

**FEATURE TYPES & DEFINITIONS** currently associated with geographical names in British Columbia

- Abandoned Locality:** A previously populated place with no current population.
- Airfield:** A land aerodrome with limited services.
- Airport:** Site intended for use by aircraft, including any necessary technical and commercial installations.
- Anchorage:** An area of water in which vessels can anchor; usually sheltered water.
- Archipelago:** Group or chain of islands.
- Arm:** Long narrow extension of a water body.
- Bank (1):** Abrupt slope at the edge of a waterbody.
- Bank (2):** An elevation over which the depth of water is relatively shallow, but normally sufficient for safe surface navigation.
- Bank (3):** Elevated portion of the seafloor or lake bottom, exposed at low water or over which the depth of water is shallow.
- Banks (1):** An elevation over which the depth of water is relatively shallow, but normally sufficient for safe surface navigation. Plural of Bank (2)
- Bar (1):** A ridge or succession of ridges of sand or other unconsolidated material extending across the mouth of a river, harbour or bay and which may obstruct navigation.
- Bar (2):** An offshore ridge or succession of ridges of sand or other unconsolidated material, either perpendicular to or parallel with the shore.
- Base des Forces canadiennes:** (Canadian Forces Base) An established base for operations of the armed forces, usually hosting one or more major units.
- Basin (4):** A water feature similar to a cove or bay.
- Basin (5):** Bowl-shaped head of a valley in foothills or mountains.
- Bay:** Water area in an indentation of the shoreline of a sea, lake, or large river.
- Bays:** Water area in an indentation of the shoreline of a sea, lake or large river. Plural of Bay.
- Beach:** Gently sloping shore of unconsolidated material along the margins of a sea, lake, or river.
- Beaches:** Gently sloping shore of unconsolidated material along the margins of a sea, lake or river. Plural of Beach.
- Bench:** Level strip of land, bounded above and below by steeper slopes; a terrace.
- Bend (1):** Change in the direction of a watercourse.
- Bight:** Water area in a broad indentation of the shoreline.
- Bluff (1):** A shoreline terrain elevation with an almost perpendicular face.
- Bluff (2):** A steep-sided hill or promontory.
- Bluffs (1):** A shoreline terrain elevation with an almost perpendicular face. Plural of Bluff (1)
- Bog:** Wet spongy land area, containing abundant organic matter.
- Bridge:** A structure built to span and afford passage across a waterway, railroad, ravine, etc.
- Brook:** Small watercourse, often a tributary to a river, stream, or creek.
- Butte:** Conspicuous isolated hill with steep sides and a flat top.
- Cabin:** A structure offering shelter; often a landmark on a remote or historic route
- Camp:** A place where tents or buildings serve as temporary residences
- Camp des Forces canadiennes:** (Canadian Forces Camp) An established camp for operations of the armed forces.
- Canadian Forces Base:** An established base for operations of the armed forces, usually hosting one or more major units.
- Canadian Forces Camp:** An established camp for operations of the armed forces.
- Canadian Forces Range / Training Ar:** An established range and/or training area for operations of the armed forces.
- Canadian Forces Station:** An established station for operations of the armed forces; usually a detachment of a larger Base or hosting a single unit.
- Canal (1):** A natural or man-made freshwater channel used for navigation, irrigation, etc.
- Canal (2):** A narrow, saltwater passage between bodies of land.
- Canyon (2):** Deep, narrow valley with precipitous walls.
- Cape:** Prominent elevated projection of land extending into a body of water.
- Cascade:** Waterfall with a small flow, normally descending over several levels.
- Cave:** Natural subterranean chamber open to the surface.
- Caves:** Natural subterranean chamber open to the surface. Plural of Cave.
- Champ de tir / champ de manoeuvre:** Champ de tir / champ de manoeuvre des Forces canadiennes.
- Channel (2):** Alternative course in a flowing water body, or a distributary within a delta.
- Channel (3):** Narrow stretch of water connecting two bodies of water.
- Cirque:** Deep, steep-walled, bowl-shaped indentation in a mountain side.
- City:** A populated place with legally defined boundaries, incorporated as a city municipality under the provincial Municipal Act.
- Cliff (1):** Steep rock face projecting nearly vertically from a body of water.
- Cliff (2):** Steep rock face projecting nearly vertically from the surrounding land.
- Cliffs (1):** Steep rock face projecting nearly vertically from a body of water. Plural of Cliff (1).
- Cliffs (2):** Steep rock face projecting nearly vertically from the surrounding land. Plural of Cliff (2).
- Col:** Low point on a ridge joining two summits, usually enabling passage between them.
- Community:** An unincorporated populated place, generally with a population of 50 or more, and having a recognized central area that might contain a post office, store and/or community hall, etc, intended for the use of the general public in the region.
- Cone:** Cone-shaped hill.
- Conservation Area:** An area with legally defined boundaries, set aside to protect or preserve the natural heritage of the area.
- Coulee (2):** Steep-sided valley or ravine, often with a stream flowing in the bottom.
- Cove (2):** Water area in a small indentation of the shoreline of a sea, lake or river.
- Crag:** Steep, jagged prominence on a mountain or cliff.
- Crags:** Steep, jagged prominence on a mountain or cliff. Plural of Crag.
- Crater (2):** Bowl-shaped or funnel-shaped depression at the eruption site on a volcano.
- Creek (1):** Watercourse, usually smaller than a river.
- Creek (3):** Narrow tidal inlet, usually with a watercourse flowing at its head (seldom used in BC.)
- Dam:** A barrier constructed to hold back water, to raise and control its level and/or to form a reservoir.
- Depression:** Low-lying land surrounded by higher land.

