreated from the 1800s in Barkerville Historic Town. From miners fare at Wake-Up Jake to exceptional Chinese at Lung Duck Tong restaurant.



Kim Taylor



CHILCOTN PLATEAU

WHERE  
COWBOY CULTURE  
REINS  
SUPREME



Kim Taylor



Destination BC/Blake Jorgenson



Lori Bowden/ Cariboo Mountain Outfitters



Geoff Moore



Kim Taylor



Michael Wigle



Geoff Moore

From Ashcroft in the south to north of Quesnel and west into the Chilcotin wilderness, B.C.'s "Land without Limits" is the province's go-to destination for rodeos, rustic guest ranches and resort-style luxury. It's also cattle country, *real* cattle country, where riding enthusiasts can immerse themselves in the local cowboy culture in unique ways – guided by experienced cowhands who are more than happy to share their appreciation of this iconic way of life. Travellers in the Cariboo Chilcotin can bunk at a working ranch as an aspiring cowhand and experience hands-on riding and roping, branding and herding, or sign up for a horse-whispering workshop and practise "horse language" to forge the ultimate bond between man and animal. A 14-day expedition into the mountains of Itcha Ilgachuz Provincial Park leads to an archaeological site near an obsidian quarry of special significance to the Carrier people. Other treks include guiding herds from winter feedlots to summer pastures (or back again in the fall), and days spent riding the Tchaikazan-Yohetta Valley Loop or the Chilcotin's Potato Range that morph into trailside lake retreats by dusk, with tents pitched in secluded meadows and fat trout reeled in for the supper fry pan.

In fact the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast is home to more than half of the province's guest ranches, ranging from those that provide gourmet restaurants, swimming pools, hot tubs, full-service spas and

the full glamping experience ("designer" camping) to those offering a more rustic, traditional Canadian experience featuring the stuff cowboy dreams are made of: guitars, cowboy songs and tall tales around a campfire, bunking down in an old-fashioned log cabin or sleeping under the stars in a snug bedroll, waking at dawn to the howl of a distant coyote and the aroma of coffee, baked beans and bacon crisping over an open flame. Or, here's your chance to relax with a massage after a long day's ride, to catch a rodeo, to videotape the skills and courage of both riders and animals – to treat your sweetheart to a distinctively western glamping experience. No matter what your wild west dream is, the region's ranch hands are experts at matching horse to rider, at ensuring both novices and experts are fitted with the 'right' in-the-saddle getaway – from family friendly, low-impact trail rides through aspen and jack-pine forests to multi-hour saddle treks featuring arid, sagebrush-covered vistas stretching as far as the eye can see.

For those keen to learn more about cowboy history, a visit to the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin in Williams Lake is another must. Exhibits here are dedicated to preserving and honouring B.C. cowboys and cowgirls of the past and present, including how cowboys and cattlemen tamed B.C.'s Wild West. The museum also houses the B.C. Cowboy Hall of Fame, and its annual Hall of Fame

inauguration (held at the Williams Lake Indoor Rodeo in April) is an opportunity to meet B.C.'s ranching and rodeo pioneers. For a more current take on cowboy culture, the big, outdoor Williams Lake Stampede in July is a sanctioned ProRodeo event showcasing bareback,

**SUNDANCE**  
GUEST RANCH

*"The first time,  
it's a vacation.  
After that,  
it's coming home."*

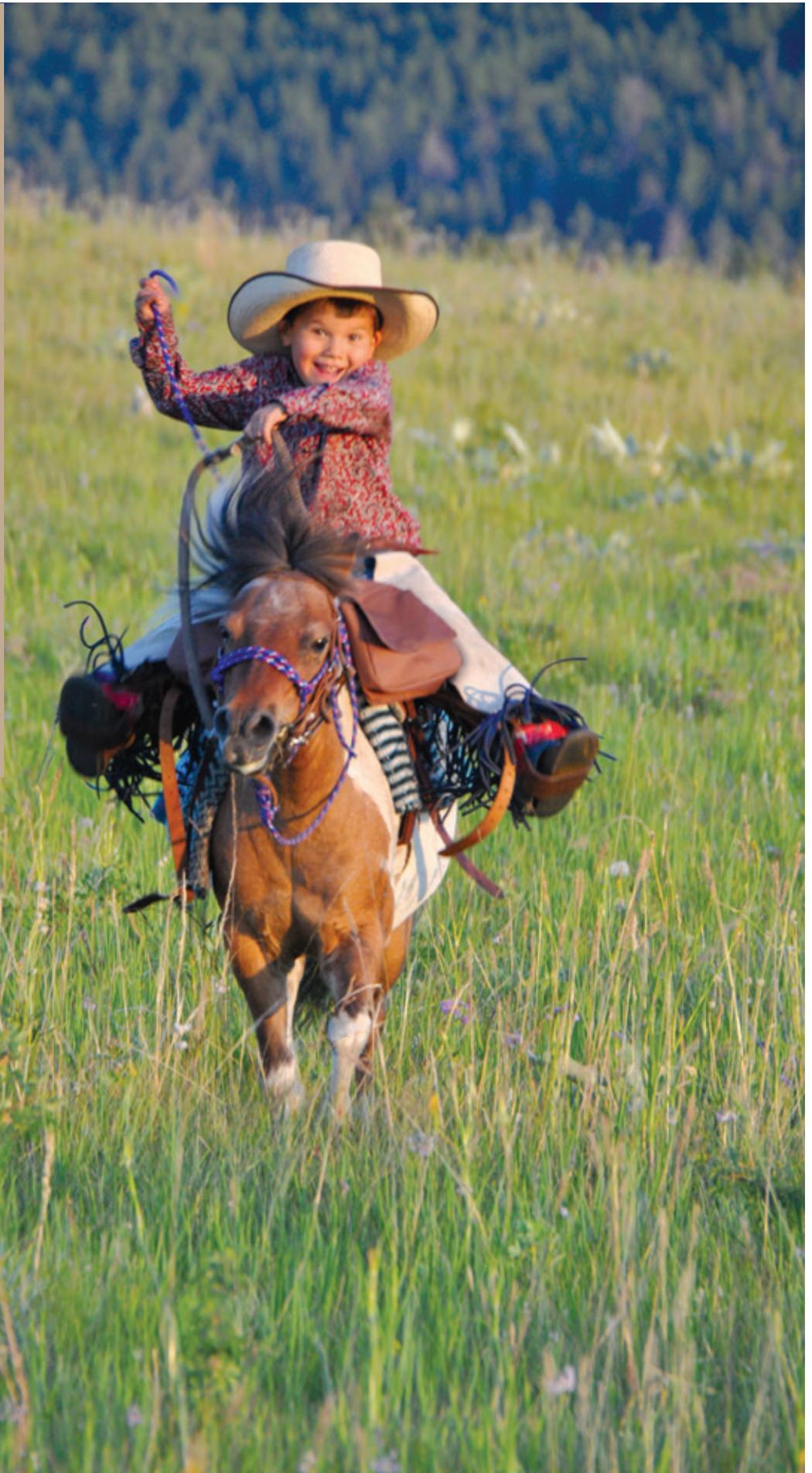
Just 4 hours north of Vancouver  
1-800-553-3533  
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[saddleup@sundanceguestranch.com](mailto:saddleup@sundanceguestranch.com)

