

Review of Public Use in the North Coast LRMP Area

*Information Based on Interviews
Conducted by Denise Stoffels*

**Prepared for the Government Technical Team
North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan**

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Introduction

Over the fall of 2001 numerous people were contacted to attempt to determine levels of public recreational use in the North Coast LRMP area. Public recreational use was distinguished from tourism activity, based mainly on guided recreation (tourism) versus unguided recreation by local users (public use). It was very hard to estimate numbers of users in given areas. Levels of use are relative, what is considered high use in the North Coast LRMP might be one party/day or 2-3 parties/weekend. Very few areas in the LRMP were described as having daily use of 1 or more parties. In addition perceptions of use varied widely. Some sites were described by one user as having low use, while the next user would describe the site as having medium to high use. Definitions of 'low', 'medium' and 'high' vary widely and most people were unable to quantify use into number categories.

A public use data base, incorporating all unique points from three recreation point coverages (TOS Features coverage (qftf), Public Use site (qpus) and an anchorage coverage (aanch)) was created. Within a portion of this database (that portion relative to the grizzly bear effectiveness map) information regarding User Days was added based on information outlined below and my estimates. The remainder of the database still requires user days to be added.

Categories for the user days are as follows:

0-200

200-500

500-1000

1000-2500

2500+

Most sites are limited to use from May - October with majority of use in July - September, so users days should not be averaged over 12 months. These categories are arbitrary divisions and as more information becomes available it may be necessary or advantageous to adjust these categories.

I tried to have these user days represent only land use at sites, but use may be overestimated at anchorage locations assuming that not everyone leaves their boats. Level of accuracy is relatively low for most of the data points. Categories were designed that would account for the variation among perceived levels of use and assumed an average group size of 2 – 4 people, with generally short visits of 1 -2 days. All information available re: human use including the angling use data, Protected Areas Strategy information and information gathered for this report were incorporated in user day designations.

Numerous books on recreational opportunities in the North Coast area were also consulted. No new information regarding recreational use in the LRMP area was found, and none of the books contained level of use information.

Public Use Interviews

The following pages summarize conversations with various contacts in the plan area.

STEWART

Karl Johansen – Recreation Officer for Kalum Forest District

- No information regarding use – recommended contacting Stewart Yacht Club – Godi & Eva 636-2585

Bob Harlowe, Ministry of Forests, Stewart Field Office 250-636-2336

- Overall use is very low due to small population (400 – 500 residents) and poor economy.
- East Georgia River – some hiking, prospecting, spring bear hunt and freshwater Coho fishing. Use is low, maybe up to 6 user groups per season
- Marmot River – prospectors are active in the area throughout the summer months. There are about 3-4 active claims. On occasion there is some goat hunting in area, but use is not annual.
- Anchorage locations include Ford’s Cove, Belle Bay by Hattie Island and Maple Bay

Godi Appenzellar, Stewart Yacht Club and Town Counsellor 250-636-2585

- There are no commercial fishing operators based in Stewart. There are 2-3 charter operators based in Stewart.
- Stewart Yacht Club berths about 15 – 20 boats; the small private marina adjacent has about 5 boats. Some of these belong to Hyder residents.
- Some people come to Stewart to launch boats during the holidays, but numbers are fairly low.
- This year the Yacht club made about \$8000.00 compared to past years were income was \$40,000.00.
- This year the yacht club placed out three floats with cabins on them located in the canal. They are located at 12, 20 and 40 miles from Stewart (Helen Bay, Ford’s Cove, Belle Bay). They are in the process of getting water lease’s for them.
- Halibut fishing occurs south by Portland Inlet or Pearse Canal. Some crab fishing occurs in the upper Canal.
- The Alaskan congressman(?) has indicated to Hyder residents that he will try to get the ferries to return to Hyder, however the likelihood of this is very uncertain.

