

2015 RECREATIONAL PROPERTY REPORT





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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

A golfer's paradise – Prince Edward Island is packed with 33 stunning golf courses, many of which are located on the beautiful shoreline of Canada's smallest province. The island also draws significant attention to its gorgeous coastline in July with the ever-popular Cavendish Beach Music Festival.

"Prince Edward Island's recreational property market has been quiet over the past few years but we may see a rekindling of interest in waterfront cottages as a result of the rebounding American economy," says Ken Peters, broker/owner, Royal LePage Peters & Lank Realty Inc. "Market activity is similar to this time last year so we are expecting sales to be on par or surpass last year's results."

Inland properties on the island typically range in price from \$75,000 to \$150,000. The range for waterfront properties with land access is much wider with cottages being listed anywhere between \$130,000 and \$350,000.

"Prince Edward Island's recreational property market has been quiet over the past few years but we may see a rekindling of interest in waterfront cottages as a result of the rebounding American economy"

Ken Peters, broker/owner, Royal LePage Peters & Lank Realty Inc.

With buyers from all walks of life – singles, young families and retirees – cottage owners buy properties in Prince Edward Island for a wide range of reasons, including for personal use or as a source of secondary income through rentals.

Peters explains that many potential buyers assume it is impossible to find anything available on the beautiful island. "While there are certain procedures that need to be followed to acquire waterfront properties on over five acres of land, there are a number of great listings available this year," he says.



NEW BRUNSWICK FREDERICTON



The dark blue waters of the St. John River can be seen from the high hills within the university town of Fredericton. Though not typically known for its cottage lifestyle, many owners of secondary homes in the area take advantage of their properties year-round and, as a result of the excessive snowfall, regularly enjoy using snowmobiles, ATVs and attending the city's annual winter festival.

"Changes to the housing market within New Brunswick's capital city are often dependent on movement within the government," says Chris Pitman, broker/manager, Royal LePage Gardiner Realty. "As a result, the market currently remains stable but we are expecting an increase in prices in 2016."

The average price of an inland property currently ranges from \$106,000 to \$116,000. For waterfront properties with land access, expect to see properties listed around \$117,000.

As a result of high inventory levels in the area, Pitman advises buyers to be thoughtful about plans to purchase a home with the hope of quickly turning around to sell it.

"Baby boomers are currently downsizing and liquidating assets, which tend to be recreational homes," says Pitman further alluding to the high number of listings.

PERTH & ROWENA ON THE TOBIQUE RIVER

Resting on the Tobique River, the Perth and Rowena regions are located just east of the American border, bringing in residents from Maine and surrounding provinces. Though the community largely consists of retirees, there are a number of engaging year-round activities for all ages,

including snowmobiling, four wheeling and cross country skiing in the winter, and music festivals, bass fishing, kayaking and the Gathering of the Scots festival in the summer.

"The recreational property market had a slow start this year due to snowfall in April," says Nicole Levesque, broker/owner, Royal LePage Grand Falls Real Estate. "As a result, it was difficult to show waterfront properties until halfway through the year."

For non-waterfront properties, the average price range is \$100,000 to \$150,000. This increases to a price range of \$200,000 to \$400,000 for waterfront properties that are accessible by land.

Levesque says that a common trend is for property owners to work west of the province for a number of months and return to New Brunswick for rest and relaxation during the summer. Beyond the temporary visitors, the retirement community in the area is growing, as more couples are returning to the Maritimes after wrapping up their professional lives.

For those looking to purchase a recreational property, Levesque advises buyers be aware of maintenance requirements. Many sellers have put a lot of effort into upgrading their properties and landscaping, something that needs to be maintained going forward, though services are available locally for those who prefer to hire professional help.

For food lovers there are great spots locally for seafood and Danish treats as well as a weekly market every Saturday.

SOUTHEAST NEW BRUNSWICK

Moncton residents looking for a summer getaway home are flocking to the beautiful Shediac beaches and the winding boardwalks of Bouctouche alongside the temperate waters of the Northumberland Strait. Dealing with abnormally long winters, New Brunswick property owners take advantage of the warm summers by birdwatching at Kouchibouguac

National Park or playing alongside the world's highest tides at the Bay of Fundy, providing relaxation and excitement for people of all ages.

"Inventory levels are low due in part to the damage that was



done to properties throughout the winter storms," says Ralph Pritchard, sales representative, Royal LePage Atlantic. "Demand is high but cottage owners are trying to get their properties ready for sale before listing them."

The average price of all types of recreational properties (whether inland, island or waterfront) is \$150,000.

Typically, cottage owners in the area are married professionals with two children who are looking for a weekend escape. There are also some cases of siblings purchasing properties together but it is not as common as separate families owning their own space and simply sharing with friends and extended family.

For those looking to purchase a property in the area, Pritchard advises buyers be realistic about prices and suggests being content with simple amenities for a secondary home.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Newfoundland offers an abundance of scenic beauty, from cliffs lined with brightly coloured buildings to harbours speckled with boats of all sizes. Cottage owners here make the most of their short summers, enjoying these landscapes and participating in as much outdoor activity as possible. Surrounded by spectacular wilderness they can spend time spotting one of the 22 species of whales off the east coast or trekking through the unmarked trails of Gros Morne National Park on the west.

Glenn Larkin, a Realtor® with Royal LePage Professionals, attributes the delay in sales this year to the slow economy. "Inventory levels are high in Newfoundland because of the instability in the oil sector," says Larkin. "With some layoffs underway, many people are selling secondary assets like their summer homes, which presents a great opportunity for some buyers."

The average price of a non-waterfront recreational property in the region is \$100,000, which increases slightly to \$150,000 for waterfront properties accessible by land. Meanwhile, the average price of waterfront properties that are only accessible by boat is \$200,000.

Typically, cottage owners in the area are married, dual-income couples with children who are looking for an escape on the weekend. In the relatively chilly province, cottage owners savour the short summers and use their recreational properties as much as possible rather than renting them out.

Larkin advises potential buyers to keep in close touch with their real estate agent for any new opportunities. They are also encouraged to frequently visit the areas that interest them and watch for signs and advertisements in the region.



NOVA SCOTIA

From the small, historic community of Yarmouth on the southwest shore, to the rolling hills of Cape Breton Island, cottage owners in Nova Scotia have endless choices of activities throughout the year. Whether snowmobiling through the fresh snow or whale watching on the beautiful Atlantic Ocean, there is something for everyone on the East Coast.

Matt Honsberger, broker, Royal LePage Atlantic explains that the early market was delayed due to weather challenges in March and early April but inventory levels have begun climbing. "We are expecting to achieve all-time highs this summer for the number of property listings," says Honsberger. "Prices start at \$100,000 in rural areas and can get up to more than \$1,000,000 for waterfront properties."

The average price of landlocked recreational properties in Nova Scotia is \$180,000. This increases significantly to \$300,000 for island properties and to \$405,000 for waterfront properties with land access.

Typically, cottage owners in the province are families with school-aged children. Honsberger says one of the biggest misconceptions among potential buyers is that they are going to get a beautiful waterfront property, close to the city for a low price which is not necessarily the case.

Buyers are encouraged to be realistic about the type of properties available to them for their price range, which largely depends on location and proximity to the waterfront.

