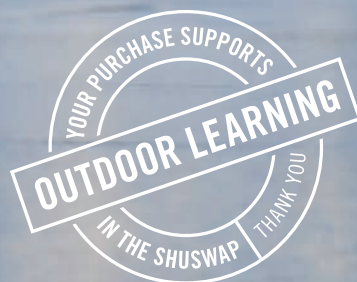


A GEOGRAPHIC HANDBOOK DIGITAL EDITION - VOLUME I - FORWARD & INTRODUCTION

EVERYTHING SHUSWAP

BY JIM COOPERMAN

Foreword by Alan Haig-Brown



Front cover photo - Bastion Mountain and Shuswap Lake.
Photo by Jim Cooperman.

Back cover landscape photo - Wright Lake, Anstey Hunakwa Provincial Park.
Photo by Myron Kozak.

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This book is dedicated to the
Secwepemc People who have lived here
peacefully since time immemorial.

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by Alan Haig-Brown

Foreword

A Guide to the Land and Its History

It is interesting to compare natural history and human history. The former, especially when we include geology, has a much longer timeline that includes the earth's changes from continental shifts taking millions of years to ecosystems that evolved over many thousands of years. The earth's human history, from the earliest carbon dates, exists on a much shorter timeline. In British Columbia this human history divides into two distinct segments: pre- and post-colonial or indigenous and settler scripted.

The name of the province speaks to the British part of our history while honouring Columbus who had no idea of this land. Fortunately many of the names of our province's various regions have recognized the First Nations people who have occupied these lands since time immemorial. Recently the name for Haida Gwaii was restored while the Chilcotin country has always acknowledged, albeit in an Anglicized form, the Ts'ilthquotin people. Similarly the Kooteney region is a variant of Ktunaxa. The area of central B.C. known as the Shuswap doesn't encompass all of the territory of the Secwepemc people but does represent a good part of it. To know a land is to appreciate all of its geological and human history. Such knowing, even with the help of elders' stories and documented sources, can take decades. But to also know it by walking it and living in it is the work of a lifetime.

It is a lifetime of study and experience that Jim Cooperman has gifted to the reader of this book. He takes the reader back in time to talk of the very shaping of the mountains, lakes, and rivers by geological forces that work in millennial timeframes. He shares his learning of continental shifts and the slightly more comprehensible ice age of about twelve thousand years ago.

Unlike museum history where a few artifacts tell a story from before personal memory, this author takes us out onto the land to explain how we benefit today from those powerful forces of our natural past. Then, with the landscape set like a huge stage, Cooperman tells of the human history. We are helped to visualize a land of huge rain-fed forests, abundant rivers, and tranquil lakes. We learn of a population in harmony with a bountiful land that could also be harsh. It was a land on which both strength and wisdom were required to survive. No amount of strength or wisdom could have prepared the Secwepemc people for the ravages of smallpox and the cultural warfare of the residential schools. With the aid of elder the late Dr. Mary Thomas, Cooperman leads the reader through the hard times and the resurgence of the culture.

While the flow of foreign seekers of fur and gold brought pain, it also brought in some remarkable characters. Cooperman brings us these characters as the real people that they were. As the sternwheelers and railways followed, he gives us flesh and blood individuals with dreams, failures, and successes. Similarly when the loggers and farmers followed, often bringing practices destructive to the land and the treasured salmon runs, he acknowledges the destruction while accepting the humanity of the settlers. Throughout this settler period the importance of the ancient salmon runs and their habitat is never far from the account both in the value of resource and the damage inflicted by the clearing of land and damming of rivers.

The Shuswap, a land of great beauty and rich history, has and continues to be a rich stage for natural and human history. Reading this book has given me new impetus to follow the trails and view the places that the author has brought to such vibrant life. – *Alan Haig-Brown*



The author's wife, Kathi Cooperman, enjoys the spectacular view from the top of the Blind Bay Bluffs.
Photo by Jim Cooperman.

Introduction

Of all the regions in the southern half of British Columbia, the one that has likely received the least attention is the Shuswap. There are countless books and magazines that cover the Cariboo, the Kootenays, the Okanagan, and the Lower Mainland, while there is only a handful about the Shuswap. All too often the Shuswap is considered to be part of either the Thompson or the Okanagan regions. Since 2005 I have been writing a newspaper column called “Shuswap Passion” to provide stories and observations about Shuswap social and physical geography in a style one might find in the *Canadian* or *National Geographic* magazines. The goal was to develop enough material to produce this book about Shuswap geography.

