

3 CONTEXT AND SETTING

3.1 Physical Setting

The Mid Coast Forest District is located within the Vancouver Forest Region on the central west coast of British Columbia. Located just north of Vancouver Island, this Forest District stretches from Cape Caution in the south to Sheep Passage in the north. It covers approximately 3.2 million hectares, or about three-quarters the size of Vancouver Island. The Mid Coast Forest District encompasses the Mid Coast Timber Supply Area, portions of Western Forest Product's TFL 25, portions of Weyerhaeuser's TFL 39, and nine provincial parks and recreation areas.

The terrain of the Mid Coast Forest District (hereinafter referred to as the Mid Coast) is varied and rugged. The outer coast portion of the Mid Coast is characterized by numerous low-lying islands while further inland the terrain becomes very mountainous with inlets with steep slopes that rise quickly from the water. There are four biogeoclimatic zones on the Mid Coast Forest District including the Coastal Western Hemlock zone which occurs at the low to mid elevations, the Mountain Hemlock zone found predominately at mid to upper elevations, and the Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir zone and the Alpine Tundra, both located at higher elevations.

3.2 Transportation and Communication Infrastructure

3.2.1 Introduction

Bella Coola, situated at the head of the North Bentinck Arm of Burke Channel, marks the western terminus of Canada's first land crossing by Alexander Mackenzie in 1793. The Mid Coast is regarded as one of the most remote regions of British Columbia. The Mid Coast has one road link to other parts of the province, and is served by both air and ferry transportation, however the ferry service is curtailed during winter months, and poor weather during the winter often makes the Mid Coast difficult to reach by air. While the Mid Coast has most telecommunication services, they are limited and, in some of the remote communities like Waglisla, internet connections are not always reliable.

3.2.2 Road Transportation

Highway 20 is the only road link between the Mid Coast Forest District and the rest of the province. Highway 20 runs east-west between Bella Coola and Williams Lake, a total of 456 kilometres. In Williams Lake, Highway 20 connects with Highway 97, the key north-south road corridor in BC.

Prior to the early 1950s, there was no road access to the Bella Coola Valley. Pack horse trails provided the only overland route from Bella Coola to the interior of BC. The provincial government refused to construct a road between the Bella Coola Valley and Anahim Lake because of the mountainous terrain and steep grades that would be required. The project was eventually initiated by the citizens of Bella Coola, and the road completed

in 1953, with the official opening in 1955. The western component of Highway 20 that rises out of the Bella Coola valley and through the mountains en route to the interior plateau (known as the Hill) is characterized by remarkably steep grades -- as much as 18 percent -- and several switchbacks. This notwithstanding, the Hill route is traveled daily (and nightly) year round by all kinds of motorized vehicles, including semi-trailers, and Highway 20 serves as the key supply line for goods and services to the communities of the Bella Coola Valley and beyond.

Several upgrades are required for Highway 20, especially the Hill component, however it is estimated that the cost of replacing the Bella Coola hill road would be expensive, requiring a significant portion of the provincial government's annual road budget.¹

The provincial Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MoTH) tracks highway traffic at location counters throughout BC. The counters provide information on Summer Average Daily Traffic, which incorporates both year-round regional and tourist traffic. In the Thompson Okanagan Region², there are seven counters located between Bella Coola and Williams Lake. Traffic data from these counters show that between 1995 and 1999 the trend in traffic growth on Highway 20 has been either relatively constant or declining. While there is no 1996 to 1999 data available for the counter near Bella Coola, MoTH indicates that the trend in traffic volumes at Bella Coola is similar to that captured by the counter near Anahim Lake, which shows a slight upward trend.

The SADT/AADT (Summer Average Daily Traffic/Average Annual Daily Traffic) ratios indicates that tourism traffic significantly boosts daily volumes during the summer months at the four westernmost counters -- in fact, the further west the counter, the higher the SADT/AADT ratio. Clearly the higher traffic volumes during the summer months is strongly impacted by ferry traffic arriving at and departing from the Mid Coast.

¹ Source: Premier's Summit on Economic Opportunity for the Cariboo-Chilcotin, 2000.

² This refers to the MoTH Thompson Okanagan Region, which includes the Bella Coola Valley.

**Table 3.2-1: Summer Average Daily Traffics
Highway 20, Williams Lake to Bella Coola**

Location of Traffic Counter	Summer Average Daily Traffic on Highway 20 between Bella Coola and Williams Lake					SADT/AADT (1995-98)
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
West end of Foot Hill Bridge, 78 km east of Bella Coola	189	na	na	na	na ³	1.97
1.2 km west of Anahim Street, Anahim Lake	282	294	321	309	296	1.51
2.0 km east of Chilanko Loop Road, 175 km west of Williams lake	415	420	na	470	458	1.27
.8 km west of Route 97, Williams Lake	na	na	18,389	17,368	17,906	1.02

Source: Ministry of Highways and Transportation

It is estimated that there are approximately 30,000 traffic movements to and from Bella Coola per year (measured at the traffic counter 78 km east of Bella Coola). A large proportion of total traffic on Highway 20 - - approximately 20 percent -- is truck traffic. During the summer months approximately 5 percent of traffic is comprised of recreational vehicles.⁴

There is no public bus service on Highway 20 between Bella Coola and Williams Lake. While a number of bus tours operate between Vancouver Island and the Mid Coast, there are currently no charter bus tours to the Mid Coast originating in Williams Lake. While two bus tour companies have operated out of Williams Lake in the past, both suspended service due to poor ridership. A staffer at the Visitor Information Centre in Williams Lake indicates that the demand exists for bus tours on this route, but several years of operation and marketing would be required to build the ridership needed to make it a profitable venture.