QUEBEC EASTERN TOWNSHIPS

Plenty of fresh air and the quiet charm of breathtaking landscapes is what awaits you in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. The area sits at the crossroads of Quebec City, Montreal, Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire. It is favored for its popular ski resort Mont Sutton in the winter and wineries, outdoor activities and traditional cuisine in Brome-Missisquoi and Upper Yamaska during the summer.

"The baby boomers were the first to popularize the region as a recreational escape, and now they are being joined by their children. It is easy to fall in love with the area and no one wants to leave," confides Steve Breton, Realtor®, Royal LePage Action Courtier Sutton.

Indeed, the region has something for everyone. There are 18 wineries to visit on the Wine Route and the Spring Rosé is an attraction in itself, drawing people from across the province. Those who are more attracted by outdoor activities will undoubtedly be surprised by the variety of options available: you can even travel through the treetops by bike! A safe and environmentally friendly operation allows you to pedal through the trees in a one-of-a-kind experience. For the shopping enthusiasts, there is the famous "Factory Outlet" in Bromont. Finally, for the winter months, do not forget the coveted ski slopes of Mount Sutton and Bromont, which make this region an all-year attraction.

The Eastern Townships offer very competitive recreational property prices with a stabilized market this year. "In this market it is mostly families who are buying recreational homes, but 40 per cent of buyers also intend to rent them out part-time" says Breton. On average, a standard waterfront property is priced at \$700,000, while non-waterfront properties go for \$300,000.

LANAUDIÈRE

Lanaudière is an expansive region, offering a mixture of forests and prairies to recreational property hunters. From Terrebonne to Saint-Michel-des-Saints, passing by Saint-Donat and along the Saint-Laurent river, the area has many lakes and rivers to explore and choose from.

"Municipalities in this area are investing to develop tourism, and the area has become a great option for buyers", says Royal LePage Harmonie Realtor® Guylaine Pelletier. "There are many properties available here providing buyers with a lot of choice, sellers have to be patient." Average prices in the region currently range from \$125,000 for inland properties to \$250,000 for waterfront properties.

"Municipalities in this area are investing to develop tourism, and the area has become a great option for buyers"

Guylaine Pelletier, Realtor® Royal LePage Harmonie

The draw to the region has become so irresistible that Pelletier has noticed owners using their recreational properties as primary residences, seeking a lifestyle of quiet beauty in Lanaudière. Not only is it an ideal retirement destination, Lanaudière also offers a variety of activities for young families and active outdoorsy types. For the more culturally inclined, the Lanaudière festival is recognized as the largest classical music festival in Canada.

"One of the great advantages of the region is that downtown Montreal is only thirty minutes away. Professionals can enjoy their recreational properties without losing time commuting," says Pelletier. "A lot of people also work from their cottages, travelling to Montreal easily if needed."

MEMPHRÉMAGOG

At the doors of Vermont, Memphrémagog is the ideal place for a variety of buyers: from professionals looking for a large property on Memphrémagog Lake to retirees looking to downsize or grandparents buying to host their growing families.

"This area is a very family-friendly community that attracts buyers with children and grandchildren because of the wealth of activities present for them"

Christian Longpré, Realtor® Royal LePage Au Sommet

"This area is a very family-friendly community that attracts buyers with children and grandchildren because of the wealth of activities present for them", comments Royal LePage Au Sommet Realtor® Christian Longpré.

The region is committed to ensuring desirable amenities are available to visitors and permanent residents alike: wifi is now available along the main commercial streets, the roads are set up for biking, and a lot of trails are already enjoyed by runners.

Only one hour away from Montreal, property prices remain reasonable for buyers looking to escape from urban life on weekends. Waterfront properties with water access average between \$150,000 and \$300,000, and waterfront properties with land access go for between \$250,000 and \$500,000.

MONT-TREMBLANT

"The area is simply defined by its quality of life", says Royal LePage Mont-Tremblant Realtor® Paul Dalbec. "It is considered the place to be in Quebec by many, whether to live full time or as a vacation destination."

Visitors from Canada, the United States, and Europe flock to the area to spend quiet time with the family, take in local culture or enjoy eco or adventure tourism. The history of Mont-Tremblant makes this Quebec destination unique. Walking the famous mountain trails, enjoying beautiful ski runs or relaxing in the quaint villages allows you to escape fully from your everyday life.

Dalbec continues, "We have not seen much of an impact from recent economic events in Mont-Tremblant, and are looking at another strong market this year." Dalbec notes that the prices in Mont-Tremblant vary depending on property type: from \$225,000 to \$350,000 for non-waterfront properties and increasing to \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 for waterfront properties limited to water access. Waterfront properties with land access command the highest average price ranging from \$500,000 - \$1,500,000.

The Mont-Tremblant area continues to evolve. 2015 is seeing a developing trend around sport-oriented tourism with a number of activities and competitions taking place. One of the biggest zipline circuits in the world opened its doors in 2014 and the region has now welcomed an Ironman triathlon, and an obstacle race.



ONTARIO BLIND RIVER

Cottage owners from Ontario, Michigan and Wisconsin, flock to Blind River for year-round adventures. The region's snowmobile trails and ice fishing opportunities are perfect for the long, chilly winters and sailing, swimming or canoeing are ideal for those looking for a summer getaway.

"Inventory levels vary depending on the cost," says Catherine Green, sales representative, Royal LePage Northern Advantage. "We have a number of listings for high-end properties but inventory is a bit lower among the less expensive properties. Even the water access only properties are selling quickly."

The average price of both inland (non-waterfront) and island (water access only) properties is \$150,000 but this increases to \$200,000 for standard waterfront properties that are accessible by land.

Cottage owners in Blind River are typically younger families or older parents looking for a place they can bring their families. Green says many of these buyers are coming from across the border with two-thirds of the properties around one of the lakes owned by Americans.

One of the biggest misconceptions among potential buyers is that they can get pristine, waterfront properties for a low price but Green says this is not the case and advises buyers to have realistic expectations.

BRUCE PENINSULA

Every year, the national parks near Tobermory – located between Georgian Bay and Lake Huron – increase in popularity, bringing more tourists to explore the Bruce Peninsula area. The unique shoreline offers both rugged terrain for adventure seekers and beautiful scenery for those looking to kick back and relax.

"With no shortage of water-related activities in the area, demand is increasing for waterfront properties," says Paul Annett, sales representative at Royal LePage RCR Realty Pike Bay. "Overall, sales have been stable throughout the past few years but this spring sales have climbed moderately for our waterfront properties."

Buyers are willing to travel three to four hours for recreational homes in the Bruce Peninsula due to its popularity and prices. For a standard waterfront property with land access, the average price ranges from \$275,000 to \$450,000, while inland properties range in price from \$150,000 to \$200,000.



Though joint investments among family members and friends are rare, Annett believes that cottage buyers still want to share their experience and are of the mindset that relatives will visit their property in order to spend time together.



Annett advises buyers to trust their instincts when purchasing their recreational property and to choose based on location regardless of the market. According to Annett, "Buyers know the property that's perfect for them as soon as they see it."

