

BELLA COOLA VALLEY

TRAIL GUIDE

20+ Trails with Maps to
Plan Your Adventures

Wildlife Safety Guide

Mountain Biking in
The Valley

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Cover photo: **Jesaja Class, School House falls east, Hagensborg**

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Police 1 (250) 799-5363 Forest Fire *5555 or 1-800-663-5555
Ambulance 1-800-461-9911 Conservation Officer 1-877-952-7277

TRAIL MAPS LEGEND

	Trail		Deactivated or closed road
	Non-maintained route		Forest
	Mountain Bike Trail		Meadows/brush tracts or cleared fields
	ATV trail		Rock, exposed soil & alpine
	Forest Road		Rivers & lakes
	Paved Road		Creeks
			20 m contour interval

TRAIL HERITAGE

Trails are an important part of the heritage of the Bella Coola Valley, beginning with the “grease” trail routes used by First Nations peoples to carry eulachon grease and other products between the Coast and the Interior. One of these trails led Alexander Mackenzie to the Pacific in 1793, and through the 1800’s, these routes served gold seekers and settlers. Hunters and trappers cut trails into the side valleys, where loggers followed in the early 1900s, leaving logging roads, some of which have been regenerated as hiking trails of today.

A mountaineering boom was triggered in 1937 with the first ascent of Mt. Stupendous by the famed husband/ wife team of Don and Phyl Mundy. This boom began to fade in the early 1950’s when other prominent peaks, including Mt. Saugstad, were first ascended. Surprisingly, few Valley residents have been attracted by the mountaineering possibilities. However, while no established trails lead to the mountain peaks which require expertise in technical climbing, there are countless opportunities for mountaineers — experienced and inexperienced alike.

The mix of ancient and more recently established trails described in this Guide offers a wide variety of experiences and sights, from strolling through lush old-growth riverbottom forests to spectacular alpine adventures of easy to moderate difficulty.

Photo: Jordan Tuck, M Gurr Lake Trail

RESPECT THE WILD

Many bears, particularly in the upper Valley and on the Atnarko River are tolerant of people, and show little concern when humans are near. Do not see this as an opportunity. Closing the gap on any animal is an aggressive behaviour. Wherever possible show grace and give space by slowly backing away. Each encounter is unique and we advise consulting other publications that focus on bear and cougar behaviour (e.g. 'Bears Without Fear'—Kevin Van Tighem).

Report injured animals or troublesome human behaviour, including vehicle licence number to the Conservation Officer Service, phone: 1-877-952-7277.

WILDLIFE AWARENESS

PROMOTING SAFE COEXISTENCE

Visitors to the Bella Coola Valley can expect to see a bear anywhere. Most often in spring, feeding on the first green shoots on the Valley floor, and again, starting in late July and well into the fall, feeding on wild Pacific salmon returning to spawn in the creeks and rivers.

While seeing a bear can be one of the most memorable experiences of a wilderness vacation, it is critical that we behave in a considerate, predictable manner that respects the bear's "personal space", and that of all wildlife, in their habitat.

Help us keep bears wild & the Valley litter-free. Please use bear proof garbage receptacles/recycle bins where provided.

WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE BEST PRACTICES

Roadside Bear Sightings

- Please ensure safe, courteous driving in accordance with B.C. Motor Vehicle Act.
- NEVER approach the bear with your vehicle.
- If a bear is crossing or appears to want to cross a road, stop your vehicle with enough space to allow the bear to do so. NEVER stop your vehicle between a group of bears, i.e. a mother and her cubs
- If you stop for a photo opportunity, remain in your vehicle & be respectful of noise/voice levels.
- Be respectful of private property boundaries. When in doubt, please stay out.

Hiking & Camping

- ALWAYS keep campsites, picnic & eating areas clean.
- NEVER leave backpacks or food unattended.
- NEVER leave garbage or food scraps behind.
- NEVER FEED WILDLIFE. It is illegal (B.C. Wildlife Act).
- Obey 'Bear Warning' trail signs.

- Avoid surprises when hiking by making noise. When possible, it is best to remain in the open where bears can see people and choose to avoid them if they wish.
- If you encounter a bear or cougar, don't panic or run. Speak softly as you back away slowly, facing the animal, giving space in a non-threatening manner.
- Carry bear spray and learn how best to use it.
- Avoid animal & fish carcasses and/or injured animals.
- Avoid scented deodorants and foods with strong odours.
- Because dogs may attract bears or cougars, always keep your dog on a leash, or leave them at home.
- Keep a respectful distance (100 metres +). Closing the distance on wildlife is aggressive behaviour.
- Use binoculars, a spotting scope, or a telephoto lens to view wildlife from a safe and unobtrusive distance.
- DO NOT whistle or make strange noises in an attempt to attract the attention of wildlife for any reason.

River Fishing

Bears have right of way on the river. Avoid food conditioning bears by ensuring offal/roe are discarded in deep, fast waters. If playing a fish, land it immediately or cut the line. Store all caught fish in a secure manner.

Cougar (mountain lion) Encounters

The best cougar encounter is one you avoid. Hike in groups and avoid surprise encounters by making noise. If you encounter a cougar, keep calm and NEVER turn your back and run. Maintain eye contact and slowly back away. Keep pets on leash and bring small children close to adults. If the cougar advances, then you display aggressive behaviour—stand tall, yell in repetitive short bursts, and if possible throw rocks or sticks while slowly backing away. Use bear spray if necessary.

For additional information visit: www.WildSafeBC.com

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

The Bella Coola Valley has an up and coming mountain biking scene with a dedicated community of riders who create & maintain trails.

SCHOOLHOUSE TRAIL NETWORK

The centrally located Schoolhouse trail network is a fun series of multi-use trails that all levels of riders can enjoy. Schools In and Schools Out are mountain bike specific trails linked by the Hagensborg Loop Trail. The trails are best accessed from Nooklikonnik Creek, west of Hagensborg. Schools Out is the valley's only machine-built trail and is multi-directional. In conjunction with the Hagensborg Loop Trail, it is fast, fun and flowy. Schools In is more technical with multiple small bridges. This trail rides best west to east with a nice downhill to finish. The trail ends at the local high school and a short ride on Hwy 20 brings you back to Nooklikonnik Creek. Estimated loop time 1 hour. Note that these trails are multi-use and shared with foot traffic, use caution when riding. See page 15 for map.

MEDBY TRAIL NETWORK

The Medby Trail Network has the Bella Coola Valley's moderate to advanced riding. The network is located east of Hagensborg on the East Nusatsum Forest Service Road (FSR). Parking is available at Hwy 20. Trails are located on both sides of the East Nusatsum FSR but the higher you climb the longer the descent! The Up-Take is an old skid road 1.5km up East Nusatsum FSR and is the climbing line. It's a steep grind and can get brushy mid summer but don't be deterred, it is well worth the effort. There are currently five trails that descend from the Up-Take with BLT being the uppermost. It is also the newest trail and it has variable riding - ranging from steep technical with loose rock to beautiful loam. Adrian's, also known as No Skids Allowed, is a local favourite. It's a Bella Coola equivalent of a flow line and the faster you ride it, the more fun it gets!

Multiple laps off the Up-Take is the norm, but exploring the full Medby Trail Network is best done over a couple of days. There is approximately 5.5km of hand-built, user-maintained singletrack and the opportunity to mix and match trails to create your preferred routes. While in the area, be sure to take a break from the bike and hike up



the Medby Rock Lookout Trail (page 26).

Visit trailforks.com and refer to the Medby Trail Network for a detailed map of the area.

FOREST SERVICE ROADS

Great riding can also be found up the many Forest Service Roads in the Valley. Clayton Falls FSR, Nusatsum East & West FSRs, Noosgulch FSR, and the Tote Road in Tweedsmuir Park are all scenic routes. Be sure to use caution as motor vehicles also use these roads. More extensive trails can be found at East Nusatsum FSR, visit trailforks.com and refer to the Medby Trail Network.

Note: Please avoid riding on any vegetation and always stay on the trail. When descending any multi-use trails, it is proper etiquette to watch for others and to announce yourself; especially around corners. All traffic on any trails takes right-of-way.

Photo: Kerry Boileau



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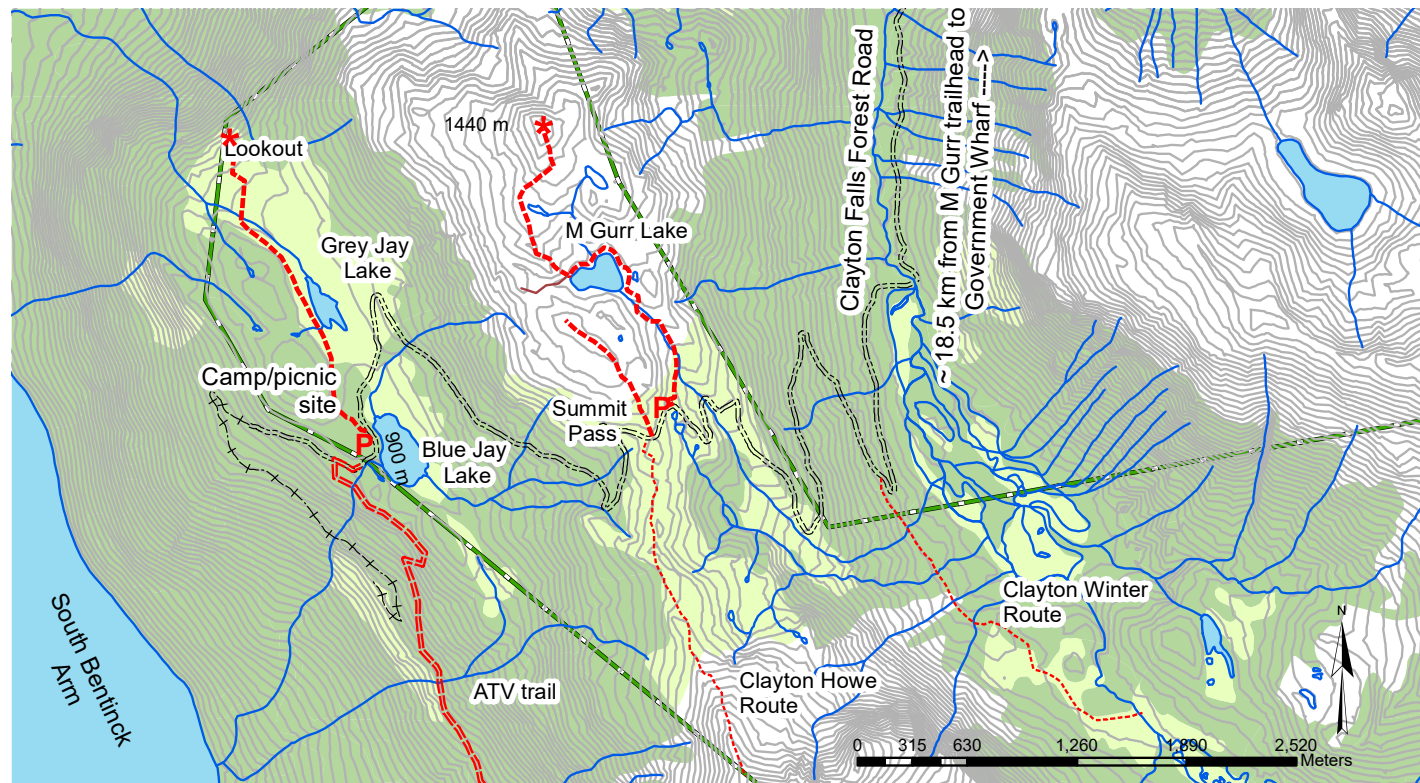
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1. GREY JAY/ BLUE JAY LAKES & NORTH BENTINCK LOOKOUT

