

BELLA COOLA VALLEY

HEART OF THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Exploring Bella Coola's
Coastal Fjords by Boat

Backcountry Adventure
Safety & Tips

Experience Local
Nuxalk Arts & Culture

- 4 GETTING HERE
- 6 LOOKING BACK
A BRIEF HISTORY
- 8 COMMUNITY AMENITIES
- 10 EXPLORE BY BOAT
- 14 ARTS & CULTURE
- 16 ACTIVITIES ABOUND
- 20 TWEEDSMUIR PARK
- 24 EXPLORING THE
BACKCOUNTRY
- 26 GRIZZLY VALLEY
YOUR GUIDE FOR SAFE VIEWING
- 29 DIRECTORY
- 34 BELLA COOLA VALLEY MAP

Cover photo – Visitor Guide: Jordan Tuck

Visit us online www.bellacoola.ca & follow us @visitbellacoola

The Visitor Information Booth is mobile, located on Hwy 20 at the Norwegian Heritage House in Hagensborg or see our website or social media for current location. This Visitor Guide and Trail Guide on reverse have been produced by Bella Coola Valley Tourism with special thanks to Destination BC & Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, Our Board Members: Kelly Harrison, Shannon Lansdowne, Abra Silver, Jen & Bobby Sherlock, Garrett Newkirk, Anni-ka Granander, Kayce Carlson, and Rebecca Percy. We also acknowledge and thank our previous board members and contributors to BCVT: Tom Hermance, Sally King, Jayme Kennedy, Hans Granander, the Bella Coola Trails Alliance, BC Parks, Jessie MacDonald, Ernest Hall, Jefferson Bray, Doug Baker, Holly Wilgress, Ken Dunsworth, Carsten Ginsburg, Jan Prins, Caitlin Thompson, and Central Coast Communications. For their invaluable advice and contributions, BCVT also acknowledges the Norwegian Heritage House for providing the location for our Visitor Information Booth.

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One of the largest Western Red Cedar trees in BC, measuring 5m in diameter. Boat tours are the best way to visit the Big Cedar Tree Recreation Site located 35km from Bella Coola.

Photo: Nicola Anderson

YAW SMATMC

HELLO, MY FRIEND

My name is Sixilaaxayc. My smayusta (Creation story) tells of the abundance that came at the time of Creation when the land tilted toward Chief Sixilaaxayc and Q'umk'uts on the bank of the river near where I live now.

One hundred years ago, several long houses stood at that place. Long before that, at the time of Creation, the tilting land brought much abundance to the Valley of Nuxalk, which means in my language "becoming one." I welcome you to our Valley, where all you see is sacred.

I hope you enjoy the scenery, the rich history, and the abundance. Please enjoy your stay.

Sixilaaxayc (Noel Pootlass),
Nuxalk Nation Head Hereditary
Chief and Artist



GETTING HERE

BY LAND

Prepare to experience the driving adventure of a lifetime. Highway 20 connects the valley to the outside world, weaving its way down "The Hill" from the arid Chilcotin Plateau into the rainforest of the Bella Coola Valley. This highway is unpaved between Anahim Lake and the bottom of the Heckman Pass, also known as "The Hill". This section is well maintained and can be traveled by all vehicles using reasonable caution. Be prepared for wildlife, open range cattle, and spectacular views. Visit www.drivebc.ca

BY AIR

There are regularly scheduled flights from Vancouver landing you in the Valley in just a little over an hour. This flight is short but spectacular, offering up jaw dropping views of emerald alpine lakes, glacier covered peaks, and some of the highest mountains in British Columbia. www.pacificcoastal.com

BY SEA

More serene, but likewise spectacular, is the approach to Bella Coola by sea. BC ferries offers a direct ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola in the summer months, until early fall. Weaving through the narrow glacial fjords, this route takes you through mountainous coastlines of stunning granite cliffs and tumbling waterfalls, misty green dark forests, and deep glacier-fed inlet waters. With great wildlife viewing opportunities, keep your eyes peeled for bears, eagles, whales, dolphins seals and sea lions that call the great bear sea home. Ferry Reservations are a must. www.bcferrries.com

Photo: Tyler Cave

Heckman Pass, also known as "The Hill", with its steep grades and switchbacks.



Where the west is still plenty wild.



Sail into the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest.

Sail through pristine glacial fjords between Port Hardy and Bella Coola. Marvel at majestic grizzlies as they fish in the Atnarko and Bella Coola River. Or, hike to one of the many alpine lakes to see rugged landscapes and spectacular lookouts. Our travel experts can help you plan your perfect getaway, including hotel, ferry and activities.

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LOOKING BACK

For countless generations, the people living in the Bella Coola Valley have fished its rivers and hewn its trees amid the magnificent mountains and verdant forests of the northwest coast of this continent.

Legend has it that the first of these people arrived at the time of Creation on the eyelashes of the sun, in animal form, landing on various mountain tops where they took on human form. Their society, now called Nuxalk (pronounced “NOO-hulk”), was rich in material and cultural wealth and had strong links covering a vast territory by way of dugout canoe and a network of trails—a major one being the “Grease Trail”, so-called for a prized trade commodity: the grease of the eulachon (a small smelt-like fish) that swarmed the coastal rivers each spring.

The first encounter between the Nuxalk people and Europeans was in 1793 when sea Captain George Vancouver sailed up the fjord to the mouth of the Bella Coola River. Then, seven weeks later Scottish explorer Alexander Mackenzie and his six voyageur companions, with the assistance of aboriginal guides, completed the 1st recorded land crossing of North America at the same point after following the historic Grease Trail, descending from the Rainbow Mountains to the Valley floor. From there, Mackenzie was guided downriver to Pacific waters and out the fjords toward the open ocean, terminating the trek at “Mackenzie’s Rock” on the Dean Channel.

