

5 RESOURCES OF THE MID COAST

5.1 Study Area and Features

The Mid Coast is a land of contrasts. Steep sloped fiords link the jagged snow surrounded peaks of the inner coast to the rugged shores of the outer coast. Lakes and rivers, some with towering cliffs, some with beaches and many with an abundance of fish are found throughout the Mid-Coast.

The low lying outer coast is composed of rocky islands and archipelagos of scrub cedar, hemlock and pine forests interspersed with bogs and small lakes. The rugged shore winds into inlets, coves, lagoons, and narrows. Beaches, estuaries and mud flats intersperse the landscape. The coast can be tempestuous then mild. Rain, fog, clouds and mist dominate many days and evoke an air of mystery. The ocean dictates the lives of the animals and people that live on the land.

The fiords that extend into the interior are steep, dramatic and inhospitable. River valleys with estuaries and coves reach in, providing a welcome respite. Some of these valleys are large and lead far inland. To the east, these valleys have provided a trade route between the inland and coastal peoples. The Coastal Mountain Range is a vast, jagged, unforgiving landscape that is spectacular. Glaciers and icefields extend down from the grey granite ranges to the headwaters of the rivers. The red rounded interior mountain range provides a contrast to this bold landscape.

Wildlife and people have lived on the edges of these towering mountains, the rugged shores and the pervasive weather. They lived on the bounty of the ocean and the rivers. It is an abundant land and humans have presided here for over 10,000 years. Over the course of time, a rich culture full of art, stories, knowledge and trade flourished. Wars were fought and alliances made. The presence of the First Nations can still be felt and seen among many of the people who reside here. The land attracted other people from distant countries who took part in the harvesting of the seas and the land. Their presence can be seen in a number of structures and in the people. Unfortunately, the structures that all the people built were made of wood and these continue to be reclaimed back into the forest from which they came. Today there are vestiges and the visitor is left with the ambiance and his or her imagination of human settlement and activity in this land.

5.2 Resource Area Description

The varied landscape of the Mid Coast offers diverse physical features that are a resource for recreation activities. As a framework for depicting and mapping the inherent opportunities of the Mid Coast, the landscape has been divided into a six resource areas or geographic units. The study team defined these units based on physical landscape similarities, and also considered market access, theme development potential, and geographical relationships. For example, the low lying island groupings of the outer coast have all been grouped into one unit while identifying the proximity to certain communities and resource potential.

The six geographic units – and key sub areas within each unit -- are described in the following table. The community or communities associated with each unit has been further identified, as has a list of general recreation activities.

