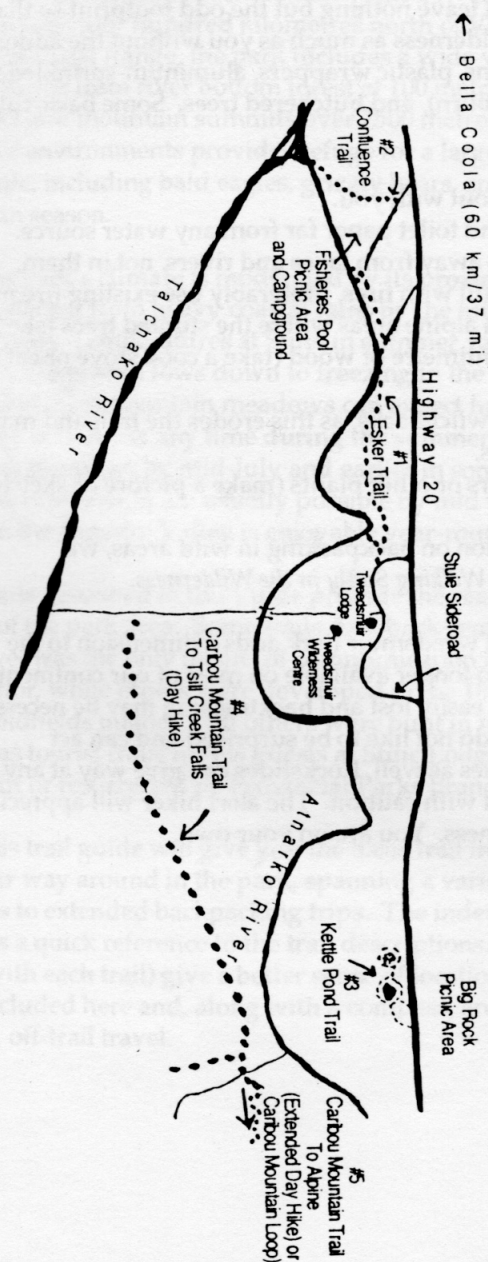


• Stui Area Map

Tweedsmuir Trails Around Stui



Stuie Area

(Map sheet 93D/8)

Stuix (Stuie on the road maps) was a vibrant native village until the smallpox epidemic of the 1860s killed most of the residents. At the limit of navigation by dugout canoe of the Atnarko and Bella Coola Rivers, Stuix was an important place for both coastal and interior peoples. In the 1930s, Tommy Walker established Stuie Lodge (the forerunner of Tweedsmuir Wilderness Centre and neighbouring Tweedsmuir Lodge) and developed several trails and cabin stopovers for his touring and hunting guests. Located in one of the most scenic places in Tweedsmuir Park, with broad views of high glaciated peaks to the southwest and heavily treed with old-growth Douglas-fir forest, Stuie is the focal point for a number of trails built over the past half century.

1. Esker Trail

(half hour)

The trail begins across from the smokehouse on Corbould Drive 13 km (8 miles) east of the western park boundary. One branch descends to the Atnarko River; the main trail climbs to the top of a ridge, heading west.

Many of the geological formations of Tweedsmuir Park tell a story of ice and time. A few thousand years ago the Atnarko - Bella Coola valley was filled with ice two kilometres deep. Beneath the ice ran a river, carrying meltwater and ground-up mountain material downstream to the ocean. The ground-up rock, gravel, and silt settled in the channel beneath the ice, leaving a high ridge when the ice melted. The ridge thus formed is an esker and the trail follows along its crest for about a mile, providing good views of the Atnarko River and the high glaciated peaks of Mounts Melikan, Nyland, and Stupendous to the south.

Near the start of the trail are some graves of Chilcotin Indians buried here thirty to fifty years ago. As you continue along you may notice some blue blazes on the old-growth Douglas-fir trees in the hollow to the right of the trail. This remnant forest was spared from clear-cutting by a trade of lands, unlike the forest downstream from here in the park, and the slopes across the river, which were deforested recently.

Twenty minutes down the trail a large opening in the trees draws the eyes across the valley to the Tsini-Tsini Creek with Mount Nyland at its head. A quick descent on the trail then brings you to the Atnarko River shore. Follow the roadway downstream and then cut over to the picnic shelter visible from the road, where the following hike begins.

2. Confluence Trail

(30 minutes)

The Atnarko River pours into the Talchako River two kilometres below Stuix, forming the Bella Coola River 65 miles and 150 metres above the ocean. While the Atnarko (meaning 'clearwater' in Chinook jargon) is fed by snowmelt, lakes and springs, the Talchako (meaning 'whitewater') receives its waters from the melting of the large ice fields to the south and west. In early summer and again in late summer, the meeting of the clear waters of the Atnarko and the milky waters of the Talchako at the confluence creates a clean line down the middle of the Bella Coola until the mixing is completed downstream.

The trail begins 100 metres down the driveway of the Fisheries Pool campground, named for the federal government fish hatchery that operated here in the 1970s. Descending down the bank to the floodplain, you follow a cleared trail through cottonwood forest to the shores of the river, a 15 to 30 minute walk from the road depending upon your interest in the tremendously varied plant and bird life and chance encounters with grizzly bears. Bald eagle nests are visible from here and the area is popular with grizzly bears as well as with fishermen, who come here for much the same purpose. The trail also has a lot of stinging nettle, so it's a good idea to wear long pants when walking it.

