

SOAR

Inflight
Magazine for
Pacific Coastal
Airlines

Go with the snow

BC resorts are
gearing up after a
slow start to the
season

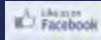
Big walks on Haida Gwaii

An East Beach Trail
adventure

Destination Cariboo

Five things to do near
Williams Lake this
winter

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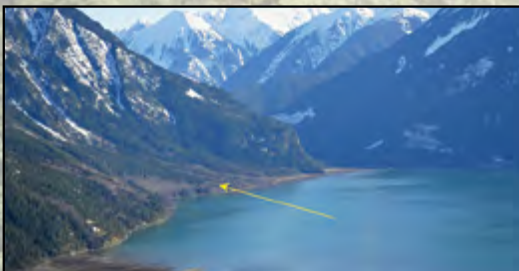
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Hidden Cove Lodge: Eco-resort on **Vancouver Island**, just north of **Telegraph Cove**. 8 acres with oceanfront on a private bay. Resort facilities include a main lodge, cabins and modern suites, offering a comfortable nature get-away. Drive to, off-grid property with substantial infrastructure in place. Great opportunity to purchase an established resort. **\$3,450,000**



DL1489 Jackson Bay: 33.7 acre oceanfront property in **Topaze Harbour** in **Johnstone Strait**. Beautiful views and sunny exposure in this appealing coastal location with easy access to miles of Crown land to explore. Multiple dwellings, a workshop and outbuildings, moorage and substantial infrastructure in place. Zoned residential and commercial. **\$1,395,000**



Bute Inlet Oceanfront: 107 acres at the head of **Bute Inlet**! 4950ft south-west facing oceanfront, three streams, nicely forested, diverse sloped topography. This would be an amazing property for a secluded getaway, a remote homestead, or a fishing/hunting base in one of the most spectacular regions of the coast. This is a boat access property. **\$689,000**



Nimpo Lake Log Home: Attractive 4560sqft log home with amazing views on 1.47 acres. Beautiful finishing, gourmet kitchen and large lakeside deck. In addition there is a second lakefront residence, a large workshop, a dock and a floatplane ramp. **Nimpo Lake** serves as a major jump-off point for many wilderness activities in the **Chilcotin** region. **\$1,698,000**



Campbell River Development Property: 0.77 acre cleared lot zoned multi-residential in a mixed-residential neighbourhood. Quick access to main transportation routes into town. Close to schools, rec centre, college, shopping and park trails. Surrounded by stunning natural beauty, **Campbell River** is a growing, active city with a need for all types of housing. **\$950,000**



Discovery Islands Oceanfront: 9.93 oceanfront acres in **Owen Bay**, on **Sonora Island**. Cleared building site, licensed moorage plus additional access easement, domestic water. Diverse shoreline and topography. Excellent consideration for an island get away! **\$299,900**

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MARKING MILESTONES

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we embrace the start of 2024 and the promising voyages it brings, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for choosing us as your travel partner during the recent holiday season. I am thrilled to share the recent milestones and developments within our airline during this festive period.

2023 marked a significant chapter of transformation and remarkable expansion for Pacific Coastal Airlines. We proudly unveiled three exciting new routes: Vancouver-Nanaimo, Nanaimo-Kelowna and Victoria-Kamloops. These incredible additions were made possible through collaboration with our esteemed airport partners and the overwhelming support of our valued passengers. With these new services, our commitment remains unchanged—connecting BC communities while minimizing travel time.

We also want to kindly remind passengers of our exciting additional flights between Vancouver-Penticton. Starting January 4, 2024, we have added four additional weekly morning flights to our current service between Vancouver and Penticton. Customers are welcome to reserve their flights on our website.

With the expansion of our network, we are actively seeking new talent to join our team of aircraft maintenance engineers and pilots across British Columbia and Alberta. We take pride in providing in-house professional training and coaching, with senior chief pilots leading the way. Beyond a job, we extend travel perks with over 20 airline partners, uphold work-life balance and foster avenues for professional advancement. If you aspire to kickstart your career in aviation, please visit our careers site at pacificcoastal.com/careers.

It was also in 2023 that we celebrated three milestone anniversaries that hold great significance to us: five years in Tofino, 20 years in Williams Lake and 25 years in Bella Coola and Anahim Lake. These numbers are a testament to our commitment in serving and connecting BC communities. With that said, these accomplishments would not have been feasible without the steadfast support of our loyal customers.

2023 was also about fulfilling our vision of a future where communities are connected and enriched, supported and embraced. Through our annual golf tournament, we raised an unprecedented \$120,000 in donations for two local charities: Power To Be and The Source Club Society. For the first time, we also established three aviation scholarships for BC youth, aspiring pilots and individuals pursuing AME training, with a value total of \$30,000. Over 157 flight vouchers were donated to numerous communities and charities across BC, along with our recent food drive to support the Richmond Food Bank Society.

As we embark on the journey into 2024, I want to express my appreciation to our passengers for consistently choosing us as your preferred travel partner. Your trust inspires us to continually strive for excellence, and we are honoured to accompany you on your travels in 2024. 🇨🇦

Warm regards,

Quentin Smith



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MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE: PJ



Position: *Flight attendant*

Location: *Vancouver based*

Time with PASCO: *2.5 years*

Job description: *Ensuring the safety, security and comfort of airline passengers.*

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Born and raised in New Westminster, BC.

