

## 1. SUNDEW SWAMP

Sundew Swamp is a floating sphagnum bog on a backwater of the Atnarko River across from Belcarce. It is an interesting place to spend time exploring and watching the large variety of bird, mammal, fish, insect and plant life in its vicinity. To get to the bog, follow Corbould's Road immediately west of Tweedsmuir Lodge and cross the Atnarko River on the bridge. Three hundred yards past the bridge there is a rock cairn on the left side of the trail, marking the beginning of the Caribou Mountain Trail. Follow this trail for a quarter mile through dense underbrush and then through a deep forest. The trail then climbs steeply to a bench of a ridge which it follows for some distance before dropping to the North towards the river. The Caribou Mountain Trail branches to the right here at a blazed tree while the Swamp Trail continues straight ahead, coming out on a small ridge with the swamp to the East.

There are two abandoned beaver houses in the swamp, inhabited until 1973. Otters and mink are frequently around. In August one can often see grizzly bears here. Loons, ducks, geese, and in the Fall and Winter, trumpeter swans can be seen on the backwaters of the river. Great horned and Great grey owls are commonly seen and heard in the evening at this spot. Bald eagles fly overhead frequently.

Continuing north along the ridge a hundred yards is a campsite. Judging from the amount of obsidian at this spot it was either a camp or a village of the Bella Coola Indians. The trail turns east and follows the south bank of the swamp and the base of the ridge to the Atnarko River. There is a large pool or backwater here which is a favourite fishing hole for bears and fishermen. It is also a good vantage point for watching.

## 2. CARIBOU MOUNTAIN TRAIL

The Caribou Mountain Trail starts at a <sup>small</sup> rock cairn <sup>450</sup> 300 yards down the road past Corbould's Bridge across the Atnarko from the Lodge. The trail was built in 1930 by Temmy Walker for access to Caribou Mountain and Hunlen Falls. Turning east at the cairn, the trail goes through dense underbrush for a quarter mile then enters a Douglas-Fir forest at the foot of a ridge. The trail climbs to a bench on the ridge which it follows for a quarter mile, then descends towards the river. Just before the base of the hill the trail forks at a blazed tree. Take the right fork.

The trail now runs through a beautiful coniferous forest carpeted in moss. Bear, moose, cat, and wolf sign are frequently encountered. The trail forks once after about two miles. The left fork goes down to the river so take the right fork. Note the bear trail on the right <sup>also on left</sup> here, distinguishable by the footprints worn through the moss the floor. Continue along the trail to the intersection with the Talchako Valley Trail running north-south across your path. Still heading east, the trail now descends a short embankment and continues several hundred yards to Tsill Creek. Ford the creek on a log and pick up the trail again on the far side, downstream from the log.

The trail climbs to a small stream, crosses the stream, climbs southward and then follows a bench to a ridge above Tsill Creek. At this point the trail turns east and starts up Caribou Mountain. Straight up a ridge to a small rockslide, the trail begins some (very) steep switchbacks. A mile up the switchbacks Tsill Creek can be heard falling over False Teeth Falls (so named by Molly Walker when her mother lost her teeth in the stream at this point). This is a good day hike from Stuie, and the last water for several miles and hours.

2hrs

The trail continues to climb with steep switchbacks for four miles up Caribou Mountain and then crosses Tsill Creek. It then climbs along the creek, crosses a meadow southeasterly, and follows a small creek to the remains of Walker's cabin, still standing in 1972 but mostly fallen by 1975.

There is no trail as such from here. The easiest route over Caribou Mountain is to angle northeast from the cabin following meadows until you have crossed a few small creeks. Then follow meadows around Caribou Mountain until you reach Janet Creek running down a valley from the south. Follow the meadows up Janet Creek to Janet Lake.

You are now in the Molly Lake Basin. Travel for miles in all directions is easy - meadows and lakes with surrounding peaks at seven to eight thousand feet. The Molly Lake Basin can also be reached from Walker's cabin by continuing up the west side of Caribou Mountain, following meadows for a quarter mile, then clinging through trees and underbrush for a quarter mile to timber line. Continue up the north ridge of Caribou, or traverse south to the west ridge. The north ridge is the most direct but is quite exposed in one spot for about 25 yards. A fifteen foot exposed rock may require roping because of the exposure.

The Molly Lake Basin is six miles wide and has almost a dozen beautiful alpine lakes in it. Wildflowers peak during July and early August. Marmots, goats, and wolverines can be seen in the area. The resident caribou were exterminated in 1936 when a hunting season was opened on them.

Several loops are possible from the Molly Lake Basin. One is to hike past Molly Lake and circle Caribou Mountain to come back at the trail brought up. A more extensive loop involves some trailless cross-country travel to Hunlen Falls where this trail is then joined. One crosses Whistler Pass from Janet Lake and heads south and east towards Ptarmigan Lake, where another trail is a-building. If there is no trail, it is a four mile bushwhack from the ridge past Ptarmigan Lake to the north end of Turner Lake. Follow the creek valley and ford it as high up as possible, then bushwhack due east to Turner Lake. From here you follow the trail back to the highway and thence to Stuie. (trail almost complete, 1978)

### 3. TALCHAKO VALLEY TRAIL

This trail is a trapline and bear trail which crosses the Caribou Mountain Trail from the Atnarko River to the Talchako River and then follows the Talchako up to a trappers cabin across from Nordskow Creek. It is faint in many places and requires some searching but travels through very beautiful moss-carpeted overmature fir forest. Grizzly bears and moose can be seen along the trail.

Follow the Caribou Mountain Trail to the intersection before Tsill Creek on a small rise. Take the south (right) fork and climb up several small steep hills to a large moss-covered boulder area. The trail follows the east side of these rocks, crosses them at a narrow place and continues south through a swampy area. It then descends a steep hillside to the Talchako River. At the base of the hillside it angles slightly to the left and skirts the southeast side of a shallow lake. It then continues south and east up the Talchako Valley to the trapper's cabin. Please leave the contents of the cabin intact as they are still used.

Travel from this spot becomes quite difficult. The trail continues up ~~and down~~ the valley, where there are three more cabins, roughly six miles apart.

