

Tourism Powell River Society

Powell River Visitor Attraction and Marketing Tool Development Program

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Progress Report (project update until October 15, 2011)

Project Objectives:

The two key campaigns that fall under this project are as follows:

1) Travel Writer Program – Media Campaign:

Tourism Powell River will assemble a portfolio of prepared stories to promote the Powell River and Sunshine Coast region through the generation of editorial content in print and electronic publications as well as broadcast mediums to attract visitors. It's a proven fact that editorial content about a tourism destination is invaluable, and far more effective than traditional advertising. One story in a magazine or on television is worth millions in advertising and promotion.

Project Activities:

- Developing a portfolio of story ideas with background information and contacts that are easy to disseminate to publications and media organizations that cover the travel and tourism sector
- Researching and developing a network of contacts within the travel and tourism media to disseminate the stories to
- Buying editorial space and time in key print, electronic and broadcast media to promote the region without it coming off like an infomercial
- Paying to bring professional media to do familiarization tours of the Powell River and Sunshine Coast region and providing them with positive experiences to write about
- Assisting in the implementation and promotion of a Powell River Writer's Conference and Fall Workshop for writers on the Sunshine Coast and beyond

2) Meetings and Retreats Development and Marketing Campaign:

Tourism Powell River has researched and identified an opportunity to attract conferences and retreats to the region, and believes it will be able to attract medium and smaller sized events that are not normally well accommodated by larger urban centers. It also believes that meeting facilities in the Powell River region are of high quality and would be attractive for event organizers and companies to consider this region for their meetings and retreats. It is therefore important to develop a strategy and tools with which to attract them.

Project Activities:

- Research and develop a strategy to attract meetings and retreats to the region
- Perform a total inventory of services related to the meetings and retreats market in the region
- Create awareness of the region as a premiere destination to host meetings and retreats
- Work with the industry to attract capital investment for the creation and upgrading of facilities
- Develop marketing packages, collateral and imagery to directly entice organizations and companies to bring their events to Powell River and the Sunshine Coast region

Sponsorship of Powell River Writer's Conference (PRWC) in 2010 and 2011	\$2,000.00
Purchase of Local Stories for website and media (includes consultant/Editor contract)	\$3,600.00
Media Relations 6-month contract (Spectacular Ink)	\$15,500.00
Media pages design for website and Media Rich CMS system	\$1,000.00
Media Press Trips and associated expenses (all expenses including flights)	\$8,528.54
Advertising and promotion	\$7,000.00
Spectacular Ink Key Client Showcase	\$1,200.00
Go Media Canada Showcase	\$3,000.00
Travel – including Media Shows	\$3,250.00
Subscription to online Press Release distribution programs (Media Kitty)	\$500.00
Media Gifts (branded USB Keys with media links)	\$1,000.00
Admin, hardware, software, computers (10%)	\$2,900.00
Total Project Budget	\$51,978.54

Deliverables acquired in Travel Writer project:

Sponsorship of the Powell River Writer's Conference

The Powell River Writer's Conference is a great conference that brings together professional and aspiring writers for a weekend of lectures, seminars and workshops. The event brings in tourism dollars to the community as well as arming aspiring local writers with the skills necessary to get published. Tourism Powell River was a key sponsor of the 2010 event by offering graphic design services (approx \$400 value) and ad/media buys including key radio and newspaper ad insertions promoting the conference. Tactics included seven newspaper ad insertions in the Powell River Peak and strategic radio ads on Sun FM. We were also be a key sponsor of the Spring 2011 conference and we increased our support of the event through media buys to help bring more aspiring writers to experience the Sunshine Coast. The event did not meet our expectations with respect to attendance this year and we will be evaluating our continued support for 2012 as a board.

Purchase of Local Stories for Website and Media

A critical element of this project was the creation of compelling articles and stories highlighting the amazing tourism assets within the region. Since the Sunshine Coast has a community of talented writers and authors, Tourism Powell River decided to support them through this project. The first level of support was in the sponsorship of the Powell River Writers Conference, where many local writers attended to learn how to write professionally and improve their skills. Secondly, Tourism Powell River put out a call to accept submissions from local writers that wanted to see their tourism-based works published on the official destination website. Stories were carefully reviewed by TPR staff and by a professional editor that was sourced for this project. Articles that were accepted were purchased from the other for \$100 each and accompanying images were licensed along with them for \$15 each. A total of 28 stories were purchased and are now featured on the Stories page of Tourism Powell River's website. www.discoverpowellriver.com/media/stories.php?id=23

Media Relations contract – Spectacular Ink

In order to capture media attention we needed to ensure we were represented by an established and reputable firm. Spectacular Ink was contracted on a six-month basis to provide media relations expertise and deliver results of published works about the Powell River and Sunshine Coast region. Spectacular Ink was to write press releases on behalf of our destination and its stakeholders, deliver media content and press releases to their qualified database of professional media and to set up press trips for interested media over the duration of the contract.

We are very pleased with the work Spectacular Ink has provided to us, including the successful organization of multi-day press trips. Each press trip allowed our members to host key media and get important face time with the writers. Another press trip is slated for late-January, focusing on winter activities and off-season tourism.

The writers that have been brought to Powell River over the course of these press trips include writers representing the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Courier*, *Westworld* magazine, *West Jet's UP* magazine, *Northwest Cheap Sleeps*, *Flavours of the West Coast* and *Zoom* magazine. Media that is coming in February include writers for *Canadian Geographic*, *Blackpress*, *Dine* magazine, *AOL*, and more.

All of these writers have informed us that their stories will be completed and published in 2011. This media exposure combined will be worth about a million dollars in editorial value for the Powell River region.

Spectacular Ink will be sending a progress report to us by Christmas, highlighting media conversions, continued media interest and details on story ideas that they have generated.

We attended the Spectacular Ink Client Showcase on March 29, 2011 in Vancouver, BC. We made great contacts with attending media representatives and travel writers from across the country, including two writers from the United States. The event consisted of one-on-one time with media to pitch tourism-

related news and products and generate further buzz around Sunshine Coast tourism experiences. Over 125 media attended and we have entered them in our media database and will continue to engage them with the latest news and products from the Sunshine Coast. Powell River chef David Bowes (Laughing Oyster) attended the event as well and did a live cooking demo highlighting seafood on the Sunshine Coast. David's oysters were undoubtedly the biggest hit of the event and helped to ensure our booth was heavily visited, and remembered. Christine Hollmann from Sunshine Coast Tourism and owner of Terracentric Coastal Adventures also attended the event to represent the Powell River region.

