

FEATURE FILM

Baits Motel

Site Identification

Nearest Community:
Spences Bridge, B.C.

Geocache Location:
N 50°25.369'
W 121°20.506'

Ownership:
Private Property

Accuracy:
1 meter

Overall Difficulty: 1.5

Overall Terrain: 1

Access Information and Restrictions:

From Hwy 1 heading towards Vancouver turn left onto Riverview Avenue in Spences Bridge and park near the Baits Motel.

Parking Advice:
Park by motel.

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society
PO. Box 933
Cache Creek, BC.,
VOK 1H0

Tel: 1-877-453-9467
email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

For more site pages go to:
www.goldtrail.com

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Photo: Marcie Down

While its name may play on words with references to Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho*, the Baits Motel in historic Spences Bridge is a popular destination for anglers on a quest for the ultimate Steelhead fishing experience. From October through December the fishing season attracts a steady stream of fishing enthusiasts hoping to catch one of the river's famous steelhead that have been known to reach up to 30 lbs in weight. During other parts of the year, the water is teeming with trout, Chinook, and in the fall, bright red sockeye salmon making the long journey to the Adams River to spawn. Ray Nigalis, owner of the Inn at Spences Bridge, recounts stories of Ernest Hemingway and other celebrities visiting the area for the outstanding fishing during the town's heyday.

Although local first nation's people have lived in the area for thousands of years, it was the Cariboo Gold Rush that brought white settlers in the mid 1860's. From 1862 – 1865 the area was known as Cook's Ferry, due to the rope ferry operated by American businessman, Mortimer Cook. Later a toll bridge was built by Thomas Spence that connected the wagon road from Yale to the gold-rich areas of the Cariboo and Barkerville. The community that emerged eventually became known as Spences Bridge.

Due to its rugged beauty and dry, desert vistas, Spences Bridge has caught the attention of more than one Hollywood director and several movies have been filmed in the area. One of the more high profile film shoots to take advantage of the stark beauty and western imagery found in the area was the 2005 drama *An Unfinished Life*, starring Robert Redford, Jennifer Lopez, Morgan Freeman and Josh Lucas. Filmed in various locations in around the Gold Country area with Ashcroft standing in for the small town of Ishawooa, Wyoming, the movie is about loss and the healing power of forgiveness.

As Einar Gilkson (Redford) mourns the untimely death of his only son and the dissolution of his marriage, his ranch is falling to ruin around him. He suffers another blow when a bear mauls his good friend and ranch hand Mitch Bradley (Freeman). As Gilkson cares for Bradley, his estranged daughter-in-law Jean, played by Jennifer Lopez, appears at his door with a granddaughter, Griff (Becca Gardner), he never knew he had. Escaping from an abusive relationship, Jean turns to Gilkson for temporary refuge while she pulls her life together. Sheriff Crane Curtis (Lucas) is Jean's love interest and Camryn Manheim plays Nina, the restaurant owner who befriends Jean while suffering from her own losses.

The Baits Motel, formerly known as the Quarter Circle J Motel, was the shooting location for a pivotal scene where Gilkson (Redford) breaks down the motel room door where Jean's (Lopez) abusive ex-boyfriend, Gary Winston (Damien Lewis), is hiding from the law. Gilkson, with shotgun in hand, threatens Winston and runs him out of town and Jean's life forever. The hotel, with its classic 1950's exterior, was purchased by John and Laurie Kingston who changed the name to the Baits Motel in 2011.

Hard Core Logo, a 1995 Canadian fictional documentary-styled account of a punk rock band's reunion tour is one of the earlier films to take advantage of the Spences Bridge location. More recent film projects that have utilized the area's desert and visual appeal include the 2010 remake of *The A-Team*, starring Liam Neeson and Bradley Cooper and the apocalyptic 2012, starring John Cusack and Woody Harrelson. The Canadian film *The Sweet Hereafter*, starring Ian Holm and Sarah Polley, and directed and written by academy award nominee Atom Egoyan, was filmed in Venables Valley, a few kilometres northwest of Spences Bridge.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

"An Unfinished Life", The Internet Movie Database. Web. 3 July, 2012.

BC Adventure. Spences Bridge. Web. 2 July, 2012.

British Columbia Travel and Discovery. Spences Bridge. Web. 3 July, 2012.

"Hard Core Logo", The Internet Movie Database. Web. 3 July, 2012.

Kingston, John. Personal Interview. 4 July, 2012.

Nigalis, Ray. Personal Interview. 4 July, 2012.

Travel the Canyon. Spences Bridge. Web. 3 July, 2012.

Weller, Vicci (TNRD Film Commission). Personal interviews. (no date).

Letterboxing Clues:

Located by the apple tree at picnic area on the right side of the building. Blends in with landscape.