**District:** A named land division with legally defined boundaries.

**District Municipality (1):** A populated place with legally defined boundaries, incorporated as a district municipality under the provincial Municipal Act.

**Ditch (1):** Small watercourse.

**Dome:** Mass of rock or ice with a rounded top, elevated above the surrounding terrain.

**Domes:** Mass of rock or ice with rounded top, elevated above the surrounding terrain. Plural of Dome.

**Dyke (1):** Artificial structure to control water flow and flood waters.

**Ecological Reserve:** A designated area established under the Ecological Reserves Act, set aside for the study of representative or unique ecosystems.

**Eddy:** Small whirlpool in a watercourse or in the sea, running contrary to the direction of current or tide.

**Entrance:** Outer end of a channel, harbour, or other water feature; usually allowing access to the waters within.

**Escarpment:** Long laterally continuous, steep slope, often cliff-like.

**Falls:** Perpendicular or steep descent of water. Variation of Waterfall.

**First Nation Village:** A village or community inhabited primarily by members of the same First Nation.

**Fishing Site:** A section in a watercourse or waterbody where there is good fishing, or was historically used for fishing

**Flat (2):** Almost level land, usually found along a valley.

**Flats (1):** Level area of land usually composed of fine material, extending from the shore.

**Flats (2):** Almost level land, usually found along a valley. Plural of Flat (2).

**Flats (3):** A large area of flat, wet ground.

**Forest:** Expanse of tree-covered terrain

**Fork (1):** Branch of a stream.

**Fork (2):** Junction of two streams; a confluence.

**Former Cannery:** A facility formerly used for canning fish, fruit or meat.

**Former First Nation Village:** A place formerly inhabited by First Nations' people, with no current population or that is usually uninhabited.

**Former Locality:** A once-populated place with no current population, or that is usually uninhabited

**Former Post Office:** Post Office now closed or renamed.

**Former Railway Point:** Siding, junction, flag stop or station now closed or renamed.

**Fort:** Fortified structure built to protect a strategic site.

**Fumarole:** A vent, usually volcanic, from which gases and vapours are emitted.

**Game Preserve:** Tract of land provincially designated to provide habitat for the management and preservation of wildlife.