## HIGHLIGHTS

Trail ride across alpine meadows near Anahim Lake, in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park's remote Rainbow Range, with an experienced guide for a pack trip into this incredibly beautiful mountain paradise.

Dust off your stetson, boots and bolo tie for unique rodeo events throughout the region, including the Bella Coola Rodeo's Grand Finale Bullarama and the Williams Lake Stampede's raucous Wild Cow Milking.

Escape the city for an action-packed, working ranch getaway. Offered by a several seasonal Chilcotin operators, these multiday escapes are a unique opportunity to learn how to rope, pack a horse, herd cattle, ride the range and generally help out. Be ready for camp cook-offs and to live a little – or a lot.





Gina Myhill Jones

saddle-bronc and bull riding, team roping, steer wrestling and barrel-racing events that draw contestants and spectators from around the world.

B.C. Rodeo Association-sponsored events can also be found throughout the region, including local rodeos staged in Clinton, Bella Coola, Williams Lake, Anahim Lake, Alkali Lake, Interlakes, Redstone and Quesnel – with each rodeo reflecting the spirit of that community, and offering its own special twist on the traditional rodeo format. The Quesnel rodeo is an example of this, complemented by the city’s Billy Barker Days, for which townsfolk parade about in their finest 1860s garb while enjoying festival activities. Bella Coola’s annual attraction tempts all comers to try their luck at cow patty bingo. The communities of Anahim Lake, Nemiah and Redstone champion a series of First Nations rodeo events. Children are the stars of spring’s Little Britches Rodeo in 100 Mile House (featuring such entertaining highlights as mutton busting, goat tying and dummy roping). Clinton’s May extravaganza features a full-on Western Heritage Week, with cowboy poetry readings and western musical performances and an old-time ball.

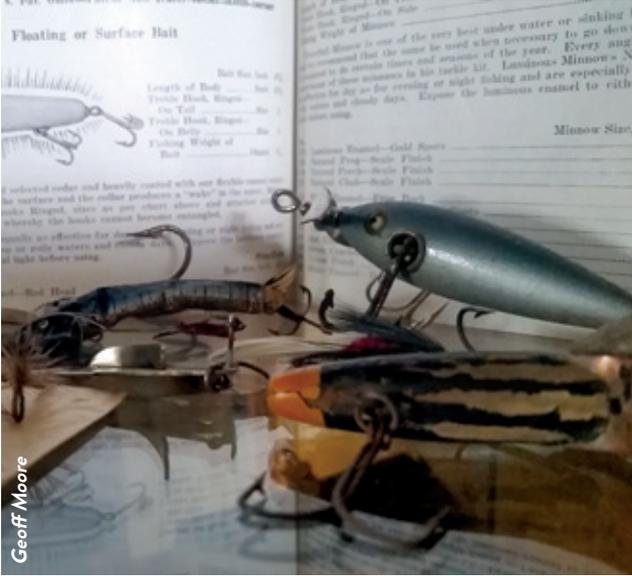
The rodeo season kicks off in Williams Lake in April with indoor events and wraps up in September as Quesnel hosts the year-end B.C. Rodeo Association Finals. All season long, rodeo dances are also alive and well throughout the region, showcasing traditional western music and those famous cowboy manners. Rest assured the fun doesn’t end when the sun goes down. ♣



Geoff Moore



www.huntndriftwood.com



Geoff Moore



www.huntndriftwood.com



Geoff Moore



Gail Hartman



Geoff Moore



Geoff Moore



**D**o you seek feisty fish and big game? Fishing and hunting are more than casual experiences here. It's a way of life, part of our culture and that many enjoy sharing with others. Imagine fishing a new interior lake or a new spot along the central coast every day for the rest of your life; or, during hunting seasons, trekking into the wilderness with the aid of experienced guides to harvest mule deer, moose, California bighorn sheep, mountain goat, black bear, cougar, lynx, bobcat, wolf or coyote. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast's sound fishing and hunting practices are designed to produce results for hunters and fishers alike.