Brian Woodward – City Administrator for Stewart

- 2 small boat harbours in Stewart
- generally local use only, very low levels of tourist use
- most use is private recreational users conducting day trips through out the year

- peak use is May to end of August, during winter use is very low (<dozen users during winter)
- most use is sports fishermen, water based used, very little land use in Portland Canal area (very few anchorages and poor access to land)
- Bay by Sitklan Island is where a lot of use occurs (in vicinity of Wales Island, on US side of canal)

Recommended speaking to Richard Lemeaux – Hideaway Lodge 250-636-9172

Richard Lemeaux – Hideaway Lodge, Portland Canal 250-636-9172

- Hideaway Lodge is located approximately 23 miles down the canal (public use coverage as qpus_tag R6_103P_044), south of Ford’s Cove
- use varies widely from week to week, some weeks he sees no other boats, other weeks he might see 15 – 20 boats, mostly locals but also some from out of town
- use varies from year to year, use has decreased due to decreased population in Stewart/Hyder
- use is almost exclusively on water due to inhospitable shoreline and large tidal influences
- winter use occurs but is concentrated closer to Stewart
- species fished for: halibut, salmon, crab, some lingcod, red snapper

PRINCE RUPERT

Ministry of Forests, North Coast Forest District

Matthew Lamb-Yorski and Sarma Leipins

Visited office on August 30, 2001

Tentative use categories for the May – October period were based on total visits. Low <5 visits, Medium is 6 – 25 visits, High is 26+ visits. For land access sites high were 10 visits per week. This varies from the final use categories as defined above in the introduction.

- Portland Canal receives relatively low use. There are few anchorages on Canadian side (Maple Bay, Belle Bay etc.) so use though low, is concentrated at these sites (use guessed to average about 1-2 parties per week, see above).
- Observatory Inlet has low use due to distance from gas supply. Potential for increase in use due to stunning scenery, historic values (Anyox, Alice Arm etc.), especially if gas were available in Kincolith. Hastings Arm is spectacular scenic value. Fishing is okay but not an attraction as better fishing is available closer to Prince Rupert.
- The road to Kitsault (access via New Aiyansh area) receives relatively high hunting use during moose season.

- Hunting potential in Stagoo Creek watershed, use likely low (boat access only) (site in anchorages coverage).
- Nasago Gulf (Chambers Creek) has permanent logging camp (Triumph Timber) (anchorage in area is in public use coverage as qpus_tag R6_103J_047).
- Kwinamass River is a Class 2, guided river, with moderate to moderately high use. River is accessible by riverboat or canoe. Also excellent wildlife viewing (grizzly bear) (public use coverage as qpus_tag R6_103J_046).
- Khutzeymateen Inlet. Park has restricted access, but many charter operators conduct bear viewing in inlet in vicinity of Mouse Creek and at small bay west of Mouse Creek. (These locations are not included in any of the human use coverages.) Floatplanes also offer viewing flights and will land in inlet for viewing from the plane. Viewing occurs from the water, with little to no land access. There is a very high potential for this use to increase if/when cruise ships start docking in Prince Rupert as this is an easy day or half day trip via boat, or a short flight tour.
- The mouth of Work Channel is a prime whale watching location. Currently there are no regulations regarding whale-viewing operations in this area. This area receives high use with some harassment of the animals already occurring. Again, this activity has the potential to increase greatly if cruise ships stop in Prince Rupert.
- Work Channel receives high use by fishermen. Many launch boats by the Lachmach Forest Service Road. Quottoon Inlet is very scenic with narrows and waterfall and several anchorage locations.
- Khyex River is scenic with wildlife viewing opportunities and canoeing potential but receives low use.
- Kwinitza Creek road is ATV access only. Use is low.
- The Skeena River Islands are scenic and receive seasonal high use by sport fishers.
- Scotia River has a permanent logging camp by the confluence with the Skeena. Access is limited by boat. Hunting may occur at relatively high levels by employees (or friends/family of employees) working in the area.
- Khtada Lake has a cabin on it (owned by Trevor Pierce of Inland Air). Sport fishing opportunities are high. Access is by air or via boat/hike. Use is low, about 15 parties from June to September (based on guest book at cabin). Confirmed with staff at Inland Air.
- Port Essington – historic values are high. Use is relatively low, due to difficulty of access (boat access only, area influenced by tide and current).
- Ecstall River is accessible by jet boat almost to Johnston Creek (qpus 591). Locals do hunt and fish along this river corridor, use is medium from May to October, with use fluctuating during the period.
- Ecstall River – hot springs reported at Hayward Creek, but location undefined and use is low to nil.

