

History of the Tyax Lodge & Heliskiing



The area surrounding today's Tyax Lodge remained virtually undiscovered by tourists until the late 1970s, when an avid outdoorsman named Gus Abel toured the back roads in search of a suitable place to build a destination resort. His criteria: the location had to be remote, on a lake, and surrounded by mountains, with dry hot summers and lots of powder snow in the winter.

A VISIONARY PARTNERSHIP

Gus eventually encountered a remote lake known to the aboriginal people as "Tyaughton" or "lake of the jumping fish". On its north shore was a deserted old hunting and fishing camp called Tyax Lodge. This location and its 275 acres of lake-side wilderness had all the ingredients to build a fabulous resort.

In 1981 Abel purchased the land and solicited development partners. A Swiss entrepreneur named Urs Villiger with a passion for bush plane flying responded and a great vision turned into reality. In 1985, Scott McKenzie, a local contractor, joined with Abel and Villiger to build the resort and that winter, the land was cleared. It took seven months and seven days for a crew of twelve men to build the largest freestanding log lodge (34,000 square feet) in Western Canada. On December 24, 1986, Tyax Resort opened for business.

A SUMMER SUCCESS STORY

Tyax Mountain Lake Resort was an immediate hit and became a huge success story among Western Canadian independently owned and operated wilderness resorts. The Government of British Columbia acknowledged this success and awarded its founder/co-owner and CEO Gus Abel with the IDEA Small Business Excellence Award for Entrepreneurship in 1989.

During the resort's first summer in operation Abel bought a De Havilland Beaver on floats/skis, and named his new airline "Tyax Air Service." Today, this plane flies guests to remote alpine lakes for fishing, hiking and mountain biking, as well as flight seeing trips over the vast Bridge River Glacier Fields.

TLH HELI-SKIING IS BORN

With the combination of mountainous terrain, sunshine and abundance of powder snow, Tyax also proved to be an ideal resort destination for winter activities, including snowmobiling and skiing. Instead of building towropes and chairlifts like other ski resorts, Abel chose to introduce heli-skiing in its first winter, and heli-skiers (and later heli-snowboarders) began to arrive in ever-larger numbers. In the early 1990s he had created TLH Heli-skiing to cater to the increasing demand. By the end of the decade heli-skiing became the main drawing point for guests to visit Tyax in winter.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CIRCUIT

In the summer of 1991 Tyax marked and built a seven-kilometer multi-purpose recreational trail around the eastern portion of Tyaughton Lake, eventually expanding it to encompass the entire lake to create a 20 kilometer circle route of for resort guests.

Recreational trails soon became the foundation of an expanding variety of outdoor adventure experiences offered by Tyax. These trails are easily accessible from the resort and designed for guests with various levels of fitness. Activities include walking, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, and ATVing in the summer and autumn months, and Nordic skiing and snowmobiling in the winter and spring.

FROM DREAM TO LIVING LEGACY

Abel retired in 2006 and relocated with his family to the sunny Okanagan Valley, also in beautiful British Columbia. Tyax remains a classic Canadian wilderness destination for families and outdoor enthusiasts. Its main lodge features 29 spacious guest rooms, a spectacular 114-seat lakeview dining room, western lounge, gift shop, fitness room, massage room, sauna, outdoor whirlpool, and meeting room. Within walking distance are four guest chalets, a beachfront campground, riding stable with horses, lumberjack area, tennis and volleyball courts. A lush, green lawn flows down to the sandy beach with boats, canoes, rowboats, paddleboats, motorboats, and sailboards.

To the aboriginal people this region was known as the “Skumakun” or “Land of Plenty”. Today, thanks to the vision of Gus Abel to build a classic Canadian wilderness destination, Tyax Lodge has revived that spirit of plenty and evolved into a unique luxury wilderness resort visited annually by thousands of guests from all over the world.

A NEW NAME & LOGO!

In 2017, we updated our name and logo to further unify our family of tourism products. We have now brought TLH Heliskiing together with Tyax Wilderness Resort & Spa to officially become Tyax Lodge & Heliskiing.