3. Kettle Pond

(1 hour)

A remnant of glacial times, a kettle pond is formed when a large chunk of ice is left behind by the retreating ice and is buried in the debris of the ground-up rock. When the chunk melts, a deep hole is left, creating a pond if it is below the local groundwater table, often without inlet or outlet.

Such a formation is found at Kettle Pond, across from the Big Rock Picnic Area 16 km (10 miles) east of the western park boundary. The trail begins across the road from the rock, entering the forest and climbing the hillside before descending by well-graded switchbacks to the level of the pond. The trail continues around the pond giving you a good view of the clear water, pond lilies, and aquatic mint as well as an occasional glimpse of goldeneye ducks and warblers.

To the west of the pond is a second depression, well on its way in succession to land. A short distance down the trail you may cross over the lagg (moat) on a fallen tree to where you can take off your socks and shoes and enjoy the bog. (Be gentle with the sensitive vegetative mat). It might not look like much at first, but get down on your hands and knees and look closely at the peat-in-process. There are many kinds of moss and other plants, all adapted to the highly acidic, nutrient-poor floating mat of partially-decomposed moss. Have a look at the sundew, a tiny,

bright red, meat-eating plant. Try putting an ant or fly into the sticky leaves; it will eventually get digested by the leaf which acts like an inside-out stomach.

Back on the trail at the pond, you can continue around the north side and then either backtrack on the trail to Big Rock or follow an alternate trail up to the highway a half kilometre west of the picnic ground.

Caribou Mountain

(Map sheets 93C/5 and D/8)

A trail up Caribou Mountain was constructed in 1932 under the supervision of Tommy Walker, proprietor of Stuie Lodge. Because it begins on private property, it is accessible to guests of Tweedsmuir Wilderness Centre and Tweedsmuir Lodge, by way of the deteriorating logging bridge crossing the Atnarko River at Stuix. The advanced state of decay of the bridge suggests caution in crossing, and shortly one may have to again ford the river rather than cross the bridge, as Walker did in the 1930s and 40s.

4. Tsill Falls Day Hike

The trail proper begins somewhat brushily 450 paces beyond the bridge on the left (east) side of the road. Following 60-year old blazes and a well-worn tread, you proceed across the floodplain to old-growth Douglas-fir forest on higher ground. The trail then climbs on to a bench above the Atnarko River, heading in an easterly direction towards Caribou Mountain.

A dip in the trail leads to an obscure fork, the branch straight ahead leading down to the river and by another bog. Take the right branch and proceed along the bench following well-trodden trail through moss-carpeted forest festooned with Calypso orchids in May. Stay on the main route by noting sawed-off tree ends where we have cleared out trees fallen across the trail. Watch for animal tracks crossing the main trails as these can be easily confused with the hiking route.

An overlook above the Atnarko is reached about 45 minutes from the bridge. In 20 more minutes the trail crosses Tsill Creek on a large Douglas-fir conveniently wind-toppled over the creek. Other trees not so conveniently toppled will have to be circumnavigated on the way to the creek. Beware of the Devil's Club, which grows profusely near the creek.

After crossing the creek, pick up the trail again downstream of the log. The trail climbs and then descends to cross another, intermittent, stream. You then climb onto a shoulder of the mountain on a good trail to a ridge above the creek, from which the sound of rushing water can be

heard.

At the base of a small rockslide the trail begins switching forth and back, more steeply now, up along the Tsill Creek gorge. After about a 30-minute mile and several switchbacks (and forths) up, the falling water is more distinctly heard. Watch carefully for a branch to the right from a switchback on the main trail, just above a large fallen tree blocking the old trail route. This brings you to a cascade on Tsill Creek, one of many on the 1500 metre (5000 foot) plunge from the Caribou Mountain snowfields to the Atnarko valley. The falls makes a good lunch stop before turning back on a short day hike, or continuing up on a long one.

5. Extended Day Hike to Alpine

The main trail continues from the falls at the same steep gradient for a further 900 metre (3000 foot) vertical ascent. Cleared out periodically by YMCA Camp Menogyn and others, frequent blowdowns bury the route. Watch for cut log ends and old blazes and be prepared for heavy going. On the 1500 metre shoulder of Caribou Mountain the trail, somewhat obscure in the wet and slippery forest, ends at a fallen-down three-log cabin on a branch of Tsill Creek.

From here you can either follow the creek up to treeline on the west face of the mountain, or stay on the shoulder and follow meadows and bushwack around the north or south side to Ptarmigan Lake and Glacier Mountain. The views across the Talchako River on a clear day can make the effort well worth while.

6. The Talchako River

(Map Sheets 93D/8, D/1, C/4, and 92N/13)

The Talchako River has its source in the Talchako Glacier on Mount Monarch, the 3,510 metre (11,700 foot) mountain visible due south at the head of the straight-running, 65-kilometre long Talchako Valley. Although no trail currently exists up the valley, a hike through this infrequently-visited area provides the more adventurous explorer with tremendous views of the heavily-glaciated peaks on the west side of the river.

A disused trapline and well-used bear trail departs from the Caribou Mountain Trail about three kilometres past the crossing of the Atnarko River at Stuix. The trail is faint and difficult to follow, crossing rocky terrain and swamps as it heads to the Talchako River. Trapper cabins indicate you are on the right path.

