



Backgrounder on West Coast Expeditions

West Coast Expeditions (WCE) is the passionate pursuit and cumulative effort of marine educators who've fallen in love with the remote Kyuquot area and people on northwestern Vancouver Island, BC. We've been industry leaders in connecting people from around the world with the local community, Aboriginal culture, and west coast ecology since 1972, and specializing in sea kayaking experiences since 1988.

- Founded in 1972 by Okanagan College biology teacher Jerry Lang (1943-2012) introducing his colleagues, friends and students to the wilds of Kyuquot on excursions with a marine biology theme and regular community interactions.
- Continued by Jerry's nephew, Rupert Wong, also a marine biologist. Rupert became a business partner with Jerry in 1988 and sole owner in 1992. Rupert introduced sea kayaking tours in addition to the boat-based marine ecology tours. West Coast Expeditions was one of the pioneer sea kayaking tour operators in North America, and remains the only one focused on the Kyuquot area.
- In 2008 long-time WCE Guide and Operations Manager, David Pinel, purchased and has continued developing WCE together with spouse Caroline Fisher (also a long-time outdoor educator and guide), and Bev Hansen-Michel of the local Kyuquot-Checleset First Nation.
- Dave, a graduate of Lester B Pearson United World College, has been leading sea kayaking and marine education experiences since 1985, including adventure guide training programs at North Island College since 2002. He first connected with the Kyuquot community in 1995 through kayaking with WCE and as the focus of his M.Sc. thesis research on community-based tourism planning.
- West Coast Expeditions is one of the only adventure tourism companies in Canada with private co-ownership that includes a First Nations owner who is active in delivering the experience, and over 40 years of close community relations with Aboriginal cultural interactions and service providers as part of the guests' experience.
- Established use of the current base camp site on Spring Island in 1978 when Transport Canada decommissioned the LORAN station. Seasonal structures since 1988 with minimal footprint, solar power, and significant camping luxuries, i.e., glamorous camping...or "glamping"! Site use is through an agreement with the Kyuquot-Checleset First Nation on their Treaty Settlement Lands (Maanulth Treaty, effective April 2011).
- WCE has introduced small groups of visitors to Kyuquot during the same period that sea otters were re-introduced to the west coast of Canada in Kyuquot between 1969 and 1972. This has been a time of re-balancing in the marine ecology with sea otters as the keystone species influencing biological diversity.

For more information contact David Pinel at 250-338-2511 or dave@westcoastexpeditions.com