Distance: 2km one way to lookout

Elevation Change: 80m

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Access: 4x4 vehicles only

Description: This trail and boardwalk wind through alpine forest along Grey Jay Lake and then wanders through open meadows and wetlands to end at a viewpoint overlooking North and South Bentinck Arms. It offers a nice stroll and on return there is the option for a refreshing swim in Blue Jay Lake. Views of the Coast Mountains are spectacular, although somewhat limited compared to the ridge above M Gurr Lake. Alpine flowers are abundant in the summer. Blue Jay Lake is much warmer than M Gurr Lake and surprisingly contains trout. There is a rustic campsite in this picturesque spot.

How to get there: Take the Clayton Falls Forest Service Road as described to access the M Gurr Lake Trail. Continue up and over the pass then another 3.6 km downhill to Blue Jay Lake, where parking is available at the rustic campsites. The trailhead for the Grey Jay Lake/ North Bentinck Lookout trail is between the first two camping sites above Blue Jay Lake.

2. M GURR LAKE & VIEWPOINT

Distance: 1 km to lake, additional 1.7 km to ridge top viewpoint

Elevation 60 m to lake, 215 m to viewpoint

Difficulty: Moderate

Access: 4x4 vehicles only

Description: This trail winds through stunted sub-alpine forest to a crystal clear, emerald jewel alpine lake. You may want to go for a quick swim, although the neighbouring pond east of the lake is warmer. Wildflowers are abundant and provide a colourful bloom in July and August.

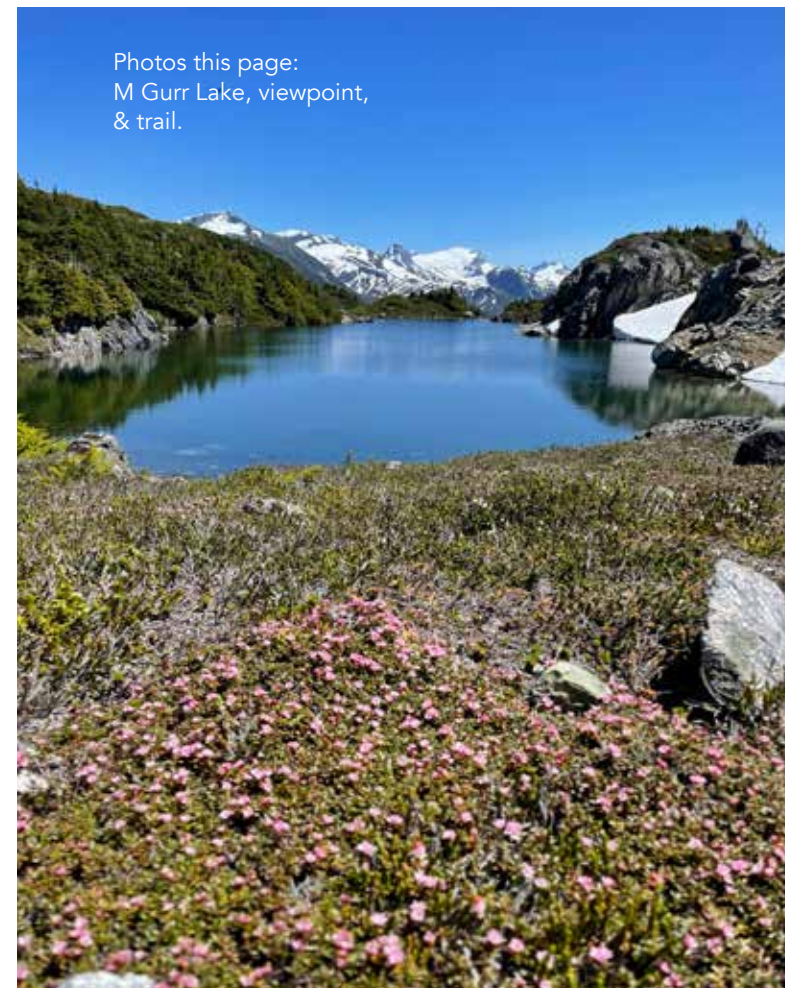
Beyond the lake the trail is not as distinct, but still easy to follow. Once on the rocky part of the ridge, pick your own way to the highest point. The viewpoint above the lake provides awesome views of the Coast Mountain peaks rimming North and South Bentinck Arms, Burke Channel and the upper Clayton Falls Valley. Top portion of the trail is in the alpine so trail is not very well defined.

How to get there: To access the trail, drive west beyond the government wharf onto the North Bentinck Forest Service Road. At 1.5 km, take the Clayton Falls Forest Road to the left. Although there are a number of steep sections along this road, the steepest is the ➤

first 200 m. Drive slowly and steadily to minimize road disturbance on the hills. This road has numerous water bars or cross ditches for water maintenance. A high clearance 4 X 4 vehicle is recommended. The trailhead is about 17 km from the start of Clayton Falls Forest Road. Park adjacent to the massive boulder, just below the last

Photos: Aude Sarhy

switchback. The trailhead is just ahead on the opposite side of the switchback across the ditch. Before leaving, make sure to continue 200 m up the road beyond the M Gurr Lake Trailhead to the summit pass—a great place to take in the great panoramic view. Even if you choose not to hike, the drive alone is spectacular!



Photos this page:
M Gurr Lake, viewpoint,
& trail.





3. CLAYTON FALLS & RECREATION SITE

Distance: 200m to falls, 300m loop in the park
Elevation Change: 4m
Difficulty: Easy

Description: With a great shoreline picnic site and a viewing platform of the falls cascading through a canyon of cliffs scoured smooth by water and glacial action, the Clayton Falls Recreation Site is one of the most popular spots in the valley. Depending on the season or the current weather, the falls can be a full apron or narrow streamlets owing through ancient grooves. Pink and Chum

salmonspawn at the bottom of the falls between late July and September. Look for them attempting to jump up the falls. Salmon also use the spawning grounds created by B.C. Hydro below the outflow from the generating station. The park has picnic tables and outhouses. At low tide there is even a small stretch of sandy beach. Watch the boats coming and going and maybe even a kiteboarder, sailboarder, yacht, or ferry. Note the old cannery across North Bentinck Arm. Seals hang out at the mouth of the creek and from the bridge over the creek you can sometimes see seals chasing down salmon at high tide. No overnight camping.

How to get there: Easy to find by simply following Highway 20 past the public wharf. From the public

Photo: Sally King

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wharf Hwy 20 will turn to a gravel road, follow the gravel road 1.8 km west and downhill either turning right to the parking area at the Clayton Falls Recreation Park sign or continue and park to the left just past the BC Hydro generating station. The second parking area is closest to Clayton Falls. Beware of industrial traffic on the road. The falls trail is along the fence on the upper side of the generating station, leading around the building. The park trail is on the lower (ocean) side of the road, opposite of the BC Hydro Station parking.

Photo: Tyler Cave

Caution: Stay away from the falls and cliffs in the canyon! Do not attempt to swim near the falls or in the canyon as the base of the falls has a deadly undertow where many people have drowned.



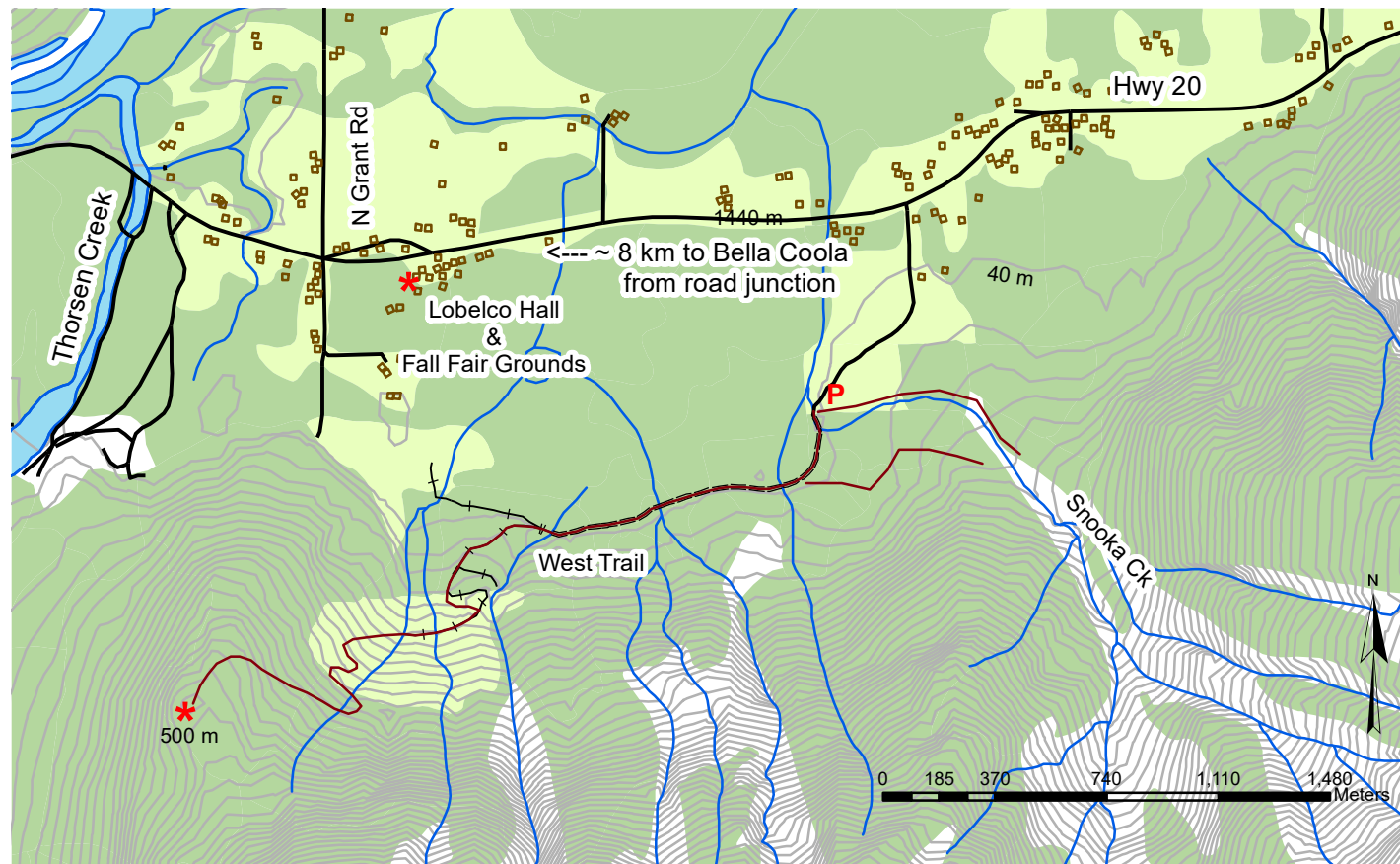
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4A. SNOOKA TRAIL EAST

