

# Bulkley Basecamp - STEELHEAD

SMITHERS - BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



*The Fly Shop*

TRAVEL & TACKLE GUIDE

GPS Coordinates: 54°42'55.85"N | 127°07'35.66"W

[WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM](http://WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM)

**Trip Questionnaire:** Please click on the link below. This will take you an electronic questionnaire form that we ask you to complete and submit to The Fly Shop®. Please be sure to click the **“Submit”** button at the end of the form. The information provided will help us -- and the outfitter best coordinate your trip. THANK YOU! Click [HERE](#)

### **IMPORTANT: ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS**

Entry into Canada is solely determined by Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) officials in accordance with Canadian law. Please see the CBSA’s website for details. <https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html>

#### **Non-Canadians Entering Canada:**

When you enter Canada, a border services officer will ask to see your passport and a valid visa, if you need one.

If you are a citizen of the United States, you need a passport to fly to or transit through a Canadian airport, but not to enter Canada by land or by boat. You must carry proof of your citizenship, such as a birth certificate, certificate of citizenship or naturalization, or a Certificate of Indian Status, as well as photo identification. If you are a permanent resident of Canada or the U.S, you should bring your Permanent Resident Card with you.

U.S. citizens entering Canada from a third country must have a valid U.S. passport.

When returning to the United States from Canada, it is very important to note that all U.S. citizens are required to present a valid U.S. passport to enter or re-enter the United States **via air**. For entry into the United States via land and sea borders, U.S. citizens must present either a U.S. passport, passport card, NEXUS card, Enhanced Driver’s License, or other Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)-compliant document.

You must claim your luggage on your first point of entry into Canada and clear immigrations and customs. Failure to claim your luggage will result in your luggage not showing up at your end destination.

#### **Inoculations & Health Concerns:**

There are no formal requirements, or recommendations for immunizations and very little risk of infectious disease in Canada. The risk would be about equivalent to what it would be for trip to Colorado. You should check with your personal physician if you are concerned. We recommend that anglers be up-to-date on their Tetanus, Hepatitis-A and Hepatitis-B vaccinations.

### **On Your Way To British Columbia**

Steelhead, the magnificent sea-going trout, enter their natal Skeena drainage in late July, and move upstream into the clear headwaters of the Bulkley River by the end of August. Fresh fish continue to accumulate in the river right through the end of October and into November.

The Bulkley produces the highest returning population of wild steelhead to enter the Skeena system in the Fall. There are more fish here than lots of the other fisheries combined and fly fishing for

these wild, native steelhead can be fantastic from the 1st of September right through the beginning of November.

The Bulkley and Morice Rivers flow North West from their head waters below Morice Lake, and wind downstream for over 150 miles where it enters the Skeena just downstream of the confluences of the Kispiox. The drainage is massive and with this much water at your disposal, it is easy for the program to adjust to changing conditions, and where the fish are in their migration. The upper river is amazing for the amount of time it takes to clear and drop after a big storm, which is common in the fall in British Columbia. The upper Morice, which is also the headwaters of the Bulkley, comes right out of the lake and will come back into shape in even the heaviest of rains. Anglers can feel confident that they will not be completely blown out for the week if a storm hits, Bulkley Basecamp will find a place to keep a fly in front of the fish. The river can virtually be blown out one day and fishable the next, which is really nice in this game!

Bulkley Basecamp's guided trips utilize many types of water craft to provide access to the very best runs, riffles, pools and tailouts the river has to offer. You will find your self in drift boats, rafts and jet boats throughout the week, in both the Bulkley and the Morice. There are literally thousands of runs between the Bulkley and the Morice and the guides at BBC know it extremely well. They will make sure they keep you in the best water with minimal pressure from the general public and other lodges. As anglers, you will enjoy a rare opportunity to fish untouched water every day of the week. There are only 6 anglers in camp per week. You will fish everyday with 1 fishing partner and 1 guide per boat, a 2:1 angler to guide ratio.

