

6.7 Destination Lodge

6.7.1 Resource Assessment

Description

A destination lodge or resort performs the function of a regional anchor that can support a variety of outdoor tourism products. Traditionally these activities have centered on fishing and hunting, but resorts are now focusing on non-consumptive activities such as nordic skiing, hiking, kayaking, wildlife viewing, cultural interpretation, exploring and full service spas to diversify their market niches. A recent trend is the shift towards specialization or theming where the lodge focuses on one or two non-traditional activities. To achieve the best return on the capital required to build a lodge facility, an entrepreneur may opt to develop activities that could draw clients in both the summer and winter seasons.

On the coast, the majority of lodges are non-moving vessels on the water. As well, there are a few on land and several large vessels that move to different locations. Access varies from fly-in or boat-in only (backcountry) to paved road (front country), and this typically depends on the market segment for which the lodge is intended. The facility can be rustic with only the most basic features, or offer full service amenities. Lodges offer private accommodation through separate rooms or cabins, as opposed to huts, which generally offer shared sleeping quarters. Operations can further diversify through offering meeting or conference rooms, allowing clients to mix business with pleasure.

Guests can participate in activities independently or through the services of a guide. The resort need not directly employ guides but could draw on the services of other local tourism operators with whom they maintain a working relationship. The existing lodges on the Mid Coast attract clients from the USA and Europe who expect a remote location with full services. Clients generally stay at a destination lodge for five or more days.

Regardless of the style of the facility and access considerations, destination lodges require scenic, natural appearing settings. The presence of significant features or a diversity of features within easy access augments the potential for lodge development, for example well-developed trail networks and nearby attractions such as nature observation platforms, developed hot springs or other amenities. Lodge developments are most often situated near lakes or rivers or in coastal areas.

The importance of non-traditional activities to the lodges is expected to increase as the quality and quantity of the fish resource (primarily salmon) deteriorates and as federal regulations further restrict access to the resource. Facilities offering a broad range of activities have a greater potential to attract couples or families when only one member of the guest party intends to fish.

Table 6.7-1: Regional SWOT Analysis for Destination Lodges

Strengths	Sports fish, remoteness, scenery, high value features including hot springs. Wildlife (bears and whales). First Nation culture
Weaknesses	High precipitation, poor scheduling of flights and cost to access region, competition among existing sport-fishing lodges, numerous sport fishing lodges in one location (Rivers Inlet), high start up and operating costs, government regulatory obstacles. Little or no relationship with local communities (with a few exceptions).
Opportunities	Diversification into other types of activities such as whale and wildlife watching, freshwater fishing, hiking, exploring, etc.; linkages to air and marine tours; soft adventure market niche seeking world class wilderness experience.
Threats	Land use uncertainties, increased use affecting "remote" experience, forest harvesting (with visual and environmental concerns), decline of the Pacific salmon stock.

Destination Lodges and the Mid Coast

Existing Opportunities and Locations: The predominant focus for existing lodges on the Mid Coast is sport fishing. The lodges are mainly located in sheltered bays and coves close to the prime salt water fishing locations. Concentrations of lodges can be found within Rivers Inlet. Other lodges include Pruth Bay, Koeve, Namu, Shearwater, Barnard Inlet and Surf Inlet. The Dean River has a lodge that is focused on the world famous Steelhead fishing. In the Bella Coola Valley at the edge of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is a lodge that offers a variety of activities.

Future Opportunities: There is an opportunity on the Mid Coast for developing new lodges linked to the following:

- Hot springs (there are four worth mentioning) - Tallheo, Sheemahant, Eucott and Nascall;
- First Nations culture - lodges providing cultural interpretation and exposition -- includes Roscoe Inlet, Koeve, Pruth Bay, Laredo Inlet and Cornwall Inlet in Princess Royal and other locations;
- Historic canneries such as Butedale, Tallheo and Namu have the history and structures that compliment a multi activity lodge; and,
- a combination of both hot springs and First Nations interpretation (Tallheo and Sheemahant Hot Springs), among others.