EAST KAWARTHAS

With the expansion of Highway 407 underway, the East Kawarthas is becoming more accessible and therefore more desirable to those living in the GTA. The two-hour drive from Toronto allows city dwellers to easily escape for the weekend to explore one of the region's many lakes on or off of the extensive Trent-Severn Waterway, all while having the amenities of Peterborough just down the road.

"We have had a very strong start to the year, with the long weekend in May being one of the busiest in recent memory," says Gail Burton, sales representative, Royal LePage Frank Real Estate, Brokerage. "As a result of a strong market, buyers' confidence has grown and many are now purchasing properties that are new or didn't sell last year."

The East Kawarthas brings a variety of options for styles of recreational homes. The average price of a non-waterfront property is \$300,000, which increases to \$350,000 for waterfront properties accessible by water. Finally, the most desirable waterfront properties with land access average \$450,000.

Burton says prices are not likely to change drastically; current properties in the region are selling closer to their list price now than they have in the past several years as sellers price accurately against what buyers are looking to spend in the area.

Before purchasing a recreational property, buyers are encouraged to speak with neighbouring property owners to gain the deepest insight about the nearby lake, amenities and surrounding community. Burton says, "A waterfront may look beautiful in the early spring but could become weedy in the late summer; only a neighbour would have this intimate knowledge."

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

A three hour commute from Toronto and bordering on Algonquin Provincial Park, the Haliburton Highlands provides rustic year-round activities from dog sledding and snowshoeing in the winter to horseback riding and boating all summer long.

Anthony vanLieshout, broker of record, Royal LePage Lakes of Haliburton, says he once again anticipates activity levels in Haliburton to be similar to past years. "We experience steady market values here in spite of the variety of buyers that come our way," he says. "We see everyone from younger buyers looking for adventure to baby boomers preparing to settle into a relaxed retirement."

The average price of properties found in the Haliburton Highlands has remained unchanged since 2014. A waterfront property with land access is \$350,000, while waterfront properties that are only accessible by boat are much more affordable with an average price of \$200,000. Meanwhile, in-land properties are an average price of \$150,000.

Potential buyers should focus on aspects of a property that can't be changed advises vanLieshout. "Think about the lifestyle a property can truly provide you, more so than the hard facts of the building itself. That aspect can be renovated and changed to suit your needs."

HONEY HARBOUR

Tucked away in beautiful Georgian Bay, Honey Harbour is home to diverse wildlife and provides access to some of the most serene waters in Ontario. Temporary cottagers and settled retirees alike enjoy the abundance of waterfront properties in the heart of bustling Honey Harbour or a short boat-ride away on one of the many surrounding islands.

"The recreational property market in the area is very active this year with an increase in listings," says Laurie Belsey, broker, Royal LePage In Touch Realty Inc. "Typically, families will pass down their cottages throughout the generations but the current market is not adhering to this trend and we have a lot of incredible properties available right now."

The average price for an entry level waterfront property that is accessible by land is \$500,000. This number decreases significantly to \$300,000 for those willing to buy island properties

that are only accessible by boat. Honey Harbour is unique in that the township does not permit backlot subdivisions, allowing everyone in the area to own a piece of the waterfront.

Belsey encourages buyers to be ready to spend and recommends purchasing an island property – many of which are only a two- or three-minute boat ride away – to avoid higher-priced listings. Such properties offer better value for the buyers' money, more privacy and often better options for swimming.

KAWARTHA LAKES

Known for its vast trails and interconnected waterways, the Kawartha Lakes region is an explorer's paradise. Whether investigating the ins and outs of the beautiful region by bike or by boat, there is always something new to see.

"I anticipate more listings will appear on the market this fall"

Linda Duncan, sales representative, Royal LePage Kawartha Lakes Realty Inc.

Linda Duncan, sales representative, Royal LePage Kawartha Lakes Realty Inc., says that inventory levels are slightly lower this time of year. "Because the high-quality waterfront properties with easy access have been scooped up in previous years, they have increased in value and are much more difficult to find," she explains. "I anticipate more listings will appear on the market this fall, as cottage owners who purchased property in early retirement begin selling and moving closer to their families."

For those looking to buy a recreational property in the region, the waterfront properties with land access, which are increasingly difficult to find, average \$370,000. Meanwhile waterfront properties accessible by water and non-waterfront properties are priced significantly lower at average prices of \$250,000 and \$170,000, respectively.

Duncan believes that nostalgia plays a role in purchasing recreational properties, citing the typical buyer as being in their 30s or 40s with a couple of children. "Many buyers frequented cottages when they were children and want to recreate that memory with their own families," says Duncan.

Many people have the misconception that \$300,000 will buy them the perfect cottage with a private waterfront, massive property, and convenience of being located just outside Toronto, but Duncan warns that this is not the case. She advises buyers to be patient in their search and begin with informed expectations.

LAND O' LAKES

Located in Eastern Ontario, the Land O' Lakes offers immense opportunity for seasonal swimming, boating and year-round fishing. Whether sport fishing on a warm summer day or curling up next to a fireplace after ice fishing, cottage owners flock to this region for one main reason: the 5,000 sparkling lakes.

"With no shortage of listings this year, Land O' Lakes is one of the most affordable markets for waterfront properties," says Chris Winney, broker, Royal LePage Northbrook. "Now is a great opportunity for buyers because sellers are being very reasonable with listing prices."

In the region, inland properties are listed at an average price of \$131,000, which increases slightly to \$190,000 for waterfront properties with water access. The average price of the most desirable properties, waterfront cottages with land access, increases to \$315,000.

"Now is a great opportunity for buyers because sellers are being very reasonable with listing prices."

Chris Winney, broker, Royal LePage Northbrook

Though many people are currently looking to sell their recreational property, those that continue to enjoy these homes do so because it's a great way to disconnect from the fast-paced, technology-driven world and reconnect with family.

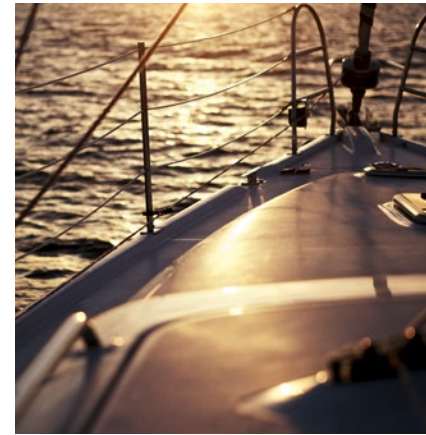
Winney advises potential buyers to consider a property's privacy, its three-season accessibility, the suitability of the waterfront, the size of the lake, the amount of Crown Land on the lake, and finally the driving distance from home.

MEAFORD, THORNBURY & COLLINGWOOD

True four-season destinations, Meaford, Thornbury and Collingwood are located two hours north of the Greater Toronto Area. Cottage owners make the short drive throughout the year to enjoy local jazz bands, sailing lessons in the harbour and black-diamond hills at Blue Mountain.



"The market is doing much better this year, but we have a 14 per cent reduction in property listings compared to 2014," says Rick Crouch, broker, Royal LePage Locations North. "The economy is doing well and interest rates are attractive. We have the buyers but need more inventory for their selection."



The average price of a waterfront property in the area is \$416,000, which increases to \$474,000 for non-waterfront properties.

Typical buyers in the region of Meaford, Thornbury and Collingwood come from the western parts of the GTA. Crouch says many people are buying recreational properties now with a plan to make them their retirement homes in the future.