In 1867, the Hudson’s Bay Company established a trading post near the mouth of the Bella Coola River. At the time, the Valley served as a major transportation route from

< Chris Nelson, from Copper Sun Journeys, wearing a traditional Nuxalk cedar woven hat.

tidewater inland to the Cariboo gold fields, and many lingered on, prospecting, trapping, and trading. Only 16 non-aboriginal people resided in the Valley in 1894 when some 200 Norwegian-speaking homesteaders settled “up Valley” in the area now known as Hagensborg and downriver in “Lower Bella Coola.”

The settlers tapped the rich resources of the area, as farmers, commercial fishermen, and loggers. The abundant resources and developing economy soon attracted the fishing and logging corporations which operated on the Central Coast for many decades throughout the 20th Century.

Meanwhile, smallpox had arrived in 1862, and the Nuxalk population, lacking natural immunity, was reduced from thousands to 200, their 45 villages to one at the mouth of the Bella Coola River. Then the Canadian government banned the potlatch (the Nuxalk governance mechanism) and dispersed their families with the Residential School policy—eroding the Nuxalk cultural roots. Today, with the potlatch ban and the Residential School policy revoked, signs of Nuxalk cultural revival attest to the resilience of this People.

As the region’s resource industries declined at the turn of the millennium, the region’s spectacular natural beauty and wild, pristine wilderness have given rise to an increasing interest in tourism. The stunning landscapes of the Bella Coola Valley and surrounding area had already been formally recognized with the creation of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park (1938) to the east. More recently (2006), the protection of the surrounding Great Bear Rainforest—accessible by road only along Highway 20—is prompting development of this sustainable industry in the region.

Locally-built road access via Highway 20, up (and down) Bella Coola’s infamous “Hill” provides some of the steepest scenery anywhere and a sheer sense of accomplishment. A drive of only 25 minutes winds around 11 switchbacks, topping out at 5,000 feet with a stunning viewpoint and rest area. Opened in 1953 as Canada’s third route to the Pacific, celebrating the pioneer spirit of those who live here and the adventurer in all who visit.

Photo: Tyler Cave

COMMUNITY AMENITIES

BELLA COOLA

The Bella Coola Townsite is located at the head of North Bentinck Arm on the Bella Coola River. As the commercial centre of the valley it offers accommodation, restaurants, groceries, fuel, auto shop, banking, galleries, and retail. The RCMP detachment is located here along with a library, museum, hospital/pharmacy/clinic, and post office. Beautifully carved Nuxalk totems and historic buildings are scattered throughout the townsite; a guided tour is offered by www.coppersunjournays.com

FOUR-MILE SUBDIVISION

Also known as Snxllh or 'Sunny Village', four miles from the Government Wharf, the home of the Nuxalk Administration and a unique school. At this school, "Acwsalcta" (in the Nuxalk language, 'a place of learning'), instruction in the Nuxalk language is keeping it and the culture alive by integrating them into the regular curriculum. There are Nuxalk art galleries and other surprises to be discovered in this neighbourhood as well as a gas station conveniently located on Hwy 20.

HAGENSBORG

16 km (10 mi) east "up Valley", is the other commercial centre with groceries, coffee shops, gifts, accommodation, camping, fuel, auto shop and post office. On Fridays the Royal Canadian Legion is open for pub service. Nearby is the picturesque and historic Augsburg Church, which celebrated 100 years in 2004. RV dump stations can be found at private campgrounds in Hagensborg.

UPPER VALLEY

Heading further East of Hagensborg lies the small hamlets of Firvale and Stuie, as well as Tweedsmuir Provincial Park. This area has accommodations but no gas or services. Be prepared for spectacular views and sprawling farmer fields before entering Tweedsmuir Park, with its many trails and the popular Belarko Wildlife Viewing Platform. This is also traditional territory of First Nations Peoples who for thousands of years have sustained themselves on the abundance provided by the Atnarko River and surrounding forest.

Photo: Rachel Hunter



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EXPLORE BY BOAT

HOTSPRINGS, WATERFALLS, AND THE FJORDS OF THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Enjoy a maritime experience by taking a marine tour cruising out from the Bella Coola Harbour over the glacial waters of North Bentinck Arm and into a vast network of deep fjords - South Bentinck, Labouchere, Burke, and Dean - past timbered rocky shores and snow capped peaks where the solitude is broken over and over again by the many scenic highlights that loom into view as you approach. Keep your camera ready!

GLIMPING THE PAST

Your ocean adventure begins at the Government Wharf where you might cruise across the Inlet to tour the picturesque Tallheo cannery. Built in the early 1900's it became a hive of activity in the heyday of fish canning before the long-haul packer boat arrived.

Further out the inlet, marvel at the ancient fish traps, petroglyphs and pictographs, indelible signs left on the rocky shores and cliffs by First Nations people who, according to archaeologists, paddled along these fjords more than 10,000 years ago (10,000 years ago – 5,000 years before the Great Pyramid was built in Egypt).

At the mouth of Elcho Harbour in the Dean Channel you can find Mackenzie's Rock marking the western terminus of explorer Alexander Mackenzie's daunting trek across the North American continent.

TAKING A HOT DIP

Relax and soak away your cares in the hot soothing waters of an oceanside wilderness hot spring. Natural hot springs are just a charter away from the Bella Coola Harbour. Perhaps sight some dolphins, seals or eagles on the way out. The hot springs are sacred places to the Nuxalk people

who have enjoyed their healing powers for millennia, so respect them as you might a Gothic cathedral.

MEET THE GIANT CEDAR

If you've never been humbled by the awe that comes with standing under the dark, swooping branches of a botanical wonder, here's your chance: The Big Cedar Tree, just a short hike up from the beach at Larso Bay on South Bentinck Arm, measures more than 5 metres (18 feet) in diameter. That's a whopping 18 metres around (more than 56.5 feet)! This ancient giant was a seedling during the late Roman Empire 1,500 years ago.

VIEWING THE WILDLIFE

As you cruise along the often misty tidal beaches and estuaries of creeks and rivers through the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest, keep your eyes peeled. In the spring, bears emerge from their alpine dens after the long fast of hibernation and offer prime wildlife viewing. Grizzly bears and black bears descend to the lowlands and beaches for the first tender grass and shoots growing close to the tide line. In late summer and fall the bears gorge themselves on the salmon returning to spawn in the coastal creeks and rivers.

