

BELLA COOLA, BC, CANADA (SEPTEMBER, 2013)



Wendy & I took a trip to Bella Coola, BC via Williams Lake, BC. It is literally at the end of the tarmac of highway 20 in Canada, but there is BC tourist ferry service as well as air service to this area.

Going west from Williams Lake is a pretty good two lane paved road until one reaches a place called Anahim Lake and "The Hill" just a bit further on. From "The Hill" (Heckman Pass), the road drops about 5,000 feet down to the Bella Coola Valley floor. The gravel road is wide but can be steep in places, up to an 18% grade. The Freedom Road as it called has a unique story of its own.

You can find a bit more about it here: <http://www.bellacoola.ca/getting-here/road.php>

The valley runs a further 50 miles west to Bella Coola and is very beautiful, reminding us of the Olympic Nationals Park's western rain forests (such as the Hoh).

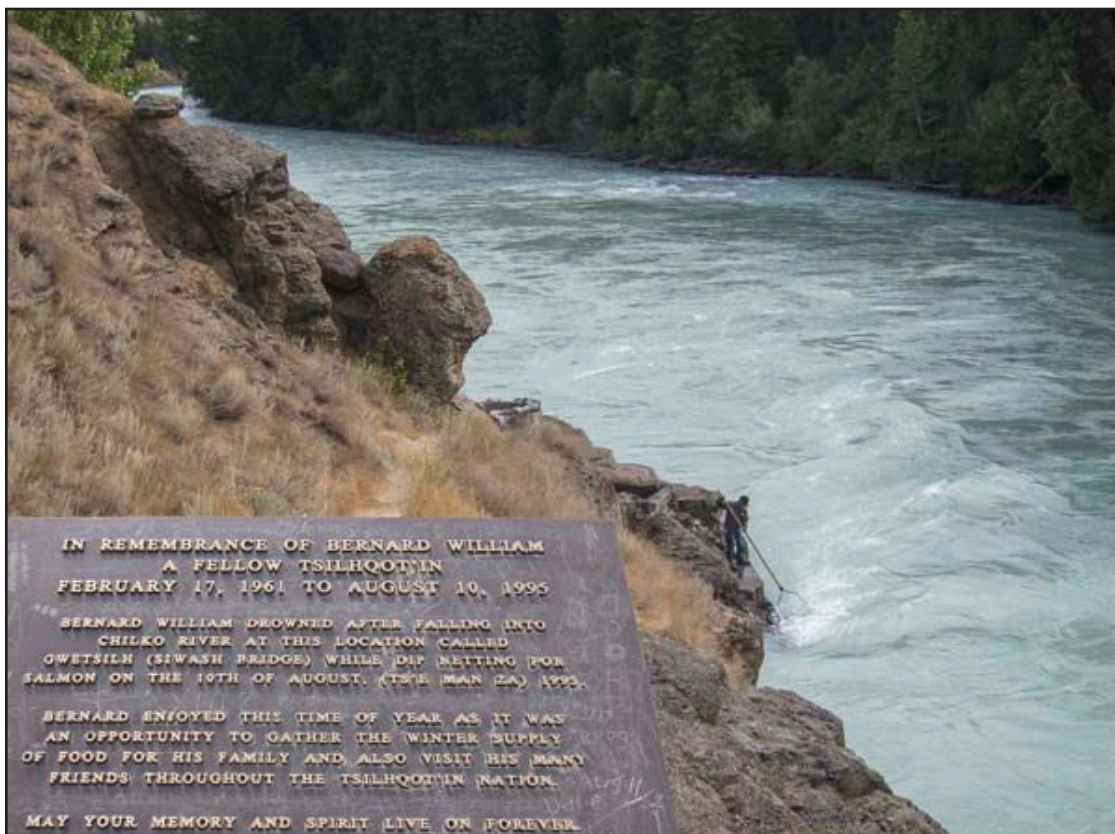
Bellingham COSTCO

We stopped overnight in Bellingham to visit and have dinner with my Mom and my sister Lita's family. We decided to get gas before we went over the border into Canada, and COSTCO was just up the street from where we stayed. The lines were very long and as we sat in line I noticed that almost all of the cars waiting for gas were from BC (British Columbia, Canada for those not from the NW). Most of the cars would open their trunks, pull out several gas cans, fill them, and put them back into their trunks. I was astounded that people would take that kind of risk and while I was scolded by the gas attendant for taking pictures on private property, I asked him about it. He just said this is what it is like all day, every day there. I was definitely extra careful not to tailgate any BC cars for awhile and give them extra wide berth.