**Gap (2):** Narrow opening through a ridge or mountain chain.

**Glacier:** Mass of permanent snow and ice flowing from an area of snow accumulation on higher ground.

**Glaciers:** Mass of permanent snow and ice flowing from an area of snow accumulation on higher ground. Plural of Glacier.

**Gorge:** Deep, narrow, steep-sided valley, usually containing a watercourse.

**Group (1):** More than one island in a centralized area.

**Group (2):** A number of peaks or mountains within a range of mountains.

**Gulch (1):** A small stream.

**Gulch (4):** Deep, steeply graded, V-shaped declivity, sometimes containing a stream.

**Harbour (1):** Sheltered water in a shoreline indentation, suitable for mooring or anchoring vessels.

**Head (1):** High, prominent land feature extending into a sea or lake.

**Highland:** Area of elevated relief, not as high or rugged as a range of mountains or as level as a plateau.

**Hill:** Elevation of terrain rising prominently above the surrounding land.

**Hills:** Elevation of terrain rising prominently above the surrounding land. Plural of Hill.

**Historical Route:** Route followed, or in close proximity to a historical trail or colonization road

**Hot spring / Hot Spring:** Site of a natural flow of hot or warm water issuing from the ground.

**Hot springs / Hot Springs:** Site of a natural flow of hot or warm water issuing from the ground. Plural of Hot spring / Hot Spring.

**Ice Cap / Icecap:** Large dome-shaped mass of permanent ice and snow.

**Icefall:** Mass of jagged, split ice on a steep glacial slope.

**Icefield:** Irregularly shaped mass of permanent snow and ice, generally forming the accumulation area of two or more glaciers.

**Indian Government District:** A legally designated area with self-governing status

**Indian Government District : Land Unit:** Area with legally-defined boundaries over which an Indian Government District exercises authority.

**Indian Reserve-Réserve indienne:** Tract of land set apart for the use and benefit of a particular Indian band.

**Indian Settlement:** terminology used by DIAND: a place occupied by Amerindians but not designated or reserved under the Indian Act; occupation is not restricted to a particular Band.

**Inlet (3):** Elongated body of water extending from a sea or lake.

**Island:** Land area surrounded by water or marsh.

**Islands:** Land area surrounded by water or marsh. Plural of Island.

**Islet:** Small island.

**Islets:** Small island. Plural of Islet.

**Isthmus:** Narrow neck of land, bordered on both sides by water, and connecting two larger land areas.

**Knob:** Rounded usually isolated part of a mountain; a hill.

**Knoll (2):** Small rounded hill.

**Lagoon:** Body of water, separated from a lake, river, or sea by a narrow land barrier, which may completely enclose it or leave a shallow passageway into it.

**Lake:** Inland body of standing water.

**Lakes:** Inland body of standing water. Plural of Lake.

**Land District:** A territorial division with legally defined boundaries for administrative purposes.

**Land Grant:** A parcel of land transferred legally to an individual or company; usually from the Crown to the first land owner. Also known as a Crown Grant

**Landing (1):** A coastal or shore location where boats may put in to load or unload.

**Ledge (1):** Flat rock area, either projecting from a land mass into the water or rising from the sea floor.

**Ledge (2):** Prominent shelf-like platform exposed on the face of a mountain or cliff.

**Ledges:** Flat rock area, either projecting from a land mass into the water or rising from the sea floor. Plural of Ledge (1).

**Lieu historique national:** (National Historic Site) A place declared to be of national historic interest or significance by the Minister responsible for the administration of the Historic Sites and Monuments Acts.

**Locality:** A named place or area, generally with a scattered population of 50 or less.

**Lookout:** Elevation from which the surrounding terrain or seascape can be viewed.

**Lowland:** A general term for low-lying land or an extensive region of low land, especially near the coast and including the extended plains or country lying not far above tide level.