The event put us in contact with esteemed travel writer Michael McCarthy (Vancouver Sun, Province, Courier, Montreal Gazette) whom we brought up to the Upper Sunshine Coast on a media press trip for him to gather material for a professional travel video and accompanying e-book.

Media Page design and new content management system

Local graphic designers Massive Graphic were sourced to create a compelling media page for journalists, editors and publishers. They would be able to access our media kit, story ideas, images, blog, and social media for use in their stories and articles. To ensure the media page could be kept up-to-date (real-time), a new content management system was required for the website. The media page is now active and is the 3rd most visited page according to our Google Analytics.

The section can be viewed at <http://www.discoverpowellriver.com/media/>

Local designers Massive Graphic are also redesigning the official Sunshine Coast destination website (www.sunshinecoastcanada.com) which will feature a strengthened brand, interactive itineraries and a password-protected media page featuring our new image library, video b-roll, story starters and press releases. This new website will be a critical tool in gaining even more media attention, giving writers a one-stop shop for producing compelling articles about the Sunshine Coast. The website is now underway and will be fully functional in March 2012.

A digital media company, MyClients, was sourced to create a database and e-newsletter system for proper communication with our media contacts that we have acquired through this and other projects. The e-newsletter allows us to communicate story ideas, news articles, story starters and events to our media and consumer databases on a regular basis. The system also allows us to gain subscribers through website links and via our contest page (www.ilovesunshinecoastcanada.com).

Media Press Trips and Expenses

All invoices and receipts in this line pertain to costs associated to our Press Trips and familiarization tours. Costs include airfare, car rentals, ferry costs, travel, media gifts, and meals and expenses not covered by members.

Sunshine Coast Tourism's Media Specialist Andrea Wickham-Foxwell was sourced to lead one of our press trips in October of 2010. The press trip included writers from WestJet Up magazine, Winnipeg Free

Press, and Meetings Canada. Both the Winnipeg Free Press and Meetings Canada have produced stories since the press trip and can be found in the Appendix.

We hosted a Social Media Workshop at the 2011 Tourism Powell River AGM, where we brought up Ben Vadasz (co-founder of Think! Social Media) to instruct on Social Media tactics for small to medium sized tourism businesses. The event had tremendous buzz within the community and resulted in the best attended AGM in the past 6 years bringing in 65 regional tourism operators. The workshop presentation was so successful that we are working with Ben to create another weekend full of Social Media workshops that focus on individual social media channels and blogging. These will occur as part of this project and are planned for September of 2011.

Travel writer Michael McCarthy was contracted to create a travel e-book and video for use in our web and online strategies. The video, which highlights travel opportunities on the Upper Sunshine Coast can be found [here](#). The e-book has just been finalized and is not online yet, but is attached as an Appendix.

Mountain Biking Tourism Association of Western Canada

Mountain biking tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing markets for tourism in the world. The province has made strong efforts in positioning British Columbia as a mountain biking tourism capital.

An opportunity was presented to Tourism Powell River to participate as a premiere destination partner for a series of province-wide initiatives promoting BC as the ultimate mountain destination in the world. This program is spearheaded by the Mountain Biking Tourism Association of British Columbia. There was room for four destination partners and Tourism Powell River, with a financial contribution from the Powell River Cycling Association, jumped at this opportunity by securing our spot. Other confirmed destinations are the Shuswap Region, Tourism Squamish and Tourism Whistler. Because of our contribution, Tourism Powell River will/has acquire(d) the following:

- High Definition b-roll of mountain biking on the Upper Sunshine Coast
- Finished 6 minute HD video on mountain biking on the Upper Sunshine Coast
- A six-minute segment on [Ride Guide TV](#), the world's most watched mountain biking show with a viewership of 60 million worldwide to be aired in Spring of 2011
- Featured pages and banner ads on the official provincial [Mountain Biking Tourism](#) website
- Full usage rights to video and b-roll from Ride Guide TV for media purposes
- Blog exposure from their shoot (which occurred September 12-14, 2010)
- Rights to imagery from the Ride Guide shoot. Click [here](#) to view some of them
- Powell River is a feature destination in a 2nd Base Film about mountain biking with major distribution. To be released in Spring 2012.

Advertising and Promotion

We continued to place strategic ads and advertorials in key media publications such as the Travel Media Association of Canada handbook, which is the main directory resource for travel media. The full page tab ad has been secured and the guide has been printed and is being distributed as this report is written.

We also launched a major radio campaign with Vista Radio that spanned the entire summer. The radio ads primary intent was to raise awareness of Sunshine Coast events (including the Powell River Writers Conference), festivals and attractions to the Vancouver and Vancouver Island markets.

Tourism Powell River supported the Powell River Community Calendar again in 2011. This sponsorship ensures that the community has an up-to-date community calendar of events and festivals. We use this community calendar to communicate with media and media partners regarding upcoming events and festivals in the area. The calendar can be accessed from <http://www.discoverpowellriver.com/things-to-do-and-see/events.php>.

Tourism Powell River also supported the 2011/2012 Powell River Business Access Guide, a definitive guide that highlights accessible tourism. Through this guide, we were able to tell the unique story of Powell River's accessibility to persons with disabilities. One of our key assets from a media perspective is the attention Powell River gives to accessible tourism. There is tremendous story potential and the PR Business Access Guide is the primary source of travel information for persons with disabilities.