In addition to developing non-conventional lodge facilities there are a number of opportunities for existing lodge operations. These include: facilities with increased diversification of activities (kayaking, air tours, wildlife viewing, hiking, nature interpretation, canopy walks, etc.), full service spas in a remote "natural" setting, and lodge to lodge tours by boat or plane – packaging a group of related but complementary facilities. Location is an important criterion and existing lodges which are not only close to the fish but to a range of suitable features, will have the greatest success. One supportive product that may be lodged based is air tours using helicopters. Helicopters can be used for scenic viewing, drop off at fishing spots, for hiking and for nature observation. On the Mid Coast, air tours are limited by the lack of scenic variety within a 60 km radius from any single point. There is one location where glaciers, fiords, lakes, rivers, coastal islands, white sand

beaches, marine mammals and large land mammals can all be reached within a half hour and this is *Roscoe Inlet*. Such locations also exist in the Port McNeill Forest District.

The locations that have high potential for lodge development include:

- Rivers Inlet with access to fish, islands, lakes, river valleys, First Nations, and relative closeness to Cape Caution;
- Pruth Bay which provides access to the outer coast beaches and coast;
- Shearwater, Namu, Koeve and Barnard Inlet which are relatively close to significant features including scenic fish bearing lakes, rivers and creeks; and
- hotspots-linked destination lodges that include Eucott, Nascall, Tallheo and Sheemahant. Lodge opportunities may be enhanced with First Nations culture interpretation and exposition, nature observation, helicopter tours and access for a variety of activities including fishing, skiing and touring.

6.7.2 Market, Economic and Social Assessment of Destination Lodges

Competition

There are over 50 destination lodges on the West Coast of BC and several more in neighbouring Alaska. Many of the destination lodges on the south coast of BC are successfully linked to a variety of adventure tourism products and target relatively new market niches (ie., storm watching). On the Mid Coast there are numerous lodges which cater primarily to the sport fishing industry. Approximately ten of these lodges are located in the Rivers Inlet area. Currently there are only three lodges in the Mid Coast that have a focus on activities other than sports fishing. However, several of these fishing lodges in the Mid Coast have started to explore associations with specific adventure tourism products.

Several First Nation communities on the coast are actively exploring destination lodges in association with the development of cultural and adventure tourism products. An entrepreneur considering a destination lodge would need to be aware of the complementary products offered by the larger kayaking companies who use pocket cruise ships or large sail boats to offer clients higher-end accommodation in the Mid Coast.

Market and demand

Destination lodges generally attract more affluent, seasoned travellers willing to pay for a unique outdoor experience combined with comfortable accommodation and high quality food and service. Adventure tourism activities such as wildlife and nature observation, heli-hiking, boating, freshwater fishing, cycling, kayaking and visiting historic or First Nation cultural sites are often associated with the destination lodge experience.

Research has shown that a significant component of the ecotourism market is attracted to smaller, intimate, adventure-type accommodations, including cabins and lodges.¹ As illustrated in Table 6.7-1, experienced ecotourists cite a strong preference for this type of accommodation.

Table 6.7-1: Accommodation Preferences of Ecotourists Interested in Visiting BC²

Accommodation Preferences	% General Ecotourists Interested in Visiting BC	% Experienced Ecotourists
Cabin	18	66
Lodge/Inn	16	60
Tent	22	58
Bed and Breakfast	6	55
Hotel/motel	55	41
RV	9	8

Typically visitors at a destination lodge stay a minimum of one week.

Currently, a small portion of the global tourism market visits British Columbia. The province’s market share of world tourism has the potential to grow in the future, as tourists become more aware of the amenities British Columbia has to offer. As well, the demographics of the American travelling population is growing older and they are looking for more comfort oriented environments.³ This will stimulate strong demand for the destination lodges product in BC in the coming years, as long as the destination lodge is able to ensure high quality accommodation, food and services on par with that offered in other countries more customarily known for their high-end lodge destinations.

