

Kate & Jim's Travels with Charles

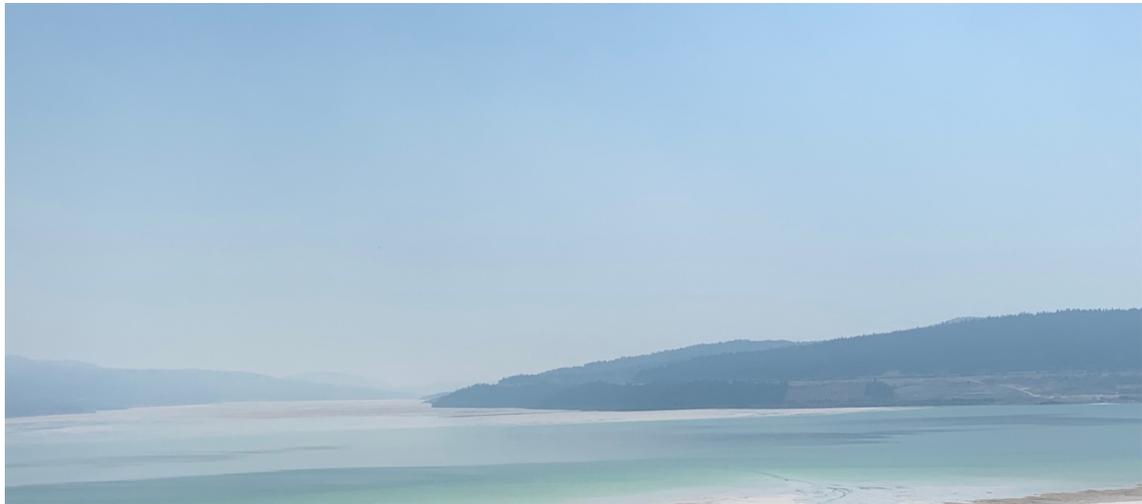
Episode #10 – Zigzagging Through the Okanagan

From Lillooet, we had to start plotting our route more carefully, as some of the highways were closed, and some of the areas were best to avoid. As a result, we zigzagged through the Okanagan, and still came too close for comfort to some fires.



Our zigzagging route also took us past some interesting places.

We suddenly found ourselves driving past this huge open pit copper mine. It's apparently one of the largest in the world, and we drove past it for kilometres and kilometres. Although it looked like a beautiful lake with pure white sand ... we suspect it wasn't totally environmentally friendly.



We saw these domes from a distance and didn't realize that they were painted like the Canadian flag. (I lifted this photo from the web.) They claim it's the world's largest Canadian flag. So that's something.



Our travels took us through the town of Merritt, where we stopped into one of the more unusual visitor centres. It looked more like a cluttered antique store with all kinds of stuff other people wanted to get rid of. The woman there was happy to give us suggestions of which routes we should and should not travel. We didn't take any of her advice, and it worked out fine.

While there, I took advantage of the washroom facilities, where the antique store theme continued. I got a great laugh at this unusual display of earrings, which announced that all earrings were \$2.00 unless otherwise priced. And all of the earrings were otherwise priced.



Some of our zigging took us to stunningly beautiful places that the smoke had avoided.





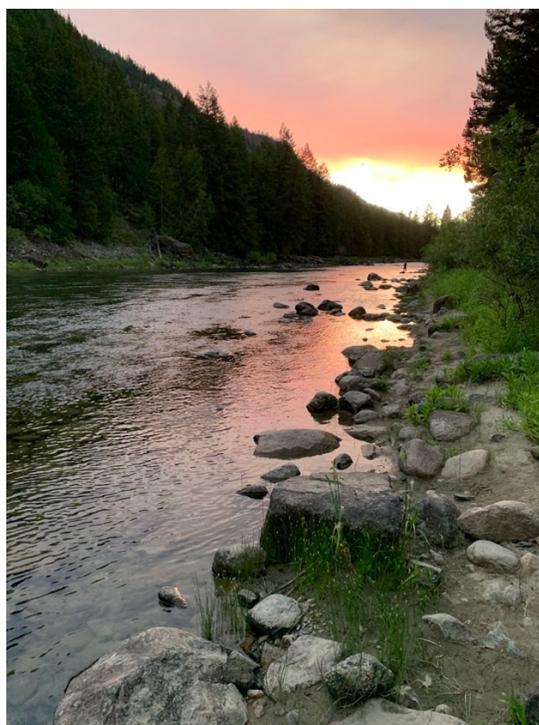
At beautiful Allison Lake, I found this “dragonfly parking lot”!