In the early morning wolves often appear along the creek mouths and estuaries. In the evening, from your offshore anchorage, you may hear their eerie howls drifting out over the calm waters.

The Great Bear Rainforest teems with wildlife including bald eagles, seals, sea lions, and otters. At times, dolphins, humpback whales and orcas break the water with their breaching—a sight to behold!

Photo: Graeme Owianski



Photo: Tyler Cave/Bella Coola Grizzly Tours



Sea kayaking in the fjords of the Great Bear Rainforest. Explore the coast on one of our half or multi-day adventures




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ARTS & CULTURE

DISCOVER THE BELLA COOLA VALLEY'S DIVERSE RANGE OF ARTISTS AND CRAFTSPEOPLE

NUXALK ART

Nuxalk art has a distinctive style and features designs that are unique to Nuxalk territory and family crests. In particular, the use of a vibrant blue has long been an identifying hallmark of Nuxalk art, the "Bella Coola Blue." As Nuxalk master carver Alvin Mack explains, "art is the vessel for the culture, it's how we communicate our history and tell our smayustas (creation) stories." Smayustas, or creation stories, are tied to family crests and also a shared history. They are the reason Nuxalk art is crafted, and each piece made by a Nuxalk artist is carrying this history.

By engaging a Nuxalk guide, you can ensure you will see more than meets the eye and add significantly to your experience. Inquire through Copper Sun Journeys.

THE PETROGLYPHS

Out of respect for the Nuxalk people and to enrich this fascinating cultural experience, hiring a Nuxalk guide or joining a tour is an absolute must when visiting this sacred place. Here you will discover rock carvings believed to be over 3,500 years old. These marvels are inextricably linked to Nuxalk culture and history and are viewed by many as the spiritual heart of the Bella Coola Valley.

NORWEGIAN HERITAGE HOUSE

For a glimpse into the lifestyle of the early Norwegian-speaking settlers, visit this site in Hagensborg. The hewn-log house was moved to its present location from its original homestead site 3 km up the Valley. A stop of interest sign describes the early Norwegian settlement.

BELLA COOLA MUSEUM

The Bella Coola Museum, located on the Bella Coola Townsite, reflects the varied history of the Valley from the First Peoples to the early European explorers, to the coming of the pioneers and the building of the 'Freedom Road.' The museum is housed in a former schoolhouse and surveyor's cabin built in 1892. Phone (250)982-2130 or visit bellacoolamuseum.ca

NUXALK RADIO

While in the valley, tune in to 91.1 FM to listen to Nuxalk Radio broadcasting from the Nuxalk village of Q'umk'uts' in Bella Coola Nuxalkulmc (Nuxalk Territory) and worldwide online. Launched in 2014, Nuxalk Radio promotes Nuxalk language use, to increase fluency and inspire new language learners. The station also shares Nuxalk history and culture while promoting the common goals of neighbouring Nations and Indigenous peoples globally. Visit nuxalkradio.com

ART HOUSE GALLERY

The Bella Coola Valley Arts Council has been working in the Bella Coola Valley since 1976 promoting and facilitating both visual and performing arts the Art House Gallery functions as a gallery for local artists, facilitating art sales and providing a venue for Valley residents and visitors.

We hope you take the time to enjoy the remarkable range of work at the many galleries that the Bella Coola Valley has to offer.

Photo: Jesaja Class



LOCAL EVENTS

FARMER'S MARKET

June - October, Sundays 10am - 1pm

Come visit the Lobelco Fairgrounds to buy fresh local produce, art, crafts, and other handmade goodies.

ANNUAL BELLA COOLA RODEO

Canada Day (July 1) Long Weekend

The Bella Coola Rodeo Grounds can be found at Walker Island Snootli Creek Regional Park. This annual rodeo is one of the largest amateur rodeos in Western Canada and not to be missed.

BELLA COOLA MUSIC FESTIVAL

Third Weekend in July

This is a family friendly festival that takes place over two days at the Lobelco Fair Grounds. It features a diverse line-up of music, arts, & entertainment for all ages.

BELLA COOLA VALLEY FALL FAIR

Second Weekend in September

A down-home event that takes place at the Lobelco Fair Grounds and is reminiscent of an old county fair with games and competitions for adults and kids. The Logger Sports event is a crowd favourite!



Photo: Jordan Tuck

ACTIVITIES ABOUND

Experience some of the many activities the Valley has to offer. Visit our website for details on guided tours.

FISHING

The Valley is renowned the world over for its fresh-water fishing. Each year, all five Pacific salmon species return to the Bella Coola River to spawn after maturing at sea: Sockeye, Coho, Chum, Pink—and the prize of them all, the mighty Chinook salmon. Year after year, anglers also return to the river and its tributaries, often moving up the river with the runs to the Atnarko River. Also highly popular with anglers is the pursuit of feisty Rainbow, Dolly Varden, and Cutthroat trout. Anglers unfamiliar with the area may wish to engage a guide to take them on a guided river drift. For saltwater anglers the Bella Coola Harbour is a great departure point for those heading out to enjoy the bounty of marine wildlife. All anglers must familiarize themselves with current fishing regulations and proper licenses, available at local establishments selling fishing tackle.

FLIGHTSEEING

Take to new heights and soar amongst the mountain tops. Whether it's a breathtaking flight into the valley, a helicopter ride to a glacier, or a floatplane tour past an impossibly high waterfall, this is an opportunity not to be missed. You can also explore the alpine on a guided hike, visiting places otherwise inaccessible.

VIA FERRATA

The term via ferrata translates to “iron path” in Italian, from where these climbing routes originated. This route requires users to have a guide assisting them as they climb steel rungs, cables, and steps all while secured with a leash and harness. We are lucky enough to have one of these amazing routes in Tweedsmuir Park leading up to a stunning lookout. You must hire a guide for this activity, contact Tweedsmuir Park Lodge to book.