Land Use and Planning Impacts

Existing Recreation Uses

Recreational use associated with natural physical features, such as hot springs, are generally higher or focal points of local recreational activities. However, on the Mid Coast, with its small number of residents compared to elsewhere in the province, recreational use will typically be low to moderate. Before development, consultation with the neighbouring communities would be required to determine the acceptable proximity of the destination lodge from a significant local feature such as a hot spring.

¹ Pamela Wight and Associates. *Catalogue of Exemplary Practices in Adventure Travel and Ecotourism*, March 1999. Prepared on behalf of the Canadian Tourism Commission.

² Ibid.

³ Canadian Tourism Commission, *American Travel in Canada – The Market to 2010*, May 1998.

Other Land Uses

For destination lodges, visual quality and wildlife impacts will be a critical consideration. Therefore, forest practices and viewscapes will need to be planned accordingly in the proximity of a destination lodge.

Destination lodge owners will also need to work with local First Nations to ensure current community uses and culturally sensitive sites are not disrupted. Typically, regionally significant sites in the Mid Coast also mark important traditional sites for the area's First Nations.

Community Use or Planning

The development of destination lodges fit with the tourism development objectives of local communities. First Nation communities in the Mid Coast are exploring or developing destination lodges in conjunction with expanding cultural interpretation opportunities and developing new adventure tourism products locally.

Environment

The development of a destination lodge will need to be carefully planned to mitigate environmental impacts. The destination lodge will create intensive use around a small area, which will likely have been remote and seen little human traffic. Issues associated with waste management and wildlife impacts will have to be reviewed prior to development.

Employment Impacts

The development of a destination lodge could generate a significant amount of jobs in local communities if the lodge owner makes local hiring a priority. A common criticism of many resort lodges on the west coast is that most of their labour, supplies and services are brought into the area from Vancouver or the US, and that very few economic benefits accrue locally. However, there are a growing number of operators who recognize the contribution that can be made by local workers, and the importance of local support and economic diversification. For example, Shearwater Marine Resort is a major employer locally.

A destination lodge will require a variety of skills and job classifications and as the trend to a more diversified and extended season continues there is the opportunity to create more permanent employment in the destination lodge sector.

Regulatory or Crown Tenure Requirements

The proponent of a new destination resort would be required to apply for a Commercial Recreation Intensive Use Site lease from BC Assets and Land Corporation. The lease would require a legal survey. Other government agencies may also require additional site assessment work prior to the finalization of the tenure.

Level of Community Support

Most communities in the Mid Coast are actively exploring the development of a destination lodge type opportunity to support their own tourism development objectives. New destination lodge development will need to work closely with area communities to ensure support.

Infrastructure Requirements

The infrastructure requirements for a destination resort will be extensive. In addition to the main accommodation building(s), a destination resort could require moorage facilities, helicopter pad or access road construction depending on the mode of transportation. Sewage and utilities would also need to be developed. It may also be necessary to construct trails to support ancillary activities.

General Capital Requirements

The capital requirements for a destination resort will be significant based on standards for other adventure tourism products in this report. Realistic capital requirements range, but it is realistic that such a development could cost upwards of several million dollars for a high-end development.

Table 6.7-3 analyses each geographical unit using resource, market, economic and social criteria. The rationale for the boundaries of these geographic units is discussed in Section 5.2 of this report. Areas with the highest potential for the Destination Lodge Product have been identified as *polygons* on the map and are described in Table 6.7-4.