A new trail is much needed here. Alternately you can follow up the river in low water during the early summer, crossing between gravel bars as necessary. The views to the west and south make it all worthwhile but remember that if you make a mistake, the chances of rescue are small.

7. In Mackenzie's Footsteps – The Burnt Bridge Trail

(2 - 3 hours)

(Map Sheet 93 D/8)

The 'Burnt Bridge Loop Trail' provides the dayhiker with an opportunity to retrace a small part of Alexander Mackenzie's route as he entered the Bella Coola Valley down the Kahylskt (now Burnt Bridge Creek) watershed. You will actually walk in Mackenzie's footsteps as you tread the narrow space between the rock wall of the canyon and the bed of the creek for part of the way.

The trail is designed to start at, and loop back on, the parking lot at the Burnt Bridge picnic site on Highway 20 at Burnt Bridge Creek, the western boundary of Tweedsmuir Park.

From the parking lot, cross the highway at the lot entrance and ascend the trail on the cutbank leading to the forested bench above. Entering the forest, the trail proceeds a short distance to the base of a 170-foot high hill and ascends on well-graded trail.

At the top of the hill, about fifteen minutes from the parking lot, the trail forks. The **left fork** takes you to an overlook of the Bella Coola Valley in about five minutes. From the overlook you can see Mount Stupendous to the south, and Mackenzie's water route down the Bella Coola River to the west. You must retrace your steps to get back to the main trail.

The **right fork** is the main trail, which proceeds over the hill and then descends 200 feet to the floodplain of Burnt Bridge Creek, crossing over creek channels on two small footbridges.

Less than an hour from the parking lot, you are now walking in Mackenzie's footsteps, on the only negotiable path between the steep wall to your right and the creek just over the ridge to your left. The soil is sandy, indicative of the floodplain you are walking on, and supports a lush forest of alder, cedar, cottonwood and some Douglas-fir.

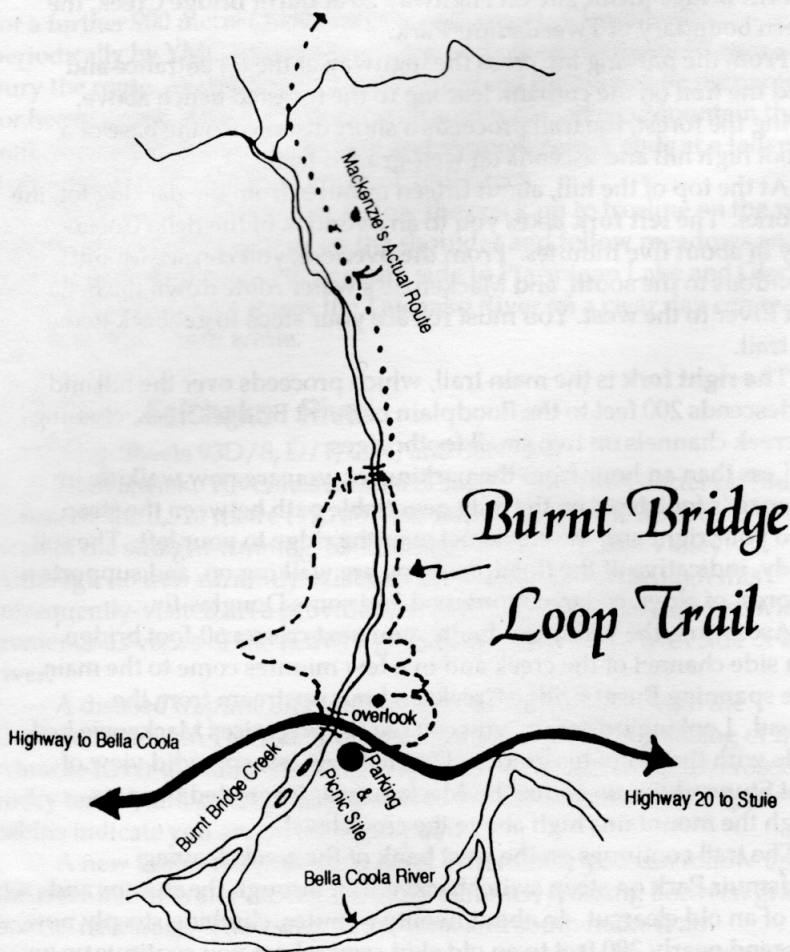
Ascending the valley gradually, you next cross a 60-foot bridge over a side channel of the creek and in a few minutes come to the main bridge spanning Burnt Bridge Creek, an hour upstream from the trailhead. Looking upstream, you can see the precipices Mackenzie had to scale with the aid of his guides. Downstream is a splendid view of Mount Stupendous, so named by Mackenzie as he crested the pass through the mountains high above the creek level.