Upon arriving at the camp, you will be assigned to a tent for the week with your fishing partner. These deluxe double walled canvas wall tents are unbelievably comfortable for 2 anglers, and tough enough to handle what ever Mother Nature can throw at you. Wood burning stoves will make them stay warm through the nights, even in the late season. Wooden floors, with wide cots and heavy duty sleeping bags with clean liners and sheets are provided to insure you get a good nights rest after a long day on the water. The tents are spacious with plenty of room for all of your gear. Hot showers in the shower house will be ready for daily use, and the massive kitchen / dining tent will provide a great place to enjoy dinner out of the elements. Most of your relaxing time will be outside, down around the campfire, enjoying the beautiful BC evenings.

You will want to be prepared to spend a few days of the week away from your tent at the basecamp. A couple nights will be spent up on the Morice if the fishing up there is hot and you don't want to come all the way back to camp. You may also end up doing a 2 day float on the Bulkley as well, spending another night away from the lodge at one of the satellite canyon camps. You will want to bring a smaller dry bag and pack light for these short little excursions away from the main lodge. You can leave the majority of your things in your main tent and just pack a light overnight bag to bring with you.

All of BBC's camps provide clean and comfortable linens and heavy comforters to keep you warm even in the late Fall, so you will not need to bring a sleeping bag on this trip.

Another option to keep in mind are helicopter fly outs to some of the most remote and fabled stretches of water in the steelhead world. If you would like, you can arrange to fly out for a day or more to see the Babine, the Upper Main Stem Skeena and the Upper Copper, just to name a few. These are extra and not part of the package price, but if conditions are right, can put your trip right

over the top and make it truly and unforgettable experience. If you would like to arrange a day or more of heli-fishing, just let your guides or the host know when you are up there.

Each day, anglers are rotated between many different beats available to BBC. They have access to so much water, you will enjoy different beats every day of the week, so that every day is a fresh exciting new adventure. The diversity of water available also allows Bulkley Basecamp guides to adjust to the river conditions, making sure you spend your time in productive water. Days are long at BBC and the guides understand the importance of taking the time to fish each piece of prime water as thoroughly as possible in order to maximize your steelhead catching potential. Bulkley Basecamp prides itself on having assembled an elite guide staff that possesses the instructional skills and knowledge of the Bulkley River system to ensure a memorable experience. You will love the team up there!

Bulkley Basecamp is strategically located downstream of Smithers on one of the most exclusive fishable tributaries of the Bulkley. It is an easy van transfer from the Smithers airport, but more importantly it is the ideal location to keep you in striking distance of all areas of both the Bulkley and Morice, whether you are fishing the upper or lower beats each day. The tributary the lodge is on also provides exclusive access to a hidden gem of the Bulkley system. This trib is almost all private, but the Camp now has 3 miles of it's own private access, to give you the opportunity to enjoy this secret gem. This river is illegal to guide on, so it is a great opportunity for you to get out and fish alone or with your partner for the last couple hours of the day.

Floating lines and dry flies, or very light sink tips with small unweighted wet flies are the name of the game for the better part of September and into October, due to the fact that the Bulkley and Morice rivers run relatively warm and very clear in low water. Heavier tips and large flies seem to be more productive through the later part of the season when the water temperatures become increasingly cooler and the fish are more reluctant to move long distances to hit a fly. While many who visit the Bulkley system year after year do so strictly for the top water action, one shouldn't overlook the late season potential this river possesses when the entirety of the run is holding in the pools you are casting into.

As with all steelhead angling, if you're looking to catch obscene numbers of fish, this trip probably isn't for you! BBC clients generally average 1-3 hook ups per angler per day, but keep in mind this is not always the case! There are many days that accomplished anglers and good students will grossly exceed these numbers, and other days when even the best effort won't come close to putting a fish up. Steelhead fishing is not a numbers game, it is about catching the most prized freshwater game fish that swims. Anglers willing to fish hard, cover a lot of water, listen to their guides, and put in a long day, will have the best potential of landing a trophy.

Steelhead on the Bulkley average between 8 -14 lbs, but specimens up to and exceeding 20 lbs are caught every year by someone. The first fish pull into the Bulkley in August, and by the 1st of September, top quality fly fishing is in full swing. The big bucks are usually in the river by early September and fish continue to accumulate in prime holding water right through the end of November.

