



South Cariboo Tourism Asset Inventory

Final Report: November 4, 2022



DISTRICT OF
100 Mile House

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MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

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MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

November 4, 2022

Joanne Doddridge
Director of Economic Development & Planning
District of 100 Mile House
385 Birch Ave
100 Mile House, British Columbia, V0K 2E0

Dear Ms. Doddridge,

Please find enclosed the final South Cariboo Tourism Asset Inventory. It has been a pleasure working with you to develop this important document.

If you have any questions or require clarification on the attached report, please feel free to contact me at 780.266.7888.

Sincerely,



Justin Rousseau, Managing Director
Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.



South Cariboo Visitor Centre
Photo Credit: Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.



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1

PROJECT
OVERVIEW



The South Cariboo Region

The South Cariboo region is an attractive destination that offers excellent access to outdoor recreational activities. The area’s unique guest ranches and lakeshore resorts are highly popular destinations.¹ Visitors from across British Columbia and further afield flock to the region to enjoy renowned fishing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ATViing, horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking, camping, and much more.² The District of 100 Mile House serves as a visitor service hub for the region and is a central gathering place for the South Cariboo. The community offers an excellent Visitor Information Centre, campground, restaurants, an attractive downtown, interesting events, and important recreational assets such as Centennial Park, trails, and various indoor facilities.

100 Mile House serves as a visitor service hub for the region and is a central gathering place for the South Cariboo.

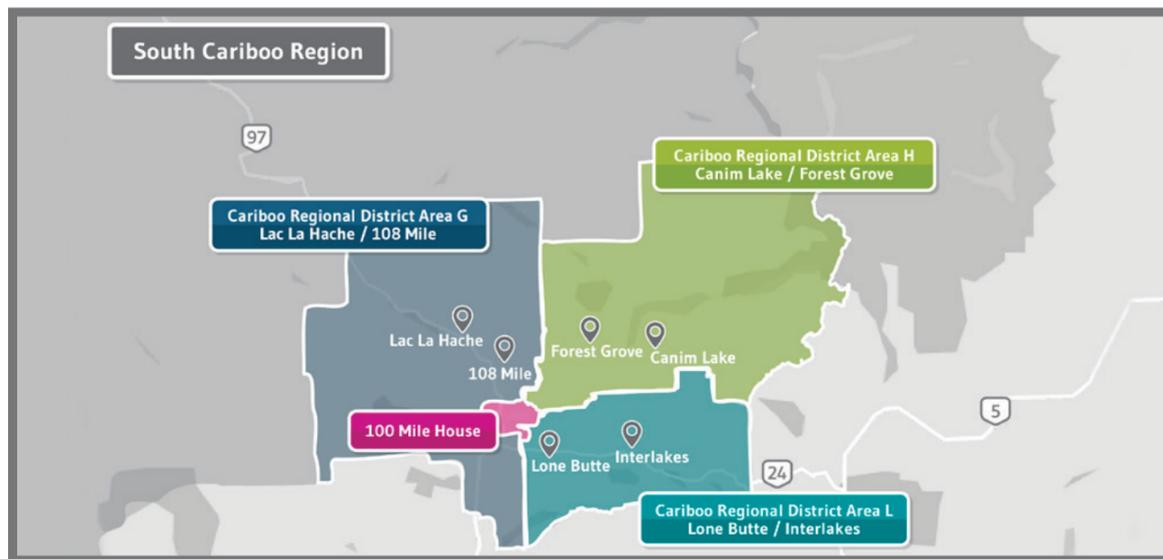
Tourism is already a significant economic driver in the region, and local communities see tourism as having strong potential for future growth.³ To better understand this potential, the District of 100 Mile House commissioned this tourism asset inventory study.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a comprehensive inventory of tourism assets in the South Cariboo region. The inventory will assist in future planning, business development and attraction, and help to align tourism offerings.

