

# BC Register of Historic Places: PDF Data Entry Template

For more information please refer to *Preparing and Submitting Records for the BC Register of Historic Places* guideline document.

☐ denotes a mandatory field

## COMMON NAME

Quesnelle Forks

Unique Provincial ID

## Other Name(s)

Quesnel Forks

## LOCATION

Street Address

Municipality

Locality

PID#

Likely, BC

## Location Description

Situated 13 kms by road to the northwest of Likely.

Latitude

121 40' 20,3" W

Longitude

52 39' 53.43" N

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Description

Quesnelle Forks is a Cariboo Gold Rush ghost town, established in 1859 at the forks of the Quesnel and Cariboo Rivers in the Cariboo region of British Columbia. It is situated 13 kms by road to the northwest of Likely. Quesnelle Forks is located in the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people.

This historic place includes a town site, a cemetery, a campground, trails, river frontage and a viewscape west in the direction of the original bridge over the Quesnel River. The site is bounded by steep hillsides and by the Cariboo and Quesnel Rivers. The whole area is at risk from ongoing natural and human caused deterioration.

The townsite contains 21 buildings in various states of preservation, ranging from arrested decay to full replication, connected by well-maintained low mobility trails to the cemetery and to a wilderness forestry campsite. Interpretive signs in Chinese and English are placed throughout the townsite. A low-mobility log building at the modern entrance to the historic place serves as a Welcome Interpretive Centre.

### Heritage Value

This historic place has been valued by the Secwepemc people since time immemorial, as a gathering place along a significant travel corridor, and as an important place to harvest food and medicine.

Quesnelle Forks is valued for its long history of Chinese settlement, as one of the earliest mining camps in BC, and for its historic role as a regional supply centre with up to 5000 residents. In its heyday, it was known as the largest city northwest of San Francisco. By 1875 Quesnelle Forks had 200 Chinese merchants and miners, and had established one of the original Tong Houses in British Columbia.

The ongoing stewardship of Quesnelle Forks, the oldest town in the Cariboo, by the local community is evidence of the value placed on this historic landscape.

Quesnelle Forks is further valued for the presence of a historic cemetery with its significant Chinese section, containing a small log structure known as a "Naguta", used for receiving, storing and honouring disinterred remains until they could be returned to their homeland in China. The Quesnelle Forks cemetery is also valued for its continuing use as an operating cemetery for the community of Likely.

Quesnelle Forks, named after early fur trader, merchant and explorer Jules Maurice Quesnelle, is also valued for its place in the history of the Cariboo Gold Rush that resulted in the establishment of the Province of B.C., and its place in the conversation, along with New Westminster and Victoria, when decisions were being made in 1866 on a capital city for British Columbia.

Quesnelle Forks is further valued for the continuity of its historic and modern-day placer gold mining activities.

Quesnelle Forks is valued for evidence of traditional Cariboo Gold Rush architecture including the use of local materials in rustic construction.

Today Quesnelle Forks has aesthetic and recreational value for its natural beauty, riverside views, fishing and picnicking opportunities, bird watching, salmon watching, and world-class kayaking and river rafting on two natural rivers.

## Character-defining Elements

Key character-defining elements of Quesnelle Forks include:

- 21 in-situ historic buildings, of which 18 are in various stages of preservation and restoration, including the Tong House.
- Physical evidence of traditional Gold Rush architecture including rustic construction style and local materials
- Hand-painted paper calligraphy homilies (sermons) posted on and in buildings throughout the town.
- Historic cemetery dating from 1860's, including grave markers, headboards, white picket fence and an Interpretive Kiosk; Chinese section with disinterred plots indicating where human remains have been removed and returned to China
- Small log ("Naguta") structure
- Interpretive Centre

- Log snake fence delineating boundaries of historic town site
- Natural wilderness setting with wild flora and fauna
- Campground
- Interpretive signage in English and Chinese
- Low mobility trails
- Original bridge pilings in the Quesnel River