APPENDIX: Articles produced from media press trips (total = 21 articles)

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/trail+Sunshine+Coast+challenging+beautiful/4892402/story.html>

<http://www.meetingscanada.com/content/sunshine-coasts-diverse-charms-22540>

<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/travel/Lesser+known+Sunshine+Coast+Trail+worth+exploring/4734253/story.html>

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/travel/the-most-beautiful-place-on-earth-119526179.html>

<http://www2.canada.com/topics/travel/story.html?id=4817766>

<http://travel.aol.ca/2011/02/27/best-and-greenest-way-to-get-to-vancouver-island/#continued>

<http://travel.aol.ca/2011/03/11/powell-rivers-haunted-theatre-adds-atmosphere-to-movie-night/>

<http://www.muchmormagazine.com/2011/06/exploring-the-british-columbia-sunshine-coast/>

<http://www.bcmag.ca/issue/article/?id=3030>

<http://www.tvexpress-travels.com/travel-enthusiasts/lesser-known-sunshine-coast-trail-is-worth-exploring>

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/Walking+Sunshine/4821100/story.html>

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/todays-paper/trail+with+famous+hiking+spots/4784334/story.html>

<http://www.timescolonist.com/travel/Lesser+known+Sunshine+Coast+Trail+worth+exploring/4734253/story.html>

<http://www2.canada.com/topics/travel/activities/outdoors/story.html?id=4734253>

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/travel/Life+golden+Sunshine+Coast/5466493/story.html>

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/Life+golden+Sunshine+Coast/5466493/story.html>

http://www.thestarphoenix.com/travel/Life+golden+Sunshine+Coast/5466493/story.html?cid=megadrop_story

<http://www.theprovince.com/travel/Five+family+friendly+activities+beaten+path/5495177/story.html>

<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/travel/Five+family+friendly+activities+beaten+path/5495177/story.html>

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/travel/Stellar+vistas+abound+Sunshine+Coast/5452924/story.html>

<http://www.theprovince.com/travel/perfect+weekend+getaway/5285351/story.html>

Discovering
The Upper Sunshine Coast
BC's Best Kept Secret



Michael McCarthy
and **Graham Collins**



Discovering The Upper Sunshine Coast- BC's Best Kept Secret

By Michael McCarthy and Graham Collins 2011

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Welcome

Who doesn't love being in on a good secret? Much like that rare feeling of arriving at a place virtually unknown by the rest of the traveling world. A place that forces you to ask why didn't I discover this sooner? A place seemingly put on the map just for you to explore. Tourism Powell River welcomes you to the Upper Sunshine Coast.

On the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, where endless green mountains meet sheltered Pacific Ocean waters, this unforgettable region provides a stimulating blend of outdoor adventure and cultural amenities. Originally founded as a resource extraction centre once home to the world's largest pulp and paper mill the area now offers adventurers countless opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, rock climbing, golfing, wildlife viewing, boating, hiking, biking, fishing, and scuba diving. This region is also host to world-class art galleries, tremendous dining opportunities, and memorable events and festivals.

We hope you take the time to truly explore all that this amazing region has to offer. From multi-day adventures along the 180 kilometre Sunshine Coast Trail and the Powell Forest Canoe Route, to leisurely strolls on the beach basking in the warm light of our world-famous sunsets, this is the time to discover BC's best-kept secret.

Happy travels!

Darren Robinson
Executive Director, Tourism Powell River



For those living in the greater metropolitan region of Vancouver, the nearest big city, a trip to the Sunshine Coast has always been a treat, with its warm sunny climate and sandy beaches. While some people hear the phrase Sunshine Coast, and think of the section of inner coast ranging from Gibson's Landing to Earl's Cove, insiders know that the Upper Sunshine Coast, running from Saltery Bay to Lund, and including offshore islands like Savary and Texada, is one of British Columbia's best kept secrets.

If you drive to **Powell River**, as most people do, once you board a **BC Ferries** vessel from either the lower mainland or from Vancouver Island you are treated to views of the majestic scenery surrounding the Strait of Georgia. Frequent glimpses of the islands, beaches and coves just waiting to be explored pass right before your eyes.



While visitors appreciate the coastal beauty, many tourists don't realize that there are literally hundreds of miles of inland trails to explore with waterfalls, wooden bridges and boardwalks all hidden in the woods. Some of the best views of the region are offered along the **Sunshine Coast Trail**.

On a clear day it seems like you can see forever. From high atop the Gwendoline Hills, due east of the village of Lund, this view from one of the shelters found along the hiking trail, sweeps to the west over Hernando Island with the Strait of Georgia and the mountain peaks of Vancouver Island in the background. The trail is the personification of an adventure travel destination that is currently unknown to many outsiders, but the Upper Sunshine Coast won't remain a secret for very much longer.



The biggest find of the Sunshine Coast really must be the awesome [*Sunshine Coast Trail*](#) which stretches for a whopping 180 kilometres beginning here at Sarah Point just north of the village of Lund. The full length of the hiking trail has been open for a while now but new bridges, more trail markers, huts and other improvements are being added all the time.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: KELLY FUNK

Now if you're thinking 180 kilometres... I can't cover that in one day. That's ok; planners designed the trail in such a way that hikers can easily explore the trail in smaller sections.

Eagle Walz's book *The Sunshine Coast Trail, 3rd Edition* outlines all of your hiking options. The biggest problem lies in trying to decide which trail section to explore first.

Hikers can simply choose whether they want to climb up to the top of a mountain, or along ridgeline trails, or stop off at the (also virtually undiscovered) Powell Forest Canoe Route.

The Sunshine Coast Trail is roughly modelled on the world famous Milford Track in New Zealand. Hikers can stay overnight in various shelters that have been constructed roughly one full day's hike apart. That means most hikers don't need to carry all sorts of heavy camping gear with them as they walk.

The Sunshine Coast Trail has one feature that the Milford Track doesn't have; you are never more than one hour away from the Sunshine Coast highway.

One could start a trek at the village of Lund with a 30-minute water taxi ride to Sarah Point, walk 16 kilometres, sleep at Manzanita Hut and then head down for a fancy dinner and sleep at the Lund Hotel, making a nice weekend out of it.



This map shows Section One of the Sunshine Coast Trail (SCT) (shown as a yellow line) from Sarah Point to Malaspina Road. There are 20 access points along the entire trail, which is split into five sections on the official recreational map.

The Sunshine Coast Trail gets progressively steeper as you head further south, with sections four and five being the most difficult. Thousands of markers have been attached to trees along the trail so hikers don't get lost.





Volunteers such as Eagle Walz, a hiking enthusiast and one of the founding members of Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society (PRPAWS), have worked countless hours to build and maintain hundreds of kilometres of hiking and biking trails throughout the forests of the Upper Sunshine Coast.

Another group, The Bloody Old Men Brigade (known affectionately as "The BOMB Squad") also built some sections and helps to maintain the network of trails.

PRPAWS has built a number of shelters spaced along the **Sunshine Coast Trail**. Manzanita Hut is a beauty, perched on a ledge with a great view of the ocean.

The downstairs floor of the Mazanita shelter has glass windows to keep out the rain, with a ladder leading up to a second floor, where there is room for up to a dozen people to sleep in the loft.