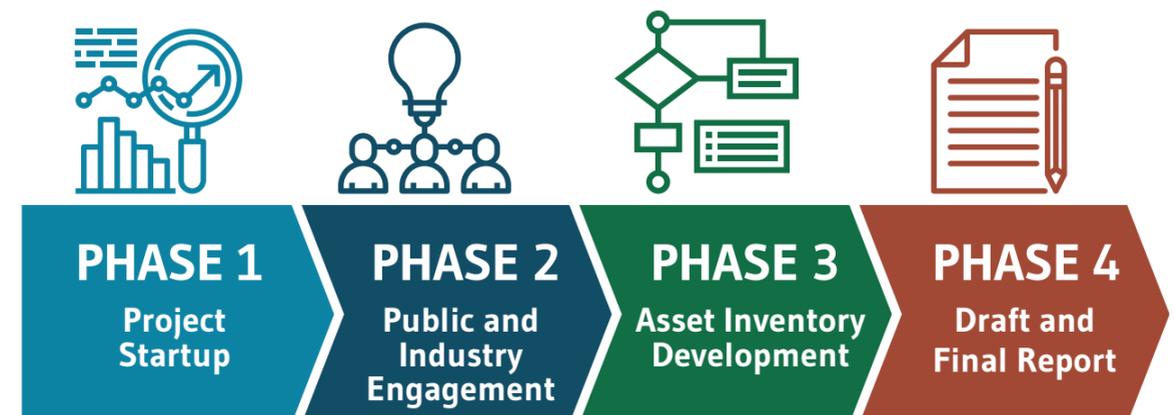
Study Area

The study area includes the District of 100 Mile House and Cariboo Regional District Areas G, H, and L.



Process

The project had four, interconnected phases as described below.



Project Team

The South Cariboo Tourism Asset Inventory was overseen and developed by the Project Team. Below is a list of Project Team representatives.

Project Team	
Organization	Representatives
District of 100 Mile House	Joanne Doddridge – Director of Economic Development and Planning
	Susan Paulsen – Community Transition Assistant
	Julie Gilmore – Manager, South Cariboo Visitor Centre
Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.	Justin Rousseau – Managing Director
	Maxwell Harrison – Senior Associate
	Zoe Arnold – Associate
	Breanna Hives – Graphic Designer

“The natural beauty, relaxed pace, and experience of being outdoors without too many people makes the South Cariboo a summer vacation destination that families choose year after year.”

- Survey Respondent

Lac La Hache
Photo Credit: Destination BC, Michael Bednar

Overview of Research

A variety of primary and secondary research activities were conducted to develop this report. Primary research was gathered through a survey of residents and industry stakeholders, an in-person community assessment, and one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders. Secondary research was gathered from local, regional, provincial, and national data sources, information requests of the Client, and a review of relevant literature.

1. Surveys Administered

- a. South Cariboo Tourism Asset Identification Survey (35 responses)

2. One-on-One Interviews Completed

- a. South Cariboo Visitor Centre
- b. Cariboo Regional District
- c. Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association
- d. Fishing Highway Tourist Association
- e. Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin

3. In-Person Destination Tour

Members of the consulting team toured the South Cariboo region in August of 2022 to gain a first-hand perspective of the destination and its tourism assets.

4. Documents Reviewed

- a. Existing inventories of tourism assets.
- b. Existing tourism-related planning and support studies.
- c. Business listing databases.

“The South Cariboo is a great place to unplug from city living and enjoy fresh air and outdoor activities.”

- Survey Respondent



2

ENGAGEMENT
PROCESS AND
DESTINATION TOUR



This section provides a summary of the engagement process and destination tour that were conducted to collect input toward the study.

Summary of Engagement Process

As an input into the process, South Cariboo region residents and tourism industry stakeholders were engaged through a variety of consultation activities, including an online survey, one-on-one interviews, and in-person discussions during the destination tour.

Key Themes

Five key themes were synthesized from all the engagement inputs received. They are as follows.



1. Strong Knowledge of Tourism Assets

Participants in the engagement process were found to have strong knowledge of tourism assets in the South Cariboo region. Respondents to the survey identified 246 assets and several dozen more were identified by interviewees and operators our team spoke with during the destination tour. Furthermore, many participants took the time to describe what made these assets special from a tourism standpoint, which was very helpful input toward the study.



2. Welcoming to Visitors

The South Cariboo region was described as being very welcoming to visitors. Participants spoke to the friendliness and warmth of the people, their service-oriented mindsets, and the high level of hospitality that is shown to visitors. There were no shortage of stories where residents and businesses went the extra mile to help a visitor in need.



3. Opportunities for Product Development

Participants saw many opportunities to expand and enhance tourism products in the South Cariboo region. The most common opportunities described by participants included:

- **Trail Tourism** – There is an abundance of old trails in the region, but many have not been upkept or are no longer widely known about. Trails are an important supporting product that give visitors more to do while they are in the region. Trails can also support a wide variety of activities, including non-mechanized pursuits (e.g. hiking, mountain biking, horse riding, cross country skiing, etc.) and mechanized pursuits (e.g. ATVing, dirt biking, snowmobiling, etc.). Additionally, trails can be leveraged by tour operators for guided hikes and activities.
- **Shoulder and Off-Season Experiences** – Offering more tourism products in the shoulder and off seasons is an opportunity to bring more visitors to the South Cariboo and reduce the seasonality of the tourism industry. There is potential to leverage existing assets, such as lake-side resorts and trails, for winter product like fat biking, cross-country skiing, ice fishing, skating, and dog sledding.
- **Family Friendly Entertainment** – There is wide-spread recognition that the region’s lakes and natural attractions are the South Cariboo’s main visitor draw. However, there is a need to develop supporting activities that will keep visitors in the region longer.
- **Itineraries** – Attractions in the region can be grouped together into itineraries to make it easier for visitors to enjoy them. Similar attractions can be grouped together into single or multi-day itineraries that appeal to visitors seeking particular kinds of experiences (e.g. best fishing spots, best swimming lakes, best hiking trails, etc.).