Visitors arriving by ferry can rent a car in Bella Coola in order to drive Highway 20 to Williams Lake. On average, the drive takes 6 to 7 hours.

The early arrival time for northbound ferries during the summer months (at 6:30 am or 7:30 am four times per week⁵), and the long drive from Bella Coola to Williams Lake, likely act as incentives for many ferry travellers to spend only a short time in Bella Coola, and then to drive on to Williams Lake early in the day. This points to the need for effective marketing of the Mid Coast's attractions both *before* and *upon* the ferry's arrival at Bella Coola in order to increase the number and duration of stayovers.

³ While MoTH may have collected data for some of the years between 1996 to 1999, at the time of writing they have not yet been tabulated.

⁴ Source: Ministry of Transportation and Highways

⁵ summer schedule for 2001

3.2.3 Water Transportation

Ferry System

BC Ferries serves the communities of the Mid Coast on a year round basis, providing both vehicle and walk-on passenger service. Coast Ferries also provides freight transportation from Vancouver to Klemtu and Bella Bella twice per month.

During the summer months (approximately mid June to mid September), the Queen of Chilliwack ferry travels to and from the Mid Coast on the Discovery Coast Passage (Route 40). The service extends from Port Hardy to Bella Coola, making several stops per week in Namu, Shearwater, Ocean Falls, McLoughlin Bay (near Bella Bella), and Klemtu. Passengers have a choice of shorter, one-day trips between the two home ports, or more extended trips with stopovers at some of the smaller communities. The Queen of Chilliwack has the capacity for 85 cars, and 250 passengers. Although a relatively new service, the Discovery Coast Passage has garnered a reputation as a unique tourism draw.

Ferry service to and from the Mid Coast is significantly reduced between September and May. During these months, the communities of the Mid Coast are served by the Queen of the North as part of the Inland Passage Route 10 between Port Hardy and Prince Rupert. The schedule for the winter of 2000/2001 indicates that the ferry stops at Mid Coast communities approximately twice per month in each direction, while there is no service at all to or from Bella Coola.

Table 3.2-2: BC Ferries' Traffic Volumes on Routes 10 and 40 to the Mid Coast Fiscal Year 1999/2000				
	To Mid Coast destinations Fiscal 99/00		To destinations Other than Mid Coast Fiscal 99/00	
	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers
Route 10 (Winter) -- Sept. to May				
Departs Bear Cove (Pt. Hardy)	668	2,858	7,742	28,021
Departs Prince Rupert	79	765	7,801	33,579
Departs Mid Coast communities	23	234	524	2,179
Route 40 (Summer) -- June, July, August and Sept⁶				
Departs Bear Cove (Pt. Hardy)	1,063	3,492	0	0
Departs Prince Rupert	16	178	0	0
Departs Mid Coast communities	228	804	1,016	4,019

⁶ Route 40 generally runs until Mid September.

The foregoing traffic data for fiscal year 1999/2000 shows that, during the winter months, just over 2,858 passengers travelled from Port Hardy to the Mid Coast, and 765 from Prince Rupert. The Mid Coast accounted for approximately ten percent of northbound passengers, and two percent of southbound passengers, on Route 10.

During the summer months of June, July, August and September, 3,492 passengers travelled to the Mid Coast from Port Hardy on Route 40. Over the same period, a slightly larger number of passengers (4,019) travelled from the Mid Coast to Port Hardy. There was also a small volume of passengers travelling between the communities of the Mid Coast.

While the Discovery Passage Route is only four years old, awareness of the service is growing, and passenger volumes have been steady over the past few years.⁷ By bringing visitors to the Mid Coast regularly throughout the summer months, the Discovery Passage service has made a significant contribution to the regional economy, particularly in Bella Coola, the northern terminus of the route and the gateway to Highway 20.

BC Ferries indicates that the Queen of Chilliwack is underutilized during the summer months, and that its lack of amenities (such as no cabin accommodation) makes it more appealing to a younger market. Older or retired travellers – a growing component of the tourism market – find it less attractive. BC Ferries is therefore planning to change the service to the Mid Coast by the year 2004 this matter is presently under negotiation. The Queen of Chilliwack will be taken out of northern service entirely and a larger ship (of the same size as the Queen of the North) will provide a modified Mid Coast service. The new vessel would be faster, and have cabins for passengers. The service would be reduced to three or four times per week.

Tourism operators and business owners on the Mid Coast, especially those in Bella Coola, have expressed serious concern about the proposed service changes. Bella Coola presently has enough capacity (hotel rooms, stores and other services) to handle the number of daily arrivals on the Queen of Chilliwack and to provide accommodation. However, the hotels in Bella Coola would not be able to accommodate a significantly higher number of arrivals, and this business would be lost. Moreover, these arrivals would be less frequent. In addition to the foregoing, Bella Coola would become a stop off on the Mid Coast route, losing its status as a destination point.

It is our understanding that BC Ferries is presently revising its plans for the new service, in response to public consultation feedback in the fall of 2000, however these plans are not yet available publicly.

