

The Nechako Reservoir

This is a unique area in the central northern region of British Columbia known as the Bulkley-Nechako region south of Burns Lake. This reservoir exists as a result of the [Kenney Dam](#). This dam eventually connected a series of lakes and rivers to form the circle you see in the map below and provides some amazing outdoor recreational opportunities.

Note: Always pack OUT what you pack IN. Respect our wilderness.



In the spring of 2016 I (and a couple of friends) had the opportunity to paddle completely around the entire reservoir starting from Little Andrews Bay on Ootsa Lake going clockwise. Later in this overview, I will explain why it would have been better to go in the opposite direction. We had planned for a fourteen to fifteen day journey. However, besides estimating distances of paddling each day, there wasn't much information available about the Nechako Reservoir.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

– Lao-tzu, The Way of Lao-tzu, Chinese philosopher (604 – 531 BC)

In my case this journey began with a single stroke of a kayak paddle for a total distance of three hundred twenty five kilometers and little did I know that I would experience one of the greatest journeys of my life (so far).

I have documented this entire trip (in detail) at my website:

<https://sasqwatch.ca/2016/05/25/nechako-reservoir-paddle/>

After a few years, I have thought about this trip often and felt the need to provide a quick overview of this trip for anyone who might be thinking of visiting this incredibly beautiful region of British Columbia, Canada.

First, I should point out that scenery or geography of this region changes dramatically from one end to another. Here is a map that shows our entire journey day by day with each stopping point. Again, we did the loop in a clockwise direction.



Note: Please always pack out what you pack in. We followed a simple rule, try to not leave any trace of having been in an area. The wilderness here is pristine, keep it that way.

Note: There is a private property at Aslin Creek. I would advise finding a spot somewhere away from this property. There are many options for places to pull out and camp at.

Starting from Little Andrews Bay on Ootsa Lake heading south east, the area is mostly soft rolling hills more characteristic of what you would expect from the Cariboo region. This part lasted for four days up to Jim Smith Point which is on Knewstubb Lake.

From there we started paddling west. As we got further west, the coastal mountain range started to reappear and the scenery became more spectacular with each passing hour. This part of the journey took us through Knewstubb Lake and Tetachuck Lake until we arrived at a very nice spot called the Tetachuck Lake Wilderness Lodge where we would have to do a portage for several kilometers. This lodge is run by a very nice couple and we were absolutely thrilled to have come across this place after seven days of paddling.

At this point I would like to make a special mention about this remote resort. I would highly

recommend this beautiful resort as a destination getaway on its own. I've often spoken to my wife about going there specifically. The resort is very rustic with beautiful log cabins. The area is absolutely pristine wilderness and as remote as one could imagine (boat access only). The owners are very friendly. This is what I would imagine if I was looking for a place to unwind and unplug from the stresses of life. A place to reconnect with yourself and nature. Here's the website for more information: <https://www.tetachucklodge.com>

I highly recommend this as a bucket list item.



Now it's important to note that this was the part of the journey where we knew that we would have to portage a few kilometers from the lodge to a point past the Red Fern rapids. The rapids at one point are quite strong and we were paddling upstream. After talking with the lodge owners, they recommended that this journey would have been much easier had we gone in the opposite direction from Little Andrews Bay.

The difference is that, if you're portaging against the rapids, you have to portage several kilometers. If you're portaging with the flow of the rapids, you only need to portage about 600 meters. That's because you only need to go about 600 meters to get past the strongest part of the rapids, The rest of it is very manageable on paddle boats right up to the lodge itself. I think if I was to do this over again, I would probably do it that way.

Once we got to the point where we could relaunch our boats onto Eutsuk Lake, the rest of the journey was actually very easy. On day 11 we reached an area on Eutsuk Lake called Pandosy Bay (two days paddling from the lodge). This was, for me, the highlight of the entire trip. The scenery was incredible. Of course we had the perfect conditions, totally clear and calm. You could hear a pin drop.



We finished up the journey with only two more days of more days of paddling from Eutsuk Lake over to Whitesail Lake and then back up to Little Andrews Bay on Ootsa Lake. There was a small portage of about 500 meters on a nice flat path to get from Eutsuk Lake to Whitesail Lake. Just a quick note for paddlers (or maybe even any boaters), Whitesail is known for very high winds and rough water conditions. It's probable a good idea to pay close attention to the weather conditions for this lake.

Overall, our plan for each day was to get up at around 4 am and get on the water as early as possible because the weather conditions are generally very calm at the time of the day. The wind would generally pick up at around ten or eleven am which was right about the time when we would be done paddling for the day.



This was an amazing adventure. I would recommend it for anyone that is a fairly experienced paddler.