Other notable product development opportunities included ecotourism, stargazing, and vehicle rentals (e.g. boats, ATVs, snowmobiles).



4. Maintaining Lake Access

Maintaining ready access to the region’s many lakes was viewed by respondents as critically important to tourism in the South Cariboo. Concerns were raised over the quality of access roads and the quantity of parking at boat launches. Stories were also shared of visitors who avoided travelling in certain areas because their RV rental contracts do not permit driving on gravel roads. Respondents would like to see more done to maintain and expand access to the region’s lakes.



5. Improving Tourism Marketing

In general, respondents felt that more could be done to market the South Cariboo region to visitors. Opportunities for improvement included developing updated visitor information materials, such as maps and brochures, increasing advertising, particularly in the shoulder and off-seasons, and developing additional signage, especially in rural/remote areas and to under utilized assets like Centennial Park.

Photos from the Destination Tour
Source: Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

Destination Tour

From August 13 – 20, 2022, an assessment team from Expedition Management Consulting Ltd. toured the South Cariboo region. The main purpose of the tour was to experience the destination from a visitor’s point of view in order to help identify strengths and growth areas in the visitor experience. The other purpose of the tour was to ground-truth information collected remotely about tourism assets.

The team travelled throughout the region, stayed at beautiful lake-side resorts, visited some of the main attractions, shopped at local restaurants and stores, and took in the sights and sounds of the stunning South Cariboo. During the tour, the team recorded what they observed through photographs and notes. The assessment team found tourism operators, businesses, and residents to be open and accommodating. They made us feel welcome.

Highlights of the team’s time in the South Cariboo included paddling on the many pristine lakes, visiting the Bridge Lake Ice Caves, exploring the beautiful Mahood Falls and Canim Falls, shopping the Interlakes Market, experiencing the 108 Mile Heritage Site, and relaxing at Centennial Park in 100 Mile House.

Tourism Marketing

The assessment team utilized existing digital and hard copy tourism marketing materials to inform the schedule for the destination tour. For the most part, the materials were found to be visually appealing and contained engaging images. However, some of the materials did not support a seamless visitor experience. For example, the Discover South Cariboo website had links to external websites that did not work, outdated information (particularly in relation to festivals and events), and in some cases insufficient information for readers to access sought-after experiences. As an example, our team had difficulty finding the exact location of lakeside resorts and attractions along the Fishing Highway. We needed to zoom in on Google Maps to find out where to go to visit these assets. Furthermore, we found there to be a gap in terms of what is presented to visitors in tourism marketing and the large amount of experiences that are actually available to visitors. More can be done to tell the story of all the region has to offer.

The barriers described above make it challenging for visitors to find the experiences they are looking for and, ultimately, to convince them to visit. Updating and improving tourism marketing materials would serve the region well.



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1. We rented a beautiful lakefront cottage on Lac des Roche.
2. We were fortunate to catch a glimpse of a bear on our way to the Bridge Lake Ice Caves.
3. We picked several buckets of saskatoon berries on our way to see the majestic Mahood Falls and Canim Falls.
4. View of Bridge Creek Falls in Centennial Park.
5. We visited downtown 100 Mile House for lunch and shopping. Centennial Park is a real gem!
6. 108 Mile Ranch Heritage Site (team member for scale). A very impressive log barn!

3

TOURISM ASSET
INVENTORY

Fishing near Canim Lake
Photo Credit: Destination BC, Andrew Strain



This section provides the findings from the tourism asset inventory process. The asset inventory is intended to be a helpful resource that grows alongside the South Cariboo’s tourism industry. As new assets are developed and existing assets are enhanced or change, the inventory should be updated to reflect these developments. Additionally, the inventory is focused on assets that are directly related to tourism. It is recognized that there are many more services and businesses located in the region that support and contribute in some way to the visitor economy (e.g. grocery stores, pharmacies, repair shops, etc.).

