

B.C.'S FISHING HIGHWAY

A RISING TIDE LIFTS ALL BOATS

B.C.'s Fishing Highway (Highway 24) is a must-visit destination for fishing and outdoor enthusiasts. Stretching 97 kilometres through the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region, the highway offers access to approximately 100 lakes, as well as trails and backcountry roads supported by restaurants, nature adventures, and the highest density of fishing resorts and lodges in the province.



PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS

While B.C.'s Fishing Highway attracts numerous visitors each year, many gravitate to more established locations at larger lakes. Smaller lakes, despite their incredible fishing opportunities, are too often overlooked due to limited access to working campsites, dock and boat launch amenities, and resorts and lodges. The outcome is an uneven distribution of visitors, leading to increased pressure on the most commonly visited areas during peak season.

PROJECT APPROACH

Several tour operators along the Fishing Highway joined forces to establish the [Fishing Highway Tourist Association](#). The volunteer-run organization promotes the Fishing Highway while working to enhance the visitor experience along the entire route.

Supported by funding from the Province of B.C.'s [Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program](#), the Association made

several infrastructure improvements to the Fishing Highway, including signage that clearly labels remote lakes; repairing and building out existing docks and boat launches; cleaning up and refurbishing campgrounds; and installing washrooms. The work was guided by a goal of visitor disbursement, making it easier and more attractive for people to explore and enjoy the lakes located along all sections of the highway.



FAWN LAKE | Photo: Blake Jorgenson

PROJECT RESULTS

While it's challenging to measure how many visitors use specific boat launches, members of the Association have reported an increase in visitation, and an overall positive response reported a positive response to highway improvements. People are using the refurbished campgrounds, and there are more boats on lakes that historically haven't been fished as frequently.



BRIDGE LAKE | Photo: Andrew Strain



LAC DES ROCHES | Photo: Andrew Strain

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

A key highlight for this project is paying attention to foundational elements, such as highway signage, washrooms, and working docks and boat launches. The Association understood that the region naturally attracts people who fish, hike, and camp, so they focused on improving its basic infrastructure to elevate the experience and encourage repeat visitation.

The project also adhered to the adage “a rising tide lifts all boats.” Volunteers knew that improving infrastructure and access along the entire highway wouldn't detract from their own business. Instead, it would attract more people to the region overall, and help to alleviate pressure on more commonly visited areas during peak seasons.