- Early spring (March – May) heli-skiing occurs on Tsimpsean Peninsula east of Prince Rupert. Current levels of use are low, with just some locals participating. Is a potential for use to increase if a tour company starts advertising this activity.
- Dundas Island – multiple pocket beaches, sport fishing opportunities and whale watching. Use is generally high.
- Lucy Islands – this area is very high, with one or more parties visiting location almost daily during May – October. Use is high with kayakers and small boats islands offering beaches, camping, hiking and wildlife viewing. Use levels are potential threat to breeding bird colonies, but availability of monitoring information is poor.
- Porcher Island area – relatively high use due to vicinity to Prince Rupert. Popular with kayakers, fishermen. Kitkatia offers high fishing potential, Welcome Harbour/Oval Bay and Porcher Peninsula offer many beaches, wildlife viewing, hiking, old clipper shipwreck etc. There is a Forest Service Rec Site at Welcome Harbour with hiking access to Oval Bay.
- Popular deep-sea sport fishing north of Porcher Island, east of Stephens/Prescott Islands.
- Captain Cove – golden cedar.
- Verney Passage (Hawkesbury and Gribbell Islands) is very scenic, and highly recommended.
- Simpson / Lowe/ Weare Lakes are very scenic and offer pleasant circle route for canoes/kayaks.
- Mink Trap Bay/Anger Island/Wilson and Markle Inlets offer excellent kayaking/small boating opportunities. Current use is moderate, to moderately high, but is increasing. Potential for a portage route across Pitt Island in this area if some trails are identified.
- Campania Island currently receives relatively low use. This area has spectacular scenery and excellent beaches and offers a virtually paradise to sea kayakers. Use in this area is bound to increase as more people become aware of the area.

Inland Air

- Khtada Lake – about 15 parties from June to September, based on guest book kept at cabin (public use coverage as qpus_tag R6_103I_040).
- Union Lake – about 3-5 parties per year.
- Ryan Lake/Kumedon – occasional use by goat hunters (uncertain of exact location).
- Hayward Lake – about 3 years ago received heavy use by moose hunters, use has declined in recent years (Ecstall River watershed).

Vancouver Island Helicopters Ltd., Blake Dewhirst, 250-624-2792

- Less than 1% of business is non-commercial recreational use.
- One group of skiers who charters them for 1 – 3 days each spring to go skiing east of Prince Rupert. Not true heliskiing as they are not ferried up mountain during day, it is just a drop-off /pick up.
- Contact for skiers: Judd at Cowpuccino's 250-627-1395 (not in until October 20, 2001). There has been talk of advertising the skiing and developing it into a more commercial activity. This has not been confirmed.

Cruise Ship Industry

Shawn Stevenson, Port of Prince Rupert, 250-627-7545

This information falls under tourism potential, not public use.

Pocket Cruise Ships

- Currently pocket cruise ships have started visiting Prince Rupert as a port of call (6 – 8 hour stop on way to Alaska) or as a turn around port (up to 12 hour stop before returning south).
- Most pocket cruise ships currently catered to have 75 – 140 passengers, though ships can range from 20 – 250 passengers.
- Currently ships offer 5 tours to their clients – harbour tour via sea kayak, fishing trip, museum tour, North Pacific cannery tour and Pike Island tour. Flight seeing tours and whale watching tours are other tours that can be offered.
- About 25 pocket cruise ships are expected in 2002 season.
- Use is expected to almost double in 2003, with +40 ships visiting Prince Rupert.
- USA companies, most based in Seattle, WA, own majority of the pocket cruise ships.