The history of the construction of the Sunshine Coast Trail is most interesting. In 1992 a handful of outdoor enthusiasts saw that there was a vanishing amount of accessible old growth left on the Upper Sunshine Coast. They formed Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society (PRPAWS) as a registered, non-profit, charitable society, to set aside protected areas linked by trails. Membership these days is around one hundred people.



PRPAWS works with forest companies and other local entities to ensure the future of the entire coastal wilderness. They have successfully lobbied for the creation of Inland Lake Park, Duck Lake Protected Area, and Malaspina Park, and have, of course, built the Sunshine Coast Trail. PRPAWS is looking 20, 50 and even 200 years down the road when the Sunshine Coast will have to accommodate the inevitable population overflow from the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. They envision a time when the Upper Sunshine Coast will be an adventure tourism destination with perhaps the same global lure of the Galapagos Islands, the Grand Canyon, the Tatzenshini or the Amazon.

As mountain biking has become so popular around the world, the Upper Sunshine Coast Coast finds itself literally inundated with trails suitable for both biking and hiking. Besides hiking and biking, the list of other adventures here to enjoy is endless. Why, there's kayaking, canoeing, cycling, diving, rock climbing, horseback riding, beachcombing, photography, sailing and boating, swimming in warm inland lakes, birdwatching, fishing, and golf.

The ***Official Recreation Map of the Upper Sunshine Coast*** is a vital source of information to determine your outdoor options.



And the region is not just a great destination in the summer. In winter a lot of trails and roads in an inland mountainous area known as the Knuckleheads Recreational Area are used for snowshoeing, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, and hiking. There are huts up in the Knuckleheads where you can camp overnight, even in the middle of winter. There is now also a hut on Mount Troubridge and another on Tin Hat Mountain. All these great attractions are virtually unknown to outsiders, for now anyway.

In addition to outdoor activities the ***Discover Powell River*** website also has suggestions for arts, culture and heritage festivals and events, as well as providing links to dining and accommodation options.



Powell River was originally incorporated a century ago as a “company town,” and (lucky for those employees who still live in the town today) the company founders had a strong altruistic streak, adhering to the “**Arts and Crafts Movement**” of the time.

As the website of the **Historic Powell River Townsite** reveals, prospective company employees were required to show useful skills and keen interest in community involvement, whether teaching music or volunteering their time in various civic affairs.

What that means today is a Sunshine Coast community bursting with pride and civic involvement, which is where the hundreds of miles of mountain biking and hiking trails for which the town is about to become famous first originated.



The original Powell River Townsite itself is a unique community that was designated as a **National Historic District** of Canada in 1995, one of only seven districts in Canada and the only one in western Canada.

This confirms that the Townsite, remarkably intact with over 400 original buildings contained within the borders of the 1910 town plan, is an historical asset to the entire country.

The "Garden City" and "Arts and Crafts Movements" influenced Powell River's planners back in 1910 in many ways, including the architectural style of the lovely homes, parks, green belts, commercial buildings and recreation facilities.



The region's crystal clear waters also make scuba diving a delight with the best visibility often occurring in the winter.

At **Alpha Dive and Kayak**, which is located at the **Beach Gardens Resort & Marina** south of Powell River, divers can rent gear and get the goods on the best local spots for diving. A prime recommendation is Mermaid Cove, just north of the Saltery Bay ferry landing.

British Columbia sculptor Simon Morris was commissioned to create a nine-foot tall bronze statue of a mermaid officially known as "The Emerald Princess". Since March 16, 1989 when she was placed in 60 feet of water the statue has been visited by divers from around the world.

There are over 20 dive sites shown on the **Official Recreation Map for the Upper Sunshine Coast** including several sunken ships in and around Powell River that divers can also visit.



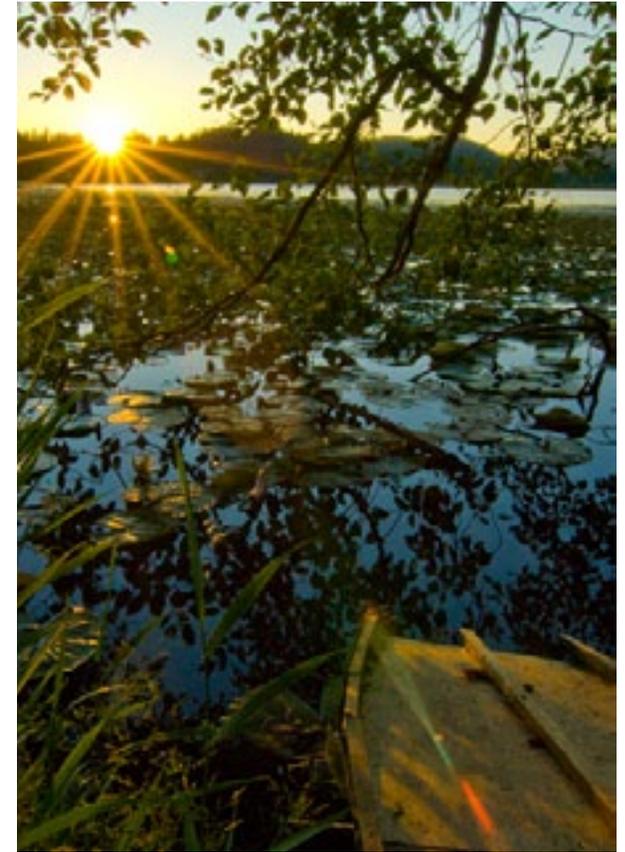


Aside from adventure sports, Powell River has a thriving arts and music scene. Music has been a staple of the culture here since the Powell River Company originally sponsored brass bands and a symphony orchestra.

There are dozens of working professional artists and a couple of art galleries open to the public.

Artique is an artist co-operative that is home to over two dozen local artists, mostly painters and sculptors who create in clay, wood and stone. The scenery and affordable lifestyle have proved irresistible to the "500 plus" artists who make their home in the Powell River area.





Next to Artique, is Studio 3 where three artists met and discovered they were all looking for a working space. This short strip along Marine Drive near the waterfront has great potential as a tourist area for Arts and Culture.

North of Marine Avenue, just off the main highway near an inland lake and out of sight of many passing tourists, is yet another small and older neighbourhood called Cranberry, where **Cranberry Pottery** is definitely doing a good business. Fine handcrafted ceramics are fired and glazed right on the premises, as they have been for nearly 40 years.

