CANADIAN HOT SPRINGS

Kinbasket Lake (Canoe River) Hot Springs
Overview of Canadian hot springs

- Number: approximately 127 Hot Springs

- Geography: Located only in BC, Alberta, Yukon, NW Territories 85% of hot springs located in BC

- 87% of BC Hot Springs located in Crown Land (BC Parks, Forestry Recreation Sites, Ecological Reserves, etc.)
Hot Spring User Trends

• Over the past 2 decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of hot spring visitors. Travel information has become easy to collect though the development of better roads, guidebooks and the internet.

• A great majority of this increase comes from the segment of the hot springs visitors who are looking for hot springs to provide a natural and rustic atmosphere, which are not available at commercial, chlorinated swimming pool or spa pool locations

• Unique natural rock-lined pools are now much more preferred over concrete swimming pools by hot spring visitors. Attractive rock-lined pools are able to draw visitors no matter how remote the location may be and do not even require full resort facilities.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Property status</th>
<th>Pool style</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
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Comparison of North American and Japanese style hot springs pools

“North American style hot springs pools”

• All commercial hot springs in Canada are currently North American style hot spring pools

• Most North American style pools are similar to swimming or spa pools. They are symmetric, constructed of concrete or tile and used chlorinated water with a circulated water system

• North American style hot spring pools will require good road access and full facilities to be successful

• They are administrated by the Ministry of Health and some cases also administrated by Parks Departments
Radium Hot Springs
Banff Hot Springs
JAPANESE STYLE HOT SPRINGS POOL

• Japanese style hot springs pools are natural rock-lined, flow-through pools and do not use any chemicals

• The pools are constructed to appear very natural, and blend into the surrounding landscape. They do not require full resort facilities

• The pools are either in-stream pools, riverbed pools, or shoreline pools and are located very close to the hot spring source

• They are often not subject to regulations such as health inspections
Hotspring Island (Queen Charlotte Island)
Hot Spring Cove, Vancouver Island
“ONSEN” Secret place, natural springs

“You build an ONSEN, they will come.”

Meager Creek Hotsprings
Sea to Sky Onsen - Mike Sato
Hot springs are a very sensitive eco-system - It warrants Environmental Stewardship
Canoe River (Kinbasket Lake) Hot Springs

- Canoe River Hot Springs used to be a 4 star soaking spring, before it was flooded by the Mica Dam in 1973.

- It is located at the 26km mark on the Canoe River West Forest Service Road, the gravel-surfaced logging roads, and is approximately 35km from the Town of Valemount.

- This hot spring is now below the Kinbasket Lake majority of the year. It can only be accessed for a few weeks in April depending on the water level that year.

- Because of these conditions, very few people know about this hot spring in Valemount. It is now only used by few of the locals and hot spring enthusiast.

- Since the 1970s, several resource companies and resort developers have tried to use this geothermal resource for a ski resort, spa facility, or geothermal power facility. All these plans required drilling and piping the water long distances which is costly and impractical.
SPRING #39 CANOE RIVER (Map V)

Rating: ****

Volume: 152.7 l/min (34.7 gal/min)

Temperature: Ranges from 44°C (111°F) to 60°C (140°F)

pH: 7.8

Character of water: Clear, odourless, tasteless. One spring has a slight sulphur taste and smell

Land status: Crown land

Access: The springs are located 15.2 km (9.5 mi) along the Canoe River Forest Access Road, which follows the Canoe River south out of Valemount. Valemount (elevation: 762 m or 2500 ft) is between Kamloops and Jasper on the Yellowhead Highway.

The hot springs percolate from the ground at three points along the shore of a small lake, at the base of a steep mountain on the west side of a 1.6 km (1 mi)-wide flat-bottomed valley. A fourth spring occurs in logging slash 122 m (400 ft) west. At the time I visited the springs, there was a small wood-cased hole in the ground for sitting in; one could also sit in the lake, which was warm and shallow: the hottest temperature recorded at this spring was in the mud of the lake bottom near the spring occurrences. A word of warning about the lake: it’s easy to get mired in the mud. There’s a story about the mounties retrieving the body of a guy from the lake bottom after he had dived in and gotten stuck.

The Canoe River springs are a near-casualty of the recently built Mica Dam: the dam flooded to within 7.6 m (25 ft) of the springs, covering the road. At the moment, the springs are accessible by jeeping along the west side of the reservoir.
Canoe River Hot Springs, 1960s
SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

• Natural settings such as those available at Canoe River are well-positioned to take advantage of tourism opportunities according recent hot spring trends

• If the Canoe River Hot Springs will be developed, it is important to maintain the rustic atmosphere or 'wilderness' style of soaking

• The facility for the hot spring should be a day use facility which only consist of modest size natural rock-lined pools, washroom, change rooms and does not require any accommodations

• With an attractive hot spring pool the Canoe River Hot Springs should be able to draw between 10,000 and 15,000 visitors within a few years of operation
• Increased tourism to day use facilities would allow for spin-off businesses, such as snowmobiling, snowshoeing, dog sledding during the winter; mountain bike, canoeing, jet boat, ATV tours, fishing etc for year-round use.

• Prime examples of hot springs with modest day use facilities that are successful at attracting visitors despite their access problems, are Liard River Hot Springs, Hot Springs Cove and Lussier Hot Springs. Liard River Hot Springs receives about 125,000 visitors per year, while Lussier Hot Springs receives about 65,000 visitors per year. Hot Springs Cove (Maquinna Provincial Park) near Tofino receives about 55,000 visitors per year. The Hot Springs Cove even requires a float plane and a boat to access the remote location. It is fairly expensive to do so but the Hot Springs Cove is still able to attract visitors.
"My final point is:

• Natural mineral water which flow out of springs at temperatures above the normal body temperature of 98°F (37°C) should be your target. At least less than 80°C which would not be governed by the Geothermal Resources Act

• Deep drilling and transporting water across the lake or to Town is not economically feasible. It is best to work with the existing hot spring source

• The first step should be to research the existing source to find the artesian pressure to see if the water can be brought above the high water mark, and establish if it will be possible to use it the entire year

• The tourist industry employs a lot of people. The number of visitors for hot springs, especially visitors from the States are increasing every year. People are willing to travel a long distance to visit unique hot springs. A hot spring at Valemount is an opportunity that should not be ignored.