Personally I have long had a passion for the Shuswap region and believe it to be one of the best places in the world to live. The Shuswap has all the attributes to attract someone who enjoys four seasons: nature, clean water, recreation, culture, and reasonably close access to larger cities. There is an amazing diversity of plant and animal life here, and thankfully due to the small population a minimum of pavement, crowds, and pollution.

What Makes the Shuswap Special

What makes the Shuswap region special? Certainly the size, shape, location, and water quality of Shuswap Lake are attributes that cannot be found in many other parts of North America or even the world. The diversity of the lake itself, with so much of its shoreline in a natural, uninhabited state, is a rarity. A sizeable part of Anstey Arm is permanently protected as a provincial park that also includes Hunakwa Lake, which is arguably the largest unroaded, protected wilderness lake in the interior of North America at a low elevation.

Another aspect of the Shuswap that makes the region exceptional is its large diversity of ecosystems. From the dry ponderosa pine and bunchgrass landscapes close to Falkland and Chase to the interior rainforests of the Upper Adams and Seymour, and to the rich Shuswap River and Salmon River Valley farmlands, the Shuswap has it all. In some locations this diversity can be a mere hundreds of metres apart, such as a dry pine treed hillside and a creek canyon where there are cedar and hemlock trees.

The Shuswap is well connected to its indigenous heritage. Many place names, including the word Shuswap, originate from the Secwepemc peoples. Salmon has always been key to the Secwepemc and is a key part of Shuswap identity now. As well the local First Nation bands, despite having endured over 160 years of injustice, are thriving. Their cultural heritage and language are being revived, and their economies are improving.

2007 Squilax Pow Wow (Ernie Philip is the dancer in the centre).
Photo by Jim Cooperman.





This Sunnybrae vineyard is one of many in the Shuswap. *Photo by Nathan Pawluck.*

In addition the Shuswap has a plethora of uniquely diverse recreational opportunities. While the focus up until the last decade has been on the motorized sector from houseboats to speedboats, jet skis, snowmobiles, and motorbikes, the more environmentally friendly options are gaining traction. Thanks to the rapidly growing legion of trail enthusiasts led by the Shuswap Trail Alliance, the network of biking and hiking trails is improving yearly as

are the opportunities for non-motorized winter recreation.

One of the Shuswap's key social qualities is its rich culture. It is home to one of the premier musical events in Canada: the annual Roots and Blues Festival. Throughout the rest of the year there are a growing number of coffee houses in surrounding communities where highly talented local musicians regularly play to full audiences. In Salmon Arm there are Jazz Club events, the Wednesdays on the Wharf summer concert series, and popular student music festivals. In addition to all the fabulous music there is live drama at Shuswap Theatre, and many artists are able to show their work in the splendid post office heritage building that now houses the Salmon Arm Arts Centre and Art Gallery.

The amazing level of community spirit also makes the Shuswap special from its active community halls to the large numbers of volunteers and the Shuswap Community Foundation, which helps financially support a wide variety of local non-profit organizations.



Salmon Arm Roots and Blues Festival. *Photo by Jim Cooperman.*

Living With a Sense of Place

The underlying concept behind this book is called bioregionalism—or politics of place, a term coined in the early 1970s by Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann. Bioregionalism is a way of life that focuses on regional self-sufficiency, environmental and economic sustainability, and a political structure that encourages citizen participation in local decision-making. Bioregions are usually described in watershed terms, since most geographic areas are based on where water flows. Ideally, political boundaries would be based on watershed boundaries so that local decisions protect local water supplies.

The Shuswap is well situated to achieve bioregional objectives, as this region is blessed with rich farmland, plentiful and clean sources of water, a stellar cultural scene, stunning landscapes, and many close-knit communities. However, more collaborative efforts are needed to ensure the watershed remains healthy.

An Overview

The Shuswap is a large, 1.55 million-hectare watershed that lies between the dry Thompson Plateau to the west and the wet Monashee Mountains to the east. It extends from as far south as the Aberdeen Plateau east of Oyama to as far north as the Upper Adams River east of Blue River. It encompasses five large lakes (Adams, Little Shuswap, Shuswap, Mara, and Mabel), one reservoir (Sugar), and many small lakes. Shuswap water flows in all directions through nine rivers (Seymour, Anstey, Perry, Eagle, Shuswap, Salmon, Momich, Adams and the Little River) and many creeks of all sizes and ends up heading west in the South Thompson River.