A tour of the Cranberry studio reveals fabulous gardens located at the rear of the property. **Lush gardens**, of which there are many fine examples in Powell River, are also another tourist attraction drawing crowds at public events held during the year. Something to do with the weather; no snow near the ocean, is evidently perfect for growing lots of green things.



Back in the quaint village of Lund the marina is full of sailboats and powerboats, and a water taxi chugs back and forth between the dock and nearby Savary Island all day long. As the last village before heading up into the maze of islands that constitute Desolation Sound Marine Park, Lund is a major stopping point for many boaters.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: MICHAEL MCCARTHY



At the **Lund Hotel** it's obvious someone has put a lot of loving care and money into the structure. The pub / restaurant on the ground floor is gorgeous, with dark wooden flooring and a beautiful view over the marina.

Originally built in 1905, the current owners bought the building in 1999 and have totally renovated its 31 rooms, which range from budget to boutique chic. Right outside the pub a giant stone marker has been erected, marking the starting point of the Pan-American Highway that runs all the way to South America.



A bakery and café have also sprung up in the village of Lund, along with some shops and a wooden boardwalk that leads coincidentally to... you guessed it... the **Boardwalk Restaurant**.

The Boardwalk Restaurant serves up very tasty fish and chips indeed, with a perfect view of the harbour and sunset included at no extra charge.



At **TerraCentric Coastal Adventures** people can book a wide variety of ocean tours, including zodiac and sea kayak trips into Desolation Sound Marine Park. TerraCentric also offers rainforest hikes and educational tours of the Desolation Sound wilderness region with a strong commitment to the environment.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: MICHAEL MCCARTHY



Kayaking tours may include areas such as Desolation Sound Provincial Marine Park or the more sheltered waters in Okeover Inlet.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: KELLY FUNK
DARREN ROBINSON



Just a short water taxi ride from Lund is Savary Island, known as the “Caribbean of the Gulf Islands” for its warm waters and sandy beaches. The island is very popular with families all summer long, which usually means that you need to book well ahead if you want to rent a cabin or house. But there is now another alternative.

The **Savary Island Resort** boasts a big main building and a nearby bunkhouse designed for families. There’s a big green lawn perfect for kids to play on, a fire pit, and hammocks hanging from trees. The main house features a huge shared kitchen and living room with a big screen TV to watch movies. The kitchen is designed with multiple fridges and stoves plus enough pots and pans so more than one family can cook at once. Upstairs are two luxury suites suitable more for romance than family fun.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: DARREN ROBINSON



Down on Savary Island's beaches the white sand does indeed seem to go on forever. You could go clamming anywhere, dig up your dinner and barbeque it over an open fire. The idea of barbequing fresh clams, oysters, geoducks, fish or whatever you find down on the beach is very appetizing.

For those so inclined there is a pub down the road and lots of trails on the beaches and in the woods. You could spend the day going all the way around Savary Island by walking on the beaches, which apparently some eager walkers actually do.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: DARREN ROBINSON



Those who work up a huge appetite may be well advised to take the water taxi back to Lund, where, at the end of Malaspina Road, one finds oyster paradise. Here, next to the marina on Okeover Inlet you'll find **The Laughing Oyster**, as fine a dining establishment as one can enjoy on the entire Sunshine Coast.

Aside from local oysters there's a scrumptious menu of other seafood dishes, plus steaks, chicken and pasta. Local musicians often perform on the covered sundeck.

Soft, lovely sun rays drift down the entire colour spectrum all over the bay, marina and restaurant, with boats drifting in to tie up for the night, making the Laughing Oyster a premiere location for those special dinners.



Just up the road from The Laughing Oyster, those looking for peace and serenity would be wise to spend a few nights in any of the well-appointed chalets of **Desolation Resort**, nestled comfortably in the trees by the calm waters of Okeover Inlet.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: DARREN ROBINSON



Back in Lund, those who own a boat or rent a kayak at ***TerraCentric Coastal Adventures*** can easily paddle in and among the nearest islands, such as the Copelands, designated as a provincial marine park. This area also provides opportunities for scuba diving, wildlife viewing, wilderness camping, swimming and fishing, with limited anchorages for small vessels.

Mitlenatch Island Nature Provincial Park is home to the largest seabird colony in the Strait of Georgia. Gulls, cormorants, auklets, oyster-catchers and eagles can all be spotted. Harbour seals and California sea lions haul out and bask on the rocks. River otters, killer whales and porpoises frequent the coves and offshore waters. There is even a trail and overnight hut with a watchman on duty that allows for kayakers to pull ashore and have a look around.