Distance: 5.4 km
Elevation Change: 50m
Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Description: This trail undulates through second growth forest along the fire-break road from the forest fire of 2009 and was developed for originally for mountain biking but also provides a pleasant shaded walk on a hot day. The East loop takes off from the South Loop and heads east on private land.

It follows the base of the mountain and exits onto the farm road along the field edge, ending at Hwy 20. Please respect the property owner by practicing courteous trail etiquette. If using this trail to mountain bike, please remember to yield to other trail users.

How to get there: Turn onto the Snooka Forest Service Road, approximately 8 km east of Bella Coola (75m west of Eagle Lodge) on Hwy 20. There is a sign post on the highway for the trail. Follow the forest service road for 0.5 km to the parking area. Here you will find a signboard providing maps of the area trails.



4B. SNOOKA LOOP SOUTH

Distance: 1.7 km
Elevation Change: 50m
Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Description: A pleasant shaded walk on a hot day, this trail provides more vegetation variety than the East Trail as it starts in second growth forest then meanders to an old growth cedar stand. It crosses Snooka creek at a ford and then loops back to the parking area. Cross the creek ford only in safe and comfortable conditions.

How to get there: The access is the same as the East Trail; trailhead is located down Snooka FSR, 8km east of Bella Coola. See the opposite page for details.

4C. SNOOKA TRAIL WEST

Distance: 3.8 km one way
Elevation Change: 500m
Difficulty: Moderate

Description: The west trail features scenic views of Bella Coola and the Four Mile residential area, historic Tallheo Cannery and North Bentinck Arm. The viewpoint also looks down on Thorsen Creek and the site of the petroglyphs. The lower trail is an old road but cattle and horses use this area and the trail is therefore only for hiking. There are a few creek crossings that should only be attempted in safe and comfortable conditions.

How to get there: The access is the same as the East Trail.

Photo: Shannon Lansdowne

BELLA COOLA VALLEY CAMPGROUND

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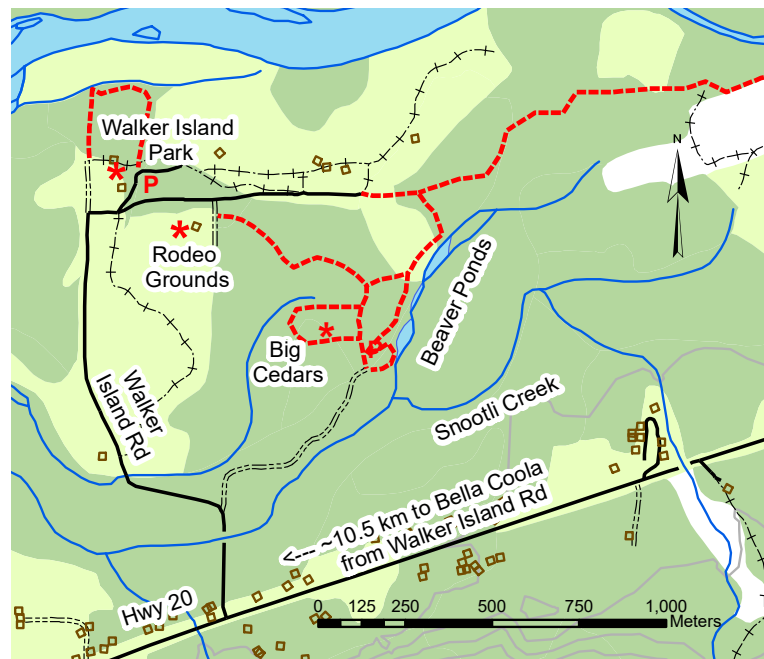


Photo: Tyler Cave

5. SNOOTLI CREEK REGIONAL PARK / WALKER ISLAND

Distance: Various lengths, 200m to 2km

Elevation Change: 5m

Difficulty: Easy

Description: This trail system provides an interesting walk as it offers a variety of natural sights and historic features. The first trail, the Big Cedars loop, branches off to the left, to an ancient grove with culturally modified cedar trees. This area requires respect not only for the forest but also for the First Nations people that used this area for acquiring bark and lumber from these sacred and special 'trees of life'. Look for the distinct scars left after planks were cut and split away from the living tree. This

grove also features huge cottonwood, Sitka spruce and Douglas maple. Back on the main trail, carry on past the cottonwood grove through second growth to the rodeo grounds, hike through the cottonwood grove, or loop back along the beaver pond to the road and the parking area. A variety of waterfowl can be seen at the pond and beaver gnawing signs are visible on shoreline trees. These trails are for hiking or biking.

How to get there: Turn north onto Walker Park Road, 10.5 km east of Bella Coola on Hwy 20. Drive straight on the gravel road at 300m. Follow this road around the loop to the beaver pond, then continue around to the small pullout near the end of the loop. This is the beginning of a series of trails. Small signs guide you around the park.

Caution: This area is frequented by bears.

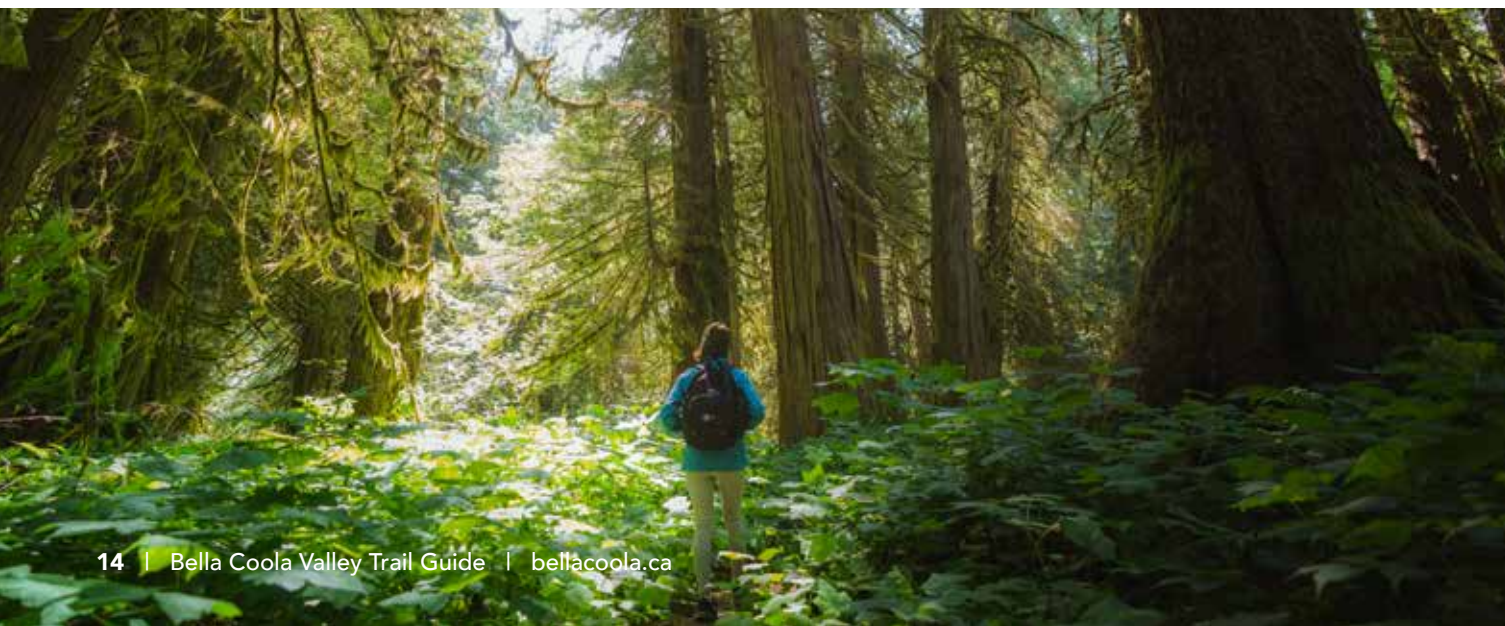
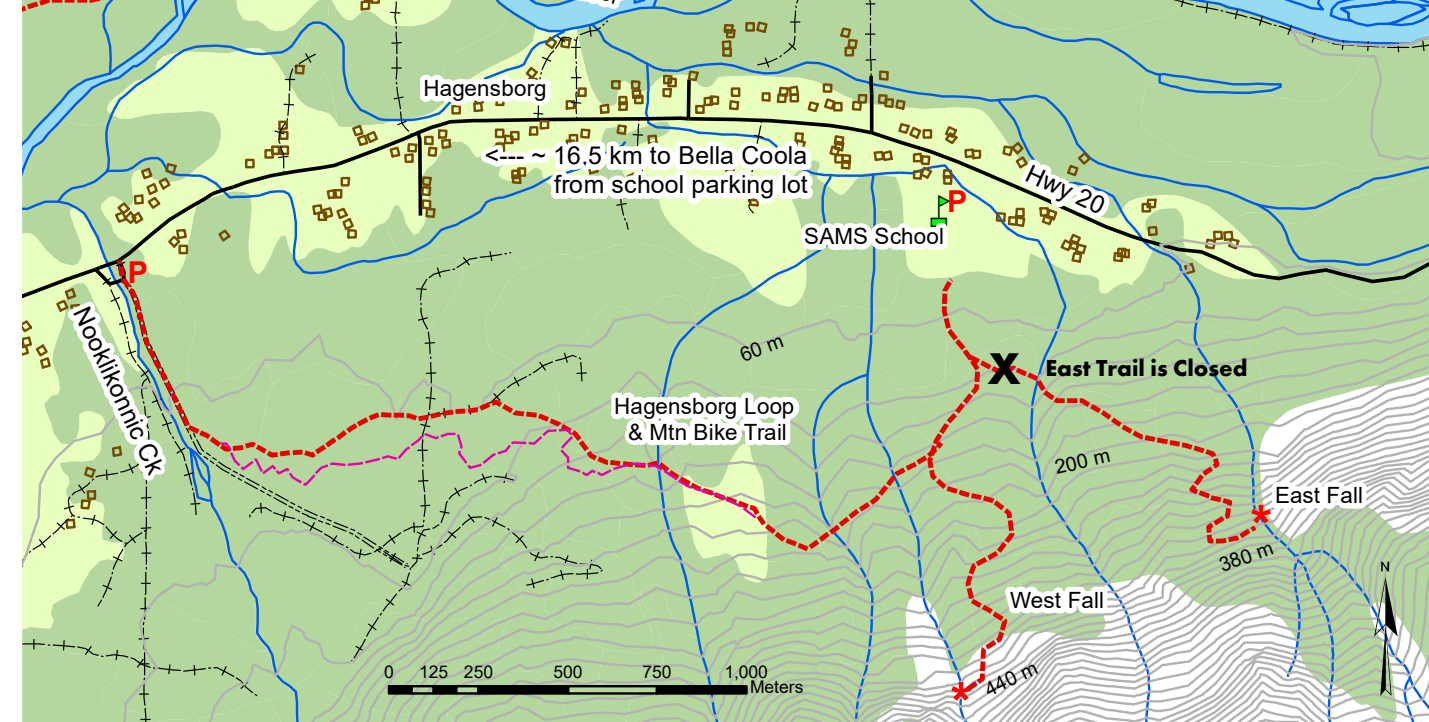