## 4. PIPELINE RAVINE

This is the most direct route to the high alpine meadow and lake country north of the Bella Cooola Valley. From Stuiie, climb the sand hill behind the gas pump, cross the road, and follow the black plastic water line north and west. There is a sort of trail along this line, running three thousand feet up the mountain to a spring. From the spring, angle up and to the left to an old slide with large moss-covered rocks. Climb the rock slide which connects to another slide which eventually runs to the north rim of the valley.

The lower part of the rock slide is smaller, unstable rocks. As you get higher, the rocks become larger, more stable, and easier to climb. There is water on the east side of the slide half way up and also near the top of the slide. From the top of the slide, climb up the trees about 100 yards on the east side of the creek. Cross the creek where it slightly levels out and bushwack to the rocky ridge to the west. On the ridge you are out of the brush and can breathe easier. Climb the ridge to timberline, where there is a small lake and a rock bluff. From the top of the bluff one can see a large meadow-and-lake region to the north extending up to Mount Walker and King Mountain. To the south is a spectacular view of the Bella Cooola and Talchako Valleys, and of the Coast Range Mountains.

## 5. CLEAR LAKE

Clear Lake is about 1.5 miles east of Stuiie just south of the highway. The road climbs east from the large meadow at Belarco and levels out after a gradual hill. There is a small clearing south of the road and 200 feet down through the trees one can see the crystal clear green water of the lake.

Several trails descend the hundred yards to the lake, one angles around to the east side where there is a table and picnic area. Another goes around the west side and gradually disintegrates into many game trails. The lake is small and surrounded by large firs and pine. A good swim on a hot day, the lake also hosts deer and waterfowl and reflects Mount Melikan on still clear days.

## 6. INDIAN PICTOGRAPHS

There are Indian rock paintings two miles east of Stuiie on the north side of the road. East of Big Rock watch on the north side of the road along the base of the ridge which descends to the road from the north wall of the Atnarko Valley. They are less than 100 feet from the road and a small brass plaque identifies them as a National Historic Site.

The paintings are on the south side of a large granite rock, reddish and quite faded. One can distinguish what looks like birds, a mountain goat, and a large arrow or spear. According to a valley resident, the pictographs mark the boundary between the interior carrier Indians and the coastal Bella Coolas. They were retouched every so often until quite recently (maybe 20 years ago), but are now quite faded.

## 7. ESKER TRAIL

The trail starts at Stuiie across from the Indian Smoke house and follows an esker down the Atnarko River back to the road. From the smoke house you climb the ridge across the road, pass the Indian graves, and continue west to a large sandy bluff overlooking the river valley. This is Sunset Bluffs, named for the beautiful sunset glows on the mountains west of the Talchako River. Judging from the amount of obsidian found at this spot, it was probably an Indian village or campsite.

The trail follows the edge of the esker down to the Atnarko River where a nondesignated campsite is frequently used by fishermen. The trail

has very good views of the peaks, cliffs, and glaciers at the head of the Tsini-tsini Creek. In August one can hear salmon jumping in the river below and frequently see grizzly bears fishing along the bars. People often see cougars and bears in the early morning along sunset bluffs. A side trail connects sunset bluffs with the road. The trail is ideal for small children, or for birdwatching, sightseeing, and easy walking.

#### 8. Tsini-tsini Creek Trail

The trail up Tsini-tsini Creek between Mounts Melikan and Stupendous is little more than a trapline/bear trail. Obvious in places and faint in others, the trail has many bear sign on it - bear trees and droppings.

To find the trail, follow the highway west 4.5 miles from Stuie to a gated logging road on the left. Follow this road, crossing the river on the bridge and taking the left turn after the bridge. The large creek with a washed-out bridge is Tsini-tsini Creek. The trail starts just to the west of the creek and climbs a small ridge. Though marked with blazes it is difficult to find at first.

The trail climbs steeply through some old growth Douglas-Fir. There are a few traps still nailed to the trees. The trail climbs up the valley, usually about 100 yards away from the creek. It goes up to several rock slides which come off of Mount Stupendous. At the south end of the rock slides there is a small pond. The brush becomes impenetrable at this point and it is impossible to continue up the valley.

#### 9. MOUNT STUPENDOUS - TABLE MOUNTAIN

Stupendous is one of the tallest peaks on the south rim of the Bella Coola Valley, standing 8500 feet above the valley floor. The peak has several small glaciers and ice falls on the north-facing side, many near-vertical cliffs, and a large snow cap on the false summit visible from the valley floor.

The peak was first climbed by Phil and Don Mundy in the 1930s from Noost Creek. This route is easy to climb, up the southwest side of the mountain, but Noomst Creek is quite difficult. The route described here starts on the Tsini-tsini Creek Trail and follows this up to the rock slides described above. You climb the rock slides for several thousand feet until there is a branch to the left. Take this branch and follow it up to an . This is the first level place where one could pitch a tent (barely) and is without water. Climb the until it emerges on a ridge. One might want some rope protection on the final climb to the ridge.

From the ridge angle down into a small basin and climb up to crotch and summit ridge to the right. This spot is the first sure water since Tsini-tsini Creek. From this crotch climb fourth class on difficult and long lead up a cliff to meadow above. The lead is fairly difficult and exposed and you may want several pitons for protection. This is the only difficult part of the climb, - the rock climb is not difficult, just long and exposed. From this point the summit is a long and gradual climb (2000 vertical feet) through meadows and rocks. Mountain goats are frequently seen up here.

## 10. MOUNT MELIKAN

Melikan is the 7800' peak which rises above the Talchako River south and west of Stuie. It is a fairly easy, third class, climb if you are in good enough shape to climb the 7200' to the summit.

One can either follow Corbould's Road to the Talchako and boat across, or use Zellerbach's Road as described in the Tsini-tsini Creek description (#8). In the latter case ford the creek at the washed-out bridge and follow the road south and east until it joins the logging road from Stuie (Corbould's Road). Take the branch which climbs the old logging cut and angles south to the top of the cut. From the edge of the cut climb through the trees on bear trails, angling to the left until you come to a prominent bear and goat trail on the ridge above a creek and ravine.