This is a place where certified guides and outfitters are as knowledgeable about wildlife habitats and conservation as they are about big-game tracking and bear-attack prevention. Some local guides are First Nation, and all have an intimate relationship with the landscape and its wildlife. Wilderness skills and knowledge of local species and habitat are based on an understanding of the complexities of the natural world and represent a special opportunity for visitors to experience the region and its wildlife in profound ways.

To maximize both hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, visitors to B.C. must access the services of the region's experienced, highly knowledgeable guides and outfitters, who subscribe to

the highest environmental and wildlife conservation standards. Throughout the region, services and accommodations from full-service, luxury four-season lodges with all the amenities, to rough-and-ready backcountry camps cater to outdoor adventurers yearning for genuine B.C. wilderness hunting and challenging fishing experiences.

### Feisty Fish

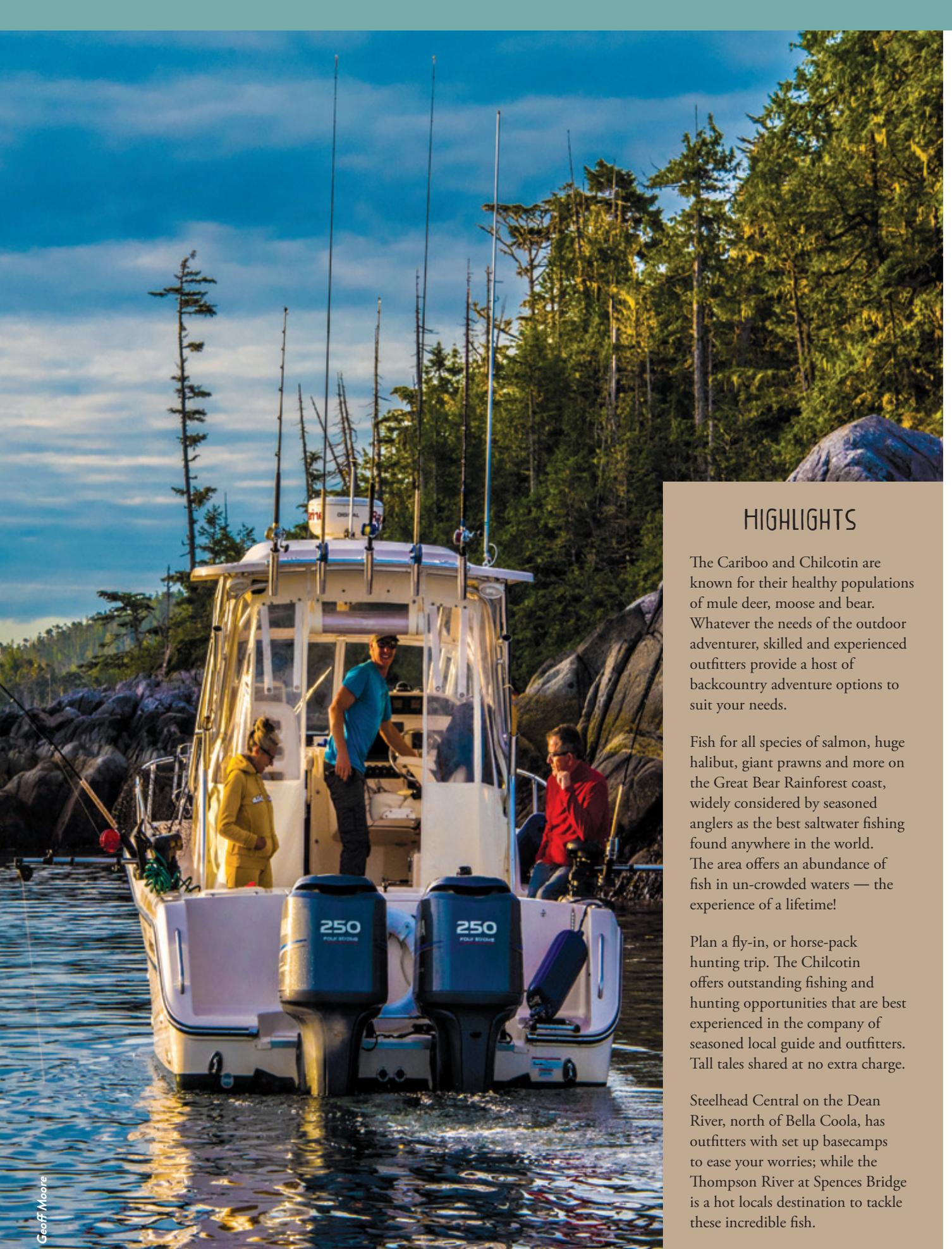
Fishing is not just a pastime here, it's a passion. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast boasts more than 8,000 lakes and 17,000km/10,563mi of rivers and streams famous for rod-bending rainbow trout, cunning cutthroat and steel-headed steelhead. The nutrient rich waters of the rugged Pacific coast yield succulent salmon, enormous halibut, prawns and buckets of fresh-and-lively Dungeness crab and several varieties of shrimp. While staying at a remote resort, a boutique property or a luxury offshore ocean floating camp, travellers can still be just a few minutes away from exceptional angling waters.

