

# SOAR

Inflight  
Magazine for  
Pacific Coastal  
Airlines

## A place to exhale

Exploring White Rock

### Journeys with intention

Indigenous travel  
opportunities

### Okanagan adventures

Seven ways to  
explore this region



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**East Thurlow Oceanfront:** 11.64 acres in **Shoal Bay** with approx. 985ft of oceanfront that includes a small protected bay with good potential for deep water moorage. Cleared building sites, recently drilled well. Nicely forested with mature second growth. Panoramic ocean views. Western and southern exposure. Fabulous northern **Discovery Islands** location. **\$485,000**



**Tahsis Oceanview Property:** One of the premier properties in **Tahsis!** Amazing, unparalleled views over **Tahsis Inlet** and the surrounding mountains. The 2.8 acre tiered property has a 2100sqft 4 bedroom home as well as an impressive 2816sqft 5 year old shop. Lots of room for storage, parking, boats, etc. Gated driveway and hard-wired camera surveillance system. **\$649,900**



**Centre Island:** 110 acre private island in **Esperanza Inlet** on the west coast of Vancouver Island with numerous little bays, peninsulas, and bluffs. Two protected bays provide good access. One-room cabin plus workshop, fresh water ponds, complement of material and equipment. A picturesque, protected location with quick access to the open west coast! **\$1,790,000**



**Zeballos, Vancouver Island:** 14 room motel with commercial kitchen, restaurant space, owner/manager's suite and management office. Separate laundry facilities. Guest rooms each have a 3 piece bathroom and come furnished with two beds, microwave and mini-fridge. High demand for long-term and short-term rental accommodations in the area. **\$499,500**



**West Coast Vancouver Island:** 1920sqft 4 bedroom residence in **Haggard Cove**, part of a water access coastal community at the entrance to Alberni Inlet, with quick access to **Barkley Sound** and the open **Pacific**. Community has a substantial marina in a protected location. The home overlooks the marina and is a great layout for a large family/group. **\$459,000**



**Tahsis Mountain View Condo:** 2 bedroom unit in a well-kept building. Well maintained and cared for unit, with newer vinyl windows, new stove, attractive laminate. Building has onsite caretaker, common patio area, lots of parking. Great accommodation for either full time living or to use as a base for fishing or outdoor recreation. Pets and rentals allowed. **\$87,000**

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# TRAVEL NEWS & GIVING BACK

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**S**ummer is officially here! Following a slow start to our summer weather—June was one of the wettest Junes in BC history—the weather is now starting to heat up and it's great to see our flights filled with excited travellers ready to explore beautiful BC.


As you are now aware, Transport Canada in coordination with PHAC, has made the decision to remove the vaccine requirement to travel on Canadian carriers via air, rail or water. A reminder that—as per Transport Canada—customers still must travel with a mask on board the aircraft. Even if you're fully vaccinated, a mask is required on board for the duration of the flight.

We were excited to host more than 150 golfers and sponsors from across BC and Canada at Pacific Coastal Airlines' 28th Memorial Charity Golf Tournament on May 26. Everyone came together to raise a record amount of money for local charities at this event, which was held at Mayfair Lakes Golf and Country Club in Richmond—the host site of the tournament for many years.

The golfers and sponsors, along with a spirited team of Pacific Coastal volunteers, raised \$90,000 after expenses—funds that will be distributed to BC-based charities, including the Source Club Society of Powell River, Power To Be and the Heiltsuk

Community Men's Wellness Group. The annual tournament is a labour of love for Pacific Coastal employees, and their enthusiastic and dedicated commitment to this tournament, and many other community events held across BC each year, underscores Pacific Coastal's corporate culture and a shared value of giving back to the people and the communities we serve.

We recently announced that we will be resuming our service between Cranbrook (YXC) and Kelowna (YLW), effective September 12, 2022. The non-stop flight service will operate three days a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, using the 19-passenger pressurized turboprop Beech 1900. Tickets are now available for purchase. To book a flight visit [pacificcoastal.com](https://pacificcoastal.com), contact our Call Centre at 1-800-663-2872 or speak with your travel agent.

As always, thank you for choosing to fly with Pacific Coastal Airlines—we look forward to having you onboard! 



**Quentin Smith**





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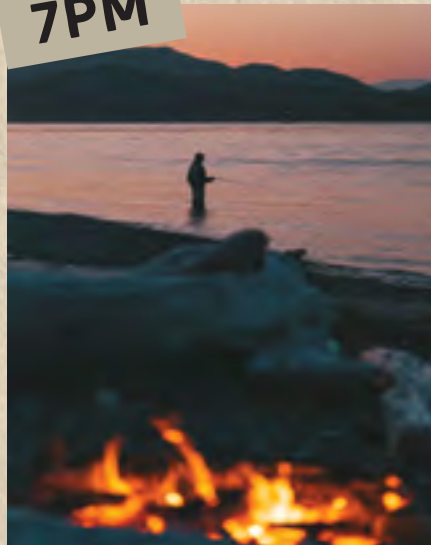
**EXPLORE THE GREAT  
OUTDOORS**

3PM



**DISCOVER THE  
COMMUNITY CULTURE**

7PM



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OF THE WILD**



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## PCA flights set to return between Cranbrook and Kelowna

Pacific Coastal Airlines will be resuming service between Cranbrook (YXC) and Kelowna (YLW) effective September 12, 2022.

"Pacific Coastal Airlines is excited to resume service between Cranbrook and Kelowna. We have received significant customer feedback requesting the return of this 55-minute non-stop flight," said PCA's Johnathan Richardson, VP, Customer & Commercial Services.

"I'm once again delighted to see Pacific Coastal Airlines commitment

in the east Kootenay air travel market," said Tristen Chernove, CEO of Elevate Airports Inc. "In 2013, Pacific Coastal Airlines connected the East Kootenays and the Okanagan with direct non-stop air service to Kelowna—something that's essential for health services, tourism and business development. Today's announcement to resume this service is cause for great celebration."

At Kelowna Airport, airport director Sam Samaddar said, "We are so pleased to see this route with Pacific

Coastal return between Kelowna and Cranbrook. It is important that we are able to once again provide these regional connections for BC residents."

The non-stop flight service will operate three days a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, using the 19-passenger pressurized turboprop Beech 1900. The aircraft offers comfortable seating, six-foot cabin height, and generous cargo capacity.

See [pacificcoastal.com](http://pacificcoastal.com) for schedules and to book a flight.



## Treetop retreat tops list of Canada's best new Airbnbs

**T**reehouse-style home in East Sooke has been selected as the top new host in Canada by Airbnb.

"Treehouse" owner Madison Grothen said her husband and co-owner Tyler Bohn built the home from treetop to bottom, except for the plumbing and electrical.