## Contact Numbers

If you have any problems during your trip with missed connections, or want to leave an emergency number for family members or office:

### **Bulkley Basecamp**

Derek Botchford and Andrea Soto  
(250) 846-9153 | [dbotchford@gmail.com](mailto:dbotchford@gmail.com)

### **The Fly Shop®**

(530) 222.3555 | (800) 669-3474 | [travel@theflyshop.com](mailto:travel@theflyshop.com)

### **U.S. Consulate General**

1095 West Pender Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
Telephone: (604) 685-4311 | Facsimile: (604) 685-7175

*\*Fishing on the entire Skeena system is strictly catch-and-release\**

### **BC Fishing Licenses:**

Fishing licenses are not included in your package price. Anglers can purchase their basic fishing licenses and steelhead report cards online before the trip at the British Columbia Government website: [www.fishing.gov.bc.ca](http://www.fishing.gov.bc.ca). You will need to bring a valid credit card with you in order to purchase classified water licenses online. Please keep a copy of your angler license number, we will need it to access your online eLicense and purchase the classified water license. If you have ever purchased an eLicense, your angler ID number remains the same. If you have not kept a copy of your angler ID number you can simply re-register yourself in the system.

You will need the following licenses for your weeks stay with us:

- General Fishing license: Resident / Non resident
- Steelhead Tag
- Classified Waters Tag: per river, per day. (Purchase upon Arrival)

You will purchase your classified waters permits, for each day you will be fishing during the trip, from Oscar's sporting goods on the first mornig you are picked up by lodge staff. This way the guides can tell you which rivers you will be on, and on which day.

*\*All fishing licenses will be paid by your personal credit card\**

## General Information

### **Fishing Methods:**

Bulkley Basecamp swings flies only. You can leave the indicators at home. Spey rods are the game up North in Skeena Country. It is hard to argue that they cast further, more often, with less effort... which equals more fish to grass. Rods from 12.5ft to 13.5ft are the go to, in line wts 7 or 8. You can

fish all week with only your spey rods, but single handers can be useful and fun to swing flies as well, so do not hesitate to bring along a 9 or 9.5 foot 8wt if you would like.

**Currency:**

The Canadian dollar is the official currency in BC, however, US dollars are widely used and accepted. Credit cards will also be accepted anywhere. Remember to call the Credit Card Company and inform them of your travel dates so they do not block transaction when you need it.

**Gratuities:**

We recommend guide and staff gratuities of approximately \$1,000 to \$1,500 per angler to be divided amongst the staff. Tips are pooled and can be left in an envelope provided to you. If you find service by any individual to be exceptional, feel free to give them additional direct compensation. US dollars are preferred. All tips must be paid in cash.

**Weather:**

Being in the mountains, the weather can fluctuate greatly, especially at this latitude. Live by the layering system so you can be prepared for everything. It can be warm, especially early season, skating dries in a T-shirt. Later in the season it will get predictably colder but not miserable most years. Storms can come through anytime during this period, so be prepared for all conditions all season long. Be prepared for anything Mother Nature could throw at you!

**Other Amenities:**

NO laundry service is available in camp, Make sure you bring enough clothing to last the entire week.

They DO have WIFI and internet connection at the Bulkley BaseCamp. Cell phone coverage will be very spotty, unless driving through town. Not good in camp.

Power outlets in every tent will allow you to charge all of your devices or run a CPAP every night.

**Alcohol:**

Alcohol is included, but if you want something special and specific, we will make a stop at the store when you arrive to pick up your favorite steelhead trip cocktails and beer. If you have a specific brand of alcohol that you prefer, you might consider bringing it with you as the selection in Smithers is limited. You may also try and take advantage of the Duty Free on the way into Canada.

**Liquor:**

Canadian Liquor Laws are different than ours here in the States. Beer and wine must be purchased in special stores. These stores usually stay open well into the evening and are open on weekends. However, "spirits" or hard liquor must be purchased at a Government Store. These stores do not stay open past 6:00 p.m., and are closed on Sundays. If you like a cocktail at the end of the day, plan on bringing your own from the States. You are able to bring 1.5 liters of wine, 1.14 liters of liquor or 24 x 355 ml cans or bottles (8.5 liters) of beer or ale. There is an opportunity to purchase beer, wine and spirits at a Government Store at your end destination.

**Food:**

The Chef at Bulkley Basecamp takes extraordinary pride in preparing excellent meals you will ever see at a fishing lodge. Top quality ingredients and an excellent presentation are paired to serve you hearty meals with ridiculous proportions. You will not go hungry!

If you have any food allergies or medical conditions we need to know about email us at [travel@theflyshop.com](mailto:travel@theflyshop.com).

## Recommended Equipment

**Fly Rods:**

The Lodge has rods and reels you may borrow and use during the week, although we recommend bringing your own equipment that you are familiar with.

Spey rods are the go to tool up here. Due to the nature of these rivers, Spey casters will certainly have an advantage with distance and efficiency. If you have not already joined the two handed revolution now is the time to start! Spey casters can simply cover more water more effectively and the BBC team of expert instructors have all the tools to work with novice and veterans alike!

The most popular choice of Spey rods for the Skeena system and the Bulkley are in the #7 and #8 weight category between 12.5 and 14 feet long. Your choice of rod for the trip is a matter of personal preference, though we have found that the lighter, relatively shorter rods are about perfect for every situation in the runs of the all of these rivers. If you are having trouble deciding which rods are the most suitable for you, we would be more than happy to give you some expert advice, based on our experience there!

**Fly Reels:**

This is probably the most important part of your tackle system! A Reel of mediocre quality will not withstand the brute force of a fresh sea run trophy. Any high quality single action reel with 150 + yards of backing capacity with a good drag system will work fine. You hard-core guys know your classic Hardy's and other noise makers will sing regardless of the drag system.

**Fly Lines:**

Below are some examples of what we feel are the most suitable Spey lines for fishing the Bulkley and other surrounding rivers. This will serve as a general guideline that anyone with any questions about equipment should follow. If you are uncertain which line you should select to properly match your rod, do not hesitate to contact us. We are experts in this field and we are happy to assist you in preparing the correct rod/line combinations.

Skagit style lines are basically shortened, condensed shooting heads developed in the Pacific North West by a hard core group of anglers that were looking for a way to cast sinking tip and large weighted flies long distances, with a very short compact casting stroke, and small D-Loop. These lines have become very popular with steelheaders due to the fact that they are easy for both the expert and novice to cast, not to mention extremely useful in situations where room for a back cast is limited. These lines also work very well for people who prefer to fish shorter 12'-13'6 foot rods. The Airflo Skagit Compact heads can be very efficient tools on all of the Skeena's tribs. These lines should be paired with the MOW sink tips in Heavy(T-14) or Medium(T-11) for these rivers. Many



Skagit casters prefer to prepare their own sink tips using varied lengths of T-14. We prefer these custom tips in 2.5ft increasing length increments. Give us a call if you have questions on these interchangeable sink tips.

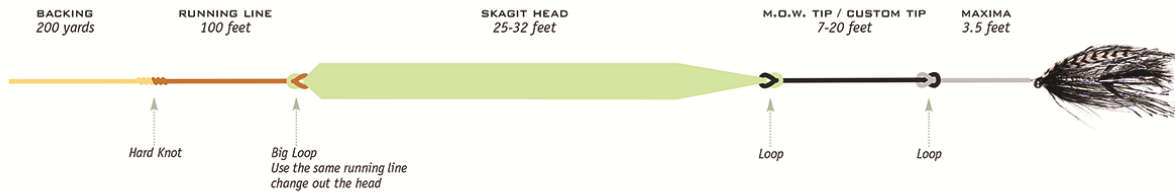
Scandi lines are the full floating version of the Skagit. Also short belly shooting heads, they are amazing at very efficiently loading the rod with a compact stroke and little effort, even in tight conditions. Long leaders are required to anchor these Scandi lines during the casting stroke. This is what you want to use early season when the fish are grabbing flies off of the surface.

