

Trip Planning Guide for the Klemtu Area

Introduction

The Kitasoo/Xaixais Traditional Territory is remote and secluded and travel in this area requires self-reliance, experience in wilderness and marine travel, and proper planning and preparation. This area is not suitable for novices. If you have any doubts about your skill level, you should consider hiring a local guide with Klemtu Tourism or book a guided tour with a Kitasoo approved tour operator. Travel plans must be flexible in order to take into account delays caused by unfavorable weather conditions. Adequate fuel, clothing, food and equipment are essential. Take time to learn about the water you intend to navigate. This area has significant tidal variation, strong tidal currents and rapidly changing weather. Strong wind can develop quickly and with little or no warning. Kayakers need experience, well-developed paddling and rescue skills, navigation skill, leadership and good judgment.

Because of the remoteness of the area, you cannot rely on other people being close if you get into trouble. If you have a radio for help it is quite likely that it will take at least several hours for it to arrive – even in good weather conditions. The Coast Guard does not issue small craft warnings for this area because small craft warning conditions are considered to be present here at all times.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

General

All vessels, including sea kayaks, must meet the minimum safety standards contained in the Canadian Small Vessel Regulations. For information on this contact:

Canadian Coast Guard, Auxiliary and Prevention Group
1661 Whyte Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 1A9
Phone: (604) 666-0146.

All boats that are travelling in this area should be equipped with a VHF radio and the required operators certification from Communications Canada. Having a VHF radio can provide current marine weather information and be used in an emergency to contact the Coast Guard.

Travellers should consider filing a sail/float plan with the Tourism office in Klemtu or with a trusted family member or friend. If this is not possible then file a sail plan with the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) Radio in Prince Rupert. Call collect 250-627-3081. Be sure to “close” your sail plan immediately on your return. You may be held responsible for unnecessary search and rescue costs incurred on your behalf. Contact CCG Radio by VHF marine radio (channel 16 or 22A) or by collect call.

Emergency Help

In case of an emergency, contact the Prince Rupert Coast Guard by radio on Channel 16 (156.80MHz) or by phoning 1-800-567-5111. Non-emergency calls should be directed to (250) 363-2997. Boats equipped with marine VHF radios should monitor Channel 16 at all times. When you are given your orientation prior to your departure into the Kitasoo/Xaixais area, you will be briefed on procedures for obtaining help in an emergency.

TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

Charts, Maps and Reference Materials

Marine charts, tide tables and the Mariner's Guide to West Coast Marine Weather brochure are essential for exploring the KITASOO/XAIXAIS area. Use Canadian Tide & Current Tables, Volume, Queen Charlotte Sound to Dixon Entrance. The Coastal Pilot also contain useful local information on tides. For more information, consult a knowledgeable local mariner or Klemtu Tourism

Marine Charts for the Klemtu area include:

- 3710 Plans - Vicinity of Laredo Sound and Milbanke Sound
(Blow up of Meyers and Higgins Passes)
- 3711 Plans – Vicinity of Princess Royal Island (Blow up of Klemtu Passage and Nowish Cove, Jackson Narrows)
- 3719 Inlets in Campania and Princess Royal Islands (Blow up of Kent Inlet, Helmcken Inlet, Commando Inlet and Evinrude, Chapple Inlet, Campania)
- 3724 Caamano Sound and Approaches
- 3726 Laredo Sound and Approaches
- 3728 Milbanke Sound and Approaches
- 3734 Jorkins Point to Sarah Island
- 3737 Laredo Channel including Laredo Inlet and Surf Inlet
- 3738 Sara Island to Swanson Bay (Hiekish Narrows)
- 3739 Swanson Bay to Work Island (Butedale)
- 3740 Work Island to Point Cumming
- 3962 Matheson Channel, Northern Portion (Fjordlands, Mussel Inlet and Kynoch Inlet)

Routes

There are many route options in the area. Contact Klemtu Tourism for route suggestions.