Large Cruise Ships

- Currently there is a written commitment from one company to begin port of call stops in Prince Rupert in 2003, with at least two other companies expressing verbal interest.
- In 2003, expect one ship per week (2200 passengers) from May – September for a total of ~50,000 visitors for the season. It is expected that current levels of sea kayaking tours, fishing excursions, flight seeing tours, whale watching etc. will triple or quadruple current levels.
- The plan is for this to increase reaching about 5 ships/week by 2010 (~12,000 people/week).
- This is a major industry development that will have a very large impact on the number of tours occurring in the Prince Rupert area.
- Background reports with data regarding cruise ships and the related economics of having them stop in Prince Rupert are available from Shawn.

KITIMAT

Andrew Weber – Kitimat-Stikine Regional District

No information – recommended Diane Hewlett Development Officer for Kitimat 250-632-6401, Kitimat marina Richard Smeale or Brenda 250-632-6401

Richard Smeale, MK Bay Marina 250-632-6401

Called on August 21, visited on September 5, 2001

- Marina does not have a computer system and cannot readily access figures regarding the number of boats launched from marina, number of boats moored etc.
- On both occasions staff did indicate that they would get back to me with more information. To date no information has been received.

Diane Hewlett – Kitimat Economic Development Officer - 250-632-8921

(also Trafford Hall, Municipal Manager and fisherman)

Visited Kitimat on September 5, 2001

- Use of the Douglas Channel area originating in Kitimat occurs year round but September to March use is very low.
- During spring, summer season “high use” might be 6-7 boats at an anchorage. No areas were identified where this level of use consistently occurred. This level of use was more sporadic (e.g. long weekends, fair weather etc.).
- Most use out of Kitimat is in upper Douglas Channel, within the Kalum LRMP area.
- Limit of day use is Wright Sound. Use is increasing south of this due to sale of fuel in Hartley Bay.
- Most use is limited to water activities as much of the coastline is inaccessible due to large tidal differences, difficulty of approach etc.
- Land use does occur at the hot springs (Bishop Bay, Europa or Shearwater, Goat Harbour), at Monkey Beach in Ursula Channel, Crab River area and Kitkiata.
- Hunting activity occurs in the Crab River, Lake area (south of Weewanie Creek). Recent clear-cut provides ideal deer habitat, and roads offer easy access for hiking. Kiltuish Inlet (Alan Reach) and other areas with recent (<15 years) logging are also used by hunters.
- Kiskosh Inlet ((public use coverage as qpus_tag R6_103H_055 and R6_103H_017) is a very popular area with regular weekly use, daily use during peak periods. Peak times undefined.
- Fish Trap Bay, on the east coast of Hawksbury island (north of the extreme northern point of Gribbel Island) is a high use area for offshore fishing. Bay is somewhat exposed and is deep. (Site included in anchorage (Aanch_nc) coverage.)
- Eclipse Bay on the southeast end of Campania Island is a very popular moorage site for halibut fishermen as this is the only moorage site on east coast of island. Use

peaks in July during peak fishing period, and can be 5-6 boats using moorage on any given night. No land use. (Public use coverage as qpus_tag R6_103A_028)

- Lowe Inlet offers opportunities for sockeye salmon fishing. Some fresh water fishing occurs here. (Tourism features coverage as qtft_nc_id 230, 380)
- Kitkiata is described as the best crab spot in all of Douglas Channel. Very little fresh water fishing in this inlet with the exception of a few native users. Halibut fishing also occurs at mouth of the inlet. (Public use coverage as qpus_tag R6_103H_045)
- Alan Reach is popular with commercial shrimp fishing boats, but receives relatively low use by recreational users with the exception of the hot springs (Europa or Shearwater springs, tourism features coverage as qtft_nc_id 45).
- Seasonal native fishing village located on Princess Royal Island (outside of LRMP area) on bay west of Barnard Harbour, east of Ashdown Island .