The trail continues on the west bank of the creek, leaving Tweedsmuir Park on steep switchbacked trail through the stumps and brush of an old clearcut. In about twenty minutes, climbing steeply now, you ascend nearly 300 feet to an old skid road where you continue on an easier grade, reaching the high point of the trail one hour and 385 feet above the bridge. Views along the way are magnificent, particularly

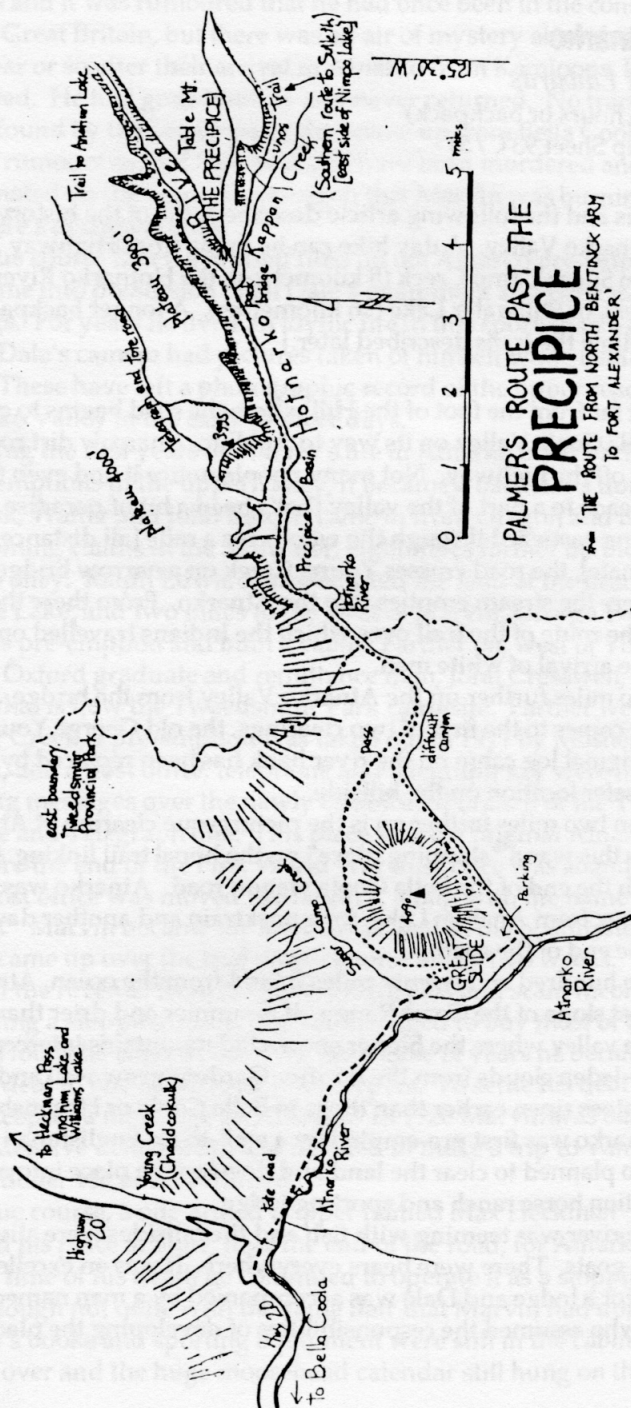
those of Mount Stupendous across the valley to the south.

The descent is on a disused logging road on a gradual slope. On the lodgepole pine flat, you pass the intersection of the Mackenzie Heritage Trail, which follows a 1920s mining trail rather than Mackenzie's actual route into the Bella Coola Valley. Further along the road another trail diverges to the left and takes you back to the highway and the parking lot on Burnt Bridge Creek in less than an hour. Here you are upstream from the site of 'Friendly Village', from which Mackenzie proceeded down to the ocean by dugout canoe on the milky cold waters of the Bella Coola River. A dip in the creek will cool you off too.

• Burnt Bridge Trail Map



Atnarko and Precipice Area Map



The Upper Atnarko Valley

8. Atnarko

by Isabel Edwards

(2-5 hours or backpack)

(Map Sheet 93 C/5)

[This and the following article describe some of the history of the upper Atnarko Valley. A day hike can be made from Highway 20 upriver to Sugar Camp Creek (8 kilometres), the Hotnarko River (12 kilometres), or Stillwater Lake (16 kilometres). A longer backpack trip would follow the trails described later.]

Not far from the foot of the Hill where the road begins to climb out of the Bella Coola Valley on its way to Anahim, a narrow dirt road branches off the highway. Not many people notice it and even fewer use it, but it leads to a part of the valley that's been a bit of paradise.

Going eastward through the woods for a mile [all distances approximate], the road crosses Young Creek on a narrow bridge not far from where the stream empties into the Atnarko. From there the road follows the route of the trail over which the Indians travelled on foot before the arrival of white men.

Two miles further up the Atnarko Valley from the bridge, the roadway comes to the first of two clearings, the old George Young place whose original log cabin on the river bank has been replaced by a larger one in a safer location on the hillside.

Then two miles farther on is the picturesque clearing of Atnarko. For years this was a "stopping place" on the horse trail linking Anahim Lake with the end of the Bella Coola wagon road. Atnarko was a two-day journey from Anahim Lake for a packtrain and another day's trail ride to the end of the road.

One hundred and twenty miles inland from the ocean, Atnarko is on the east slope of the Coast Range. It is sunnier and drier than farther down the valley where the higher snow-clad mountains intercept the moisture-laden clouds from the Pacific. Gardens grow well and corn and tomatoes ripen earlier than those in Bella Coola or Hagensborg.

Atnarko was first pre-empted by a well-to-do Englishman named Dale who planned to clear the land and develop the place into a combination horse ranch and sporting lodge.

The river was teeming with fish and the hillsides were alive with deer and goats. There were bears everywhere. It was an excellent location for a lodge and Dale was accompanied by a man named Mark Marvin who assumed the responsibilities of developing the place.