The Shuswap watershed is part of the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people, the most northern of the Interior Salish peoples, who have resided here for over 9,000 years. A provincial treasure, the Shuswap forms the major southeast contributor to the Fraser River watershed and provides key habitat for a significant percentage

of provincial fish stocks including the world famous Adams River sockeye run. Home to diverse wildlife and plant species, the watershed also provides water for drinking, development, and agriculture. A popular location to live, visit, recreate, and earn a living, the watershed deserves greater public awareness of its many values and the very best in environmentally sustainable management.

The Shuswap includes seven incorporated communities (Lumby, Enderby, Sicamous, Chase, Salmon Arm plus portions of Spalumcheen and Coldstream), along with 26 smaller communities each with their own unique histories, halls, and volunteer organizations.

With three volumes and fourteen chapters, nearly every aspect of the Shuswap will be covered in *Everything Shuswap* including its history, biodiversity, resources, culture, economy, recreational opportunities, and organizations. As well, there will be an examination of the threats to our region from climate change, pollution, and inappropriate development. The third volume will conclude with a look at what the future holds for the Shuswap.

In Volume One, the first chapter begins with the big picture, a tour through the watershed with an eye on watershed related features and local history. This is followed by an overview of Shuswap geology and next, ecology. The fourth chapter is an overview of the Secwepemc people who have lived here for thousands of years prior to European's recorded history. The final (fifth) chapter in this volume concludes with a history of European settlement up until the First World War.

The goal for this book is to provide the information needed for readers to gain an improved understanding of everything Shuswap and thus gain a better appreciation of our region. With knowledge there comes respect and hopefully a passion to help protect all of the Shuswap's outstanding values.

Bioregionalism

A bioregionally conscious life means making daily choices that protect the local ecology, economy, and culture. Instead of driving out of one's region to purchase cheaper commodities made elsewhere, bioregionally conscious consumers would strive to purchase locally grown and produced food and goods. Socially, bioregionalism involves getting to know your neighbours better and enjoying locally produced entertainment by supporting local artists, musicians, and theatre. It also includes getting more directly involved in education and encouraging schools to be more involved in the community, and it means putting one's savings in financial institutions that invest in the community.

There are many similarities between an environmentally friendly lifestyle and bioregionalism. Overall, the goal is to reduce one's footprint, including minimizing non-renewable resource use and reducing waste output. Measures such as improving insulation, reducing automobile use, utilizing solar power, and reducing overall consumption are all part of bioregionalism.

A key principle of bioregionalism is encouraging local food production that is ideally organic or at least pesticide free. The closer one's food source is to where one lives, the fewer resources it takes to grow and transport. The Shuswap is moving toward improved food security as farmers markets increase in numbers, size, and scope. Additionally, there is an active organization (Shuswap Food Action) that is promoting expansion of locally grown food.

A truly bioregional community would be one where citizens work together co-operatively, govern themselves democratically, help each other in difficult times, and enjoy a close-knit cultural and recreational life in a manner that respects and helps restore the environment. Given the demands and stresses of the 21st century and the pressures of mass marketing, such a community can at best be an ideal to strive toward rather than a realistic lifestyle.

While bioregionalism means identifying with one's place, its history, and culture, and living with respect for the laws of nature may seem to be a new concept for those who have been tied to the consumer culture, these concepts are not new for the First

Celista Hall Farmer's Market, 2015.
Photo by Jim Cooperman.



Nations. The essence of bioregionalism was the reality for Indigenous peoples that lived close to the land for millennia.

The prerequisite for achieving any of the bioregionalism goals is to improve citizens'

understanding of the bioregion they live in so that ultimately they will make choices that will enhance their homeplace. The goal of this book is to raise awareness of the Shuswap region and thus positively impact its future.