**Marsh:** Area of low-lying land, often flooded and usually characterized by growth of grass and reeds.

**Meadow (1):** Alpine or sub-alpine treeless area, characterized by seasonal grasses and wildflowers

**Meadow (2):** Low-lying, flat, seasonally wet, grassy area.

**Migratory Bird Sanctuary:** A sanctuary for migratory birds, established under Canada's Migratory Birds Convention Act (1917). Disturbance, hunting, collection of migratory birds and their eggs is prohibited.

**Military College:** An educational institution, owned and operated by the Department of National Defense, which grants academic degrees.

**Mine:** Site where extraction and primary processing of ore take place.

**Mining Camp:** Seasonal or year-round housing and facilities for people working at nearby mines.

**Mount:** Variation of Mountain: Mass of land prominently elevated above the surrounding terrain, bounded by steep slopes and rising to a summit and/or peaks. ["Mount" preceding the name usually indicates that the feature is named after a person.]

**Mountain:** Mass of land prominently elevated above the surrounding terrain, bounded by steep slopes and rising to a summit and/or peaks.

**Mountain Resort Municipality:** A populated place with legally defined boundaries, incorporated as a mountain resort municipality under the provincial Municipal Act.

**Mountains:** Mass of land prominently elevated above the surrounding terrain, bounded by steep slopes and rising to a summit and/or peaks. Plural of Mountain.

**Mouth:** The point where a river or stream flows into another body of water.

**Municipal Park:** An area developed as a park or open space, leased or owned by a municipality.

**Narrows:** Constricted section of a water body.

**National Historic Site:** A place declared to be of national historic interest or significance by the Minister responsible for the administration of the Historic Sites and Monuments Act of Canada.

**National Park:** A legally defined land area, under federal jurisdiction, for camping, outdoor recreation and preservation of wildlife.

**National Park Reserve:** Lands set aside for the establishment of a National Park, but clear title to which is subject to the resolution of native land claims.

**National Wildlife Area:** An area established under the Canada Wildlife Act (1973) to conserve essential habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. Located on land owned or leased for a long term by the Federal Government.

**Notch:** Deep but narrow opening through a ridge or mountain chain.

**Névé:** Accumulation of ice resulting from the transformation of snow on higher ground

**Ocean:** Large body of salt water, global in scale.

**Parc national:** (National Park) Legally defined land area, under federal jurisdiction, for camping, outdoor recreation and preservation of wildlife.

**Pass (1):** Narrow stretch of water connecting two larger water bodies.

**Pass (2):** Low opening in a mountain range or hills, offering a route from one side to the other.

**Passage:** Variation of Pass: Narrow stretch of water connecting two larger water bodies.

**Patch:** Elevation of the bed of a body of water; composed of unconsolidated material and posing a hazard to surface navigation.

**Peak (2):** Summit of a mountain or hill, or the mountain or hill itself.

**Peaks:** Summit of a mountain or hill, or the mountain or hill itself. Plural of Peak (2).

**Peninsula:** Elongated projection of land into a body of water.

**Picnic Area:** A designated area with picnic tables, but no camping facilities.

**Pinnacle:** Small pointed peak, or a hill.

**Plain (2):** Area of flat or gently rolling terrain.

**Plains:** Area of flat or gently rolling terrain. Plural of Plain (2).

**Plateau:** Extensive, elevated region, with either level terrain, or nearly uniform summit levels.

**Point:** Land area jutting into a water feature; also used for a convex change in direction of a shoreline.

**Pond (1):** Inland body of standing water, usually smaller than a lake.

**Ponds (1):** Inland body of standing water, usually smaller than a lake. Plural of Pond (1)

**Port (1):** Inlet, or part of an inlet, providing shelter to vessels; a bay.

**Port (2):** Natural or man-made shelter for vessels, having the necessary equipment for the taking on and landing of passengers and cargo.