Weather

The climate on the West Coast of British Columbia can be very cool and wet at almost every time of the year. KITASOO/XAIXAIS territory is located in the Coastal Western Hemlock zone (CWH). This zone is known as the wettest biogeoclimatic zone in British Columbia resulting in cool summers and mild winters. Temperatures can range from 10 degrees Celsius for 4-6 months of the year to 0.2 degrees Celsius among the sub-zones. The annual precipitation ranges from 1,000 to 4,400 mm with the mean being 2,228 mm for the entire zone.

The Canadian Coast Guard broadcasts comprehensive weather information for west coast marine areas 24 hours daily, through the VHF Continuous Marine Broadcast radio repeater stations (WX 1 for Klemtu). You can also obtain these broadcasts by phoning (250) 624-9009. A recommended pamphlet, "West Coast Marine Weather Services," can be purchased from:

Atmospheric Environment Service
Environment Canada
Commercial Services Unit
120 - 1200 W. 73rd Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6P 6H9

Listening to the weather forecast should be a regular part of your daily routine throughout your trip. This will give you a sense of the local weather patterns. Contact Klemtu Tourism for local weather information

Hazards

The Atmospheric Environment Service of Environment Canada has published a Marine West Coast Weather Hazards Manual – A Guide to Local Forecasts and Conditions (Second Edition). It is highly recommended as a good general overview of the type of marine hazards you are likely to encounter in north coast waters.

Fog – can quickly obscure all aids to navigation and make you vulnerable to collision. Summer fog is common, especially in August and September. Stay alert.

When traveling, always take a compass bearing of your destination. Whenever possible, avoid paddling in the fog. Radar systems on large boats cannot detect kayaks.

Wind – can create large waves, slow down travel, make it difficult to maintain a course, or capsize a vessel. When the wind is blowing from a direction opposite the current or swell, steep chop will form. Before setting out, check local weather and sea conditions and obtain the latest forecast for the area. When white caps are visible or winds are greater than 15 knots, kayakers and sailors should stay in camp. During your trip, check the weather forecasts throughout the day. Be alert for changing conditions, such as the approach of dark threatening clouds or an increase in wind speed or wave height. Seek a suitable camp spot before conditions become hazardous. Wind can come down fiords and inlets with great velocity making anchorages and campsites at the head of these water bodies uncomfortable.

Waves, Swell and Surf – Pay attention to the depths indicated on your charts. Three to four fathoms is considered shallow water and waves will break at these depths. They will also break in deeper water, given the right swell and wind conditions. Boaters should be alert for freak (unusually large and unpredictable) waves, and exercise caution when paddling in following(?) seas where broaching and possibly capsize are a concern. Where possible, avoid landing and launching in surf because of the likelihood of capsize. Waves will often rebound off rock walls or bluffs creating confused seas. Use your charts to anticipate where such conditions are likely to occur, and plan your passage when wind and tide are most likely to be on your side. If you are caught by a breaking wave, brace and lean into the breaking edge.

Currents – Along the outer sections of the KITASOO/XAIXAIS area, currents can be affected predominantly by tide, which flows from south to north as the tide rises (floods) and north to south as it falls (ebbs). The tidal current varies in direction and rate of flow, and tends to run significantly faster when forced through narrow passages. Your marine chart shows currents considered to be a hazard to large vessels – but not necessarily all the currents likely to be noticed by a boater. Currents shown with a feathered arrow indicate the direction during flood tide; those shown by a featherless arrow indicate the direction during ebb tide. The maximum speed of the current is usually shown above the arrow.

Kayakers should avoid currents of 6 knots or more and areas where the chart depicts rapids or whirlpools. If you can't avoid such areas, try to determine the time of slack water for safe passage. Slack water is the brief period during the tidal cycle when little or no water movement occurs. The timing of slack tide is influenced by many factors but it rarely occurs at the same time as the high tide or low tide. In this area the published Sailing Directions, local knowledge and your own experience will be your best guides to help estimate the time of slack tide.

Tide rips – develop when the smooth flow of a strong current is altered by an irregular bottom or a sudden change in depth. Tide rips are found near headlands or points of land, offshore over shoals or reefs, in narrow passages where water flows over an irregular bottom and where opposing currents meet. The result is chaotic surface water. Try to avoid such areas.

