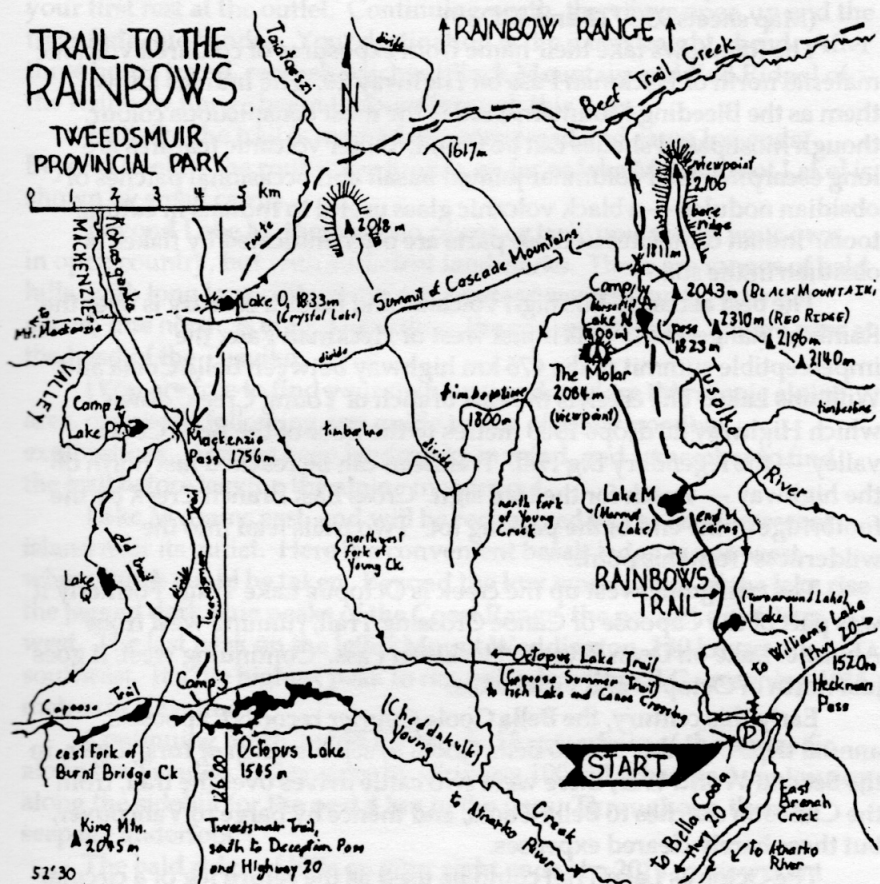


# TRAIL TO THE RAINBOWS

## TWEEDSMUIR PROVINCIAL PARK



## 11. Rainbow Range Trail

by Bob Harris

(2 to 7 day backpack)

(Map sheets 93C/12 and 93D/9)

The Rainbows take their name from exposures of coloured volcanic material north of Heckman Pass on Highway 20. The Indians know them as the Bleeding Mountains; red is the most conspicuous colour, though most pastel shades can be found. Other volcanic features are long escarpments of columnar jointed basalt and occasional patches of obsidian nodules — a black volcanic glass useful to Indians in cutting tools. Indian campsites in these parts are often indicated by flakes of obsidian in the soil.

The best access to this high volcanic and tundra country is over the Rainbow Range Trail. This is just west of Heckman Pass, the imperceptible summit of the 476 km highway between Bella Coola and Williams Lake. The creek is the east branch of Young Creek, down which Highway 20 drops 1500 metres to the floor of the Bella Coola valley — the legendary Big Hill. Trailhead can be reached just north of the highway — watch for the trail sign. Cross East Branch Creek by the footbridge at the end of the parking lot. Two trails lead into the wilderness from this point.

The trail going west up the creek is Octopus Lake Trail. Formerly it was part of the Capoose or Canoe Crossing Trail, running west from Abuntlet Lake on Dean River to Heckman Pass. Continuing west, it goes just north of Octopus and Fish Lakes.

Early this century, the Bella Coola Courier records Capoose's annual trips over this trail to Bella Coola to sell his catch of furs. Later, in the Second World War, there were two cattle drives over the trail, from the Chilcotin ranches to Bella Coola, and thence by barge to Vancouver, but these barely cleared expenses.

The Octopus Lake Trail could be used as the return leg of a circular tour after visiting the Rainbows.