Who is your family?

My mom, two brothers and my best friend, Sophie!

What path did you take to get to this job?

After coming back from Australia, where I worked as a nanny, I was referred by a friend to come work at Pacific Coastal.

What do you like best about this job?

Really enjoy meeting all kinds of people. And being able to make someone's travel day a bit less stressful always makes my heart warm. I love seeing all the cute babies on our flights too!

What are your hobbies outside of the job?

I enjoy going to my Pilates and yoga classes, walking and hiking with my dog and spending time with my amazing friends.

AROUND BC

An Indigenous tourism small business boost

Feds in BC to pump \$10M

The federal government has launched a \$10-million program to provide grants to small businesses involved in Indigenous tourism across Canada.

The fund, to be administered by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, will supply qualifying small businesses with up to \$25,000 each in non-repayable assistance.

Federal Tourism Minister Soraya Martinez Ferrada says the funding will also help the Indigenous Tourism Association promote an accreditation program certifying businesses that offer "high-quality authentic

experiences."

Martinez Ferrada says that growing Indigenous tourism is one of her top priorities.

The federal government says Indigenous tourism was among the hardest hit sectors of the travel industry during the COVID-19 pandemic after being one of the fastest-growing segments before 2020.

Funding for the new program comes from a \$20-million Indigenous Tourism Fund that was announced by the federal government in its 2022 budget. 🇨🇦



The federal government has launched a \$10-million program to directly support small businesses involved in Indigenous tourism across Canada. Unofficially named "The First Sidewalk," this 700-foot walking trail system will promote ecotourism in Bella Bella, BC.



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GO with the snow

Skiing at Whistler Blackcomb. Photo by Vince Emond.

BC resorts ramping up operations after a slow start to the season

By Susie Quinn

Hardcore snow-sport enthusiasts may think the two words dominating the 2023-24 snow season are “El Nino.” Resort operators, however, may say “patience” and “diversification” are more suitable.

This year’s season started with warmer temperatures and forbearance before the first winter storm dropped some significant snow on many of the province’s ski hills in early January. Resort owners are hopeful it’s a trend that will continue as the season progresses.

In the meantime, many resorts have concentrated on offering gradual openings and highlighting other activities in between.

Whether you’re looking for a ski adventure or some après ski activities this winter, make sure to check your chosen resort’s website to find out what’s in operation.

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LOWER MAINLAND

➔ WHISTLER BLACKCOMB

Early-season conditions didn't stop the crowds from hitting the slopes at Whistler Blackcomb in early January. They were rewarded during the first major weather system of 2024, when the resorts were able to open three-quarters of the runs.

Whistler Blackcomb has an app available to track the latest conditions and news.

When the snow is low the après vibe is high at Whistler Blackcomb. Numerous dining and spa choices are available.

Whistler Blackcomb offers a variety of pass options for its winter visitors, including Epic Passes, Edge Cards and day passes. Guests planning to visit this winter are encouraged to buy their lift tickets in advance and to check availability throughout the season.

whistlerblackcomb.com

➔ GROUSE MOUNTAIN

Grouse Mountain is about to enter a new era with a "transformational" lift project: a state-of-the-art gondola will replace the aging Blue Skyride leading up to the resort's 100th anniversary in 2026. When it opens, the new ride will feature 27 eight-person gondola cabins, bringing the mountain to the same capacity as when both the Blue and Red skyrides were operating.

The gondola easement area was completed in the summer season, as was construction of the foundations for the base and plateau stations. Towers will be assembled and lines installed in spring and summer 2024 with a projected opening of winter 2025.

Snow sports aren't the only activities to be found at Grouse Mountain: patrons can take the skyride and enjoy the view of Vancouver, experience magic with the light walk, open all winter, and check out different dining options.

Keep up to date with features and conditions via the Grouse Mountain app.

grousemountain.com

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➔ MOUNT SEYMOUR

Mount Seymour, a 30-minute drive from Vancouver, has more than 80 hectares of terrain and four terrain parks. The resort offers four-hour time slots on weekends and holidays, which streamlines lift lines, guarantees parking and eliminates road delays.

If your four-hour time slot expires, make a quick trip to guest services to see if there is room to reload.

mtseymour.ca

➔ CYPRESS MOUNTAIN

Cypress Mountain, located close to Vancouver, offers million-dollar views of Vancouver's Lower Mainland and a snow experience close to the city.

The new Sky Quad lift opened to intermediate and expert skiers and snowboarders, and night skiing could still happen, depending on the weather.

Hollyburn Ridge is the place to go at Cypress for Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, tubing and Lights to the Lodge.

cypressmountain.ca

OKANAGAN

➔ BIG WHITE

Big White Ski Resort features 119 green, blue, black and double-black runs spreading over 7,300 acres with 16 lifts in operation.

The multi-award-winning Okanagan resort has western Canada's largest night skiing area as well as three beginner-area carpets, a Tube Park, gondola and more.