Table 6.7-3: PRODUCT ANALYSIS TABLE: DESTINATION LODGE

Unit Name and Number		Outer Coast (1)	Fjords & Lakes (2)	Channels (3)	Oweekeno (4)	Mountains and Trade Routes (5)	Princess Royal Island (6)
Resource Criteria							
Uniqueness of Key Features	Setting	Medium	High	High	High	High	High
	Geography	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
	Wildlife	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Supportive Resources	Fish	High	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
	Significant feature	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Feature Diversity	High	High	Low	Low	High	High
	Suitable locations	High	High	Low	Low	Medium	High
Existence of Supportive Infrastructure		High	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
Associated Products		Salt water and freshwater fishing, Ocean kayaking, Marine Cruising, Air tours, Trail products, Nature Observation, Culture and Heritage, Spas, Rafting/driftng					
Significance of Associated Products		High	High	High	High	High	High
Access to Sub Unit Area		High	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Access from Staging Area to Resource		High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium - High	Medium
Prime Season		Spring to Fall	Spring to Fall	Spring to Fall	Spring to Fall	Spring to Fall	Spring to Fall

Mid Coast Tourism Opportunity Strategy

RESOURCE DISCUSSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rivers Inlet, Shearwater, Pruth Bay are close to a diversity of features - Koeye and Pruth Bay have interpretive First Nations opportunities - Butedale is fee simple and contains structures (in various states of disrepair) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roscoe Inlet has interpretive First Nations opportunities, scenic values, cluster of features. - Potential link to canopy walk amidst large trees. - Location provides the greatest feature diversity for air tours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hotsprings offer unique significant feature. Potential for link to First Nations cultural interpretation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential for developing hotspring although visuals are a concern. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities are linked to the valleys. Potential for an Adventure Resort in the Bella Coola Valley. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity of features and opportunities associated with the scenic lakes, Laredo and Cornwall Inlet
COMMUNITIES MOST ABLE TO BENEFIT	Bella Bella, Klemtu, Dawsons Landing	Bella Bella	Ocean Falls, Bella Coola, Bella Bella	Oweekeno, Dawsons Landing	Bella Coola	Klemtu, Hartley Bay

Market, Economic and Social Criteria								
Unit Name and Number	Outer Coast (1)	Fiords & Lakes (2)	Channels (3)	Oweekeno (4)	Mountains and Trade Routes (5)	Princess Royal Island (6)		
Level of Competition	Moderate to High – several fishing lodges in the south	Moderate	Moderate	High – several fishing lodges in Rivers Inlet	Moderate to High, three lodges servicing current demand	Low to Moderate, one lodge soon to be operating in area.		
Competition is well established on Vancouver Island and southern coastal area with numerous adventure tourism focuses and products associated with destination lodges.								
Market Demand Potential	High – growing demand for destination lodge product.							
Impact/ Conflict	Existing Recreation Use	Low	Low	Low to Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate	
	Other Land Uses	First Nation’s cultural sites and traditional uses will need to be considered for specific sites before development of destination lodges.						
		Forestry use – low	Forestry use – high forestry values, minimal past harvesting activity.	Forestry use - low	Forestry use – medium to high.	Forestry use – medium to high	Forestry use – low	
	Community Use or Plans	Klemtu First Nations exploring tourism opportunities.	Heiltsuk First Nations exploring tourism opportunities.	Unknown community interest.	Interest in area from Oweekeno First Nations.	Bella Coola Valley exploring opportunities	Of interest to Nuxalk First Nations.	
Environmental	Medium to High – building of lodge will represent intensive development in a small area, proper environmental planning will be critical to mitigating impacts.							
Local Employment Impacts	The employment effects associated with the development of a destination lodge would be significant and stable if the workers are hired locally.							
Regulatory or Crown Tenure Requirements	Would need to apply for a permit or tenure from BCAL.							