Summary of Inventory

The tourism asset inventory recorded 370 assets across 15 inventory categories. For each asset, the inventory identified the following information (where available):

- Asset Name
- Location
- Contact Information
- Description of the Product Offering
- Source of the Inventory Information
- Market Readiness (see Appendix A for a description of market ready standards)

Figure 1. Number of Assets per Category

Asset Inventory Category	Number of Assets Identified
Natural Attractions	123
Outdoor Recreation Attractions	15
Agritourism Attractions	4
Culture and Heritage Attractions	7
Indigenous Attractions	3
Culinary Attractions	13
Specialty Shops	13
Tour Operators	14
Festivals and Events	Small/Local (12) Large/Regional (8)
Fixed Roof Accommodations*	49 (548 rooms)
Campgrounds	37 (885 sites)
Food and Beverage Providers	20
Meeting Venues	14
Tourism Services	16
Community Assets	22
Total Number of Assets	370

*Many of these properties are lake-front resorts that also offer amenities to enhance the visitor experience, such as paddleboards, kayaks, boats, and other equipment rentals.

The number of assets recorded for each category is shown in Figure 1. To view the full asset inventory in Excel format, please follow this [link](#). As a result of the asset inventory process, engagement process, and destination tour, we have identified strengths and gaps in the tourism product offering that is currently available to visitors and residents.

Tourism Product Strengths:

Accessible Lakes

The South Cariboo’s many lakes are widely considered to be the region’s main tourism draw. The lakes tend to be clean, well stocked with fish, and support excellent opportunities for water-based recreation such as boating, swimming, fishing, and paddling. The asset inventory identified 81 lakes in the South Cariboo region that are accessible to visitors. This significant supply of high-quality lakes is an important product strength of the region.

Resorts, Lodges, and Guest Ranches

Over the years, the region has attracted entrepreneurial hosts who built up a strong supply of resorts, lodges, and guest ranches. No two properties are the same and each has its own unique character. These special accommodations, and the activities they support, are a significant draw to the region for visitors seeking a stronger connection to the land and a more relaxed atmosphere.

Fishing

The region’s many lakes support an abundance of fish species, which attracts anglers from far and wide. The famous Fishing Highway 24 runs through part of the South Cariboo, and fishing opportunities abound throughout the region. The South Cariboo is a fisherman’s paradise.

Natural Attractions

The South Cariboo region is an attractive destination for those seeking to connect with nature and explore wild places. The region is well appointed with natural attractions such as lakes, forests, waterfalls, mountains, provincial parks, and wildlife. Highlights include the Bridge Lake Ice Caves, Mahood Falls, and Canim Falls. The region’s large size can also be considered an asset with respect to natural attractions because few places become overcrowded. Outdoor enthusiasts flock to the region every year to experience the South Cariboo’s natural offering.

Horseback Riding

Eight tour operators who offer horseback riding experiences were identified through the asset inventory process. This high number of operators indicates that this is an area of strength for the region.

Rodeos

Three rodeos were identified through the asset inventory process, including the Interlakes Rodeo, Bridge Lake Stampede, and the Little Britches Rodeo. These large events attract visitors from outside the region and showcase the South Cariboo’s ranching heritage and cowboy culture.

Meeting Venues

The region, and the District of 100 Mile House in particular, is well-served for meeting venues that support business tourism. 100 Mile House is the commercial and business centre of the South Cariboo and regularly hosts meetings.

RV and Camp Sites

The region has 978 RV and camping sites, which provide ample opportunity for visitors to enjoy a more rustic stay in the South Cariboo.

Regional Service Hub

The District of 100 Mile House is a regional service hub for the South Cariboo. Visitors and tourism operators frequently travel to 100 Mile House to access services that support their experiences and product offerings. The community has an excellent VIC and has a variety of attractive assets like Centennial Park, events, and shopping.

Jumping into a Lake
Photo Credit: Jan Monteyne



Tourism Product Gaps:

Trails

The quantity and quality of formalized trails in the region is low. Existing trails lack variety in terms of length, difficulty, and appropriate use. The region would be well-served through the development and promotion of tourism orientated trails that can support a diversity of user types and skill levels.

Culture and Heritage

The South Cariboo region is rich in Indigenous and pioneer history. There are many compelling stories from the past including ancient Indigenous traditions, first contact and the fur trade, gold rushes, and cowboy culture. Unfortunately, the interesting culture and heritage of the region is not being shared in a way that is easily accessible or consumable for visitors. There is a lack of interpretation through museum facilities, signage, and tourism programs. More could be done to share this history with visitors, which has the added benefit of preserving it for future generations.

Supporting Attractions, Activities, and Entertainment

There is a lack of attractions, activities, and entertainment that support the region's main draw (i.e. the lakes). Activities that have broad appeal, particularly for families, are important drivers of extending visitor stays and spending. They also serve to diversify the product offering, which makes the destination a more appealing place to visit for a wider visitor market.