The Cariboo's unlimited expanse of rivers and lakes also includes a stretch of road from Little Fort (at the eastern border of the Cariboo on the Yellowhead Hwy. 5) to 93 Mile House (at the western terminus of Hwy. 24), a route enthusiastically referred to in angling circles as "The Fishing Highway". Spring-fed Sheridan Lake is stocked annually and is famous

for its rainbow trout up to 9kg/20lb. Bridge Lake is close by, with numerous bays and islands and crystal-clear waters teeming with rainbow and lake trout (char), kokanee and burbot. With 100-plus lakes typically within an hour's drive of one another, the Interlakes area really is a fishing paradise. Check annual stocking reports for recent updates.

Meanwhile, fly fishing enthusiasts congregate on the Horsefly River, a nursery for three-quarters of the rainbow trout found in nearby Quesnel Lake. In the fall its waters swell with millions of sockeye and chinook salmon en route to their spawning grounds. Near Quesnel, cattails and bullrushes line the banks of jewel-like Dragon Lake which is filled with trophy trout.

In the Chilcotin, Charlotte Lake, at the foothills of the spectacular Coast Mountains, is renowned for its trophy-sized rainbow trout. Fly fishing is king at nearby Nimpo Lake, where charter air services offer many fly-in options to neighbouring lodges and remote fishing camps. Then there's the legendary Blackwater River, renowned for its gentle, canoe-friendly grade and numerous insect hatches feeding prolific populations of trout, whitefish and squawfish. Rainbow trout and Dolly Varden churn up the cerulean-blue waters of the Chilko River where it leads out of massive Chilko Lake, as pretty as it is productive. Locals know to



## HIGHLIGHTS

The Cariboo and Chilcotin are known for their healthy populations of mule deer, moose and bear. Whatever the needs of the outdoor adventurer, skilled and experienced outfitters provide a host of backcountry adventure options to suit your needs.

Fish for all species of salmon, huge halibut, giant prawns and more on the Great Bear Rainforest coast, widely considered by seasoned anglers as the best saltwater fishing found anywhere in the world. The area offers an abundance of fish in un-crowded waters — the experience of a lifetime!

Plan a fly-in, or horse-pack hunting trip. The Chilcotin offers outstanding fishing and hunting opportunities that are best experienced in the company of seasoned local guide and outfitters. Tall tales shared at no extra charge.

Steelhead Central on the Dean River, north of Bella Coola, has outfitters with set up basecamps to ease your worries; while the Thompson River at Spences Bridge is a hot locals destination to tackle these incredible fish.



Lori Bowden/ Cariboo Mountain Outfitters

concentrate on the creek mouths where trout gather for their evening meal and sometimes become one. Puntzi Lake is also a popular, easily accessible lake that provides fishing for the whole family.

The Coast region is also crisscrossed by lakes and streams, though it is the salt waters that bring travellers and nature lovers to this ecologically diverse part of the world. Here, the salmon rules, and numerous lodges and camps, from budget to luxury high-end, cater to an international clientele of fly-in customers dreaming of “the big one.” These fishing expeditions often begin in the town of Bella Coola, and venture out to the many inlets and islands. B.C. Ferries and Pacific Coastal Airlines make the central coast highly accessible to all.

Though it may look like an obscure stretch of shoreline on a map of B.C., the Great Bear Rainforest boasts names that fishing enthusiasts from around the world speak of with reverence; Rivers Inlet, and Hakai Pass, where millions of salmon make first landfall after battling northern Pacific currents in search of

their natal streams. Along the way, these salmon pass some of the most famous fishing holes on the coast; including Odlum Point, the Gap and Barney Point, where gentle back eddies provide rest and feeding areas for salmon and outstanding fishing opportunities for anglers and orcas alike.

Steelhead hunters – “fishing” is too tame a word to describe the landing of these pugnacious sea-run trout – are equally well rewarded by a pilgrimage to the Dean River, better known as “steelhead central.” Some outfitters on the river provide a base camp for exciting expeditions, known to be gloriously full of fish and mercifully free of bugs. Spences Bridge, in the Fraser Canyon, is perfectly perched on the shores of the Thompson River and renowned for their late season steelhead runs.

### Big Game

This land without limits provides no shortage of wildlife and hunting experiences. Outfitters in the region provide a range of hunting excursions depending on the game species, terrain

and season. Catering to the abilities of every level, outfitters offer a wide range of accommodations and limit group sizes.

Passion for wildlife, conservation, and a strong connection to the land are an integral part of the cultural thread woven throughout this region. Many family operations are also multi-generational, providing rare insights on much more than wildlife – pioneers, history, ranching, culture, cuisine and more. Hearty meals cooked in camp kitchens or over the open fire offer warm comfort at days’ end.

Hunters join outfitters with exclusive guide territories where they can choose their own method of travel: ATV, horseback, 4x4, riverboat, old-fashioned “foot” and even snowmobile in the Blackwater River region. Find regional information by visiting B.C.’s guide and outfitter websites (see page 120). Choose a season that best suits your hunting or fishing style. No matter your choice, we offer the landscape, wildlife and expertise that will make your ultimate fishing and hunting experiences unforgettable. ♣



Thomas Drasdauskis



Thomas Drasdauskis



Destination BC / Grant Harder



Thomas Drasdauskis



Maureen Wasilieff



Scott Horley

Steve Ogle



One of Canada's finest attributes is the fact that it has four distinct seasons, a reality particularly important in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, where we aim to please visitors no matter when they visit. Still, in winter the air is spectacularly fresh, the sunsets magical, and no other region in B.C. offers the same rolling hills, backcountry lakes, forests, resorts and ranches, brilliant sunshine, deep-powder snow – or choice of cold weather activities.