For those looking to buy a property in the area, Crouch recommends using a local Realtor®. "Many buyers come to the area with their usual Realtor®, but it's the local ones that best understand the nuances of the market," says Crouch.

MUSKOKA

With properties ranging from under \$200,000 to a few current listings at \$10,000,000, Muskoka has gained attention from residents of Toronto and on an international level. Known as a world-class destination for summers at the cottage, potential buyers are quickly convinced to purchase a recreational property in the area after taking a dip in the glistening lakes, hiking the local trails or golfing on some of the best courses in Canada.

"Market activity was encouraging in the first few months of this year's cottage-buying season," says Don Evans, sales representative, Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka.



NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

Home to dozens of wineries, multiple theatres and exciting water adventures, this unique lakeside region is an up-and-coming market for those looking for a recreational property. Americans and Canadians alike are finding Niagara-on-the-Lake attractive due to its proximity to the border.

"Because of the long drive to Muskoka, we are seeing an increase in buyers from the Greater Toronto Area seeking alternative options," says Ryan Johnstone, broker/manager, Royal LePage Niagara Real Estate Centre. "Due to higher interest among buyers, our inventory levels are lower than normal."

"Because of the long drive to Muskoka, we are seeing an increase in buyers from the Greater Toronto Area seeking alternative options"

Ryan Johnstone, broker/manager, Royal LePage Niagara Real Estate Centre

The average price of a non-waterfront recreational property in the region is \$450,000. This increases significantly to an average price of \$600,000 for a waterfront property accessible by land.

With a wide range of activities for people of all ages, Niagara-on-the-Lake has diverse demographics including single people, families and retirees. Buyers are investing in these properties because they feel comfortable with the stability of the housing market.

Brad Johnstone, broker of record, Royal LePage Niagara Real Estate Centre, advises potential buyers to use a local Realtor®. "The market is very segmented and variations in location can account for price changes of up to \$80,000," he says.



"Consumers are feeling more confident in their financial stability and the economy in general, so potential buyers are more comfortable purchasing properties this year."

The price of a non-waterfront property typically ranges from \$175,000 to \$210,000. This increases significantly for waterfront properties, which tend to vary based on the size of the nearest lake. Waterfront properties that are only accessible by boat range in price from \$390,000

to \$450,000. Meanwhile, waterfront properties accessible by land typically range in price from \$540,000 to \$700,000.

Evans says a "typical buyer" does not exist in Muskoka, explaining that owners come from all walks of life. "We see young and successful professionals looking to enjoy their weekend; middle-aged couples who can finally afford a cottage and are looking for a place to congregate with their family; and retired couples that have transferred all assets to Muskoka and use the city as their getaway," he says.

For those looking to purchase a cottage in the area, Evans advises buyers keep maintenance top-of-mind and consider whether they want to use the property seasonally or year-round. With winter cottages, for example, it is essential buyers do their research to ensure that snow removal exists in the area where they are looking to buy.





ORILLIA & SOUTH MUSKOKA

Located two hours north of Toronto, the Orillia and South Muskoka area is surrounded by beautiful lakes for boating, fishing, swimming and relaxing. The region is perfect for outdoor adventures and is expected to draw a country music loving crowd during the three-day Boots and Hearts music festival in August.

"The market has performed well so far and many listings that carried over from last year have now been scooped up due to low inventory levels," says Stewart McNeely, broker, Royal LePage Real Quest Realty Inc. "Though inventory is low now, it is starting to open up with new listings, a trend expected to continue over the summer months."

The average price of a non-waterfront recreational property in the area is \$200,000, which increases to \$300,000 for island properties. Meanwhile, the average price of a waterfront property that is accessible by land is \$530,000.

Typical buyers in the area are middle-aged couples with adult children who are hoping to spend their weekends relaxing by the lakeshore. Though some buyers intend to rent properties during the months they are not using them, the primary reason for buying is to enjoy the lifestyle.

McNeely advises potential buyers to be persistent. "Take the time to find a property that is the right fit for you," he says. "There is no need to shift your priorities and settle on something you don't like. It is best to be patient."

PARRY SOUND

With a population of just over 6,000, Parry Sound is the perfect, relaxing getaway for residents of Toronto, Sudbury and anywhere in-between. Located on Georgian Bay, the small community rests on the shoreline of the world's largest freshwater archipelago boasting 30,000 islands.

"The Parry Sound recreational property market has had a great start to the season with lots of activity and inventory levels that are consistent with the last couple of years," says David Kingshott, broker/manager, Royal LePage Team Advantage Realty. "Current listing prices are expected to remain stable in the near future."

Non-waterfront properties in the region range in price from \$275,000 to \$350,000, while the average price range of an island property increased slightly to \$300,000 to \$400,000. Meanwhile, the average price range of a waterfront property with land access is \$350,000 to \$450,000.

Buyers are typically 40 to 65 years old and looking for cottages year-round. Kingshott advises potential buyers to use a local Realtor® in any given area they are considering as they will have in-depth knowledge of the location and its quirks.

RIDEAU LAKE

Owners of waterfront properties on Rideau Lake are anticipating a great summer for swimming, sailing, theatre and more. Located between the nation's capital and Kingston, Ontario, there are a number of available recreational properties for Canadians looking to get away from the bigger cities.

"We've had great activity in the market this year with pent up demand from 2014," says Pauline Aunger, broker, Royal LePage Advantage. "Inventory levels are high, and are expected to remain high throughout the summer, so potential buyers should see what the region has to offer."

Non-waterfront recreational properties in the area range in price from \$150,000 to \$200,000, while waterfront properties that are only accessible by water range in price from \$175,000 to \$350,000. The highly desirable waterfront properties accessible by land range in price from \$265,000 to \$450,000.

"We've had great activity in the market this year with pent up demand from 2014"

Pauline Aunger, broker, Royal LePage Advantage.

Because families are spread out across the province and region, many cottage owners that expected to pass their property on to their children are seeing the need to list their second homes instead.

Aunger says that purchasing a recreational property is not a fast process because it takes a long time to find the perfect combination of land, shoreline and good infrastructure. She advises buyers to determine the most important features – privacy, trees, swimming areas, sunrise or sunset – and be vocal about it with their Realtor®.

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Located north of Lake Erie and south of Lake Huron, Southwestern Ontario is a short drive for cottage-goers coming from the Greater Toronto Area. The region is home to entertainment-filled summers on the beaches of Grand Bend, the quaint, art-inspired village of Bayfield and the Celtic Roots Festival of Goderich.

"Based on early indicators, we are optimistic that the inventory levels will remain stable as in previous years," says Fred Lobb, broker/owner, Royal LePage Heartland Realty. "There is no shortage or excessive number of listings at the moment."

The average price of waterfront recreational properties ranges greatly from \$280,000 to \$1,400,000 depending on how well-appointed the building is -- some are closer to homes than typical cottages. For second row inland properties the prices range from \$168,000 to \$750,000.

Many cottages in Southwestern Ontario are used for secondary income through rentals, but the typical buyer purchases a cottage to upgrade it over the years with the ultimate goal of retiring there.

