

Sunshine Coast Aggregate Potential Mapping Project

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As the market for natural and crushed stone aggregate in British Columbia continues to grow and existing resources begin to dwindle, the importance of aggregate exploration, land-use planning and resource inventory escalates. At present, much of the demand for aggregate in southwestern British Columbia is satisfied by operations located along the Sunshine Coast. This project provides the first step towards evaluating aggregate resources on a regional scale by providing a first approximation of aggregate distribution within the study area.

The Sunshine Coast study area comprises of approximately 310,000 hectares of land surface, distributed throughout eighteen 1:50,000-scale map sheets. It is based on a coastal buffer that extends landward approximately 3 kilometres and stretches from Gibsons to as far north as the head of Bute Inlet. Also included are the major islands along the Sunshine Coast as well as a larger, 5-kilometre buffer in the vicinity of Powell River.

The study area has been divided based on surficial geology and has resulted in 3305 individual areas (polygons) that have been assessed for their potential for hosting natural aggregate deposits and crushed bedrock aggregate. Information collected that lead to aggregate potential evaluation includes: terrain mapping data; existing bedrock maps; 1,462 water wells, exploration drill holes and geotechnical boreholes; and 98 field stations. In total, 194 polygons were subsequently classified as having a high aggregate potential (primary), 171 as having moderate potential (secondary) and 2,940 as low potential (tertiary). This translates to 20,466 ha, 20,428 ha and 268,628 ha respectively.

The resulting aggregate potential maps are valuable tools for resource management, urban planning and aggregate exploration in the least. They are available, in digital format only, as Open File 2002-14. They are obtainable for free download and can also be viewed at the interactive Map Place website.

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