"We're very excited and honoured to be chosen by Airbnb," she said. "We've been open for just over a year and weren't expecting to be so busy, but business has been great. We were just hoping for weekends at first, so we're really thrilled to be fully booked now with a waiting list for the summer."

Described on the Airbnb website as a "haven amongst the conifers located in a magical junction between rural, land, rainforest and sea, this unique structure is sure to provide a stay unlike any other."

## Day-use pass program continues in three BC parks

The free BC Parks day-use pass program will continue in three popular provincial parks this summer to maintain a balance between the growing numbers of visitors and conserving the natural environment.

Beginning mid-June people accessing Golden Ears Park, Joffre Lakes Park and three trailheads at Garibaldi Park during peak hours will need to obtain a free day-use pass. The passes will be available online and can be reserved at 7 am, two days prior to the planned visit. People will be able to cancel a pass if they don't intend to use it.

"Some of our most popular parks continue to experience more visitors than ever—they're connecting with nature and enjoying the health benefits from outdoor recreation," said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate



# MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE: HARMANDAR



**Position:** Cargo Agent

**Location:** Vancouver

**Time with PASCO:** 6 months

**Job description:** *I ensure cargo moving across our network is safe for transport. We help reunite people with their belongings and help keep local businesses running.*

## **Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

I was born in Vancouver. I spent the early part of my childhood in Victoria before moving to the mainland.

## **What path did you take to get to this job?**

I heard about opportunities for pilots here while working through my flight training. Building up to the requirements of a position and waiting out the pandemic, I worked as a loadmaster for Cargojet. We flew medical supplies around the world in a Boeing 767 during the lockdowns. Finally, things improved, and I was brought into the PCA team!

## **What do you like best about this job?**

We are all like-minded. Everyone wants to see the industry thrive and we work hard to keep it growing.

## **What are your hobbies outside of the job?**

Nothing beats hiking with my two dogs.

## **What is your favourite thing to do in your city?**

I like to explore new places with my friends any chance I get.

## AROUND BC

Change Strategy. "Overuse has become a growing challenge in these three parks. We need to ensure that, above all, we are protecting what makes these parks special through sustainable recreation."

People visiting Golden Ears Park and three trailheads at Garibaldi Park (the Diamond Head, Rubble Creek and Cheakamus access points) require vehicle passes, while each person visiting Joffre Lakes Park requires an individual trail pass. The free passes are required during peak hours and will be checked by Discover Parks ambassadors. BC Parks is partnering with the BC Parks Foundation to provide more than 30 full-time ambassadors to welcome visitors and provide information about safe and responsible recreation.

Find day passes here:  
[bcparks.ca/reserve/day-use/](https://bcparks.ca/reserve/day-use/)

## Considering a "workation"? Meet Victoria!

People from across the globe with a pent-up desire to travel—but still constrained by daily deadlines—should consider BC's capital when looking for a working getaway, according to a new report.

Victoria has been ranked the sixth-best city in the world to take a "workation" in a report from Icelandair's Wellness Travel Report.

Frequent travel can help people feel seven per cent happier as they get to switch up their surroundings, the report said.

And while the pandemic thrust the possibilities of the remote work into the open, it also highlighted the importance of personal well-being.

With borders reopening, combining work and travel is a great way to make the most of remote work, while also prioritizing mental and physical health, the travel company said.

That's why Icelandair, Iceland's flagship airline, analyzed more than 100 cities to find the best wellness workation spots.

Victoria was only outdone by Kansas

City, U.S.; Vienna, Austria; Wellington, New Zealand; Copenhagen, Denmark; and Edinburgh, U.K.

Kelowna, ranked at 15th spot, was the only other Canadian city to make the list.

The report looked at several factors to compile its workcation list, including: overall quality of life, cost of living, safety, health care and noise and air pollution.

Since travellers would be working virtually, the report also had to look at the cities' internet speed and capability.

## Music by the Sea

After too much time away, music lovers will find themselves returning this summer to the annual Music by the Sea Festival (MBTS) for the first time since 2019, now in two locations on British Columbia's spectacular west coast. The shows take place at the Rix Centre for Ocean Discoveries in incredible Bamfield, July 23-30, and, for the first time, at the Victoria International Marina in Victoria's iconic Inner Harbour, August 1-5.

The festival features 14 concerts, spanning musical genres, from classical to jazz, chamber and contemporary, and offers participating artists from around the globe chances for spontaneity, exploration and collaboration. The ears and the hearts of the audience members will be the greatest beneficiaries at these enchanting MBTS events.

Since 2006, professional musicians from around the world have gathered in Bamfield to make music surrounded by boundless nature.

The remote location on the west coast of Vancouver Island attracts a growing number of adventurous music lovers, but "it has always been our goal to bring festival performances to Victoria for a wider audience," says executive artistic director Christopher Donison.

Individual concert tickets start at \$95 and MBTS Festival passes are also available; both can be purchased now at [musicbythesea.ca](https://musicbythesea.ca) or by phone at 250-728-3887.





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### For general inquiries and cultural planning:

Alert Bay Visitor Centre  
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Fax: (250) 974-5026

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[www.alertbay.ca](http://www.alertbay.ca)



**U'mista Cultural Centre** For events and cultural activities check here

<https://www.facebook.com/Umista.Cultural.Society/>

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# A place to exhale

## Take a break in White Rock

By Lauren Kramer

**T**here's something therapeutic and utterly joyful about exploring a beach town, even if it's just for an afternoon. Soak in the scenery, inhale the salty air and take a long walk along the coastline and you feel like you've had a mini-vacation, when in fact you've only been gone a few hours.

Next time you need precisely this kind of break, zip down to White Rock, a quintessential beach town minutes from the Peace Arch border crossing and the dense bustle of Surrey. Marine Drive is the main drag, and once the quest for parking has been achieved there's lots to do.

We began our visit at the old 1912 railway station on the waterfront, now home to the White Rock Museum & Archives. The museum, which takes just a few minutes to explore, describes how the pier and railroad helped establish this seaside town as a popular destination for swimming, long walks and vacation getaways







back in the early 1900s. Beyond the museum's doors, a busker plays an accordion and the whiff of waffles, ice cream and fish and chips in the air draws us towards the restaurants along Marine Drive.

Before we can eat, though, there are some great walks along the coast. The White Rock pier, first built in 1914 as a dock for coastal steamships, is the longest pier in Canada, extending 470 metres into the ocean. We walk to its furthest end and look out over the bay as a kiteboarder moves effortlessly across the surface of the ocean. Above us a bald eagle searches the water for dinner, and Semiahmoo Resort in Washington State looks so close you feel you could swim there.