The other trail, leading north from the footbridge, is the Rainbow Range Trail. After a few zigzags to get out of the valley, the trail heads north over the plateau country through thinning jackpine and alpine fir. Between small ridges of glacial debris lie ponds, sloughs, swales and meadows. The drainage is rather indefinite; it is worth joining the two 1:50,000 map sheets 93C/12 and 93D/9, and before starting out marking the divides, the elevations of the lakes and the directions of the creeks.

Topographic names are in short supply on the maps, so the lakes have been lettered in sequence for this trip, starting with L. [Informal names are noted parenthetically]. The trail more or less follows the divide between Young and Tusulko Creeks which is part of the intriguing "Summit of the Cascade Mountains as defined for

administrative purposes." This line winds down British Columbia from near Stewart on the Alaska boundary to the 49th parallel near Chilliwack Lake.

The first Lake, L, [Turnaround or Bonsai Lake] drains west. Take your first rest at the outlet. Continuing north, the views open up and the trees fade into tundra. Your destination is the pass straight ahead. After three hours travel, reddish patches [Black Mountain and Red Ridge] of the Rainbow Range begin to show through this pass.

Initially, the trail is marked by worn tread and sawn log ends. Beyond treeline the route over tundra, as far as lake M, [Marmot Lake] is shown by small cairns.

Beyond Lake M, there are no cairns or trail; you are on your own, in open country, but with sufficient landmarks. There are ranges of bald hills, with long lava cliffs above red sands at several levels. Always ahead, due north, is your destination, the conspicuous 1823 metre pass at the head of the Tusulko.

[You are free to find your own way and explore this scenic alpine area, or use the following as a guide to one of many possible explorations. Always keep landmarks in mind, and remember to find the trail before leaving the alpine meadows.]

Lake M drains east, and will be recognized by the small crescent island near its outlet. Here is a convenient basalt ledge facing west where lunch could be taken. Beyond the low western rim of the lake rise the jagged dark blue peaks of the Coast Range, the nearest one 60 km west. The last peak on the left is Mount Waddington, 140 km south-southeast. It's the highest peak to rise entirely within B.C., reaching 4016 metres in elevation.

Continuing north, avoid the tangled krummholz of the alpine fir along the Tusulko Valley sides by climbing 100 m higher, and contouring along the sidehill for the next 4 km to the pass. Throughout, there is seepage underfoot.

The bald ridge of hills on your right ends at a 2016 m viewpoint above the Rainbows and Beef Trail Creek, a good side trip from camp at Lake N [Horsefly Lake]. Reindeer may be met in these parts. The pass to Lake N is about five hours north from Highway 20. Here you recross the "Summit of the Cascade Mountains," and re-enter the Young Creek drainage. There is room for a few tents just north of the lake past the swamp outlet.

Stoves must be carried when backpacking over the tundra; it is not acceptable to burn the sparse stunted shrubs, and fire rings would scar the ground for decades. From this camp there are two easy ascents to viewpoints; the one to the northeast, overlooking Beef Trail Creek, and the other to the west on the 2084 metre Molar, a basalt plug crowning an otherwise smooth hill, said to have been named by a dentist's wife. Obsidian nodules have been found around the Molar [and a tooth-fairy's

quarter under the cairn at the top].

Both viewpoints command the country to be traversed if you extend your Rainbows' trip for two or three days with the loop to the west. This runs up Beef Trail Creek to the Taiateszi headwaters, then over to Camp 2 near Mackenzie Pass at the head of the Kohasganko, thence south to Camp 3 at Octopus Lake, and east back to Highway 20.

Far to the west lies the blue-grey bulk of Tzeetsaytsul (Thunder Mountain). Parts of Octopus Lake, named for its several arms, can just be seen closer in, to the southwest from the Molar.

For the simple overnight trip from Highway 20, return the way you came, contouring on the sidehill between lakes N and M. The best landmark is the west end of the long ridge of Hotnarko Mountain which will bring you above Lake M. The cairns and trail start at the south end of Lake M.

Experienced backpackers may continue the circle tour from Lake N. The country is wilderness and it is many years since cattle were driven up Beef Trail Creek. The trails have been little used since Highway 20 was completed up the Big Hill in 1953, but they follow the natural line. Good sections will be found here and there. An altimeter is often as useful as a compass; why not have both in the party?