Marvin was a superb cook and prepared exotic meals. He spoke five languages and it was rumoured that he had once been in the consular service in Great Britain, but there was an air of mystery about him.

A year or so after their arrival in Atnarko from Kamloops, Dale disappeared. He had gone hunting and never returned. No trace of him was ever found by the search party that came up from Bella Coola and in time ugly rumours spread that he might have been murdered and his body cremated on the huge piles of slash that Marvin was burning at the time of Dale's disappearance.

In due course Marvin himself filed on the Atnarko pre-emption and he also came into possession of all Dale's equipment and personal belongings. For years he lived an idyllic life in this sportsman's paradise and with Dale's camera had pictures taken of himself while fishing or hunting. These have left a photographic record of the upper reaches of the Atnarko Valley in the early pioneer days.

During the first years of Marvin's life in Atnarko other bachelors filed pre-emptions in the upper valley; it became a bachelor's domain.

Frank, Walter and John Ratcliff came in from Oregon and took out three adjoining claims in the Stillwater, eight miles farther up the Atnarko Valley. Ralph Edwards pre-empted the land at the head of Lonesome Lake; and two miles to the west of Marvin, George Young cleared his pre-emption and built a cabin. Farther on, west of Young Creek, an Oxford graduate and remittance man, John Cresswell, took up land on what is now the Tweedsmuir Park campsite. Farther west again, at Mosher Creek, a pre-emption was taken out in 1911 by Mosher, an American, and a post office, telephone and telegraph key were installed for sending messages over the newly established branch of the Yukon Telephone and Telegraph line. This place was the original Atnarko.

Before the end of the First World War this office was abandoned and the post office was moved to Marvin's, along with the name "Atnarko." Marvin became the lineman as well as the postmaster for the mail that came up over the trail on packhorse every two weeks.

With the revenue from his government jobs and scant income from his operating a stopping place, Marvin managed to buy most of the expensive foods he enjoyed but over the course of years he became deeply in debt to one of the local storekeepers. To settle his debt he gave the storekeepers a mortgage on Atnarko. In 1920 Marvin was badly in need of extensive dental work and decided to make a trip to Vancouver to have it done. He never returned.

In due course, a one-armed trapper named Max Heckman exchanged his place at Stuiie, near the end of the road, for Atnarko and until near time of his death he continued to operate it as a stopping place, although not quite with the same flair that Marvin had done.

Dale's books and sporting equipment were still in the cabin when Max took over and the huge moosehead calendar still hung on the wall.

The cabin became more smoke-begrimed than it had been but at the end of a long day on the trail the sourdough muffins and venison steaks tasted as good as the ones Marvin cooked.

Max was a born storyteller and on long winter evenings, whenever he had company, he would hold them spellbound with his bear stories.

The cabin is gone now, burnt by a careless hand. There are no longer deer on the sidehill and most of the time there is no one at all in Atnarko. One wishes the land could go back to the days before Dale and that nature could cover the traces of man, but Atnarko is still beautiful and there is an air of peacefulness about the place. It is still a bit of paradise.

(Further tales of the Atnarko Valley can be found in Isabel Edwards' Ruffles on my Longjohns, her stories of pioneering in Tweedsmuir Park in the 1930s and 40s)

9. Lt. Palmer's Precipice

by Bob Harris

(Map sheet 93C/5)

One of the major tasks of the government of the new colony of British Columbia was exploring routes of communication to the various goldfields. Governor Douglas used any means at hand: magistrates, Indians, constables, Hudson's Bay Co. employees, but principally the Columbia Detachment of the Royal Engineers, under Lt. Col. R.C. Moody. Col. Moody was also designated the first "Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works" in the colony, a department which has continued to the present, through many divisions, subdivisions, and regroupings.

As miners worked their ways up the Fraser River and its tributaries to Quesnel Lake, and then north over the Snowshoe Plateau (in midwinter) to Antler, the Cariboo became British Columbia's great goldfield, in need of tons of supplies.

By 1860, some entrepreneurs were already running pack trains across the Chilcotin from the fjords of the west coast, a possibility that was given some advance publicity by Mackenzie in 1793.

On the 24th of June 1862, Lt. Henry Spencer Palmer, R.E., aged 26 years, received 8 pages of detailed instructions from Col. Moody for a major exploratory survey of the Interior (together with an "Appendix paper by Capt. Parsons"). Palmer's exploration from Bella Coola to Alexandria was covered in one sentence of these instructions, which required him "to travel along the proposed road...altering the line as he may think proper."

A route had already been recorded in October 1861 by Captain Cavendish Venables, retired, of the 74th Highlanders, when he intended taking up a military grant of land at Bella Coola. His map, in which

Bella Coola appears as Bill Whoalla, was drawn by the master draftsman James Launders, R.E., and lithographed by William Oldham, R.E., at the Royal Engineers' Survey Office, New Westminster.

Venables shows 16 camps from Alexandria to Bella Coola. In the vicinity of Palmer's Precipice and Great Slide, Venables travelled some distance to the north, past Anahim Lake, descending from the Chilcotin Plateau to a "dam" in the deep valley of the Bella Coola River, probably down the old Canoe Crossing summertrail to a point near the mouth of Assananny Creed.