Surge channels – are long channels that but into rock shorelines. Boaters can easily be pulled into these by wind and waves. Use caution when exploring these areas- the slightest swell will be exaggerated as it moves up the channel.

Other vessels – You are likely to see other vessels as you travel. In addition, there are a few places like the inside passage where care is warranted. Brush up on your “rules of the road” before travelling, and be considerate of less maneuverable vessels in constricted areas. Kayakers should generally give right of way to other vessels.

Hypothermia – is the abnormal loss of body heat. As it progresses it lowers the body core temperature and can result in unconsciousness and death. Because hypothermia is caused by cold and aggravated by wetness, wind and exhaustion, kayakers are particularly susceptible. It is essential that each party member know how to prevent, recognize and treat hypothermia.

Drinking Water

All drinking water should be boiled or treated before drinking. Fresh water can be drawn from lakes or streams in the region but should be boiled or treated for drinking. Water quality throughout the area varies considerably. Generally, boaters will have few problems finding water except during dry periods. Check with Klemtu residents and the Tourism Office in Klemtu for the most recent conditions. Carrying a resource of water between camps is advisable.

Camping

Camping is permitted in the town of Klemtu. However, there is not a designated campground. Consult with Klemtu Tourism for certain areas where camping is permitted. Please refer to the *minimum impact guidelines* for camping in the backcountry. Part of the experience in visiting the Kitasoo/Xaixais Territory is adapting to the coastal environment. See how low trace you can be. The Kitasoo/ Xaixais Traditional Territory is being protected in its Natural State. You will be able to enjoy the pristine temperate rainforest, moss-covered village sites, bears hunting for salmon, and abundant marine life. Travel lightly. Leave this place the way you would like to find it. Leave it so the next travellers to set foot here will feel as if they are the first.

There are no designated campsites within the Kitasoo/Xaixais Traditional Territory. Random camping is encouraged so visitors spread out so as to avoid concentrating impacts in a few places. There are some sensitive areas we ask you to avoid. These will be outlined during your orientation. Or when you contact the Tourism office.

There are lots of good camping spots for small groups of one to three tents. In planning your trip, you will require good maps or charts to plan your daily itinerary and overnight stops. Allow enough time to investigate in case the site you have selected is occupied or unsuitable. Don't bank on the cooperation of the weather - always have backup plans. It is important to carry a reliable cookstove. Wood is not always available and the weather can make building a fire challenging. Please camp in such a way that you leave little or no trace of your presence. The beach is the best place for camping and cooking. Choose your campsite above the daily high tide mark. If it is not possible to camp on the beach, choose your spot so as to avoid damaging the vegetation. Avoid any obvious cultural sites, wildlife areas or important bird nesting areas. Pack out all garbage and build your campfires below the high tide line. See the minimum impact guidelines for the Klemtu area.

Attractions

There are many attractions for visitors to the Kitasoo/Xaixais territory including hatcheries, cannery sites, Fjord Land Recreation Area, Town walks with interpretative signage, creek walks, historic village sites, Rock carvings and paintings, Culturally modified trees, Cultural center, Spirit bear and other wildlife, Fishing (salt/freshwater), Diving sites and marine features

Equipment and Gear Checklists

Consult resource materials and outdoor stores for guides to required equipment and gear for travelling in this area. Items and quantities taken will depend on your sail/float plan, experience and the length and type of trip. If you are renting a kayak, check to make sure it is equipped with

the proper safety gear and take time to familiarize yourself with it and all equipment. You can also contact Klemtu Tourism for equipment and gear checklists.

Red Tide (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning)

Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP), also known as Red Tide, is the contamination of bivalve shellfish by microorganisms called dinoflagellates. When people eat shellfish contaminated with these microorganisms, death may result. These microorganisms are always in the water. When conditions such as salinity, temperature and nutrients are right, the microorganisms have a population explosion known as blooms. Little is known on how or why the organisms produce the toxin, but as the hinged shellfish filter feed on the blooms they store vast amounts of the toxin in their tissue, without being affected by it themselves. Red tide does not always mean the water will appear red. The organism can have many different pigments, resulting in different colours in the water, or no colour at all. Usually bivalved shellfish are contaminated and all should be treated as being contaminated during closures.

