

## Fast Facts about West Coast Expeditions and Kyuquot

### West Coast Expeditions

- Established in 1972; incorporated in 2007; pioneers in BC ecotourism, guided sea kayaking, and wilderness retreat experiences that offer the opportunity to “connect, experience, and refresh”.
- Achieved national recognition in November 2013 with our “Sea Otter Kayak Tour” selected as a Canadian Signature Experience by the Canadian Tourism Commission as part of their global marketing outreach promoting outstanding authentic tourism experiences that represent “Canada. Keep Exploring.”
- First sea kayaking company in Canada to achieve the Green Tourism Gold Award through a voluntary third-party assessment; continuing to refine our practices. Recently awarded a Certificate of Excellence through Trip Advisor.
- Mission:
  1. To inspire people with the joy, wonder, and discovery of BC's rugged and remote west coast ecosystems and cultural landscape through sea kayaking and marine ecology tours.
  2. To connect guests with refreshing and fun experiences with the local area and people.
  3. To contribute in positive ways to the health and well-being of our staff, guests, the community, and Kyuquot area as an important piece of the planet and our lives.
- Administrative office and start/end point for trips is in Courtenay on central Vancouver Island with convenient access via Comox International Airport (YQQ) or Campbell River Airport (YBL).
- Operate seasonally from late June to mid-September with small group sizes (5-20 guests) on 4 to 9 day sea kayaking experiences from a unique Wilderness Retreat on Spring Island.
- All-inclusive package prices from \$1650 to \$2999.
- Experiences are in the remote wilderness of Kyuquot on northwestern Vancouver Island – approximately a five hour drive from the Comox Valley area to Fair Harbour for water taxi transport to the Village of Kyuquot (population approximately 200 people) and Spring Island.
- Alternate access by float plane (only 2 h from Vancouver!) or via Gold River with a scenic day-long boat cruise.
- Spring Island is:
  - o about 3.5 km from the Village of Kyuquot and the westernmost island in Canada for this type of experience, including a myriad of old growth forest trails, protected waters for paddling, and easily accessed open coast;
  - o part of the historic Mission Group of Islands; lies due west of Campbell River (50° latitude) on the open Pacific;
  - o approximately 1.1 km<sup>2</sup> (110 hectares) or 272 acres and offers trails maintained by WCE for guest and public enjoyment while exploring the rugged shoreline and old-growth temperate rainforest with ancient western red cedars and Sitka spruce.



- Our Wilderness Retreat accommodations offer privately situated walk-in waterfront tents with beds and world-class views and sea otters floating nearby. Occupancy can be adjusted for single to quadruple configurations in most tents. Other site amenities include a spacious all-weather dining and activity shelter (with wood stove, resource library, and natural history collection), hot shower, and inspirational outhouses!
- Trips are fully catered and provisioned with high quality composite single and double kayaks.
- Able to accommodate a range of dietary requests, ages, kayaking experience (from none to advanced), and interests. Approximately 75% of our guests are return or referrals from past guests.
- Our largest group was a wilderness wedding with 40 people for 3 days. And the greatest age range on a trip was 3 to 87 years old during a customized family reunion! Average group sizes are 8 to 14 guests (composed of independent travelers, couples, families, and friends) plus guides and support staff.
- Professional affiliations include: Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC, Aboriginal Tourism BC, Wilderness Tourism Association of BC, 1% for the Planet, and Volunteer Ecological Reserve Warden (BC Parks).

### **The Kyuquot Area**

- Spring Island is adjacent to British Columbia's largest ecological reserve, Checleset Bay Ecological Reserve (34,650 ha) which was first established in 1981 to protect sea otter habitat and is now designated with the primary function of protecting "a representative marine ecosystem on the west coast of Vancouver Island."
- Sea otters were extirpated from BC (locally extinct) in the 1920's, re-introduced to the Kyuquot area between 1969 and 1972, and have been a success story in species and marine ecosystem recovery, albeit with some local cultural and economic tensions that are current and dynamic.
- The Kyuquot area is home to the Kyuquot-Checleset First Nation people who have a comprehensive modern Treaty Agreement (Maanulth Treaty) with the Government of Canada and Province of BC, effective April 1, 2011. There are approximately 500 Kyuquot-Checleset citizens, with about 175 living locally in Kyuquot. This is the northernmost of the 14 Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations on the west coast of Vancouver Island.
- In the 1980s, Kyuquot Sound and Checleset Bay were the focal point of international attention around massive steep-slope clear cut logging with significant erosion, slow reforestation, unprecedented viewscape damage, and associated habitat loss.
- The area now has some of the largest and better known Provincial Parks and protected areas that include: M<sup>q</sup>uq<sup>w</sup>in / Brooks Peninsula Provincial Park, Bunsby Island Provincial Park, Checleset Bay Ecological Reserve, Rugged Point Marine Provincial Park, and Tahsish-Kwois Provincial Park.
- For the past 20 years, sportfishing, sea kayaking, and recreational boating have contributed to a relatively steady seasonal tourism economy that partially supports what once thrived as a commercial fishing, whaling, and forest-based economy for local residents.

**For more information contact David Pinel at 250-338-2511 or [dave@westcoastexpeditions.com](mailto:dave@westcoastexpeditions.com)**