



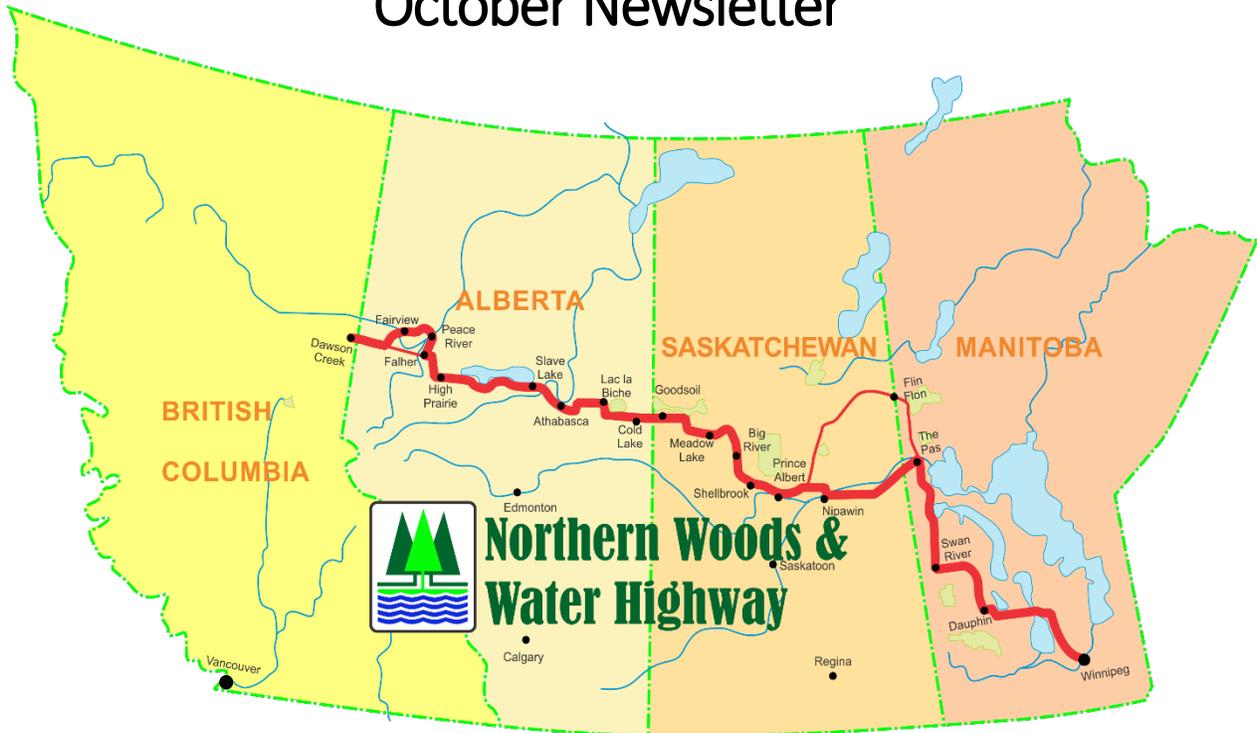
Northern Woods & Water Highway Association

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October Newsletter



Highway Economics 101

The Northern Woods & Water Highway was originally developed and promoted to showcase the great scenic beauty of northern parts of the western provinces and to encourage people to see western Canada in a new way. Dawson Creek is Mile Zero on the Alaska Highway. A 2016 report¹ on the impact of the Alaska Highway on Yukon tourism visitor counts indicates that 125,343 travellers entered the territory via the Alaska Highway. The GDP impact of all visitors \$63 million, creating or maintaining 890 jobs. The eastern and southern US travelling segment of this group are a target market to travel along the Northern Woods & Water Highway either on their way to or back from the Alaska Highway. At 25% of the total that is over 31,000 people per year. For example, this summer 14 days' travel one person in a motorhome deposited \$3,200 along the highway. The majority was gas, but \$1,200 was food, camping, shopping, and repairs.

