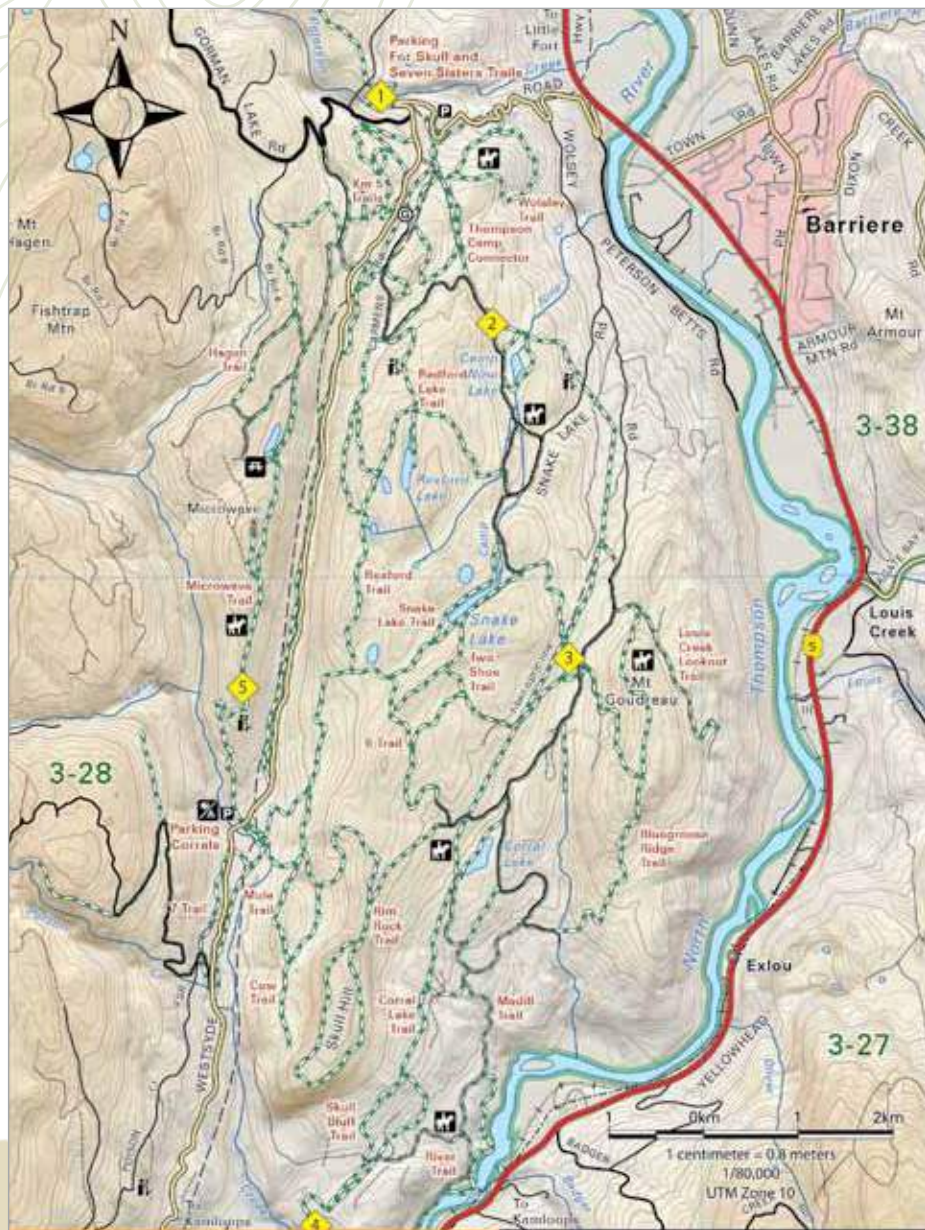


SKULL MOUNTAIN TRAIL

SYSTEM

BACKROADMAPBOOKS.COM



LENGTH: 33.72 KM
GPS: N-51.19247N
W-120.18447
TIME: 1-3 DAYS

SEASON: APRIL-OCTOBER
DIFFICULTY: EASY - MODERATE



SKULL MOUNTAIN



LOCAL HISTORY

In June of 2011, the popular reality series “Mantracker” filmed two episodes within the trail systems of Skull Mountain, Seven Sisters, and the Bonaparte Lake area. The OLN (Outdoor Life Network) aired these segments in 2012.