BOATING, KAYAKING & RAFTING

Bella Coola Valley rivers and waterways provide virtually endless hours and days of paddling opportunities, but adventurers must always be “bear aware” and mindful of the wilderness conditions. For ocean kayaking, the estuary and somewhat sheltered fjords offer hundreds of kilometers of shoreline to explore with a chance to see bears, whales, seals, sea lions, and other sea life. Check with the Visitor Information Booth for local guides.

MOUNTAIN BIKING, ATVING & DIRT BIKING

Explore developed trails and logging roads from one end of the Valley to the other. Try out our newest mountain bike loop trail at Schoolhouse Falls. See Trail Guide for details.

ATV and off-road tours are offered by local guides to help you reach new heights & explore the alpine.

Our forest service roads can be quite rough so this is a great option for those not wanting to brave these 4wheel drive only routes.

CANOEING AND SUP

There are an abundance of lakes to explore along the two main forest service roads leading up into the alpine from the valley floor. Canoeing is also popular in Tweedsmuir Park where you can rent a canoe to paddle and portage your way through the remote Turner Lake chain. There is no road access so paddlers must either hike in and/or charter a float plane. For canoe rentals, camping fees, and information on accessing the area visit BC Parks website for Tweedsmuir South Provincial Park, www.bcparks.ca

HORSEBACK RIDING

There are numerous trails within the valley and Tweedsmuir Park that allow horseback riding. See the Trail Guide for the Rainbow Range Trail or visit BC Parks website. Guided trail rides are available within the valley and guest ranches are common up on the Chilcotin Plateau.

HIKING AND ROCK CLIMBING

See our Trail Guide for the best trails the area has to offer. For more extreme adventurers, the Valley boasts an abundance of granite for rock climbing and many classic routes for mountaineering. The Bella Coola Trails Alliance website is a great additional resource to visit while planning your adventure. >



Photo: Aegir Adventures

KITE BOARDING & SAILBOARDING

On a nice summer day check out the inlet from Clayton Falls Creek recreation site, just west of the Bella Coola Townsite, where you can find kiteboarders enjoying the afternoon wind. Watch while they speed by cutting through the ocean, occasionally taking flight over the small rolling waves.

BIRDING

There are plenty of opportunities and great locations for observing and identifying birds throughout the valley. Witness herring gulls and bald eagles feasting alongside grizzly

bears in the Atnarko river or visit the estuary at the mouth of the Bella Coola to find heron, cranes, various ducks, trumpeter swans, and perhaps the beautiful mountain bluebird. Visit the Bella Coola Birds Facebook page for additional information or get in touch with a local tour guide.

HELI-SKIING

Unbelievable depths of stable powder with some of the greatest verticals in North America combine to create the perfect heli- skiing experience.

SNOWMOBILING

The East Branch Creek area near

the top of "The Hill" in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is renowned for its excellent snowmobile terrain and snow conditions. The upper Clayton Falls Creek area (accessible west of the Bella Coola Harbour) is also popular.

DOWNHILL & X-COUNTRY SKIING

The local ski club operates a tow lift on weekends in the East Branch Creek area near the top of "The Hill." In addition, there are more than 20 km of track set Nordic ski trails as well. www.tweedsmuirskiclub.com

Visit www.bellacoola.ca for a current list of activities & tour providers.

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WILDLIFE WATCHING INDIGENOUS PICTOGRAPHS THE BIG CEDAR TREE

TWEEDSMUIR SOUTH PROVINCIAL PARK


The gem in the crown of the BC's parks is Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, with its vast open spaces and spectacular range of landscapes. This park encompasses 981,000 hectares (2.4 million acres) of wilderness; gorgeous meadows, hidden lakes, fast-flowing rivers, and high glaciated mountains, spanning from the Bella Coola Valley floor up to the Chilcotin Plateau.

Extensive hiking trails are located in the colourful Rainbow Range, a collection of volcanic peaks where heavy mineralization has given the soil an array of colours. This vast network of long range trails, connect the plateau to the valley floor, a trade route used by First Nations including the Nuxalk, Tsilhqot'in (Chilcotin), and Dakelh (Carrier). Also known as a "the grease trail" for the eulachon fish grease they would transport. Later this trail was also used by British explorer Alexander Mackenzie on his quest to traverse the continent.

Energetic visitors are drawn to the hiking, canoeing, and camping at the Turner Lake chain within the Park and the jaw dropping Hunlen Falls, which has one of the highest unbroken drops in Canada. From here hikers can further explore alpine trails with views of stunning glaciers, glacial lakes, horned peaks, and hanging valleys. For these more advanced routes it is important to plan ahead and be prepared with a GPS, topographic maps, and a compass.

This park is also home to Lonesome Lake, famed for homesteader and conservationist Ralph Edwards, who worked to preserve migration habitat at the lake for the trumpeter swan. This homestead has since burned down but stories of Edward's time spent at the lake can be found in the biography called Crusoe of Lonesome Lake.

While the Park is home to a number of long-range trails, it also offers plenty of easy to moderate hiking trails ideal for day use, including the popular Burnt Bridge Loop Trail. This trail leads the hiker for a couple of hours from the Valley floor over a section of the aforementioned Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail/ Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail from which Mackenzie named the spectacular mountain directly ahead "Stupendous" as it loomed into his view on his transcontinental trek in 1793. >



Hunlen Falls, with one of the highest unbroken drops in Canada.

Photo: Ben Giesbrecht

In addition to the many hiking opportunities in the park, there is also an array of guided activities available. Drift down the Atnarko River to view grizzly bears feasting on spawning salmon or enjoy a scenic flight soaring over the Rainbow Range mountains and Hunlen Falls.

A new exciting addition to the Park is the self guided Belarko Wildlife Viewing Area, a raised platform that is fully staffed, providing a safe way to see and photograph bears and other wildlife. For the adventurous, there is the Via Ferrata, a fully guided tour providing participants with a spectacular self-propelled mountain excursion complete with amazing scenery and all while safely clipped into a harness and cable system. In the Valley portion of the Park

there are two well appointed designated campgrounds conveniently located just off of Hwy 20, where weary explorers can rest their heads.