Common symptoms of PSP are tingling or numbness beginning around the lips and spreading to the face and neck within one half hour of ingestion. This is followed by headache, dizziness, nausea and a feeling of weakness. Similar sensations happen in the fingertips and tongue, followed by loss of voluntary movement. Rapid pulse and difficulty in breathing can occur. Cardiac failure and paralysis of the chest and diaphragm can cause death within 12 hours. If PSP is suspected, seek medical attention IMMEDIATELY. Induce vomiting and do not give any alcohol. At present there is no known antidote.

Amnesiac Shellfish Poisoning

This is a recent arrival to the coast of North America and knowledge about this newcomer is still sketchy. Scientists were first alerted to the existence of Amnesiac Shellfish Poisoning (ASP) when a large sea bird die-off occurred on the California coast in the 1980's. Since then, ASP has spread steadily along the West Coast and is found in both bivalves and the viscera (body, not Legs) of crabs. Algae blooms are responsible for this toxin. As with PSP, there is no cure and poisoning may result in death. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, and disorientation and may progress to death. Unlike PSP, survivors of poisoning from this toxin suffer permanent brain damage as a side effect.

Special Note - If you are going saltwater fishing, obtain the proper license available at retail outlets and agents. The area around Klemtu is often closed for the harvesting of shellfish. Contact the local department of Fisheries and Oceans (559-4413) for more information.

BEAR CONSIDERATIONS

General

Bears are wild animals, which demand your respect. **DO NOT APPROACH OR FEED A BEAR.** Bears that begin to associate humans with food are embarking on a road which may lead to their destruction. As the habituation process continues, the bear gradually loses its natural fear of humans and becomes more aggressive in its pursuit of your food until the potential exists for a violent encounter.

Bears that have been relocated as a result of interactions with humans either return immediately to their own territory or become a problem in another area. Some suffer extreme stress, both during relocation and after release, when they find themselves in another bear's territory. Relocation can become a death sentence. With your cooperation, bears and people can coexist. You are responsible for your safety and the safety of others.

At Your Campsite

- Hang your food well up in a tree, 5 meters up and 1.5 meters from the trunk, even if it is in bear-resistant containers.
- Do not cache food or garbage, or store it in kayaks or boats close to shore.
- Keep your camp away from salmon streams and estuaries, especially when salmon are spawning.
- Do not cook or eat in or near your tent. The lingering odors of food are an invitation to bears. Freeze-dried foods are best. It is best to sleep in different clothing than that worn while cooking. Keep tent pads clean and free from food and garbage.
- Pack out all garbage. Don't bury it. Bears can easily locate it and dig it up, becoming a danger to the next group of campers as the bear begins to associate human presence with food. Dispose of wastewater below the high tide line.
- The smell of fish strongly attracts bears. When preparing your catch, return the entrails to the sea.
- Treat cosmetics and toiletries like food. Bears may be attracted to perfumes, hair sprays, soaps, toothpaste, shaving cream and cosmetics.

Hiking

- Hike in a group and make loud noises. Most bears will leave if they are aware of your presence.
- Use caution when near natural bear foods. Fish and berries are important food sources for black bears. Caution should be used at all times, especially near estuaries and salmon streams, where bears take advantage of the rich and easy pickings during salmon runs. Camping is not advised in these areas.
- Stay away from dead animals. They represent a concentrated food source and bears will aggressively defend it.
- Watch for bear sign: droppings and diggings.
- Leave your dog at home. Dogs can antagonize bears.
- Don't get too close when photographing bears. Use a telephoto lens instead.
- Chemical bear repellents, when delivered to an animal's face, cause immediate irritation of the eyes and upper respiratory tract. However, such sprays cannot be considered an absolute guarantee of safety.

If You Encounter A Bear

- Keep calm. The best way to keep calm is to be prepared.
- Make a wide detour or retreat from the area.
- Do not run. You cannot outrun a bear, and running may trigger an attack. Back slowly away from the bear, facing it and talking in a soft voice. Dropping a pack or object may help to distract the bear.