Photo: Jessaja Class



6. SCHOOLHOUSE MOUNTAIN FALLS WEST

Distance: West Falls 2 km

Elevation Change: West 330 m

Difficulty: West - moderate

Description: These trails offer a moderately strenuous uphill effort to the tall, cascading falls. The first part of the trail goes through a unique and interesting forest swamp ecosystem with old growth. The trail is elevated on a pleasant 250m long boardwalk. The west falls trail is identifiable by ribbons and use. At the end you will find a great view of the Hagensborg area, lower Bella Coola Valley, the massive granite faces on the opposite side of the valley, including Saloomt Peak and Saloompt River valley opposite right, Mill Creek opposite left and Four Mile Ridge above the airport. Bike trail is in figure 8 route. The West Falls trail is a mixed difficulty trail with easy sections and a steep climb at the end. The falls at the end of the trail is a series of small cascades.

How to get there: Park at the gravel lot just east of Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in Hagensborg (16.5km from Bella Coola). Follow the path to the trail at the end of the school field.

Photo: Abra Silver



7. HAGENSBORG LOOP & MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL

Distance: 6.5 km
Elevation change: 200 m
Difficulty: Moderate

Description: This trail begins by following the Schoolhouse Mountain Falls trail to the West falls. At the point where the West falls trail heads uphill the loop trail veers westward slightly downhill to a ford crossing of the creek. If the water is too high this crossing may be difficult and you may need to return the way you came. Beyond the creek, the trail follows an old logging road. The mixed deciduous and coniferous forest here is second growth. The trail exits on the quarry road 44m north of the steel gate. (Coming from Highway 20 the trail enters the forest on the left 44m before the gate). The quarry road carries on to the pit used to quarry granite for highway and river diking material. Once at the quarry road you can walk about 500m north to the highway and the bridge across Nooklikonnick Creek. Stop here for a fabulous view of Mount Saugstad to the south or during late July and early August stop here to watch the Chum or Dog salmon spawning. The rest of the loop is along the highway back to the school. Walk well off the road, facing traffic. Bike trail is in figure 8 route.

How to get there: Follow the same instructions for the Schoolhouse Mountain Falls trails.

8. SALOOMPT FOREST TRAIL

Distance: 300m to 1 km
Elevation change: 0 m
Difficulty: Easy

Description: This is an interpretive trail with unique forest features and valley bottom ecosystems. There are three different trails within this park. Each has its own special features. There is an ancient forest stand with massive Douglas fir, cedar and spruce intermingled with hemlock, cottonwood, alder and maple. There are eagle nests, bear scratch trees, fast growing second growth forest, an old homestead site, springboard logging stumps and lots of lush temperate rainforest undergrowth. A side channel of the Bella Coola River flows along the south side of the park. Once back out to the road, walk to the bridge over the Salloompt River. This is a great place to swim in July or see salmon spawning during Aug. and Sept. This is a wheelchair friendly trail with benches and a handicap outhouse.

How to get there: Turn north on Salloompt Road, 19.5 km east of Bella Coola on Hwy 20. Follow this road for 2.6 km, crossing the Bella Coola River. Veer left at the 'Y', down Salloompt River Road. The trail parking area is 1.4 km from 'Y'.

Caution: This area is frequented by bears.

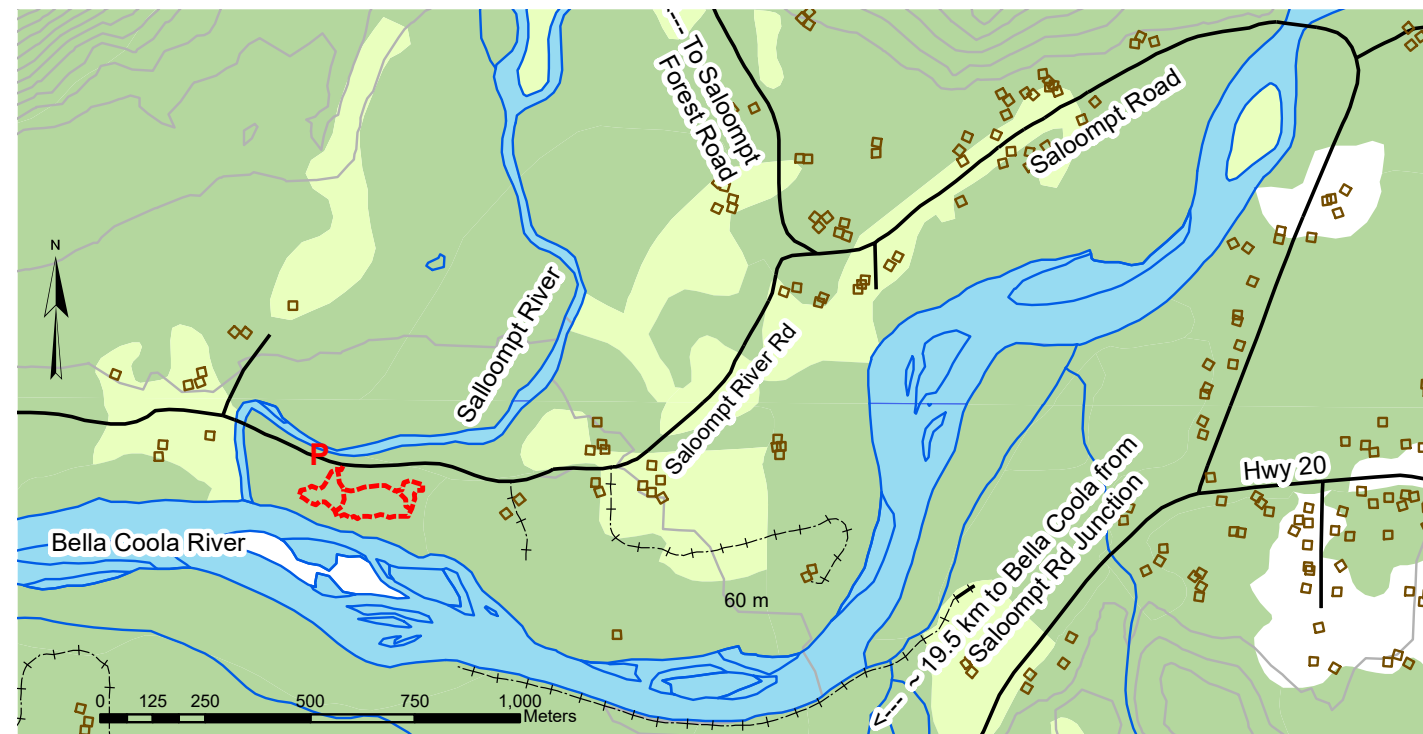


Photo: Nicola Anderson



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9. LOST LAKE TRAIL

Distance: 2km one way
Elevation Gain: 180m
Difficulty: Moderate

Description: This trail winds uphill through old growth forest to a small lake and great view spots looking over the valley and mountains to the south. The trail begins in second growth forest but quickly climbs up a rocky slope into a peaceful moss carpeted old growth Douglas fir forest. Lost Lake is quite small, but the views from the trail end are rewarding. At the lake there is a recreation site with picnic tables, tent camping sites and an outhouse. The two lookouts here offer a great picture of the glaciated u-shaped valleys of the lower Bella Coola and Nusatsum Rivers. The first lookout is to the right of the lake and the second one is beyond the lake on a trail that leads slightly downhill. At the first lookout you can easily identify Hagensborg and the airport. Look a little closer and you may even see the Augsburg Church. At the second lookout, with a stunning view to the south, is the Nusatsum valley with its regenerated logging areas and the road to Odegaard Falls. In the foreground, Nusatsum Mountain is on the left and Schoolhouse Mountain on the right. Looking out over the Bella Coola River to the east, you can see the edge of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park beyond the small community of Firvale.



How to get there: Access from Hwy 20 is the same as for the Saloompt Forest Trail, except at the 'Y' junction on Saloompt Road, keep right. This road turns to gravel at 1.3 km, the start of the Saloompt Forest Service Road. At the next main intersection (another 1.0 km) continue right, up the hill for 0.5 km., then right again at the top of the hill. Follow this road for about 3 km. to the parking area and the trailhead near the base of Saloompt Peak.