Palmer understood that his major problem was to find the best route for the 3000 foot climb out of the Bella Coola Valley, and on to the Chilcotin Plateau. His large scale map shows several possibilities, all on the north side.

In November 1862, Palmer published his informative report, with two maps, that were remarkably good considering he traversed the country only once. Using Palmer's information, we were able to retrace that part of his journey between his Great Slide on the Atnarko, and his Summit of the Precipice, section 3 of his report. It involved an ascent of nearly 3000 feet, on to the Chilcotin Plateau, in 16 miles of trail.

It should be mentioned that Palmer's "Great Slide" does not look different from any other talus slope along the Atnarko. It merely identifies the particular slide that he and his party had to backpack up. Palmer reports that the trail at his Great Slide ran almost directly up the loose talus. Our 1978 examination of this part showed faint traces of the trail used by Palmer, supplanted by at least two later trails a short distance south. The final horse trail, shown on some maps as "The Old Sugar Camp Trail," holds a very good grade, and in places is wide enough to take a waggon. It has, however, gathered many loose rocks in parts, having not been maintained since 1956 when the citizens of Bella Coola, aided by the Department of Highways, finally completed their road connection to Williams Lake via Young Creek, now Highway 20.

The Sugar Camp Trail zigzags up to "cruising altitude" 1200 feet above the Atnarko and then contours north and east for four miles, exactly as Palmer did, to cross a broad saddle above the Hotnarko, the major valley or coulee joining the Atnarko from the east.

Palmer notes how his Great Slide route may be avoided by taking an alternative trail up the lower canyon of the Hotnarko. At the time, this may have been the better trail, provided the four crossings of the Hotnarko were in good order. This was the route selected for the Dominion telegraph from Bella Coola to join the Yukon telegraph at 150 Mile House in 1912. This line continued in service, latterly under B.C. Telephone Co., until the early 1960s.

Today, Palmer's Sugar Camp Trail is the better way to go. The four pack bridges over the Hotnarko are in ruins. Abandoned telephone wires festoon the floor of the lower canyon, and slides from a

Department of Public Works exploratory road cover parts of the trail.

Around 1912, the Hotnarko was further surveyed for a trans-Canada railway, the Pacific and Hudson Bay; several fair topographic maps were prepared, and some trail lines were slashed along the south slopes of Precipice Basin.

Four miles above the junction of the two trails reported by Palmer, the trail crosses modern Precipice Creek, which runs into Precipice Basin from the north. We are still four miles from Palmer's Precipice. The whole upper Hotnarko is ringed by miles of precipices in the form of small basalt columns.

Great coulees, such as the Hotnarko and Kappan, were gouged in the basalts of the Chilcotin Plateau, as meltwaters took the short route to the coast in the closing years of the last Ice Age. The area formerly drained east to the Fraser River; the eastbound outlet of Hotnarko Lake makes a 180° turn after three miles, giving clear evidence of its recent capture by the main Hotnarko.

"The Precipice" had moved to its present location before 1907 when E.P. Colley B.C.L.S. made his report and map to the Department of Lands. By this time, the trail by Anahim Lake had become the main travel route. Colley shows the route used by Palmer as "disused trail", down by the Hotnarko. It continued in use, however, for many years, being taken over by Jacob Lunos, a settler from the Norwegian colony round Hagensborg, near Bella Coola. Lunos moved up to Towdystan (just south of Nimpo Lake) in the early 1900s, and kept the trail open for many years, at a time when the lands were being surveyed and subdivided.

Palmer's trail upstream from Precipice Basin runs braided, along a bunchgrass and jackpine hillside facing south. After three miles, it dips down suddenly to the pack bridge over the Hotnarko, just above the mouth of Kappan Creek. Since its days of coulee cutting, the Hotnarko has shrunk to a very modest trickle.

Here the topography is just as Palmer describes it. The long easy ridge between the two creeks leads to the base of a 100 foot basalt cliff, the edge of Table Mountain. Being unconfined, the cliff tends to fall away in great rows of basalt columns. We could not verify just where Palmer got on top, but there is an easy ascent about 200 yards to the left, from which we made our way back to Palmer's survey point at the prow of Table Mountain, elevation "3840, The Precipice", on his map. The point is still used for surveys, being shown on modern maps as elevation 3926 (feet). The remains of a pole tripod, dressed in tattered white cloth, lay nearby during our visit.

Palmer shows the easier trails to Nacoontloon and Sutleth, both up on the plateau, on either side of his Precipice, but presumably he took the steep trail up the middle to get a better view of the country.

From here, Palmer travelled southeast along a delightful open and

flat verge, a few feet back from the rim rock. The trail continued east, over gently undulating and somewhat monotonous country, passing the headwaters of Pelican Creek, and the north shores of the two main arms of modern Nimpo Lake. In Palmer's day, and for many years afterwards, these arms were shown as separate lakes, Nimkop and Sutleth, or variants of these names.

Still on the main Indian trail, Palmer crossed the Salmon (Dean) River where Highway 20 crosses today, at the Fishtrap, now identified by a roadside Point of Interest sign. He then continued southeast, on the general line of Highway 20, past Towdystan and out of this story. He arrived back in New Westminster after four busy months.

10. Hunlen Falls and the Turner Lakes – Lonesome Lake Area

by Bob Harris

(3 to 7 day backpack)

(Map Sheets 93C/4 and 93C/5)

There are six named lakes in the Turner Lake chain, located 3600 feet up in a broad valley on the western edge of the Chilcotin Plateau. Some say the valley drained east to the Fraser before the last Ice Age, but now the waters take a short route to the coast, dropping 2000 feet into the deep valley of the Atnarko River and out by Bella Coola.