Table 5.2-1: Unit Descriptions

Sub Areas	Key Communities	Comments	Recreation Activities
OUTER COAST (Geographic Unit 1)			
Swindle – Price	Klemtu	Swindle and Prince Islands are low elevation islands with bog forest and rugged coastlines and separated by Higgins Channel. The west coast is exposed with a large bay (Kitasu) providing a degree of shelter.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing
Vicinity Bella Bella	Bella Bella	Archipelago with the larger islands of Athlone, Campbell, Dufferin, Denny, Chatfield and Cunningham defining the boundaries. Low elevation slopes with extensive rocky shoreline, inlets and coves. Combinations of open seas and sheltered coastline.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing
Hakai Recreation Area	Bella Bella	Comprised of Hunter, Hecate and Calvert Islands and including the Goose Island group almost 20 kilometers to the west. Many small island groupings sprinkle the west coast. Includes Hakai Recreation Area, a 123,000-hectare area encompassing a large archipelago of outstanding natural beauty and recreational value. A varied and scenic coastline from fully exposed shorelines to rolling, forested hills and 1000-metre peaks. Special features such as lagoons and reversing tidal rapids, beaches, all-weather anchorages, tomolos, and an intricate network of coves, inlets, and channels	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing
Namu to Dawsons Landing	Dawsons Landing Bella Bella	From Namu to Dawsons Landing along Fitz Hugh Sound the area is comprised of mid elevation ridges, a number of bays in which to shelter, the Koeye River, Fish Egg and Elizabeth Lagoon, Elizabeth Lake and the mouth of Rivers Inlet.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing
Smith	Dawsons Landing	Remote section that includes the open seas, rugged shores and beaches of Cape Caution, north to the long narrow inlets and rocky shores of Smith Sound. Low and mid elevation ranges.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing
FIORDS & LAKES (Geographic Unit 2)			
Fiordland – Roderick	Klemtu	Renowned for the high, steep cliffs that flank the fiords in Fiordland Provincial Park, the sub-unit extends south to include Roderick, Pooley and Dowager Islands and the west shores of the Don Peninsula. Mid elevation ranges with rocky outcrops dominate these landscapes. Roderick and other lakes are scenic with steep granite cliffs.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing
Spiller – Ocean Falls	Ocean Falls Bella Bella	Spiller Chanel is a medium length channel with high scenic, historical and natural values. It leads to Ellerslie Lake, a large lake ringed by high granite bluffs and sandy beaches. This unit reaches further east up the Dean Channel to Cascade Inlet to include Ocean Falls and Link Lake. Medium and high elevation ranges dominate the unit.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing
CHANNELS (Geographic Unit 3)			
Dean	Bella Coola Ocean Falls, Bella Bella	The Dean Channel extends to Kimsquit River and is surrounded by high mountain ranges that slope directly into the channel. Small bays, hot springs and river valleys line the rocky steep shores of the channel.	Boating, Fishing
Burke to Bentinck	Bella Coola Bella Bella	Similar to the Dean in geography, includes the sheltered Kwatna Inlet.	Boating, Fishing
O WEEKENO LAKE (Geographic Unit 4)			
Oweekeno Area	Oweekeno	Oweekeno Lake is a long scenic lake flanked by steep scenic ridges. The lake is situated from west to east and abruptly heads north. High mountain ridges comprise this unit.	Boating, Fishing

Smith Area	River Inlet	Remote narrow inlets flanked by steep mountains.	Boating, Fishing
MOUNTAINS & TRADE ROUTES (Geographic Unit 5)			
Kimsquit Dean	Bella Coola	These scenic valleys link the Dean Channel with the interior. Traditional trade routes (grease trails).	Hiking, Fishing
Bella Coola	Bella Coola, Hagensborg	The Bella Coola Valley links the North Bentinck with the interior. Traditional trade routes (grease trails).	Road Tours, Fishing, Hiking, Snowmobiling
Noeick Macmell	Bella Coola	Typified by high coastal mountains and expansive icefield /glaciers.	Ski tour, Hiking
Tweedsmuir	Bella Coola	Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, a 895,000-hectare park is accessed from Highway 20, east of Bella Coola. The park encompasses a diversity of landscapes including the rugged gray coastal mountains and the gentle sloped reddish interior range. Lakes and rivers enhance this unit.	Hiking, Canoeing
PRINCESS ROYAL ISLAND (Geographic Unit 6)			
North	Hartley Bay	Low to Mid elevation mountains, large lakes, deep inlets and rocky shores typify this unit.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing,
West	Hartley Bay, Klemtu	Low to mid elevation mountains, deep inlets and rocky shores typify this sub-unit.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing
Butedale to Laredo Inlet	Klemtu	Spectacular granite cliffs flank Anchor and Butedale Lakes while scenic rocky outcrops are typical in the many other lakes and the deep inlet (Laredo) that bisects Princes Royal Island.	Kayaking, Boating, Fishing

5.3 Product Selection

The Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture developed a preliminary list of over 50 potential tourism activities as a starting point for determining which offer the greatest potential for outdoor recreation-based tourism on the Mid Coast Forest District. The consultant team generated a short-list based on knowledge of the resource base, market trends and economic considerations, priorities defined by the funding agencies, and experience conducting similar studies in other parts of BC. A key consideration was the degree to which local communities could be involved in the development process.

The short-list of tourism activities was presented at the initial meeting of the Advisory Team. The team members were tasked with identifying which represented, in their opinion, the most potential for opportunity development. When the final results were tallied, a general consensus was reached regarding which tourism activities merit further research. The activities were then analyzed respectively and grouped or singled out as specific *tourism products*. Each tourism product may represent a number of activities that have a common relationship.