Known for its off-hill offerings as well, Big White has the Ridge Day Lodge, Happy Valley Day Lodge and Black Forest Day Lodge. Bringing this

all together is the return of former Big White executive chef Boddie Macklin-Shaw.

The Spa at Stonebridge Lodge is open this season, offering space to relax and rejuvenate after a day on the slopes.

Electric vehicle charging stations have been added, and expanded parking is coming along.

Big White has a total uphill capacity of nearly 30,000 skiers and snowboarders per hour. Expansion plans include staff accommodations and new housing options.

bigwhite.com

➔ APEX MOUNTAIN RESORT

Apex Mountain Resort is located on the west side of Okanagan Lake, creating perfect sunny days combined with champagne powder when conditions



are perfect. Apex has four ski lifts: a high-speed quad, a triple chair, a T-bar and a Magic Carpet.

There is also a skating rink and a skate loop for those who like their winter experience on the icier side.

When you're done playing in the snow on the slopes for the day, make sure to visit the award-winning Gunbarrel Saloon—considered one of the best après-ski bars in Canada.

apexresort.com

➔ SILVERSTAR MOUNTAIN RESORT

SilverStar Mountain Resort, part of the Monashee Mountains range, ended last season with new snow and an extended week. The resort boasts a ski-in, ski-out village with plenty of on-slope and off-slope activities throughout winter.

SilverStar's early-season base was one to envy, and all lifts were operational at the beginning of January prior to the first major storm of the season.

Stay up to date with SilverStar weather and conditions online and with the SilverStar app.

skisilverstar.com

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THOMPSON OKANAGAN

➔ SUN PEAKS

Sun Peaks Resort is situated just north of Kamloops and is spread across three mountain peaks, surrounding a European-style ski-through village. Each mountain is accessible from the village, so it's possible to ski all three in the same day.

The new parking lot at the base of the Burfield chairlift is open for use, including a new warming hut and washroom building. The building harkens back to the Tod Mountain days, with an exhibit of historical photos and memorabilia.

The Nordic skiing network at Sun Peaks offers dog-friendly trails and fat-biking, as conditions allow. Check with the resort before bringing your furry friends for a mountain experience. sunpeaksresort.com

TRAIL

➔ RED MOUNTAIN RESORT

The hard-working team at RED Mountain Resort has ensured that visitors will have operational options when they come to visit.

Topping Creek Chair opened in

early January with a few runs; visitors are encouraged to check the snow reports for the full picture.

There's a new self-contained RV camping policy for the winter at Red Mountain. Check out the details online.

For those who are travelling between Red Mountain and Rossland, the Red Mountain Express has dispensed with bus passes, tokens and punch cards to offer free transportation for up to 44 passengers.

redresort.com

"A ski industry veteran, Christine has a proven track record and will work hard to bring strategic and commercial leadership to Kimberley Alpine Resort," said John Shea, president and chief resorts officer for RCR.

Fernie Alpine Resort started its 62nd year with some decent snow and the hope for more as the season progresses. Fernie boasts more than 2,500 acres of skiable terrain, more than 140 runs in five alpine bowls and an enviable amount of vertical.

skircr.com

CRANBROOK

➔ FERNIE AND KIMBERLEY ALPINE RESORTS

Fernie and Kimberley alpine resorts are situated along what Resorts of the Canadian Rockies staff call the "powder highway" of BC. They have had moderately strong starts at both resorts this season.

Aside from some great skiing and snowboarding, Kimberley Alpine Resort offers an amazing lineup of ski racing events this season, in addition to a lineup of other events all season long.

Kimberley Resort welcomed Christine Schultheis as general manager in November 2023.

THE ROCKIES

➔ REVELSTOKE MOUNTAIN RESORT

Revelstoke Mountain Resort is home to the most vertical in North America at 1,713 metres (5,620 feet) and is renowned for its variety of terrain.

Revelstoke is known for its light, fluffy powder and, while it may not make its annual average of 10.5 metres this year, the glade skiing is sure to be a draw.

Keep up with current conditions on the website and check out the constant lineup of events happening at the resort and in town too.

revelstokemountainresort.com



Above and at right, having some fun at Big White Ski Resort.

we fly there.



Pacific Coastal

AIRLINES®

VANCOUVER ISLAND

➞ MOUNT WASHINGTON ALPINE RESORT

The base at Mount Washington Alpine Resort on Vancouver Island may not see the records it has in the past, but crews have worked efficiently with the snowmaking machines to offer a variety of terrain with more in the forecast.

The resort has an app and updates its “Daily Dispatch” with conditions and operational information.

The Nordic Centre at Raven Lodge offers a close-up opportunity to explore the winter flora and fauna around Mount Washington, whether it’s on cross-country skis, snowshoes, toboggans or fat-bikes.

mountwashington.ca

➞ MOUNT CAIN

Normally a Vancouver Island mountain with enviable powder conditions, Mt. Cain experienced warmer-than-usual temperatures and operators were still waiting for snow to fall as the new year turned over to 2024. The resort decided to suspend operations until the snow falls and will reassess as the weather turns more hospitable to ski conditions.


mountcain.com 



Photo courtesy of Barkerville Historic Town & Park.