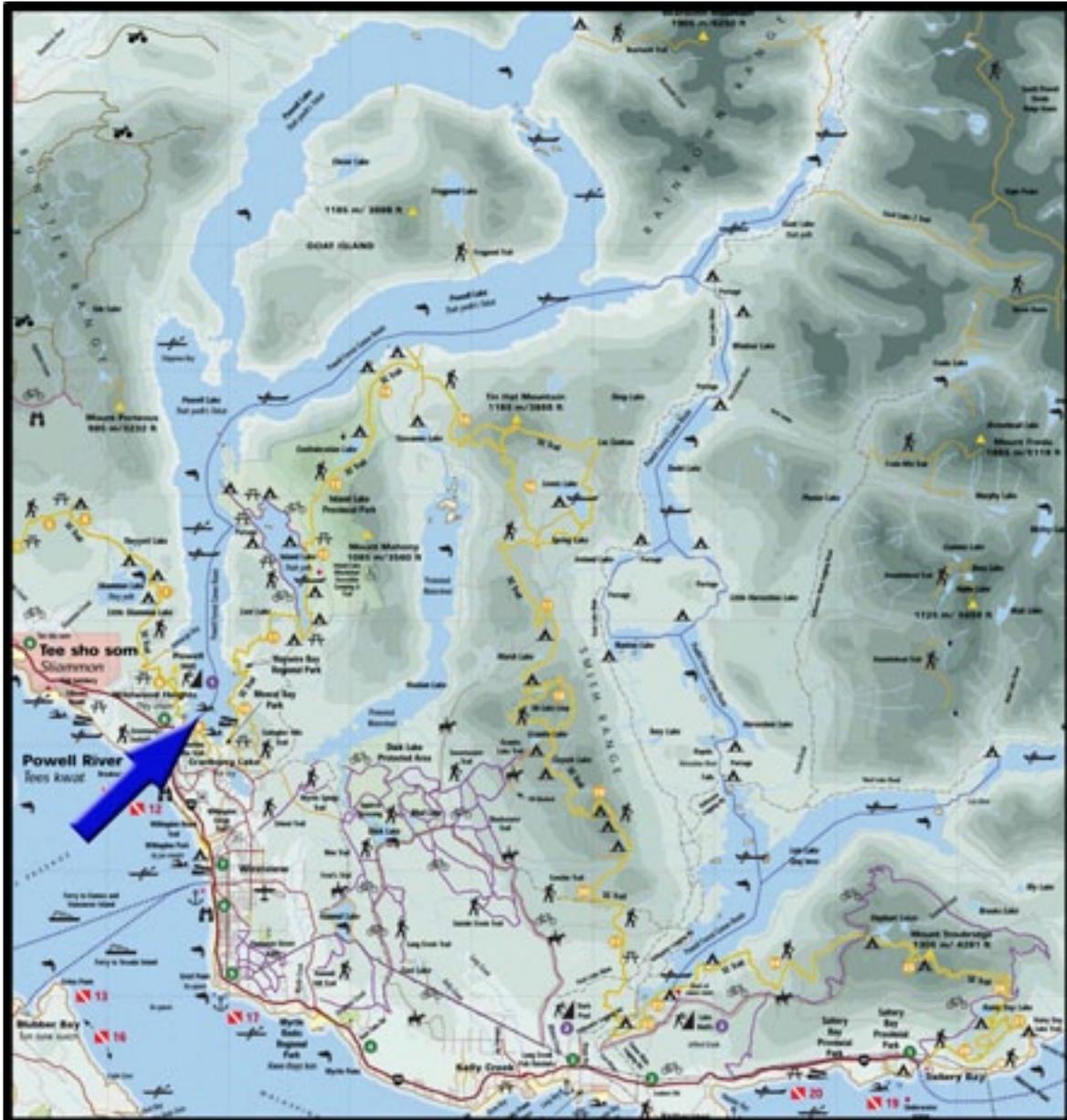
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: MICHAEL MCCARTHY



Down at the southern end of the Upper Sunshine Coast adventurers will find Stillwater Bluffs, a favourite spot for locals to try their skills at rock climbing, a sport which is rapidly gaining popularity on the Sunshine Coast.

Dedicated climbers come from around the world to tackle the rock faces of the Eldred Valley located inland a few kilometres up a logging road.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: DARREN ROBINSON
KELLY FUNK



Speaking of inland destinations, the Duck Lake Protect Area contains a lot of hiking and biking trails. Inland is also where the Powell Forest Canoe Route is located, a hidden gem still basically unknown except to local residents.

Every canoe enthusiast knows the Bowron Lakes Canoe Route, but that's way the heck and gone up in the B.C. Interior. What makes both Bowron and Powell lakes so popular is that you can paddle several lakes in one trip via short portages.

The Powell Forest Canoe Route is comprised of eight lakes, four of them pretty big, each separated by short portages. You can put your canoe in the water anywhere you can access a lake via logging roads, but to experience the whole route most people start on Powell Lake, just west of the town and right off Highway 101. Powell Lake is a huge lake, but maps show plenty of campgrounds along the shore.

After Powell Lake there's a steep portage to smaller Windsor Lake, another short portage to Dodd Lake, then an option of two short portages to Horseshoe Lake and finally ending at Lois Lake.

The route needs about a week (or several days, if you are an experienced paddler) to complete and many people do just that in the warm summer months. But, like most of the "secret" attractions of the Upper Coast, the canoe route is not well known yet.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: KELLY FUNK



Kelly Falls, in the Duck Lake Protected Area, is both a popular hike and a picnic destination. The trail to the falls is shared by hikers and mountain bikers and dotted with a whole series of bridges, walkways and viewpoints built by volunteers.

As the trail winds slowly uphill for about a kilometre the lush green undergrowth in the canyon, into which the creek falls, looks like Hawaii. With a picnic table placed down by the creek, and a couple of benches placed right in front of the falls that cascade about 20 feet over a rock ledge, this is an excellent destination to sit and meditate, read a book or have a relaxing picnic.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: DARREN ROBINSON



A quick ten-minute walk from Kelly Falls, still uphill, leads to yet another scenic wonder, David Lam Falls (named after the former Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia).

This waterfall is also found in a steep canyon but its drop is much higher. The BOMB Squad volunteers also built another scenic wooden lookout here, deep in the lush green forest.

A wide variety of parks and lakes are suitable for swimming in the Upper Sunshine Coast region, as well as being great for camping and fishing. Equestrians also use many of the trails and go for rides along the shoreline.



Evidently there are bridges and boardwalks all over the region. It's taken many years to build all these amenities, and mainly it's only local mountain bikers who know these trails are here. Mountain biking has really taken off on the Sunshine Coast, and trails of every category are found literally everywhere. Logging roads, singletrack and paved highway routes offer a wide variety of choices for everybody from the casual cyclist to dedicated weekend warriors.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: KELLY FUNK