#### Documentation Location

Cariboo Regional District - Planning Department - Williams Lake



Heritage Branch

#### OTHER INFORMATION

##### Function

##### Type

Community: Settlement

Select

Select

##### Era

Historic

Select

Select

##### Contributing Resources

##### # Type

Collection

Select

Select

##### Themes

Peopling the Land: Settlement

Developing Economies: Trade and Commerce

Select

Select

##### Category of Property

Public (provincial)

##### Architect/Builder

##### Name

##### Type

Select

Select

Select

##### Associated Dates

##### Type

##### From

##### To

Construction (circa)

1859

1950

Select

Select

#### FORMAL RECOGNITION

##### Recognition Type

##### Reference #

##### Recognition Date

Community Heritage Register

Resolution No. 2015-6-10

June 12, 2015

Select

Select

#### IMAGES

##### File Name

##### Image Type

##### Description

##### Caption

##### Date

Quesnelle Forks Site Map

Drawing

Townsite

Townsite Map displayed at Quesnelle Forks

July, 2015

Quesnel Forks Area Map - GIS

Other

Area Map

Select

#### LINKS

##### Type

##### URL

##### Description

Local government website

<http://www.cariboord.ca/services/heritage>

Heritage section

Select		
Select		

#### COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

NOTE: Information in this field is for use by the local government. It is not added to the BC or Canadian Registers of Historic Places