Follow the trail until it runs out and then drop into the creek bed. Climb the bed until you can't anymore, then follow the small streambed to the right and climb 50 yards to the base of a small rock face. This is the only difficult part of the climb and must be climbed with a rope. It is one long, 50', lead to a belay point above the cliff. From this point climb up the small ridge and drop again to the creek. Climb snow whenever possible, then a long third class scramble on the left of the creek up to the terminal moraine of a small glacier at 5000'.

From here climb directly up the glacier, which has few if any crevasses, and ropes are not necessary. Glacier and rock scramble up to ridge connecting the lower north summit to the south summit. The north summit is a rock scramble from this point. Follow snow and rock ridge up to south summit. This is not the true summit; one must descend several hundred feet and climb up to the true summit a quarter mile to the west.

The view from the top in all directions is spectacular.

## 11. CONFLUENCE OF ATNARKO AND TALCHAKO RIVERS

The clear water of the Atnarko mixes with the milky glacial water of the Talchako to form the Bella Coola River. Their confluence affords spectacular views of the surrounding peaks as well as hosting river otters, bears, salmon, and fishermen angling for spring salmon.

The confluence is reached by following the river about 600 yards downstream from the fisheries station, or by bushwacking from the road about a quarter mile west of the fisheries camp. Fishermen's trails can make the going easier if you can find them.

## 12. TWEEDSMUIR TRAIL

The trail starts 6 miles east of Stuie about 100 yards west of where the highway crosses Mosher Creek. It is marked by a Park sign. (missing 1979) The trail is subject to many blowdowns and is difficult to follow unless it has been regularly maintained. Good luck.

The trail switchbacks up the hillside west of Mosher Creek for two miles on the south side of the hill, then crosses over to the east side. It climbs steeply at times, through Douglas-Fir, jackpine, spruce and hemlock. The trail traversed an area of insect infestation where most of the trees are dead and then climbs over a ridge. It then climbs up for another two miles to a ridge coming off Mount Walker. At this point the trail descends to Bear Camp Creek and is not well maintained.

If you climb the ridge to the west you are quickly out of the brush and above timberline in about 1½ miles. From here travel in all directions

is easy as the terrain is mostly meadows and lakes with some streams and small mountains. Ptarmigan, mountain goats and caribou are common in the area around Mount Walker.

If you continue on the Tweedsmuir Trail, you descend three-fourths of a mile to Bear Camp Creek. The trail is partly overgrown and sometimes difficult to find. You have to ford the creek and then head north along a somewhat better trail. After a mile the trail forks, with the right fork going north over a high ridge to Octopus Lake.

The left fork goes west up Bear Camp Creek to a valley of extensive meadows and several large lakes. In 1974 a cabin still stood on the north edge of a large meadow to the east of one of the large lakes. From the cabin one can follow a trail east which connects to the Tweedsmuir Trail, or follow the meadows west, across the alpine ridge to the north and connect with the Burnt Bridge Trail in the Rainbow Mountains.

### 13. WALKER FALLS TRAIL

The trail was built in 1975 by the Parks Branch to the falls on the west side of the Atnabko River 4 miles east of Stuie. The trail is steep and climbs nearly up to the Fraser Plateau.

### 14. HORSETAIL FALLS

The falls are on the north rim of the Bella Coola Valley, four miles west of Stuie. The hike is a moderately difficult 2000' rock scramble which affords a good view of the valley, Mount Stupendous, and other peaks. Mountain goats are occasionally seen around the falls and bears are common in the berry patches at lower elevations.

The route starts on the highway four miles west of Stuie. The road rounds a right angle bend and comes very close to the Bella Coola River. Park on this corner and follow an old cat-track/ logging road which climbs towards the north wall of the valley. At the base of the mountain take the left fork and follow the cat trail until it stops near a small 30' falls on the same creek (have to ford the creek). Climb up the east side of the creek to a large rockslide. Climb up the rockslide until it runs into vertical cliffs. Here on the left side of the slide is a rock cairn beside a 15' snag. Follow a faint trail marked by cairns and sticks leaning against trees. The trail traverses to the left under cliffs then goes straight up for three or four hundred feet. When the trail meets steep cliffs, traverse to the right over a small ridge to a small rockslide. Continue traversing over the rockslide, through some pine trees until it is possible to scramble easily up the cliff above. Once above the cliff, traverse through pines up and to the left until the trees run out at the base of another cliff. Traverse the foot of this cliff until you come to a short, 8 foot rock scramble up to another ledge of pine trees.

Traverse on this ledge to the right and up over a few narrow ledges until the cliff above you peters out. From this point climb straight up through the pines about 100 yards to a rockslide. From this point you can see Horsetail Falls. It is a 5 minute traverse to the foot of the Falls.

The vegetation around the falls is very lush, large cedar and douglas-fir. In early summer the falls are too full to approach but later on one can swim in the pool below.

If you watch carefully for markers, cairns, and leaning sticks, the route is quite easy to follow. Many routes lead to dead ends - large vertical cliffs. The marked route is the safest, if not the fastest way.

You can continue up past the Falls and connect with other trails above. Loose rocks on the trail make small parties the best for this hike. Average time is three hours, to the base of the Falls. Descend the large rockslide on the eastern edge, on the scree.

## TRAILS FROM ATNARKO

## 15. JANET CREEK TRAIL

The trail climbs the north side of Caribou Mountain, starting at Atnarko. One must cross the several branches of the river by boat, and search for the trail on the south bank. The trail starts opposite the cabin that was used by Moxey Hjekman the one-armed trapper. The cabin is also known as the Atnarko Hotel.

The trail climbs in switchbacks and is quite clear until about 3500' where it gets rather brushy, due to an old burn. There is a cabin at this point. The trail eventually enters the Janet Creek drainage where it levels out after several miles. When you get up to the meadows, it is possible to either continue on up Janet Creek to the Molly Lake Basin, or to cross meadows to the west and connect up with the Caribou Mountain Trail.

## 16. Sugar Camp Trail

The trail leaves the Atnarko Valley about 2 miles east of Atnarko. It leaves the road on the north, just past Sugar Camp Creek, and switchbacks up the hillside 1000 vertical feet. It then climbs gradually into the meadows of Sugar Camp Creek. There is a cabin on the southeast side of the creek about 4½ miles from the road.