White Rock's West and East beaches are connected by a two-kilometre promenade that's an irresistible draw for a leisurely stroll on a beautiful day. Families push strollers, couples walk hand in hand and children lick ice cream cones as they move slowly along the path. There's lots of eye candy on the journey, between the public art along the waterfront, the view, the people-watching and the unmissable white rock for which the community is named. The four-metre-high mono-

**White Rock's carefree atmosphere is contagious, chasing the day's stresses to the margins and inviting visitors to indulge in hours filled with uplifting views and sweet pleasures. It's a place where the day's hardest choice is the flavour of ice cream.**

lith, likely a glacial deposit left behind thousands of years ago, maintains its white colour thanks to regular TLC from the City of White Rock.

East Beach is quieter than West, and on sunny days children gather at low tide to build sandcastles and wade through the shallow water. West Beach, by contrast, has a more magnetic and bustling scene. Convertible cars playing loud music inch along the drive and ice cream and gelato shops dot the main strip. We stop at Maya's Ice Cream for root beer floats and cones of sea salt caramel fudge gelato, savouring the sweet treats from a bench on the boardwalk.

Later, we drift in and out of nearby gift stores, a mix of retailers selling clothes, art, home décor and flowers. They're interspersed by restaurants with "vibey" patios, filled with diners relaxing among family and friends and enjoying cold drinks beneath the sunny blue

skies. White Rock's carefree atmosphere is contagious, chasing the day's stresses to the margins and inviting visitors to indulge in hours filled with uplifting views and sweet pleasures. It's a place where the day's hardest choice is the flavour of ice cream.

At sunset we nab a table at the Washington Avenue Grill. Near East Beach, it's an upscale bistro overlooking the water and featuring tantalizing, Pacific-Northwest-themed dishes. Located in an historic 1913 building, the family-owned eatery is a favourite among locals, and a place where waterside tables are hard to come by.

The sun sets as we sip BC wine over a flavourful feast. It's the perfect end to an exhilarating day in White Rock, and we head home feeling nurtured, refreshed and invigorated by White Rock's distinct beauty and one-of-a-kind charm. 🌅

# Fish and game clubs: a force for conservation

By the BC Wildlife Federation

**B**C's wilderness areas offer bountiful opportunities for exploring, experiencing solitude and enjoying unparalleled access to settings remote enough that you can hear the soft swish of a bird taking flight. And as you revel in the majesty of the forests and meadows, rest assured you are not alone. Tens of thousands of British Columbians find community, learning opportunities and kinship with people who love this province's outdoor spaces. They also wield the power to protect and enhance our natural assets for today and future generations. BC's hundreds of fish and game clubs form a large, powerful community that supports sustainable, safe outdoor recreation and the harvesting of wild, natural food.

Game clubs focus on fishing, hunting, sport shooting, and conservation. You'll find one in nearly every major town in the province. Clubs are a great place for beginners learning the basics of hunting and angling, and they offer a place for more experienced hunters and anglers to hone their skills or give back to others. Here, you can learn how to tie flies for fishing, run a hatchery, try out new firearms, compete in contests, get involved in boots-on-the-ground conservation, host community events, engage with government officials on wildlife advocacy and make lifelong friends.

Established in 1899, the Fernie Rod and Gun Club is the oldest club of its kind in BC. What started as a target-shooting club

has evolved into a group of hunters and anglers who care so much about the local environment that they sparked BC's original conservation movement.

Fernie Rod and Gun Club members are witnessing changes to wildlife populations in the Canadian Rockies firsthand.

"Moose populations in the area have tanked, elk are half what they should be and mule deer are decreasing," said club president Mario Rocca.

Club members, with generations of on-the-ground knowledge of wildlife populations in the region, think it is a predation problem. They may be right. Wolves are known to prey on moose and deer and tend to follow their prey into the habitat of endangered caribou as well. People who join the club can offer their opinions about how hunting is regulated, and help the BC Wildlife Federation present its priorities to government.


Clubs have more power to bring about change by uniting their members toward a common goal.

"Our club's power is strength in numbers," said Mark McDonald, president of Delta Ladner Rod and Gun Club. "If I was signing an advocacy letter to the government that represents the club, the more people that stand behind it, the more weight that letter carries."

As environmental concerns grow, people increasingly opt for natural food choices and try to source their food locally and sustainably. Many people who hunt and fish do so to provide quality, locally harvested food to their families and friends. Clubs across BC have understood for generations how important this is, so they emphasize conservation in part to ensure sustainable harvests of healthy food. Many people who join clubs to learn fishing and hunting stay because the clubs' conservation projects resonate with them.

According to Russell Wagner, President of the Golden District Rod & Gun Club: "Hunters are conservationists. We're one of greatest contributors to conservation because we have a vested interest in the survival of fish and wildlife. Without fish and wildlife, our way of life disappears, and I think that's what attracts a lot of new hunters these days. Plus, it's a great way to spend time with friends and family outdoors."

There are over a hundred clubs affiliated with the BC Wildlife Federation, which offers its 43,000 members benefits including third-party liability insurance, retail partner discounts and exclusive member content, as well as access to the decisionmakers in government. Membership supports the advocacy work that the BCWF is doing to protect hunting and promote science-based wildlife management across the province.

Visit [bcwf.bc.ca/our-clubs/](http://bcwf.bc.ca/our-clubs/) for a list of affiliated fish and game clubs, sorted by region. 