From Lake N, continue north through the next pass, with the Rainbow Range ahead and the 2016 metre viewpoint on your right. Descend through the willow swamps of Beef Trail Valley. Sections of the trail will be found along the north side of the valley floor, heading west. Beyond the very gradual Taiateszi divide, the trail remnants disappear and travel is cross-country, southwest past the top of the 2018 metre peak and up to Lake O at the source of the Taiateszi. Again, this is reindeer (caribou) country, and on the "Summit of the Cascades." Mount Mackenzie, 2104 metres, is framed in the narrow pass just west of Lake O. Its peak is a trigonometric survey station, supporting two small metal tripods, one old, one new. It makes a satisfactory day trip from Camp 2, with new panoramas west. From it, Mackenzie Valley stretches out of sight to the north.

Camp 2 should be made at the west end of Lake P, where there is a small, grassy flat. The lake has a very irregular outline, from a partially submerged moraine. The Cascade Summit runs below the cliff just south of Lake P, and continues west along the headwall of the Mackenzie Valley. Alexander Mackenzie first crossed the Cascade Summit on June 12, 1793, and went southwest down Burnt Bridge Creek to the Bella Coola Valley. Mackenzie Pass is located incorrectly at the headwall of Mackenzie Valley on the 1:50,000 map; he probably came up the easy slope just east of Camp 2.

To reach Octopus Lake from Camp 2, go west with a small creek marking the line of the Cascade Summit, until the rock cliff gives out. A trail starts inconspicuously near an interesting group of tarns on the



divide. This trail soon angles up a small gravel cutbank and turns south for the long descent to Octopus Lake, staying high on the sidehill above Lake Q. Gradually it turns east of south. Parts are overgrown, and it is obscure at swamps and thickets, but it is surprising how soon one rejoins it by continuing in the same general direction. It is about three hours to Octopus Lake.

Approaching Octopus Lake, there is a long switchback down to the right before the trail levels out near the lake. Watch for a blazed route to the east at a minor crest in the trail about 10 minutes before the lake. This is the line of the Capoose Trail, back to East Branch Creek. Five minutes from the lake, take the left turn at a large old whitebark pine, and you will soon be at Camp 3, a very old site from its appearance.

As the trip down to Octopus Lake takes only a morning, the afternoon can be spent exploring the Tweedsmuir Trail to the south. This was built in 1937 for the governor-general's visit, when he formally dedicated the park. In the 1920s, it was to have been named Mackenzie Park. The wagon road part way up the Bella Coola Valley was then the "Mackenzie Highway."

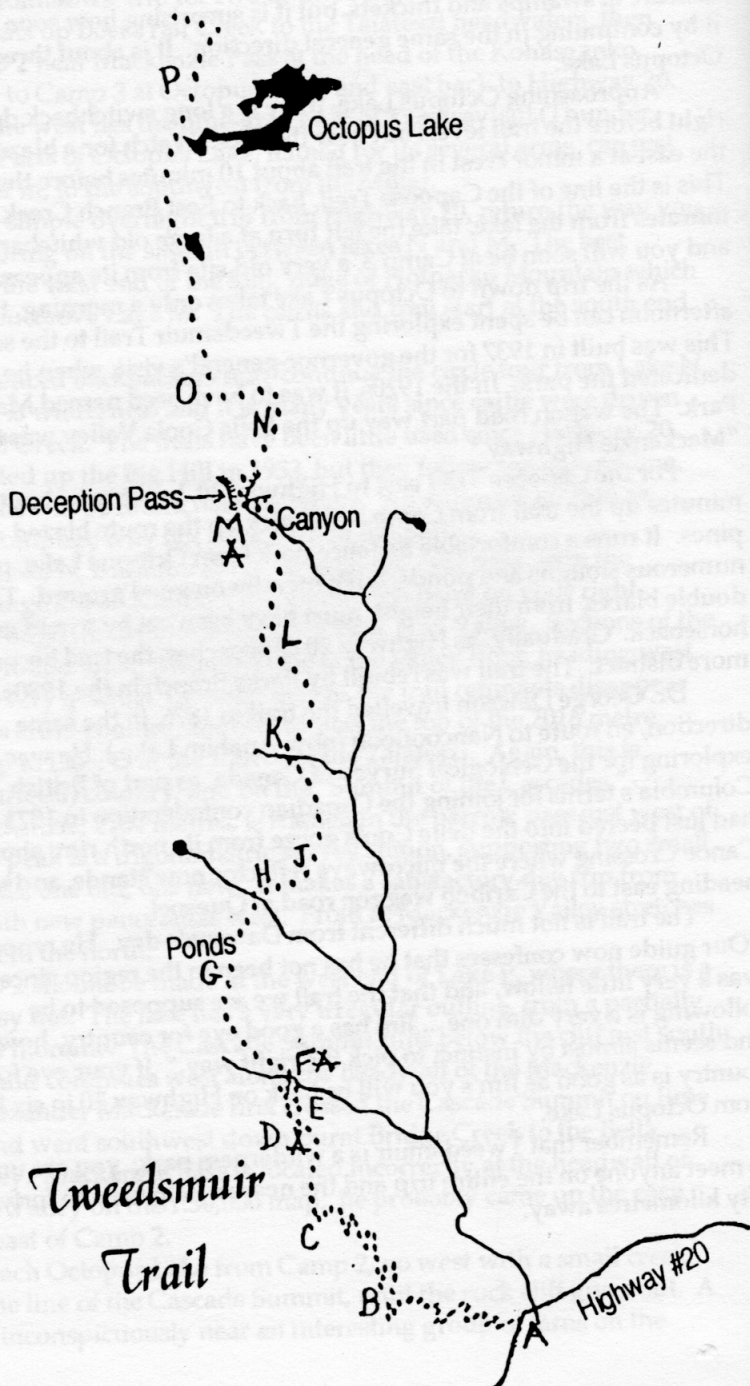
For the Capoose Trail east to Highway 20, backtrack about 10 minutes up the trail from Camp 3 and pick up the route blazed on jack pines. It runs a comfortable distance back from Octopus Lake, past numerous sloughs and ponds, but generally on good ground. The double blazes, from their height, must have been cut by a man on horseback. Gradually, as Highway 20 approaches, the trail becomes more distinct. The trail was rebuilt by Parks Branch in the 1980s.