**Portage:** Trail around an obstacle in a watercourse or joining two bodies of water.

**Post Office:** A Canada Post designation; the post office name may or may not be the same as the name of the place where it is located.

**Prairie:** Area of flat or gently rolling grassland; larger than a meadow and often extensive.

**Protected Area:** Legally defined area under provincial jurisdiction, containing archaeological and/or natural sites, with unique or irreplaceable resources.

**Province:** The principle administrative division of Canada, as established by Articles of Confederation or by Constitutional Amendment.

**Provincial Heritage Property:** A site administered under the province's Heritage Conservation Act, which preserves, interprets and presents a live expression of human history at the site, for the enjoyment and education of residents and visitors.

**Provincial Historic Park:** Historic park administered by the province.

**Provincial Historic Site:** Property, whether a site of nature or a work of man, that is of interest for its architectural, historical, cultural, environmental, aesthetic, or scientific value.

**Provincial Marine Park:** A park designated and administered by the Province, primarily for water-oriented activities, that may or may not be only accessible by boat.

**Provincial Park:** Legally defined land area, under provincial jurisdiction, for camping, outdoor recreation, and preservation of wildlife.

**Provincial Recreation Area:** Lands which are designated by provincial Order in Council, and developed and maintained to facilitate their use and enjoyment for outdoor recreation.

**Railway Point:** A named railway siding, junction, flag stop or timing point with or without an agent.

**Ranch:** A facility and its estate; most commonly for grazing and rearing horses, cattle and/or sheep.

**Range (2):** Group or chain of mountains or hills.

**Ranges:** Group or chain of mountains or hills. Plural of Range (2).

**Rapids:** Fast-flowing section of a watercourse, usually with turbulent water or exposed rocks.

**Ravine:** Deep, V-shaped declivity.

**Reach:** Relatively straight section of a river, lake, or inlet.

**Recreation Facility:** Infrastructure associated with recreational or leisure activities, generally designed for day-use.

**Recreational Community:** A populated place with seasonal or year-round services, accommodation and amenities associated primarily with recreational or leisure activities.

**Reef:** Rocks rising to or near the surface of a body of water.

**Reefs:** Rocks rising to or near the surface of a body of water. Plural of Reef.

**Refuge d'oiseaux migrateurs:** (Migratory Bird Sanctuary) A sanctuary for migratory birds, established under the Migratory Convention Act (1917). Disturbance, hunting, collection of migratory birds and their eggs is prohibited.

**Region:** A relatively large area having specific characteristics which give it a certain unity.

**Regional District:** A division of the province incorporated as a regional district.

**Regional Park:** Park administered by a Regional District.

**Reservoir:** Body of water maintained at a controlled level, the stored water being used mainly for utilitarian purposes.

**Resort:** A seasonal or year-round facility, frequented because of its' purpose or quality, or the nature of the surrounding area.

**Resort Municipality:** A populated place with legally defined boundaries, incorporated as a resort municipality under the provincial Municipal Act.

**Ridge (2):** Elongated stretch of elevated ground.

**Riffle:** Fast-flowing section of a watercourse, usually with turbulent water or exposed rocks.

**River:** Watercourse of variable size, which has tributaries and flows into a body of water or a larger watercourse.

**Rock (1):** Small mass of rock usually projecting above the water surface.

**Rock (2):** Rocky hill, mountain or cliff; or a large boulder

**Rocks (1):** Small mass of rock usually projecting above the water surface. Plural of Rock (1).

**Rocks (2):** Rocky hill, mountain or cliff; or large boulders. Plural of Rock (2).

**Réserve de parc national:** (National Park Reserve) Lands set aside for the establishment of a National Park, but clear title to which is subject to the resolution of native land claims.

**Réserve nationale de faune:** (National Wildlife Area) An area established under the Canada Wildlife Act (1973) to conserve essential habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. Located on land owned or leased for a long term by the Federal Government.