Beyond tourism and the Alaska Highway, the Northern Woods & Water Highway provides access to supply communities and resource industries of the far north. In Alberta, the MacKenzie Highway starts at Grimshaw near Peace River providing access to Hay River and Yellowknife, Fort McMurray is accessed from Grassland and Lac La Biche. In Saskatchewan, Meadow Lake and Green Lake are the access point to the northwest and Buffalo Narrows, as well as Smeaton and the Hanson Lake Road providing the flow of goods to Flin Flon. Eastward in Manitoba, Flin Flon is also reached north out of The Pas and Thompson is

¹ http://economics.gov.yk.ca/Files/2016/Economic_Profile_of_AK_Hwy_Report_FINAL.pdf

accessed southeast of the Pas. The communities and resource industries rely on highways for the flow of goods to and from their locations utilizing heavy trucks.

Having more people travelling the highway strengthens the frontline businesses of gas stations, restaurants, hotels, campgrounds, recreation sites, museums, etc. Travel dollars inject new money into local economies to create or sustain jobs. In the smallest communities, these dollars can mean the difference of survival, as local populations dwindle and shopping gravitates towards larger centres.

Governments determine infrastructure spending based on traffic counts, so increasing traffic will improve roads and maintenance. But for northern communities the importance of a highway is more than the number of vehicles that use it. It is also a matter of safety in the winter, as well as a link to supplies. A highway is the most basic infrastructure for northern communities providing fuel and re-stocking supplies, but having access to fuel, accommodation, food and washrooms are also important for travellers. To support and sustain these services we need to increase traffic counts to compensate for smaller populations and we need to lobby provincial governments to ensure a good highway network.

The Yellowhead Highway Association has been linking communities, marketing, and promoting their highway since 1970. The Northern Woods & Water Highway Association is going to work at getting Northern Woods & Water Highway name recognized so that we can create word of mouth and brand recognition. If your community is interested in supporting this economic development initiative contact the Northern Woods & Water Association through the information above.

BC Highway Extension

The previous iteration of the Northern Woods & Water Highway Association heard comments that the Highway starts nowhere and ends nowhere.

In reality, the starting point at Winnipeg is where the larger population of eastern Canada feed into the western Trans Canada highway network. The TransCanada and Yellowhead Highways also receive traffic passing through Winnipeg westbound. It is also an access point for American travellers from the eastern seaboard and as far south a Florida to enter Canada on their way to Alaska or just northward to enjoy the water and wilderness.

There is merit in extending the Northern Woods & Water Highway southwest to Vancouver thereby completing a possible circle tourism route of the four western provinces. Following the original premise of creating a unique vacation and holiday travel highway, it is proposed that the Association contact communities from Dawson Creek to Vancouver to determine their level of interest in participating in the Northern Woods & Water Highway. This initiative would also include contacting BC Highway and Travel BC to get feedback from them.

The proposed route from Dawson Creek would continue north through Taylor and Fort St John before travelling southward through Hudson's Hope and Chetwynd. This portion would include a large section of travel along the Peace River as well as linking forestry, coal mining, oil & gas, and hydro power generation economics.



The southbound trip from Chetwynd would lead through the Rocky Mountains and the Pine Pass. (great snowmobiling at Powder King) Mackenzie is a community located off Hwy 97 at the south end of Williston Lake a huge lake that was created by the Hydro Dam at Hudson Hope. Southbound is Prince George, a crossroad to the Yellowhead Highway, then onto Quesnel, Williams Lake and 100 Mile House in the Caribou/Chilcotin Interior region.

South of this point there are two alternate routes. The more common well travelled route would be south through Cache Creek onto Hwy #1 to Ashcroft, Spences Bridge, Boston Bar, Hells Gate, Yale, Hope, Chilliwack, Abbotsford, and Vancouver. The less travelled and more challenging route for RV & trailer towing is westward on Hwy 99 junction north of Cache Creek to Lillooet, Pemberton, Whistler, Garibaldi, Squamish, Lions Bay and West Vancouver. The second option would be more inline with the less travelled wilderness concept of the existing Northern Woods & Water Highway.

The Association is looking for some feedback if you have any. This alternate route may be included in the 2017 Highway Guide as an unofficial route similar to the Flin Flon – Hanson Lake Circle Tour.

Membership News

We welcome and appreciate the new members that have joined the Association after the road trip this summer. There are many more that are still in the process of approving the 2017 membership.

Rural Municipality of Coldwell, MB
 Village of Goodsoil, SK
 City of Cold Lake, AB
 Cold Lake Chamber of Commerce

Dale Harrison, MBA
 President,
 Northern Woods & Water Highway Association