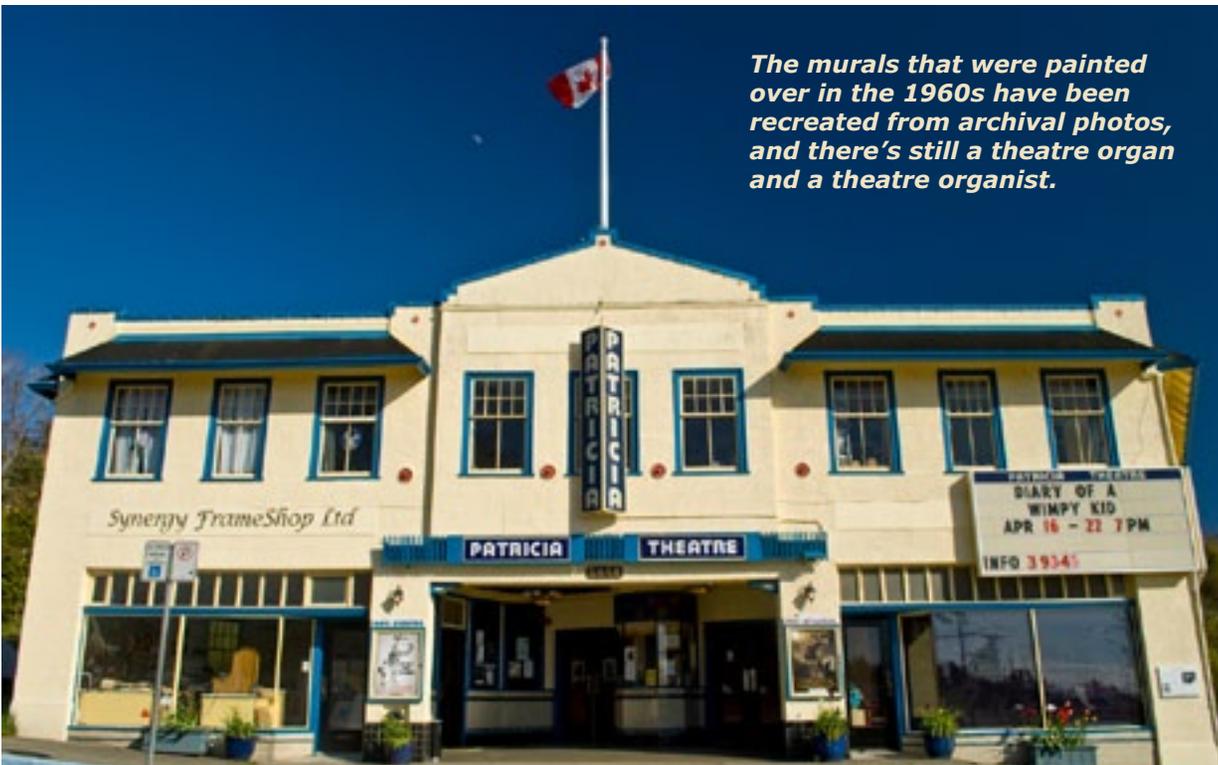
Going east or west through the Powell River region, it's impossible not to drive through the historic Townsite.

Here Ann Nelson operates the historic **Patricia Theatre**, "Canada's oldest continuously operating movie theatre."

The original theatre opened in September, 1913 and soon became the entertainment capital of Powell River with movies, touring vaudeville acts, boxing matches, fashion shows and talent contests.

The "new building" was designed, built and opened in 1928, a remarkable example of Arts and Crafts Spanish Revival theatre architecture in an era notable for extravagant movie palaces.

The first movie was shown in November 1928, and there has never been a time since when there haven't been movies, week in and week out.



The murals that were painted over in the 1960s have been recreated from archival photos, and there's still a theatre organ and a theatre organist.





If you'd like to visit a quiet place with an extensive history a short ferry ride from Powell River's downtown will take you across to Texada Island, which is BC's largest gulf island in the Strait of Georgia.

In 1871 iron ore was discovered on Texada Island, then marble, copper, and gold. By 1899 the village of Van Anda was a boom town that boasted having the only opera house north of San Francisco, plus several hotels and saloons.

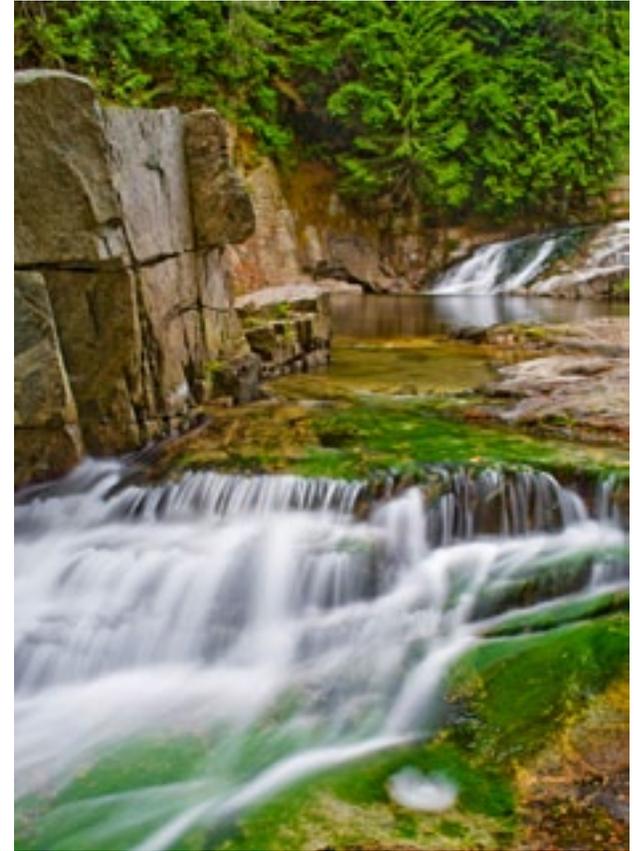
By 1917 following a series of suspicious fires the town of Van Anda was destroyed except for one store which still stands today. In the 1920s and early 1930s an illegal distillery on Texada supplied alcohol to the United States during the prohibition era.



Today some limestone quarries are still working although one Quarry Lake has become a popular spot for swimming.



Scuba diving sites and abundant marine life surround the island which is also a noted spot for birdwatching and four wheel driving.



There are at least two-dozen bed and breakfast operations listed on the Upper Sunshine Coast. ***Herondell Bed & Breakfast*** turns out to be well south of Powell River, closer to the ferry landing at Saltery Bay, about a 20-minute drive south of the town. The property is huge, over 40 acres densely wooded, with a tiny creek running down the middle into larger Eagle River.

Alex and Nancy have spent many years improving the property, building the tiny cabin for guests in the deep woods. In the back yard a wooden stage has been erected for performances, and there is a gazebo, a barbeque area, and an "adventure playground" with ropes and swings. You can hike up the hill and access the Sunshine Coast Trail at the back of the property.

Eagle Falls, just down the road, is more of a "local swimming hole" than a tourist attraction. Here Eagle River tumbles over a rock ledge and cascades about 60 feet to a huge pool below. It's far more accessible than David Lam Falls and you can jump off the cliffs into a deep pool below, if you are crazy enough. Eagle Falls is an excellent spot for a picnic too.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: DARREN ROBINSON
MICHAEL MCCARTHY



The Sunshine Coast Trail is not like the West Coast Trail over on Vancouver Island, or the Milford Trail in New Zealand, both of which requires hikers to trudge all of the trek in one long go.