Agritourism Experiences

The South Cariboo has a long history of farming and ranching and maintains strong linkages to agriculture to this day. However, these linkages have not translated into significant agritourism development. Potential exists to transform the South Cariboo into an agritourism cluster given the number of farms, ranches, and locally produced food available in the region.

Market Ready Tourism Products

The South Cariboo region currently lacks market ready tourism products. This includes things like packages, guided tours, facility admissions, and other experiences that can be sold to visitors. Currently, exploration of the region and participation in activities is primarily self-directed by visitors. It is good that visitors are welcome to explore the region independently; however, the region could benefit through the development of purchasable tourism products that leverage existing assets and product strengths.

Shoulder and Off-Season Offerings

There is a lack of tourism-related offerings to draw visitors to the region in the shoulder and off-seasons. Mount Timothy Recreational Resort and the Fishing Highway's Ice Fishing Derby are notable exceptions. Although, more could be offered to consistently attract visitors outside of the high summer season. Particular opportunity lies with the region's lodges and resorts. These high-quality assets could be leveraged

to a greater degree for off-season product offerings (e.g. ice fishing, snowmobiling, dark sky viewing, etc.).

Indigenous Experiences

Indigenous history and culture in the form of tourism products is largely unavailable in the South Cariboo region. Several Indigenous-related events are hosted annually, such as the Canim Lake Pow Wow. However, these events primarily serve community purposes rather than tourism purposes. Given the area's long history as the Traditional Territory of the Secwepemc People, there may be opportunities for First Nations to leverage their cultural history for tourism growth.

Public Beaches

Public beaches are lacking at the region's many lakes. Visitors must often stay at a lake-front resort to access beach areas, and swimming next to boat launches is not an ideal alternative, especially for families with young children.

Transportation

There are no public transportation options or taxi services in the region. Therefore, all visitors must rely on themselves and their vehicles to travel throughout the destination.

Luxury Accommodations

There is a lack of high-end, luxury accommodations in the region as well as ecolodges not focused on fishing.

Mt. Timothy Chair Lift
Photo Credit: Tourism Activities



"The South Cariboo is a place where you can find absolute quiet. This is so hard to find in this busy world."

- Survey Respondent

4

OPPORTUNITY
ASSESSMENT

A tourism opportunity assessment was conducted using Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.’s Tourism Opportunity Evaluation Tool. Several high potential product development opportunities were identified for future consideration. These are explained in further detail in this section.

Tourism Opportunity Evaluation Tool

The following set of criteria was used to assist in determining which tourism products and clusters have the greatest potential for development. The evaluation process placed high value on the current availability of assets and their level of market readiness. The assessment also carefully considered the product/market match of each opportunity.

Figure 2. Opportunity Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Description
1. Availability and Market Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity is currently available in the South Cariboo region or could be developed with limited investment. The market readiness of the opportunity.
2. Unique and Authentic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes an authentic experience that highlights what is unique and valuable about the South Cariboo region.
3. Market Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity reaches identified target markets. Limited competition exists relative to market demand.
4. Market Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity has the potential to be promoted year-round to leverage the brand of the region. The opportunity has the potential to attract the attention of the media.
5. Growth Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity has potential to achieve year over year growth in revenue, product, and visitation.
6. Return on Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity will produce a high return on investment.
7. Human Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the opportunity will not put un-due stress on existing human resources.
8. Partner and Community Buy-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity demonstrates commitment from partners. The community is open to sharing the opportunity with visitors.
9. Strategic Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the opportunity aligns with the strategic intent and organizational strategy of stakeholders.
10. Community Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity fosters the culture, health, and development of the community by enhancing community spirit.
11. Environmental Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity has minimal negative environmental impacts.
12. Physical Infrastructure Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community has the physical infrastructure in place to support development (e.g. roads, public facilities, accommodations, etc.).

Tourism Product Development Opportunities

The following product development opportunities are intended to be used as a guide to demonstrate high potential tourism offerings that can be offered in the South Cariboo region in the future. It is hoped that experience providers will use these examples to spark their own unique ideas, generate enthusiasm, and encourage collaboration in the development of new tourism product.

Fishing Highway Programs and Events

British Columbia possesses one of the best freshwater fisheries in North America. With over 20,000 lakes and 750,000 kilometres of fishable rivers and streams.⁴ One of BC's most exciting freshwater fishing destinations is the South Cariboo, and specifically the Fishing Highway. There is an opportunity to further develop the tourism experience surrounding the fishing industry. For example, there are clear links to culinary tourism. During our tour of the region no restaurants we visited served local fish, there were no fish fry events, and there were generally limited opportunities to consume local fish. There may also be an opportunity to develop a large signature event in the summer, fall, or spring focussed on celebrating and promoting the Fishing Highway. The District of 100 Mile House could be the central hub of such an event with the spokes being fishing lodges and lakes throughout the region. In addition, Highway 24 itself has limited reference to the Fishing Highway brand and limited promotions of this key tourism attraction.