The trail is in good shape and is not a very strenuous climb out of the valley. One can make a loop following the trail east and slightly south from the cabin to several small lakes, then circle back to the main trail. Or you can follow the trail east to the Precipice Trail and either come back down via the Hotnarko or continue (on) 20 miles to Anahim Lake.

## 17. PRECIPICE TRAIL

The trail is the most direct route into the Atnarko Valley from Anahim Lake and is still used by people on horseback or on foot. It may become a highway some day. The trail was a service route for the telephone lines from Bella Coola to Williams Lake until they were bypassed by the microwave system in 1973. In 1970 the road was bulldozed a bit for surveyors plotting a highway.

The trail follows the road up the Hotnarko River from the Atnarko. It crosses the river and passes the old survey party camp. The trail then climbs up the Hotnarko Valley, passing south of Hotnarko Lake. The trail climbs to the Fraser Plateau, by several ranches, then proceeds through 15 miles of flat jackpine country to Anahim Lake.

The trail hits the main road about 1 mile west of the town of Anahim Lake and one mile east of Pelican Creek. To find the trail from the road, watch for the telephone lines where they leave the main road.

## 18. STILLWATER LAKE

The trail starts where the highway crosses a small creek one mile east of the Atnarko campground. This trail/tote road takes you a mile to Young Creek which is crossed on a bridge. A 200 yard section beyond the bridge may be bypassed by a footbridge (in poor repair) when in flood. The trail continues up the Atnarko Valley.

The Atnarko here is quiet and slow and a fine place to watch salmon jump (closed to fishing). At the upper end of this slow stretch the trail angles away from the river which heads south. A frequently occupied eagle's nest is across the river at this point. Continue up the tote road past the community of Atnarko - several log buildings and a barn.

The road leaves the river at Atnarko and returns to it a mile further on. At this point is another frequently occupied eagle's nest. The road is fairly rough for about a half mile as it traverses a rockslide. It then enters the trees and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Young Creek turns north and follows the Hotnarko River.

Just beyond this ~~road~~ bend in the road is a wide place to park cars (if you had one tough enough to make the trip) and here begins the trail to Stillwater Lake, Hunlen Falls, Lonesome Lake, Knot Lakes, and the Turner Lake chain.

The trail crosses the Hotnarko River on a footbridge, climbs a short steep hill, then continues up and down for some two miles to Stillwater Lake. At the outlet to Stillwater is a bridge which crosses the Atnarko River and a trail climbs south to Hunlen Falls.

A trail continues on the northeast side of Stillwater Lake. It climbs high on the rockslides above the lake and leads to the large meadow and swamp at the top end of the lake. This area is rich in animal life - eagle and osprey nests, moose and bear abound. The trail is quite faint, overgrown and difficult to follow at the top of the lake. If you persevere on up the valley, cross the Atnarko River where it is fordable and there is a good trail along its west side which runs up to Lonesome Lake.

Stillwater Lake was formed by a landslide in the 1930s which blocked the Atnarko and flooded a large meadow area.

#### 19. LONESOME LAKE

There are two approaches to Lonesome Lake. The first is to follow the route to Stillwater Lake (#18 above). At the upper end of Stillwater Lake, cross the Atnarko River to the west side. Its about four miles of good flat trail to Lonesome Lake from here. Just before Lonesome Lake the ford of Hunlen creek can be quite difficult, especially in late spring and early summer. There is usually a log across the stream somewhere though, so follow the stream up towards the big falls.

The foot of Hunlen Falls is approachable from here - about a half mile rock scramble. The canyon and foot of the Falls are very dangerous in spring and early summer when the snow <sup>ice</sup> is melting from the canyon walls.

The trail continues up the west side of Lonesome Lake to the south end of the lake. The trail was cleared in 1974 to bring stock through, and may be cleared occasionally.

The second approach to Lonesome Lake is to climb the trail from the outlet of Stillwater Lake to Turner Lake. You can then rent a canoe to paddle the lake, or hike around to the south end of the lake. Follow the portage trail from the south end to the end of the portage (marked by a sign). From this point there is a blazed trail which crosses Turner Creek on a log and angles steeply down to the top end of Lonesome Lake.

There are two homesteads near the south end of Lonesome Lake. The Edwards' place was settled in 1910-1920 while the Turners built theirs in the 1950s about a mile further upriver. Lonesome Lake supports a flock of over 400 Trumpeter Swans in winter, maintained by the Turners. Once in danger of extinction, the Trumpeter is now looking fairly secure and this small group was once the token gasp of the species. The swans come in late November and are mostly gone by early March.

One can continue up the Atnarko Valley on good trails for 18 miles to the north end of the southern Knot Lake. The trail is flat and easy to follow, passing Tenas, Rainbow, and northern Knot Lake. This is a potential access to the Monarch ice caps and mountains.



## 20. HUNLEN FALLS TRAIL

Hunlen Falls is one of the largest free-falling waterfalls in North America. A clear fall of 850' adds to succeeding cascades totalling over 1300'. The Falls drops from the outlet of Turner Lake down into the Atnarko Valley just below Lonesome Lake.

In 1973 the Parks Branch\* built a trail into the Falls and a bridge across the Atnarko at the outlet of Stillwater Lake. The trail begins at the northwest end of Stillwater Lake and climbs gradually from the Atnarko River to the base of a ridge to the south. For two miles the trail switchbacks up a ridge and then follows the top of the ridge above Stillwater Lake.

The trail climbs up to 3200', crosses a small hill, then drops down to Turner Lake and Hunlen Falls. Two hundred yards from the Falls a trail branches to the right and circles around the Falls to a designated camping area. From the camp a trail follows Turner Lake to a bridge \*\* which crosses the lake at a narrow point and then climbs a ridge three quarters of a mile to the east for another view of the Falls.

There is no water between Stillwater and Turner Lakes so carry some with you on this trail.

## 21. TURNER LAKE CHAIN

Turner Lake is the end of a chain of six lakes at about 4000' elevation and linked by streams and portage trails. While carrying a canoe in would be a formidable feat, canoes can be rented from John Edwards or flown in. The lakes are surrounded by pine forests and the heavily glaciated coast range mountains. Fishing is quite good, with cutthroat trout averaging 8 to 12 inches.