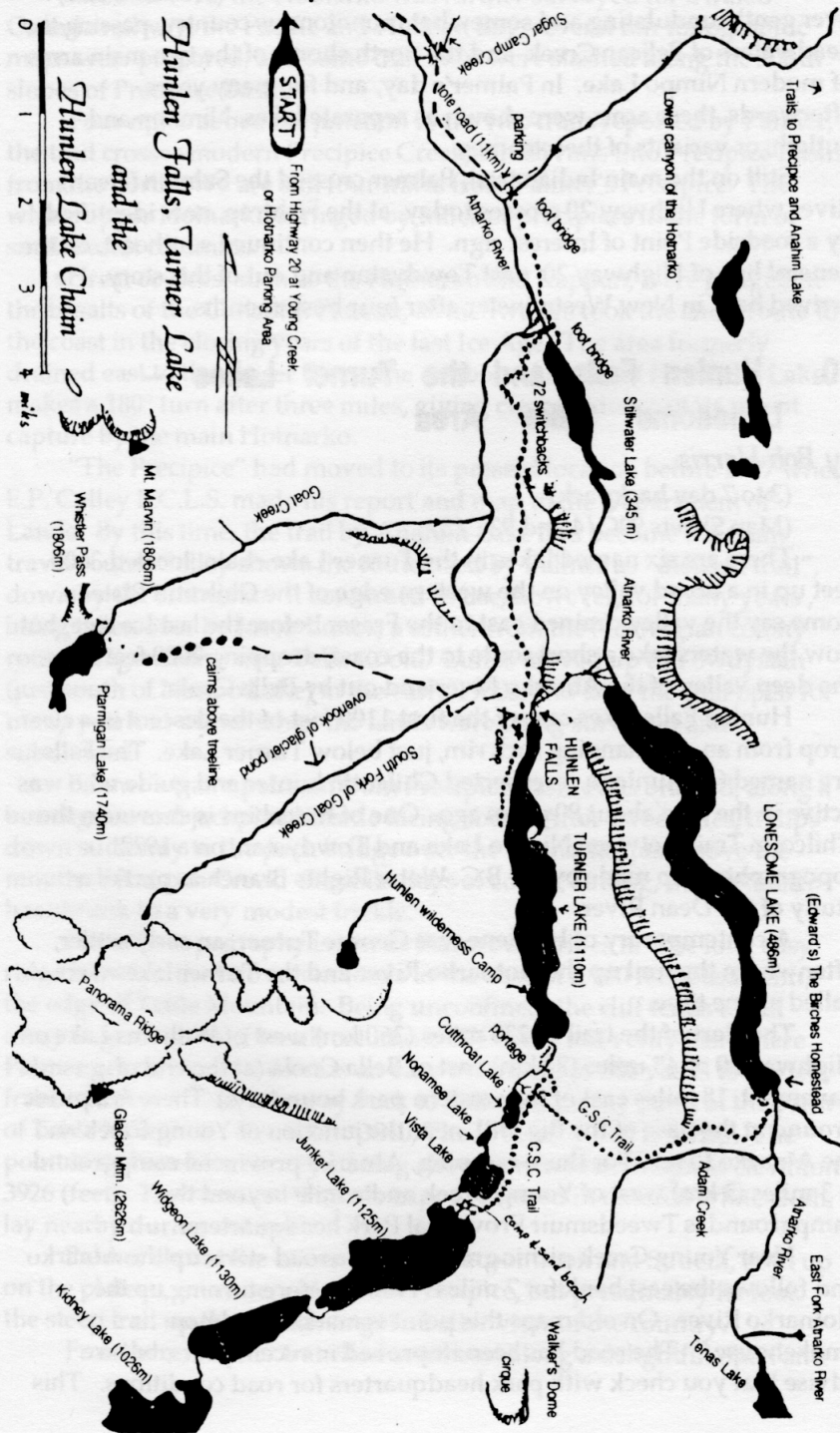
Hunlen Falls takes care of the first 1100 feet of the descent in a clear drop from an overhanging rock rim, just below Turner Lake. The Falls are named for Hunlene, a respected Chilcotin hunter and guide who was active in the area about 80 years ago. One of his cabins is shown on the Chilcotin Trail, between Nimpo Lake and Towdystan, on a 1922 topographic map made by the B.C. Water Rights Branch as part of a study of the Dean River.

A contemporary of Hunlene was George Turner, an early settler, after whom the trail up the Hotnarko River and the Turner lakes were called at one time.

The start of the trail is 225 miles (360 km) west of Williams Lake on Highway 20 or 45 miles (72 km) east of Bella Coola (at the end of pavement, 18 miles east of the western park boundary.) There is a picnic ground at the base of the Big Hill, near the junction of Young Creek and the Atnarko River. For those camping, Atnarko provincial campground is 3 miles (5 km) west of Young Creek and a mile beyond the campground is Tweedsmuir Provincial Park headquarters.

Near Young Creek picnic ground, a tote road starts up the Atnarko and follows the east bank for 7 miles (11 km) before turning up the Hotnarko River. On old maps this point is marked "salmon smokehouse." The road has been improved in recent years, but we advise that you check with park headquarters for road conditions. This

• Hunlen Falls Map



area is only 1000 feet (300 m) above sea level and vegetation is coastal.