Doug Davis, West Coast Launch Ltd. 250-627-9166

- Majority of his ferrying work is for the fishing lodges.
- Does a few kayaking groups, but does not identify any areas as high use. This year he took 6 people to Dundas Island. Some limited use to Oval Bay and Lucy Island.

Taylor Ryan, Prince Rupert Water Taxi/Metlakatla Ferry Service – 250-624-3337

- Majority of work involves Pike Island Tour which is run thru the museum.
- Has taken a few groups (4-5 trips this year) of kayakers to Kitkatla for an average of 5 –7 day trips. There are a few trips of this type each year, but very limited. Mentioned that generally kayakers do not run into other kayakers during trips due to low use.

Was unsuccessful in contacting New Pacifica Charters and Expeditions, EcoTreks Sea Kayaking Adventures and Seashore Charters. Presumably emails and phone messages were not being checked as it was off season for these companies.

OUTLYING COMMUNITIES

Jan Lemon – Oona River 250-628-3241

- Ferry service to Oona River is up to 4 times per week depending on tides. It is regular, and will be maintained at least for next 4 years
- Population at Oona River at peak is about 60 – 70 people in 22 households. Usually about 25 – 30 people in town at any given time due to work commitments elsewhere
- Hatchery on river is developing programs for tourism/educational purposes.
- Freshwater fishing on river occurs year-round, use is increasing all the time.
- In fall deer hunters use area – mostly locals or people with some connection to the community. They use logging infrastructure to move around

- Hiking trails in area – May to October they receive daily use by locals, visitors on average 1-2 times/week. Trails currently exist along riverbank, across peninsula to beaches; constructing trail to head of Porcher Inlet. They are also looking at developing hut-to-hut marine trails in the future in conjunction with Kitkatla community. They are also promoting Oona River as an area for retreats/tourism etc. and predict a significant increase in use in the future.
- Experimental forest from MOF in area is seeing increased use for educational field trips.
- Public dock receives varying levels of use – depends on weather, gas prices etc.
- Local charters are available from Oona River.
- Kayaking in the Porcher area, especially Kitkatla Inlet occurs throughout the spring – fall period. Use is continuous and increasing. A local resident is working to open a kayaking business in Oona River.

Dan Cardinal – Hartley Bay – 250-841-2500 dcardina@home.com

- Spoke briefly with Dan, followed up with an email request for information (sent Aug. 31/01). Second email request sent late September but no response has been received.

John Wheatley, Kitsault (Caretaker) 250-831-2211

- Road access to town is gated 8 km out of town. Town site receives little hunting, with the exception of natives. Most natives access town site via boat, coming from Kincolith or Port Simpson. Hunting occurs all year round with about 20 –30 hunters a year.
- Road beyond gate receives hunters and mushroom pickers in season. Road condition is deteriorating so use is decreasing with time.
- Public recreation use occurs in town site by appointment only. In past use reached levels of 50 people/month for 6 months. Current use is about 150 people in total June to end of October (use is concentrated in August and September).
- Town site is for sale. Potential for use to increase if mining resumes or if tourism is pursued.

Summary

And to finish, some thoughts for consideration...

The above information is incomplete and for the most part not quantitative. Information of this type will be best collected through the table and public review. Overall, use in the North Coast is very limited with some exceptions in areas of concentrated use (Khutyzemateen, hot spring locations, Lucy Island and whale watching areas).

The definition of high use also differs significantly depending on the type of use. For example, what a charter fishing boat considers low use, might be considered high use by a kayaker who is seeking a 'wilderness' experience. This difference in perception of levels of use must be recognized when considering the public use information.

Finally, in spite of the current low levels of use, the potential for water-based recreation in the North Coast LRMP area is very high. The area is highly suited to activities such as kayaking, which will likely increase in time. It appears that tourism is also going to be increasing (see comments above re: cruise ships) and this future growth will need to be addressed by the LRMP.