Heli-skiing, sleigh rides, snowshoeing and ice fishing are all in abundance here. Nordic and downhill skiing, snowmobiling, pond hockey, tobogganing, dogsledding and curling simply make winter the time to get outside and have fun in our wild backyard, where the snow is dry and deep, skies clear and blue, and the winter activities seemingly endless.

Ice climbing? It's park-and-climb at Marble Canyon Provincial Park in the Pavilion Mountain Range near Lillooet, where the roadside icefalls are some of the most thrilling and accessible in western Canada. Snowmobiling? Sled-hounds flock here from across North America for the wide-open spaces, abundant hill-climbs and extensive trail networks, some of them linking historic towns that are scattered about the region like gold nuggets.

Imagine yourself ensconced aboard a fur-covered sled, powered by a team of

huskies as it glides through the forest and over frozen lakes. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon is unique in offering amateur mushers the chance to experience sled dog travel – arguably the most exhilarating way to experience the backcountry. Add to this list winter camping, kicking back in a snow-banked hot tub and swapping stories around a crackling fire at a cozy lodge, and it's easy to understand why this region claims to have it all.

At one time, when the snow was deep, the only way to get around the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast was via sled dog. Today, this unique way of travel has been revived not just at the competitive level but as a truly memorable interactive experience for visitors, and both amateur and experienced mushers can now answer the call of the wild with a range of guided tours, one-on-one mushing workshops and multiday dogsledding adventures. Specialty options have also emerged, with some outfitters boasting Inuit-only sled dogs and others swearing by the legendary Alaskan malamute.

The Gold Rush Trail Sled Dog Mail Run, held every January, and is popular for those with their own dog team, sees participants are issued special hand-cancelled envelopes of mail in Quesnel that they swear an oath to deliver to the town of Wells, 100km/62mi away along a route that traces the historic Cariboo Wagon Road. The emphasis is on fun and

fellowship, but first prize still counts for bragging rights at the local pub.

Love skiing? Take your pick, from a wealth of groomed Nordic trails and backcountry skiing options, to family-focused downhill, show shoeing and the most awesome deep-powder heli-skiing in the world. Don't forget the ice skates, either. Fun skating parties are a way of life here when lakes freeze and pond hockey games begin, visitors are always welcome.

Nordic skiers and backcountry aficionados find peace and tranquility here as well. As Rob Bernhardt, president of B.C.'s Nordic Ski Society puts it, "Everything about this region, from the stable weather and ideal snow conditions to the vibrant culture and stunning natural environment, makes it ideal for its Nordic activities." It helps, too, that meticulously groomed trails are maintained by resorts, clubs and communities in pretty much any direction a skier might choose to point those ski poles. Novice Nordic skiers can easily cover the 8km/5mi route between Wells and Barkerville, for example, plus other trails that loop through the area. Mount Agnes, near Barkerville, features 23km/14mi of trails leading through heavily forested countryside. Hallis Lake outside Quesnel is renowned for its vistas and viewpoints, while an hour south near Williams Lake, the lure is the 28km/17.5mi of groomed trails at Bull Mountain – some of them dog friendly and evening-lit.



## HIGHLIGHTS

Experience awesome ice fishing at Raven Lake in the east Chilcotin, with water so clear you can see into your fishing hole as fish swim by – or get hooked.

Glide through the glittering powder of the Coast Mountains. Several heliskiing operations fly onto spectacular mountain glaciers, for skiing that is unmatched anywhere in the world.

Join foodies on the Wells Gourmet Ski Tour. Each pit-sop serves different ethnic cuisine: Russian borscht, Spanish tapas, Indian masala chapati wraps and more. Prizes are awarded for best ancestral attire and goofiest costume. The shindig ends at the Bear's Paw Café, with Scandinavian dessert and international beverages.

Dash through the snow in a horse-drawn sleigh – at Barkerville Historic Town's Old-Fashioned Christmas Celebration. Yuletide revellers experience a throwback Christmas while jingling down mainstreet behind a team of Clydesdales.



Thomas Drasdauskis

Near 100 Mile House in the south Cariboo, the pole-and-push crowd get particularly stoked about the area's enormous 150km/93mi trail inventory, including sections for night skiing. The gold-rush-themed Cariboo Marathon, staged by the 100 Mile Nordic Club, comes replete with 50km/31mi, 30km/18.5mi, 20km/12.5mi and 10km/6mi events. The Clinton Snow Jockey Club maintains 60km/37mi of marked trails also suitable for hiking and biking in summer, while the Mt. Timothy Ski Area, a family-friendly downhill destination east of Lac la Hache, has groomed Nordic trails.

It's the region's many mountains and soft, dry powder that draw heli-skiers from all over the world. These alpine daredevils inhabit a world of absolute stillness, a place of virgin beauty and dramatic settings where nothing exists but thousands of vertical feet of the finest skiing on earth. The sport of heli-skiing was, in fact, invented in the Cariboo Mountains by mountaineering legend Hans Gmoser, known as the "Father of Heli-skiing," and the Cariboo, central Coast and the southern Chilcotin Mountains beckon still: these world-renowned heli-skiing destinations boast 3,000m/9,850ft peaks that receive as much as 15m/49ft of snow annually.