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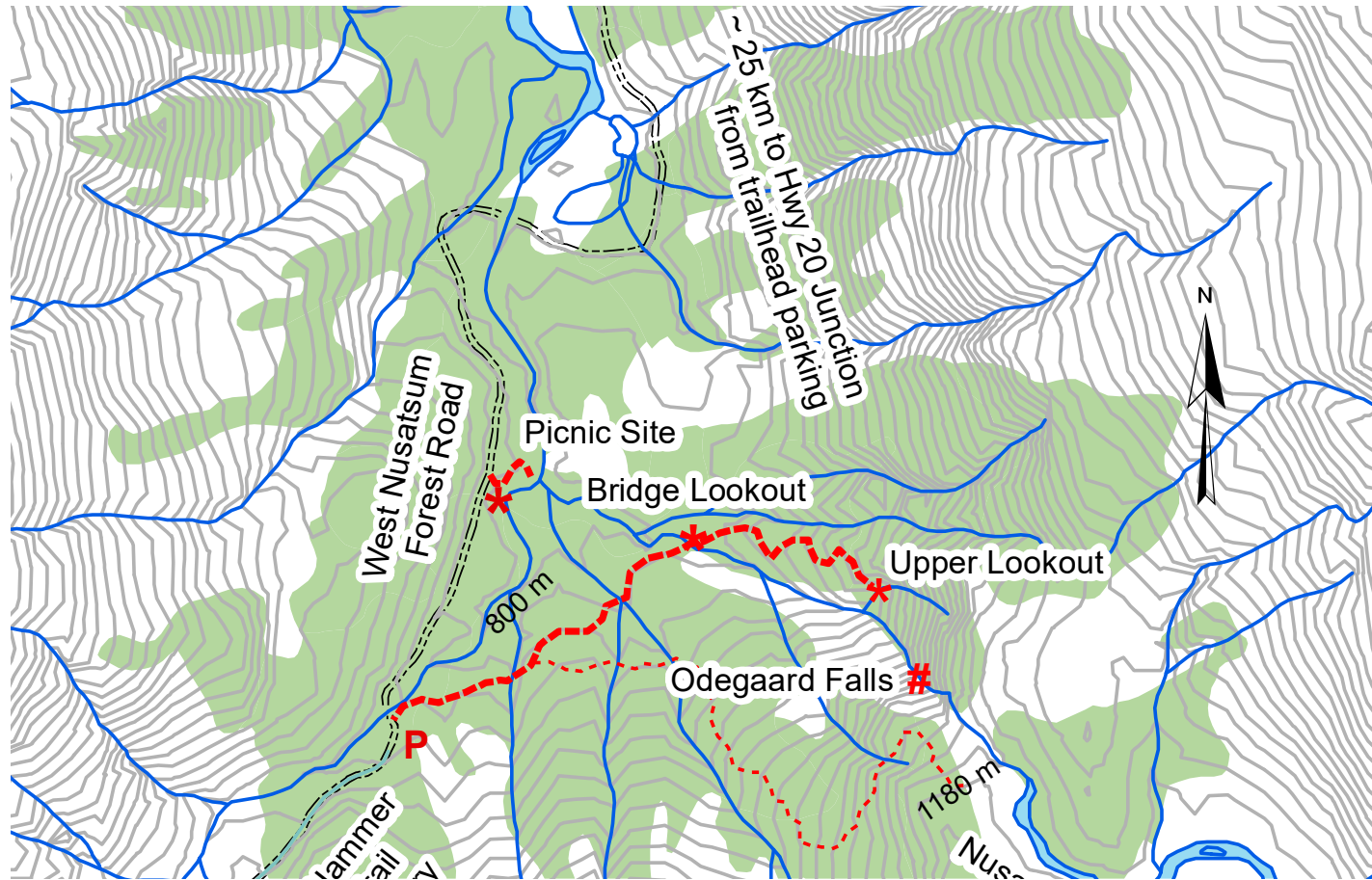
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10. ODEGAARD FALLS & NUSATSUM RIVER TRAIL

Distance: 200 m river trail, 2 km falls viewpoint

Elevation: 20m river trail, 100m falls viewpoint

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Description: The Odegaard Falls area in the Nusatsum valley is a must see attraction as it is in the heart of the Coast Mountain wilderness with its spectacular peaks and glaciers. The falls are very impressive, especially in early summer when it swells with snow melt. The trail to the falls passes through an old mossy forest of Western hemlock, Sitka spruce and Amabilis fir. You get the first view of the falls from the foot bridge crossing the Nusatsum River. There is a great viewpoint at the base of the falls that have a vertical drop of approximately 175 metres.

How to get there: Follow Highway 20 east from the Saloompt Road for 3.3 km to the Nusatsum River bridge, which crosses at the short but dramatic vertical canyon (23.3 km east of Bella Coola). The West Nusatsum Forest Service Road on the west side of the bridge is the road to the falls. Follow this road for about 24.6 km as it

criss-crosses the Nusatsum River a number of times and steadily climbs into the Coast Mountains. This brings you to the roadside lookout and the trailhead for the short walk down to the river. Drive 0.5 km more to the other side of the next bridge to get to the parking area at the trailhead for the falls trail. The West Nusatsum Forest Service Road has a few steep sections, some rough areas, and brushy spots. A 4 X 4 vehicle is recommended. A two-wheel drive can be driven but drive slowly and steadily up the hills to minimize road disturbance.

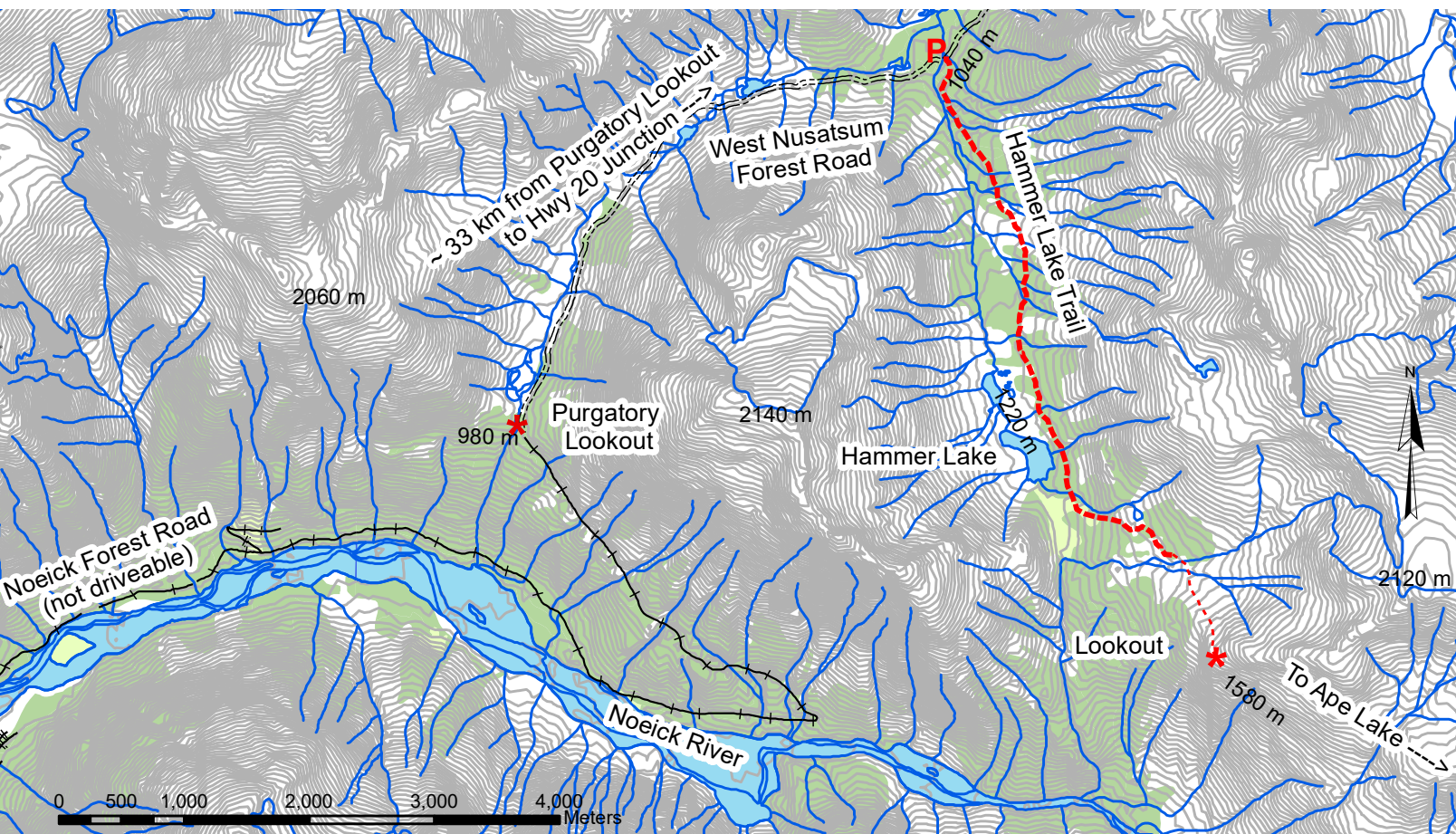
The Nusatsum River trail is a short hike downhill from the roadside lookout. It ends at the confluence of Nusatsum River from the falls and a no-name river from the summit pass further up the valley to the right. Further up the road, the Odegaard Falls viewpoint trail begins along a steep narrow canyon of the no-name river as it cascades to meet Nusatsum River further downstream. From the foot bridge over Nusatsum River it is a 500m uphill walk to the viewpoint near the base of the falls. Note that if you are travelling beyond Odegaard Falls to Purgatory Lookout, road conditions deteriorate and you will require 4 wheel drive vehicle or you can rent a 4x4 vehicle or book a tour with a local guide company offering off-road adventures.

Photos: Owen Perry.



Clockwise: Odegaard Falls, driving West Nusatsum FSR towards Purgatory Lookout, and the mossy trail to Odegaard Falls.





11. HAMMER LAKE TRAIL & LOOKOUT

Distance: 4 km to lake, 2 km more to lookout
Elevation Change: 300 m to lake, 500 m from lake to lookout
Difficulty: Moderate

Description: This trail route leads into the heart of the Coast Mountain wilderness through dense high elevation forest to more open sub-alpine parkland and then onto lushly flowered alpine meadows that lead to imposing jagged peaks. The trail starts off through a subalpine forest of Engelmann spruce, Mountain hemlock and Subalpine fir, where huckleberries are plentiful in season. The trail can be quite wet at certain times of the year and during prolonged wet weather. There is a large section of boardwalk closer to the lakes where the trail opens up into subalpine meadows. The views of the surrounding mountains are impressive. Pearl Peak with its glacier plastered on the side can be seen beyond the meadows and lakes.

An alpine viewpoint is the final destination with amazing views of Iroquois Ridge and its glacier ice fall

over the Noeick River. South-east is the route to Ape Lake and the peaks of the Monarch Ice Field, including the looming pyramid of Mt. Jacobsen. Beyond the viewpoint the route to Ape Lake requires a map and compass or GPS device and should only be attempted by experienced, well prepared hikers, as there is no flagged trail and route has danger of avalanches.

