

Culture Area Boundaries

The attached map presents the boundaries of the Interior Plateau, Northwest Coast and Subarctic/Boreal Forest “culture areas” in British Columbia, as defined by the Archaeology Branch. This map is solely for operational purposes to do with assessing relevancy of field experience for archaeologists seeking to be Field Directors or Permit Holders. It may be subject to change as we monitor the utility of these boundaries.

The intent here is to define areas that have broad archaeological criteria in common so that we can be comfortable that experience obtained on one project is comparable and transferrable to that needed on another project. These “culture area” polygons are based loosely on the Culture Areas defined in the *Handbook of North American Indians* with exceptions occurring in border areas of those maps, most often in the northern parts of the Interior Plateau. While the boundaries of these culture areas frequently coincide with boundaries of First Nations’ asserted traditional territories this is not necessarily the case.

Examples of how archaeological features are captured in these boundaries include:

- The Northwest Coast culture area captures most recorded aboriginally-logged tree sites.
- The Interior Plateau includes most cache pit sites which are indicative of the use of salmon combined with reliably freezing winter temperatures.

Applications by permit applicants and Field Directors new to a culture area should refer to this map when reporting their experience.

Archaeologists who have previously been recognized as qualified to hold permits or direct field work in the Interior Plateau, Northwest Coast and/or Subarctic/Boreal Forest culture areas will continue to be so recognized, regardless of whether their reported experience conforms exactly with this map.

- However, a request to recognise experience for an additional culture area that is based on time previously used for approvals in a what was then a different culture area will not be considered (you can’t count the experience twice for two different areas).

Note that experience in a culture area will not necessarily qualify an applicant to direct any archaeological project in that culture area. The Archaeology Branch will continue to consider the relevancy of an archaeologist’s training and experience to the project proposed. For example:

- experience excavating in coastal middens may not be sufficiently relevant to a project that is expected to require identification and recording of aboriginally-logged trees on the Northwest Coast;
- experience with NE Oil and Gas projects is not necessarily sufficient to work on a mine project near Telegraph Creek among cache pits, rectangular house depressions and salmon fishing stations even though both are in the Subarctic/Boreal Forest Culture areas.