Private or Charter Vessels

While many pleasure and other private craft ply the waters of the Mid Coast, it is extremely difficult to obtain accurate numbers. A majority of these go to Hakai Pass and Fiordland, or the circle route that links Dean Channel (north of King Island), Labouchere Channel and Burke Channel. There are harbour authorities in both Bella Coola and Ocean Falls, however only a small subset tie up at these harbours. On average, 40 to 50

⁷ It is difficult to make consistent year-to-year comparisons of passenger/vehicle numbers on Route 40 over the past four years because, among other things, the duration of the summer season has varied. For example, Route 40 ran until the end of September in fiscal year 1997/98, but only to the second week of September in the subsequent two years.

boats tie up at Bella Coola harbour each summer – they are generally at least 40 feet in length. No information is available for the Ocean Falls harbour. The manager of the Shearwater marina indicates that at least 300 boats tie up overnight per season, and that there are many more daytime visitors.

Travel between the communities of the Mid Coast are primarily by air or charter boat. Charter boat travel declines during the winter months.

A sea bus travels between Shearwater and Bella Bella every two hours.

Port Facilities

The communities of the Mid Coast have the following port or wharf infrastructure.

- There is no public dock on **Denny Island** (where Shearwater is located), but water access is available via the DFO wharf or Shearwater Marina's float. There is a ferry dock at Atlin Point.
- There is a public Transport Canada Wharf in the centre of **Bella Bella**, and the BC Ferries McLoughlin Bay terminal is located 3 kilometers from the village. A new road has recently been completed to connect the ferry terminal with Bella Bella, at a cost of \$1.6 million.
- **Ocean Falls** has a Transport Canada wharf and a roll on-roll off ferry wharf.
- **Klemtu** has a public Transport Canada wharf, and a ro-ro ferry dock.
- **Bella Coola** has a Transport Canada wharf, a public boat launch, a marina, a ro-ro ferry dock and several charter operations.

3.2.4 Air Transportation

Travel to and from the Mid Coast, and between the communities of the Mid Coast, is largely by air, particularly during the winter months. This is because ferry and chartered boat service is generally infrequent or slow, and because of the considerable distances involved. However, air travel on the Mid Coast during the winter months can be delayed due to poor weather conditions.

Bella Coola, Bella Bella, and Denny Island (Shearwater) all have paved landing strips, while Oweekeno's landing strip is unpaved and used seasonally. The other communities – Klemtu and Ocean Falls – are accessible by float plane only, while Denny Island also has a protected float plan base.

Approximately 30,000 visitors travelled to and from the Mid Coast in 1999/2000. Pacific Coastal Airways is the only scheduled carrier that serves the Mid Coast, flying to both Bella Bella and Bella Coola from Vancouver. There is one scheduled flight per day from the late fall to mid-May, and two flights per day during the summer months. Flights to and from the Mid Coast are generally at high capacity year round. Pacific Coastal's Beaver aircraft also provides five daily flights per week from Bella Bella to Klemtu.

It is our understanding the Bella Coola airport does not tabulate annual passenger volumes or landings, however we are informed that there were 3,512 landings at the Bella Bella airport in 1990/2000, approximately the same as the year before.

Klemtu, Oweekeno and Ocean Falls are all accessible by charter flights. Pacific Coastal provides charters, and there are two other small chartered airplane operations based within the region -- Bella Coola Air, and Sharp Wings which charters between Williams Lake and the Mid Coast. In addition, there are also two helicopter charter companies with operations in Bella Coola – Vancouver Island Helicopters, and West Coast Helicopters. In addition to regional operators, there are a number of charter companies that fly from Vancouver to the Mid Coast, including North Vancouver Air. Charter plane and helicopter operations provide their services in general transportation, recreation and industrial sectors – for example, transporting passengers to fishing camps and logging camps.

In January 2001 Pacific Coastal Airways cancelled the scheduled air service between the communities of Bella Coola and Bella Bella. This has introduced a new complication for those who need to travel between the two major communities of the Mid Coast. It is now necessary to charter planes for this trip.

3.2.5 Links to Other Transportation Centres

Highway 20 links the Bella Coola Valley with BC Rail's passenger service in Williams Lake. During the winter months, travellers can also take the ferry from the Mid Coast to Prince Rupert, which is the terminus for CP Rail's passenger service.

3.2.6 Communication Infrastructure

In most of the communities of the Mid Coast, telephone, electronic medium and other communication services are operational, although not necessarily up to date. With the exception of Oweekeno, which enjoys a private satellite telecommunication service, telephone services offered on the Mid Coast have some limitations. Internet communication with Bella Bella is also unreliable. Bella Bella (and possibly other First Nation communities on the Mid Coast) is investigating the possibility of upgrading their telecommunication system in cooperation with TELUS.

3.3 Community Profiles

For purposes of analysis, the project area has been disaggregated into six units: the **Outer Coast, Fiords and Lakes, Channels, Owikeno Lake, Mountains and Trade Routes**, and **Princess Royal Island**. (This breakdown is based on logical geographical distinctions, to be discussed in section 5.) There are communities situated in most of these geographic units. The objective of this section is to provide a context for evaluating the various tourism products within the various units, and to identify which communities would benefit from tourism development within each of units on the Mid Coast.

The Mid Coast is one of the most remote and sparsely populated regions of the province, with a population of approximately 4,500 in 1999. Over half of this population is First Nations. The key communities of the Mid Coast are:

- Bella Coola Valley (Bella Coola, Hagensborg, Firvale and Stuie)
- Nuxalk
- Klemtu
- Waglisla (Bella Bella)
- Shearwater/Denny Island
- Ocean Falls
- Oweekeno

Duncanby Landing and Dawsons Landing, both near Rivers Inlet, are small service centres for the marine tourism and commercial fisheries industries.