As described below, the vast majority of anglers are male, and they tend to be older. Therefore, complementary programming focussed on females and youths will encourage the whole family to take a trip to the Fishing Highway.

Market Insights:

1. BC's Fresh Water Anglers spend \$498 million annually in BC.⁵
2. BC's Fresh Water Fishing generated \$299 million towards BC's GDP.⁶
3. During the 2018/19 season, 79% of all licenced anglers were male, while 21% were female. Additionally, 9% of licenced anglers were under 25 years of age, while 38% were 55 years or older.⁷
4. The top motivator for taking a fishing trip to BC is "to be close to nature". This is followed by "for relaxation" and "to get away from the routine".⁸

"The South Cariboo is a fishing haven."

- Survey Respondent

Family Friendly Entertainment

As described earlier, there is a need to provide activities that will encourage visitors to stay in the region longer. The region lacks the diversity of family activities and entertainment that many competitive destinations have. Examples of family friendly entertainment that could be developed include mini golf courses, adventure playgrounds, zip lines, petting zoos, events, and paintball courses. Cultural activities and performances suitable to multiple generations, experiential learning opportunities, and other immersive experiences would help round out the experience for visitors. Agritourism experiences are also a big hit with multiple generations (agritourism opportunities are described on the next page). As the central service hub and meeting place of the region, the District of 100 Mile House would be a logical location for these types of attractions to be located. Particular attention could be paid to indoor activities given that there is a lack of things for visitors to do on rainy days.

Family friendliness also means focusing on safety and security in all aspects of tourism development and delivery. Families should clearly recognize the region as a safe destination to eat, stay, and play.

Market Insights:

1. 83% of travelers plan trips together as a family.¹⁰
2. Family travel is predicted to grow at a faster rate than all other forms of leisure travel, partly because it represents a way to reunite the family and for family members to spend time with each other, away from the demands of work.¹¹
3. An estimated 75% of travellers plan their holiday around a milestone event such as a birthday, reunion, wedding, anniversary, or even holidays themselves to bring family members together¹²
4. More families than ever are taking 'ed-ventures', which are long-term trips where children learn on the road.¹³

"The South Cariboo is rich in pioneer history, railroads, gold panning, and homesteading."

- Survey Respondent

Agritourism and Culinary

The South Cariboo Region has a significant opportunity to further develop its agritourism offering. One example of an agritourism offering is farm tours. Farm tours offer an experiential and often educational opportunity for visitors to celebrate agriculture and foster a deeper connection with their food and the people who produce it. The region has many farms and ranches that could offer farm tour experiences that would be attractive to visitors interested in learning about their food and agricultural lifestyles.

Closely linked to Agritourism is Culinary tourism, which is big business and is a focus of many competitive destinations. More than simply eating at local restaurants, culinary tourism adds value to the visitor experience by connecting producers and chefs; by featuring local culinary talent; and by creating new and memorable experiences that enable visitors to see, touch, smell, hear and taste the destination.¹⁴ The region lacks unique culinary experience offerings at the present time. Therefore, some development work will be needed to encourage enhanced culinary experiences. These could be located in the District of 100 Mile House to leverage its position as the central service hub of the region.

Market Insights:

1. Sampling local cuisine is consistently ranked among the top 5 activity preferences among BC's top domestic and international visitor markets.¹⁴
2. Culinary offerings are a top driver of domestic travel for 18 – 34 year olds. Eating and drinking local food is among the most popular activities for this travel segment when visiting a destination.¹⁵
3. Destination Canada targets Explorer Quotient profiles domestically and internationally that seek activities related to agritourism, including attending farmers' markets, visiting small towns and villages, and dining at restaurants offering local ingredients.¹⁶

"All the rodeos in our area are such great cultural entertainment for families."

- Survey Respondent

Outdoor Adventure

In British Columbia, outdoor adventure tourism is often defined as activities that present the participant with risk and challenge. Activities are often divided into two types: hard and soft adventure. Hard outdoor adventure, such as white-water rafting, tends to require more experience, better physical fitness, and presents more potential danger than soft outdoor adventure, such as wildlife viewing.¹⁶

The region has some stunning geography and terrain that could lend itself to a further developed outdoor adventure tourism offering. For example, there is an opportunity to enhance mountain biking trails and to build a mountain bike tourism cluster through enhancements to the trail infrastructure, rentals, tours, and programs. The region is in close proximity to Wells Gray Provincial Park and the District of Clearwater, which is an established outdoor adventure focal point. The region could leverage this opportunity through shared programming and promotions.