Dr. George Dawson travelled the trail in 1876, in the same direction, en route to Nancootloon (now Anahim Lake.) He was exploring for the Geological Survey of Canada, as part of British Columbia's terms for joining the Canadian confederation in 1871. He had just peered into the Bella Coola gorge from its north rim, above Canoe Crossing where the microwave reflector now stands, and was heading east to the Cariboo waggon road at Quesnel.

The trail is not much different from Dawson's day. He reported "Our guide now confesses that he has not been in the region since he was a very little fellow, and that the trail we are supposed to be following is a very dim one ... Jim has a good eye for country, however, and seems almost by instinct to pick the right way." If your eye for country is as good as Jim's you will be back on Highway 20 in six hours from Octopus Lake.

Remember that Tweedsmuir is a wilderness park; you are unlikely to meet anyone on the entire trip and the nearest help may be forty or fifty kilometres away.

# • Tweedsmuir Trail Map



## 12. Tweedsmuir Trail

(Map sheets 93C/5, C/12, D/8, D/9)

The Tweedsmuir Trail was built in 1937 to commemorate the visit of the Governor-General Lord Tweedsmuir. The route out of the Atnarko Valley was laid out by Tommy Walker, proprietor of Stuiie Lodge, with the remainder of the trail into Mackenzie Valley laid out by Bob Boyd, foreman of the crew constructing the trail. While the Governor-General was too ill to make use of the trail (he died three years later), the quality of construction was high, befitting the rank of the visitor and employing such niceties as timber bridges across creeks and double biffies for the Lord and Lady.

After a half-century of disuse and deterioration, the trail was relocated and rehabilitated by Bob Harris and friends in the mid 1980s. Potential users are warned of a high probability of losing the trail in dense brush or marshy sections. Half-century old blazes or worn tread below layers of rhododendron brush are sometimes your only indication that a Lord was once meant to ride this way.

The following description provides general directions and descriptions of the trail layout, keyed to map stations and approximate elevations (in feet) on the accompanying map. Good luck!