The largest communities in the project area are the Bella Coola Valley and Waglisla, with populations of 2,440 (including the Nuxalk) and 1,250 respectively. Approximately one half of the population on the Mid Coast lives in the Bella Coola Valley, while the remaining population is distributed across the small settlements on the outer coast.

First Nations have inhabited the Mid Coast area in large numbers for several thousands of years. The region has been home to many permanent First Nation communities and numerous seasonal camps. Prior to the mid-1800s, there was extensive trade between communities on the coast and with the Carrier First Nation in the Interior. This led to the establishment of the famous “grease trails” that connected Nuxalk villages, and led to the Interior plateau. In the early 1800s the First Nations of the Mid Coast and European fur traders began to actively interact in commerce. However, by the 1860s, due to conflict and diseases, many of the villages began to disappear and the First Nation populations entered a period of rapid decline. It wasn’t until after the 1918 flu epidemics that the First Nation populations began to stabilize, however, only a fraction of the original First Nation population remains.

Today, the First Nations that inhabit and/or have territorial claims on the Mid Coast are:

- Kitasoo/Xai’xai – live in Klemtu,
- Heiltsuk – principle community is Waglisla,
- Nuxalk – main village near Bella Coola,
- Oweekeno – community is at Rivers Inlet, and,
- Gwa’Sala-Nakwaxda’xw – Port Hardy, with territorial claims on Mid Coast.

The remainder of this section profiles each of the key communities of the Mid Coast.

3.3.1 Communities of the Outer Coast

Klemtu

Location – Klemtu is situated on a sheltered harbour safe from inclement weather on the south-east side of Swindle Island. The community is located beside Finalyson Channel slightly north and west of the community of Ocean Falls.

History – Klemtu is the only occupied village in Kitasoo/ Xai'xais territory. The people of Klemtu come from two distinct cultural linguistic groups. The Kitasoo component is of Tsimshian origin related to many Nations from the neighbouring north coast including Prince Rupert, Terrace, Port Simpson and Hartley Bay. The Xais'xais are from the Kwa'kwala language group of the Mid Coast.

Transportation – There is BC Ferries service to this community year round. There is no year-round road access to a service centre resulting in the community experiencing high transportation costs.

Demographics – There are approximately 325 residents living in Klemtu.⁸ With just over 30 percent of the community's population being 14 years of age or younger, the community has a significantly higher percentage of young people than is generally observed in the province which averages 20 percent in the same age group. Conversely, fewer than 5 percent of the local population is 65 years or older, which is just over one-third of the provincial average of 13 percent for this age group.

Economy and Labour Force – The fishing industry continues to be a vital part of the local economy. While there has been a decline in recent years within the commercial fishing of wild salmon, a local aquaculture industry is continuing to develop. Fishing and fishing related activities involve approximately 21 percent of the local labour force. In recent years, the Kitasoo people have become more involved in all phases of forest sector activity. Approximately 15 percent of the labour force are now involved in the forest industry. Value-added opportunities in fishing, forestry and other small business areas are being pursued, while government services with health, education, and Band administration is the largest employer in the community and represents 45 percent of the labour force. Transportation, goods and services are also economic generators for this community and make up the remaining employment opportunities.

Tourism Infrastructure – There is a fuel dock, a float, a well-stocked store, café, showers, police, medical services and an excellent source of fresh water. Klemtu generates its own hydroelectric power. Communication systems are up to date with electronic mail service, internet access, telephone and fax links. Tourism is becoming more viable due in part to the Discovery Passage ferry service; however, transportation links remain one of the main barriers to tourism development.

⁸ First Nations populations based on Indian and Northern Affairs registered populations for October 2000.

Waglisla (Bella Bella)

Location – Waglisla is also known as New Bella Bella. It is located on Campbell Island beside Seaforth Channel.

History – The Heiltsuk people lived in many villages and seasonal camp locations throughout the Heiltsuk territory for several thousands of years. Between 1860 and 1890, and as a result of increased conflict and disease, the people began to concentrate into one village in McLoughlin Bay. In the 1890s the Heiltsuk moved their community to the present site of Bella Bella. Heiltsuk people today can trace their lineage to one of the original five tribal groups.

Demographics – Bella Bella is the largest settlement on the outer coast and is the home of the Heiltsuk Nation. Bella Bella has a population of approximately 1,250 people. The community is characterized by a younger average age than the provincial average. Bella Bella, with just over 5 percent of its population over 65 years, has less than half the average seniors population (13 percent) of the province as a whole. Conversely, just under 28 percent of the local population is under 14 years of age, while the BC average for this age group is less than 20 percent.⁹

Economy and Labour Force – Government services represent the largest portion of the labour force with approximately 51 percent involved in band administration, health and education services. The resource sector, with employment in commercial fishing, fish processing, salmon hatchery, and forestry activities provide employment for approximately 27 percent of the labour force. Recent partnerships with forest companies have allowed for expansion into silviculture and logging. Value added fish and forest products are targeted to play a greater role in community economic development in the future. A further 18 percent of the labour force are engaged in retail and whole services, transportation, and construction activities. Approximately 4 percent of the labour force are involved in accommodation, food and beverage services industries. Tourism, home-based and cottage industries, and transportation in goods and services are increasing in importance in the local economy.

Transportation – Campbell Island at McLoughlin Bay is a port of call for BC Ferries' Inside Passage and Discovery Coast services. A paved runway is also on Campbell Island with regular scheduled air service to Vancouver and Vancouver Island.