While visiting the Bella Coola Valley this outstanding Park is a must-do addition to your itinerary, enjoy the wide-open landscapes with its lightly trafficked trails and exciting adventures that await.

More information on BC Parks: www.bcparks.ca

NOTE: Only well-equipped, expert backpackers or those with a guide should attempt to experience the park's back-country wonders. For maps of the Park's less demanding trails, see our Trail Guide. Permits are required for commercial tour operators.



Photo: Rachel Hunter



Photo: Marco Calara

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EXPLORING THE BACKCOUNTRY

ARTICLE BY RYAN LEVESQUE



Having first aid supplies, clothing for the conditions, extra food and water, and a satellite communication device (and an understanding of how to use it!) should be considered mandatory for anyone hoping to experience what Bella Coola's higher elevations have to offer.

I am known as the guy who worries about things. *When are you getting back? Where are you going? Do you have an InReach?* On weekends, when I am in cell service, I can be the check-in for at least three different groups on some adventure in the Valley. This is probably one of the reasons I first got into Search and Rescue. Whether mountaineering, rock climbing, or alpine trail running, there are many ways the adventurous type can spend their weekends needing a check-in.

The Bella Coola Valley, with its storied past of mountain activities, offers a unique and thrilling experience. The long approaches, limited beta, and steep terrain have protected many routes; leaving numerous first ascents, speed records, and unexplored ridges for those who like to find themselves alone in the alpine. Unlike other mountain destinations in the province, running into other parties is rare, and sharing a route is unheard of. With this solitude comes a responsibility to understand that you must be self-reliant, and having a cell phone in your pocket does not count as an emergency plan.

Most of the Valley's rock and mountain routes are out of cell phone range and can be afflicted with wildly varying trip times depending on conditions.

I've been a Bella Coola Valley Search and Rescue

member since 2019. I joined the group after asking, "What would happen if I didn't come home?" The answer is that a small, skilled group of local volunteers who live and recreate in these hills come together to assist with rescues. Due to the size of our group and limited helicopter availability, I like to remind visitors to the community that our response times are often much longer than those of a more significant city centre. We commonly rely on other groups in the valley, such as the Nuxalk Guardian Watchmen or SAR groups from different areas, to assist in operations. This coordination planning adds time to our response time. So if you need us, call the Local RCMP detachment immediately.

Stay safe, plan well, and let the Bella Coola Valley in Nuxalk Traditional Territory be a place of unforgettable and safe exploration. Visit AdventureSmart.ca for more information on preparedness, trip planning, and safety.

Both Photos: Sam McCoy



TRIP TIPS:

Let someone know where you are going

Always send your trip plan to a responsible party, family member or friend. They can notify authorities if you don't return.

Always have a means of communication

Consider carrying a device compatible with your activity and location to call or alert others in an emergency. Remember, if you are in danger, your chance of a successful outcome increases if your call is made as soon as possible.

Be Prepared

Ensure everyone with you understands what to do in case of an emergency.

Don't depend solely on technology

Equipment failure and lack of reception are very possible in the outdoors. Consider carrying a map and compass as a backup.

Familiarize with your equipment

Know the capabilities and the limitations of the equipment you are planning to use as your lifeline to survival.

Stick to the plan

Throughout your activity, stick to the trip plan you left with a friend or family member. In the event that you do not return as stated in your plan, it can be given to police and search and rescue organizers to help them find you.

Travel with a companion

A companion can give you a hand to overcome difficulties or emergencies.

IN AN EMERGENCY:

Don't Panic

Stay calm and maintain a positive attitude.

STOP

Stop, Think, Observe and Plan.

Stay Put

It reduces time and search area for the authorities looking for you.

Seek Shelter

Protect yourself from the elements by staying warm and dry or out of the sun.

Signal for Help

Think BIG, Think CONTRAST, Think 3's. Use whistle blasts x 3, mirror flashes x 3, horn blasts x 3, signal fires x 3 or rock piles x 3 to signal distress. Create a ground-to-air symbol by making the letter "V" or "SOS", at least 3 meters in length.

Contact Search and Rescue

In case of emergency call Bella Coola RCMP (250) 799-5363. If you are concerned about a friend or family member who is missing, overdue, or possibly injured call the RCMP as soon as possible to dispatch the Search and Rescue team.

Non-emergency contact: BCVSAR@gmail.com or visit www.bcvsar.ca

GRIZZLY VALLEY

THE BEST WAYS TO VIEW BEARS IN THE BELLA COOLA VALLEY

The Bella Coola Valley is one of the best places to view grizzly bears in the world. Watching a bear foraging in the wild is a truly unforgettable experience.

Adventurers driving along Highway 20 into the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest from late spring to late fall may chance upon a sow and her cubs grazing on the long grasses along the road side. However, the prime bearviewing opportunities are in the late summer and fall, when the salmon are running in the rivers, large populations of both black bears and grizzlies inhabit the region. This can be the highlight of most people's visit and should be done safely, with respect to the wildlife.

TAKE A GUIDED TOUR

Tours are offered by knowledgeable, experienced and accredited bear viewing guides. Guides use strategies designed especially for low impact viewing and guest safety. Among them are those who drift their guests in shallow-keel boats quietly down the Atnarko and Bella Coola Rivers, looking for bears and eagles feeding on spawning salmon. Guided hikes are also available through the densely populated grizzly grounds.

THE BELARKO WILDLIFE VIEWING AREA

Directly overlooking the Atnarko River, the viewing area is elevated and surrounded by an electric fence. Qualified staff are present both in the reception area and the viewing area to provide information on viewing protocol and enhance safety of the viewing experience. There is no charge for visiting the viewing area, the platform is operated cooperatively by BC Parks and Nuxalk Nation. The main objective of the Belarko Wildlife Viewing Area is to increase the predictability of human behaviour in this area, reduce human/bear conflict, and leave sections along the river where bears can feed undisturbed by humans.

Open for the month of September, the viewing area is located on Highway 20, 13 km inside the western boundary of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park. Look for highway signage.