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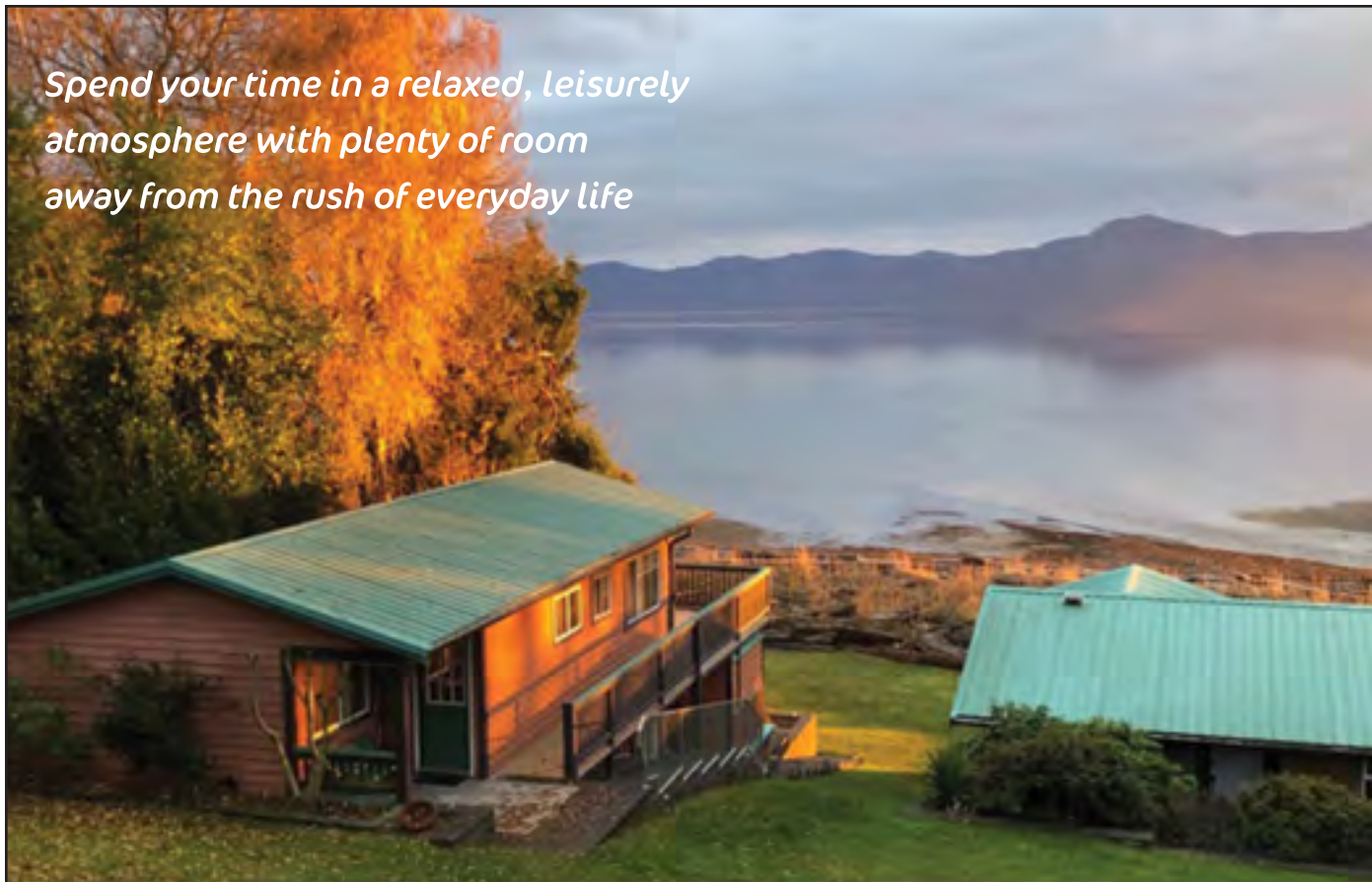




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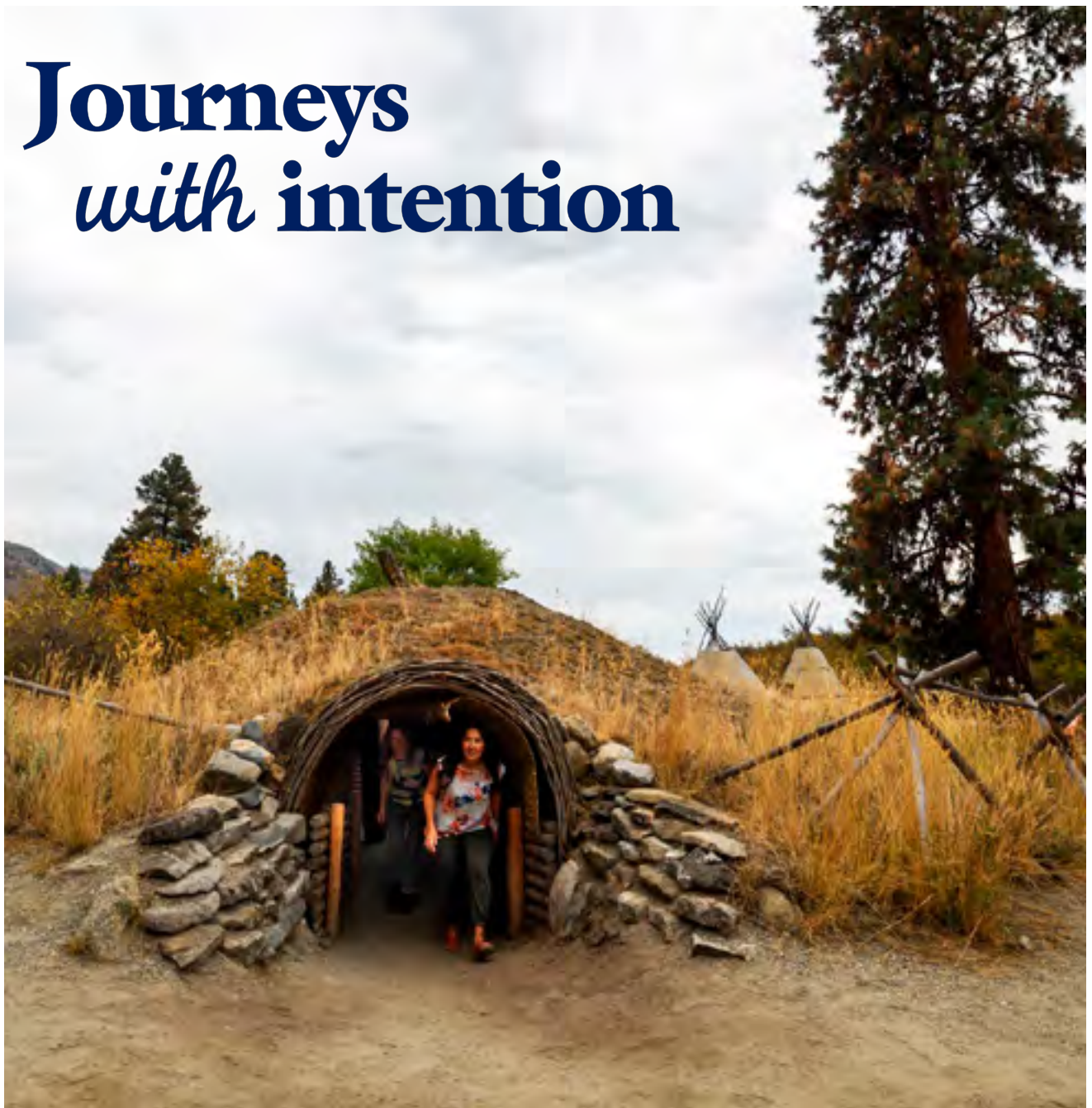
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# Journeys *with* intention



Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre.  
Photo by Andrew Strain, courtesy Destination BC.

## Indigenous travel experiences

**W**ith around the corner, many of us are gearing up to embark on long-awaited getaways. While it's tempting to jump on the quickest deal or all-inclusive mega-resort experience, Indigenous Tourism BC has an abundance of intentional travel experiences that aim to enrich, educate and inspire.