Key Infrastructure – Bella Bella serves as the main supply and communication centre for the outer Mid Coast. The community has a water treatment plant, docks, fuel, store, banking, RCMP and hospital. Telephone, electronic medium and other communication services are up to date. As well, Bella Bella has a secure supply of hydro electricity from the nearby plant at Ocean Falls.

⁹ Statistics Canada, 1996 Census.

Denny Island/ Shearwater

Location – Denny Island is situated across from Campbell Island and is a non-native community under the Central Coast Regional District settlement area.

History – The Royal Canadian Air Force chose the Shearwater site on Denny Island as an reconnaissance base during World War II. The base was built to accommodate over 2,000 military personnel; however, there was never more than 1,000 stationed there at any one time.

Demographics – There is a population of approximately 120 residents.

Economy and Labour Force – Employment opportunities are found in tourism, beach combing and hand logging. There are two commercial fish boats and one dive boat. A marine service and fuel station is also located at Shearwater with Shearwater Marine being the main local employer. Fish processing did occur but the plant has been closed for several years. There is some cottage industry and home based business occupations.

Transportation – BC Ferries terminal for Discovery Coast ferry service at Shearwater.

Key Infrastructure – There is a resort and marina with 2,000 feet of docks, a new fuel station, campground, showers, restaurant, hardware store, grocery store, laundromat, pub and a post office in Shearwater. The community receives reliable hydro electric power from nearby Ocean Falls. Communication systems are up to date. There is also a 70-ton travel lift, a 100-ton haul-out, and all marine repairs.

Duncanby Landing

Location – Located near Goose Bay in Rivers Inlet.

Economy – This small community is a family-run service center for marine tourism and the commercial fisheries.

Key Infrastructure – Moorage, gas, diesel, propane, water, 30-amp power, showers, laundry, liquor and groceries are available. There is also a satellite phone.

Dawsons Landing

Location – Located near Rivers Inlet.

Economy – Dawsons Landing is a service center for marine tourism, the commercial fisheries and the nearby residents of the Rivers Inlet area.

Key Infrastructure – Here there is a public wharf with a Department of Fisheries and Ocean float. The community also has a post office, a well equipped general store, and a liquor store. Charts, water, ice, gas, diesel and other products are available.

3.3.2 Owikeno Lake Area

Oweekeno

Location – Oweekeno is located in the southern portion of the Mid Coast, at the east end of Rivers Inlet on the banks of the Wannock River at the entrance to Owikeno Lake.

History – Archaeological evidence dates back 9,000 years in the area and the Oweekeno people are thought to have once had the largest population of all Mid Coast nations. More recently, Oweekeno was the center of the region's fisheries with over 14 salmon canneries and a solid commercial fleet. Canneries developed in the area as a result of access to fresh water, proximity to the migratory path of salmon species and a close proximity to the market. The Rivers Inlet / Oweekeno Lake sockeye run was once considered one of the top producers in British Columbia; however, today this system is on the endangered list, and sockeye populations are at a critical low.

Transportation – Oweekeno has no direct road link to neighbouring communities and is accessible only by boat or plane.

Demographics – Oweekeno has a population of just over 100.

Economy and Labour Force – Oweekeno was entirely dependent on the cannery industry for employment and with its collapse the community faced immediate high unemployment. In the past five years, some inroads have been made to increase employment in forestry, watershed restoration, fisheries enhancement and habitat restoration. Access to timber for community development through partnerships with licensees is now occurring.

Key Infrastructure – Oweekeno has a new school, new health and administrative centre, and a sophisticated communication system. There is also a new air landing strip.

3.3.3 Fjords and Lakes Area

Ocean Falls

Location – Ocean Falls is located at the head of Cousins Inlet.

History – It was established as a sawmill and pulp mill town in 1909. At its height, Ocean Falls had a core population of 3,000 people, although much of this was transient. Difficult and distant markets, access to fiber and an aging facility eroded the workforce over the years. In 1968 Crown Zellerbach closed the kraft and

sulfite operation of the mill with the loss of 100 jobs. By 1969 discussion to shut down of the mill began and Crown Zellerbach was successful in an application to change timber licenses solely dedicated to Ocean Falls to joint licenses held by Ocean Falls and Elk Falls. In 1973 Ocean Falls was purchased by the provincial government and in 1980 the operation at Ocean Falls closed with the exodus of most of the community's population.

Transportation – There is regularly scheduled float plane service to Ocean Falls as well as the Discovery Coast ferry service to the community.

Demographics – Today there is a core of approximately 50 people living year-round in Ocean Falls. Some residents are original pulp mill workers while the rest are newcomers looking for an alternative life style. In the summer months the population increases to over 150.

Economy and Labour Force – The Ocean Falls Corporation no longer exists and the community is operated under an Improvement District. The power company is privately owned and provides power to Ocean Falls, Denny Island and Bella Bella. Employment is found in beach combing, tourism and with the power company.

Key Infrastructure – There is a superb power supply, access to large volumes of water, excellent deep-sea port, good communication systems, stores, laundromat, post office and a yacht club.

3.3.4 Mountains and Trade Routes Region

Bella Coola Valley

The Bella Coola Valley is 80 km long, extending east-west from the eastern end of North Bentinck Arm to Tweedsmuir Park, where the coastal range begins to ascend towards the Interior Plateau. There are five communities situated within the Bella Coola Valley – the Bella Coola town site, Hagensborg, Firvale, Stuiie and Nuxalk. The first four communities are non-native, while the last is the home of the Nuxalk Nation. Bella Coola town site and Nuxalk are in close proximity, and share some infrastructure. We have, however, chosen to profile the non-Native communities and the Nuxalk separately, as follows.