The Hunlen Falls Trail (#20) brings you to Turner Lake where you can rent a canoe. Canoes at the north end of the lake allow you to paddle to the south end and Edwards' camp where you can rent a canoe for the trip. The chain can be paddled in two days round trip but four to six days is more common. The creeks between the lakes have small riffles and a current so moderate canoeing ability is advisable. The portages are short and well-maintained.

## 22. TENAS, RAINBOW, AND KNOT LAKES

These lakes are strung out in a chain upriver of Lonesome Lake. A good trail runs along the west side of the Atnarko River from the south end of Lonesome Lake, past Fog Swamp Farm (the Turnners' homestead) and on to Tenas Lake. Just before Tenas Lake, the Atnarko River drops into the valley from Charlotte Lake to the east and joins the outflow of Tenas Lake.

A trail continues past Tenas and Rainbow Lakes to the south end of Knot Lakes. The trail stays on the west side of the river and lakes and has been maintained for moving the cattle which are pastured at Knot Lakes.

\* John Earle EDWARDS says he built most of this trail, and the bridge and trail loop to Hunlen Falls, east side.

\*\* The (1978) trail to Parmigan Lk and Whistler Pass heads west from just north of the designated camp area.

\*\*\* (1978) a trail was built for about a mile south, along the west shore of Turner Lk, from camp.

## TRAILS IN THE RAINBOW MOUNTAINS

## 23. EAST BRANCH CREEK - RAINBOW MOUNTAINS TRAIL

The East Branch Trail starts where Highway 20 crosses East Branch Creek, six miles east of where it crosses Young Creek. The trail starts on the north side of East Branch Creek and follows the creek west for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. It then follows a small creek north into a meadow which you cross heading northwest. The trail disappears in the meadow so must be found again on the northwest edge after fording the stream in the middle of the meadow.

The trail now heads north on the east side of a small ridge. It then turns west and crosses a creek, following it north to timberline between ridges on the northeast and southwest. The trail ends at a long lake to the east where there is an old horse camp. Travel from this point is all cross-country and quite easy.

You can follow meadows north into the Rainbow Range or climb the ridge to the east. Caribou are common above timberline and wolverines, moose and wolves can be seen. Peregrine falcons, bald and golden eagles, and a variety of other birds are common in this area.

It is possible to continue north ten miles to Beef Trail Creek and follow this old Indian trade route east to the Dean River and then upstream to Anahim Lake (also known as the Grease Trail). Another possible loop is to cross the ridge to the east where the East Branch Trail ends, and descend on the southwest side of the Tusulko River on the Horse Pasture Meadow Trail.

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24. OCTOPUS LAKE TRAIL

← seems to be midsection of the Capoose Summer Trail (Abundant to Canoe Crossing)  
Octopus Lake lies in a chain of lakes in a valley between the Rainbow Mountains to the north and the long ridge called King Mountain on the south. The trail starts at East Branch Creek, six miles from the Young Creek bridge. There is a short loop off the main road where the road crosses East Branch Creek. Where the loop road crosses the creek, an obvious trail starts up on the north side of the creek.

The trail goes west up the creek for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile and then follows a small creek north to a large meadow where it gets lost. Head northwest across the meadow, ford the stream in the middle, and find the trail in the northwest side. Continuing north and somewhat west, the trail climbs a small hill and branches. Take the left (main) branch going west and you soon pass on the north side of two lakes. Continue west and cross a small creek coming from the north, then drop down a short hill and cross Young Creek. Continuing west through jackpines and meadows, the trail eventually disappears within about a mile of Octopus Lake.

From this point one must drop through treed and meadows to the lake, or climb above the trees to open meadows. This trail eventually ties into the Tweedsmuir Trail at Octopus Lake then goes north and west over Mackenzie Pass and down to Burnt Bridge Trail which it meets just south of the Tanya Lakes. The trail is faint or nonexistent in places so you have to follow landmarks and the map until you stumble on it.

The trail has a great variety of birds, including nesting Canada Geese on the lake. Wolverine, bear, moose, and caribou can also be seen along the way.

\* Lake has many arms.

## 25. TUSULKO RIVER TRAIL

The trail is hard to find and often swampy but provides the most direct access to the Rainbow Mountains Nature Conservancy Area. The trail leaves Highway 20 at its most northerly point, about 18 miles from the Park Ranger's Station.

This is more of a 'route' into the mountains than a trail. It follows the Tusulko River north and west to its headwaters in the 'Little Rainbows', a ridge of three peaks just north of saddlehorse meadow. There are various blazed routes in the river valley so just choose the easiest route through the trees. For the first two or three miles you will find numerous small lakes and streams in the jackpines and will then follow meadows up to timberline, about four to five miles from the highway.

## 26. BEEF (GREASE) TRAIL

used only once for beef drive, by ..... in ....

27. ~~MAKIX~~ MACKENZIE VALLEY AND TAYESCO RIVER TRAIL

## 28. E. GURR LAKE

The lake is a short hike from Highway 20 just south of Meckman Pass. The trail starts about one mile south of the Rainbow Mountain Trail. There is a small wide place in the road to park cars and a swampy meadow on the west side of the road. This is the place of the 'check your brakes' sign.

The trail starts at the lower end of the meadow. It runs perpendicular to the road and is well blazed. The trail climbs a short hill, crosses through a flat, jackpined area, then drops slightly to the north end of the lake. The lake is bordered by trees on the west side and small cliffs on the east. There is a good campsite at the south end of the lake.

## TRAILS FROM FIRVALE

## 29. BURNT BRIDGE TRAIL

(not quite) see #30, and Provincial report  
This is the route reputed to be that followed by Mackenzie into the valley in 1793. It starts from Highway 20, 0.5 miles west of Burnt Bridge Creek by a dilapidated sign on an old logging road. Follow this road until it peters out in brush and the trail takes off up the hill to the right. The logging road climbs the valley through old clearcuts before the well-cleared trail visibly departs from it at a pile of stones on a stump.