Intentional travel strives to balance tourism's social and environmental

impacts, while raising awareness of experiences that restore and rebuild communities, contributing to local citizens' livelihoods and preserving and protecting the culture in the process.

June is National Indigenous History Month, and to this end, Indigenous Tourism BC has developed some ideas around intentional travel:

### **The journey is as important as the destination**

Many of Indigenous Tourism BC's travel destinations are located in stunning places that are as interesting to travel to as the location itself.

Local operators such as Indigenous-owned Gulf Island Seaplanes serve to connect some of BC's most remote communities, including locations on Gabriola Island, De Courcy



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Island, Thetis Island and Ruxton Island, all the while sharing information about the land and people en route.

### **Choose travel experiences rooted in purpose**

One of the ways society can move towards “truth and reconciliation” is through travel.

Reconciliation is a journey both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are urged to take together, raising awareness of the history told by Indigenous people as well as experiencing the incredible array of Indigenous artists, storytellers, guides, chefs and more.

Moccasin Trails, based in Kamloops, recently introduced a new five-day tour that includes a traditional welcoming by the Syilx Nation, local cuisine and wine experiences, a Secwépemc-led workshop and an educational residential school tour. This tour provides the opportunity to hear firsthand stories from those who went to the school when it was in operation and the atrocities Indigenous people suffered during that time.

The tour finishes with a visit to Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre—a state-of-the-art architectural structure where visitors can explore the arts, walking trails and the rich living culture of the Osoyoos Indian Band.

### **Consider accommodation that educates**

An abundance of Indigenous-operated accommodation options are available for travellers seeking Indigenous hospitality. One example is the historical home at Cluxewe Resort, located on the ancestral land of the Kwakiutl First Nation just north of Vancouver Island's Port McNeill.

Featuring self-contained waterfront cottages, suites and camping options, Cluxewe Resort offers pristine nature-viewing with spectacular vistas, coastal birds and sea life. The rich history of villages from centuries ago remains on this land, making it a must-see for history buffs, as well.



Above, Indigenous World Winery. Photo courtesy Destination BC. Below, Cluxewe Resort. Photo by Kimberley Kufaas, courtesy Indigenous Tourism BC.





The Gitmaxmak\_ay Nisga\_a Dancers and the Wii Gisigwilgwel (Big Northern Lights) Dancers at the Cassiar Cannery in Port Edward.

Intentional travel strives to balance tourism's social and environmental impacts, while raising awareness of experiences that restore and rebuild communities, contributing to local citizens' livelihoods and preserving and protecting the culture in the process.

### Explore Indigenous culture through the palate

Indigenous World Winery in Kelowna shares its heritage and story through the tastebuds of its visitors.

Combining the unique terroir of the valley and the Indigenous people's knowledge of the lands, every effort is made to produce world-class wines in a respectful way to the environment and its people.

The unique agriculture of the lands in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys was formed over time with glacial ice, volcanic eruptions




NK'Mip Desert Cultural Centre. Photo by Brendin Kelly.

and geological events, producing an incredible area of the world that produces excellent quality wines.

### Get immersed in nature

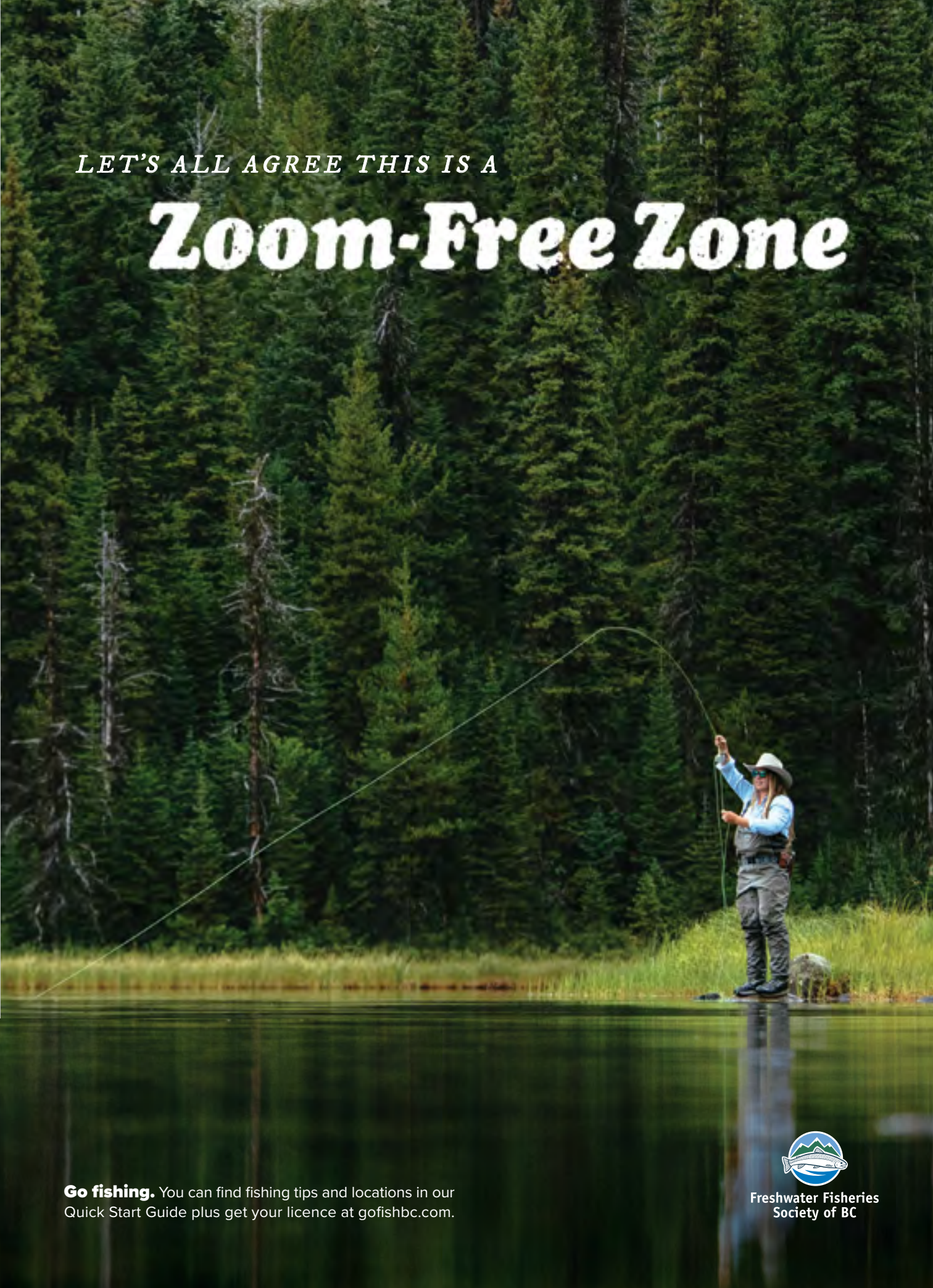
West Coast Expeditions, based in Courtenay, is a leader in marine

ecology and cultural tours in British Columbia, providing diverse Indigenous coastal experiences. From flexible family kayaking excursions to guided sea expeditions around otter habitats, it's a great way to explore the outer edge of Canada and BC's rugged coastlines. 