A Geocaching program was established in the area in 2012. This project was to showcase the multitude of existing trail systems as well as to promote tourism to the area. A link to this Geocaching community can be accessed at: lowernorththompsongeocaching/facebook

The Brigade Trail from Kamloops to Fort St. James (app. 1826-1843) went through the Barriere and surrounding region. The Brigade Trail led up the rocky East bank of the North Thompson River, and some of the sections of the trails were very rugged and dangerous for the horses, most notably starting in the Fish Trap area of McLure, through the Exlou location and onwards before entering the Louis Creek region.

Paddle wheelers were used as a means of transportation (general public and commercial usage) on the North Thompson River (1865-1912). Various stops included McLure, Louis Creek, Barriere, and Chu Chua regions. Seven stern wheelers were in use at various time periods : The Marten (1865-1867) The Kamloops (1872-1878) The Selkirk (1895-1898) S.S. Queen (1894) The S.S. Peerless (1893-1894) The Ethel Ross (1898) and the S.S. Distributor (1912).

AREA DESCRIPTION

This is a provincially designated Wildlife Management Area and therefore used for non-motorized recreation only. For decades, Skull Mountain has been used for horseback riding. Since the 2003 wildfires, the burned wood has been removed, resulting in magnificent vistas of the North Thompson Valley to the north and south. The elevation in this area is relatively low and can be hot in the summer.

FACILITIES

Chinook Cove Golf Course is located within the area. The Simpcwetke River & Adventure Co. is also located close by and provides guided tours of the North Thompson River. This area is close to many lakes, providing a variety of canoeing, kayaking and fishing opportunities.

ACCESS:

From Barriere: Travel north from Barriere on Highway 5 for 0.5 km, cross the bridge and turn left onto Westsyde Road. The road climbs for 4 km and then levels out. This is a well maintained secondary road. At 12.5 km you will see Fishtrap campsite on the left side. It is clearly visible from the road.

ROAD CLOSURES are in effect on Skull Mountain during hunting season for motorized traffic, so please watch for closure signs.

From Kamloops: Travel Westsyde Road 50 km to the McLure Ferry and continue on for another 10 km. Cross Fishtrap Creek and Fishtrap Campsite is immediately after it, on the right hand side.

THE CAMPSITE

Fishtrap Campsite is located at 12.5 km on Westsyde Road. There are 6 camping spots with corrals, 2 large turnout areas, 2 outhouses, 1 shower house, large rock BBQ, 20x20 shelter and easy access to water at Fishtrap Creek which is on the south side of the campsite. Trails you can access from here include: The Microwave Tower Trail, Hagen Trail, Mule Trail, Rim Rock Trail, Rexford and Snake Lake Trails and Bluegrouse Ridge and River Trail.



OTHER PARKING AREAS

Km 3.5 on [Westsyde Road](#)

There is no water or facilities available here, but it is a large enough area to comfortably accommodate 3-4 trucks with trailers. This parking area will give you access to the Seven Sisters Trail system, The Thompson Camp Trail on the north end of Skull Mountain, and the Hagen Trail to the west of Skull Mountain.

Km 5 on [Westsyde Road](#)

There is no water or facilities at this point. There is room for 3-4 rigs to park here, where there is a small turn around area. The Hagen Trail, Thompson Camp Trail and Seven Sisters Trail can be accessed from here.

SKULL MOUNTAIN SIDE:

MULE TRAIL 7.7 KM RETURN

Max Elevation 2450 ft.

This trail offers a short 1 hour ride from camp. There is also a one way lookout trail that will add 0.5 hour to your ride. Go through the back of the campsite, cross the pipeline onto the pipeline access road. Go north (left) for 0.5 km and follow the # 6 signs up the hill. The trail branches to the south (right) 0.5 km up the hill.



REXFORD TRAIL

LARGE LOOP - 15 KM RETURN | SMALL LOOP - 12 KM RETURN

Max Elevation 3000 ft.

This trail branches off the # 6 trail to your left 1.3 km up the hill. In a short distance you will come across a fence line which you will follow for .5 km.

SKULL MOUNTAIN SIDE

CONTINUED

The trail branches off to the right (east). When you come to a rock cairn, head to the left (north). This trail will take you past Kickapoo Lake and around Rexford Lake with an option to ride/hike into Rexford lake. You can loop around Snake Lake or return as you came.

SNAKE LAKE TRAIL 8 KM RETURN

Max Elevation 3000 ft.

This trail branches off the # 6 trail to your left (west) 1.3 km up the hill. In a short distance you will come across a fence line which you will follow for 0.5 km. The trail branches off to the right (east). When you come to a rock cairn you will head right (east). This trail takes you right around Snake Lake and connects again on the west end of Snake Lake.

RIM ROCK TRAIL 13.5 KM RETURN

Max Elevation 3200 ft.

This trail branches off the # 6 trail to your left 1.3 km up the hill. In a short distance you will come across a fence line which you will follow for 0.5 km. The trail branches off to the right (east). When you come to a rock cairn you will head right (east). Go past Kickapoo Lake, watch for a trail on your right (South) side. This is where you pick up the start of the Rim Rock Trail.



TOMPSON CAMP TRAIL

3.6 KM ONE WAY

NAMED AFTER THE LOGGER, MR. TOMPSON

The Tompson Camp Trail runs one way from km 2 on Westsyde Road right through to Snake Lake.

CAMP NINE TRAIL

Camp Nine Trail can be accessed from the Tompson Camp Trail or the Rexford Trail. From the bridge on the Tompson Camp trail, head south and follow the fibre optic line until it meets an old logging road. Follow the old logging road and close to the km 6 marker you will see the Camp Nine Trail on the east (left) side. It takes you around the back side of the lake and links to the old logging road.

RIVER TRAIL 12.7 KM

The River Trail starts on the west side of Corral Lake and ends on the east side of Corral Lake. Its starts out on the Fibre Optic and later joins back onto Wolsey Road, follows the river for awhile and then loops back up to Corral lake. Parts of this trail are in the burned area. There are several options for loops.

BLUE GROUSE RIDGE TRAIL

22.5 KM FROM FISHTRAP CAMPSITE

9.8 KM FROM KM 7 ON WOLSEY ROAD

From Fishtrap Campsite follow directions to Snake Lake then connect to Wolsey Road.

This trail starts in two different locations, km 7 or 8 off Wolsey Road. At km 7 you will see a # 11 sign for the Louis Creek Lookout Trail. You will branch off of this at the top of the hill and start heading south on the Blue Grouse Ridge Trail. You will get a north view going up the trail and a view of the North Thompson Valley, McLure and the river as well as views to the west of the cliffs on the top of Skull Mountain. This trail is covered in Balsam Root in May, very beautiful, but should be respected by staying on the trails. This trail is on Mt. Goudreau.



From Fishtrap Campsite: Poison Creek Side

MICROWAVE TOWER TRAIL 13 KM

#5 on Map

From the campsite go out the back of the campsite and onto the Pipeline Access Road. Follow this for approx. 1 km until it comes to Westsyde Road, cross the road and carry on to the pipeline. This trail continues on the pipeline for 5 km, comes out again on Westsyde Road at km 7, crosses the road and picks up the pipeline on the other side. Continue on the pipeline for 1 km and just before the really steep hill, watch for a trail to the north (left). This very short section will take you to km 6 on Westsyde Road.

Again, cross the road and the trail goes up the open hillside to a very large meadow. Cross the meadow to Branch 17 road and head north until you get to the intersection, then swing south (left). This is Branch 17 spur road and will take you back to Fishtrap campsite with lots of views. There are three further loops that can be accessed from Branch 17 spur road known as the Hagen Trail.

HAGEN TRAIL

From Fishtrap: Take the lower side of the Microwave tower trail until you reach the meadow (Harry's Flats), go north a short distance on the Branch 17 spur road to the intersection. Continue north and the beginning of the trail is on the west side (left) of the road. It climbs gradually on a very old grass covered skid road until it crests the hill. Here it will join another spur road and you will take a left (south) until you run out of road. You will find a single track trail that goes south along the hillside and comes out on a landing. The Hagen trail will connect back to the Microwave Tower Trail. Head south and return to Fishtrap Camp. There are three loop options.

From km 5: Leave the parking area heading south, the trail will parallel the road, head down a draw at km 5.5, cross the land bridge over the swampy area and head back up and out of the draw. Once you come to the meadow (Harry's Flats), follow the same directions as above.