The nine tourism products evaluated are:

- Culture Heritage
- Ocean Kayaking
- Nature Observation
- Marine Cruising
- Road Touring
- Destination Lodges
- Hut to Hut Systems
- Adventure
- Air Tours

These final products can be regarded as the best short-term options for outdoor recreation-based tourism products. However none exist in isolation, and opportunities to build on clusters of tourism products or where products could be linked are extremely important and are described in this report.

The products selected should not be considered an all-inclusive list as there are likely other tourism products or activities not evaluated for in this study, which have enormous short or longer term potential. For example, as the primary focus for tourism development in this study is outdoor recreation products, an activity such as a festival or cultural event, which may have high potential in the short term, was not evaluated.

Each of the selected tourism products was further evaluated to determine the land's suitability to support the product. The results of this analysis are documented in the following section (Section 6 Product Assessment) and depicted in the suitability maps. Suitability maps illustrate existing or potential tourism opportunities taking into consideration a range of constraints.

The criteria guide for each of the chosen products is identified in the following table.

Table 5.3-1: Product Descriptions

Product	Associated & Complementary Activities/Products		Resource Requirements	Delivery Models	Development Consideration	Comments
Ocean Kayaking	Hiking/ Backpacking Marine Cruising	Cultural Heritage Nature Observation Destination Lodge	Sheltered coastline, beaches, level areas, freshwater	Mothership Base (circle) Base/Satellite Expedition (linear)	FN Heritage sites Environmental	Appears suitable to the outer coast
Air (Helicopter/ Fixed Wing)	Fishing Hiking Touring	Biking Skiing Nature Observation	Rivers/Lakes Open terrain Scenic areas (bluffs, etc) Opt. snow conditions.	Tours Access	Environmental Unreliable weather	Shorter distances of recreation resources from base is most profitable. The air product is closely linked to communities and lodges and may require primary industry use.
Nature Observation	Scenic Viewing Herring/ oolican run Grizzly	Bird watching Nature Interpretation Marine mammal Cultural Heritage	Reliability of sightings Safe Viewing areas Scenic/Unique features Trails/ Platforms	Boats (incl. drifting) Buses Hikes	Environmental Habituation	Anchor species include Grizzly and Whale species. Other flora and fauna provide an important compliment.
Marine Cruising	Nature Observation Touring Kayaking	Cultural Heritage	Anchorage Scenic and Unique features (hotspring)	Scheduled pocket Unscheduled pocket Mothership	FN Heritage Limited anchorage	Product is associated with vessels less than 100 feet.
Road Touring	Nature Observation Scenic Viewing	Marine Cruising Cultural Heritage Rail Tours Lodges	Roads Scenic and unique features Reliability of fauna sightings	Circle bus tours Linkage tours	Linkage to other Districts and Agencies. Road closures	Link tours join marine to rail and require regional cooperation. Hwy tours can link with river floats. Highlight on "the Hill". Gravel roads to the Big Cedar.
Destination Lodges	Saltwater/ Freshwater Fishing Nature Observation	Helicopter Cultural Heritage Scenic viewing Ocean kayaking Hiking	Scenic Values Fish Suitable location	Sport fishing Spa (also FN) Wilderness Activities	Fish Suitable locations	Lodge placement expands the base from which associated products can emerge.
Hut to hut	Fishing Ocean kayaking Boating (small)	Nature Observation Cultural Heritage Scenic Viewing	Scenic values Fish	Marine(boat/kayak) Lake (fly-in drop off) River (fly-in drop off) Trail (linear or circle)	Vandalism	High to low end Boaters /Kayakers
Cultural Heritage	Touring Destination Lodges Helicopter	Marine Cruising Ocean kayaking Miscellaneous Nature Observation	Visible Heritage features Heritage Interpretation Heritage Exposition	Tours Interpretive Centers Destination Lodges	Sensitivity of information.	First Nations and European heritage compliment to the other products. Canneries, lighthouses and artifacts
Adventure	Windsurfing- Whitewater kayaking Exposed Ocean Kayak	Mountaineering Rock Climbing Caving/Canyoning Paragliding	Cliffs Winds Glaciers, ice fields Remote, rugged ranges Open, exposed coast	Air transport Local access	Safety Unreliable weather	Bella Coola and other communities have feature groupings suited for attracting extreme sport enthusiasts (participants with advanced skill.

