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.

**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:** A 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 des Forces canadiennes:** Champion de tir / champ de manœuvre 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.

**Craggs:** 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): A 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.
Escarpetment: 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: Irregularly shaped 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.
Harbour (1): Sheltered water in a shoreline indentation, suitable for mooring or anchoring vessels.
Head (4): High, prominent land feature extending landward from 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 Springs / 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 Springs / 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: Area of elevated relief, not as high or rugged as a range of mountains or as level as a plateau.
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-Réservation 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 seascapes 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: 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. Plural of Plain (2).
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 Conderation 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.
Recreational 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.