**Sea:** A subdivision of salt water next in size to an ocean, partly or sometimes wholly enclosed by land.

**Settlement:** Any permanently occupied, unincorporated area normally identified by a single name, generally rural, and having a recognizable central focus.

**Shoal:** Elevation of the bed of a body of water; composed of unconsolidated material and posing a hazard to surface navigation.

**Shoals:** Elevation of the bed of a body of water; composed of unconsolidated material and posing a hazard to surface navigation. Plural of Shoal.

**Shore:** Narrow stretch of land bordering a body of water.

**Site:** A named place that has historic, geographic or folkloric significance.

**Site du patrimoine mondial:** (World Heritage Site) One of over 800 cultural and natural properties throughout the world, considered to be of outstanding value according to criteria drawn up by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee.

**Slide:** Scar and/or material from landslide or debris flow.

**Slough (1):** Backwater area, usually marshy; or a meander channel cut off from the main drainage.

**Slough (2):** Shallow water-filled or marshy depression with no external drainage.

**Snowfield:** Irregularly shaped mass of permanent snow and ice, generally forming the accumulation area of two or more glaciers.

**Sound (1):** Large body of water from which two or more inlets, arms or channels branch off.

**Sound (2):** Arm of the sea or a lake; inlet.

**Spire:** Tall, slender, sharp-pointed peak; or a mountain.

**Spires:** Tall, slender, sharp-pointed peak; or a mountain. Plural of Spire.

**Spit:** Long, low, narrow projection of unconsolidated material extending into a body of water.

**Spring:** Site of a natural flow of water issuing from the ground.

**Springs:** Site of a natural flow of water issuing from the ground. Plural of Spring.

**Spur:** Subsidiary ridge extending laterally from a mountain or ridge.

**Station des Forces canadiennes:** (Canadian Forces Station) An established station for operations of the armed forces.

**Steamer Landing:** A scheduled steamer landing, with or without a population

**Strait:** Passage, usually navigable, connecting two larger bodies of water.

**Straits:** Passage, usually navigable, connecting two larger bodies of water. Plural of Strait.

**Stream:** Watercourse, smaller than a river.

**Subdivision:** A separately-named residential area, with definable limits, within an incorporated municipality.

**Summit:** Highest point of a mountain or hill.

**Swamp:** Low-lying land, permanently saturated with water and usually having trees and shrubs.

**Tidal Rapids:** Constricted passage with strong tidal current.

**Tower (1):** A conspicuous mountain or pinnacle.

**Towers:** A conspicuous mountain or pinnacle. Plural of Tower (1) (2760).

**Town:** A populated place with legally defined boundaries, incorporated as a town municipality under the provincial Municipal Act.

**Trading Post:** A locality with a trading post.

**Trail:** Footpath or track. [see also Historical Route]

**Trench:** Large-scale elongated depression between mountain ranges.

**Trough:** Long depression of the seafloor, characteristically flat-bottomed and steep-sided.

**Tunnel:** Underground passageway for a travel route (under a watercourse or arm of the sea, or through an elevation of terrain).

**Unclassified:** A named or formerly named feature, whose type is unknown or undetermined.

**Urban Community:** A separately named area within the limits of an incorporated municipality

**Valley (1):** Long relatively narrow depression, commonly containing a river or other water feature.

**Village (1):** A populated place with legally defined boundaries, incorporated as a village municipality under the provincial Municipal Act.

**Village (2):** An unincorporated populated place.

**Volcano:** Hills related to volcanic activity.

**Volcanoes:** Hills related to volcanic activity. Plural of Volcano (3901).

**Waterfall:** Perpendicular or steep descent of water.

**Whirlpool:** A constant, rapid, circular movement of the water.

**World Heritage Site:** One of over 800 cultural and natural properties throughout the world, considered to be of outstanding value according to criteria drawn up by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee.