

A Survival Guide To The Lake Shuswap Float Fly In

by Al Franklin

Through out the year you have heard many of us talk (brag) about the Lake Shuswap Seaplane Fly In that's annually held in early September.....Here's the skinny!!



Lake Shuswap is located in the upper end of the Okanogan Valley in British Columbia and in the western foot hills of the Rocky Mountains. It's an outstandingly beautiful area! It's between 450 to 550 miles depending on which of the several routes you select. All are very scenic and all have much to offer. We'll touch on this in more detail later. The flying site is at a privately owned resort called Sandy Shores located about three (3) miles west of the town of Salmon Arm on the Trans Canada Highway #1. There is over 1200' of pure white sandy beach to fly from with no obstructions.

There are +/- a dozen cabins, well over 150 r/v sites with full hook ups plus some more dry r/v sites, and camping sites if you wish to tent. Other than the cabins, reservations are not required. There are also many fine motels in Salmon Arm along with an abundant amount of restaurants. Depending on where you stay in the park, the walk to the 75' wide beach could be as close as 25' and no more than 400'. The park closes for the regular season on Labor Day night, but then remains open one more week for the fly in only. Starting Tuesday morning there is open flying all week through Friday night. There is a chase boat available at all times and there is a frequency board on the beach. Early Saturday morning the Shuswap R/C Club sets up their headquarters tent on the beach along with a P/A system, registration, and a more formal frequency control system.



At about this same time a couple of hobby shops are setting shop in the camp ground area with a huge inventory of bargains including the little incidentals needed for on site maintenance and repairs. (With the exchange rate as it is you can make some major savings, especially on higher ticket items!) There is also a silent auction on the last day with a lot of good model stuff going at bargain basement prices, especially on the U.S. dollar. Local wines (you are in the heart of Canada's wine country) and fruit baskets are also up for bids.

On Saturday night there is a night flying demonstration, an outstanding fireworks display with lots of "ooohs and aaahs" and a huge bonfire for just sitting around and chatting about whatever. There are several women's activities scheduled on Saturday and Sunday. In the past there have been tours to a local cheese factory, a popular nearby waterfall, macramé classes and sight seeing tours. And of course there are the ever popular and frequent cash drawings for the ladies only that are sometimes in excess of \$100.



Other than an informal Schneider Cup race and a Pilots Choice award for the best plane, this is still just a great big fun fly. On Saturday and Sunday you have to get on the waiting list to fly, which doesn't take much time at all, and when your name is called you not only get your frequency pin but also a ticket for prize drawings which happen quite often. Also available are raffle tickets for some really great prizes such as ARF planes, engines, radios, etc.

There are some things you should take to make life easier such as folding chairs for the beach and/or your camp site and some sort of cart for hauling your gear to and from the beach. Due to the soft beach sand it is desirable to a fairly wide wheel's that won't bury in the sand. (Note the cart in the photo. This one can pack a pretty good load.). If you are staying at the resort there are plenty of picnic tables that you can use for your model's while in the park. A folding canopy or gazebo is also highly recommended for protection from the elements plus some sort of cover to go over your plane's at night. Incidentally, there have been no problems in the past with leaving your planes out at night in the camp ground.





Now that I've said all of this, I've only been to the Lk. Shuswap Fly In, once. Jim Hyson, John Rowley and Danny Mason are the real experts, both having made this trip several times. In fact they will both be going to the Vernon Fly In also. They both have a wealth of information, probably a lot that I've overlooked. You can call Jim at 360 876 1202 or Danny at 360 876 9378.

Give any of us a call and we'll do what we can to help out. Hope to see you there!! Al