After hiking three and one-half hours up the Atnarko, cross the footbridge over the Hotnarko and continue along the north bank of the Atnarko on the pack trail to Stillwater. The trail winds up and down the rockslides and through heavy timber along the river. In 40 minutes, you will be passing the delta of Goat Creek. In some years, warm Fall rains on new snow deliver so much debris from Glacier Mountain down Goat Creek that Stillwater Lake is raised several feet until the Atnarko cuts a new channel.

Just beyond the most southerly arm of Goat Creek delta, a suspension bridge crosses the Atnarko, right at the outlet of the Stillwater. Turn off the Stillwater Trail and zigzag down to cross the footbridge. You are now on a small flat at the start of the Turner Lake Trail.

About 72 switchbacks lift you 2000 feet (600 m) to the long ridge between Goat Creek and the Atnarko, climbing first on the Atnarko side, then above Goat Creek. The narrow ridge runs almost level for 4 miles (6.5 km) to the lower end of Turner Lake, the largest of the chain. Soon after the trail levels off on the ridge there is a small clearing on the west side with views over the canyon of Goat Creek to the peaks and ridges of the Glacier Mountain group, reaching over 8500 feet (2550 m) above sea level.

A mile further, the trail runs along the rim of a cliff, on the east side of the ridge, 2000 feet (600 m) above the swamps and meadows where the Atnarko widens into Stillwater Lake. The Atnarko is dammed by the deltas of its side creeks, forming fjord-like lakes. Goat Creek regulates the Stillwater, Hunlen Creek causes Lonesome Lake, while the east fork of the Atnarko backs up Tenas Lake.

There is a primitive campsite near the outlet of Turner Lake which makes a base for exploring east to Hunlen Falls or west to Ptarmigan Lake. From the north end of the campsite, a signed trail leads east round the lakeshore to a sturdy footbridge over the outlet, built to give access to the rock headland east of Hunlen Falls. The Parks Branch has thoughtfully hung a sign on the upstream side of the bridge, announcing "End of Navigation."

From the bridge, the trail loops round the headland. In 20 minutes, keeping to the left, you are on the rim of a sheer 1000 foot (300 m) cliff, facing the full height of the Falls plunging down their alcove. There is a second alcove, now dry, on the left of Hunlen Falls, where there was another cataract in melt-water times.

The loop trail continues to more cliffs on the east side of the headland, with a fine panorama from the upper Stillwater to lower Lonesome Lake. Further east rises the smoothly rounded bulk of bald Trumpeter Mountain, named for the swans which winter on Lonesome Lake. South is the more rugged face of Mount Ada, just beyond the east

fork of the Atnarko. On your way back to camp, take another look at Hunlen Falls, perhaps the deepest clear drop you will ever see. After all, it has been a long hike in from Highway 20, eight hours backpack for most people.

Ptarmigan Lake, the largest in the Glacier Mountain group, lies 7 miles (11 km) west of Hunlen Falls at the head of Goat Creek. It is a one-day round trip from the Turner Lake campsite. Ptarmigan Lake Trail (signed) leaves the main ridge trail about half a mile north of the campsite and climbs steadily west through the jackpines and round gravel hummocks. There is only one descent, to cross the south fork of Goat Creek on a two-log footbridge.

Above timberline, about 2 miles (3 km) of the route is marked by rock cairns ("stone women," in tribute to their builders). Soon after turning northwest towards Whistler Pass on the skyline, the Trail winds down through clumps of alpine fir to the outlet of Ptarmigan Lake where you may camp on the far side. There is time, even on a day trip, to continue north over good ground to Whistler Pass.

John Edwards' Hunlen Wilderness Camp is nicely situated near the head of Turner Lake, with a beach, a jetty, two guest cabins and nearly 20 canoes. By canoe, with a few portages, you may reach Kidney Lake at the top of the chain in a long day.

From the footbridge just upstream from Turner Lake, two trails blazed in the 1950s by the Geological Survey of Canada lead to other lakes of interest. Head a quarter mile south after crossing the footbridge, passing a great meadow on your left. The trail now forks. The east branch runs over fairly flat ground to the rim of the Atnarko Valley, then zigzags down the left bank of Adam Creek to the head of Lonesome Lake.

The other Geological Survey trail, fainter, though well-blazed, leads southwest over dry gravel ridges, past Cutthroat and Vista Lakes to Junker Lake. Ten minutes up the trail, a cairn marks a short blazed trail to the right, leading to an old campsite by the river.

High on the right, as you pass Vista Lake, is a conspicuous knife-edge ridge on Glacier Mountain. Dominating the view to the left is Walker's Dome, with its great north-facing cirque. The finest view of the whole Turner Lake chain is from Walker's Dome, but be prepared for two hours' heavy bushwhacking from Junker Lake to get above timberline.

Prevailing westerly winds down Junker Lake have built a coarse sand beach at the east end. Some visitors camp here. Other primitive campsites are up on the knoll, west of the beach. Framed above are the rugged Talchako Mountains, reaching almost to 10,000 feet (3000 m).

You are now about 13 hours backpack from Highway 20, deep in the wilderness, and fully responsible for your own welfare. The region is true wilderness, silent and magnificent.