5 things to do near Williams Lake this winter

By Chloe Sjuberg

British Columbia's Cariboo region is known for its magnificent natural surroundings, offering adventures for nature, wildlife and outdoor recreation lovers—even when the winter snow arrives!

The Cariboo has tons of activities for winter sports enthusiasts of all kinds, as well as those who love to get cosy with hearty winter fare and local arts. The Pacific Coastal Airlines destination of Williams Lake offers a great gateway to winter adventures in the Cariboo.

➞ STRAP ON SKIS OR SNOWSHOES

The Cariboo is home to multiple ski destinations perfect for all ages and skill levels.

Mount Timothy Recreation Resort, locally owned and operated, is about an hour's drive from Williams Lake, near the town of Lac La Hache. It has three lifts and a wide variety of terrain.

For cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, Hallis Lake near Quesnel (about 75 minutes from Williams Lake) has a 75-kilometre trail network, with the Cariboo Ski Touring Club providing gear rentals and lessons at the day lodge. And in the city of Quesnel itself, there are ski and snowshoe trails in West Fraser Timber Park.

In Williams Lake, head to the Bull Mountain Cross-Country Ski and Snowshoe Area, which opened a brand-new lodge this fall.



➔ TAKE A WALK THROUGH HISTORY IN BARKERVILLE

When Billy Barker struck gold in 1861, Barkerville became the epicentre of the Cariboo Gold Rush, a driving force behind British Columbia's early growth as a province. Today, Barkerville Historic Town & Park, about 2.5 hours from Williams Lake, is preserved as a National Historic Site, a living heritage museum dedicated to this era of BC's history, including Chinese and Indigenous perspectives.

The shoulder season in Barkerville is a great time to take a self-guided tour through the town, wandering the quiet streets as you explore more than 100 heritage buildings and educational displays. Entrance is walk-in and by donation.

To truly immerse yourself in history, you can book a stay in Barkerville at the quaint St. George Hotel or the Historic Kelly Guest House. From here, you can also access cross-country skiing and snowmobiling trails from the nearby town of Wells.

The Cariboo has tons of activities for winter sports enthusiasts of all kinds, as well as those who love to get cosy with hearty winter fare and local arts. The Pacific Coastal Airlines destination of Williams Lake offers a great gateway to winter adventures in the Cariboo



Photo courtesy of Station House Gallery



Photo courtesy of Gold Rush Snowmobile Trail

➞ REV UP A SNOWMOBILE

For a real dose of adrenaline, traverse the groomed trails of the Cariboo Mountains on a snowmobile. The Gold Rush Snowmobile Trail (GRST), located east of Williams Lake, passes through several Cariboo communities, inspired by the path of gold prospectors looking to strike it rich in the mid-1800s.

It winds through coniferous forests and near trout-filled lakes and pristine alpine landscapes, with access to provincial parks, campsites, lodges and a variety of services.

The Williams Lake Powder Kings and the Wells Snowmobile Club are among the groups that help maintain the GRST and other trail networks in the area.

➞ COSY UP WITH CULTURE

There's no better way to warm your spirits on a cold day or night than with some live entertainment or a stroll through a local art gallery or museum.

In Williams Lake, enjoy art at the Station House Gallery (in Williams Lake's oldest building, a historic train station) or a show at the Studio Theatre (in February, they're putting on the ABBA musical *Mamma Mia!*).

Drive to Quesnel, and you can take in a performance at Quesnel Live Arts or learn about the history of the area at the Quesnel Museum and Archives, located at the visitor's centre. For a cosy night of local music, catch one of the "Tiny Den Concerts" at Moonshine Coffee on the first Friday of each month.

➞ TAKE THE ALE TRAIL

The Northeast BC Ale Trail runs right through the Cariboo, stopping at two excellent local craft breweries. Toast the season with a brew from one of these delicious local spots.

In Williams Lake, Fox Mountain Brewing Co. is housed in an extensively renovated Greyhound bus station. Fox Mountain also serves up hearty and delicious pub fare to warm you up from the inside out—think burgers, nachos, sandwiches, wings and ribs.

Barkerville Brewing Co. is located in Quesnel but takes its inspiration from the adventurous Cariboo Gold Rush era of historic Barkerville.

Craft breweries often roll out unique seasonal offerings in the

Williams Lake: a special place in hearts and history

Pacific Coastal Airlines celebrates 20 years of travel to the region

Courtesy Pacific Coastal Airlines

December 8 marked two decades of our service to Williams Lake.

This milestone is not solely ours to celebrate as we humbly acknowledge that our journey and accomplishments thus far have been made possible by the continuous support of the local communities, our valued passengers and our business partners. With that, we would like to extend our deepest appreciation to all individuals and organizations who have stood by us since our inaugural flight in 2003.

Williams Lake holds a special place in our hearts and history. Unlike any other destination, this region generously offers mesmerizing scenery of the majestic mountain ranges and renowned lakes that promise one-of-a-kind adventures. Williams Lake is also home to a diverse wildlife population, including the world-famous grizzly bears, eagles and iconic wild salmon. Yet, its beauty transcends the wonders of nature. The region proudly embraces a rich cultural heritage, tightly knit local communities, and strong relationships with its surrounding regions.