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# Never-ending views



Photo by W. J. McDonald

## Cattle Point Urban Star Park amazes day and night

By Sean McIntyre

**W**hen most people visit Oak Bay's Cattle Point, it's the sweeping sea views and mountainous backdrop beyond the scenic San Juan Islands that garner the most oohs and ahhs.

Not so well known is the shoreline area's status as one of North America's few urban star parks.

According to Dave Robinson, who heads up the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC), Victoria's department for responsible lighting and light pollution, many of the very same qualities that attract the park's daytime sightseers are also responsible for the park's distinctiveness as a destination for viewers of the night sky.

Cattle Point is naturally protected from the "sky glow" of Victoria's downtown core and suburbs by the expansive greenery

of nearby Uplands Park and the surrounding neighbourhood's leafy streets.

The view affords an expansive view of the horizon, which greatly increases the chances of seeing astronomic phenomena like planets, low moon appearances and constellations. It also helps that the park is easily accessible, has some level ground to accommodate astronomers and their telescopes, is located in an area with little traffic, is close to a washroom and has minimal artificial lighting.

"There's now only one streetlight at Cattle Point," Dave says. "It's located at the western boat launch and has controls that limit its time of use to a short period around dusk to permit late-evening boaters to retrieve their boats."

An information kiosk near the parking lot in the park's north side gives visitors a brief introduction to the concept of star



Since the the urban star park was officially dedicated in 2013, RASC Victoria has held informal events at Cattle Point for special astronomical happenings like planetary conjunctions, lunar eclipses and comet appearances.

parks. The Cattle Point Urban Star Park is one of only two such sites to have been officially designated by the RASC in Canada (the other is in St. John, NB).

The kiosk outlines how over-illumination of the night sky is having increasingly detrimental consequences on the wellbeing of wildlife populations in urban and rural areas. A dark sky, for example, plays a crucial role in regulating the natural biorhythms of plants and animals around the world, affecting everything from reproductive cycles to migration patterns.

Dave says he's fortunate to live only a short drive away in Cadboro Bay, so he often visits the park to set up one of his three telescopes. He says the park attracts a regular group of local amateur astronomers who bring telescopes and binoculars on clear nights for visual and photographic observations.

"The area of the park used most is at the rear of



Photo by Don Denton

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the main parking lot," he says. "This is to avoid stray light from cars driving into or through the park. For more significant events, observers often set up at various spots in the parking area close to the water."

Information at the park gives amateurs an idea of what to look out for in any given season and recommends visiting on clear, moonless nights to increase one's chances of an otherworldly viewing experience.

Since the the urban star park was officially dedicated in 2013, RASC Victoria has held informal events at Cattle Point for special astronomical happenings like planetary conjunctions, lunar eclipses and comet appearances.

For the last two years, Dave adds, public events haven't been held at Cattle Point due to COVID-19 restrictions and risks associated with public gatherings and shared contact with observing equipment. Similarly, the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory's usual summer star party events have been on hiatus due to limited access to Observatory Hill, located north of the city near Elk Lake.

"We expect this to change as summer approaches," Dave says.

More information about the Cattle Point Urban Star Park and the Victoria Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada is available at [victoria.rasc.ca](http://victoria.rasc.ca). 📍



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Wagalus Elementary School students perform cultural songs and dances. Photo by Tyson Whitney

# Blessings

## Indigenous ceremony marks opening of Port Hardy's new airport terminal

By Tyson Whitney, North Island Gazette

**P**ort Hardy's new airport terminal is up and running after an Indigenous blessing ceremony in late May.

Kwakiutl artist Mervyn Child was the master of ceremonies at the gathering; he introduced Mabel Knox and Charles Willie, who performed the blessing ceremony. Child then spoke briefly about the history of the land on which the the airport is situated inside of the Kwakiutl First Nation's traditional territory.

Wagalus Elementary School staff and students were also on hand to perform cultural songs and dances throughout the event.

Speeches were made by various people in attendance, including Stan and Jason Hunt (who created much of the Indigenous artwork on display at the terminal), Port Hardy mayor Dennis Dugas, Kwakiutl chief David Knox and Transport Canada employee Jordan Nicholson.

**"It's something for all of us to be very proud of."**

Nicholson spoke briefly about how the new terminal came to be, noting the project started back in 2015. The old terminal was demolished around

July of 2019 and construction on the new building was finished in 2021. It wasn't able to open until this spring due to unspecified complications.

Dugas said council is excited that the new airport terminal is finally ready.

"We were hoping it would've been open last year, but it's open now and that's awesome. It's just in time for tourist season," he said, adding the new terminal is "very welcoming" and it's "something for all of us to be very proud of." 🇮🇸



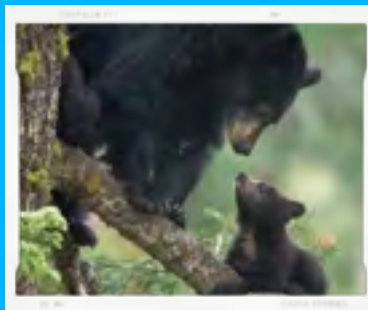
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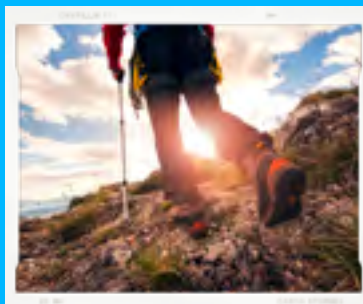


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# Out of the woods





# Brothers turn high-flying hobby into primetime TV series

By Sean McIntyre

A pair of brothers from Mill Bay on Vancouver Island, Matt and Steve Sager, probably never imagined their extreme hobby could become a steady source of income and get them a national television series. Yet that's exactly what happened when the pair's new show, "Lost Car Rescue," debuted earlier this year on History Canada.

The show follows a team of "car hunters" who fly over the wilds of northern Canada in search of abandoned vehicles left to decay in the bush. Once a potential find is identified, team members set about planning the extrication and return of the vehicle to civilization, where it is fully restored.

"Everything we do is an uphill battle," Matt says. "We are typically by ourselves way in the North and there isn't a lot of help."

