

Sep 22 - Woss and Beyond

We're heading back to Campbell River today with a stop at Woss, following the North Island route south.



Woss is a Canadian Forest Product's lumber town/village/community located in the Nimpkish valley. CFP owns and operates the only logging railroad in Canada.

We're looking for locomotive 113, a 2-8-2 Mikado steam engine, on display somewhere around here.

Here she is at the end of the rail yard. We pull in to look around and have a coffee.



Here is a bit of history about Loci 113 and logging in the Nimpkish valley.

A collage of information about Woss Heritage Park and the logging railroad. On the left, there is a red circular logo with the number "113" and the text "Woss Heritage Park". Below this, it says "Woss Heritage Park celebrates almost 100 years of railway logging in the Nimpkish Valley. The park's focal point is Locomotive 113, an engine that symbolizes the railway as an essential part of the logging operation." In the center is a map of the Nimpkish Valley showing the logging railroad route from Vancouver Island to Campbell River, with various logging camps and facilities marked. On the right, there are several text boxes and photos. One box titled "WHY A LOGGING RAILROAD?" explains that the railroad was adapted for the challenging physical conditions of northern Vancouver Island's forests. Another box titled "As the only still-operating logging railroad in the country, the railway is living history at the heart of the Nimpkish Valley logging operations." includes a photo of a steam locomotive. A third box titled "The logging railroad eventually extended over 215 kilometres through dense forest and over deep ravines. Its operation required the construction of nine enormous wooden trestle bridges such as this one at Noomas Crossing, seen here in the 1930s. These engineering feats were remarkable for their time. Today, overpasses crossing the Island Highway near Woss indicate the location of the logging railroad." includes a photo of a trestle bridge. A final box titled "Locomotive 113 in action in the 1940s" includes a photo of the locomotive pulling a train and text describing its role in picking up logs and transporting them to a log sorting facility.

Locomotive 113 with Ross Mountain in background, 1945

LOCI 113: A 2-8-2 STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

Built in 1920, Loci 113 is known as a 2-8-2 steam locomotive, a wheel configuration commonly used in the first half of the 20th century, before diesel-powered engines replaced steam.

The 2-8-2 wheel arrangement allowed the locomotive's firebox to be placed behind instead of above the driving wheels, creating space for a larger firebox that was both wide and deep. This increased the rate of fuel combustion and capacity for steam generation, producing more power at higher speeds.

A coal fire burns in the firebox, heating a boiler full of water to make steam. This drives the cylinders and pistons to turn the wheels and propel the engine.

Locomotive 113's Specifications

- Number: 113
- Serial No: 61899
- Built: 1920
- Weight: 135 tons
- Type: Alco Rod Engine 2-8-2, referring to the arrangement of its wheels
- Builder: Portland, Astoria & Pacific Railway based in Oregon, USA

Identifying the parts of Loci 113

- Chimney - releases engine exhaust
- Domest - contains safety valves to reduce boiler pressure
- Smokestack - exhaust steam and gas from the fire down through to the chimney
- Boiler - produces steam from water
- Firebox - burns coal to create steam
- Cab - houses the engineer
- Tender - carries water and coal
- Cylinder - converts steam to power
- Wing gear - rods, levers, cranks and other mechanical parts that provide the links between pistons, valves and wheels
- Wheels - connect to the pistons and drive the locomotive

Acquired by Canfor in 1953, Loci 113 was used for logging as late as 1965, and for popular forestry tours until 1981. It was then retired and put on display in Woss.

To celebrate Canadian Forest Products' 50th anniversary picnic in 1988, the reworked Loci 113's steam whistle sounded through the forest once more. A passenger car known as the Grey Ghost was used to transport visitors.

THE LEGACY OF LOCI 113

Affectionately known as Loci 113, this steam locomotive remains an important part of the history and community of Woss.

Although its last logging run took place in the 1960s, Loci 113 retains a nostalgic and historical connection for people in Woss and the Nimpkish Valley.

It is a symbol of success for the people who worked for many years as crew on the logging railway, in the forest industry and for children who explored the forest riding the railway. The locomotive is a sign of identity and home for the Woss community, and continues to be important to past residents who return for train celebrations, contemporary logger sports competitions and other events.

It's our train
113



I couldn't resist hopping on the tender running board.



Well that was enjoyable and so was the coffee. Good thing we pack a thermos with hot water before we headed out.

Back on the highway, there are more trees and mountains.



After a stop for lunch at the Sayward junction, we arrive in Campbell River. We had already decided we'd head back to Elk Falls for tonight, maybe two.

Here's our campsite and the Quinsam river running behind us.



On our evening walk, we stopped further up the river and chatted with a couple watching the fish. I wasn't sure it would work, but I shot a video of the fish. I didn't catch any of them jumping. Drat!

We're going to stay a couple of nights here then see where we go Saturday. The days are warm but the nights are definitely cool.

Check back to see where we go next.