5.4 Community and Product Matching

Throughout this report, identified opportunities are associated with the community or communities best situated to benefit from their development. However, it lies within the purview of each community to determine whether or not they support development of particular opportunities.

Opportunities were identified and associated with communities without prejudice to treaty negotiations or First Nations' traditional territories. First Nation leaders have stated that they will not pursue opportunities outside of their traditional territory; they will defer to the Nation in whose territory the opportunity is positioned, and will work towards cooperative management in areas that they share.

The following set of tables links tourism opportunities to the communities.

Table 5.4-1: Linkages of Communities and Products

BELLA COOLA VALLEY and NUXALK	
Product	Description
Ocean Kayaking	Opportunity is limited by the high winds, lack of suitable campsites and steep terrain typical of fiords.
Air (Helicopter and Fixed Wing)	Inland tours. Glacier viewing. Very dramatic landscapes by Monarch Glacier.
	Coastal tours along the Dean or South Bentnick Channel with potential to include inland tour..
Nature Observation	Grizzly viewing at the Atnarko and Kimsquit rivers.
Marine Cruising	Long fiords and great distances limit circle tours. Linear tours are linked to the outer coast communities. High potential for hot spring, First Nations interpretive circle tour to Tallheo Hot spring.
Road Touring	Highway 20 and the "Hill" provide a scenic, memorable tour opportunity. Gravel roads provide access to features adjoining the Bella Coola Valley.
Destination Lodge	Tweedsmuir Park and hot springs provide opportunities.
Hut Systems	Trail based hut systems along grease trails and Alexander Mackenzie route. Constraints may outweigh the opportunities.
Cultural Heritage	First Nations interpretive opportunities lie with the Thorsen Creek Petroglyphs, the Tallheo Hot spring and other features best known to the Nuxalk people. The Thorsen Creek Petroglyphs offer an opportunity for cultural sharing, but one must recognize the sensitive nature of disclosing these and other artifacts to the public. Other than these, there are limited physical artifacts useable as tourism attractions and there is a concern by the First Nations of their disclosure to the public.
	European heritage is visible in Hagensborg and the adjoining valley. Tallheo Cannery depicts mid-20 th century development in the Mid-Coast.

Adventure	The steep mountains, cliffs and glaciers that surround the Bella Coola Valley offer enthusiasts opportunities for climbing, mountaineering, etc. The Nuxalk-Carrier grease trail (A. Mackenzie) offers possible opportunity for long distance mountain biking.
KLEMTU	
Product	Description
Ocean Kayaking	High opportunities limited by distance of suitable features from Klemtu and shortage of suitable camping areas. Heritage sites are closely linked to suitable camping areas.
Air (Helicopter and Fixed Wing)	A 60 km radius from Klemtu reaches scenic areas with a variety of topography from steep terrain and cliffs (Anchor, Ellerslie and Roderick Lakes; Fiordland) to low elevation coastal shores (West Princess Royal, Swindle and Price). Numerous small rivers, creeks and lakes suitable for fishing. Wildlife are difficult to detect and the possibility for disturbance is high.
Nature Observation	Sightings of marine mammals, Kermode bear (Princess Royal), Grizzly bear (Khutze), mountain goat (Fiordland) and other mammals are not reliable. When sighted, disturbance and habituation is a consideration and possible constraint. Khutze Hotsprings is a warm spring.
Marine Cruising	The greatest opportunities for marine tours are linked to Laredo Inlet and Kitasu Bay to the west and to Khutze and Green Inlets (outside the study area). Distances to the west are an obstacle.
Road Touring	There are no road touring opportunities.
Destination Lodge	There may be a lodge opportunity in Laredo Inlet and Anchor / Canoona Lake. These areas are closely linked.
Hut Systems	Marine and Lake hut system opportunities linked to Kitasu Bay and Laredo Inlet with maintenance constraints. Lake hut systems can be accessed by air with opportunities for kayaking/canoeing on site.
Cultural Heritage	The presence of the First Nations and the Kitasoo in the study area allow for interpretive opportunities, however there are limited physical artifacts useable as tourism attractions and there is a concern by the First Nations of their disclosure to the public.
	Butedale provides the visible structures suitable for the interpretation of early to mid 20 th century development in the Mid-Coast.
Adventure	Circle opportunities for open water kayaking linking west Swindle and Price Islands to Klemtu.
WAGLISLA (BELLA / BELLA) and SHEARWATER/ DENNY ISLAND	
Product	Description
Ocean Kayaking	Numerous islands provide an opportunity for kayaking in sheltered and open waters. Limitations are linked to few beaches, fresh water sources and level camping areas. High First Nations heritage values and present use areas are associated with optimal kayaking areas.
Air (Helicopter and Fixed Wing)	A 60 km radius reaches scenic areas with a variety of topography from steep terrain and cliffs (Roscoe Inlet, Roderick Lake among others) to low elevation coastal shores. Numerous small rivers, creeks and lakes suitable for fishing.