Dip Netting On The Chilko River

After we hooked up with Tim & Evi at their home in Williams Lake, Tim took over the driving chores out to Bella Coola, stopping along the way to show us some things. The Salmon were starting to run and the dip netting had started. This fellow is roped to the bank as were most of the others we saw dip netting. It still seemed like falling in would be easy and fatal even when roped up. It wasn't clear if Bernard William was or not.

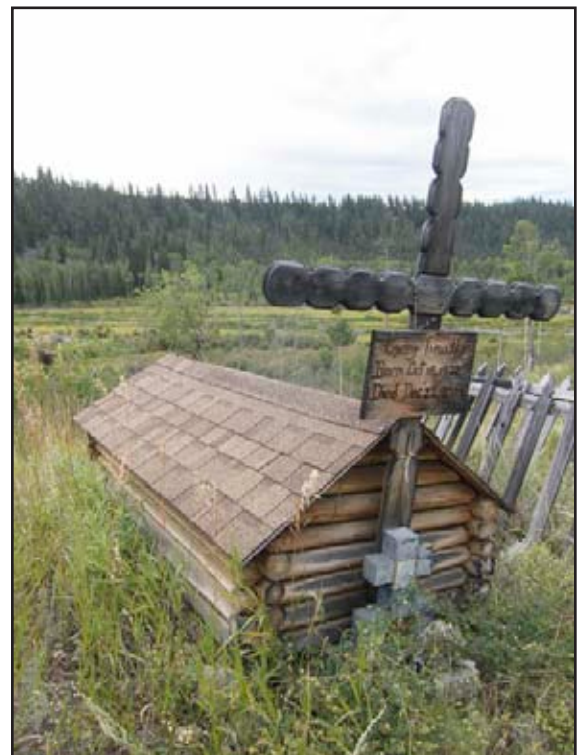


We saw as many as three fish caught in a single dipping / sweep.



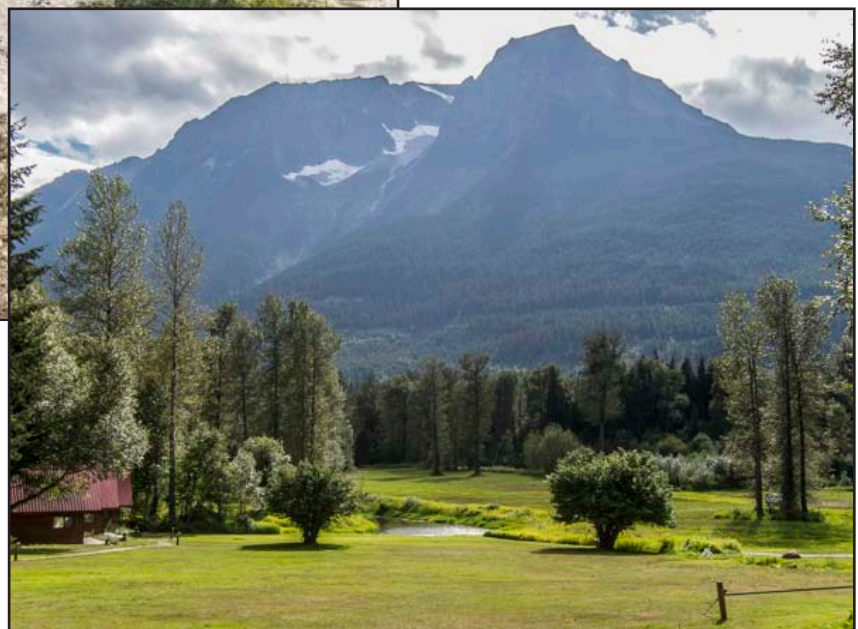
Cemetery Along The Highway

We stopped at this interesting cemetery beside the highway.



Lunch At A Typical Lake... All To Ourselves

Except for the bees, insects and other critters... Of note is that it is estimated that 60% of the world's lakes are in Canada. That is about three million lakes!



Bella Colola Valley - Tweedsmuir Park Lodge, Tweedsmuir Provincial Park

Our first stop after surviving our 5,000 foot free fall along the Freedom Road to the Bella Coola Valley floor was a very nice lodge and bear viewing area along the Bella Coola River. The salmon had yet to start their run in earnest, so the bears were waiting up in higher ground.