In the past 20 years, PCA has

had the privilege to grow alongside Williams Lake's communities and businesses in offering flight services, charters and cargo options. As Williams Lake and its neighbouring regions have prospered and flourished, so too has PCA navigated through the changing tides of travel demands, adapting our services to best suit the evolving landscape. Nevertheless, our mission remains unchanged—to offer reliable services and seamless connections for this vibrant community to various destinations across BC. We're proud to witness the growth of this beautiful region and eager to continue exploring the best ways to facilitate travel for passengers to and from Williams Lake.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our loyal passengers for entrusting Pacific Coastal Airlines with their travel needs. It is an honor to be an integral part of the Williams Lake community, and we eagerly anticipate the opportunity to continue serving this remarkable destination for many more years to come.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey. 🏔️

winter, and these ones are no exception. Coming soon to Fox Mountain is a coconut porter brewed in honour of Ullr, "the god of snow and patron saint of skiers." Barkerville's latest release is the Lightning Creek Cold IPA, an invigorating hop-driven brew with hints of pine and citrus to match the crisp, cold weather.

For winter itineraries and more information to help you plan your trip to the Cariboo, visit explorecariboo.com. 🏔️

*Photo courtesy of Fox Mountain
Brewing Co.*



Big walks on Haida Gwaii

An East Beach Trail adventure

On one of my most recent visits to Haida Gwaii, I was walking back from the grocery store when I met a grey-haired tourist who was grinning from ear-to-ear with classic “just arrived in Haida Gwaii” enthusiasm.

“I want to walk everywhere!” she said, and I knew exactly what she meant.

I had the same urge on my first visit nearly 10 years earlier—it feels like every step has the potential for new discovery. Walk the islands and you might stumble upon a centuries-old half-built Haida canoe in the depths of the forest, or a glass ball from a Japanese fishing net in the middle of the beach, or a sparkling crystal high in the mountains.

It was an unforgettable experience. But would I recommend it to others?

With an insatiable urge to walk during my first visit, I planned a solo hike. Haida Gwaii has epic mountain traverses in the backcountry, but most require serious navigational skills and survival experience. I was attracted to the East Beach Trail because it’s much easier to navigate (70 kilometres along the beach with well-marked forest trails at either end). And cabins along the way meant I didn’t have to carry a tent (I should have carried a tent).

It was an unforgettable experience.

➞ Day 1: Tlell to Cape Ball

I was fully equipped with everything from water purification tablets—to safely refill my water bottle in streams—and a hatchet to make kindling out of driftwood. But it took me about half an hour to find the trailhead (look for the Tlell River Day Use Area right next to the bridge).

The East Beach hike begins with a forest walk next to the Tlell River. Then it’s over 70 kilometres along the beach.

Trailhead found, I followed the ambling forest trail until it hit the ocean, and then headed north to the Pesuta shipwreck. The old log barge rises from the sand like a breaching whale and is a great destination for a day hike. The trickling Mayer River was easy to cross, and I reached the Cape Ball shelter just after lunch. Volunteers have added a door and metal roof since I spent the night in 2012, but the rustic cabin still has a sand floor.

➞ Day 2: Cape Ball to Oeanda

It’s crucial to schedule your departure with a receding tide so that you have enough time to cross under kilometres of cliffs. Get trapped at high tide and the ocean may sweep you away. I awoke before sunrise, but the raging Cape Ball River slowed my departure.

A local told me later that I should’ve looked for a log bridge upstream, but instead I held my backpack over my head, stepped into icy white-capped water and shuffled across with my heart in my throat.

Eagles, ravens and deer tracked my progress from high on the cliffs, but otherwise it was just step after step on the sand. The beach may have been easy walking, but distant landmarks took hours to reach, and I developed a sharp pain in my ankle from the slant of the shore. By noon on the second day even the sound of the ocean was annoying.

By dusk, I’d crossed many streams, but I couldn’t tell if any one of them was Eagle Creek, the halfway point on my map. Still kilometres away from the evening’s destination, luck brought me a hunting cabin deco-



HAIDA GWAII

rated with skulls and a no-trespassing sign. I chopped and stacked driftwood in thanks for the shelter and fell into an uneasy sleep.

➔ Day 3: Oeanda to Cape Fife

Good rainwear is essential on Haida Gwaii, and on the third day I put mine to use. Storms usually blow in from the south, which is why everyone recommends hiking East Beach the same way. But even with the 80-kilometre-per-hour winds at my back, conditions were tough. Sand whipped across my face when I stopped to bandage a blister.


Locals often drive the beach in ATVs and before my hike I'd hoped they'd stay away. I wanted a remote, physical challenge. Now I begged for a ride, but no one was driving in the storm.

The cedar longhouse-style cabin at Cape Fife made a welcome reprieve, and I stayed long enough to light a fire and make tea. I was curious about the colliding waters at Rose Spit, but after 70 kilometres on the beach I opted for the 10-kilometre forest trail to the finish line. It's a rich, healthy forest, and even a few downed trees across the trail couldn't hold me back.

➔ SHOULD YOU HIKE THE EAST BEACH TRAIL?