Market Insights:

1. 42% of Europeans and North and South Americans reported the main activity of their most recent trip (domestic or international) to be adventure related.¹⁷
2. Over 1.2 million people participate in British Columbia's commercial outdoor adventure tourism. US visitors and British Columbia residents are the most common participants in outdoor adventure tourism in British Columbia.¹⁸
3. According to the 2009/10 Outdoor Recreation Study: BC Resident Participants, published by Destination BC in 2013, the majority of British Columbia residents (91%) participated in at least one outdoor recreation activity during the past year.¹⁹

"The South Cariboo is special because of its beautiful nature, welcoming people, and relaxed atmosphere. Also, you can actually see the stars at night!"

- Survey Respondent

Activate 100 Mile House Downtown

There is potential to drive visitation to 100 Mile House’s downtown area and transform it into a focal point for tourism activity in the region. This can be accomplished by activating the area with programming and events that would draw visitors in. Examples could include street markets and festivals, destination animation during peak visitation periods (see definition below), adding outdoor dining options such as patios, enhancing interpretation of historical and cultural aspects of the downtown, and other offerings that resonate with the region’s visitor markets. New program development should always be paired with strong advertising and promotions to ensure the offerings are being shared with visitors.



Destination Animation

Smaller performances, interactive displays, and other experiences that take place repeatedly, mostly in the heart of a town, and help enliven the visitor experience.²¹

Another asset in 100 Mile House that could be better leveraged for tourism is Centennial Park. This park is a fantastic community asset that both residents and visitors can enjoy. The park is located in close proximity to the downtown and includes a spray park, playground, picnic area, tennis courts, walking trails, waterfalls, skateboard park, washrooms, and campground facilities. The park can also be rented for large events. There is opportunity to expand the promotion of this park as a destination for visitors through enhanced signage and greater inclusion in tourism marketing materials.

Market Insights:

1. 80% of non-lodging visitor spending is estimated to take place in downtown areas.²²
2. Shopping and sampling local cuisine are among the top 5 activities for British Columbia’s visitor markets.²³ These experiences are often provided in downtown areas.

“100 Mile House is an incredibly service-oriented and friendly town.”

- Survey Respondent



Crafter's Market in 100 Mile House
Photo Credit: Expedition Management Consulting

5

NEXT
STEPS AND
CONCLUSION



Next Steps

In order to move forward with tourism development in the South Cariboo region, the following next steps are recommended.

1. Seek approval of the South Cariboo Tourism Asset Inventory from District of 100 Mile House Council.
2. Share the report and asset inventory resource widely with stakeholders, including businesses, tourism organizations, and governments.
3. Using this report as a key input, develop a Tourism Product Development Plan for the South Cariboo region.
4. Utilize this report to update and refresh digital and hard copy tourism marketing materials and ensure they provide sufficient information to visitors.
5. Consider completing a Value of Tourism Study to quantify the economic impact of tourism in the region.
6. Seek to leverage available grant funding and cooperative marketing funding to spur tourism planning and development.
7. Update the tourism asset inventory on an annual basis to ensure it will be a useful tool moving forward.

Tourism Product Development Planning

To begin bridging the gap in terms of the availability of market ready tourism product, the region should utilize the Tourism Asset Inventory as an input to undertake a Tourism Product Development Plan. The purpose of this initiative would be to produce a tactical plan that will set the local tourism industry on a path toward developing high potential tourism experience clusters in the South Cariboo region.

The report should develop action plans for each product development opportunity that will identify what steps stakeholders need to take in the short to medium term to develop the opportunity further. For example, the Tourism Asset Inventory suggests that family friendly experiences are an important opportunity for further development in the region. The Tourism Product Development Plan would identify key action items to move this product category closer to market ready status. That may include suggestions for itineraries, packaging, experience offerings, promotion, physical enhancements (such as equipment rentals and signage), and could identify partnerships with key organizations. The end result will be a document that will encourage action from private and public stakeholders interested in further developing tourism products in the South Cariboo region.

Conclusion

The South Cariboo Tourism Asset Inventory provides a comprehensive inventory of tourism assets in the region, identifies product strengths and gaps, and puts forward high potential product development opportunities for consideration. It is anticipated that this resource will be used by tourism stakeholders to support their efforts to grow the visitor economy in the South Cariboo and plan for future development.

Tourism operators in the South Cariboo are keen to continue their recovery from the impacts of COVID and get back to growing their businesses. Furthermore, with the resumption of travel activities, the visitor economy in the region is poised for growth. Now is the time for stakeholders to invest in tourism and expand the many economic, social, and environmental benefits it can provide.