Non-Native Communities (Bella Coola, Hagensborg, Firvale and Stuiie)

Location – The non-native communities of the Bella Coola Valley are located along the Bella Coola River – they are Bella Coola, Hagensborg, Firvale and Stuiie. All four are unincorporated communities. The Bella Coola townsite is located at the east end of the North Bentinck Arm, where the Bella Coola River flows into the channel. Hagensborg is situated east of Bella Coola at the junction of Salloomt River and Bella Coola River and is 19 kilometres east of the mouth of the Bella Coola, and 32 kilometres from the west entrance to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park. The community of Firvale is located just outside Tweedsmuir Provincial Park while Stuiie is located just inside Tweedsmuir Park. All communities are located along Highway 20.

History – In 1793, Alexander Mackenzie, traveling over land, visited the Bella Coola Valley on his exploration of an overland route to the Pacific. The Hudson’s Bay Company established a post in the area in 1869, but Company clerk John Clayton’s house by the river is all that remains.

The largest group of settlers were of Norwegian descent, who were attracted by the homelike settings of the fiords, moved to the valley from their first settlements in Minnesota. The Norwegian settlers arrived in the Bella Coola Valley in 1894 and took up farming, commercial fishing and eventually logging. Lands were allocated under crown grants, which were designed to stimulate regional economic development. Today, many descendants still live in the area and continue to earn a living in resource based activity. The Bella Coola Valley remained relatively isolated until 1953 when the highway was constructed.

Transportation – BC Ferries provides regular summer service to Bella Coola, the terminus of the Discovery Coast Ferry service. The communities of the Bella Coola Valley are all accessible by Highway 20. There is daily scheduled air service from Bella Coola to Anahim Lake and Vancouver.

Demographics – The Bella Coola Valley has a population of approximately 2,440. The population is concentrated in the lower half of the Bella Coola Valley with approximately 605 residents live in Hagensborg area and another 725 living in the lower half of the Bella Coola Valley between Hagensborg and the mouth of the Bella Coola River. The remaining residents live in the upper Bella Coola Valley. The Valley is characterized by an age distribution that is very similar to the provincial average. With 13 percent of the population over 65 years, the Valley mirrors the provincial percentage for seniors and with 20 percent of the local population under 14 years of age the Valley is also close to the BC average for population under 14 years of age.¹⁰ The population in the Valley did not change between 1991 and 1996.

Economy and Labour Force – The total labour force in the Bella Coola Valley (excluding First Nations) is approximately 880 with 185 individuals or 21 percent of the labour force involved in logging and forest services. This makes employment in the logging and forest services sector the largest single component of the local labour market. Several other sectors contribute significantly to the local economy including government services (education, health, and government) with approximately 18 percent of the labour force. A further 12 percent are engaged in retail and whole services, while 10 percent are involved in transportation and construction activities. Manufacturing, agriculture, construction, communications and fishing, each with approximately 5 percent of the labour force also contribute to the overall economic wealth. Approximately 9 percent of the labour force are involved in accommodation, food and beverage services industries. A variety of other activities make up the remainder of the workforce.

Key Infrastructure – The Bella Coola Valley is a well-established service center, with a range of tourism businesses and services located primarily in Bella Coola and Hagensborg. There are a variety of shops and stores in the town of Bella Coola including local native art, restaurants, a clothing store, mechanic service, food store, travel agent, marine supplies, liquor store, credit union, museum, gas station, and several government offices. The community also has several accommodation choices including a hotel, motel, bed & breakfast establishments, a campground, and a restored cannery that takes overnight guests. A significant proportion of Bella Coola’s infrastructure is located in the Nuxalk native village.

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, 1996 Census.

Hagensborg has one hotel, approximately seven bed and breakfast establishments, and two campgrounds. In the Tweedsmuir Park near Stuie is the famous Tweedsmuir Lodge.¹¹ There are several guides and tourism activities offered in the valley as well as defined trails and forest service roads.

Nuxalk

Location – The Nuxalk nation is located near the mouth of the Bella Coola River at the east end of North Bentinck Arm of Burke Channel. The main village is located at the Bella Coola River, while the remainder of the population lives in the Four Mile Subdivision located outside of downtown Bella Coola.

History – Previous to the establishment of reserves there were numerous aboriginal settlements or seasonal habitation at Kimsquit, Dean, Skowiltz, Kwatna, Taleomey, Smitley, South and North Bentinck, Sheemahant, Noosgulch, Burnt Bridge and Stuix. The region's larger rivers were rich in oolichan and salmon and the Nuxalk actively traded with the neighbouring interior First Nations following the famous Nuxalk-Carrier grease trail. Spanish fur traders began arriving in the area in the early 1800s. The Americans, who started trading in the area in the 1830s, followed the Spanish. Finally the British from the Hudson Bay Company arrived in the area in the 1860s. In 1862-63 there was a devastating small pox epidemics, which significantly reduced the local populations. In 1902 the remaining Nuxalk villages were consolidated onto two reserves located at the mouth of the Bella Coola River. Here many Nuxalk began to participate in the economic activities of the region's fish canneries.¹² Today canneries no longer dominate local employment opportunities, however, over a third of the Nuxalk labour force is still involved in the resource sectors (ie., fisheries and forestry).