Nature Observation	Sightings of marine mammals, Grizzly bear (Koeye), mountain goat (Roscoe, Link, and Ellerslie) and other mammals are not reliable. When sighted, disturbance and habituation is a consideration and a possible constraint. Seal haulouts and bird rookeries are primary consideration. Geographic features of interest include the outer coast, the steep fiords (Roscoe) and groves of large trees (Roscoe and ?) and lake beaches.
Marine Cruising	Circle tours opportunities to Roscoe, Troupe, the outer islands, to Koeye and the Hakaii. Linear tours to Bella Coola and points north and south.
Road Touring	There are no opportunities for a road tour.
Destination Lodge	There is presently a lodge in the highly suitable Pruth and Namu Bay (constraints for lodges are associated with First Nations heritage). Other potential areas are limited by a lack of feature groupings and heritage constraints with the possible exception of Roscoe Inlet.
Hut Systems	The marine hut system is well suited for the island groupings. The proximity of Bella Bella, the ability to locate huts away from sensitive sites, the provision of shelter in a wet region with limited camping are but some of the advantages for this product to Bella Bella and the Heiltsuk.
Cultural Heritage	The presence of the First Nations and the Heiltsuk in the study area allow for interpretive opportunities, however there are limited physical artifacts useable as tourism attractions and there is a concern by the First Nations of their disclosure to the public. Namu and scattered lighthouses offer a link to early to mid 20 th century development in the Mid Coast.
Adventure	Circle opportunities for open water kayaking from Athlone to Calvert Islands and including the Goose Group.
OCEAN FALLS	
Product	Description
Ocean Kayaking	Limited opportunities.
Air (Helicopter and Fixed Wing)	A 60 km radius reaches scenic areas with a variety of topography from snow clad peaks, steep terrain and cliffs (Roscoe Inlet, Dean Channel) to low elevation coastal shores. Numerous small rivers, creeks and lakes suitable for fishing.
Nature Observation	Sightings of marine mammals, Grizzly bear, mountain goat (Roscoe, Link, Ellerslie) and other mammals are not reliable. When sighted, disturbance and habituation is a consideration and a possible constraint. Geographic features of interest include the steep fiords (Roscoe) and hot springs.
Marine Cruising	Linked primarily to linear tours between Bella Bella and Bella Coola. Limited opportunities for circle tours due to the high winds and potential
Road Touring	There are no opportunities for a road tour.
Destination Lodge	A destination lodge may be linked to Ocean Falls itself. Opportunity for a Hot spring Lodge in Nascall Bay.
Hut Systems	Opportunities associated with cabins in Link Lake.
Cultural Heritage	Ocean Falls provides an opportunity to view a largely abandoned large-scale development and corresponding settlement. Alexander Mackenzie cairn is situated along Dean Channel. First Nations heritage has a focus on nearby Roscoe Inlet (reachable by land).