Family Visiting Bridge Creek Waterfall
Photo Credit: Paulsen



6

APPENDIX



Appendix A: Destination BC Market Ready Standards

Destination BC Market Ready Standards are broken down into three categories of “readiness” to assist tourism-related businesses in progressively increasing the quality and professionalism of their operation. ²⁴

Visitor Ready

These criteria are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer “visitor ready” product to consumers.

Visitor Ready

- Refers to a business which has all of their licenses, permits and insurance in place in order to operate legally.

Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as “visitor ready”. The business must:

- Maintain good standing of all applicable business licenses, insurance, and legislative requirements.
- Maintain a staffed business location with a set schedule of operating hours.
- Provide a contact telephone number or email contact year-round. If closed for season, provide automated response through voicemail and or email.
- Have branded on-site signage.

Market Ready

These criteria are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer “market ready” product to consumers.

Market Ready

- Refers to a business that markets to potential visitors; communicates with potential visitors year-round and is ready to accept advanced reservations.

Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as “market ready”. The business must meet visitor ready criteria plus:

- Provide a published pricing policy.
- Have a published consumer billing, payment, and cancellation policy.
- Have marketing materials such as brochure, rack card or website.
- Have site based parking in close proximity.
- During operating season, maintain a 24-48 hour response time; or less, to inquiries and a 24 hour response time to reservation/booking requests.
- Be prepared to communicate and accept reservations by telephone, fax and/or e-mail and provide same day confirmation of booking arrangements.
- Have high resolution images and video footage for promotional and training purposes.
- Have frontline staff who are trained in customer service (such as WorldHost® or equivalent customer training program)
- Be an active stakeholder or eligible to become a stakeholder of your local tourism association.

Export Ready

These criteria are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer “export ready” product to international markets.

Export Ready

Refers to a business that markets to and through travel trade distribution sales channels, understands commission or net rate pricing, agrees to trade bookings and a cancellation policy.

Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as “export ready”. The business must meet “visitor and market ready” criteria plus:

- Be in business at least one year, with a proven track record for safe and professional operation.
- Demonstrate an adequate budget and marketing plan that includes international tourism operators.
- Understand the roles played by receptive tour operators, tour operators, travel wholesalers, and retail travel agents and understand rack or retail pricing, agent commissions and wholesale net rates at each level.
- Be willing to include receptive tour operators in your marketing and sales plan and provide contracted wholesale net rates to receptive tour operators.
- Provide detailed pricing and program information to tour operators and wholesalers at least one year in advance of selling season.
- Be prepared to set up billing arrangements with the tour operator, wholesale agency or receptive tour operator.
- If you plan to pursue group business, ensure you are able to accommodate and adapt to the needs of the market (e.g. tour bus access and parking, washroom facilities, maximum group size, group pricing, and frontline staff that speak the language of your target markets).
- Carry adequate insurance (discuss this with your receptive operator as sometimes they can add suppliers to their existing policies at nominal cost).
- Provide support (free or reduced rates) for international media and travel trade familiarization tours.
- Offer currency exchange rates consistent with industry norms.

Centennial Park Playground
Photo Credit: Mitch Cheek

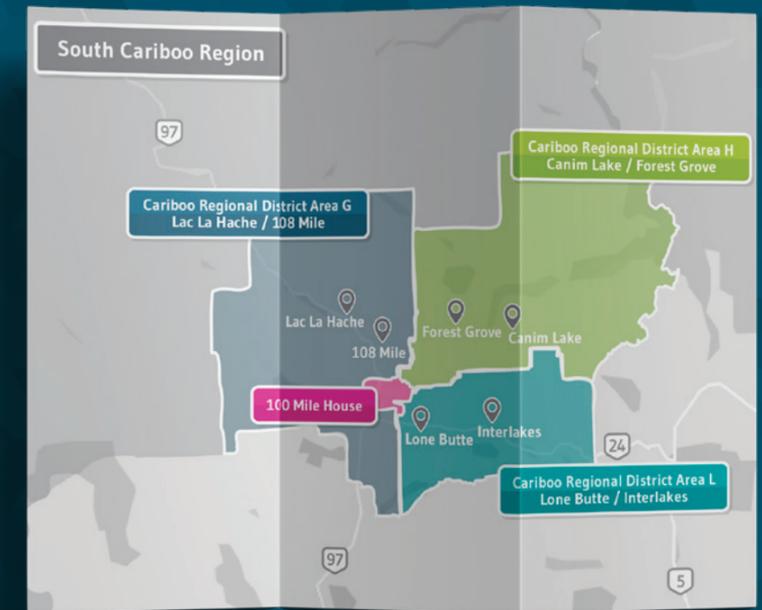


Appendix B: One-Page Information Flat Sheet

South Cariboo Tourism Asset Inventory Snapshot - Tourism Assets



The South Cariboo Region Welcomes You To Visit Us!



Appendix C: References

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