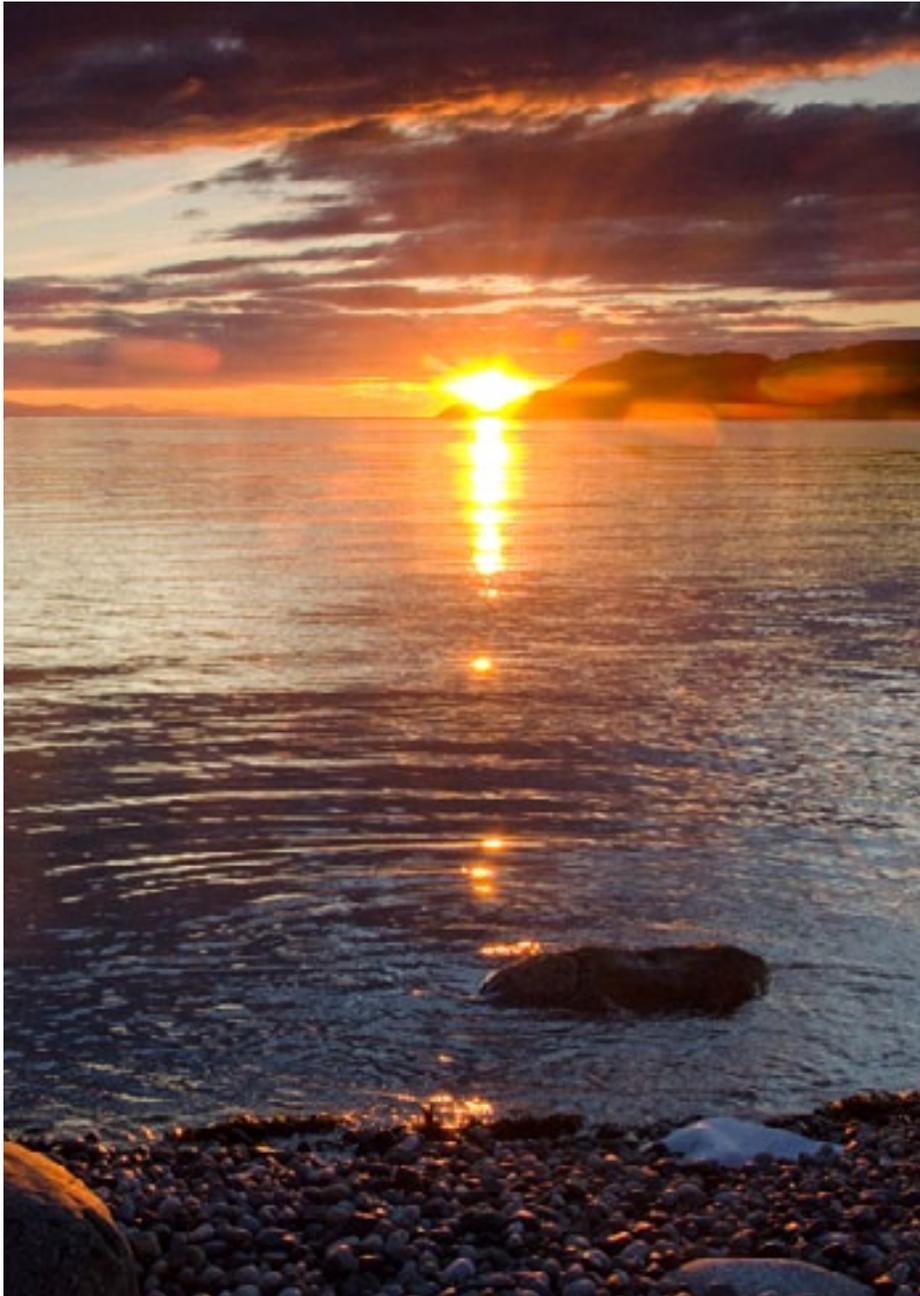
On the West Coast Trail, hikers have to register way in advance to buy a permit, the permit costs a lot of money, the trail gets very muddy and you have to travel all the way to the west coast of Vancouver Island just to get there.

Yet both these trails have become world famous. Meanwhile, the fabulous Sunshine Coast Trail remains virtually unknown. Here the trails are ninety-nine percent mud free. That alone gives the adventurer a good reason to go.

Other good reasons include the kayaking, canoeing, sailing, fishing, biking, beachcombing and other outdoor activities in the Powell River region, all counterbalanced by the fact that the little town now boasts several fine dining establishments offering everything from seafood to steaks, and many relaxing hotels and Bed & Breakfasts.

A decade ago Squamish was still a small town, just off the road on the world's way to Whistler. Some thought it would always stay the same. Rock climbers thought differently, and so did the hikers, eagle watchers, river rafters and para-gliders who moved in to the area.

Now Squamish has morphed into a global outdoor adventure destination, bringing a much-needed infusion of new investment to the valley. Can the fabulous Upper Sunshine Coast, that has a much wider variety of opportunities for the adventurous, be far behind?



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: MICHAEL MCCARTHY

In addition to the businesses and service providers mentioned in this publication and the related video ***Tourism Powell River*** has a complete listing of many other companies and individuals that will be happy to help you discover the Upper Sunshine Coast.

<i>Tourism Powell River</i>	(604) 485-4701
<i>BC Ferries @ Saltery Bay</i>	(604) 487-9333
<i>Lund Water Taxi</i>	(604) 483-9749
<i>Pacific Coastal Airlines</i>	(604) 483-2107
<i>Beach Gardens Resort & Marina</i>	(800) 663-7070
<i>Desolation Resort</i>	(604) 483-3592
<i>Herondell Bed & Breakfast</i>	(604) 487-9528
<i>Lund Hotel</i>	(604) 414-0474
<i>Savary Island Resort</i>	(604) 414-9454
<i>Boardwalk Restaurant</i>	(604) 483-2201
<i>The Laughing Oyster</i>	(604) 483-9775
<i>Alpha Dive and Kayak</i>	(604) 485-6939
<i>Suncoast Cycles</i>	(604) 487-1111
<i>TerraCentric Coastal Adventures</i>	(604) 483-7900
<i>Artique</i>	(604) 485-1247
<i>Cranberry Pottery</i>	(604) 483-4622
<i>Studio 3</i>	(250) 475-4947
<i>Patricia Theatre</i>	(604) 483-9345