## Skagit & Scandi Lines

### Skagit Style Shooting Heads – easiest to cast spey system

These lines were developed by steelhead anglers to fish deep sinking tips and larger flies in winter conditions. The compact heads allow anglers to fish very dense, heavy tips and larger flies than is possible with longer spey lines. They also excel in windy conditions and help cast smaller D-loops when you've got your back to the wall.

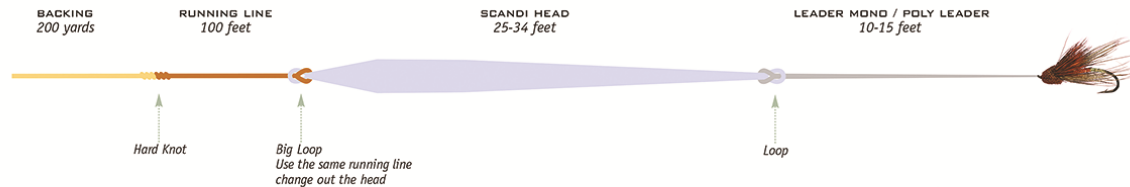
Skagit shooting heads have short, dynamic tapers designed to generate enough power to deliver deep sinking tips. Head lengths vary from 20 to 30 feet with looped ends. The rear is attached to running line, and tips (either *MOW*, *iMOW* or custom) are added to the front, creating a full head and maximum versatility.



### Scandinavian (Scandi) Style Floating Shooting Heads

Scandi heads are designed to cast tight loops and make long distance casts as easily and effortlessly as possible. These type of spey lines are ideal for summer and fall steelhead, Atlantic salmon, and sea trout when the fish are aggressive and move to the surface. All our Scandi heads are factory looped on each end.

Scandi-type floating shooting heads attach at the rear to any shooting line, which is in turn attached to the running line then backing and then reel. At the front end most experts just attach a 10' to 14' poly or mono leader. Poly leaders are ideal to fish just below the surface while a tapered mono leader is the best choice to skate dries.



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Be sure to give us a call if you have any questions on how to set up your spey rig **800-669-3474** or email us at: [info@theflyshop.com](mailto:info@theflyshop.com). [www.theflyshop.com](http://www.theflyshop.com)

### Leaders:

Leaders for fishing sink tips in steelhead fly fishing are very simple...15lbs Maxima. You may want to bring a larger selection simply to insure that you will be prepared for any and every situation.

For the Scandi Lines, you will want long leaders, between 12 and 16 feet long, to provide the line stick of the anchor point. Rio's nylon mono Steelhead Leaders are great and inexpensive, Airflo's Poly Leaders are the best casting, but cost more.

### Waders:

Chest high breathable waders are recommended when fishing any cold water these days and these rivers are no exception. Durability and comfort are key elements to consider when selecting a wader, there are many different manufactures that make quality products.



### **Wading Boots:**

These rivers are primarily cobble and small to moderate gravel, with a few obvious boulders. Some stretches do have larger rocks, and can be more difficult to wade in. If you're used to using a wading staff at home we do recommend you bring it with you. **Felt soles are strongly suggested.** "Sticky" Vibram rubber-soled wading boots do not work well here. We also recommend studs on your felt sole wading boots, but this is personal preference. Some anglers love cleats, others hate them.

### **Rain Gear:**

This is extremely important in BC when steelhead are present. The Bulkley and Morice are in the mountains, in the Fall, at very high latitudes. You do not want to get caught with less than excellent rain gear and layering. Be prepared for what Mother Nature has in store and you will fish much longer hours... and catch more fish! Your choice of garment must allow freedom of movement and keep you dry, even in a downpour. We would be happy to suggest ideas for a raincoat.

### **Layering:**

The "layering" system works best with today's top quality synthetic and wool garments. The idea is that by adding or removing multiple layers of clothing, in varying thickness and insulation, you will be able to obtain ideal body temperature and comfort, instead of just one big layer that you are either hot or cold in. If you have any questions we would be pleased to offer advice on the many options of the layering system. **Do not use COTTON layers in these conditions.**

If unsure of what gear you need to fully enjoy a week at Bulkley Basecamp we would be pleased to recommend equipment options. Although we do not seek to endorse specific brand names, our extensive experience has shown certain products to be superior.

