



SIWASH LAKE
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WILDERNESS RESORT

Green Practices & Sustainability

Contents

SUMMARY.....	Page 2
DAILY BEST PRACTICES.....	Page 4
HUMAN RESOURCES.....	Page 6
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP.....	Page 7
WATER CONSERVATION.....	Page 8
SUPPLY CHAIN.....	Page 9
CULTURAL, HERITAGE & INDIGENOUS VALUES.....	Page 9
COMMUNITY.....	Page 11
LEADING BY EXAMPLE.....	Page 11
OUR WILDLAND ECOLOGY CENTRE SOCIETY.....	Page 12

Summary

Taking care of the planet is our guiding philosophy at Siwash Lake Wilderness Resort. While crafting our world-class eco-resort and luxury guest ranch, our main focus has always been on striving to be true stewards of the land. Since we purchased our piece of raw wilderness over thirty years ago, it has been our mantra to stay in harmony with the surrounding environment. We've practiced green tourism for more than two decades. While drawing inspiration from Nature and the ancestral culture of the area, our luxury resort has grown with the land, not onto it. We even partnered with National Geographic on a mission to promote sustainability through tourism; to help our clients understand the effects of climate change and inspire them to follow in our green footsteps. We are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, and with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We offer captivating and educating wilderness experiences in Nature. With our plethora of guided eco-adventures, guests are encouraged to embrace everything the land has to offer. Our guests leave minimal carbon footprint as they explore BC's backcountry by using our horses as their trusty tour guides — other low impact modes of transportation include bike, foot, and canoe. To help offset all of our fossil fuel use, including gas and

SLWR GREEN PRACTICES & SUSTAINABILITY

diesel for vehicles and equipment, propane for cooking and hot water, and the occasional helicopter charter, our rates include an eco fee that helps fund our many environmental initiatives.

Guests indulge on savoury, organic, ranch-produced food — enriched by the Siwash Lake culinary team with fruit, vegetables, and flora foraged straight from the ranch garden and surrounding forest. Food waste is scarce, for the Siwash hens enjoy left-overs on a daily basis, and in turn provide the operation with a steady supply of farm-fresh eggs. We also utilize a composting system for vegetable scraps and our ranch dogs are fed the meat scraps.

Our clean energy usage with a 12KW photo voltaic solar array allows us to use power derived from the sun for all of our electricity needs. A back-up generator turns on when sunshine is sparse, however the Cariboo region is known for being hot and dry during our operating months, so our minimal fossil-fuel usage is relatively steady throughout the year — on average no more than two hours per day of generator run time. While operating at a maximum capacity, power consumption levels amount to approximately 30 KWH per day, and our solar array can power up to 72 KWH per day. We store the excess in a 48V battery bank. Wood burning furnaces are used to heat the majority of buildings in the resort. We have an extremely robust recycling system and as a result our garbage output per week in peak season is one bag or less, which we haul to the local transfer station on specific supply days. We also practice sustainable employment; in an industry that is known for recruiting internationally, we do our best to ensure that our staff is Canadian sourced, with the majority from BC.

Following a massive wildfire in 2017, SLWR owners spearheaded development of a not-for-profit conservation organization. The BC Wildland Ecology Centre has a symbiotic relationship with the resort and serves to protect, study, and showcase the surrounding post-fire ecosystem while uniting with local stakeholders and partnering with local Indigenous organizations to preserve cultural and heritage values. Located at Siwash Lake, on the Wildland Private Nature Reserve, BCWEC performs all of our advocacy work.

In concert with BCWEC, Siwash Lake and partners planted 130,000 tree seedlings on Crown land surrounding the resort in the spring of 2018. In spring of 2020, another 5,500 seedlings were planted on the resort property. In Summer 2023, an additional 550 large trees were planted around the core of the property to help with cooling and exposure mitigation. We continue to monitor for invasive species; study the after-effects of wildfire; and protect remaining areas of Refugia and habitat from high impact industry activities, and from excessive off-road motor vehicle use. Beginning in 2019, SLWR and BCWEC united to introduce fun, family-focused, eco-safaris that instil awareness and insight to those who set foot in this magical post-wildfire outpost. These luxury eco-retreats feature our flagship wildfire ecology program — the [Fire Ecology Hike™](#).

Daily Best Practices

Administration

- ✓ The majority of our printed marketing materials are constructed from recycled paper.
- ✓ Whenever possible, communication is electronic versus print.
- ✓ Whenever possible, printers are set for double-sided printing
- ✓ Scrap paper is used for drafts and for fire starter or sent for recycling.
- ✓ All computers, printers and monitors are turned off on a power bar when not in use.