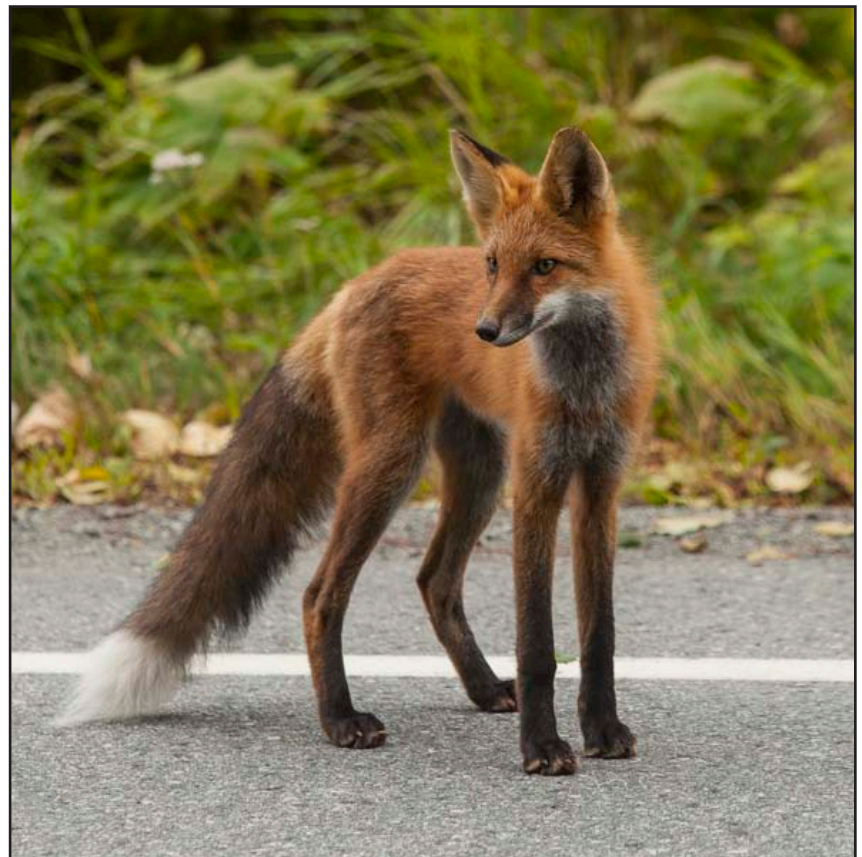
Bella Coola Fox

I made friends with a fox. I asked it to give me a menacing pose in this shot.



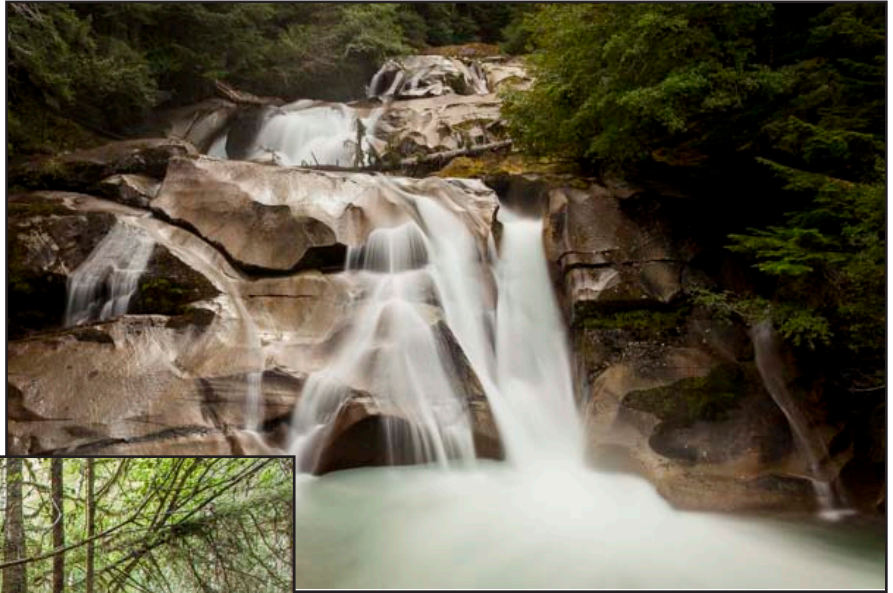
Then I asked it to give me a more demure, 3/4 profile pose.

I was beginning to think that getting some grizzly bear photographs was not going to be so hard after all and that all the wildlife was going to be as accommodating as my fox friend.



Clayton Falls

This waterfall was just past Bella Coola, definitely a treat at the end of the road.