Local Cariboo outfitters keep everyone fit with multiday hut-to-hut tours of the Bowron Lake canoe circuit, where the lakes' frozen surfaces are broken only by the speckled tracks of foxes, hares and ever-wary timber wolves. In the Chilcotin, Tatla Lake features 40km/25mi of groomed trails plus January's Tatla Lake Ski Challenge and Fun Day (the latter comes with an outdoor barbecue and enough good cheer to warm even the coldest

winter day). Nearby Nimpo Lake's wilderness lodges serve as a perfect base camp for ski touring in the wilds of Itcha Ilgachuz Provincial Park. And for those who believe slow and easy wins the day, low-cost snowshoeing guarantees backcountry winter-trail access to anyone capable of putting one foot in front of the other, wherever there's a patch of snow.

For many winter buffs, snow exists simply for snowmobiling. The result: sledders trek by trail across untracked wilderness. Throughout the region, including up and down mountainous terrain notorious for adrenaline-rush hill-climbing (along with adherence to responsible sledding guidelines, of course). Excitement is also growing with the development of the Gold Rush Snowmobile Trail, a thrill-packed work in progress that, when completed, will offer 350km/217mi of stunningly picturesque and well-signed touring from Clinton to Barkerville. Check first with local clubs and Visitor Centres for trail updates and amenities en route, before heading out. Meanwhile, Gold Bridge and Bralorne in the Bridge River Valley have long been popular snowmobile havens, with the Mineshaft Pub sledder central for many events. Favourite rides in this area include the Lone Goat Trail and Slim Creek, where the distance travelled is limited only by the amount of fuel carried.

For some, ice fishing is cold comfort. However, hauling a fat rainbow trout out of a hole in a frozen lake warms an avid fisher's blood. Need a little pointing in the right direction? Area outfitters may offer all-inclusive ice-fishing adventures with cozy accommodations, portable shelters, and whopper tales at no extra charge. ♣



Army Thacker

# FRASER CANYON

# CARIBOO

Celebration is the theme of events along the Fraser Canyon, where you will be sure to find your fill of fun. Heritage events featuring gold panning, theatre, stagecoach rides and ranch rodeos celebrate the Gold Rush and ranch history that drove colonist settlement; First Nations Pow Wows and traditional gatherings remember the cultures that have sustained their people for thousands of years on this land. Lytton's River Fest shares in honoring the bounty of the mighty Fraser River; while Spences Bridge Desert Daze features agriculture and music that draws community together. Graffiti Weekend in Cache Creek celebrates the 50s and 60s with a classic car show, sock hop dance, smoke show and a weekend of racing at NI'Akaxm (*ing-khla-cappum*) Eagle Motorplex drag strip and geocaching events are a great way to see the countryside or get the kids on the move.

Chock full of traditional and unique year around events, the Cariboo communities can offer you fun-filled weekends and keep you guessing on what's next. Pow Wow season runs from June to November, with some communities hosting special New Year's events; while the rodeo season kicks off in April and wraps up in September. A long established arts and music culture will keep you jigging to the beat of several unique music festivals, music in the park or at the lake, community art walks, gallery features and the renowned Artswells festival. Feel the thunder at the bi-annual Quesnel Skyfest or relish the flavours at the annual South Cariboo Garlic festival, weekly farmers' markets or Lillooet's beer and wine festival. Heritage events, car shows, fishing derbys, carriage driving, sled dog challenges, medieval games and more will keep you looking for the next adventure!



Thomas Drasdauskis



Brad Kassleman/coastphoto.com



©Richard Wright 2015



Geoff Moore

For more events and details go to

# CHILCOTIN

# COAST

Life moves at a different pace in the Chilcotin, as do the annual events, where you will have a special opportunity to witness and be welcomed into this unique culture. The Tatla Lake Ski challenge is a Nordic countryside course with amazing food stations in the warming hut as your reward. Bridge River Valley Winterfest brings together the communities of Gold Bridge and Bralorne for events such as outdoor pond hockey, lake curling, ice fishing and vintage snowmobiles. For thrill seekers the unique Dean River snowmobile water skipping, where riders drive their sleds onto the open river, and the Canoe Races, where paddlers race from Nimpo to Anahim Lake are sure to leave lasting memories. Rodeos, stampedes and gymkhanas are a way of life here and there is likely one happening somewhere during the summer season.

Festivals in the Great Bear Rainforest fit the season and the environment. Weekly farmers markets in Bella Coola featuring local produce and crafts from June to September. The Bella Coola Music Festival is a family-friendly weekend in July including rock, roots, blues, and folk performances, multi-cultural events, children's activities and more. Shearwater and Ocean Falls boast fishing derbies, with fabulous prizes for the biggest catch and the latter highlighting live music, delicious dinner, tall tales and cash prizes. A rare treat is an invitation to a potlatch with traditional storytelling, songs, dances and ancient cultural readings. Bella Coola Valley's fall fair is a vintage country fair with train rides, logger sports, horseshoes and axe-throwing, of course! During the summer the valley hosts gymkhanas, kicked off by the BCRA rodeo where cow patty bingo is a competitive draw.



Geoff Moore



Amy Thacker



Geoff Moore



Amy Thacker

[www.landwithoutlimits.com](http://www.landwithoutlimits.com)





SOUTH CARIBOO

ALL PATHS  
LEAD  
TO THE  
WILD WITHIN

# REGIONAL TOURISM INFORMATION



B.C. visitor centres offer friendly, professionally trained staff with local knowledge of attractions, activities, events and current seasonal road travel to help you make informed travel plans. They can also assist with accommodation, transportation and sightseeing tour bookings.