Housekeeping

- ✓ Biodegradable, natural cleaners and detergents, no phosphates or harsh chemicals, purchased in bulk and concentrated, and scented with essential oils, which we put into re-usable spray nozzle bottles.
- ✓ Toilet tissue and Kleenex are made from recycled paper.
- ✓ Organic, biodegradable guest toiletries are purchased in bulk and set out for guests in refillable pump bottles.
- ✓ Notice in bathrooms for guests regarding SLWR environmental policies and procedures.
- ✓ Notice in guestroom info books regarding SLWR environmental initiatives.
- ✓ Laundry always washed in cold water (except kitchen linens).
- ✓ All lodge laundry is hung to line dry in the fresh air when weather is good.
- ✓ Used magazines are donated to local library.
- ✓ Used newspapers are used for fire starter or sent for recycling.
- ✓ Curtains and doors are kept closed in unoccupied rooms to conserve energy.
- ✓ Housekeeping staff are trained to switch off any lights that guests may have left on (but the guests are encouraged and reminded to cooperate with this too).
- ✓ The goal is to produce no more than two to four bags of garbage per month at peak capacity.

Food & Beverage Operations

- ✓ 90% of appliances are Energy-star rated and/or managed properly for peak efficiency and low energy consumption.
- ✓ Five-star guest menus showcase delicious **Climate Conscious Cuisine**, while featuring a plant based theme for one day of each week.

SLWR GREEN PRACTICES & SUSTAINABILITY

- ✓ Vegetable and fruit peelings, plus guest and staff plate scrapings are fed to SLWR chickens.
- ✓ Coffee grounds, tea bags etc. are composted (compost is used on garden).
- ✓ Meat scraps are given to working ranch dogs.
- ✓ Strict portion control is practiced, and meals are plated so there is very little left-over food (no buffets).
- ✓ Any left-over food is incorporated into staff/family meals.
- ✓ Left over and trail food is packaged using eco-friendly containers/wrappings.
- ✓ Use of tin foil and plastic food wrap kept minimal and only when necessary.
- ✓ Ranch farmed natural food is used as much as possible (i.e. vegetables and herbs from our garden; free-range eggs; trout; and honey).
- ✓ For other supplies and food, we provision locally and organically as much as possible, purchase in bulk, and we use suppliers whom make sustainable practices a priority.
- ✓ No single-use plastics that cannot be recycled.
- ✓ Beverage containers, tin cans, glass, cardboard, and plastics are recycled.
- ✓ Household batteries discarded by guests are collected and taken to the community waste transfer station.
- ✓ No aerosols whenever possible – choose pump spray alternatives.
- ✓ The dining room is set with linen napkins and place mats. Guests are assigned one napkin for 3 meals per day.
- ✓ The 2-acre ranch garden is organic and community tended — the ranch owners and all staff members partake in its care.
- ✓ Guests are given a stainless steel, washable, re-usable water bottle for their personal use throughout their stay, to take on hikes, riding etc.

Engineering

- ✓ A 15KW solar photo voltaic array sends energy to a 48V power bank of deep cycle industrial batteries, which provides 100% of a day's electricity for the lodge when the weather is fair (95% annually). The status quo for off-grid wilderness resorts in BC is to run a generator 24/7.
- ✓ Energy use is monitored constantly through the day, in order to maximize solar efficiency.
- ✓ No air conditioning units in rooms – all windows open for fresh air and lodge is designed for natural circulation of air. Log buildings are naturally well-insulated – cool in summer, warm in winter.
- ✓ Heating is provided by CSA approved/emission-controlled wood stoves that utilize forest-fire damaged wood, which is harvested taking care to cause minimal impact on the surrounding terrain.
- ✓ All lighting is with energy efficient LED bulbs. All outdoor pathway lighting is solar.
- ✓ Our own private water system treats well water using an innovative high-tech filtration system and absolutely no chlorine.
- ✓ All of our faucets and toilets have flow-restriction mechanisms.