The trail switchbacks up the south side of the cliffs and until it gains the top of a ridge where it passes several small lakes and travels west and north over a hill and down to Fish Lake. Here it turns north through a pass and down the Tayesco River drainage. It then crosses into the Kohasgenko River drainage which it follows east and north to where it joins the Tweedsmuir Trail just south of the Tanya Lakes.

## 30. BURNT BRIDGE CREEK

The creek is a tributary of the Bella Coola River entering from the north  $(\frac{1}{2})$  miles west of Stuie. Mackenzie is said to have followed this

route from the Fraser Plateau into the valley, coming down to the east of the creek. The creek valley is a good place to backpack or dayhike from mid-July through the Fall.

When the creek is low you can start from the west side of the creek, hike up past the cliffs on the east side and ford over to the east. If the water is high it is best to scramble up the steep hill opposite the Burnt Bridge campground, cross the flat top of the hill, and descend the steep north side of the hill to the creek. There is very little trail over the hill but also little underbrush so going is easy.

Back down in the creek valley, head up the creek on the east bank. After a quarter mile where the trail runs out, cross the small creek to an island and follow bits of trail wherever possible. If any rockbars are exposed follow them as they are easier walking than the brushy banks. In about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles the trail circles around a large rock on the east side of the creek. Beyond this is a fairly good trail right next to the creek. Continue up the east branch of the stream until large sandy bars are exposed on the east side of Burnt Bridge Creek. These bars can be followed for several miles.

The lower creek is quite rapid but the upper creek has large pools and trout. The valley becomes quite steep and impassable after the creek branches from three directions about four miles from the highway. Bears, cougar and wolf may be seen here.

### 31. CANOE CROSSING TRAIL ← also "Capoose Summer Trail"

This trail is an alternate route to the Fraser Plateau from the valley. It starts a quarter mile west of Assanany Creek where a sign labels it the 'Summer Trail'. The trail climbs through an old burn, goes through an island of trees, crosses more burn, and goes into a mixed spruce, hemlock, pine, and alder forest.

The trail now makes a long level traverse to the west at about 4000', passes a small lake, then climbs to the top of a ridge. It continues north about a mile, then drops down to cross Assanany Creek. The trail goes east from here along the side of an alpine ridge and through some beautiful meadow and lake country. It climbs to a high point of about 5500' and then drops down and crosses several creek drainages. Here it becomes difficult to follow but eventually connects with the Burnt Bridge Trail just south of Fish Lake. The trail was cleared of brush in 1975, maybe as far as the Burnt Bridge Trail. (1979: a chainsaw had been used to about 2 miles west from Fish Lake)

### 32. CACOOTIN CREEK

Cacootin Creek flows between Mount Defiance and Mount Nusatsum, north into the Bella Coola River. A road overgrown in bush goes up the west side of the valley from the Bella Coola. A half mile east of the Robin's Nest take the gravel road on the south bank of the Bella Coola where the main road crosses the river. Follow this road for two miles past a farm on the right and take a spur road going south towards Mount Nusatsum. Follow this road for about a mile until it becomes impassable by car. Continue on foot and take right fork when road veers east toward Cacootin Creek. Follow this fork up to the base of a hill where it angles west and then switchbacks over the shoulder of a ridge and climbs the Cacootin Valley, staying well above the creek. After about two miles, the road meets the creek just above the junction of the east and south branches. The creek can be crossed on a large log about 150 yards upstream from the road.

After crossing, climb directly up a very steep hillside through the

logging cut to a shoulder 300 vertical feet above. Angle through the trees towards the creek and follow up the creek for about a quarter mile until the creek bank becomes too steep to follow. Cross creek on a log and climb up the steep hillside to the north to a shoulder.

A blazed trapline follows up the creek from here. After about a mile the trail seems to disappear. Traverse south at this point. The trail crosses a small creek then continues up the valley for a mile. Stay within 200 yards of the stream to avoid getting separated from it by slides. The valley narrows and a major slide and the creek come close to the edge of the trees. Here you can climb through the creek (and get wet) or climb through the trees for a quarter mile and traverse through 300 yards of slide alder and devil's club to the creek. The banks of the creek are free of brush at this point and make an easy route up to the ice fall on the north side of Mount Defiance. The left side of the icefall has a good route to the top of the glacier. The area is crevassed and requires ice axe, crampons, and rope. The snow to the left of the icefall climbs steeply ~~to~~ for about 700' to a flat bowl in the glacier then another 700'.

Climb to the northeast ridge of Defiance. There is water and a few small campsites on the ridge here. The ridge over to Noomst Peak has many good camp sites on it and Noomst Peak is a third class scramble from the ridge. Mount Defiance is a fourth class rock climb with some steep snow if climbed in June or July. Mountain goats are common here.

### 33. FIRE LOOKOUT TRAIL

A fire lookout was maintained by the Forest Service just west of Burnt Bridge Creek until 1973. The lookout is still there and makes a good hike for views of the valley and surrounding mountains.

The trail leaves Highway 20  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Burnt Bridge Creek. It crosses the valley floor for a half mile then climbs steeply 1000' vertical to the lookout.

### 34. NOOMST CREEK

### 35. NOOSGULCH RIVER

The Noosgulch River flows into the Bella Coola from the north several miles west of Firvale. A logging road has mostly obliterated the trail which formerly went up the river and clearcuts are all that remain of the forest the Zellerbachs tore down. Follow the logging road to the Noosgulch River and cross the river on a bridge. The road turns to the right and angles sharply up a shoulder on the west side of the river. It continues for several miles before crossing again on a bridge. Here the old trail begins on the east side of the river but is mostly lost in the clearcuts.

The road continues up the east side to the foot of Thunder Mountain. Zellerbachs have the key to the locked gate here. From the north end of the last clearcut, drop down to the river and ford around a cliff on the east bank, continuing up the stream on rock bars on the east side. There are several beautiful pools along the way. The river enters a narrow and deep canyon which can be scrambled up on the west side.

## 36. THUNDER MOUNTAIN

Thunder Mountain is the largest mountain on the north side of the Bella Coola Valley and a prominent peak on the skyline looking from peaks to the east and south. It can be seen from the valley at the head of the Noosgulch River, just west of Firvale. Access to the foot of the mountain is by a logging road along the Noosgulch River.

