

# Sectors



# Economic *Sectors*

With Powell River's strategic location it is no wonder the area is blessed with many successful industries and sectors. The strength of Powell River's economic condition comes from established resource sectors such as forestry, aquaculture (marine), mining, and agriculture. These sectors have become instrumental to the success of the Powell River economy. These industries are in high demand and are capable of employing the majority of Powell River's population resulting in a self sustaining community.

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# Forestry

In 1881, Doctor Israel Powell believed he had found the second shortest river in the world and decided to name the area after himself. Doctor Powell was Superintendent of Indian Affairs for BC, Canada's westernmost province. While it was formally discovered in 1881, it wasn't until many years later that the area became home to settlers and the community began to grow. With an abundance of forested areas it did not take long for logging in the area to explode. With the formation of these new industries residential areas started to form to facilitate logging and paper making industries.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations is responsible for managing BC's crown forest land and the numerous benefits available to British Columbians from forest lands. The Sunshine Coast District is responsible for the forest in the community of Powell River and its surrounding area, and encompasses an area of 1,555,088 hectares. Lying approximately 100km northwest of Vancouver, it falls within the Coastal Mountains and extends from the Howe Sound in the south to Bute Inlet in the north. Along with Powell River, the Sunshine Coast District is also responsible for the forest lands in Sechelt, Gibsons, and Pender Harbour. In addition to forests, recreation, water, fish and wildlife, and timber are a few of the key values being managed by the Sunshine Coast Forest District.



In the past, Powell River and its surrounding region had depended on the forest industry to support its economy. Even when the forestry industry had struggled in BC, Powell River's performance has proved to outperform that of other regions in the Province. With the desire to add value to the fibre harvested in the region, Powell River has forged a new path for its forest sector.

When logging was the principal activity in the 1880s, Powell River got its start in the forest industry. Present day, the region is home to what many consider to be one of the most valuable timber supplies in the Province. 'Transition zone', as its known, is the region's forest area and grows many types of harvestable timber including Hemlock, Balsam, Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, Cypress, Alder, Spruce, and Pine.

Within the Haslam Lake and Lang Creek Community Watershed you will find Powell River Community Forest Ltd. The Community Forest has operated in the area since 2006, and is governed by the board of directors as well as a consultancy company specializing in forest management. Community Forest provides between \$500,000 to \$1 million in revenue on an annual basis to the City for local projects.

A direct descendant to the Forestry Sector, Catalyst Paper, is located on the mainland coast of British Columbia, and is a leading producer of high-quality newsprint and uncoated mechanical specialty papers. The Powell River Division of Catalyst Paper plays an important role in the cultural, social and economic health of this community.



# Aquaculture

Powell River and its surrounding region is widely recognized as having some of the most pristine water in all of North America. For that reason, fisheries and aquaculture are intertwined into the culture and economy of the area. Vancouver Island University (VIU) has specialized in the advancement and protection of these important activities. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department at VIU is known as a leader in their field, and has state of the art facilities and aims to provide practical field experience that will help to support applied research and education to better the area, Province and beyond. VIU is strategically placed in close proximity to fresh-water lakes and streams, and of course, the Pacific Ocean. These geographic features allow VIU students to gain practical experience, and are focal points of their education. VIU, and the region in general, are close to Federal and Provincial laboratories, such as the Pacific Biological Station, for example.

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Over the years, Powell River's aquaculture industry has grown into a profitable and attractive market. The area's superb quality and ultra variety products supply many national and international chains restaurants such as Joey's Seafood Restaurant, Earl's, Cactus Club Café, as well as Costco wholesalers in Canada and the United States. The region also produces large quantities of shellfish and fin fish through sustainable processes for global consumption.





# Agriculture

As Powell River became a landing spot for many the agricultural sector quickly grew. When Powell River was only accessible by ferry the community needed to adapt and provide their own food supply as distribution was a challenge. In 1915, thirty-two farmers in the Powell River community and its surrounding area bound together to found the Powell River Farmers Institute to improve and benefit conditions for agriculture in the district. Today, the Institute is as strong as ever and focuses their attention on the same goal of promoting agricultural initiatives in Powell River.

Powell River is lucky to have a list of features that have helped the community become an agricultural powerhouse. Climate, terrain, and fertility are a perfect fit for a variety of crops, livestock, and a mixed variety of farming initiatives, which can be produced year-round. In addition to more traditional agriculture, Powell River also has a long history of other harvestable product like, mushrooms, salal, wild fruits, and florals. There is plenty of acres in the agriculture land reserve available in addition to more than 60 properties that already have official farm status.

Because of the excellent conditions for agriculture and Powell River's long standing commitment to supporting local farmers, the region has been welcoming



newcomers who have purchased properties to establish new farming. Sticking with the trend of healthier living, there is a particular new interest in organic growing that will enhance the local and regional economy. Powell River benefits from being the first Canadian agricultural area to be officially declared free of genetically engineered crops. “G-E-Free Crop Area”, as it was named, is the geographic isolation that provides protection against contamination and other disease or parasite problems. It is also important to note that the area is free of infestation from the honey-bee mite.

Many local producers sell at the thriving farmers’ market and the annual agriculture exhibition, both of which are run by the Powell River and District Agricultural Association. Small scale, local production and food processing is crucial to Powell River’s development and sustainability goals of achieving clean, and safe food.





# Mining

Nearby Texada Island is home to a limestone quarry which is the largest and most important provider of raw materials to BC and the US markets. As the oldest mine in BC, the quarry has a successful history in production of limestone. Its extensive history does not limit its future as it was recently announced to have as much as 200 years worth of limestone excavation left. On average, Texada Quarrying produces about four million tonnes of limestone each year, and had a record year in 2008, when 8,000,000 tonnes of limestone was produced. The quarry is the principle supplier of limestone to the cement, chemical and pulp industries for the Pacific Northwest. The operation ships out millions of tonnes in limestone each year via a deep sea dock capable of loading panamax and capsized ships.

In August 2014, the Fraser Surrey Docks (FSD) was granted approval from the Province of BC to allow for the transshipment of additional coal by Texada Quarrying. Texada Quarrying would receive coal by barge from FSD for loading on to deep sea vessels for export to Asian markets. The current storage of coal is capped at 400,000 tonnes and with this new approval the storage capacity will increase to 800,000 tonnes creating new economic and employment opportunities.



# Healthcare & Social **Assistance**

The healthcare and social services sector is a main industry sector for Powell River – one of the City’s largest employers in Inclusion Powell River. The community has been recognized by the United Nations World Urban Forum as an accessible and inclusive community. Many people with disabilities have chosen Powell River as their home because of the services that are provided and the ability to live somewhat independently. There are also active developments in senior’s care with a new long term care facility being built and a new assisted living facility moving forward.

Powell River is well serviced with the Powell River General Hospital facility. The hospital is a 33-bed facility providing services that include surgery, endoscopy, ICU, obstetrics, in-patient psychiatry, oncology, emergency and diagnostic services.