There are lots of worthy day trips at either end of the East Beach Trail: the Pesuta shipwreck, Rose Spit and the Tow Hill Blow Hole are all worth exploring. Hike to them all! Just drive the highway in between.

➔ TO GET THERE:

Pacific Coastal airlines flies regularly between Vancouver International Airport's South Terminal and Masset at Haida Gwaii. See pacificcoastal.com. 



A wind-beaten Sitka spruce marks the location of the Cape Ball shelter. On a clear day like this, you can see islands in the Alaskan Panhandle.



The Pesuta shipwreck near Tlell is a great destination for a day hike on Haida Gwaii.

EXPERIENCE

Our World



Alert Bay, BC, Canada
'Namgis Territory

ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

While visiting Alert Bay, immerse yourself in the rich history of the Kwakwaka'wakw people by visiting the U'mista Cultural Centre. The centre offers a profound and enriching experience, allowing you to gain a deeper understanding of the Kwakwaka'wakw arts, culture and heritage. The Alert Bay Library and Museum serves as a captivating repository of the town's history, embracing the rich narratives of both the municipality and the First Nations community.

The traditional 'Namgis Big House is an inspiring epicentre of culture, where traditions come to life through ceremonial events, as well as summer cultural sharing from the T'sasata Cultural Group. The World's Tallest Totem Pole which stands outside the Big House, is an enduring symbol of heritage and artistry, has been drawing visitors from around the globe since 1973.

ATTRACTIONS

Explore the heart of Alert Bay! Find maps, information, and local insights at the Visitor Centre. Dive into thrilling whale watching or bear tours, fishing, and scenic nature trails by walking or biking. In addition to the island trails, visit our tennis court and skate parks. Stop by Culture Shock for great coffee and one-of-a-kind treasures. Don't miss the exhilarating 360° kayaking race with competitors from around the world. Immerse yourself in the perfect blend of play and culture - your adventure starts here.



You can find more information on what Alert Bay has to offer, by contacting the Alert Bay Information Centre (250)-974-5024 | INFO@ALERTBAY.CA

U'mista Cultural Centre:
For events and cultural activities check out our website or social media: www.umista.ca
call us at (250) 974-5403 or 1-800-690-8222





Fleece, fibre & “fibershed”



*The wool blanket draped over the couch, the cashmere sweater warming your shoulders, the cotton bedding you'll climb into tonight—they all started from the ground somewhere. Do you ever wonder where the fibre grew and how it was processed to become the useful item it is today? Delve into *Fleece and Fibre: Textile Producers of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands* (Heritage House, 2023) by Francine McCabe to read about island producers and fibershed, “a vision that enhances social, economic and political opportunities for communities to define and create their fibre and dye systems and redesign the global textile process.” Here is an excerpt.*

Exploring the textile producers of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands

*Reprinted with permission of publisher.
All photographs courtesy of Francine McCabe, unless noted.*

Forage Farm on Salt Spring Island is home to both Elf Leatherworks and Lorrie's Locks. This multifaceted farm is run by Lorrie Irwin and Andy Whitehead. Lorrie has lived on the acreage since 1979. She lived in a bus for a time while erecting a barn and later a permanent home.

The house is tucked into the land, resting under the dappled light of a towering Garry oak tree. When I pull up, Lorrie is experimenting with a deep purple dye pot that makes my mouth water when I smell it. She explains it's the leftover juice from some concord grapes she was processing.

Lorrie leads me through a full garden with peppers hanging heavy on the

plants, multiple fruit trees and a separate herb garden. She explains that their garden is their main source of food. Even the sheep get some of the homegrown vegetables.

Past the barn, we go through to an area that is fenced off into multiple grazing areas so the sheep can be moved around. Andy and Lorrie explain that this helps with grazing control, allowing them to move the animals once they have foraged the tall growth, but before they eat the lower growth.

The flock is made up of 10 ewes, some pure Bluefaced Leicester and others Gotland. The Gotlands have to be sheared every six months or their fleece begins to felt. The wool is often sent to

Alberta or Ontario to be processed into roving. Lorrie then hand spins and uses natural dyes to create a variety of colours.

After we check out the sheep, Lorrie and Andy show me the leather workshop, equipped with shoemaking machines, including large leather sewing machines lining the walls. They show me beautifully crafted belts, bags and heavy aprons for metal work that Andy has designed and made. Andy has also been commissioned to do some interesting repairs on old handles and even a unique bellows with abalone eyes embedded in a carved face.

It is easy to feel at home on this farm. Lorrie and Andy are the kind of people that can make anything with their hands and enjoy doing it.

Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands have hundreds of farms currently breeding sheep, alpacas, llamas, goats and other fibre-producing animals. I spent over a year sourcing island fibre and visiting 31 farms and their fibre animals. My journey began in early fall, on one of those days on the island when the fog is so thick the land disappears under a smothering

cloud. My family and I were out on a weekend adventure, driving up the Old Island Highway to explore a new area. Once we were out of the fog, I counted several farms with sheep and goats, and acres being readied for the coming season. It seemed obvious to me that the island would be producing its own fibre.