SLWR GREEN PRACTICES & SUSTAINABILITY

- ✓ Eco-septic systems function like a compost and break down waste by natural bacteria and evaporation.
- ✓ Hazardous waste is kept to a minimum and is sent for recycling whenever possible (i.e. used vehicle batteries and oil).
- ✓ No harsh chemicals, solvents, pesticides or herbicides are used. We use water-based paints and stains 80% of the time.
- ✓ Hot water for the kitchen and staff areas is created by propane fueled “on demand” geyser systems (as opposed to traditional hot water heaters).
- ✓ The Ranch ATV is used only when required for ranch work and when walking or riding a bike or a horse is not a viable option.
- ✓ No engine idling policy for all vehicles.
- ✓ Trips off the ranch are planned for efficient use of time and fuel and made only when necessary – errands are saved up and grouped under one “town” day per week or preferably once every ten to fourteen days.

Recreation & Land Use

- ✓ Practice the concept of "Leave No Trace" at all times.
- ✓ Everyone stays on the trails.
- ✓ All garbage is packed out.
- ✓ Used toilet paper is packed out and human waste is buried.
- ✓ Wildlife is to be enjoyed, but respected and not disturbed, and breeding areas are to be avoided – we abide by the Ministry of Environment Wildlife Guidelines for Commercial Backcountry Recreation.
- ✓ Fishing is catch and release.
- ✓ No smoking on resort property except for guests in designated area
- ✓ We take care not to spread noxious weeds and invasive plants by vehicle, by boat, by foot and by horse and monitor for this daily.
- ✓ We maintain buffer distances between guests and wildlife, and do not chase or stress wildlife while viewing.

Human Resources

At Siwash we practice sustainable employment by hiring locally and investing in the long-term development of our team. Many of our staff are from Canada, which is uncommon among the Tourism & Hospitality industry in the country. We strive hard for retention and generally, we have a very low turnover rate. We provide housing on-site, which eliminates the need for transportation to and from the lodge for work.

Our employees are very engaged in being champions of climate change awareness through our daily best practices. Most chose to work for us in the first place for reasons relating to sustainability. They are on a mission to help us educate our guests and share our combined passion for preserving the planet. For example, our guides speak to guests about climate change while they are horseback riding through the woods, viewing beetle-kill timber and the aftermath of a wildfire. Our servers/hosts explain to guests about re-using their linen napkins, turning lights off in their rooms, water conservation and so forth. Since we have made our sustainability statement public on our website, we have had better success recruiting and retaining employees whom are working here for more than monetary reasons. Our staff orientation program, training and manuals all speak to sustainability.

Environmental Stewardship

We have a management plan for the land that we operate upon (approx. 4,000 hectares). Highlights include:

- ✓ Consistently monitor and collect field data to keep a pulse on the health of our eco-system.
- ✓ Creating awareness about **Climate Change** by documenting and demonstrating its effects in the area surrounding Siwash Lake.
- ✓ Consulting with First Nations, Government Ministries, our neighbors, the general community, and the overlapping land users to mitigate any environmental impacts or conflicts.
- ✓ Promoting biodiversity.
- ✓ Educating the public at large, neighbouring communities and our guests.
- ✓ Undertaking projects designed to preserve and conserve, such as applying MCH pheromone pods on fire-impacted Douglas fir trees to repel beetles, building low-impact fences from fire-damaged wood, establishing non-motorized areas, studying post-fire morbidity of crown-damaged Douglas fir trees, recording field data about pioneer species and natural regeneration, and advocating for signage that educates the public about environmentally sensitive areas.

SLWR GREEN PRACTICES & SUSTAINABILITY

We have completed a multi-faceted conservation project with Ducks Unlimited Canada for our wetlands, with ongoing wetland stewardship practices that include:

- ✓ Maintaining biodiversity
- ✓ Retain temporary wetlands and small spring ponds to provide important early spring breeding habitat for wildlife.
- ✓ Protect vegetative buffers adjacent to riparian areas.
- ✓ Maintain riparian vegetation (trees, shrubs and forages) with fencing to provide breeding, feeding, nesting, travel corridors and cover for bird species and wildlife.
- ✓ Maintain nesting boxes around the lake.
- ✓ Position winter feeding of livestock to minimize manure run-off.
- ✓ Delay grazing of grassed waterways and other wet areas and buffer zones until mid-July when bird nesting is completed.
- ✓ Perform annual species and water level inventories to monitor the health of our wetlands.
- ✓ Monitor for invasive plants.
- ✓ Installation of solar powered aeration on the lake to help oxygen levels and enhance habitat.