Bella Coola Nurse Rock

On the trail to the first nations
Nuxalk petroglyphs

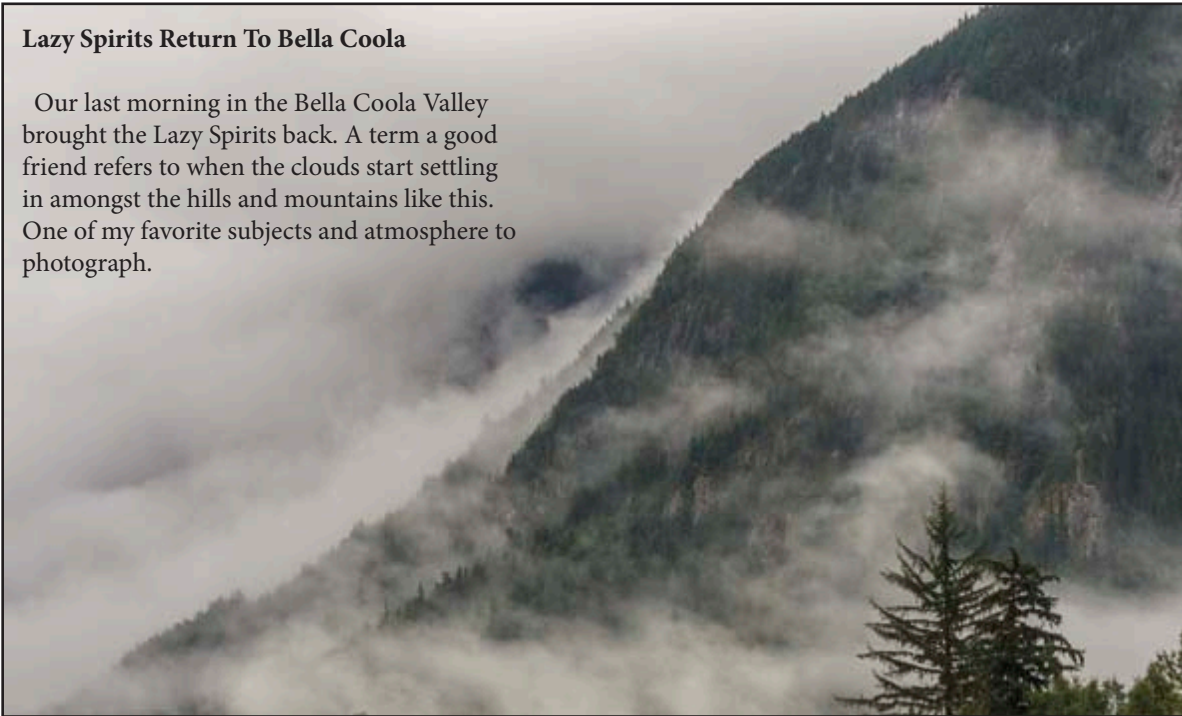
Our Only Bear Sighting

Tim, Evi, Wendy and I and the only
bear we saw on this trip!



Lazy Spirits Return To Bella Coola

Our last morning in the Bella Coola Valley brought the Lazy Spirits back. A term a good friend refers to when the clouds start settling in amongst the hills and mountains like this. One of my favorite subjects and atmosphere to photograph.



Seriously, Even Here?

When we saw this Nevada USA plated billboard we decided we should probably head east again towards Williams Lake before we fell for the bait or got caught in the cross fire.



Give Us Ronda or Give Us Free Coffee and Cookies!

We stopped at a wonderful lodge on the way back to Williams Lake. Tim, Evi and family frequented this spot and have fond memories of a lady named Ronda from here, (at least Tim's boys and Tim do). Anyway, Ronda was not there, but we accepted their offer of free coffee, freshly baked cookies and a great view of a lake in order to enjoy them even more. It was a great break in our long drive back to Williams Lake.



Elvis Is Here!

At least most of his stuff is! As we drove back to Washington via the Trans-Canada Highway #1 we stopped at the "Elvis Rocks the Canyon" cafe for lunch. This place houses the owner's late wife's 45ish year collection of Elvis memorabilia. Judging from the amount of memorabilia in there, she was an extremely active and devoted collector for everyone of those years. The owner said there are even more rooms below the cafe that are packed full of Elvis stuff!

You can find out more about "Elvis Rocks the Canyon" using the link below:

<http://www.elvisrocksthecanyoncafe.com/>



We continued on home first passing through Hells Gate then through Hope (the highway is an emotional roller coaster).

More information about the Bella Coola Valley can be found here: <http://www.bellacoola.ca>

.END