

# Understand BC & the Canadian Rockies

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# BC & the Canadian Rockies Today

Western Canada has been on a high in recent years. Alberta is enjoying the financial benefits of its giant oilfields, while BC is basking in the light of having Vancouver hovering atop those 'world's most livable cities' surveys. But it's not all sunshine. Southern Alberta had its worst flooding in living memory in 2013, while BC continues precariously balancing wilderness preservation with the need to tap resources.

## Best on Film

**Mount Pleasant** (2007) Gritty drama about family life in Vancouver.

**City of Gold** (1957) Evocative short film comparing gold rush Dawson City to 60 years later. Narrated by noted Canadian author, Pierre Berton.

**Carts of Darkness** (2008) Documentary about shopping-cart races among Vancouver's homeless.

**Delicate Art of Parking** (2003) Comedy documentary about traffic enforcers.

## Best in Print

**City of Glass** (Douglas Coupland, 2000) Vancouver's most celebrated author offers a quirky guide to his hometown.

**Craft Beer Nation** (Joe Wiebe, 2013) Profiling the lip-smacking breweries and beermakers of BC.

**The Call of the Wild** (Jack London, 1903) The story of a dog during the Klondike gold rush.

**Calgary Stampede: 100 Years of the Greatest Show on Earth** (Calgary Herald, 2012) The story of Canada's favorite annual party.

## Olympic Legacies

When Vancouver hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in 2010, the eyes of the world feasted on British Columbia's snowcapped peaks, endless blue skies and street-partying locals. The province used the event to showcase its billion-dollar looks, aiming to encourage tourism and investment. But since the flame went out, the benefits of the Games have been harder to grasp – an indication that economies need more than mega-sized events to generate development.

Alberta proved this after hosting the Winter Olympics in 1988: the province strutted through the recent global recession better than any region in Canada, due to its reputation as a low taxation-big business capital with an economy centered on its booming oil industry. While BC wrings its hands over exploiting gas reserves in its pristine coastal wilderness, the environmentally controversial northern Alberta oil sands continue to pump out money-spinning black gold.

But BC may have the last laugh: proposals have been put forward for a giant oil pipeline to run from the Alberta oilfields to huge tankers docked on the BC coastline. Communities along the proposed route are up-in-arms about the idea, while BC politicians are mulling over how much they can charge for it.

## Leaping Loonie

Constantly hovering around parity with the US dollar like a persistent housefly, the rising Canadian dollar, known as the 'Loonie' because of the loon bird depicted on \$1 coins, is a challenge for the regional economy. While the country was not subjected to the bankruptcy-threatening damage that recently afflicted other nations, the fact that the US is by far Canada's main trading partner has serious consequences here. Dollar parity means fewer American tourists traveling