Mid Coast Tourism Opportunity Strategy

Level of Community Support	Several communities in the Mid Coast are currently exploring the development of their own destination lodge. Project developed with the community will be supported.					
Infrastructure Requirements	High in order to support a destination lodge in remote location, will also require development of some ancillary infrastructure as well.					
General Capital Requirements	High					
POLYGONS EXHIBITING HIGHEST POTENTIAL	3	2	5, 6	4	7	1

Refer to Table 6.1-1 for definition of foregoing criteria. See following page for definitions of polygons.

Table 6.7-4: Descriptions of Highest Potential Polygons for Destination Lodge Product

Polygon #	Polygon Description
1	<p>Focus: Anchor Lake and Butedale Staging Area: Klemtu This lodge product would be associated with cultural heritage interpretation and exposition, fishing, nature observation, boating, air tours and hiking. High and diverse values heightened by the possible sightings of the Kermode bear. Butedale has existing heritage buildings and a still visible history related to the coast. Destination lodge associated product: Cultural Heritage Interpretation, Nature Observation Boating, Steelhead Fishing, Hiking</p>
2	<p>Focus: Roscoe Inlet Staging Area: Bella Bella A lodge can link to the rich Heiltsuk First Nation interpretive opportunities, local scenic values and cluster of features with a potential opportunity for a canopy walk amidst large trees. Helicopter link to this area provides access to high snow capped peaks, the outer coast, ocean and lake white sand beaches and fish bearing streams, rivers and lakes. Only high suitability location in the Mid-Coast with this potential. Destination lodge associated product: Cultural Heritage Interpretation, Nature Observation, Air Tour and Access, Ocean Kayaking, Marine Cruise, Hiking, potential skiing.</p>
3	<p>Focus: Pruth Bay and North Calvert Island Staging Area: Pruth Bay A lodge presently exists focused on fishing. Opportunities for diversification lie with Cultural Heritage interpretation, ocean kayaking and a shift to the open waters in the exposed west coast. Trails need to be constructed. Destination lodge associated product: Ocean Kayaking, Boating, Hiking.</p>
4	<p>Focus: Oweekeno Lake Staging Area: Oweekeno Scenic Oweekeno lake is close to Sheemahant hot spring which can be developed as a spa lodge with strong First Nations Heritage interpretation and exposition. Nature observation linked to the grizzly bear and salmon (with hopes that they return to their traditional stock levels). Timber harvesting has affected the viewscapes. Past and present forest harvesting practices including visual design, environmentally sensitive and other considerations can be explained. Access to the Monarch Icefield of unit 6 can be achieved by helicopter and increase the diversity of opportunities to includes touring and skiing. High Oweekeno First Nations interest. Destination lodge associated product: Specialized Spa, Air Tour And Access, Freshwater And Saltwater Fishing, Marine Cruising, Skiing, Mountaineering.</p>
5	<p>Focus: Eucott and Nascall Hot Springs Staging Area: Bella Coola or Ocean Falls These hot springs are adjacent to scenic Dean Channel and the helicopter opportunities of: scenic and culturally rich Roscoe Inlet and Ellerslie Lake, the fishing potentials of the Fiords and Lakes Unit (2) and the ski opportunities associated with the glaciers and snow opportunities of the northern Mountain and Trade Routes Unit (5). Destination lodge associated product: :Specialized Spa, Air Tour And Access, Freshwater And Saltwater Fishing, Marine Cruising, Skiing, Mountaineering</p>
6	<p>Focus: Tallheo Hot Springs Staging Area: Bella Coola (Nuxalk) This hot spring has a small beach. Hot spring flow is suitable for a small lodge development. Destination lodge associated product: Cultural Heritage Interpretation, Marine Cruising</p>
7	<p>Focus: Bella Coola Adventure Lodge Staging Area: Bella Coola This product is focused on the Adventure Product associated with the surrounding mountains, cliffs and Icefields. Grizzly observation is an opportunity. That can be linked to drift tours down the Atnarko and Bella Coola Rivers. Destination lodge associated product: Air tour, Road Tour, River Drifting, Canoeing,</p>