COMMUNITY

Last Updated Tuesday, 22 July 2008

Bella Coola is approximately 430 km northwest of Vancouver BC at the mouth of the Bella Coola River.

Until 1953, Bella Coola was linked to the rest of BC only by trail, air or water. In August 1953, the residents of Bella Coola finished construction of the "freedom road" which required two years of donated time, equipment and money. The new road connected the road system of the Bella Coola valley to the provincial highway system. Today, there are three main transportation methods to get to/from Bella Coola: Highway 20 from Williams Lake, a one hour flight from Vancouver or a ferry from Port Hardy.

The majority of the people in the Bella Coola valley are either Nuxalk or of Norwegian descent. The Nuxalk have lived in the Bella Coola region for thousands of years, while the Norwegians established a settlement of Hagensborg 16km east of Bella Coola in the 1890s.

The Nuxalk Village of Q'umk'uts' lies next to the non-Nuxalk townsite of Bella Coola. The Nuxalk Hall hosts the Nuxalk Basketball Association (NBA), a very popular pastime of Nuxalk young and old. Potlatches, feasts, dances and celebrations are also held at the Nuxalk Hall, which remains busy throughout the winter and summer months. There are several Nuxalk businesses in the valley, including convenience stores, art galleries, gas stations and clothing outlets, as well as a Volunteer Fire Department. The Bella Coola town site includes a hospital, post-office, government agent office, RCMP station, grocery store and retail stores.