- Watch for aggressive behavior like jaw snapping, woofing sounds, or keeping its head down with ears laid back.
- The majority of attacks come when a bear is surprised, particularly if it is a female with cubs. A bear may also become aggressive if it is protecting a food source.

Closures

It may become necessary to close areas of Kitasoo/Xaixais Territory to visitors where human-bear interactions are persistent. Check with Klemtu Tourism staff upon your arrival for information on any area closures.

Keep us informed

Report ALL interactions with bears to Klemtu Tourism.

CODES OF ETHICS FOR TRAVELLERS

Klemtu Tourism and the Kitasoo/Xaixais people are promoting ecotourism, which is defined as “responsible travel that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people.” We have developed a code of ethics for which will help us maintain a high-quality, sustainable tourism sector dependent on the conservation of our natural resources, the protection of our environment, and the preservation of our cultural heritage. Please follow them.

Code of Ethics for Travel in the Kitasoo/Xaixais Territory

1. Enjoy the diverse natural and cultural heritage and help to protect and preserve it.
2. Assist in our conservation efforts through the efficient use of resources including energy and water. Water shortages can be a regular occurrence in Klemtu in the summer.
3. Avoid activities which threaten wildlife or plant populations, or which may be potentially damaging to the natural environment.
4. Respect all cultural sites. They are vital parts of the living and dynamic Kitasoo/Xaixais culture.
5. Slow down and take the time to experience the friendliness and the welcoming spirit of the Kitasoo people and it's community. Help to preserve these attributes by respecting local traditions, customs, and regulations. Check with locals or Klemtu Tourism staff.
6. Try to buy food, supplies and gift items that are made and/or sold locally.
7. Photography should be done with the respect and appreciation of the local people. Ask!
8. Challenge yourself in your packing to leave as much packaging material behind as you can. Also consider biodegradable items. Garbage disposal is limited and expensive for Klemtu
9. When planning a tour in the Kitasoo/Xaixais Traditional Territory select an Operator which has entered into a Protocol Agreement with the Kitasoo/Xaixais people. These Operators will provide benefit to the local community of Klemtu by, among other things, hiring local staff, buying local supplies and paying use fees to the Kitasoo. Ask your Tour Operator if they have a Protocol Agreement with the Kitasoo or contact Klemtu Tourism for a list of Operators with Protocol Agreements.

Special Note - Klemtu is a “dry” community. Alcohol is discouraged in the community, and from being brought into the community. The Klemtu residents want travellers and visitors to respect their decision on having a “dry” community by not bringing any form of alcohol to this area.

MINIMUM IMPACT GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS TO THE KLEMTU AREA

Introduction

The KITASOO/XIAXAIS Traditional Territory is an area rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage. Our coastal ecosystems offer visitors almost limitless opportunities for discovery. As participants in exploring this area of growing popularity you must take steps to minimize your impact on these valuable resources and strive for "no trace camping." These few guidelines may help you explore the traditional territory in an environmentally and culturally sensitive manner.

Pre-trip planning

- ✓ Keep your group size small, to minimize impact on an area.
- ✓ Consider alternate transportation such as buses, car-pooling, or walking onto ferries.

While in Klemtu

- ✓ Conserve water. Water shortages are common events in the summer so please conserve your water use.
- ✓ Conserve energy. The Community also has a limited hydro energy supply so please conserve energy.
- ✓ Camp in designated areas. Check with Klemtu Tourism for the location of designated camping areas.

While touring

- ✓ Select launching/landing site carefully to avoid trampling inertial life.
- ✓ Traveling quietly will allow you to become part of the natural world.
- ✓ Avoid bird and mammal breeding habitats
- ✓ Use binoculars and telephoto lenses to observe and photograph wildlife.
- ✓ Resist the temptation to feed animals, no matter how bold or curious they may be – handouts may alter feeding habits
- ✓ Tread carefully while exploring the intertidal zone – return all rocks, shells and creatures to their original location.
- ✓ Hike on designated trails.
- ✓ Use bilge cloths or pillows to collect engine oil, fuel, transmission fluid and other pollutants.
- ✓ Never fill portable fuel tanks on board.
- ✓ Consider not using anti-fouling paints.