Later that week, I visited a few of my favourite yarn shops and discovered that they had little to no local fibre. When I asked the shop staff why, they all told me the same thing. By the time the farmer has the fibre processed and packaged into yarn, the cost is already high. Once the shop adds enough markup to make a profit, the price is beyond what most consumers will pay.

This left me wondering: Why was local fibre so costly to produce? I discovered that Vancouver Island once had several small family-run fibre processing mills, but I couldn't track down any existing ones. Today, farmers looking to process their fibre have no other option than to ship their fibre off the island, sometimes even across the country, for affordable processing. With the huge variety of fleece and fibre on the island, both animal- and

plant-based, I was shocked to find no operating mills.

The problem was certainly not a lack of fibre. The more I searched for local fibre, the more amazed I was by the variety of breed-specific producers.

Along the way, I kept hearing similar stories of processing woes and the growing cost of feeding and caring for animals. This made me wonder: Why aren't we, as a province, investing more in fibre infrastructure? Why are there multiple agricultural grants for farmers looking to produce food, but so little financial help for starting fibre-related farms? We need sustainable start-up options for fibre mills. Fortunately, we are beginning to realize that our textiles are just as impactful to our region as the food we eat. Closing this gap is one of the goals of the fibreshed movement.

The fibreshed concept was pioneered by Rebecca Burgess, executive director of the California-based non-profit organization Fibershed. (You'll notice two different spellings: "fibre" in Canada and "fiber" in the US.) She defines "fibreshed" as "a vision that enhances social, economic and political opportunities for communities to





Author Francine McCabe.

define and create their fiber and dye systems and redesign the global textile process. It is place-based textile sovereignty, which aims to include rather than exclude all the people, plants, animals, and cultural practices that compose and define a specific geography."

Burgess's concept made so much sense to me. I realized I was far from the first person to be asking these questions about local fibre and the growth of a regional textile economy. Her concept has quickly spread, and networks have begun popping up all over the world, including Vancouver Island and the surrounding Gulf Islands.

Still, farmers need an easy way to turn their fibre over so they can justify and afford the time spent on the product, and the makers that are looking for local fibre need to know what is locally available and how they can buy it. All the parts are

here; they just need connection.

Farmers themselves, however, are working hard to close gaps. Each farmer in my book, *Fleece & Fibre: Textile Producers of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands*, made it clear that using all the materials from their farm in a renewable way is important to them and their farm practices. I saw fields of flax used as a dual-purpose cover crop. I met farmers with fibre mill plans in the works. One farmer told me about a new wool pelletizer she just purchased. Others are using their wool as building insulation.

What these farmers are doing to care for their animals, crops and the land is invaluable and deserves to be shown off. And the products they are bringing to our local market are worth supporting and nurturing. Everyone I met along the way has been so enthusiastic about fibre and the possibilities. They give me hope. 🏡

SNOW PLACE LIKE KAMLOOPS

Escape to Kamloops this winter for a weekend filled with culinary delights, exhilarating winter sports, and vibrant cultural experiences.

Start your journey with the city's Dine Around Kamloops event, January 17 to February 11, a culinary festival that showcases the best of Kamloop's robust culinary scene. Indulge in the diverse flavours offered by Kamloops' top restaurants, perfect for warming up after a day in the snow.

Embrace the thrill of winter at Harper Mountain and Sun Peaks Resort. Celebrating its 50th anniversary, Harper Mountain is a beloved destination for skiing and snowboarding enthusiasts. Sun

Peaks, Canada's second-largest ski area, offers a wide range of winter activities for all skill levels.

Kamloops is not just about outdoor adventures; it's a hub for arts and culture too. Experience the mesmerizing performance of *Hypnotic Journey* by the Kamloops Symphony, an enchanting musical experience. Visit the Kamloops Art Gallery to explore the intriguing Bluto's Cave exhibit, showcasing unique artistic perspectives.

A weekend in Kamloops offers a blend of excitement and culture, set against a backdrop of stunning winter scenery. It's an ideal getaway for those seeking both adventure and artistic inspiration.



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Glide effortlessly into the coolest winter scene in Kamloops, where the vibes are as fresh as the powder on our slopes. Immerse yourself in adrenaline-packed slopes, savour a culinary adventure that's a burst of flavours, and explore an arts and culture scene that's as chill as it gets.