WHAT TO AVOID

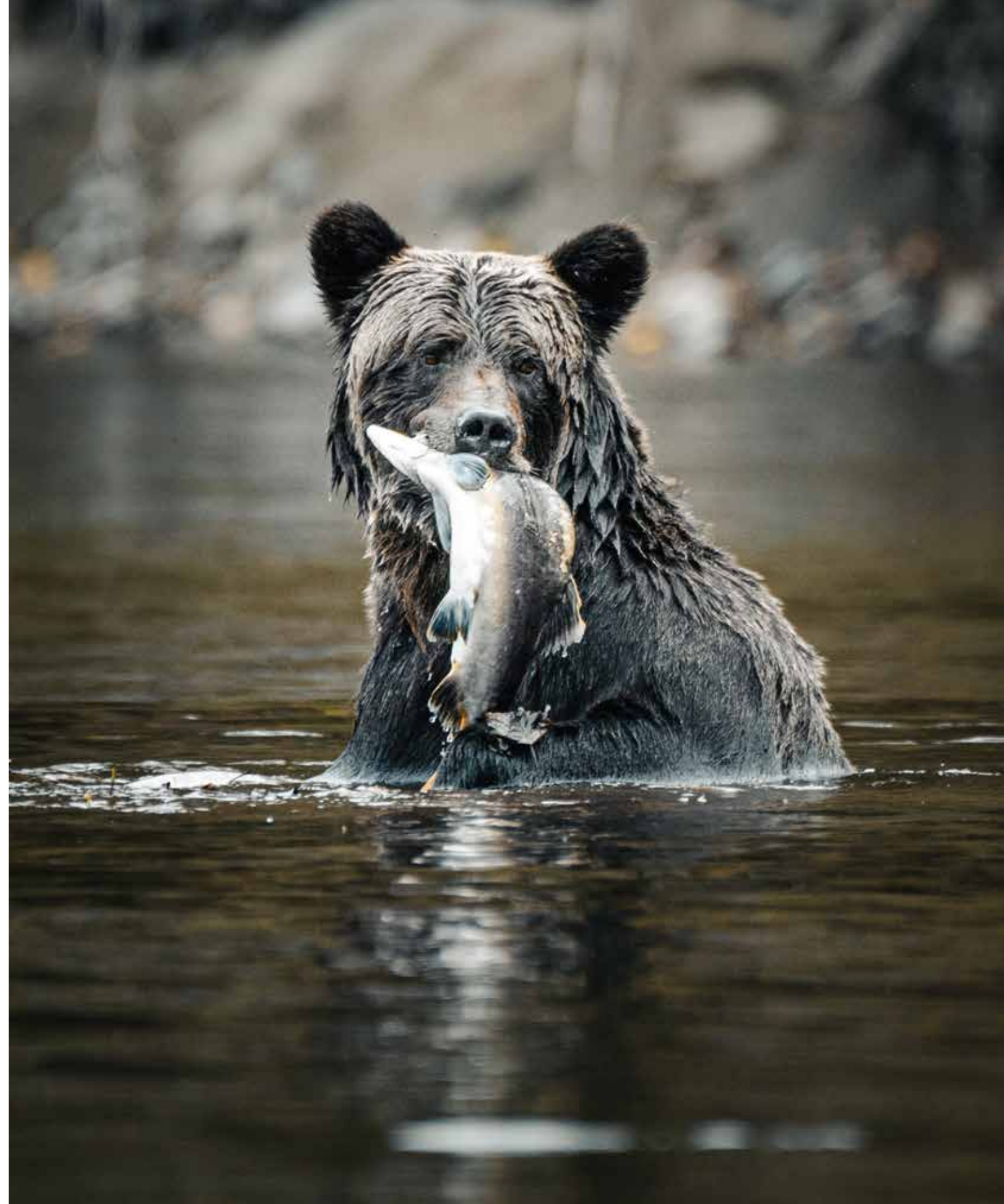
- Blocking traffic on busy roadways and narrow bridges is to be avoided. When seeing a bear while driving please use common sense and continue to follow traffic patterns and obey signage.
- Do not harass bears or restrict their freedom of movement. Bears always have the right of way! It's an all too common sight to see groups of people following or surrounding bears in the valley. Please give bears plenty of distance to make sure you are not displacing them from important habitat.
- Avoid habituating bears to humans—although they may not show it, bears are very aware of human presence. They have great vision, an acute sense of smell and hearing. Avoid wearing perfume, smoking, flash photography, minimize noise and movement and never signal bears in any way, whether using hand motions or auditory signals. In Most cases it's best to stay in the open where bears can see you and choose to avoid you if they wish.

By following these best practices we can reduce human bear conflict and leave vast areas where bears can feed undisturbed by humans. Please consider the safety of not just yourself but the bear as well, the desire to for a closer look or to get a photograph should always come last.

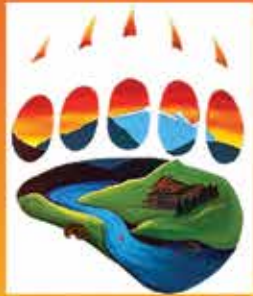
For many centuries people and bears have coexisted in the mountains, forest and rivers of this region. With the cooperation of First Nations, Park visitors, commercial operators and local residents, we can ensure continued protection of both bears and recreational opportunities within the Bella Coola Valley.

For additional information please visit wildsafebc.com and see pg. 4 of the Trail Guide.

Photo: Owen Perry



Great Bear Chalet



"Be at Home in a Grizzly Kingdom"



Experience the awe and humility of true coexistence in some of the most spectacular wilderness found on Earth. Enjoy an exclusive, intimate stay and celebrate the reign of the grizzly bear as monarch over our Valley home. Our all-inclusive packages allow Great Bear Chalet to share our ecologically responsible home with you. Re-wild your Spirit; make unforgettable memories to empower your story; explore the nature of coexistence through consideration and thrive on this River of Bears - gateway to the Great Bear Rainforest.