"Having a knowledgeable Realtor® is essential to finding the best property"

Fred Lobb, broker/owner, Royal LePage Heartland Realty

Lobb encourages buyers to ensure their Realtor® understands the nuances of owning a cottage and has insight into the surrounding community. "Having a knowledgeable Realtor® is essential to finding the best property," says Lobb.

SUDBURY

Abounding with more than 300 freshwater lakes, countless trails and endless vegetation, Sudbury is a beautiful and easily accessible destination to residents of Southern Ontario. With a population of 160,000, Greater Sudbury has the amenities of a city and the space to explore.

"The recreational property market in Sudbury is stable," says Alex Dumas, broker, Royal LePage North Heritage Realty. "Though there aren't many cottages on the market right now, there is a good balance between supply and demand in the region."

Inland properties in Sudbury are listed at an average price of \$100,000. This increases to \$160,000 for waterfront proper-

ties only accessible by boat. Finally, the waterfront properties with land accessibility have an average price of \$200,000.

Typically a buyer in this area is well established in their career and ranges in age from 35 to 55. Dumas explains that because prices are so affordable, families and friends do not typically purchase a cottage together.

ST. JOSEPH ISLAND & LAKE HURON

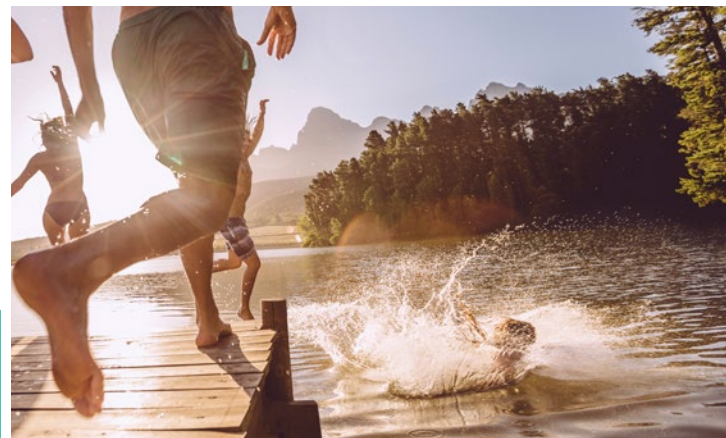
St. Joseph Island, tucked away in the northeastern corner of Lake Huron, is home to scenic, paved roads that draw cyclists from far and wide. These paved roads winding through the scenic regions have become very attractive to cottage-goers seeking a laidback lifestyle.

"Historically, the market is quite slow this time of year because many people are waiting until the snow clears," says Carl Thomas, broker/owner, Royal LePage Northern Advantage. "The main difference this year is that residents in the area – mainly Sault Ste. Marie – are more financially stable, trust the economy, and are ready to invest in a secondary property."

The average seasonal price of a non-waterfront property is \$125,000, which increases to \$150,000 for waterfront properties that are accessible by water. The most sought-after seasonal properties – waterfront locations with land access have an average price of \$175,000.

Cottage owners in this area are typically in their 40s and seeking a second property that they can eventually convert into a year-round residence for future retirement. Thomas advises new buyers to check the waterfront as some areas of the island have shallower waterfront than others especially for those who are avid boaters.

"It's important for buyers to be knowledgeable before making the purchase – whether that is of the inner-workings of the home or of the surrounding community," says Thomas.



MANITOBA INTERLAKE AREA - WEST SHORE OF LAKE WINNIPEG

Located 45 minutes from the provincial capital, the west shore of Lake Winnipeg is the ideal location for those looking to escape the city. Whether fishing for pickerel or relaxing on the spacious shores of Gimli Beach, cottage owners frequent their secondary homes throughout the beautiful Manitoban summers.

"We started off the cottage season right with a good number of properties available in May," says John Bucklaschuk, broker/owner, Royal LePage-JMB & Associates. "I expect prices will remain stable throughout the remaining summer months."

Standard waterfront properties with land access average in price at \$215,000, while non-waterfront recreational properties in the region can be found for an average price of \$107,000.

"We started off the cottage season right with a good number of properties available in May"

John Bucklaschuk, broker/owner, Royal LePage-JMB & Associates

Owners in the area are typically between 30 to 50 years of age, with a mix of couples and families. Because of the region's affordability, many lower- to middle-income earners are finding great success in purchasing recreational properties here.

Bucklaschuk recommends interested buyers conduct thorough inspections of the cottages they are considering so they are confident in the property's maintenance levels.

GRAND BEACH DISTRICT

With the iconic Grand Beach, new recreational facilities, an addition of highways (and more to come), the hilltop resorts festival, and a market with high inventory, the Grand Beach District in Manitoba is ready for buyers.

According to Lee-Ann Shewchuk, Realtor® for Royal LePage Top Producers Real Estate in Winnipeg, the market is favouring buyers for the first time in a decade, making it an opportune time for those who have waited to buy recreational properties in the area. Prices are dropping due to market saturation, which has undercut prices by 10 to 15 per cent. This translates to between \$10,000 to \$20,000 in savings for buyers.



Shewchuk says that since last year, many of the area's older residents have decided to retire down south and sell, flooding the market with listings. She says that the area's demographics are shifting as well and young parents in their 30s and 40s have become the typical buyers.

Families tend to come from cities in the surrounding areas and buyers are typically professional in nature or self-employed. They are attracted by the year-round accessibility of the properties and the wide range of activities available throughout the year, including snowmobiling and ice fishing in the winter, and water sports in the summer.

According to Shewchuk, an average inland property costs \$150,000 while waterfront properties with land access are selling for approximately \$200,000. Waterfront properties with water access only average \$220,000.

She recommends that those who decide to purchase a property in the area go in with their eyes open about the work required to maintain the property, as well as the difference in financing options for a primary home versus a recreational property.

LAC DU BONNET

Located 115 km northeast of Winnipeg, Lac Du Bonnet truly is a "four-season playground", as its official motto claims. With amenities that range from golf courses to snowmobile routes to lakes for swimming and boating, there is something to do every month of the year at Lac Du Bonnet.

According to Tammy Beutel, real estate agent with Royal LePage Top Producers Real Estate in Winnipeg, the area has been a buyer's market since 2009. This trend is expected to continue this year, making it the perfect time to visit the region and take a look around.

Those looking at recreational waterfront properties with land access in the region will see them priced at approximately \$290,000. Cabins that are located in back lots, meanwhile,

currently sell for approximately \$150,000. Waterfront properties, in particular, hold their value despite poor market conditions because there is a finite amount of waterfront space available. Those able to get their hands on a waterfront lot should consider themselves fortunate.

Beutel says that the majority of buyers in the Lac Du Bonnet region are intrigued by the potential for a recreational lifestyle in each of the four seasons and are encouraged by current financial conditions. With historically low interest rates and market prices in the area low right now, those who do buy at Lac Du Bonnet will be thrilled that they did.

LAKE MANITOBA

Only two hours away from the heart of Winnipeg sits a lake offering recreational property buyers seclusion and breathtaking scenes of natural beauty and awe-inspiring wildlife. The Lake Manitoba region provides a classic escape into the simplicity of rural life.

Warren Neufeld, broker, Royal LePage Portage Realty, says that early market activity has been in line with last year's, but without the same challenges. "Last year also saw a strong market to start but we then dealt with flooding issues," Neufeld explains. "Not needing to contend with that this year has resulted in a greater confidence in the market."