Adventure	Limited opportunities.
OWEKENO, DUNCANBY AND DAWSONS LANDING	
Product	Description
Ocean Kayaking	Opportunities associated with the Penrose Island group, Fish Egg Inlet and a possible lake-marine circuit utilizing Elizabeth Lake.
Air (Helicopter and Fixed Wing)	A 60 km radius reaches scenic areas with a variety of topography from snow clad peaks, steep terrain and cliffs (Oweekeno Lake) to low elevation coastal shores including the long beach at Barnett Bay in Cape Caution. Numerous small rivers, creeks and lakes suitable for fishing. Wildlife are difficult to detect and the possibility for disturbance is high.
Nature Observation	Sightings of marine mammals in the outer coast and Rivers inlet are not reliable. Grey whales may be observed off Cape Caution. There may be some reliability for viewing Grizzly bear and mountain goat from the top of Rivers Inlet and Oweekeno Lake but the potential for disturbance and habituation is a consideration and a possible constraint. Geographic features of interest include the steep lake (Oweekeno) and Sheemahant hotspring.
Marine Cruising	Circle tours associated with resorts in the outer coast and islands groups as well as Cape Caution. There is an opportunity for a resort tour between the resorts. Possible Oweekeno Lake tour.
Road Touring	There are no opportunities for a road tour.
Destination Lodge	This area has many lodges and there is an opportunity for a number of those lodges to diversify their operations to include other activities. Sheemahant hotspring has limited opportunity constrained by the remoteness and poor scenic quality.
Hut Systems	Marine hut systems including a linkage through along Elizabeth Lake have potential.
Cultural Heritage	The presence of the First Nations and the Oweekeno in the study area allow for interpretive opportunities, however there are limited physical artifacts useable as tourism attractions and there is a concern by the First Nations of their disclosure to the public..
	The evidence of former canneries provide an opportunity for interpretation of early to mid 20th century development in the Mid Coast.
Adventure	Limited adventure opportunities although there is a high presence of suitable rock and tremendous cliffs in the area and the open waters suitable for advanced ocean kayaking.

5.5 Suitability Map Description

The objective of suitability mapping is to identify tourism opportunities that presently exist or have potential to be developed, taking into account the various physical, economic, social, planning and other constraints that will have a bearing on development. The primary sources of information for this assessment are:

- information from prior maps and research undertaken by the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture and the Ministry of Forests (e.g., features, suitability); and,

- input and comments from successful tourism operators and other informed sources regarding constraints and locations favourable for a specific activity or product.

The next step in the methodology is to identify, for each of the recreation products, those areas that can be classified as **low**, **medium** or **high** suitability for recreation. This assessment takes into account several criteria:

- general biogeoclimatic overview (alpine? subalpine? forest type?);
- presence of suitable features (glaciers, rivers, lakes, wildlife, and heritage among others);
- significance of the features (What is the quality of the features? Are there feature groupings? Are they unique? Are they truly significant to the opportunity being identified?);
- biophysical aspects (slope, aspect, steepness, amount of forest cover); and,
- the presence of supporting resources (trails, roads, huts, lodges, put in and pull out sites, etc.).

Low suitability includes all areas exhibiting the general biogeoclimatic and suitable feature attributes required for an activity or product. **Medium suitability** is defined as areas with suitable features and the biophysical features that heighten the importance of an area for a particular activity or product. **High suitability** areas are determined by where the significant features and supportive resources are.

The next step is to determine the cultural and environmental constraints and how they relate to the areas identified. For the purposes of this analysis, if the constraint was deemed to be significant enough (at the scale of the mapping) then an area may be reduced in significance or eliminated. The concerns expressed by the First Nations and small communities of the Mid Coast that operators from the outside may disenfranchise their resources are realistic but, for a large part, recreationists who would utilize them are already aware of them. To exclude these areas does not address the issue. What needs to be done is for the local communities to be aware of their resources in the hope that they will benefit. For this process, their concerns are addressed in the report and on the maps, and operators are asked to work with the local proponents so as not to alienate local communities.