- A (980). The trail starts about 100 yards west of Mosher Creek, 14 miles east of the western park boundary. It heads north on good tread over heavy talus to elevation 2560 feet.
- B (2990) The trail is now brushy with many deadfalls from an old burn and much debris and vegetation on the trail. Annual clearing is needed to keep ahead of alder bushes and pine blowdown, so this description is usually apt.
- C (3220) The trail improves again and is well benched into the hillside. It crosses the first of several ruined timber 'bridges' used to span wet sections of the route.
- D (4720) This is the first summit of the trail and a possible campsite. The trail now descends to Bear Camp Creek via a series of switchbacks and ruined wooden bridges.
- E (4370) Cross the creek at Bear Camp and ascend on a sidehill traverse.
- F (4910) Following blazes through whitebark pine, you arrive at this minor summit, still in the trees.
- G (4710) Travel over boulder-strewn ground and across two small streams.
- H (5120) Climb through alder and brush sometimes so dense you can't walk on the ground.
- J (5180) The trail is now well-benched into the hillside, heading north. You may note an indistinct junction here, perhaps

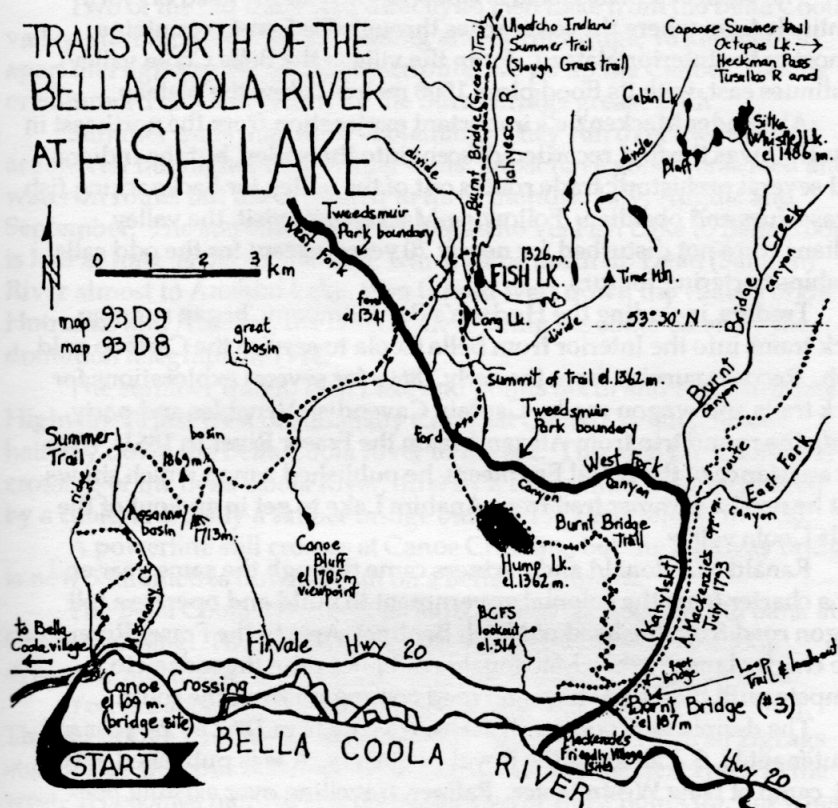
still marked by inclined slats nailed to a tree. This side trail climbs west to Tommy Walker's ruined cabin two miles distant.

- K (5500) The main trail climbs around the hillside, leaving the trees behind as it ascends.
- L (6040) Here is Bob's **true** 'Deception Pass' (not the one on the topo maps) — a pleasant, broad pass watered by a creek from the northwest and providing good views down the Mosher Creek basin. The first recorded ascent of the pass by a Teddy Bear occurred in 1985.
- M (5500) Descend on the east side along the meadows and on an easy grade occasionally marked by cairns.
- N (5250) Head due west to north around granite dome and over a creek.
- O (5030) Head north over hummocky glacial debris to a campsite which is sited on a creek flowing from the west and at an old pine blazed on three sides. Watch for trail intersections with the Octopus Lake, Tweedsmuir, and Capoose trails, all of which meet near here.
- P (4970) Eight minutes to the southeast is a campsite on Octopus Lake.

From here you can travel north to the Rainbow Range on the Tweedsmuir Trail, east to Highway 20 on the Octopus Lake Trail, or west to Fish Lake on the Capoose summer trail.



TRAILS NORTH OF THE  
BELLA COOLA RIVER  
AT FISH LAKE



### 13. Fish Lake Trail Intersection

*By Bob Harris*

(2 to 3 day backpack)

(Map Sheets 93D/8 and D/9)

The village of Bella Coola is a port of entry at the head of North Bentinck Arm, where the sea reaches through the Coast mountains almost to the Interior plateau. From the village the Bella Coola valley continues east, with its flood plain 1500 metres below the plateau.