The route up the mountain is to ascend the ridge to the southeast of the logging road by staying east and south of the creek coming down from the mountain. There is a good place to camp on the east flank of the mountain. Traverse to the west and gain a prominent scree slope to a gully which leads to the summit. The climb is not difficult and can be done without ropes.

The north end of the summit rim is the high point of the mountain. Mount Tseetsaytsul to the north is easily climbed by traversing around the south and west sides of Thunder Mountain above Timberline and then scrambling to the summit.

## 37. BIG CREEK

There is no trail on this creek but it is a beautiful hike through deep woods. Start from Highway 20 just east of the cement bridge across the Bella Coola 18 miles west of Stuie. Follow the logging road to the northwest, cross the Noosgulch River on a bridge and take the left fork after the bridge.

The road circles the base of a steep logged hillside and then climbs onto a shoulder. From here you can either follow the road on the east side of the creek or cross Big Creek and follow the road up the west side until the forks, where a bridge crosses back to the east side. If you stay on the east side, follow the major road until it stops about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles into Big Creek. Cross the slash about 200 yards and climb to a cat-trail visible several hundred feet above. Follow the road down until it meets the main road which has crossed from the west side. The object is to get through the logging cut and into big trees. Follow the cat road northerly to the end of the slash. Cross a short piece of brush between the end of the cat track and the open forest.

Continue up the valley for several miles, staying near the creek. The trees end in a rock slide which you cross and continue in forest again until you reach another slide. Follow rocks in the creek to avoid the slide alder and devil's club. When travel is difficult on the east side of the stream, cross to the treed hillside on the west and continue up to the head of the valley.

Here there is a short steep wooded hillside followed by a half mile flat climb to the lake, at 4200'. The lake is surrounded by peaks, rock, glaciers and waterfalls. Access is easy to peaks in all directions from the lake.

## 38. NUSATSUM RIVER

The Nusatsum River is a major tributary of the Bella Coola flowing from the south and to the west of Mount Nusatsum. A logging road follows the river on the west side for many miles and is currently in use. The road gives access to Bastille Mountain and other peaks to the south of the Bella Coola Valley.

The Nusatsum Valley provides the quickest hiking access to Symphony (Ape) Lake and the Monarch Ice Cap are to the southeast.

## 39. NUSATSUM MEADOWS (MOSQUITO PASS)

The meadows lie directly south of Mount Nusatsum at the head of Cacootin Creek. The route to these meadows offers the best access to climbing Mount Defiance, the Matterhorn, Mount Nyland, Mount Arjuna, and many other rugged peaks in the vicinity. The meadows is a strenuous and steep but brush-free climb out of the Bella Coola Valley and offers an ideal base camp for climbers and rugged hikers.

The meadows usually melt out in mid-July and is best for camping in August. The route to the meadows starts on the road at the south side of the Nusatsum ski hill. Follow the road for 200 yards and take the first branch to the south. The road is grown over in alder but offers easy travel.

Follow the road for two miles south until it is washed out by a large slide. Skirt the top side of the slide by going through the trees. Cross a small creek drainage until you gain a steep ridge over a logging cut to the south. Climb this ridge via a bear trail and when the ridge ends in a steep, wooded area, continue straight up the hillside.

Travel is very steep but the mountain is free of underbrush and the forest floor is moss-covered. Climb this hillside to almost 4000' at which point there are blazes on the trees on a traverse. The blazes are found soon after underbrush appears. Follow the blazes and goat trail to the right and descend across a short slide to a creek. Cross the creek and continue approximately a quarter mile to the east until you break into meadows. The upper part of the meadows is dryer than the lower part and offers the best camping.

If these meadows are too buggy and wet, climb the ridge to the south where there is water and good campsites. From the meadows it is possible to hike the ridge to the south to the high point at a survey cairn marked as 6864' on the map. This spot offers a spectacular 360 degree panorama of the mountains. From here you can traverse south under the peaks on the east side of the Nusatsum River for several miles. The large pointed peak to the south is a fourth class climb from the survey cairn.

From Mosquito Pass one can traverse the headwaters of Cacootin Creek and climb to the pass to the east. There is a large lake just east of the pass which makes an ideal base camp for climbing the ridge of the peaks to the south and the Mount Defiance to the north. A relatively easy traverse can be made at the headwaters of Noomst Creek providing access to the Matterhorn, Mount Arjuna, the and Mount Nyland. These peaks are all for experienced mountaineers but the cirques and lakes of this area can be reached by rugged hiking.

## 40. SALOOMPT RIVER AND TRAIL

The Saloompt River is another large tributary of the Bella Coola coming in from the north just east of Hagensborg. A good trail was built up the Saloompt to a homestead about nine miles from the mouth,

and to a copper and silver mine twelve miles up the river. The trail was heavily used in the 20s and 30s but has seen little use since then. Various unsuccessful attempts have been made to occupy the homestead and the mine has been inactive for fifty years.

There has recently been a lot of logging in the valley and a road now goes up the west side of the river almost up the homestead. The trail can be found on the east side of the creek at this spot. It is clear and easy to follow as far as the old mine where there is a cabin. Grizzly bears and wolves are common in the valley.

#### 41. SALOOMPT PEAK, THE RABBIT EARS, AND BIG MOUNTAIN

These mountains are the group of peaks between the Saloompt River and Big (Tseapseahoolz) Creek. Take the Saloompt Road at the Trading Post 2½ miles east of Hagensborg. Cross the Bella Coola River and take the next right turn. Follow this road for a mile past a metal gate and leave your car at a forks on the road just before a bridge over the Saloompt. Take the overgrown right fork and climb steeply up a hill at the top of the hill. The road follows a shoulder east for 1½ miles where there is a good branching road going north towards Saloompt Peak.

Take this road and follow it out of the clearcut and into the wooded hillside. Climb up and slightly left (west) on the steep hillside and skirt around the left of several rocky areas and cliffs. A ridge with a steep bear trail bypasses these cliffs on the left. Bear trails make up most of the route so far and travel is steep but fairly easy.