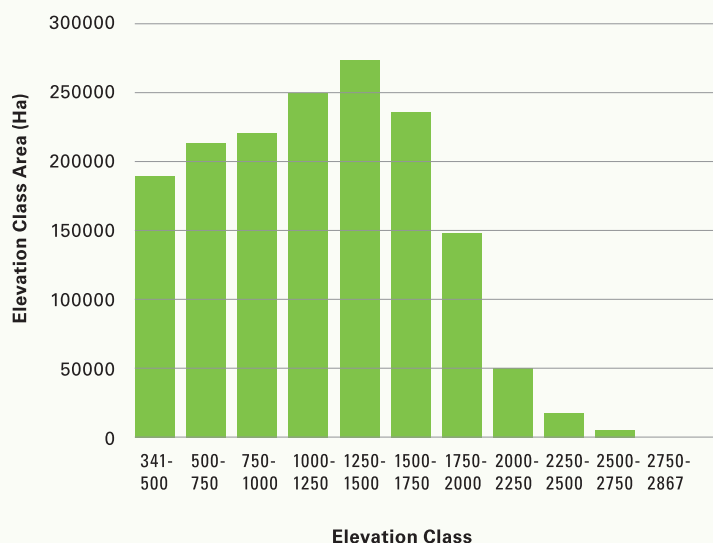


Shuswap Watershed Facts

- The drainage area of the watershed is 1,552,058-hectares (5,993-square miles).
- The Shuswap watershed is located near the headwaters of the Fraser River system.
- The highest point completely within the watershed is Mount English at 2,701-metres above sea level.
- The lowest point in the watershed is the exit of Little Shuswap Lake at Chase at only 346-metres above sea level.
- The highest residence is at 1,647-metres and is located at Silver Star Mountain.
- Shuswap Lake produces 19 percent of the sockeye population of the entire Fraser River system.
- Of the Shuswap fish population, 70 percent require shoreline habitat for their survival.
- Shuswap Lake is the seventh largest lake in British Columbia.
- Number of rivers: nine
- Number of mayors: seven
- Number of First Nation chiefs: six
- Number of Prince Edward Islands that could fit in the Shuswap: 2.5
- Average difference between low and high water in Shuswap Lake: 3.7 metres

Land Distribution by Elevation.

Area (Ha) Area in Hectares per Elevation Class



Land Distribution in the Shuswap.

Inoperable refers to land that is too steep, too wet or too high in elevation for logging. Operable land is the land base dedicated to logging. OGMA's are Old Growth Management Areas protected from logging. Note that there are 4,415 ha of parks within the lakes, wetlands and rivers category.

Land Base	Area (Ha)
Inoperable	258,741
Lakes	65,550
OGMA's*	95,613
Operable	922,927
Parks	61,995
Private	135,164
Rivers	3,271
Wetlands	8,797
Total	1,552,058

* OGMA's (Old Growth Management Areas)

About the Author



Jim Cooperman moved to the Shuswap in 1969 as a war resister and a back-to-the-lander, after receiving his BA from the University of California at Berkeley. Over the succeeding years, Jim taught school, worked in construction and log building, operated a sawmill, and edited a provincial environmental journal, *The BC Environmental Report*. His local environmental work led to the protection of over 25,000-hectares of new parks in the Shuswap, which is documented in the book, *Big Trees Saved*, by Deanna Kawatski. He has researched and written about local history and helped initiate and edit the local history journal, *Shuswap Chronicles One and Two*. In 1993, he wrote the Chapter on Canada in *Clearcut – The Tragedy of Industrial Forestry*. And in 1998, he wrote *Keeping the Special in Special Management Zones, A Citizens' Guide*, published by BC Spaces for Nature. Jim lives with his wife, Kathleen, in a log home they built on 40-acres above Shuswap Lake, where they raised five children. His column, "Shuswap Passion," appears every two weeks in the *Shuswap Market News*. Additionally, his YouTube channel has over 90 videos, including many that showcase local live music, skiing, and Shuswap geography. Learn more at shuswappassion.ca



About Everything Shuswap

"It is one thing to travel through a landscape, quite another to be part of it. Anyone can look out the car window and enjoy the view while driving through the beautiful Shuswap region of British Columbia, but to really be in that landscape you have to understand its human and natural history. That's the journey Jim Cooperman seeks to take you on in this deeply researched and keenly observed book. *Everything Shuswap* explores the region's rich eco-types and its interwoven historical record. It's a textbook for understanding one of the most beautiful and least understood landscapes – and it should be mandatory reading for anyone who lives in or visits the Shuswap."

– Mark Hume, author of *Adams River and other books*

"The Shuswap is one of the most spectacular and diverse regions of British Columbia, from the sunlit ponderosa pine parklands of the western reaches to the lichen-draped rainforests in the east. Jim Cooperman brings natural history and human history alive to create a remarkable guide to this remarkable area. *Everything Shuswap* is clearly the result of years of research, a labour of love and caring." – Dick Cannings, ecologist, bird biologist, nature writer

"The Shuswap finally gets its due! Jim Cooperman is your trusted guide to fascinating landscapes and ecosystems, wildlife, culture and heritage—and wonderful places to play. Perfect for planning your Shuswap adventures." – Mark Forsythe, retired host of *B.C. Almanac* on CBC Radio

36 Maps

350+ Photos

Watershed
Tour

Geology

Ecology

Secwepemc
History

History of
Settlement

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VOLUME I

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