Alexander Mackenzie's important exploration from the northeast in July 1793 was the first recorded descent into the valley, but the Indians had several prehistoric trade routes out of the valley for backpacking fish grease, furs and obsidian. Following Mackenzie's visit, the valley Indians were not disturbed for nearly 70 years, except for the odd calls by ships bartering for furs.

Traders, including the Hudson's Bay Company, began running pack trains into the Interior from Bella Coola to service the Cariboo gold rush. Records survive from the early 1860s for several explorations for pack trails and wagon roads. Captain Cavendish Venables and party made the round trip from Alexandria on the Fraser River in 1861. With the assistance of the Royal Engineers, he published a map which shows that he used a summer trail from Anahim Lake to get in and out of the Bella Coola valley.

Ranald Macdonald and partners came through the same year and got a charter from the colonial government to build and operate a toll wagon road from the head of North Bentinck Arm to the Fraser River. The charter lapsed when Macdonald could not raise the money to compete with the Cariboo wagon road coming up from the south.

The definitive report, with maps, was made in 1862 by 24-year old Lieutenant H. S. Palmer of the Royal Engineers. It was published at the R.E. camp at New Westminster. Palmer, travelling over existing pack trails, soon abandoned his small train of eight horses, preferring to continue on foot. He recommended against a wagon road.

It was 90 years before Bella Coola and the Anahim Lake country were joined by road. Local residents, with the aid of the Department of Highways, made the last link, a road up Young Creek (Palmer's Cheddeakulk). This road, now Highway 20, has been regularly maintained and improved. In 1979, the Bella Coola valley section received a major straightening and blacktopping.

Through traffic in the 1860s was deterred by the "Chilcotin War" of 1865, but explorations resumed in the 1870s. Under the terms of British Columbia's 1871 confederation with Canada, the Canadian Pacific Railway surveys and the Geological Survey of Canada crisscrossed the Chilcotin and other parts of B.C. looking for routes, minerals, and geological formations.

A steady pack train traffic over the old Indian trails developed from Bella Coola to the Ootsa Lake country, lasting until the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway began service between Prince George and Prince Rupert in 1914. Local pack horse traffic used the trails until Highway 20 opened, when commercial use of the trails ceased.

Two of the old trails lead directly to Fish Lake from the Bella Coola valley, starting from Canoe Crossing and Burnt Bridge, 10 kilometres apart on Highway 20. In this description we go up the Canoe Crossing or Summer Trail, and return by the Burnt Bridge grease trail.

Summer trails may need explaining. They run over the hills and are shorter but higher than winter trails. Most have good horse feed and water en route, but use is limited to three months: July, August and September. The summer trail from Ulgatcho via Fish Lake to Bella Coola is half as long as the winter trail, which came north up Dean (Salmon) River almost to Anahim Lake, then turned west down the valleys of the Hotnarko and Atnarko, the latter valleys being the route taken by the dominion telegraph in 1912.

The summer trail to Fish Lake and points north and east starts from Highway 20 just west of Assanany Creek, at Canoe Crossing, about halfway down the Bella Coola River to the sea. This was the traditional crossing of the Bella Coola River; first by a canoe, then a canoe guided by a cable, and lastly a timber bridge built in 1913 and rebuilt in 1930.

A powerline still crosses at Canoe Crossing, but the highway bridge is now 5 kilometres downstream on a better alignment.

The Bella Coola River swings hard against the rocky north bank at Canoe Crossing. The trail starts up the steep hillside from the loop driveway of a house, on what looks like an overgrown logging road.

You are soon high above the Bella Coola River on the rock bluff. The old bridge abutment can be seen on the far bank. The trail zigzags steadily up the spur between Assanany Creek and the next creek to the west. It becomes more overgrown after two or three hours up, but when all else fails, the route can be determined by finding the sawn ends of windfalls.

At the top of the spur, where the small trees are thinned out by aisles of heather meadow, the grey eminence of Thunder Mountain shows to the northwest. There is a strange pulpit-like rock silhouetted to the east edge of the summit, whence it may be possible to address all the believers of the world.

Now the trail enters the headwaters of the Assanany Creek basin and makes a long ascending traverse to the east until it is aiming for Mackenzie's "stupendous mountain" on the south side of the Bella Coola valley. This unmistakable peak faced Mackenzie as he trudged from the north to the rim of the valley. It differs from surrounding Matterhorn-like peaks in having a flat top, tilted to the north and fitted with a

permanent snowcap.