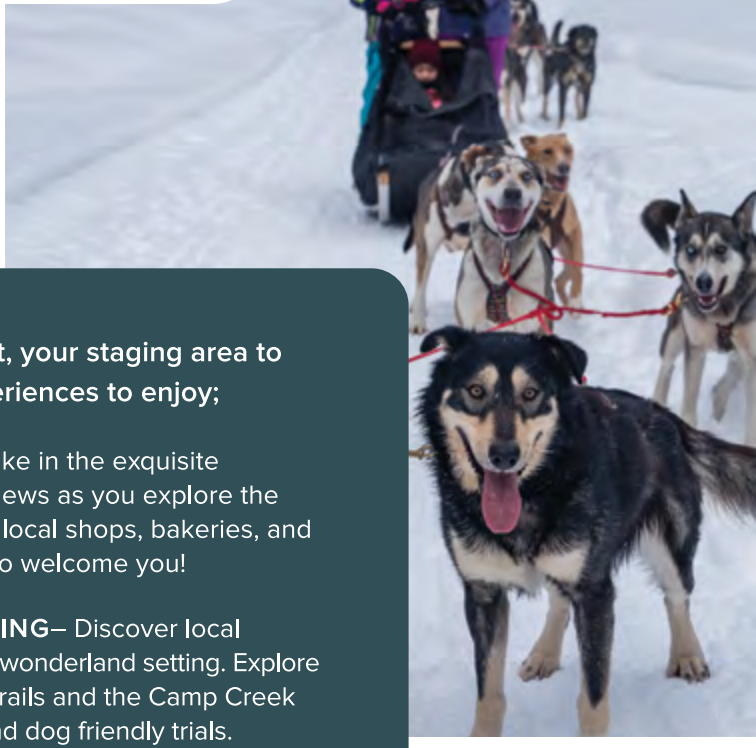
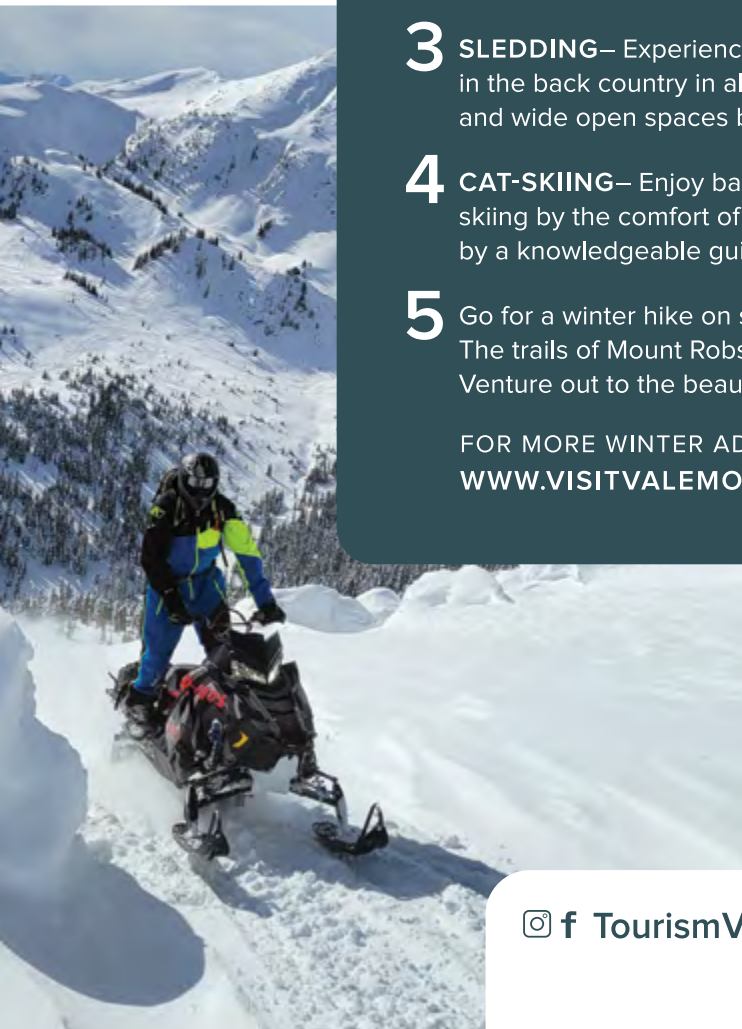
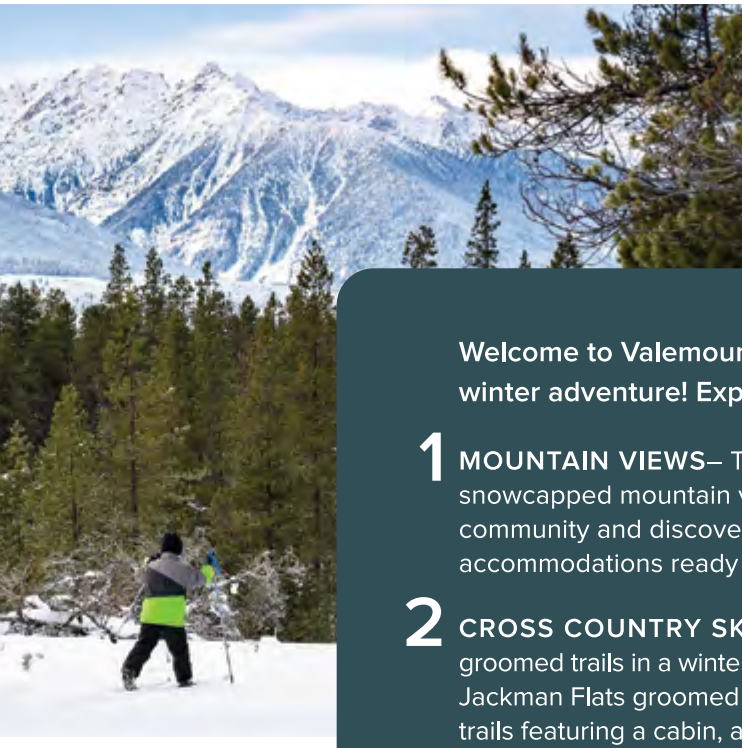
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