Take, for example, the 1931 DeSoto Coupe. The car had all but disappeared, only visible from the air and mostly submerged in a lake under high water levels. To perform the extrication, the team went in during winter, and first cut a hole in the ice to extract the car. Using a crane to hoist the vehicle onto the frozen lake, the team was then able to haul the car to shore.

"I fell through the ice briefly, so I won't forget that one, but we got the car," Matt recalls. "My mother was not happy."

The idea came to him while commuting by small plane to and from job sites in the north, where Matt and Steve operated a heavy machinery company. Matt, who is also a trained pilot, began to notice an amazing number of abandoned vehicles dotting the landscape below, and he started to think up ways of extracting the forgotten vehicles.

**"It's like being a kid on opening day at the theme park... When you're looking out the window of the plane every second is like that anticipation. It's addictive."**

He soon found himself heading out every weekend in search of new finds—and a hobby was born.

"Once we sold our company up north we figured, 'why stop now?' So we grabbed the gear and made it more of an extreme hobby for a few

months a year instead of just the weekends."

Prime car hunting season runs from the time that winter weather begins to ease up in March and runs until May, when foliage and tree cover grow and limit visibility. Matt estimates his team has found upwards of 9,000 vehicles in the past 10 years.

Although finding a vintage car amid the vast expanse of Canada's sparsely populated northern forests sounds a whole lot like finding a needle in a haystack, Matt says spotting the cars isn't as tricky as one might think. Team members



rely on careful research and word of mouth to locate potential sites, which can include forgotten communities, abandoned mine sites and expansive acreages. Many of the sites are former boom towns that went bust, or farms, where sending an old car to the back 40 was more practical than hauling it to the scrapyard hundreds of kilometres away.

"The first thing I do is scan the car visually and I can usually tell within a few seconds what year, make and model it is," Matt says. "You can kind of get a quick judgement call on what it's worth as far as its history and its value."

He adds: "It's like being a kid on opening day at the theme park, or like gambling with an adrenaline rush. The reason you buy a lottery ticket is because you want that anticipation right before the numbers come out. When you're looking out the window of the plane every second is like that anticipation. It's addictive."

Once the team determines where to look, it usually isn't too long before a few

low-altitude flyovers of an area reveal their prey.

When the team finds something from the air it gets them in the door and talking to locals: the sight of the team's 1948 Stinson 108 light aircraft landing on a remote northern driveway or dusty rural road has left plenty of locals scratching their heads and heading out to ask what the heck is going on. That's when trust begins to form and tips from neighbours and friends start flowing in.

"So it's a combination of searching history, aerial reconnaissance, local tips and leads on the ground," Matt says.


Some cars sell locally while others make their way to the lucrative US auction market, where some vehicles have sold for upwards of \$20,000.

As much as Matt enjoys the process of finding and retrieving a forgotten vehicle, it is seeing the team's finds "make it" that really gets him excited; it's a sign that all the effort was worthwhile.

The brothers aren't getting rich with their hobby-turned-job, especially given

the high cost and time required to rescue the vehicles, but their extreme and eccentric hobby had become more than self-sustaining. As the brothers' collection quickly expanded and word of the team began to spark interest across northern communities, Matt realized his newfound hobby might just make for some great television.

"We were doing this already as a group anyway, and I thought it would be interesting if the world could see what we did since there's nobody else that hunts cars the way we do," he says. "I got in touch with a production company out east, and we instantly formed a close relationship. Three years later, we were out there filming."

The show's first season comprises six episodes filmed mainly around Dawson Creek and British Columbia's Peace Country as well as on the prairie surrounding North Battleford, SK. Episodes air on History Canada and can also be streamed in their entirety on Amazon Prime's STACKTV channel. 

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Echo Lake Provincial Park. (Google Maps - Exploratory Glory)

# Okanagan Adventures

## Seven ways to explore this region of BC

By Daniel Shipley, [westcoasttraveller.com](http://westcoasttraveller.com)

**T**he Okanagan is a beautiful region of southern British Columbia defined by the basin of Okanagan Lake and the cities of Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon.

The valley is made up of majestic mountains and forests; it's surrounded by hiking and walking trails and ski resorts; and it's sprinkled with hundreds of wineries.

Whether you're into rock climbing, hiking, biking or kayaking, you'll find plenty of amazing spots to get your thrills.

And if you've got kids in tow, the area also has a ton of cool attractions and activities for families to enjoy.

### 1. Okanagan Science Centre

The Okanagan Science Centre in Vernon offers all kinds of fun and educa-

tional exhibits and interactive science displays.

This summer the centre features daily hands-on ocean activities with Think Ocean, where you can learn to code with a riverbot and gobble up garbage.

You'll also explore microplastics in the ocean and learn about their impact on organisms living in the ocean.

The centre has also opened a new



interactive exhibit, Arctic Voices, which takes you on a journey through the region.

## 2. West Kelowna Wine Trail

Discover some of the best wineries in the Okanagan Valley on this tour of five wineries by tasting award-winning wines and enjoying breathtaking views of Okanagan Lake and the hills and vineyards that surround it.

Brought to you by Metropolis Wine Tours, this is a fun and quirky tour where guests are encouraged to pick a theme and dress up in costumes!

## 3. Penticton Farmers' Market

Held in downtown Penticton every Saturday from 8:30 am to 1 pm, this market welcomes close to 8,000 visitors and boasts lots of vendors from small local farms.

From fresh veggies and fruits to honey, eggs, baking, handmade crafts and preserves, everything is grown or produced in the South

Okanagan, and vendors proudly make, bake, or grow everything they sell. The market also hosts a selection of local liquor vendors every week.

All of this makes for a fun place to enjoy the summer sun while you shop, grab a bite from a food truck, and maybe just people-watch for a while!

## 4. Margaret Falls in Herald Provincial Park

Located 15 kilometres west of Salmon Arm just off Highway 1 and nestled on the shores of Shuswap Lake in Herald Provincial Park, this incredibly beautiful waterfall is a must-see.

This family-friendly 20-minute hike is through an amazingly scenic canyon filled with lush, vibrant old-growth trees that feed off the moisture from the falls.

You'll walk over several wooden bridges as you take in the stunning canyon with its sheer cliff walls towering overhead. A nature lover's dream without having to do anything too extreme!

## 5. Historic O'Keefe Ranch

Located just north of Vernon, this ranch takes a step back in time, allowing you to learn about the old west and the history of the region, including the story of ranching in BC. Events coming up at the ranch this summer include a cowboy poetry and music festival, a vintage tractor pull, local bands on Saturday nights and Family Days! The ranch also hosts different types of events including weddings at St. Anne's Church.

## 6. Echo Lake Provincial Park

Located southeast of Lumby in the North Okanagan Valley, Echo Lake is a hidden secret of the region, known for the great echo that gives the lake its name.

