

Our Mighty Fraser River (Faye Brownlie)



Imagine getting in a car and riding for 14 or 15 hours. If you were traveling at 100 km an hour, you would cover the same distance as the length of the Fraser River. That is a long distance! The Fraser River flows for 1400 km. It begins near Jasper, and continues until it flows into the Pacific Ocean, near Vancouver. People of British Columbia live all along its way. Perhaps you are one of these people or perhaps you have visited the Fraser River.

The river was named after the explorer Simon Fraser. He wanted to find out where the river emptied into the Pacific Ocean. With the help of his First Nations' guides, he travelled along the river all the way to the ocean. It was a dangerous trip with many rapids to cross.



Fraser River emptying into Pacific Ocean

Fishing

The Fraser River today is the home of many kinds of salmon and trout. People come to fish in the river, in different ways. Some use powerboats, fishing boats, or canoes. Some people fish from the shore. The current in the lower part of the Fraser River is very strong, so everyone has to be careful not to be swept downstream. Even though this current is strong, many salmon swim upstream to spawn.

Working River

The Fraser River is a working river. Every day fishing boats and tugboats come up the Fraser River from the Pacific Ocean. They travel with the tide to make moving in the river easier. The tugboats take log booms up and down the river. Sometimes they tie the log booms up to the shore before they take them to the mill. Early in the morning or late at night, voices can be heard as the log rollers move about on the booms checking their lines and positions.



Tugboat moving a log boom on the river

The Fraser River flows through about 1/4 of our province. All along its banks, people hike, bike, picnic, and watch the river go by. No wonder it is often called the 'lifeblood of BC'.