Demographics – The Nuxalk community is comprised of approximately 900 residents.¹³ The community is characterized by a younger average age than the provincial average. The Nuxalk, with only 4.6 percent of its population over 65 years, have only a third of the average senior population (12.8 percent) of the province as a whole. Conversely, over 33.7 percent of the local population is under 14 years of age, compared to the BC average for this age group is less than 20 percent.¹⁴

Economy and Labour Force – Government services represent the largest portion of the labour force with approximately 35 percent involved in band administration, health and education services. The resource sector, with employment in commercial fishing, fish processing, silviculture, forestry activities, and an ice plant provide employment for approximately 34 percent of the labour force. A further 11 percent of the labour force are engaged in retail and whole services, transportation, and construction activities. Approximately 8 percent of the labour force are involved in accommodation, food and beverage services industries.

Key Infrastructure – The key Nuxalk infrastructure includes the village's water system, government offices and recreation hall. At Four Mile subdivision there is a gas station and three stores which sell a variety of convenience items.

¹¹ Source: www.centralcoastbc.com/accomodation/bellacola.asp

¹² R. Carriere (2000), *Nuxalk First Nations Community Profile*.

¹³ First Nations populations based on Indian and Northern Affairs registered populations for October 2000.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada, 1996 Census.

3.4 Economic and Planning Context

3.4.1 Land Use

The Central Coast Land and Coastal Resource Management Plan was initiated in July 1996, to enable regional interests (marine and coastal) to work together to produce a plan for Crown land and coastal resources that considers all resources and values, and the needs and interests of the people and industries who use them. As of April 2001, agreement has been reached on the first phase of the Central Coast LCRMP, and government has provided immediate decisions to provide greater land use certainty. A range of land use zones have been confirmed by government subject to further consultation with First Nations and others. This includes:

- Candidate Protection Areas (including the Spirit Bear area of Princess Royal Island) – designated as prime candidates for future protection;
- Options Areas – significant cultural, ecological and economic values, and merit further analysis; and,
- Special Management Zones for Visual Quality – recognized for their high tourism values.¹⁵

In early April 2001, the BC government created the 96,458 hectare Spirit Bear protection area, and announced that they are entering into a unique agreement with First Nations on land-use planning in BC's central and north coast regions.

The Ministry of Forests has completed the Timber Supply Review II process. This is the review of all crown forest lands that contribute to the provincial Annual Allowable Cut. On the Mid Coast, the Mid Coast Timber Supply Area and the Tree Farm Licenses were reviewed and a harvest level determined by the province's Chief Forester.

Throughout BC, the federal, provincial and First Nation governments have entered into treaty negotiations. On the Mid Coast all bands are currently involved in the treaty processes except for the Nuxalk First Nation.

International interests may also have some bearing on future land management on the Mid Coast. Since the early 1990s, the remote coastal areas of BC -- including the Mid Coast -- have received global attention from environmental groups and other interests due to its wealth of coastal temperate rain forests. As the Mid Coast contains some of the larger tracts of coastal temperate rain forest in the province, land use decisions could come under particular scrutiny if global awareness continues to grow.

3.4.2 Economic Development Initiatives

Several recent non-native economic development initiatives on the Mid Coast have been developed by the Central Coast Economic Development Commission and supported by the Central Coast Regional District

¹⁵ Refer to the following website for more information: www.luco.gov.bc.ca/slupmbc/cencoast/prelim401/html

(CCRD) -- the Economic Development Commission is a function of the CCD. It should be noted that the Nuxalk, Oweekeno, Heiltsuk and Kitsoo also have economic development functions.

The Central Coast Regional District completed a comprehensive economic development strategy in 1987. This comprehensive strategy looked at several strategy areas for the communities on the Mid Coast. Following from this strategy the Regional District has developed long-term plans at five-year intervals. Currently, the Regional District is working on the development of a new five-year plan in 2001. This plan will set priorities and task for the following year and provide long-term goals that the region will be working towards.

The Central Coast Regional District has also undertaken two other strategic planning exercises at the regional level to investigate specific issues. These are the following.

1. *Forest sector strategy:* In 1997, the Central Coast Regional District in partnership with Forest Renewal BC completed a forest sector strategy. This strategy outlined several specific initiatives to diversify and strengthen the region's forest sector economy. Since the completion of this strategy the region has worked on implementing initiatives that would increase the economic wealth generated locally from the Mid Coast extensive forest resource, including:
 - development of a log sort yard; this keeps showing up- it did not happen as it was not viable;
 - increasing the supply of fibre available for local value added processing;
 - undertaking local training to increase the skill level of existing small mill operators- in basic sawing, grading for hard and soft woods- kiln development; and
 - developing comprehensive lists of value added manufacturers outside of the area who are interested in purchasing green lumber and specialty cuts.

2. *LRMP Assessment:* In 2000, the Central Coast Land and Coastal Land and Resource Management Planning Team completed a comprehensive investigation into the economic opportunities and barriers in the region. This work focused on issues associated with infrastructure gaps and the barriers and opportunities within specific resource sectors including:
 - tourism;
 - commercial Fishing;
 - aquaculture;
 - forestry;
 - botanical forest products;
 - mining; and
 - water.

3.4.3 Previous tourism and recreation strategies and current tourism initiatives

The communities of the Mid Coast are beginning to capitalize on the region's tourism potential, and the tourism sector as a way to achieve economic diversification. However, the region has had to work diligently to address critical barriers facing the tourism sector such as lack of infrastructure and isolation. Work also continues to raise the profile of the region through marketing and encouraging new entrepreneurial investment in the tourism sector.

In the past few years, the Central Coast Regional District and communities of the Mid Coast have undertaken several tourism planning and development initiatives including the following.