### **Flies:**

The usual steelhead menu, in the full spectrum of colors commonly used, will work great on the Bulkley and all of the other rivers of the Skeena system. Some are dark and somber, others are vibrant and bright, due to the diversity of water conditions. Even the same river can display different moods and may go from low and clear to high and muddy in a matter of hours. Have dries, or skaters in the early season as well as a large assortment of wet flies in varying sizes, colors, and weights for the entire Fall. Flies that would spook fish in one condition may be barely visible in another. Remember to have flies also in varying weights and sizes as well as a variety of colors. It pays to carry a variety of patterns and be prepared for whatever nature and her fish can throw at you. Steelhead will always be deliciously unpredictable. Tube Flies are the newest fly design concept to hit steelhead fly fishing and the possibilities are endless. Tubes allow steelhead fishermen versatility when it comes to meeting changing conditions by changing the type of tube they use, allowing more control over the depth and action of the fly. They also have the advantage of having a larger fly with a shorter shank hook, exactly what is called for to drag out large steelhead. The stinger style flies will also allow this and the Intruder Style flies are a favorite up in Skeena Country.

Ask us here at The Fly Shop® to put a package together for you that will work in all of the fishing scenarios you may encounter, we will have you prepared before you get there. There is also a wide variety of flies for sale at the lodge for you to fill in any gaps you find when you arrive.

**A Note on Re-Booking for Next Season:**

The potential for spectacular steelhead fishing in BC often falls within a very narrow window of just a handful of weeks per year. As such, competition for space can be significant. If you like your week and you intend to return next season, you are wise to move quickly to confirm with a deposit at the conclusion of your trip. Most lodges will hold space for you in the following year for just two weeks past the conclusion of your trip. We will make contact with you when you get home, but you are encouraged to be pro-active in notifying either the lodge or The Fly Shop® that you intend to return.

**Disclosure:**

Bulkley Basecamp will not be responsible or liable for any loss, damage or injury to participants, personal property, or for any cancellations, expenses or delays incurred as a result of weather, transportation or other conditions over which we have no control. Management reserves the right to withdraw and/or cancel any excursions offered at any time and make changes in itineraries as may be necessary for safety and proper handling of said excursions. All guests have a responsibility to disclose to management any special medical, physical or dietary conditions. We make no compromise to assure a safe trip; however, outdoor activities of this nature are not entirely "risk free". We recommend that you secure travel and trip cancellation insurance. Check with your insurance broker for options on this type insurance. All rates are subject to change without notice but will not change once booking is confirmed.

## Packing and Gear Checklist

Chest Waders w/ Belt	Airline Tickets and Itinerary
Wading Boots with Studs	Valid Passport w/ Spare Copies Separated
Rain Jacket - Top Quality	Fishing Licenses
Base Layer - Top and Bottom, Thin Wicking Layer - 2 or 3 sets	Wallet - Cash (Tips) / Credit Cards (Call - Report Travel)
Mid Layer - Top and Bottom, Medium Weight Fleece Insulators - 1 set	Prescription Medication
Insulator Layer - Top and Bottom - Heavier layer for cold - Nano Puff / Softshells - 1 set	Camera / Lens / Extra Battery / Chargers
Heavy Socks and Liners	Emergency Telephone Numbers – This sheet!
Hats - Ball Caps / Toques	Reading Glasses
Fleece Fishing Gloves	Charger: Phone / Other Device
Camp / Lodge Clothes	Tablet or Kindle
Waterproof Camp Shoes / Lodge Shoes	
Polarized Glasses	
Headlamp / Flashlight	
Fly Rods - at least 2 Spey Rods	
Reels - at least 2	
Lines - Skagit and Skandi Heads	
Sink Tips - T-14 - in all sizes 2.5' to 15'	
12' Tapered Leaders for Skating	
10 to 15 lbs Maxima Tippet	
Fly Box – Full & Diverse Selection	
Day Pack - Ideally Waterproof	
Dry Duffel for Float Trips	
Tool – Nippers / Debarb Hemos / Hook file	
Tape Measure	
Sunscreen / Lip Balm	
Toiletries - Tooth Brush / Toothpaste / etc	
Duct Tape	