The trail continues east to a rock shoulder high above the flood plain of the Bella Coola River: a fine viewpoint, elevation 1713 metres on the map. At first, the rock shoulder seems impassable, but the trail leads steadily on, dropping a little, and you are soon past and on better ground.

Back to the west of 2677-metre Stupendous Mountain is the slender spire of Nusatsum, 2574 metres, while farther off to the east of Stupendous is the subdued outline of Caribou Mountain, behind which lie Turner Lake and Hunlen Falls.

Three kilometres directly ahead of you, on the next rock ridge, is a black B.C. Telephone microwave reflector board at the summit of a long rise from the north, with a sharp drop to the Bella Coola River to the south. Several land surveyors have occupied this point for triangulation, naming it Canoe Bluff, or Canoe Nose, after the former river crossing below.

This exposed point is where Dr. G. M. Dawson's Indian guide brought him in 1876, at the climax of his trip up the Tahyesco River, for a view of Bella Coola valley 1600 metres below (a vertical mile in those days). Dawson recorded the Indian name for Stupendous Mountain as the euphonious "Chil-a-thlum-dinky." Rejecting his original intention to walk down to the Bella Coola River, he returned to Fish Lake and headed northeast, over the lake-sprinkled moorlands, on (Capoose's) summer trail to Abuntlet Lake.

Our trail now turns inland, to cross a creek from a high meadow basin to the north. Beyond this creek is a flat of heather, ponds, and sedges; a good campsite, about nine hours up from Canoe Crossing.

From the flat, the relatively level country stretching down to the northeast starts to open up. Fish Lake can be seen in its meadowed hollow among stunted trees, about 8 kilometres ahead. The trail follows easy ground to Fish Lake, descending into timber, crossing meadows with the occasional vista towards Thunder Mountain.

Three hours from camp, after crossing several tributary streams from the left, the trail descends upstream and fords the west fork of Burnt Bridge Creek. You have now entered Tweedsmuir Park.

Demand for a park in the Bella Coola/Rainbow Mountains country brought a proposal in 1925 for "Mackenzie" park. In support, the wagon road up the valley was named the Mackenzie Highway, but the eventual park was designated Tweedsmuir Provincial Park for the 1937 visit of the governor-general, Lord Tweedsmuir. The name Mackenzie survives on Mackenzie valley, pass and mountain northeast of Fish Lake. Tweedsmuir Park lost a few million acres for the Alcan development in the 1950s, but there have been some subsequent additions.

Traverse down the north bank of the west fork, and round the foot of a conspicuous rocky spur on your left. The broad hollow containing



Fish Lake is now 2 kilometres ahead, over gravel hummocks and by slough grass ponds.

Fish Lake is mentioned on old travellers' maps and notes for the last 80 years or so. Its importance comes from being a good campsite near the junction of main trails at the head of the Tahyesco River.

Step on the boulders used for crossing the outlet of Fish Lake and look south up the lake. It is shallow, rimmed by a wide margin of intensely green slough grass, and backed by Stupendous Mountain with its tilted snowcap, 14 kilometres to the south. The ground appears to continue rising to the south; it is hard to imagine the great Bella Coola gorge lying between you and Stupendous Mountain.

A small tree east of the outlet carries three signs installed by the Bella Coola Rod and Gun Club in 1977. At the top is FISH LAKE. The next sign, set north and south, reads SLOUGH GRASS — BURNT BRIDGE, while the lowest sign, pointing northeast-southwest, says WHISTLE LAKE — SUMMER TRAIL.

The trail marked "Slough Grass" is the continuation of the Burnt Bridge Trail. It runs down the Tahyesco valley, roughly parallel to Mackenzie's route, which lays to the east. It joins Mackenzie's route near Tanya (Tanyabunket) lakes which are almost halfway to the abandoned village of Ulgatcho, just west of the source of his West Road (Blackwater) River. Old maps show it as the Ulgatcho (Indians') summer trail at this end, and as the Bella Coola summer trail at the north end. To understand the old reports, it helps to know that each geographical feature has, or at least had, two or three common names.

Whistle Lake takes its name from the hoary marmot colony in the boulder slide where the trail passes north of the lake. It is a local name for the Sitkatapa Lake shown on the current 1:50,000 map. G.M. Dawson was the first to record it. On his 1876 map he wrote "Si-ka-ta-pa" lake.

