



Nimpo Lake



Monarch Icefields

## BELLA COOLA & TWEEDSMUIR PARK

August 7, 2022 – 8 Days

*Includes Northern Sea Wolf ferry from Port Hardy to Bella Coola*

Bella Coola is an isolated community on the central BC coast, surrounded by splendid mountain scenery. Regular ferry service from Port Hardy through the Inside Passage started in the mid-1990s, and was upgraded with the launch of *Northern Sea Wolf* in 2019. The only road access is Highway #20 from Williams Lake, a scenic drive across the Chilcotin and through the Coast Mountains. The ferry and the highway offer an awesome circle route for travellers. The 10-hour daylight voyage along the rugged BC coast is an amazing experience of seascapes and wildlife. Too many people take only a day to drive the 450 km highway whereas this tour devotes 3 days to the trip, allowing time for many stops and the thrill of "The Hill". A highlight is the flight into Tweedsmuir Park to see Hunlen Falls, Canada's highest waterfall, the vast Monarch Icefields, and the colourful Rainbow Range.

Activity Level: 2



TOUR  
30

17 Meals Included:

6 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 5 dinners

Fares per person:

\$3,365 double/twin; \$3,905 single; \$3,215 triple

Please add 5% GST.

**BC Seniors** (65 & over): \$72 discount with BC Services Card.

Early Bookers:

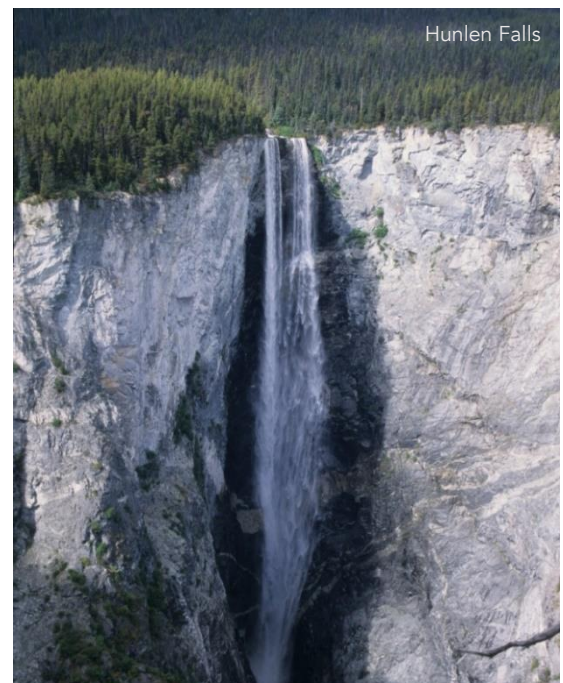
\$180 discount on first 8 seats; \$90 on next 4

Experience Points:

Earn 79 points on this tour.

Redeem 79 points if you book by June 15, 2022.

Departure from: BC Interior



Hunlen Falls

## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Sunday, August 7

We travel to **New Westminster** and stay at the Inn at the Quay overlooking the Fraser River. This evening, you may want to take a stroll along Westminster Quay.

**Meals included:** Lunch

**Accommodation:** Inn at the Quay

### Day 2: Monday, August 8

We ride the 10 am ferry to Duke Point and meet our Victoria customers in Nanaimo, then drive north on the Island Highway to **Port Hardy**.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Kwa'lilas Hotel

### Day 3: Tuesday, August 9

The **Northern Sea Wolf** departs from Port Hardy at 7:30 am for the 10-hour journey north through the magnificent **Inside Passage**. On the outside decks, there is plenty of seating or strolling space, so you can watch the ever-changing panorama of the passing coastline. During the voyage, we pass hundreds of islands and waterfalls, and probably see wildlife such as bald eagles, porpoises or Orca whales. First, we cross Queen Charlotte Sound north of Vancouver Island, then see the entrance to Rivers Inlet, and traverse Hakai Pass. After turning east through Fitzhugh Sound, the ferry follows the narrow fjords of **Burke Channel** and North Bentinck Arm, and arrives in **Bella Coola** about 5:30 pm.