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For more of our story, please visit: www.greatbearchalet.com

Reservation email: greatbearchalet@xplornet.com Tel: 604-629-9871



ACCOMMODATIONS & CAMPGROUNDS

Barney's Lakeside Resort

Puntzi Lake
(250) 481-1100
barneyslakesideresort.com

Bailey Bridge Campground

2375 Saloompt River Road
Hagensborg
(250) 982-2342
baileybridgebc@gmail.com

Bella Coola's Eagle Lodge

1103 Hwy 20, Bella Coola
(250) 799-5587
eaglelodgebc.com
info@eaglelodgebc.com
See Visitor Guide p.29

Bella Coola Grizzly Tours Resort

1953 Hwy 20, Hagensborg P1-888-982-0098
bcgrizzlytours.com
info@bcgrizzlytours.com
See Visitor Guide p.9

Bella Coola Mountain Lodge

900 Highway 20, Hagensborg
1-866-982-2298
bcmountainlodge.com
info@bcmountainlodge.com
See Visitor Guide p.9

Bella Coola Valley Campground

1875 Hwy 20, Hagensborg
(250) 644-3524
bellacoolavalleycampground.com
campground@gmail.com
(Formerly Gnomes Home)
See Trail Guide p.12

Bella Coola Valley Inn

441 Mackenzie Street,
Bella Coola
1-888-799-5316
bellacoolavalleyinn.com
valleyinn@outlook.com

Eagle Bear Lodge

Hwy 20, Tatla Lake
(604) 629-9577
eaglebearlodge.com
info@eaglebearlodge.com

Eagle's Nest Resort

Anahim Lake
(250) 742-3707
eaglesnest-resort.com
info@eaglesnest-resort.com
See Trail Guide p.32

Firvale Wilderness Camp

4330 Hwy 20, Firvale
firvalewildernesscamp.com
firvalewildernesslodge@gmail.com
See Visitor Guide p.33

Great Bear Chalet

Tweedsmuir Provincial Park
(604) 629-9871
greatbearchalet.com
greatbearchalet@xplornet.com
See Visitor Guide p.28

Nuk Tessli Lodge

Klenna Kleene
(778) 766-3487
nuktessli.com
nuktessli@gmail.com

Nusatsum River Guest House

Hagensborg
250-982-2348
bellacoolavalley@mac.com
bellacoolacabins.com
See Visitor Guide p.18

Retreat Wilderness Inn

Nimpo Lake
(250) 742-3332
retreatwildernessinn.com
retreatwilderness@gmail.com

Eagle Lodge / Cafe Bella



Fly and Tackle Shop
Outdoor Hot Tub
Barrel Sauna
Outdoor Kitchen with BBQ
Kids playground



www.eaglelodgebc.com

info@eaglelodgebc.com

Reservations : 250-799-5587

1103 HWY 20 , Bella Coola , BC

ACCOMMODATIONS & CAMPGROUNDS

Rip Rap Campsite & Cabins

1854 Highway 20, Hagensborg
(250) 982-2752
riprapcamp.com
amberriprap@gmail.com
See Trail Guide p.13

Stewarts Lodge

Nimpo Lake
1 (800) 668-4335
stewartslodge@gmail.com
www.stewartslodge.com

Suntree Guest Cottages

3825 Hammer Road,
Hagensborg
1-877-982-2424
suntree.ca / info@suntree.ca
See Trail Guide p.26

Tallheo Cannery

Guest House Bella Coola
(604) 992-1424
bellacoolacannery.com
info@bellacoolacannery.com
See Trail Guide p.10

Terra Nostra Guest Ranch

19647 Hwy 20, Kleena Kleene,
BC (250) 476-1273
terranostra-guestranch.com
See Trail Guide p.25

Thunder Mountain Accommodations

4950 Hwy 20, Firvale
(250) 982-0021
info@tmadventures.com
thundermountainadventures.com
See Trail Guide p.29

Tweedsmuir Park Lodge

Stuie (Atnarko River)
1-877-982-2407
tweedsmuirparklodge.com
info@tweedsmuirparklodge.com
See Visitor Guide p.13

Wildway Glamping

1905 Highway 20, Hagensborg
(250) 213-7905
wildwayfarmco@gmail.com
overthetopadventures.ca

Woodlands Fish'n Resort

Puntzi Lake (East Chilcotin)
(250) 230-5099 /
(250) 800-0400
woodlandsfishingresort.com
info@woodlandsfishingresort.com
See Trail Guide p.11

LAND & MARINE TOURS

Aegir Adventures

Bella Coola Harbour
(250) 617-3266 info@
aegiradventures.com
aegiradventures.ca
See Visitor Guide p.12

Bella Coola Grizzly Tours

1953 Highway 20, Hagensborg
1-888-982-0098
bcgrizzlytours.com
info@bcgrizzlytours.com
See Visitor Guide p.19

Bella Coola Heli Sports

Tweedsmuir Park, Stuie
(604) 932-3000
bellacoolahelisports.com

Copper Sun Journeys

442 Mackenzie Street
Bella Coola
(250) 267-6430
coppersunjournays.com
info@coppersungallery.ca
See Trail Guide p.7

Gnoses Sailing Adventures

Bella Coola Harbour
svgnoses@gmail.com

Great Bear Adventures

Tweedsmuir Provincial Park
(604) 629-9871
greatbearchalet.com
greatbearchalet@xplornet.com
See Visitor Guide p. 28

Inner Coast Inlet Tours

Bella Coola Harbour
(604) 992-1424
innercoastinlettours.com
info@bellacoolacannery.com
See Visitor Guide p.12

Kynoch Adventures

1896 Highway 20, Hagensborg
(250) 398-0390
kynochadventuretours.com
info@kynochadventuretours.com
See Trail Guide p.17

Nan Adventure Tours

Bella Coola Harbour
nanadventuretours.com
nanadventuretours@gmail.com
(250) 267-5384 or
(250) 799-0068