## Hope Visitor Centre

919 Water Avenue, Hope  
P: 604-869-2021  
E: vc@hopebc.ca  
W: www.hopebc.ca

## Lytton Visitor Centre

400 Fraser Street, Lytton  
P: 250-455-2523  
E: visitorcentre@lyttonchamber.com  
W: www.lyttonchamber.com

## Lillooet Visitor Centre

790 Main Street, Lillooet  
P: 1-250-256-4308  
E: lillmuseum@cablelan.net  
W: www.lillooetbc.ca

## 100 Mile House Visitor Centre

155 Airport Road, 100 Mile House  
TF: 1-877-511-5353  
E: info@southcaribootourism.com  
W: www.southcaribootourism.com

## Williams Lake Visitor Centre

1660 South Broadway, Williams Lake  
TF: 1-877-967-5253  
E: visitors@telus.net  
W: www.tourismwilliamslake.com

## Quesnel Visitor Centre

703 Carson Avenue, Quesnel  
TF: 1-800-992-4922  
E: qvisitor@quesnelbc.com  
W: www.tourismquesnel.com

## Wells Visitor Centre

11900 Hwy 26, Box 123, Wells  
TF: 1-877-451-9355  
E: vic@wellsbc.com  
W: www.wellsbc.com

## Neighboring Visitor Centres

### Kamloops Visitor Centre

1290 West Trans Canada Hwy  
TF: 1-800-662-1994  
E: tourism@kamloopschamber.ca  
W: www.tourismkamloops.com

### Prince George Visitor Centre

1300 First Avenue, Prince George  
TF: 1-800-668-7646  
E: info@tourismpg.com  
W: www.tourismpg.com

### Port Hardy Visitor Centre

7250 Market Street, Port Hardy  
TF: 1-866-427-3901  
E: phcc@cablerocket.com  
W: www.ph-chamber.bc.ca

## Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association

1-800-663-5885  
www.landwithoutlimits.com  
www.Facebook.com/  
CaribooChilcotinCoast  
Twitter: @CarChiCoa  
YouTube: www.youtube.com/theCCCTA  
Instagram: @CarChiCoa  
Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/lwls/

## Fraser Canyon

www.hopebc.ca  
www.historyale.ca  
www.lytton.ca  
www.bostonbarbc.net  
www.travelthecanyon.com  
www.exploregoldcountry.com

## Cariboo

www.cariboord.bc.ca  
www.southcaribootourism.com  
www.tourismwilliamslake.com  
www.tourismquesnel.com  
www.wellsbc.com  
www.lillooetbc.ca  
www.village.clinton.bc.ca  
www.fishinghighway24.com

## Chilcotin

www.visitthewestchilcotin.com  
www.chilcotin.bc.ca

## Coast

www.bellacoola.ca  
www.ccrd-bc.ca

## Provincial

### Hello BC

Destination BC Consumer Website  
www.helloBC.com

### Gold Rush Trail

www.goldrushtrail.ca

### Aboriginal Tourism BC

www.aboriginalbc.com

## General Information

### Weather Info

www.weatheroffice.gc.ca

### BC Driving Conditions

www.drivebc.ca  
1-800-550-4997

### BC Wildfire Travel Advisories

www.bcwildfire.ca

### BC Provincial Park Info

www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks

## Camping & Touring Info

www.camping.bc.ca  
www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca  
www.campingrvbc.com  
www.travelbritishcolumbiacanada.com  
www.northtoalaska.com

## Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife Info

www.goabc.org  
www.bcfroa.ca  
www.fishing.gov.bc.ca  
www.gofishbc.com  
www.bearaware.bc.ca/bears  
www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/

## More Activity-Specific Websites

www.ridethecariboo.com  
www.wellsbarkervilletrails.com  
www.marketplacebc.com  
www.rodeobc.com  
www.bcheritage.ca/cariboo  
www.GoldRushTrail.ca  
www.bcgeocaching.com  
www.geocaching.com  
www.bcguestranches.com  
www.bcbackcountry.ca  
www.canadatrails.ca/bc

# TRAVEL INFORMATION

## International Visitors to Canada

International visitors to Canada (not U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents) must carry a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Visit the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca) for a complete listing of countries whose citizens require visas to enter Canada. All other visitors should contact their Canadian consulate or embassy to learn what documents are required. To learn more about Canadian customs regulations, visit the Canada Border Services Agency website [www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca) or visit [www.goingtocanada.gc.ca](http://www.goingtocanada.gc.ca).

## Bus Travel

Greyhound offers scheduled services to communities along Hwys. 1 and 97, with connections to cities and towns across North America.

[www.greyhound.ca](http://www.greyhound.ca) | 1-800-661-8747

## Ferry Travel

It is highly recommended reservations are made well in advance for travel on Inside Passage and Discovery Coast routes to Central Coast communities. Recent route and schedule changes may significantly impact your travel plans. Check with BC Ferries for current schedules.

[www.bcferries.ca](http://www.bcferries.ca) | TF: 1-888-223-3779

## Rail Travel

The Rocky Mountaineer's Rainforest to Gold Rush route travels from Whistler to Jasper, Alberta, through the historic Cariboo Gold Rush region, with an overnight stop in Quesnel.

[www.rockymountaineer.com](http://www.rockymountaineer.com) | TF: 1-877-460-3200

## Air Travel

Pacific Coastal Airlines services Williams Lake, Anahim Lake, Bella Coola, Bella Bella, Klemtu and Ocean Falls.