Fortunately for those looking to purchase, according to Neufeld, Lake Manitoba boasts some of the most affordable properties in the province. Land locked properties see an average price of \$155,000, while those on the shoreline see an average price of \$175,000. Island properties see the highest average price point at \$199,000.

Neufeld believes that fishing and the ability to get away from the city is drawing families to the region, with buyers typically aged between 45 and 60 years old. Buyers often have children who also enjoy using the property. It is rarer, but he also sees families purchasing together, understanding none of them individually have the free time to use it year round.

"There are a lot of advantages to purchasing here, but it is still important to get out and experience the regions you are

considering to get an understanding of the lifestyle benefits they offer," continued Neufeld.

LAKE WINNIPEG

Lake Winnipeg's recreational property market is currently balanced. Those looking for a uniquely Canadian experience should explore the region, including the new Winnipeg Beach and new merchants and increased amenities that it has brought.

Jim Muir, broker with Royal LePage Dynamic Real Estate in Winnipeg, says that properties in this stable market typically fetch between \$100,000 for non-waterfront access and \$260,000 for waterfront properties, while some larger lots can reach prices of up to \$500,000. Families with young children eagerly anticipate the warmer season when they can say goodbye to Manitoba's cold winters and embrace the lake and all the joys of summer.

"There are a lot of advantages to purchasing here, but it is still important to get out and experience the regions you are considering"

Warren Neufeld, broker, Royal LePage Portage Realty

According to Muir, the area had a very late spring last year, so there is an increase of listings left over that are coming up this year, resulting in higher inventory and turnover. The positive impact for buyers is that although the majority of properties are not necessarily chosen solely for investment purposes, these recreational homes are safe, and are not at risk of depreciating significantly any time soon, especially the waterfront properties. This is good news for young families, who are typically the area's dominant demographic, as well as retirees, who tend to go south during Manitoba's colder months and then return home as the sun comes out.

Muir warns buyers however, that although they may have the time to personally make repairs to a recreational property, it would be advisable to consult with professionals on all major maintenance issues. These homes are not simple cottages and have all of the major amenities of a house in the city. As a result, they should be treated with the attention they require.



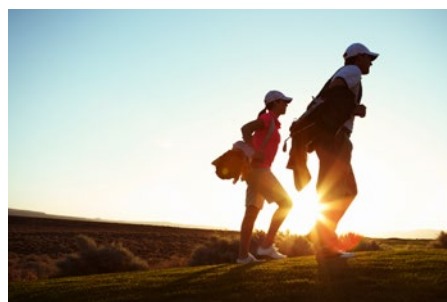
SASKATCHEWAN CHRISTOPHER LAKE, EMMA LAKE & CANDLE LAKE

In the heart of the Saskatchewan prairies, just north of Prince Albert, is a trio of crystal clear lakes and lush forest that draw recreational activity lovers year-round. Whether your sport is golfing, fishing, boating, bird watching or sunbathing, there's something for everyone in the summer months. In the winter, outdoor enthusiasts can also enjoy activities such as snowmobiling at Great Blue Heron Provincial Park or cross-country skiing along the Christopher Lake Nature Area Trails.

There is a good supply of properties available, at a wide-range of prices for buyers interested in the area, according to Matt Miller, a sales representative at Royal LePage Saskatoon Realty. Prices range from an average of \$210,000 for a non-waterfront property to \$420,000 for a lakefront home. Most sales happen in the spring and summer months, supply and demand have been strong so far this season.

While there are some buyers looking to rent out their properties to vacationers, Miller says most are purchasing for their own personal use. Many are looking for a second home in a more rural setting and a place to spend time with family and friends on weekends and holidays. "Properties here tend to be purchased by families seeking recreational use as opposed to investors. In many cases, properties stay within families for multiple generations," says Miller.

Before buyers start their search, Miller recommends they think about how they plan to use the property over the long term, and whether it will be just in the summer or year-round. "It's important because of the large difference in value, depending on these requirements," says Miller. "Buyers should think about the recreational activities they want to do, their budget, and select a property out of the many options that fits those needs"



REGINA

Saskatchewan's capital city is known for its more than 100 parks, well-established symphony orchestra and its historic Legislative Building, nicknamed the "marble palace." These are just some of the features of this pretty prairie city and its surrounding lakes and resorts that attract recreational buyers from across the province, and beyond. Buyers are mostly looking outside of the city, but enjoy the proximity to Regina's many amenities, as well as the various cultural and entertainment activities that take place year-round.

Mike Duggleby, broker/owner at Royal LePage Regina Realty, says there's a slight slowdown in the market this season compared to last year, which can be a buying opportunity for some. "It's a bit of a buyers' market, but it's still not a huge market for us in this area," says Duggleby. "If a person is thinking of buying, with interest and availabilities where they are, this might be a good time to take a look." He says sellers are often retirees moving to warmer climates south of the border or the West Coast. Some sellers are also capitalizing on the appreciation of their properties in recent years.

Many recreational property buyers in this area are young couples with children looking for a place to bring them on weekends and holidays. There are also some retirees seeking a picturesque place to live a more laid-back lifestyle.

"If a person is thinking of buying, with interest and availabilities where they are, this might be a good time to take a look."

Mike Duggleby, broker/owner at Royal LePage Regina Realty

Prices can range from \$130,000, for inland properties, to \$300,000 for waterfront properties with land access. Duggleby says a misconception many buyers have is that lakefront properties are always available. "There's only so much waterfront, which means there's a smaller selection, and they are always going to be more expensive."



ALBERTA CANMORE

If you're looking for an authentic mountain lifestyle, there are few places as picturesque and with as many outdoor activities as Canmore Kananaskis. Not only is this region located next to Banff National Park, but it also boasts a world-class cross-country ski facility, endless hiking and biking trails and gorgeous golf courses. Plus there's Elevation Place, Canmore's indoor playground, which includes an aquatics centre, indoor climbing gym, fitness facility, community library, art gallery and community gathering spaces. It's no wonder they've coined the phrase "Boredom can't breathe up here," to promote this mountain community.

It's a good time to buy property in Canmore Kananaskis, says Brad Hawker, broker/owner at Royal LePage Rocky Mountain Realty. Lower oil prices have created economic uncertainty in the resource-rich province, which has sidelined many buyers and sellers.

"With sales down and inventory slightly elevated, we're going to have a softer season this year," Hawker says. However, more travellers are coming to the area from the U.S. and other parts of Canada, which could attract potential buyers.

Prices for recreational properties in the region vary widely, from between \$650,000 - \$1,000,000 for inland properties while those on the waterfront can range from \$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000. Most buyers aren't purchasing properties as investments, but instead as a place to spend time with family and enjoy the outdoor lifestyle.

Hawker says there tend to be two types of buyers in the area: married couples with children looking for a place to come to from their primary residence in cities such as Calgary and Edmonton, and baby boomers preparing for retirement. "It's a place where they not only gather with family, but can lead an active lifestyle," Hawker says.

He recommends potential buyers be open-minded about the properties they're seeking in the Canmore area. There are some hidden gems in areas newcomers may not know exist.