Author Date Modified

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July 2, 2015

#### Questions? Contact:

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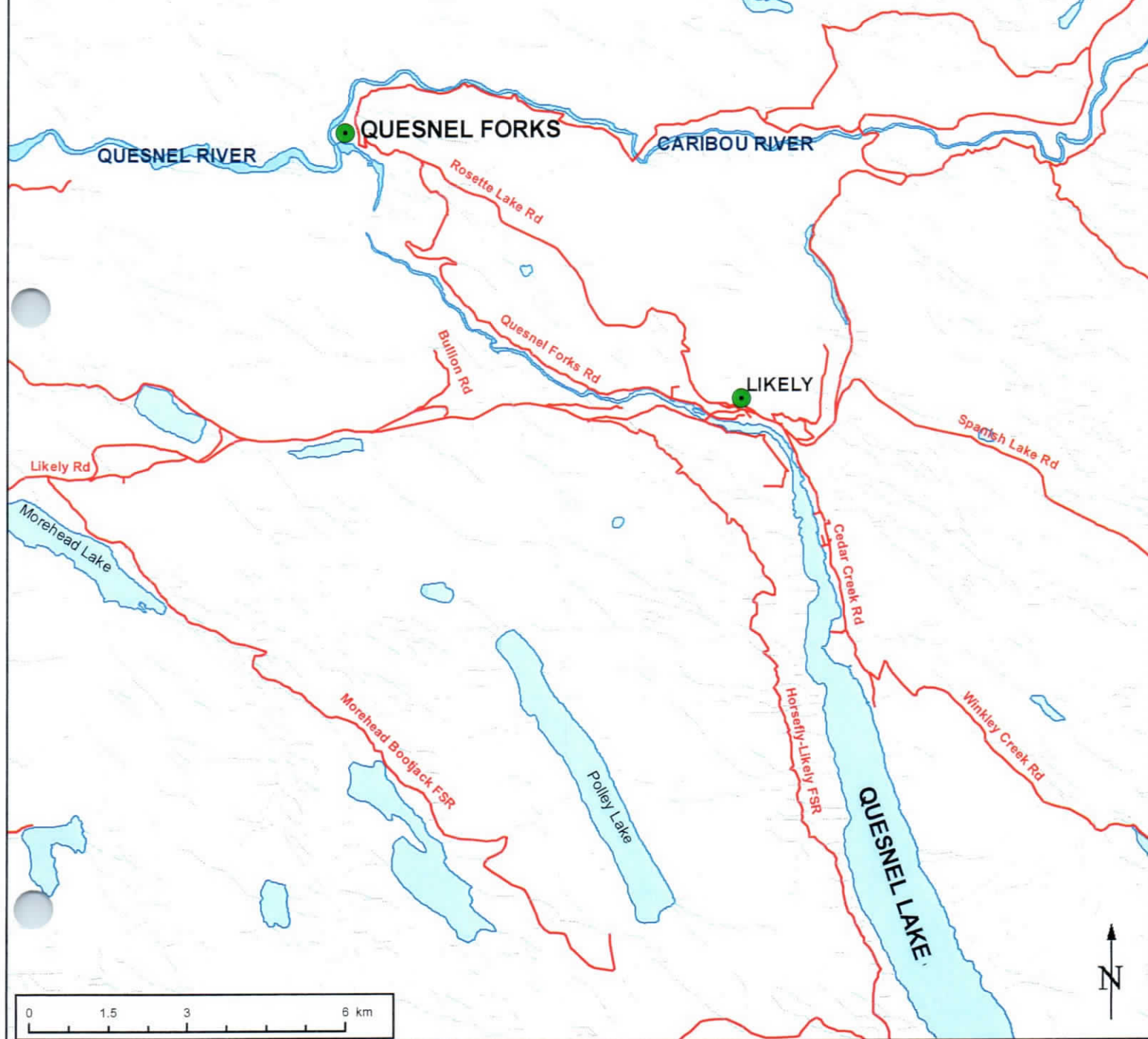
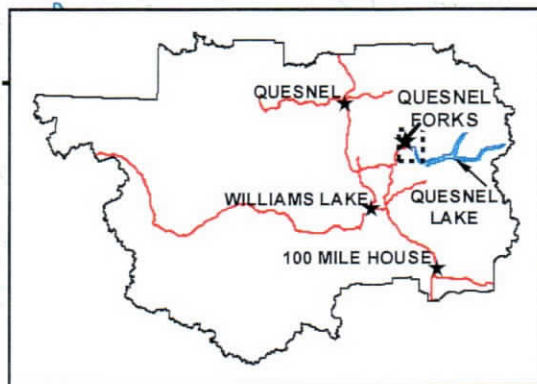
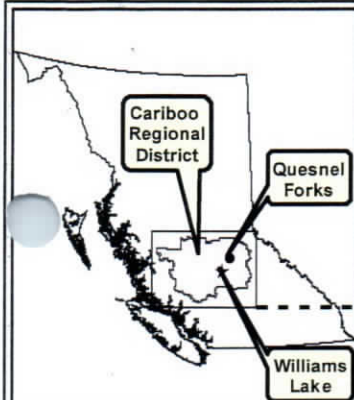
250-387-2262

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Heritage Branch





DEBRIS FROM  
1996 LANDSLIDE

APPROXIMATE LINE  
OF OLD BRIDGE

QUESNEL RIVER

FORMER LOCATIONS OF  
(L to R: Death House, Joss House,  
Wong Kuo's and Tong House)

EROSION LOSS SINCE 1996  
LANDSLIDE

DAY USE  
AREA

CARIBOO RIVER

CAMPSTERS

YOU ARE HERE

OLD CEMETERY  
SECTION

NEW CEMETERY  
SECTION

Vince's Centre

Jacob's House

OLD CHURCH

ROAD TO CAMPSITES

TO MINING CLAIMS  
(PRIVATE)

ROAD TO LIKELY  
(13 KMS)

## MAP LEGEND



- OUTHOUSE FACILITY
- BUILDING ON PRIVATE LAND
- STANDING STRUCTURE  
(1 or more walls standing, may have a roof system.)
- COLLAPSED STRUCTURE  
(No roof system, at least two walls still standing.)
- FORMER BUILDING SITE  
(Either lost to erosion or relocated.)