Water Conservation

We get water from a well on our property and treat it with a high-tech purification system. We have aerators on all taps with flow restrictors (less than 2gpm), dual low-flush toilets, notices in all the bathrooms about conservation (i.e. don't brush your teeth with the tap running), we have rain barrels around the lodge for garden watering, our appliances are water-efficient models (i.e. dish washer, clothes washer), and we don't irrigate unless there is an adequate supply from snow pack and rainfall to replenish what we would use. We have created a cistern on our hay barn (60'x90') that harvests 30,000 gallons a year according to current rainfall figures. We gravity feed this water to a rearing pond for rainbow trout.

With only biodegradable cleaners and toiletries allowed on site, non-toxic waste water is dealt with naturally in our two eco-septic systems, one a lagoon, and the other a specially constructed drainage field. Grey water is also used to irrigate pastures.

Supply Chain

We ask that our major suppliers demonstrate corporate ESG responsibility. We're looking for their efforts in reducing power consumption, fuel consumption, excessive packaging, and waste. Additionally, we want to know that there are options for bulk sales and purchasing locally produced products. We immensely favor supplies that are available in recyclable or re-usable packaging, and only deviate when there is no other option, and it is a critical supply. We favor natural and organic products that are manufactured or grown and harvested ethically while using fair trade agreements. We take into account the impact of the entire supply chain. If for example, the choice is for a case of organic apples grown in New Zealand, or BC apples that are locally farmed but aren't certified organic, we would choose the BC apples. We stay mindful of green washing and inspect labels thoroughly.

Locally Sourced

- ✓ We grow our own vegetables (all salad greens and herbs, tomatoes, zucchini, carrots, peas, broccoli, beets etc.)
- ✓ We raise chickens for farm fresh eggs
- ✓ We keep our own bees, which pollenate several species of flowers in our ranch gardens and the surrounding land to be used as garnishes on all dishes — and the bees produce delicious fireweed honey
- ✓ We purchase most of our meats from the local butcher, Summit Meats, who sources from local farms in BC
- ✓ We try to buy only sustainably, ethically farmed or wild caught BC fish and shellfish (not imported)
- ✓ We purchase other food – BC produce and fruit, dairy products, jams etc. through local distributors (nearest town - 100km)
- ✓ We purchase only BC wines and beer for our alcohol list
- ✓ All of our breads, baked goods and desserts are made from scratch at the ranch

When you live remote in an economically depressed region that has a growing season of less than four months and is rated a zone 2 (like gardening in Alaska), it's really hard to find local suppliers. So, we do our best and stick to BC produced goods (provincially) as much as possible.

Cultural, Heritage & Indigenous Values

Our corporate culture is all about RESPECT – for people, for the planet, for business and the entrepreneurial way. It all boils down to our **Mission Statement**:

“... to share the Siwash experience with like-minded travelers from around the world by offering a unique, all-inclusive ranch vacation featuring nature-based adventure, luxury accommodation, fine cuisine, and first-class service... a soul-pleasing blend of the rustic and the refined, all delivered in style with a smile. In the process, we shall continue developing a resort that’s in complete harmony with the surrounding wilderness and we shall promote stewardship of the land, freedom of spirit, personal growth, and an appreciation for family and the finer things in life.”

For the uniqueness of our Siwash setting, we are fortunate to be located in a rugged and remote area, but we are also very grateful to the guardians of the land: the Indigenous people of the area — the Secwepemc First Nation — self-governing, prosperous communities guided by their unified values, language and culture. The Secwepemc are the northernmost Interior Salish group of the Plateau area. Siwash Lake is within the unceded wilderness territories of several local Secwepemc communities: these are High Bar, Bonaparte, Skeetchestn, Canoe/Dog Creek, and the Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Band.

For at least five thousand years, the lands around Siwash have been traditional grounds for these nomadic people, who would travel through in summers for hunting, fishing, and gathering plants for food, medicinal, spiritual and ceremonial uses.

Conservation of the local cowboy and ranching culture, and the colorful heritage of the Cariboo region is part of our daily best practices.

In effort to preserve the cultural, heritage and Indigenous values of our area, we...

- ✓ Build relationships and share information
- ✓ Live the life and run an authentic working ranch, sharing with all who visit
- ✓ Address it in our operations manual for staff
- ✓ Teach it during staff training
- ✓ Incorporate interpretive guiding for the local flora, fauna, and history into activity programs
- ✓ Promote it via our images, marketing and the media

SLWR GREEN PRACTICES & SUSTAINABILITY

- ✓ Take great care to preserve the history and physical integrity of the ranch site and surrounding heritage sites
- ✓ Architecturally, our site incorporates the culture (i.e. log buildings, pioneer wall tents, Cariboo snake and Russell fences, antique furniture, local art)
- ✓ Feature authentic, local Indigenous cuisine
- ✓ Offer craft making activities for guests with projects based on local culture and the surroundings
- ✓ A full section on our website to highlight the region and its history

Community

Siwash Lake is remote; as such the place has its own on-site community encompassing the ranch family and resort staff. Far-off neighbouring communities in this rural area are made up largely of recreation properties that are inhabited by non-residents for only the warm season months and public holidays.