Nuk Tessli Lodge

Kleena Kleene
(778) 766-3487
nuktessli.com
nuktessli@gmail.com

Over The Top Adventures

Hagensborg
(250) 413-7433
info@overthetopadventures.ca
overthetopadventures.ca
See Trail Guide p.23

Solstice Alpine Guides

Bella Coola
(250) 218-1513
SolsticeAlpineGuides.ca
solsticealpineguides@
hotmail.com

Thunder Mountain Adventures

4950 Hwy 20, Firvale
(250) 982-0021
info@tmadventures.com
thundermountainadventures.com
See Trail Guide p.29

Tweedsmuir Air

Nimpo Lake
1-800-668-4335
flytweedsmuirair@gmail.com
tweedsmuirair.com
See Visitor Guide p.19

Tweedsmuir Park Lodge

Stuie (Atnarko River)
1-877-982-2407
tweedsmuirparklodge.com
info@tweedsmuirparklodge.com
See Visitor Guide p.13

SERVICES

BC Ferries

(888) 223-3779
bcferries.com
See Visitor Guide p.5

Bella Coola Airport

(250) 982-2225
1685 Airport Road,
Hagensborg

Bella Coola Harbour Authority

Bella Coola Harbour
(250) 799-5633
bellacoolaharbour@gmail.com

Bella Coola Trails Alliance

Bella Coola
bellacoolatrails.ca

Bella Coola Valley Transit System

Bella Coola
(250) 799-0079
bctransit.com

Bella Coola Vehicle Rentals

Bella Coola Airport & Anahim
Lake Airport
(250) 982- 2146
bellacoolavehiclerentals.com
CoolaWheels@netbistro.com

Central Coast Regional District

crrd-bc.ca
(250) 799-5291
626 Cliff St / Box 186
Bella Coola, BC V0T 1C0

Department of Oceans & Fisheries Area 5B

(250) 799-5345
Regs, limits, openings &
closures pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

El'Con Service Station

440 Mackenzie St Bella Coola
(250) 799-5314
ronrichards120@gmail.com

Fawn Gunderson Realty

Bella Coola
(250) 982-2314
fawn@landquest.com
See Trail Guide p. 27

Pacific Coastal Airlines

pacificcoastal.com
1-800-663-2872
604.273.8666

Snootli Creek Hatchery Hagensborg

Call for Tours: 250-982-2214

West Coast Helicopters

Hagensborg Airport
(250) 982-2181
westcoasthelicopters.com
bellacoolareception@
wcheli.com

Williams Lake & District Credit Union

Bella Coola
(250) 799-5328
wldcu.com
See Trail Guide p.19

SHOPPING

Copper Sun Gallery

Bella Coola
(250) 267-6430
coppersungallery.ca
info@coppersungallery.ca
See Trail Guide p.7

Eagle Lodge Fishing & Pro Shop

1103 Hwy 20, Bella Coola
(250) 799-5587
info@eaglelodgebc.com
See Visitor Guide p.29

Kopas Store

Bella Coola
(250) 799-5553
bellacoola.ca/portfolio/
kopasstore
See Visitor Guide p.30

Mamayu Gift Shop

Four-Mile Subdivision,
Bella Coola
(250) 799-5211

Moore's Organic Garden Centre & Nursery

S Grant Rd, Bella Coola
(250) 799-5975
mooresorganic@gmail.com

Mountain Valley Organics

1926 Hwy 20 Hagensborg
(250) 982-2205
mountainvo@hotmail.com
See Visitor Guide p.23

Townsite Home Hardware

635 Cliff Street, Bella Coola
(250) 799-5353
katlyn.wilson@
homehardware.ca

Art House Gallery

Bella Coola Valley Arts Council
1961 Highway 20, Hagensborg
bellacoola.ca

FOOD, GROCERIES & RESTAURANTS

Bella Coola Consumers Co-op

Bella Coola
(250) 799-5325
bellacoolacoop@gmail.com

Bella Coola Valley Inn Restaurant

441 Mackenzie St, Bella Coola
1-888-799-5316
bellacoolavalleyinn.com
valleyinn@outlook.com



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Email: bcsupply33@gmail.com

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DIRECTORY

Cafe Bella
1103 Hwy 20, Bella Coola
(250) 799-5587
eaglelodgebc.com
See Visitor Guide p.29

Eagle's Nest Resort
Anahim Lake
(250) 742-3707
eaglesnest-resort.com
info@eaglesnest-resort.com
See Trail Guide p.32

End of the Road Cafe
Hagensborg, BC
1896 Hwy 20 Hagensborg
endoftheroadcoffee@gmail.com

Hagensborg Shop Easy
Hagensborg
(250) 982-2637
hagmerc@xplornet.com

Liquid Sunshine Mobile Cafe
Lobelco Fairgrounds/ location
updated online
(604) 754-9504
Liquidsunshinebellacoola@
gmail.com

Mountain Valley Organics
1926 Highway 20, Hagensborg
(250) 982-2205
mountainvo@hotmail.com

My Lunch Spot
1660 Hwy 20, Hagensborg
(250) 982-0095

Puntzi Lake Bakery & Cafe
3964 Puntzi Lake Rd
(250) 481-0011
woodlandsfishinresort.com
info@woodlandsfishingresort.
com

**Tweedsmuir Park Lodge
Restaurant**
Stuie (Atnarko River)
1-877-982-2407
tweedsmuirparklodge.com
info@tweedsmuirparklodge.
com See Visitor Guide p.13

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Bella Coola Museum
Bella Coola
bellacoolamuseum.ca
(250) 799-5767

Bella Coola Music Festival
bellacoolamusic.org
info@bellacoolamusic.org

Bella Coola Music Festival
bellacoolamusic.org
info@bellacoolamusic.org

Bella Coola Visitor Centre
1881 Hwy 20 Hagensborg,
bellacoola.ca

Nuxalk Radio 91. FM
Bella Coola
nuxalkradio.com

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

POLICE
(250) 799-5363

AMBULANCE
800-461-9911

FIRE
(250) 799-5321

**CONSERVATION
OFFICER**
877-952-7277



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Photo: Rachel Hunter, Cafe Bella

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