**Meals included:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Bella Coola Valley Inn or Grizzly Lodge

### Day 4: Wednesday, August 10

A local guide accompanies us for the next two days to provide expert interpretation about the history, ecology, and First Nations culture of the valley. At the Bella Coola Museum, we meet Rene Morton, daughter of Bella Coola pioneer Cliff Kopas and a lifetime resident, and she presents ***A Morning with Alexander Mackenzie***, a tribute to his amazing expedition to this area in

1793. Afterwards, we visit local attractions such as Clayton Falls, a fish hatchery, and **Augsborg Church**. Norwegian settlers from Minnesota and Wisconsin arrived in this valley in 1894 and the Hagensborg Heritage House tells their remarkable story. We stroll among the towering giants of the **Saloompt Forest** and browse the shops such as the popular Kopas Store. Our guest speaker at dinner is Dr. Harvey Thommasen, a retired local physician, author, photographer, naturalist, and recipient of the Order of Canada and Order of British Columbia.

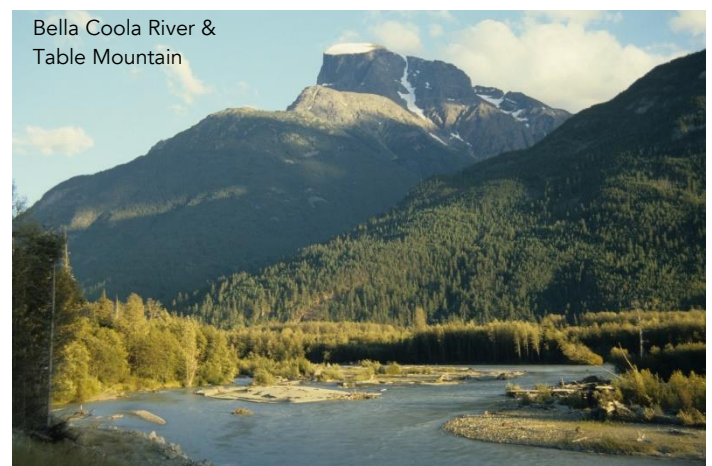
**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Bella Coola Valley Inn or Grizzly Lodge



### Day 5: Thursday, August 11

Accompanied by our guide, we learn more about the Bella Coola Valley as we drive east where the road is hemmed by soaring mountains with descriptive names such as Stupendous, Defiance, Table, and Matterhorn. Entering **Tweedsmuir Provincial Park**, we stop at the Alexander





Mackenzie Monument and the "Split Rock", then a picnic lunch is provided at the Fisheries Pool beside the Atnarko River. Soon, we arrive at the bottom of the famous **Bella Coola Hill**. By 1950, residents decided that they needed better service than a periodic coastal steamer, but they were unable to convince the government that a road through the Coast Mountains was even feasible. So they raised money themselves and built their own road using bulldozers working from the top and bottom. When their blades met on September 26, 1953, British Columbia's third route to the Pacific became a reality and was nicknamed "**Freedom Road**".

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was held in 2003 and attended by some of the original workers. During the tortuous 1,500-metre climb over the next 20 km, we stop at two thrilling viewpoints and top the Coast Mountains at **Heckman Pass**. After passing through Anahim Lake, we stay two nights at **Nimpo Lake**, known as "Float Plane Capital of BC" because it is the access point for numerous fishing lakes in the West Chilcotin.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Stewart's Lodge or Waterfront Motel



## Day 6: Friday, August 12

We board chartered float planes to explore the wilderness of Tweedsmuir Park which protects some dramatic scenery of the Coast Mountains and awesome Hunlen Falls. There are two flight options today. Please refer to descriptions on page 4. Later, we meet **Chris Czajkowski**, the author, poet and botanist, who talks to us about her pioneer lifestyle in the wilderness and how she built the Nuk Tessli cabin single-handed. Her many books, such as *Cabin at Singing River* and *Diary of a Wilderness Dweller*, describe her experiences in the Coast Mountains.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Stewart's Lodge or Waterfront Motel