How to get there: Trailhead is 2.9km past Odegaard Falls viewpoint trail parking lot. There are a couple of slide areas that are sometimes impassable due to snow and debris. If this is the case, you can park and walk to the Hammer Lakes trailhead. Follow the easily discernible trail and boardwalks to the meadows where the lakes can be seen a few hundred meters below the trail. You can leave the main trail and take a swampy walk down to the lakes. To get to the alpine viewpoint the trail stays left of the lakes and climbs through forest into an alpine bowl filled with wildflowers. Take note where the trail leaves the forest as it may be difficult to find on your return. Carrying a GPS device, maps, and compass is recommended. Continue south diagonally across and up the bowl towards the small notch along the ridge line. The viewpoint is located in the prominent boulder field.

Photo: Ron Scott



Hammer Lake Trail with its stunning views.

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12. PURGATORY LOOKOUT

Distance: None

Elevation change: 0 m

Difficulty: Easy

Access: 4x4 vehicles only

Description: Originally part of a road down to South Bentinck Arm, it can still be driven in a 4X4 to the lookout depending on the level of debris from the previous winter's avalanches and roadside brush encroachment. This spectacular route, ideal for mountain bikes, winds among meadows, ponds, talus boulder slopes and snow avalanche brush tracts. This road is especially beautiful in the fall when the deciduous trees have turned bright yellow and mountains are capped with snow.

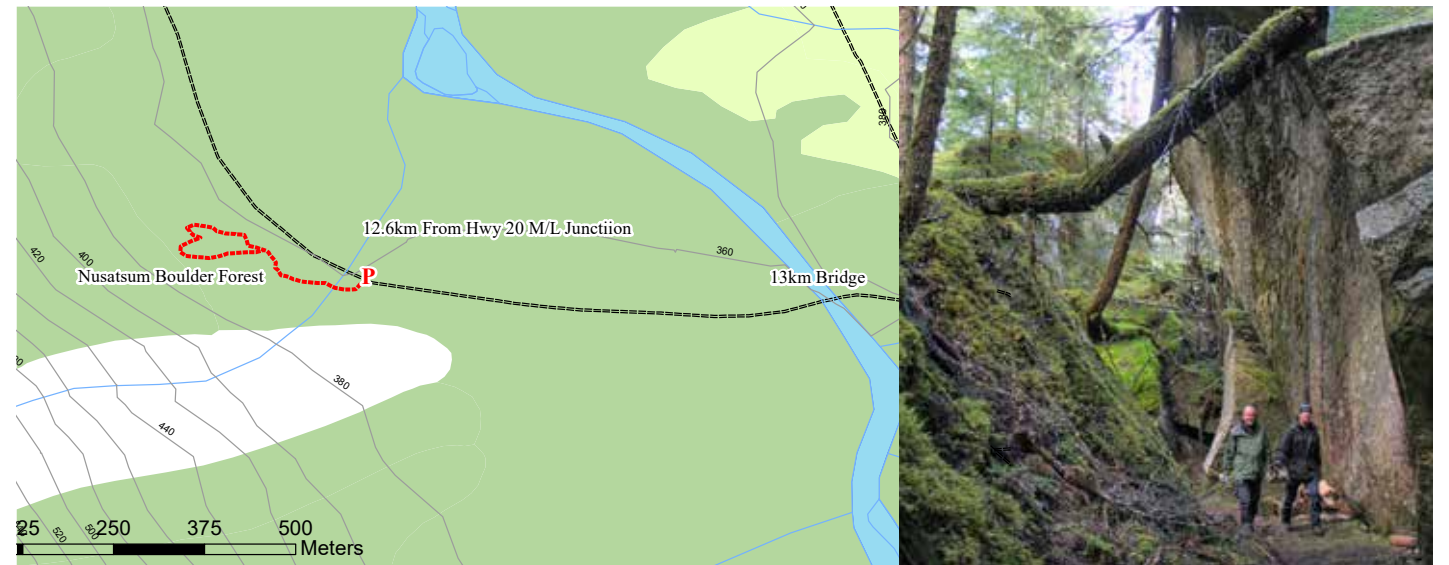
The lookout provides a fabulous view of the Noeick River valley, Styx Mountain and Purgatory Glacier directly across the valley. At this stunning viewpoint there is

a picnic table and outhouse facility. It is possible to continue walking down the old forest service road for more views, but the road is brushing in quickly. Before heading down to the river, just remember it's a long way back up to your vehicle. The valley was washed out a few times by a jokulhlaup (a glacial phenomenon) where the rising waters of Ape Lake broke through the receding Fyles Glacier ice dam, dumping a wall of water down the valley, wiping out forests and roads all the way down to the ocean at South Bentinck Arm.

How to get there: Starting at Hammer Lake trailhead drive an additional 5 km to the lookout. 4x4 vehicle access only as this road can be quite rough. Guided off-road vehicle tours or 4x4 vehicle rentals may be the best option to access this challenging route. Inquire beforehand at the tourist information booth for current road conditions.

See map on page 22.

Photo: Amélie Bourgeois



13. BOULDER FOREST TRAIL

Distance: 300 m

Elevation Gain: 40 m

Difficulty: Easy

NOTE: This is not an official trail, but a flagged route created and maintained by the Bella Coola Community Forest (bellacoolaforest.com).

Description: This is a short, pleasant walk through a maze of huge boulders in an old growth forest. As you step off the road and into the forest, you notice the humid air that is so characteristic of the West Coast rainforest. These moist conditions make it possible for large trees to grow right on top of the boulders even though there is no mineral soil, only decomposing organic matter

and moss. It is a cool walk through a lush forest on a hot summer day and an ideal short stop on the way to Odegaard Falls. While walking around and under the cavernous boulders you can hear a trickle echo from an underground water source. In the fall this trail hosts a variety of colourful mushrooms, including the spotted admirable bolete and clusters of yellowfoot mushrooms that contrast with the green, mossy forest floor. Although this trail is easy, be cautious of slippery sections and watch your footing on wet logs and mossy rocks.

How to get there: Take the West Nusatsum Forest Service road turnoff on Hwy 20 immediately west of the Nusatsum River Bridge. Follow the mainline for approximately 12.5 km to the small pull out parking area where the trail starts. It is an easy walk but not wheel-chair accessible.

Photo: Bella Coola Trails Alliance



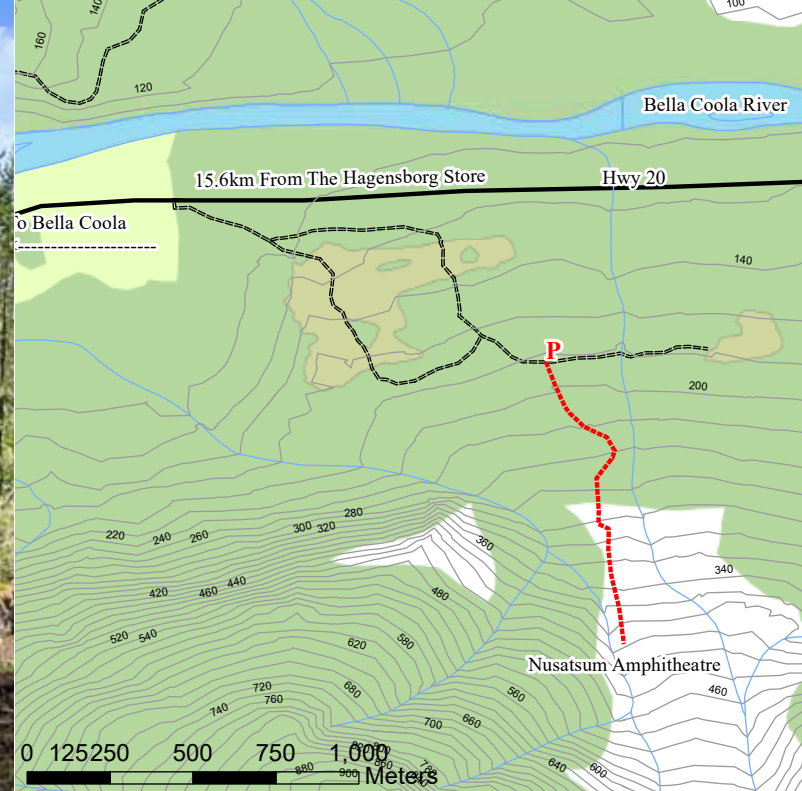
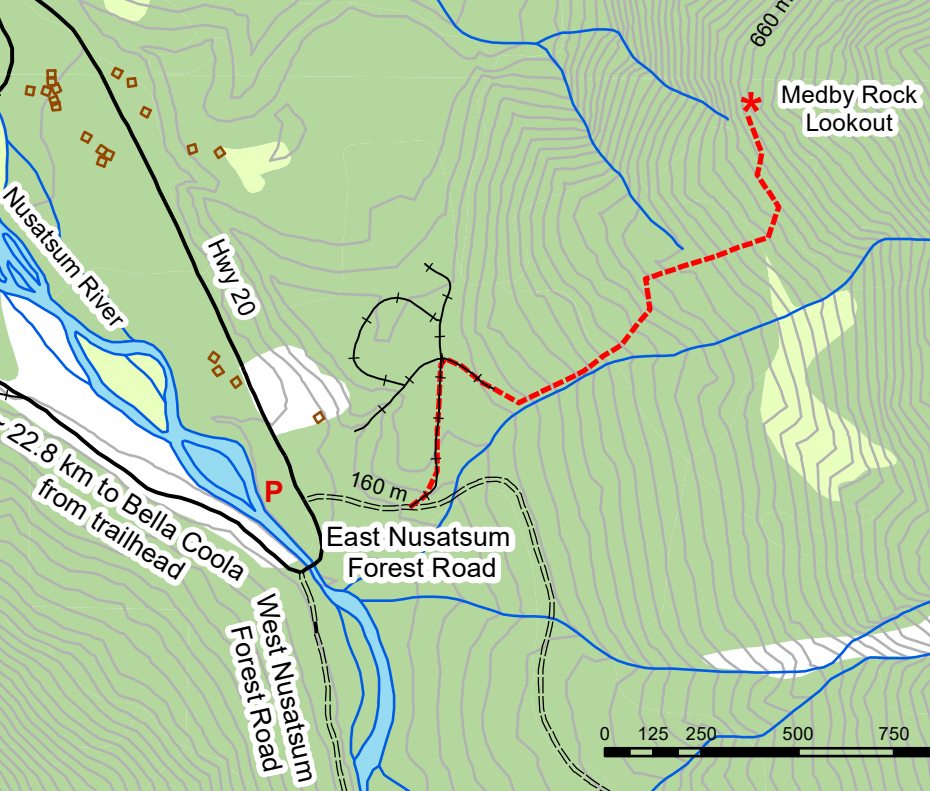
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14. MEDBY ROCK LOOKOUT

Distance: 2km

Elevation Change: 500m

Difficulty: Moderate to difficult

Description: This trail leads to the site of an old forest fire lookout, so you can bet the view is panoramic. The trail starts along the main logging road for about 300m then veers left onto a branch road. Follow this for another 300m to the top of the hill and across the flats. Then turn right as a smaller road eventually turns into a trail near a small creek. The trail climbs steadily from here through second growth forest. Eventually the trail enters an old growth forest with some large Douglas fir. The trail veers left, then switches back and forth up to a cliff, along

its base and then out onto the old forest fire lookout site. Only the concrete footings remain as the building burnt down many years ago. There is much to see from this spot named after a local painter, Carl Medby, who painted from here in the 30's. There are excellent views of the lower Bella Coola valley looking west towards Hagensborg and Bella Coola, north into the Saloompt River valley and south into the Nusatsum River valley. For a description of the mountain bike trails, see Page 6.