Campsites

- ✓ Avoid critical wildlife habitats, obvious animal trails, and fragile terrain.
- ✓ Do not cut trees or branches.
- ✓ Avoid digging drainage trenches around tents – choose well-drained or high ground instead.
- ✓ Obtain permission to camp on KITASOO Indian Reserves (denoted IR on most charts), and other private lands in the area.
- ✓ Do not camp at KITASOO/XIAXAIS cultural sites.

Pristine Sites

- ✓ Choose a non-vegetated area for your camp, such as sand or rock beaches.
- ✓ Situate your camp 50 meters from fresh water sources including lakes, rivers and creeks (many animals require frequent access to these areas)
- ✓ Leave no sign of your visit

Established Sites

- ✓ When possible, it's better to camp at established sites where your stay will cause no additional damage.
- ✓ These sites may have visible tenting areas, an established fire pit, and occasionally an outhouse, but should be free of camping structures (makeshift lean-tos, tables etc.) and garbage. Check with Klemtu Tourism for the location of existing or established camping sites.
- ✓ Watch where you walk – use established trails to avoid trampling vegetation.
- ✓ Leave sites in a more pristine state than the way you found them.

Fires

- ✓ Portable stoves should always be carried for preparing meals.
- ✓ Fires should only be lit in suitable areas where there is sufficient fuel (it is not necessary to have a fire every night).
- ✓ Restrict fires to cooking size – bonfires are too consumptive.
- ✓ Always use established fire pits where they exist
- ✓ Where no established fire pit exists choose a site on sand or gravel (not mineral soil or rock) well below the monthly high tide line and away from vegetation, drift logs and rocks – do not construct a ring of rocks around your fire, as it will permanently scar the rocks.
- ✓ Burn only driftwood no larger than the diameter of your fist – avoid picking an area clean of driftwood.
- ✓ Allow the fire to burn down to ash, cold to the touch (no half burnt pieces remaining) and crush any charcoal.
- ✓ Remove all traces of ash and charcoal by scattering in the ocean or packing it with you to your next site – do not bury remains.

Harvesting

- ✓ Many areas can no longer sustain plant and animal harvesting – whether or not to harvest, and the amount to be taken should be critically assessed in each area – consult with the Klemtu Tourism office.
- ✓ Return all shells and entrails to the area from which they were harvested.

Waste Disposal

- ✓ Don't dump garbage or discharge pollutants in our waters.
- ✓ Dispose of trash in port or take it home.

Human Waste

- ✓ Use outhouses wherever they are provided
- ✓ Feces and urine degrade more quickly in salt water than in topsoil – select a secluded site in the intertidal zone – on a sand beach dig a shallow cat-hole, and cover it after use. If you are unable to use the intertidal zone, make sure that you are at least 100 m from water sources and campsites. Bury your waste 20 cm below the surface so that it will decompose quickly and will not be easily uncovered.
- ✓ If possible plan to pack out waste or use a porta potti system.
- ✓ Try washing with salt water as an alternative to toilet paper, otherwise all toilet paper should be burned, or packed out.
- ✓ Sanitary pads/tampons must be packed out or burned thoroughly in a hot fire.
- ✓ Don't pump your sewage overboard in anchorages, marinas or swimming areas.

Waste Water

- ✓ Waste water from cooking should be drained into the ocean
- ✓ Soaps and detergents are pollutants and should not be introduced to freshwater sources, including estuaries.
- ✓ Wash your dishes at the ocean's edge, using soapless saltwater, and sand or gravel as a scouring pad.

- ✓ Wash yourself and your clothing in the ocean, using (only if necessary) small amounts of biodegradable, phosphate-free soap.
- ✓ Minor hand and face washing without soap can be done in a stream or lake.
- ✓ Brush your teeth at the oceans edge using biodegradable paste or baking soda.

Food Waste

- ✓ Pack out everything you pack in by sorting cans, glass, plastic and compost for recycling at home.
- ✓ Reduce the amount of potential garbage; plan meal quantities carefully, package food in reusable containers and use leftovers for snacks or lunches.
- ✓ Food wastes must be packed out, or completely burned where appropriate.