Head straight up the hillside. The brush is fairly dense for a half mile before timberline. Climb steep meadows to the ridge. The ridge has plenty of water, is studded with lakes, and offers spectacular views in all directions. The climb of Saloompt Peak to the north is a steep rock scramble over granite slabs. It is not a difficult climb but novices may want a rope in some places.

The Rabbit Ears to the north is a steep rock and snow hike and not difficult. You get a beautiful view of the Coast Range Mountains and a glacial lake north. The higher east peak is a scramble while the lower west one is a short snow and rock climb which shouldn't be attempted without ice axe and rope.

From the Rabbit Ears you can descend the long ridge to the east over to Big Mountain, a third class rock scramble up the sharp and pointed peak. There be goats in these mountains and grizzly tracks have been reported on the ridge between Rabbit Ears and Saloompt Peak.

#### 42. THORSEN CREEK TRAIL AND ROCK CARVINGS

Thorsen Creek is a beautiful clear-flowing stream which enters the Bella Coola Valley from the south about three miles east of Bella Coola. It is surrounded by dense, moss-carpeted forest. The creek is swift, with waterfalls, rapids and deep green pools. A hundred feet above the creek near the north wall of the Thorsen Valley are some extensive rock carvings (petroglyphs) of unknown origin. They predate the present native population of the valley and have instigated some extensive anthropological fabrication about their perpetrators. The carvings are varied, depicting people, mammals, insects, reptiles, birds and abstract figures.

The trail into Thorsen Creek is now the road to Four Mile townsite of the Bella Coola Band but herewith the former description: Leave the main road 2.9 miles east of Bella Coola on a logging road just before a small bridge. Take the left fork of the first and second branches which brings you to a clearing. A steep logging road leaves



the southwest corner of this clearing while the trail leaves by the southeast corner. Follow it through some alder for 100 yards to Thorsen Creek. Follow the Creek for 100 yards then climb up the hillside to the right. After a brief 150' climb the trail levels out and immediately one sees carvings on the rocks across which the trail treads.

As you continue up the trail more carvings appear on rocks beside the trail. One large 20'x30' rock is covered with carvings.

The trail continues up Thorsen Creek for about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles and ends at a waterfall.

#### 43. NUSATSUM RIVER ROCK CARVINGS

Less known than the Thorsen Creek carvings, these carvings are found on the Bella Coola River opposite the confluence of the Nusatsum River. Fairly faint, the carvings are on a southwest-facing vertical wall. The river runs at the base of the wall in the summer and at high water the carvings are covered by the river.

You can get to the carvings in three ways: (1) float down the Bella Coola River (2) follow the floodplain of the Nusatsum River to the Bella Coola and then boat across the ~~xxxx~~ Bella Coola or (3) cross the Bella Coola River on the Saloompt Road and then bushwack upstream 300 yards through very dense brush until you are across from the Nusatsum inflow.

#### 44. FOURMILE MOUNTAIN

#### 45. CLAYTON FALLS

Clayton falls is an impressive cascade west of Bella Coola. B.C. Hydro has built a generator at the falls and destroyed some rock carvings in the process. Access to the falls is at your own risk since Hydro owns most of the property as a sign will inform you.

To get to the falls, drive west from Bella Coola to the government wharf. Here a jeep road continues west for a mile to the base of the falls and a power plant. Just before the power plant the road divides. The left branch goes up Clayton Falls Creek to a gorge and diversion dam. The lower branch goes past a Forest Service dock then to the base of the falls. A branching road follows down the creek to where it flows into North Bentinck Arm.

#### THE TALCHAKO RIVER

The Talchako has never been run in its entirety. The beginning is accessible only by helicopter. In 1975 a firefighter had a kayak flown into a camp at Ape Creek and boated down from there. Some canoeists had their boats flown in from Kidney Lake but were unable to paddle the Talchako.

From the air the Talchako looks easy from top to bottom except south of Stue where there are many log jams. The upper river is swift but without any canyons or rapids visible from the air. Some portions have standing waves and swift current but no major rapids.

#### THE ATNARKO RIVER

The Atnarko varies from rapid and difficult to slow and easy. From Atnarko (the old settlement) the river is moderately fast for a mile,

(class 2) then placid for a mile after which it becomes very swift with large holes and continuous rapids for 12 miles to Belarko. (class 2 with some rapids 3 or 4). There is a quarter mile long rapid just upstream from the entrance of Mosher Creek that is class 3 and 4 for 200 yards then 5 and 6 for 100 yards (impassable). This stretch is very difficult and must be carefully scouted before attempting to run it.

Mosher Creek to Belarko has some very difficult spots varying from class 2 to class 4 rapids (all ratings in mid-July waterflow). From Belarko down to the Talchako junction, the river is slow and good for canoes, rafts, kayaks, drift boats and tubes. There are some small rapids but the only hazard is log jams and brush in the river. Not recommended for inexperienced boaters.

#### BELLA COOLA RIVER

The Bella Coola is runnable in its full length. It is a swift river with frequent log jams which can drown unwary boaters and some of which have to be carried over or around. From the confluence of the Talchako and Atnarko Rivers, the Bella Coola is flat, swift, and can be floated without carries for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The river comes near the road at this point and this is a convenient take-out: look for log jams.

The river passes a bridge which is the next possible take-out. The next several miles, past Burnt Bridge Creek usually has many log jams but the north or right-hand channel is usually the clearest. The river comes near the road just above Firvale where some riprap has been dumped to protect the bank. The next point of contact is at Canoe Crossing where a cable crosses the river and a waterwheel hangs on the south bank. The stretch from Firvale to Canoe Crossing is easy. Several miles downstream is a large bridge. This is the last takeout point for many miles. Below the bridge are several class 2 rapids. The current is swift and there are many log jams. It is 12-15 miles to the next bridge.

Five miles below this second bridge is a large rapids just upstream from the airport. Three large submerged rocks and standing waves can be mostly avoided on the left side. There are few rapids from the airport down to Bella Coola but log jams continue to make boating hazardous in the whole stretch.

The average time to float from the big bridge to Bella Coola is 5 hours in a 6-person rubber raft. An open canoe can be used by experienced boaters on any part of the river but novices should not try paddling it.

[END]