Formerly, the trail past Whistle Lake was the Sitkatapa Trail, or Capoose summer trail, named for Antoine Capoose, a wealthy Indian chief and trader active about 1910 to 1930. His ranch and store were at Abuntlet Lake on the Dean River, just north of Anahim Lake. The Bella Coola Courier recorded his arrivals in Bella Coola two or three times a year with 30 or so pack horses, trading furs.

Leaving Fish Lake, the Capoose summer trail climbs northeast over the open moorlands, a little sketchy in places. After crossing the main stem of Burnt Bridge Creek above the canyon, it turns east, passing north of Whistle/Sitkatapa Lake.

The trail continues east, passing on the north side of Octopus Lake and through the woods to the east branch of Young Creek at Heckman Pass, where it is intersected by Highway 20. Here it is known as the Octopus Lake Trail.

The Burnt Bridge Trail is still well used both north and south of Fish Lake. To the south, it again parallels Mackenzie's route. Students

of Mackenzie's journal and map have decided he followed his Indian guides on a steep route down the rock ledges on the east side of Burnt Bridge Creek canyon to reach the floor of the Bella Coola valley. The Mackenzie heritage trail follows the Burnt Bridge Trail rather than this latter route.

Leading along the west side of Fish Lake, the Burnt Bridge Trail crosses the imperceptible main divide (the mysterious "summit of the cascade mountains, as defined for administrative purposes") which is here only 2 metres higher than the lake, then descends 10 metres to cross the outlet of Long Lake, a pond feeding the west fork of Burnt Bridge Creek. From here is a steady climb to the south, up a gentle draw. Stupendous Mountain is right ahead.

The summit of this draw is reached one and a half hours from Fish Lake. Soon the trail turns right for a steep, rough zigzag descent to the west fork of Burnt Bridge Creek. You now leave the park; step over the boulders with care.

Resume the ascent south up another draw, until you have regained all lost altitude. One hour after fording the creek the trail divides at an old campsite and slough in a third draw. To the left is the high diversion, bypassing the rocky sidehill used by the main trail, above the Bella Coola valley. From the main trail, see the verdant floodplain where the spring floods rearrange the log jams and the braided channels. In the still of the evening, cows and fowl can be heard 1500 metres below.

The two branches of the trail rejoin at Hump Lake, a pleasant pond and campsite on a detached remnant of the lake and slough grass country round Fish Lake. Stupendous Mountain rises over the southern rim of Hump Lake, and is reflected in its still waters. With its isolated location, Stupendous Mountain, and particularly its snowcap, catches the last of the sun in the evening and the first of the sunrise.

For half an hour from Hump Lake the trail winds east along the isolated ridge between the west fork of Burnt Bridge Creek and the Bella Coola valley, descending gradually past small meadows, hillocks, sloughs and ponds. The main 1500 metre descent begins abruptly, on the side facing Stupendous Mountain. Steady short zigzags lead the deep groove of the trail down through sparse jackpines.

One and a half hours later, and 1000 metres lower, you join an overgrown logging road. Follow the road contouring east; 300 metres below is a gravel pit, and a glimpse of Highway 20. After going 15 minute east, the road switchbacks down right, arriving after 30 minutes on the flat alongside Highway 20. You are now 20 minutes west of Burnt Bridge Creek, which takes its name from the fate of the timber bridges over what was then Kahylskt Creek: twice they were destroyed by fire. The locality became "Burnt Bridge", and the name was soon transferred to the creek.

Burnt Bridge Creek and its east and west forks have cut back deep

canyons some way from the Bella Coola gorge. Up on the plateau, the trails cross above these canyons.

Mackenzie's "Friendly Village" was at the mouth of Burnt Bridge Creek, on the left bank. Following the smallpox epidemic of 1861/1862, a trader's store was built here. This also burned.

The round trip to Fish Lake is a full overnight backpack from Highway 20. This section of Tweedsmuir Park is truly wilderness; you may go a week or ten days without seeing another person — you are entirely dependent on your own resources.

---

This second edition is still dedicated to Birch, who still walks with us.

Thanks to Bob Harris for his trail descriptions and to Isabel Edwards for her writings about early life in Tweedsmuir Park. Corrections and comments are appreciated and may be sent to the Centre's address on the back cover.



Printed on recycled paper



published in Tweedsmuir Park by  
Kuch, Hayhurst and Kuch

*Tweedsmuir Wilderness Centre*

Tweedsmuir Park Box 2  
via R.R. 1 Bella Coola  
British Columbia, Canada

V0T 1C0

© 1993