How to get there: On Hwy 20 cross the bridge over the Nusatsum River about 3.3 km. east of Saloompt Rd on Hwy 20 (22.8 km from Bella Coola). Drive 100m past the hairpin corner to a large parking area on the west side of the highway. The trailhead is the East Nusatsum Forest Service Road on the other side of the highway. A sign marks the start.

15. NUSATSUM AMPHITHEATRE TRAIL

Distance: 1.2 km

Elevation Gain: 220 m

Difficulty: Moderate

NOTE: This is not an official trail, but a flagged route created and maintained by the Bella Coola Community Forest (bellacoolaforest.com).

Description: This trail takes you through second growth forest and breaks out onto the boulder strewn deposition field below the spectacular walls of the north side of Mount Nusatsum. At 2,575 m (8,448 ft) elevation, Mount Nusatsum, the sleeping giant, is one of the tallest mountains in Bella Coola and steeped in mythic lore.

The trail climbs steadily, first along an old logging road narrowing to an uneven foot path. The trail ends at the base of the boulder field but skilled hikers can carefully pick their own way further up the scree slopes below the towering north face of Mount Nusatsum. If planning to go beyond the lookout at the end of the trail, make sure you have good, supportive hiking boots and hiking poles as the boulder field can be treacherous. Do not attempt to pass the viewpoint into the boulder field on a wet day, the boulders can be extremely slippery.

How to get there: Follow Hwy 20 approximately 15.6 km east of the Hagensborg store to the junction of a small forest road. Follow the forest road for 200 m or so and at the first fork in the road, take the left turn and follow the road about one kilometer to the small parking area and flagged trailhead.



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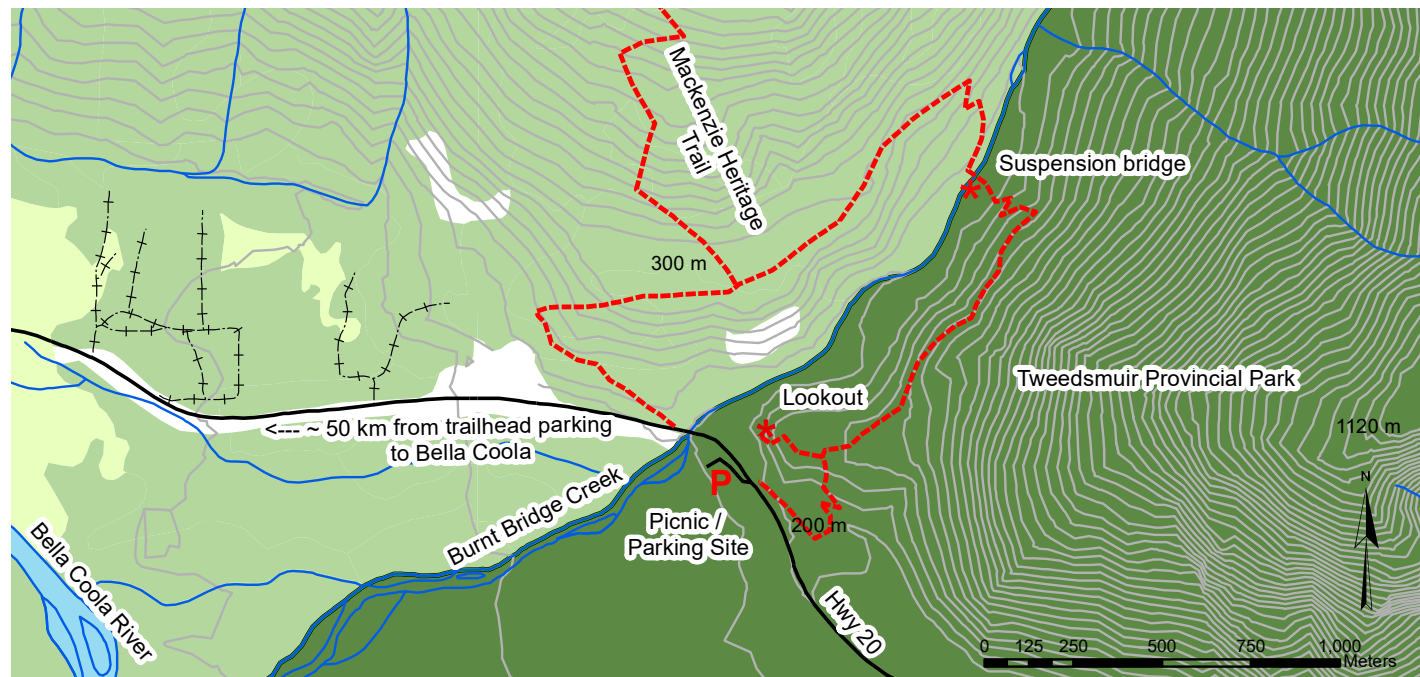


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16. BURNT BRIDGE LOOP & VALLEY VIEW LOOKOUT

Distance: 5 km
Elevation Change: 200 m
Difficulty: Moderate

Description: Segments of this trail are part of the ancient First Nations grease trail network, and it was likely used by Sir Alexander Mackenzie on his historic expedition across Canada by Land in 1793. The trail straddles the Tweedsmuir Park boundary and while the viewpoint is in the park, it overlooks the beautiful Bella Coola Valley towards Firvale, outside of the park. It is only a short 10-15 minute walk from the parking lot to the viewpoint starting at the trailhead on the East side of the bridge. The trail then continues along Burnt Bridge Creek to a suspension bridge with stunning views. There is an additional lookout on the west side of the bridge. Follow a short trail down to a bench overlooking Burnt Bridge Creek and Stupendous Mountain. Back on the main trail watch for more great views of Stupendous Mountain on your decent down to the road. You will need to walk on the highway a short distance back to the parking area. This trail can be completed in 1-2 hours.

How to get there: The trail starts from the Mackenzie Heritage Trailhead Parking lot at the west boundary of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, 50km east of Bella Coola on Hwy 20. Note: Trailhead is on the opposite side of the highway from the parking lot.

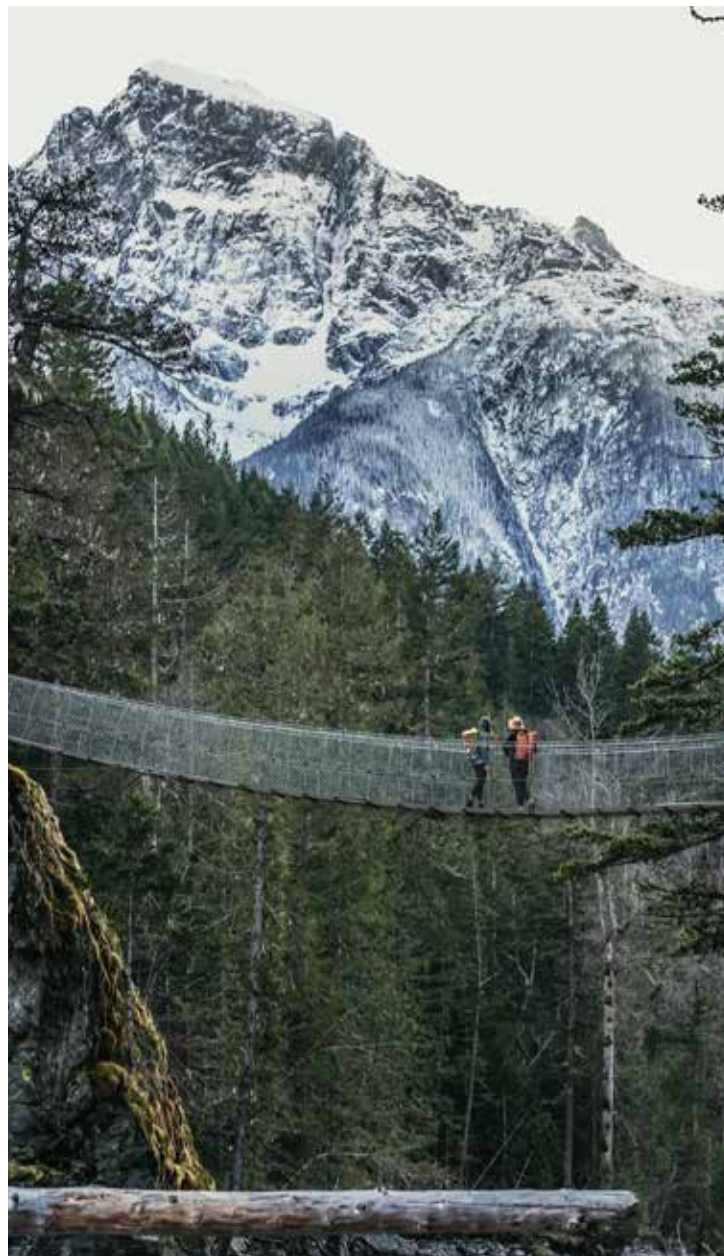


Photo: Jon Thorpe




17. KETTLE POND TRAIL

Distance: 2km
Elevation Change: 80m
Difficulty: Easy




Description: This is an interesting walk that begins along a medial glacial moraine consisting of 'till' and giant boulders which were left behind between two lobes of a glacier that retreated at the end of the ice age. The trail


then meanders downhill to a unique glacial depression called a "kettle" pond. There are ancient Douglas firs, orchids and water lilies to look for. The large boulder at the parking lot is an erratic left behind by the glacier. It split in the late 1990s. If it's cloudy down valley it just may be sunny up here.