GLENIFFER LAKE & PINE LAKE

Red Deer County in southern Alberta is a mix of rolling agricultural land, wooded areas and lakes, that offer a wide range of outdoor activities for residents and visitors year-round. Pine Lake, southeast of Red Deer, is a long and narrow stretch of water that's popular in the summer for activities such as swimming, boating and waterskiing, and for fishing throughout the year. The Gleniffer Reservoir Provincial Recreation Area, to the southwest of Red Deer, includes a lake and watershed, with many of the same summer and winter activities.

Chad Jensen, broker/owner at Royal LePage Network Realty Corp., says market activity has slowed a bit this year, as a result of lower oil prices. Many buyers and sellers are waiting out the economic uncertainty.

"It's more of a second home than a rental space for people"

Chad Jensen, broker/owner at Royal LePage Network Realty Corp.

Still, there are some properties available and buyers should take advantage of the slower period. "It's a great time to get into the market," Jensen says. When the oil sector recovers, more people will once again be looking for recreational properties, which will drive up prices.

Prices on average are around \$310,000 to \$370,000. Jensen says some buyers are surprised at first by the higher prices, which he explains is because the area is small and supply is limited.

Most buyers are families with children looking for a place to spend weekends and holidays outside of the city. "People are looking at it as a long-term investment, but not something they would rent out," he says. "It's more of a second home than a rental space for people in places like Edmonton and Calgary."

PIGEON LAKE

This community, located about 100 km southwest of Edmonton, is a recreational and environmental refuge. It includes 10 summer villages and a handful of small communities. Hundreds of cottages are dotted around Pigeon Lake, and residents are actively involved in protecting it and the ecosystems of its unique watershed. Pigeon Lake Provincial Park is also an attraction for both residents and visitors to the area.

Barbara Howey, broker/owner, Royal LePage Parkland Agencies, says buyers are drawn to the area's natural surroundings and outdoor lifestyle, including swimming, boating, fishing and sunbathing in the summer, and cross-country skiing and ice fishing in the winter. "Many of our residents are familiar with the lake, and came here as children. Now, they want to take holidays here with their own children," Howey says, noting most buyers are young families.

About 60 per cent of residents live in the area year-round. Buyers have a wide range of homes to choose from in the market today. Inland properties range from \$179,000 to \$499,000 on average while waterfront properties begin around \$379,000 and reach high-end averages of \$1,490,000.

Many buyers are looking for an investment, as well as a place to go on weekends and holidays. "The market here is stable," Howey says. "If you're looking for recreational properties, this is a great choice. It's a big place and well developed. Some of the smaller lakes go quiet when the economy sags – that isn't the case here."

SYLVAN LAKE

Located about halfway between Calgary and Edmonton and just west of Red Deer, Sylvan Lake is a popular destination for tourists looking for some fun in the sun. More than a million people come to visit each year to dip into the crystal waters, enjoy the thrill of splashing down the rides at Wild Rapids Waterslide Park, or bike and hike along the region's various trails. Boating and buzzing around on personal watercrafts are also popular pastimes in this small community.

Ted Iverson, a sales representative at Royal LePage Network Realty Corp., says prices have softened as result of economic uncertainty in the oil industry, which could present a buying opportunity for some. Prices range from \$350,000 to \$500,000 for a landlocked property to over \$1,000,000 for some of those on the waterfront.

"I think we'll have some good sales this year based on lower prices," Iverson says. "It's a chance for people to buy a property here who couldn't previously afford to buy. Once the price of oil gets better, the market will improve."

Typical buyers are young families with higher incomes looking to enjoy the outdoors. Many live in the community year-round. Some are buying properties and renting them out, even in the winter when the weather is milder than the northern parts of the province. "A significant number of people make their money up north but they leave their family here," Iverson says.



According to Iverson, Sylvan Lake is more expensive than many people realize, for a reason. "It offers one of the cleanest lakes in the area, the most amenities, and a full-service community." The town is also building a major recreation centre, which will be another draw for residents.



WABAMUN LAKE & LAC ST. ANNE

About an hour's drive west of Edmonton is a tri-lake community well known for its recreational lifestyle, as well as its Aboriginal heritage and history as one of the first European settlements in Alberta. Today, the area is highly sought after by vacationers looking for a place to golf, fish, swim or simply enjoy some sun in the summer months.

Tom Shearer, broker/owner at Royal LePage Noralta Real Estate, says the market remains steady despite recent economic instability in the province. "I see it remaining stable because there is limited supply," he says. "A lot of people are holding on to what they have. That means sellers in the desired areas are able to ask a premium price."

Prices range from \$225,000 for inland properties, while waterfront properties are seeing average prices between \$280,000 and \$525,000 depending on whether the property is accessible by land or by boat. According to Shearer many buyers are making a lifestyle investment when they purchase in the area, as opposed to a financial one.

"People are going with their families. It's a very social community," Shearer says, adding most buyers are married couples with children. "I don't think most people are necessarily buying here as an investment, but it's still a good one given the finite supply of property. It's going to go up in value over the longer term."

BRITISH COLUMBIA 100 MILE HOUSE - SOUTH CARIBOO

Nestled on the Fraser Plateau between the Coastal and Rocky Mountain ranges is the South Cariboo, a vast and beautiful landscape in south-central British Columbia. Buyers are lured by the countless lakes and diverse backcountry wilderness, only a half-day drive from B.C.'s Lower Mainland. South Cariboo is also known as cattle country; where brochures boast that you can "come as a tourist and go home a cowboy."

Mel Grahn, a sales representative at Royal LePage 100 Mile Realty, says sales in the region are on the rise and there's growing selection on the market.

Prices are reasonable as compared to some other parts of the province, ranging from an average of about \$100,000 for non-waterfront properties to about \$260,000 for those on the water — up slightly from last year, Grahn says. "The price difference is likely due to the quality of spaces that are available this year."

Grahn says many buyers aren't only making an investment, but a lifestyle choice. "They feel comfortable purchasing when there's good value," he says. "There's very little renting for secondary income here."

Most buyers are in their late 40s and 50s with families, or early retirees looking for a recreational property. Grahn says the winters in the region have been shorter and milder, which is attracting buyers from as far away as Atlantic Canada.

South Cariboo has a strong community feel, and a number of events for residents to enjoy including a farmer's market, music concerts on the weekends and endless other outdoor activities.

"It's a really terrific time to buy for value and selection," Grahn says.

CRANBROOK, SPARWOOD, KIMBERLY & FERNIE

The East Kootenay region of southeastern B.C. is known for its Rocky Mountain Trench, emerald-colour lakes, pristine rivers and flourishing wildlife. Together, these make for an irresistible recreational destination.

Buyers tend to gravitate around cities such as Cranbrook and Fernie and the district of Sparwood, which provide the latest amenities and are just a short distance to some of the best hiking, golfing, biking and skiing the province has to offer.

The recreational property market has been busy in East Kootenay since last fall, according to Philip Jones, broker/owner

at Royal LePage East Kootenay. He expects demand to remain strong for the rest of the year as more buyers come not just for the natural beauty, but also the milder weather compared to other parts of Canada.

Property prices in the region vary from \$300,000 for inland properties without water access, to \$800,000 for a waterfront residence. Water accessible properties meanwhile average \$400,000.

