

Lytton Reaction Ferry

SITE #060102

GC1TQ34

Written & Researched by Peter McArthur

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Lytton, V0K 1Z0
 Location/Parking: N 50°14.799'
 W 121°35.606'
 Geocache Location: N 50°14.825'
 W 121°35.650'
 Accuracy: 6 meters
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page
 UTM: East 0600233;
 North 5567049 10U
 Geocache altitude: 187 m./612 ft.
 Overall difficulty: 1
 Terrain difficulty: 1.5
(1=easiest; 5=hardest)
 Date Established: c1940
 Ownership: Lytton First Nations & BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
 Access: • Public Road
 • Seasonal (ferry closed at high water)
 • Vehicle accessible
 • Located 2.5km northwest of Lytton on Hwy #12.
 • Turn left onto the Lytton Ferry Rd.

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:
 Gold Country Communities Society
 P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0
 Tel: 1-877-453-9467
 email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

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

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First Nations people initially travelled across the rivers at Lytton by canoe. Early European settlers built several “ferries,” which were generally row boats attached to a cable. The current form of crossing, a reaction ferry, was first built in the 1940s.

The Lytton Reaction Ferry is a traditional non-powered river ferry. Consisting of two steel pontoons, a small deck and a crew house, its simple construction has withstood the test of time. The ferry is attached to the cable spanning the river with a ‘traveler’ and managed with a ‘bridle’ of steel cables and sheaves. A simple wooden dock on each side of the river provides a docking area for the ferry and ramps to load vehicles and passengers.

To begin crossing, a rudder at the forward end of the ferry is lowered turning the ferry at an angle to the river’s flow. Since the cable over the river prevents the ferry from being pushed downstream the force of the current propels the ferry across.

The ferry is lashed to the dock to allow loading and unloading then the opposite rudder is lowered into the river, allowing the ferry to return across the river. There is no engine and no electricity is required, providing a charming five minute ride on a sunny afternoon.

The Lytton Reaction Ferry provides access to the west side of the Fraser, home to approximately



Lytton Ferry c 1929

Photo: Lytton Museum & Archives



Lytton Ferry c 1950

300 people. School buses bring children across to Lytton daily and visitors and hikers can access the front end of the Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Provincial Park. Bearing great historical, cultural and spiritual significance, this park provides the nature purist with wonderful backcountry hiking opportunities. You may also follow a gravel road 65 km north to Lillooet or 30 km south to Boston Bar; however, neither road is recommended to occasional drivers.

Although the daily ferry ride is peaceful, there has been excitement too. On May 9, 1979 cables broke loose leaving the ferry to float down the Fraser River. Boats from Boston Bar rescued it, gently pulling the ferry to shore. No one was injured and even the car on board

made it home safely. However, tragedy had previously struck in the 1960s, when a car rolled off the ferry into the river and two local seniors drowned.

The ferry operates from 6:30 am to 10:15 pm daily, closing for lunch and dinner. No reservations are required; however, there can sometimes be a wait. Do not be late; the last crossing is at exactly 10:15 pm not approximately 10:15 pm. The Lytton Reaction Ferry holds two vehicles and twelve people but does not operate year-round. Due to the dangers of being struck by debris carried down the river, the ferry ceases operation each spring, during high water. It has also been temporarily closed for ice flows.

Visit with the ferry operators to learn more adventures and mechanics of this innovative crossing.