How to get there: The trailhead begins across the road from the Big Rock/Kettle Pond Day Use Area area & parking lot in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park about 64km east of Bella Coola, just a few kilometers past Stuie.



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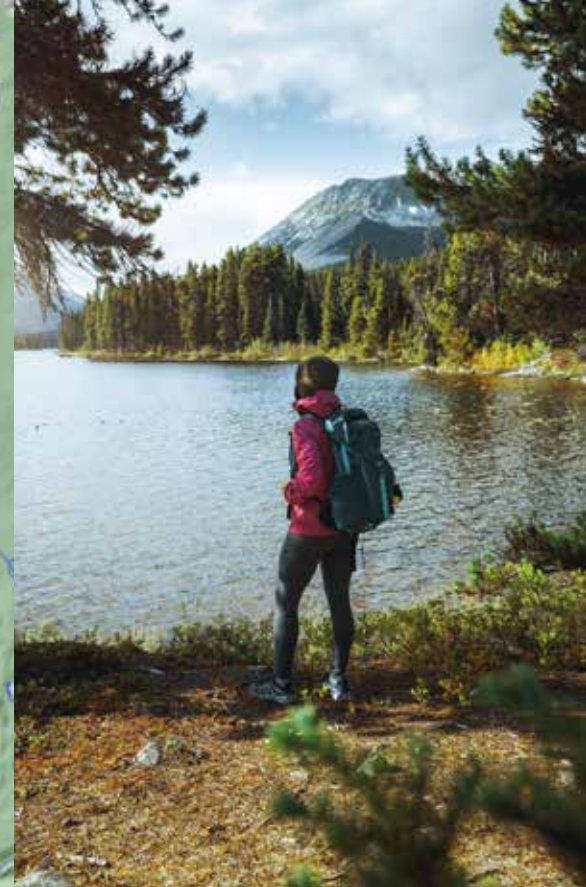
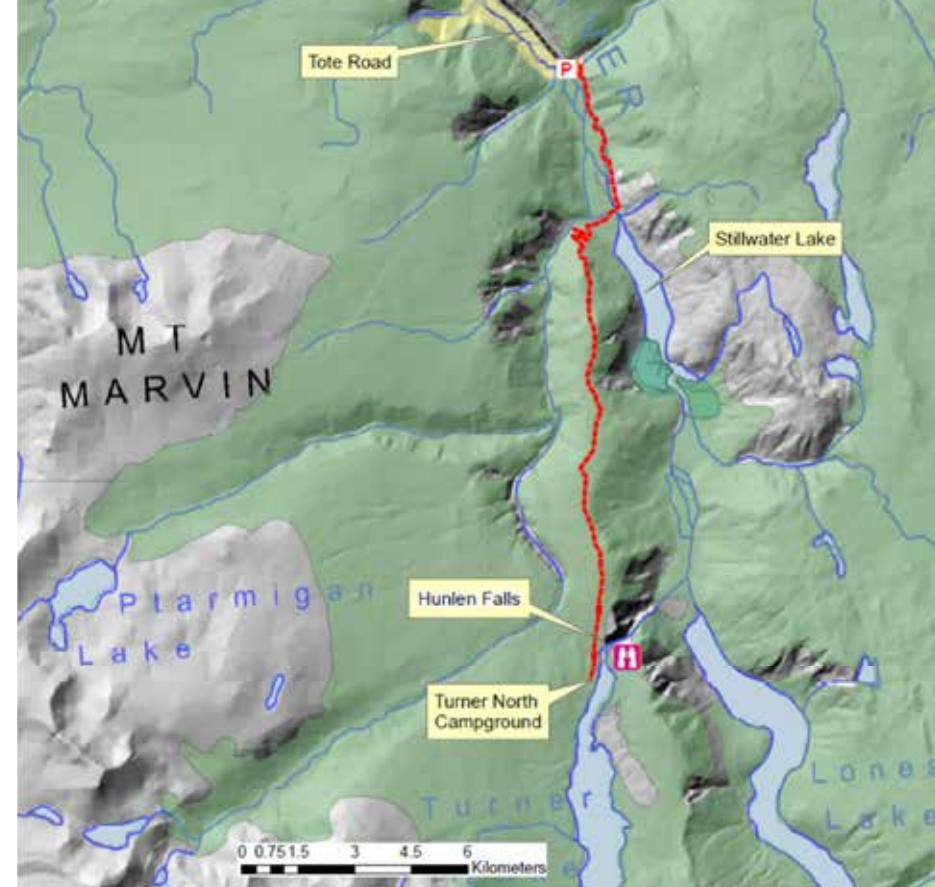
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Photos: Jesaja Class



18. HUNLEN FALLS & STILLWATER LAKE

Distance: 16.4 km

Elevation Change: 800m

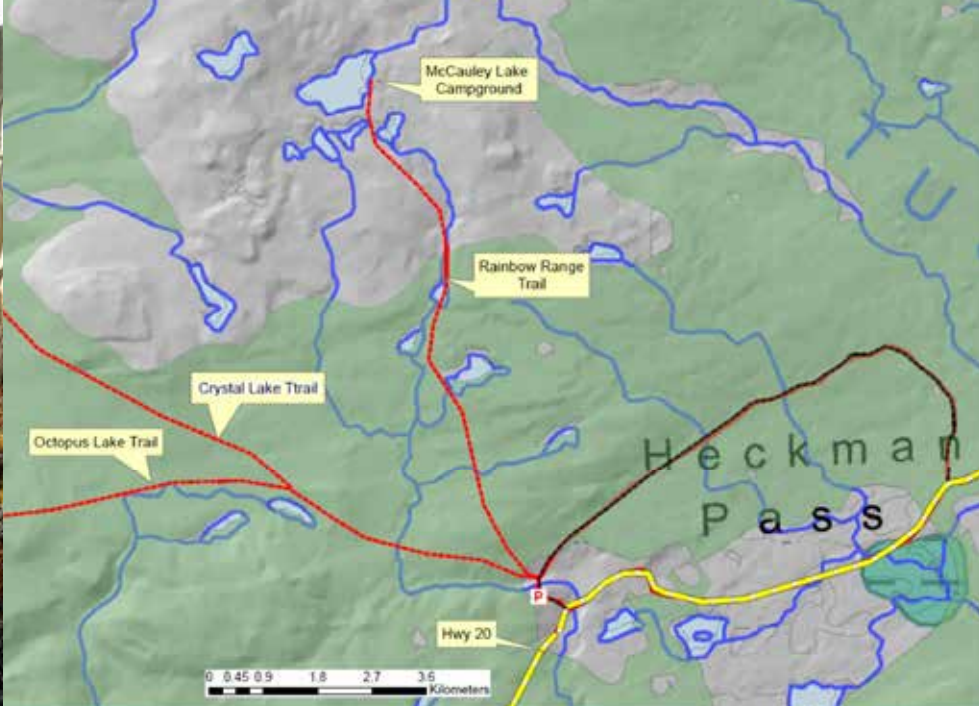
Difficulty: Difficult

Access: 4x4 vehicles only

Description: A challenging 6-9 hour (one-way) hike to one of Canada's highest free-falling waterfalls, which plunges 1,316 ft (401m) from Turner Lake. The trail meanders alongside the Atnarko River through scenic forested areas as well as talus boulder fields, before reaching the refreshing Stillwater Lake at the 4km mark. Stillwater Lake is the last source of fresh water before Turner Lake. It is important to note that camping is not permitted at this lake. Hikers should use caution when crossing any scree washouts and are encouraged to hike this section of the trail in groups, if possible, and between late morning and early afternoon, when foraging bears are the least active in this high-value habitat. Bear spray is a must-have on this hike. The next portion of the trail includes the majority of this hike's elevation gain, hikers will climb 600 metres via 78 switchbacks and emerge at a ridge with a spectacular viewpoint. The trail then rises more gently towards the wilderness campsite, following the route of Chilcotin Chief Hana-Lin, who used to fish

and trap at the base of the falls, and for whom the falls are named. The campsite is well appointed with a large steel bear cache for food storage, sand-filled tent pads, fire rings, benches, and cooking platforms. Depending on the time of year there can be mosquitoes and black flies, be sure to pack bug spray and bug nets. This campsite is a great base for further explorations, whether that be by canoe or foot. Canoe rentals and float plane access can be arranged through Tweedsmuir Air Service. [The Hunlen Falls Trail heads north from the campsite to a footbridge at the outlet of Turner Lake, then to a breathtaking viewpoint opposite the Falls. Take extra caution and stay back from any steep drop offs.]

How to get there: Trailhead access is located at the end of Tote Road. From Hwy 20 at the base of 'the Hill' (75 km from Bella Coola) follow the old Tote Road for 12 kms. It is important to note that this road is suitable only for high clearance 4-wheel drive vehicles. Significant flood risk hazards and debris flow hazards exist on this road and BC Parks recommends that parks visitors AVOID travelling on the Tote road during high water or rain events. Suggested driving time 1.5 hrs. If you choose to hike in on this road please note there is no camping at the trailhead or at the trailhead parking lot. The road should only be hiked between the hours of 10am and 3pm to avoid periods of heightened bear activity.



19. RAINBOW RANGE TRAIL

Distance: 7km one way
Elevation Change: 300m
Difficulty: Moderate

Description: This trail, near Tweedsmuir Park's eastern boundary, provides a short and direct route into the alpine, where hikers are rewarded with incredible views of the surrounding Coast Range Mountains and volcanic Rainbow Range. While hikers are welcome to enjoy the beautiful wilderness camping spots, please be aware that there are no facilities at these locations. The trailhead is located at the far end of the parking area, just beyond the metal gate. Hikers should immediately veer to the left, before following the Rainbow Range Trail sign towards the right and up through an old burn, teeming with new life and contrasting pink fireweed and yellow arnica in

the summer months. The old burn is slowly replaced with thriving subalpine forest and wild-flower filled meadows as the trail winds between lakes of varying sizes and up onto a rocky plateau. Hikers should follow the well-worn trail and rock cairns to a view overlooking a picturesque unnamed lake and the multi-hued Rainbow Range. There is no obvious end to this trail, so hikers should simply pick a spot to take in the views before heading back. For those adventurous hikers who have more time, there is a dedicated camp spot at McCauley Lake, which is a perfect base-camp for further exploration in the area. Hikers should be prepared with bug spray or nets as bugs enjoy this trail as much as the rest of us, especially on still days. Be aware of mountain goats and bears in this area.

How to get there: The Trail head is located off of Hwy 20 at the top of "The Hill", 95km east from Bella Coola and at the far end of the East Branch parking lot.



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Photos: Owen Perry