And Jim had a chance to get some more footage for his water videos.



These beautiful shots aside, it was a slightly stressful day, because we knew we still had lots of smoke ahead of us. But we found a nice RV camping spot in Hedley, where we were able to relax for the evening, and we got down to the river in time for sunset.



The next morning, we headed to the heartland of the Okanagan, where each little town has dozens of roadside produce stands.



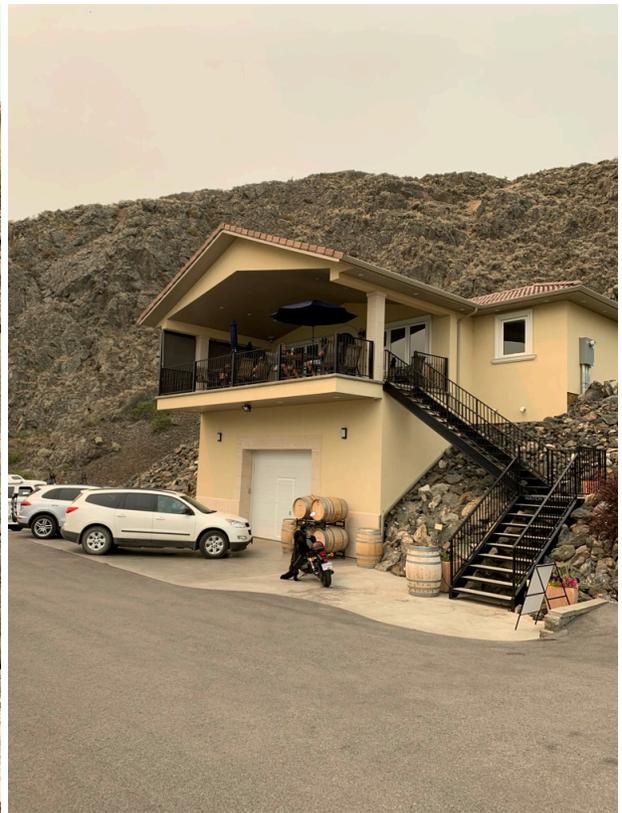
At this one, in Keremeos, we found these giant zucchinis that reminded me of the ones our grandfather used to grow on our Ontario farm back in the 60s.

We had hoped to go to Osoyoos, which is said to be a beautiful town, but confronting these sights convinced us that we'd have to visit it some other time.



We turned around and headed back toward Cawston and Keremeos, which is also known for its wines.

We pulled up to one that was off the road, and although we didn't have an appointment, we were welcomed, and we had a lovely tasting of their excellent wines.



It was still hazy with smoke, but I guess to the residents, it's just one of the seasons of the year and they take it in stride.





Continuing on the wine theme, we booked our first Harvest Host stay. Harvest Host is an organization of wineries that allow RVers to stay on their property overnight for free. Obviously, the hope is that guests will make some purchases while they're there. And we were happy to live up to their expectations.

We stayed at the Crowsnest vineyard, where we were able to park right beside the grapes.





We tasted a few of their wines, and then, after a nap (!), we enjoyed a lovely dinner.



There was still a reminder of the fires in the region...



... but we loved the whole concept of Harvest Host and hope to find more of them in our travels

The next morning, we drove to Penticton for the one stop we refused to omit. We had to catch up with my old friend Trevor Evans.



We picked him up and we drove to his favourite morning hangout, The Bench, where we had a great breakfast and got caught up. Still his energetic self, Trevor kept us entertained for an hour or so with tales of his youth. Let's just say, in the time it took Jim and me to finish a full breakfast of eggs and toast and other yummy stuff, Trevor took one-and-a-half bites of his muffin.

Then he took us on a tour up to the best lookout in Penticton.





We would love to have stayed longer, but we knew we had a long drive ahead of us. So we said goodbye and headed toward the Alberta border.

Though our stay in the Okanagan was much shorter than we had hoped, we have no complaints. Truly, life is just a bowl of (Keremeos) cherries.