[www.pacificcoastal.com](http://www.pacificcoastal.com) | TF: 1-800-663-2872

Central Mountain Air services Quesnel and Williams Lake.

[www.flycma.com](http://www.flycma.com) | TF: 1-888-865-8585

## Firearms in Canada

For information regarding the importation of firearms to Canada, contact the Canadian Firearms Centre

TF: 1-800-731-4000 from anywhere in Canada or the U.S.

P: 1-506-624-5380 from other locations

[www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca](http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca).

## Watercraft Regulations

All Canadians *must* have proof of operator competency on board *at all times*. For more information visit Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety online or call the safe boating line.

[www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca) | TF: 1-800-267-6687

## Recreational Vehicle Operation

Operators of recreational vehicles in B.C. are required to comply with evolving provincial regulations. To ensure you are aware of current updates and requirements in your area, review websites regularly.

[www.tti.gov.bc.ca/tourism/orv](http://www.tti.gov.bc.ca/tourism/orv) | TF: 1-250-356-0104

## Visitor Info Booths

### Yale Tourist/Visitor Info Booth

31187 Douglas Street, Yale

P: 604-863-2324

E: [info@historicyale.ca](mailto:info@historicyale.ca)

W: [www.historicyale.ca](http://www.historicyale.ca)

### Gold Bridge Tourist / Visitor Info Booth

104 Haylmore Ave, Gold Bridge

P: 1-250-238-2534

E: [bridgerivervalley@gmail.com](mailto:bridgerivervalley@gmail.com)

W: [www.bridgerivervalley.ca](http://www.bridgerivervalley.ca)

### Cache Creek Tourist / Visitor Info Booth

1270 Stage Road, Cache Creek

P: 1-888-457-7661 (TF)

E: [cachecreekinfo@telus.net](mailto:cachecreekinfo@telus.net)

### Horsefly Tourist / Visitor Info Booth

Jack Lynn Memorial Museum on Boswell Street

P: 1-250-620-0544 (seasonal) or 1-250-620-3440 (winter)

E: [land@horseflyrealty.ca](mailto:land@horseflyrealty.ca)

W: [www.horsefly.bc.ca](http://www.horsefly.bc.ca)

### Likely Tourist / Visitor Info Booth

Cedar Point Provincial Park, Likely

P: 1-250-790-2207 or 1-250-790-2459

E: [cedar52@telus.net](mailto:cedar52@telus.net)

W: [www.likely-bc.ca](http://www.likely-bc.ca)

### Alexis Creek / Visitor Info Booth

Hwy. 20 in Alexis Creek

P: 1-250-394-4900

(Seasonal: May – September)

### Tatla Lake / Visitor Roadside Kiosk

Hwy. 20, Tatla Lake

### Nimpo Lake / Visitor Roadside Kiosk

Hwy. 20, Nimpo Lake

### Anahim Lake / Visitor Roadside Kiosk

Hwy. 20, Anahim Lake

### Bella Coola Tourist / Visitor Info Booth

Copper Sun Gallery, 442 MacKenzie Street, Bella Coola

P: 1-866-799-5202 (TF)

E: [info@bellacoola.ca](mailto:info@bellacoola.ca)

W: [www.bellacoola.ca](http://www.bellacoola.ca)

## Emergency Information

Drive B.C. - Highway Information	1-800-550-4997
Emergency: Police, Fire, Ambulance	911*
Bella Coola Ambulance	1-800-461-9911
Bella Coola Police	1-250-799-5363
Poison Helpline	1-800-567-8911
Provincial Emergency Preparedness	1-800-663-3456
Report a Forest Fire	1-800-663-5555
Report All Poachers and Polluters	1-877-952-7277

(\*not accessible in remote backcountry areas, dial "0" for operator)

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### Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin

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mcc@wlake.com www.cowboy-museum.com

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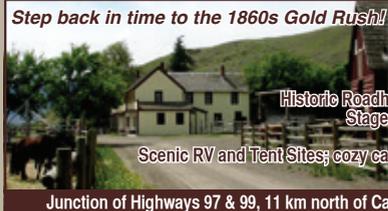


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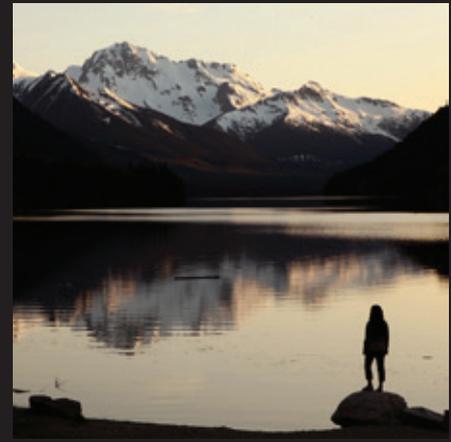


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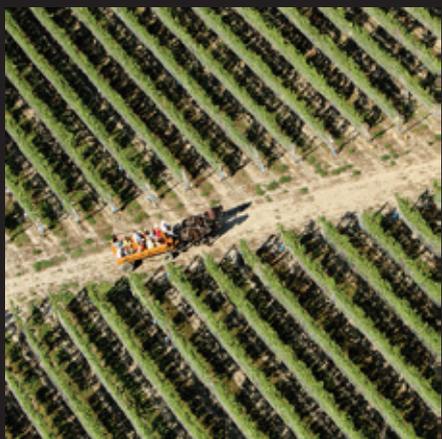


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