With its beautiful clear turquoise water and excellent fishing, it's a perfect destination for anyone who's into kayaking, paddling or canoeing.

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are situated at either end of the lake. You can rent a campsite or rustic cabin at Echo Lake Resort, which rents boats and canoes, or you can stay at Cozy Cabins Nature Resort, where you can let your kids unplug and explore the forest, rope swing over their private lake, use the free rowboats, or even go for a wagon ride!

## 7. Myra Canyon Adventure Park

This adventure park, situated right above Kelowna and below the famous Myra Canyon trestles, has something for everyone, including aerial courses and kinder zip lines, slacklines, balance boards, swings and a netted climbing course.

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Historic O'Keefe Ranch. (Ranch photo)



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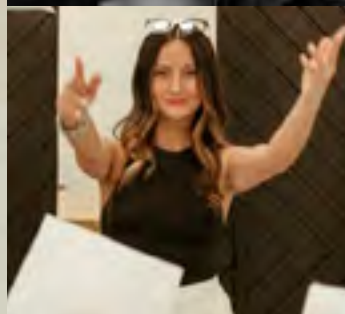
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# Tracking an old murder through the Nicola Hills

*Following is an excerpt from Adventure Roads of BC's Northwest Heartland by Liz Bryan (Heritage House, 2022).*

**S**ome journeys follow, as best they can, the explorations of the great men of history: Alexander Mackenzie's overland trail to the Pacific; or farther afield, Hannibal's trek across the Alps in 218 BC. This journey also follows a historic route, but one far less epic in scope. It revisits the scene of a horrific 19th-century murder of a police constable by a gang of very young horse thieves, the three McLean brothers and their friend, and tracks their escape route through the hills and valleys of the Nicola Country.

It is an adventure road for certain, but there is much to ponder here, as you follow the dramatic saga. Could a fairly routine theft of a horse have spiralled into murder if the McLean boys had not been outsiders? They were of mixed race: their father, Donald, an ex-HBC factor, had been killed in the Chilcotin War by warring First Nations; their mother, Sophia, an Indigenous woman from the Cache Creek area, was shunned by both her own people and the settlers. When a small government compensation payment for her husband's death ran out, the family was destitute. Caught in the clash between cultures, the boys did not belong anywhere. They had nowhere to go. In a way it seems wrong to tell this macabre story in the idyllic grassland setting of the Nicola Valley.

The tale begins in Kamloops in 1879. The bad guys are brothers Allan, Charlie and Archie McLean and their friend Alex Hare, teenagers with a long record of cattle rustling, theft and general hell-raising. The good guys are John Tannatt Ussher, constable and government agent,



Old Highway 5, south of Kamloops. .Photo by Liz Bryan

two ranchers, William Palmer and John McLeod, and Amni Shumway, a Mormon freighter and tracker.

It was December 7, with deep snow shrouding the hills. The boys had been in Kamloops jail for horse theft and highway robbery but escaped (as they had done several times before) and took to the hills. That day, rancher William Palmer sees the McLean boys, so he rides back to Kamloops where Constable Ussher gathers together a posse, appointing Palmer, McLeod and Shumway as special constables. A reward of \$250 is offered for the boys' capture.

It is late afternoon. The snow is falling and the group rides out quickly, hoping to find the trail before dark. They pass the cabin of John McLeod,

who agrees to join them, and they all stay for the night. In the bitter cold of dawn on December 8, they follow faint tracks south toward the hump of Brigade Hill. Horses are spotted near a small campfire in a clearing surrounded by aspen and young firs; the lawmen move close. The outlaw boys, hidden behind the trees, raise their rifles. A gunshot misses Palmer but grazes McLeod on the cheek. He fires back, but his borrowed shotgun falters and he takes another bullet, this time in the knee.

Into the melee strides Constable Ussher. He knows these boys well. He jumps off his horse, leaving his gun on the saddle, and pleads with them to surrender. He reaches out to Hare, but Hare stabs him and he falls.



Monument to Johnny Ussher at the scene of his murder.  
Photo by Liz Bryan

Archie McLean puts a gun to the side of the constable's head and fires. Ussher lies crumpled on the bloodstained snow and Hare keeps stabbing.

Gunfire continues. In all, 30 shots are fired. With one dead and one badly injured man to care for, the posse rides back to Kamloops for reinforcements. The outlaws strip the dead man


of his coat, boots and gloves and ride off with his horse and gun, heading south, stopping by several settlers' cabins to commandeer guns and ammunition as they head for the Indigenous village of Spaxomin on Douglas Lake.

The McLean boys, being half-Indigenous, hope that the villagers will come to their aid, but Chief Chillihitzia is adamantly opposed to helping them, even though Allan is married to one of his daughters, Angele. The boys hole up in an old cabin near the Nicola River, where, after a four-day siege, they surrender. Their journey ends, a year or so later, at the New Westminster gallows.

The adventure road that follows the Wild McLean boys on their journey of murder and mayhem begins at Long Lake Road, a turning off Highway 5A, south of Kamloops, the old road to Merritt. Once it leaves the cluster of houses and mailboxes at Knutsford, the road, then one of the HBC brigade trails south, is the most likely route for the fugitives to take. It is still remarkably rural, mostly still rangeland, a beautiful mix of shady forest and grassland, an area the boys probably knew well. Anderson Creek is roughly where Shumway first picked up the outlaws' tracks.

To really slip back into the times it should be winter, bruisingly cold and with blowing snow. It is difficult to resurrect the mood of that sombre day when summer's wild roses and lupines bloom riotously along the road edges, or fall scatters golden showers of aspen leaves. But the McLean Boys did come this way. The brigade route carried straight on to the lake, a sinuous ripple of blue tucked into the folds of grassy hills. It was a perfect spot for the brigade's 300 packhorses and men to feed and rest. Today, it's a great place for birders, a great place for a picnic, and a great place to take photos: there's an old homestead on the far side of the lake for a focal point.

To reach the McLeans' camp, the murder scene, drive east for about six hundred metres, then turn south to a group of old corrals and a stack of round haybales. Park here and follow a rough track southeast to a small pond. Circle around this to a small clearing in the trees, just to the east. In the centre, a stark pyramid of granite rocks marks the site where Ussher died. An inscribed plaque remembers the lawman who "unarmed and fearless [...] gave his life to secure peace and order in our growing west."

After the murder, the McLeans and Hare rode south along the Brigade Trail, which heads down to the valley floor at Napier Lake, where it meets today's highway. Highway 5A, once the main road between Kamloops and Princeton, has been supplanted, north of Merritt, by the Coquihalla Highway. Luckily the old road has been left as a modest two-lane road, a far more interesting route since it follows the contours of the land, a narrow glaciated valley with a string of long lakes, and still bears many relics of pioneer days. This was the road the McLean boys followed. 

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