Stewart's Lodge docks

## Day 7: Saturday, August 13

Leaving Nimpo Lake, we journey across the vast ranchlands of the **Chilcotin**, passing villages such as Tatla Lake, Alexis Creek, and Riske Creek. There are impressive views of the glacial blue Chilcotin River as it roars through Bull Canyon and **Farwell Canyon**. Another stop is at the lofty bridge over the Fraser River where we enter the Cariboo. Our last night is in **Williams Lake**.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Coast Fraser Inn

## Day 8: Sunday, August 14

We follow the Cariboo Highway to Cache Creek. Lunch is included at **Ashcroft Manor**, a roadhouse built in 1862 to serve travellers on the Cariboo Wagon Road. We travel home in the afternoon.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch



Bella Coola Hill

## TWEEDSMUIR PARK FLIGHTS ON AUGUST 12

We board chartered float planes to explore Tweedsmuir Park. **There are 2 flight options today**, both included in the tour fare. At the time of booking, please choose the one best suited to your mobility. Note that you must be able to climb 3 ladder-like steps (with assistance) to get into the planes. All flights see the awesome **Hunlen Falls** which plunges 400 metres and is Canada's highest waterfall, measured as a continuous drop. In the valley below is **Lonesome Lake** and the remote abandoned homestead of the famous pioneer, Ralph Edwards, about whom three books have been written, including *Crusoe of Lonesome Lake*. Then we fly into the Talchako Range where dozens of tumbling glaciers cling to sheer cliffs, icebergs float around glacial lakes, and the vast **Monarch Icefields** stretch to the horizon. The next spectacle is the **Rainbow Range** where eruptions eight million years ago created a huge shield volcano and lava flows with brilliant colours.

**Flight #1 (Hunlen Falls landing, Monarch Icefields, Rainbow Range)** – Your plane lands at Turner Lake, then you walk on a trail for about 40 mins to the view of Hunlen Falls (at least 1¼ hours round trip). The last 15 mins walking is uphill to the falls viewpoint. After 2½ hours stop, you get back on the plane and fly over the Monarch Icefields and Rainbow Range. Total trip time is about 4¼ hours. This flight option is rated as “Activity Level 3” due to the Hunlen Falls walk (the rest of the tour is Level 2).

**Flight #2 (Hunlen Falls flyover, Monarch Icefields, Iceberg Lake landing, Rainbow Range)** – Your plane flies over and circles Hunlen Falls, but does not land. Then you fly over the Monarch Icefields and land at Iceberg Lake which has formed at the snout of a glacier. You do not get out of the plane here. After taxiing around the lake to see the glacier and icebergs up close, your plane takes off and flies over the Rainbow Range. Total trip time is about 2 hours.

**Option #3 (no flight)** – If you prefer not to fly at all, there is a fare reduction of \$250 per person.



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## ACCOMMODATION

There are no large hotels in Bella Coola or Nimpo Lake, so rooms are booked in two places. Do not expect luxurious lodgings as these communities are remote and typically host travellers looking for a backcountry experience. You do not need to make any choices here as Wells Gray Tours will assign your accommodation based on how early you booked and whether you are travelling double, twin or single.

**Bella Coola area** – Bella Coola Valley Inn is in the town. All rooms are on the second floor accessed by a flight of stairs and have inside entrances. Grizzly Lodge is in Hagensborg, 10 km east of Bella Coola, and accommodation is in individual log cabins. Both dinners are included for everybody in a private room at the Valley Inn. Both breakfasts are included for everybody in the Hagensborg Legion as there are no public restaurants open anywhere that serve breakfast.

**Nimpo Lake** – Stewart's Lodge has log cabins with lake views and a dining room. One large log cabin has 3 bedrooms suitable for 2 couples or 3 singles, large living room, deck, and shared bathroom. Waterfront Motel has 3 log cabins and 5 motel rooms by the lake and you are driven to Stewart's for all meals.



## NORTHERN SEA WOLF

B.C. Ferries' *Northern Sea Wolf* is a new vessel for the Bella Coola route, replacing the *Queen of Chilli-wack* which operated for nearly 20 years until this service was shut down in 2014. The ship was built in 2000 and was named *Aqua Spirit* in 2011. From the home port of Piraeus (near Athens), she served as a passenger and car ferry to several Greek islands. BC Ferries purchased the ship in 2017 for \$12.6 million and sailed her to British Columbia. Major problems were found after her arrival which cost about \$20 million to rectify.