At Siwash Lake, we believe that the needs of everyone in a given community should be considered and the people should feel safe, healthy and ultimately happy. The surrounding environment is to be appreciated, protected and enhanced; damage is to be minimized.

A **sustainable community** can persist over generations, enjoying a healthy environment, prosperous economy and vibrant life. It does not undermine its social or physical systems of support. Rather, it develops in harmony with the ecological patterns it thrives in. Our strategy to help influence for this regionally is to lead by example, build relationships and share information... to educate and drive change.

Leading by Example

Throughout the past two decades, SLWR has served the tourism industry and its regional destination in the following manner:

- ✓ As a demonstration site for deploying clean, renewable energy in rural communities
- ✓ Participant in regional pilot project for sustainability
- ✓ Garnering international and national media attention for the destination
- ✓ Serving on the Board of Directors for the BC Wilderness Tourism Association, BC Guest Ranchers' Association, the Chilcotin Cariboo Coast Tourism Association, and as a Tourism Marketing Committee member for Destination British Columbia.
- ✓ Founding member of the Magnificent 7 Luxury Lodges of Canada, a collection of wilderness lodges all promoting sustainable tourism
- ✓ Joining the National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World
- ✓ Regularly engaging with government
- ✓ Making waves with the general public

Our Wildland Ecology Centre Society

Wildfires have burned from California to Colorado, Portugal to Greece, and even on to the Siwash Lake home base in 2017. In light of this horrifying, global-spread of fire, the Siwash team has established the Wildland Private Nature Reserve and spearheaded development of a non-profit organization — the BC Wildland Ecology Centre Society — which has a symbiotic relationship with the resort and ranch. BCWEC is a not-for-profit Society headquartered at Siwash Lake in the centre of the largest, most continuous severe burn area of the massive 2017 Elephant Hill wildfire.

The purpose of the BCWEC society is to safeguard, study and showcase the sensitive ecosystem created by wildfire in the area, through conservation, education, reforestation and responsible tourism activities. This ecology centre is protecting the remaining refugia

SLWR GREEN PRACTICES & SUSTAINABILITY

(lush areas of green that survived the forest fire), the pioneer and returning plant and animal species, and advocates on behalf of the 4,000 hectares of regenerating land.

Siwash Lake Wilderness Resort and BCWEC have united to introduce fun, family-focused, eco adventures located at the Wildland Private Nature Reserve, to help instill awareness and insight for those who set foot in this magical post-wildfire outpost.

With both organizations working in concert, we aim to build authentic connections with guests — connections that transform the lives of those in our community, just as much as they change the lives of our visitors. We implement these eco adventures, tailored to ecosystem regeneration, with our flagship wildfire ecology program — [the Fire Ecology Hike™](#).

An important project with the BC Wildland Ecological Society is taking place each springtime — we've been deploying MCH pheromones to protect the remaining Douglas Fir trees and areas of refugia from fir beetle attack, post wildfire. By putting up the little pods of MCH every 20 metres in a grid pattern, it communicates to the potentially invading beetles that there is no more food left and to go somewhere else.

This project is a part of the greater "Elephant Hill Pilot Project" — BCWEC is orchestrating a holistic, five-year, multi-phase, multi-faceted pilot project aimed at demonstrating recovery strategies and practices for extreme wildfire scenarios. It connects industries, First Nations, government, private enterprise, and public community — addressing the varying interests with economic development and long-term integrity of the eco-system in mind. The project has efforts in areas such as reforestation, eco-tourism, and scientific study of wildfire ecology. Activities consist of, but are not limited to, the establishment of a fire ecology interpretive trail system, tree planting, species inventories, habitat restoration, and networking events in the field.

Since the 2017 Elephant Hill Wildfire, the BCWEC team has witnessed a great need to unite all those who have interest in the area's natural resources, steering towards a common goal while on the road to economic recovery and success. In the wake of wildfire, the BCWEC promotes best use of land moving forward, protecting the long-term integrity of the ecosystem and its natural resources while facilitating economic revitalization and development in a rural community.