- The Central Coast Regional District is working on the implementation of several tourism initiatives that were developed during the Tourism planning processes undertaken in 1999. The Tourism Strategic Action plan identified several key initiatives including working on improvements to local tourism infrastructure, communication, and promoting (through website development and improved signage) the Bella Coola Valley. The area is also working on acquiring property on behalf of the Central Coast Regional District to build an outdoor open air pavilion for arts and crafts and other events. The goals of the strategy are to increase visitor awareness of activities, and visits of longer duration.¹⁶
- In December 2000 the Kitsoo completed a community tourism strategy to guide tourism development over the next few years. The community of Klemtu is now working on the implementation of their local tourism strategy. Several short, medium and longer term initiatives have been identified. Adventure tourism products, training and infrastructure development are key components of the tourism strategy. Implementation has begun and specific tasks will be addressed in 2001 including development of specific tourism products, marketing, and construction of an outbuilding.
- Besides the tourism strategies and reports completed on the Mid Coast, the First Nations of the Mid Coast are now considering the establishment of a Central Coast First Nation Tourism Consortium to address:
 - economic and employment equity for Mid Coast first nations in the tourism sector;
 - issues associated with tourism growth management;
 - the development of protocol format for First Nations and the tourism industry to explore partnership opportunities; and
 - the development of human resource and capacity for Mid Coast first Nations to benefit from tourism.

¹⁶ Central Coast Economic Development Commission (1999), *Central Coast Economic Development Commission Tourism Action Plan for 1999*.

3.4.4 Role of Government Agencies

There are several government agencies that are involved in, or are relevant to, tourism development on the Mid Coast. They are as follows.

The **Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture** has the responsibility to ensure that tourism values and interests are available for, considered and accommodated in provincial, regional and sub-regional land, water and resource planning initiatives and in treaty negotiations. The office for this Ministry is located in Victoria; there is a field office in Williams Lake.

The **Ministry of Forest's** mandate is related to the planning and management of the timber resource while managing, protecting and conserving all forest resources, including recreation values, to ensure immediate and long term economic and social benefits they may confer on British Columbia. In terms of the role in tourism activities on the Mid Coast, the Ministry of Forests has played an active role in the planning and technical support that has gone into the Central Coast Land and Resource Management process. As well, the Ministry of Forests maintains resource inventories (Visual Landscape Inventory, Recreation Features Inventory, Recreation Opportunity Spectrum) for recreation management on the Mid Coast. The Ministry has a district office in Hagensborg.

BC Ministry of Environment, Land and Parks' stated mandate is to the protection, conservation, and restoration of natural diversity; maintaining and restoring healthy and safe land, water and air; and sustaining social, economic and recreational benefits. With regards to tourism, the Ministry is responsible for the management of BC park system through **BC Parks**. BC Parks maintains the campground and trail infrastructure inside the provincial park system and is also responsible for determining the appropriate commercial tourism activities in the parks. BC Parks maintains an office in Hagensborg.

BC Assets and Land Corporation has an office in Williams Lake that oversees activities on the Mid Coast. BC Assets and Land Corporation oversees and administers all Commercial Recreation tenures on Crown land under the Commercial Recreation Policy (this excludes alpine skiing, which has its own policy). The goals of BCAL include:

- assisting communities with their local development challenges to achieve their objectives;
- making Crown land resources and assets available to support growth and diversification of the province's economy;
- recognizing the social, environmental, and aboriginal values in the use of Crown land resources and assets;
- evaluating major government assets to determine opportunities to increase value to taxpayers;
- this agency oversees the allocation of tenures that are required to undertake tourism ventures on crown lands; and,
- ensuring that government receives full value from the management and disposition of Crown land resources and assets.

BC Ferry Corporation is responsible for ferry services to many of the communities on the Mid Coast. The ferry service plays a critical role in both economic and tourism development throughout the Mid Coast. BC Ferry Corporation's main office is in Victoria.

Tourism BC's mandate is to promote development and growth in the tourism industry, to increase revenues and employment throughout BC, and to increase the economic benefits for all British Columbians. The Crown corporation has five primary areas of focus including: marketing and sales, visitor information services, accommodation services and standards, education and training, research, and business development.¹⁷ Tourism BC's main office is in Vancouver, and it works closely with regional tourism associations.

Forest Renewal British Columbia (FRBC) is an independent Crown Corporation that was established to manage and direct investments to renew British Columbia's Forest Economy. Among their objectives is to support forest communities experiencing major job loss. The Campbell River office of FRBC oversees activities on the Mid Coast.

Fisheries Renewal BC is an independent Crown corporation with a legislated mandate to provide all British Columbians -- including First Nations, recreational fishers, processors, local government, environmental groups, the sports fishing tourism industry and others -- with meaningful opportunities to participate in provincially-led initiatives aimed at protecting fish and renewing the fishery. The top priorities of Fisheries Renewal BC include programs for recreational fisheries diversification and development and community-based fisheries job creation strategies.

Department of Fisheries and Ocean is the federal agency responsible for the management of anadromous fisheries in BC and the enforcement of federal environmental and marine regulations. With regards to tourism, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans oversees regulations for the recreational anadromous fishery, vessel size and usage for specific ocean tourism activities, moorage regulations, and marine safety and environmental protection. The Department of Fisheries has a local office in Bella Coola.

Land Use Coordination Office plays a functionary role in coordinating Land Use Management Planning initiatives underway in British Columbia. LUCO has offices in Victoria where all activities covering the entire province are managed, including those on the Mid Coast.

¹⁷Tourism BC website: www.hellobc.com/media/corpinfo.jsp