She has been renamed *Northern Sea Wolf*, a name inspired by a Heiltsuk legend in which the Sea Wolf is a manifestation of the Orca. The Sea Wolf symbolizes family and loyalty, and the spirit of the Sea Wolf protects those travelling their waters. The vessel was supposed to start service in 2018, but this was delayed repeatedly and 2019 was her first on the Bella Coola route.

*Northern Sea Wolf* is 75 metres long with a beam of 15 metres and a draft of 2.8 metres. She carries about 35 vehicles and 150 passengers at a travelling speed of 17 knots. Facilities include restaurant, gift shop, and indoor and outdoor seating. The journey from Port Hardy to Bella Coola takes 10 hours, all in daylight to permit great viewing of the rugged coastline and abundant wildlife, marine life, and bird life. Our motorcoach travels on the ferry, so luggage and other belongings can be stored there.



## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation for 8 days
- 7 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Ferry from Tsawwassen to Nanaimo
- *Northern Sea Wolf* ferry voyage from Port Hardy to Bella Coola
- Locally guided tour of Bella Coola Valley
- *A Morning with Alexander Mackenzie* presented by Rene Morton
- Bella Coola Museum
- Augsborg Church
- Hagensborg Heritage House
- Snootli Creek Fish Hatchery
- Presentation by author, photographer, and naturalist, Harvey Thommasen
- Locally-guided tour from Bella Coola to Heckman Pass
- Sightseeing flight to Hunlen Falls, Monarch Icefields, and Rainbow Range
- Presentation by author Chris Czajkowski
- Ashcroft Manor
- Gratuities to Bella Coola guide and pilots
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at some hotels
- **17 meals:** 6 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 5 dinners



## TOUR NOTES

**Identification:** Even though you are travelling within BC, photo ID is essential and mandatory. You will not be allowed to board the ferry in Port Hardy without photo ID in hand. This could be your BC Services Card, a passport, or any other government-issued photo ID. There is no refund of your tour fare if you are denied boarding at the ferry, and travel insurance is unlikely to cover this.

**TOUR 30** This is a Tour 30 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 30 participants, a more intimate travel experience.



**Activity Level 2:** Moderate activity including walking over uneven surfaces, steep terrain, or stairs.

There is more strenuous activity on August 12; please read the flight descriptions and choose your flight based on your mobility. All flights require getting in/out of float planes with 3 ladder-like steps. Seeing everything on this itinerary requires active participation. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. The coach cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. Some hotels do not have luggage service. If Activity Level 2 could be challenging, you are urged to bring a companion to assist you. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not able to keep up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some tour days.

## TOUR POLICIES

**Payments:** A deposit of \$300 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due June 15, 2022. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

**Discounts:** Early bookers receive \$180 discount on first 8 seats and \$90 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after June 15, 2022. BC seniors (65 & over) receive \$72 discount extended by BC Ferries, so you must bring your BC Services Card; deadline to claim this discount is June 15, 2022.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to May 13, 2022, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From May 14 to June 15, the cancellation charge is \$150 per person. From June 16 to July 5, cancellation charge is 50% of tour fare. After July 5, there is no refund.

**Fare Changes:** Changes to taxes and surcharges from tour suppliers can occur anytime and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes until departure.

**Travel Insurance:** A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

**Food Allergies:** You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to a remote destination where restaurants probably cannot satisfy all food allergies. For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

**Photo Credits:** Sylvia Nicholson (Nimpo Lake), Roland Neave (Monarch Icefields, Hunlen Falls, Saloompt, Table Mtn, Bella Coola Hill, Stewart's docks), Bella Coola Tourism (bulldozers), BC Parks (Rainbow Range), BC Ferries, Pat Manthey (Stewart's)

**Experience points:** This tour earns 79 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until June 15, 2022.

**Consumer Protection BC Licences:** Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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