Jones says inventory is relatively low currently, as sales remain steady, "if the activity keeps up and inventory levels stay the same, then our prices are going to increase a bit," Jones says.

However, prices in this region are quite reasonable when compared to other parts of the province. Jones says existing home prices are usually much lower than the cost of new developments.

Many buyers are coming from nearby Alberta, due in part to recent economic uncertainty in that province. The typical

"It's a really terrific time to buy for value and selection [in South Cariboo]"

Mel Grahn, sales representative, Royal LePage 100 Mile Realty

profile of a recreational property buyer in the East Kootenay area is a professional couple with children, looking for a place to spend weekends and holidays in a more natural setting.

The region also boasts the most sunshine hours in B.C., which makes those winter days seem longer and summer days even warmer.

"It's a true four-season area here," says Jones. "It's probably a little different than most areas."



GULF ISLANDS

Tucked between Vancouver Island and mainland B.C. are hundreds of small islands and islets known as the Gulf Islands, home to an eclectic group of residents with an appreciation for the natural beauty of the West Coast. Some of the more well-known islands include Salt Spring, Gabriola, Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna, each with its own unique features and personalities. Not to forget little gems like Thetis, Ruxton, Mudge, Decourcy and Protection Island.

The nature, history and character of the Gulf Islands make it a popular destination for buyers looking for a quieter and more laid-back lifestyle than what some other vacation destinations may offer.

"The larger, more populated Gulf Islands such as Salt Spring Island offer many services, but the less populated or smaller Islands offer more basic services," says Janet Moore, a sales representative at Royal LePage Nanaimo Realty, Ladysmith Branch.

Moore says there's a misconception that properties in the Gulf Islands are expensive. "There are some tremendous values out there, very affordable and with so many ways to enjoy the lifestyle on a small gulf island. A trend is having several families; or family members invest together to purchase a property."

The spring selling season got off to a great start in February which is early. Islands with no ferry service (boat access only) have prices ranging from \$35,000 for inland lots to \$50,000 for waterfront options. Islands served by BC Ferries have inland acreages starting around \$100,000 with low bank waterfront acreages around \$400,000. There are some great values of waterfront lowbank west facing acreages with residences starting at \$ 500,000. The region can also see price tags over \$2 million for large waterfront properties with estate style homes.

Moore says buyers are largely baby boomers looking for their own retreat, but there is also some increase in offshore investments in the Islands.

Fewer homeowners in the area are also choosing to invest in the U.S. now that the Canadian dollar has depreciated, making purchases south of the border more expensive.

"All of the money that left is coming back to the recreational property market," says Moore. At the same time, more Americans are looking to stretch their money, by investing in Canadian properties.

Moore has also noticed more boaters in the area in recent years, which has more people discovering the Gulf Islands as a potential place to buy property. Thetis Island with its beautiful protected harbour is a great example of a place to live economically and explore the seas.

KELOWNA

Whether you're a wine enthusiast, golfer, snow or water skier or all of the above, Kelowna is a recreational paradise. Known as the gateway to the Okanagan Valley, this bustling B.C. city is a popular vacation destination for people both in and out of the province.

The market is "extremely busy," particularly regarding sales of higher-end homes, says Mark Walker, sales representative, Royal LePage Kelowna.

"It's been a great year for the recreational market, particularly lakefront properties"

Mark Walker, sales representative, Royal LePage Kelowna

"It's been a great year for the recreational market, particularly lakefront properties," Walker says. "In the last six months, we've seen a lot of lakefront property over \$2 million moving, which we haven't seen in a long time."

Inventory levels are dropping, which Walker says is helping to normalize the market. A shortage of lakefront properties is making it a seller's market for people looking to leave those homes, he says.

For buyers looking at waterfront properties with water access or inland properties the average price is sitting at \$300,000. Meanwhile standard waterfront properties are coming in at an average of \$1.5 million.





"People see waterfront properties as a sound real estate investment, while condos are more of a lifestyle purchase," says Walker. Typical buyers are married couples in their 40s and 50s with children.

More Albertans have been buying properties in and around the Kelowna area, attracted by its often milder climate and shorter winters.

The beautiful blue waters of Okanagan Lake are a huge attraction for most buyers. Transit and infrastructure are good in and around the city, the university is attracting parents who buy properties for their children to live in during the school year and rent out in the summer. Kelowna has some gorgeous golf courses and is just a one-hour drive from the Big White Ski Resort, which has activities year-round.

RATHREVOR BEACH & HORNE LAKE

There are few places as peaceful and picturesque as the communities and natural habitat around Parksville-Qualicum Beach, on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Rathrevor Beach is one of B.C.'s most popular family destinations, with five kilometres of beachfront, lush forest and parkland. Horne Lake is a community created by cottage owners to preserve its recreational way of life with a Provincial Park acting as a major tourist draw for its sparkling crystal formations, ancient fossils and underground waterfall.

It's not surprising, given all there is to do and see that buyers are attracted to the area. "Sales activity has picked up quite a bit," says Marianne Keilty, sales representative at Royal LePage Parksville-Qualicum Beach Realty, who expects the market to remain steady in the coming months.

Inventory levels have slipped due to an increase in sales and prices on average range from \$244,000 for properties inland to \$270,000 for those on the lake. Meanwhile island properties without land access are averaging \$280,000.

Keilty says many buyers aren't necessarily looking for a second home in the area, but instead a place to spend more personal and family time. Buyers range from people

in their mid-30s to grandparents. Many properties are being purchased as a family investment.

"The buyer profile in this area has always been families that invest together," Keilty says. "We're sort of off the grid, so it's a different pace and it's a great family gathering place to relax."

Keilty says many buyers are looking to escape the harsh winters in provinces to the east, enjoying milder temperatures experienced on Vancouver Island.

There are certain restrictions and policies that homeowners have to honour in this area, Keilty recommends using a knowledgeable agent to help smooth out the process. Buyers thinking of scooping up property this season should act soon.

VERNON

Perfectly situated between multiple lakes and world-renowned golf courses, the Vernon area is popular for people who love to spend their free time in the great outdoors. The Silver Star Mountain Resort is also nearby, with mountain bike trails developed to "Whistler Standards" by the North Okanagan Cycling Society.

"No matter what recreational activity you're seeking, you are 20 minutes away from being able to do it here," says Darcy Griffiths, broker/owner at Royal LePage Downtown Realty Vernon.

As the largest city in the North Okanagan, Vernon has all of the amenities of a larger city, including a hospital, a wide variety of shops and a regional public transit system.

Griffiths says the typical recreational property buyer in the Vernon area is a baby boomer set to retire, many coming from the Lower Mainland or Alberta.

She says the market has been strong in recent years. "In terms of volume, we are doing as much as or greater than our last peak in 2007," Griffiths predicts sales will remain steady in the coming year.

The market is relatively balanced between buyers and sellers as waterfront properties are reaching the \$1 million mark, while properties without water access are averaging \$650,000. "I think prices are going to remain stable," says Griffiths. "There might be a slight increase, but I don't think it will be anything dramatic."

Most buyers are living year-round in their homes, those that do rent them out as vacation properties need to be prepared for some vacancies, especially during the off-season, Griffiths says. The busiest season for buying is the spring and fall.

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NEW BRUNSWICK

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