



Bulkley Valley Backpackers

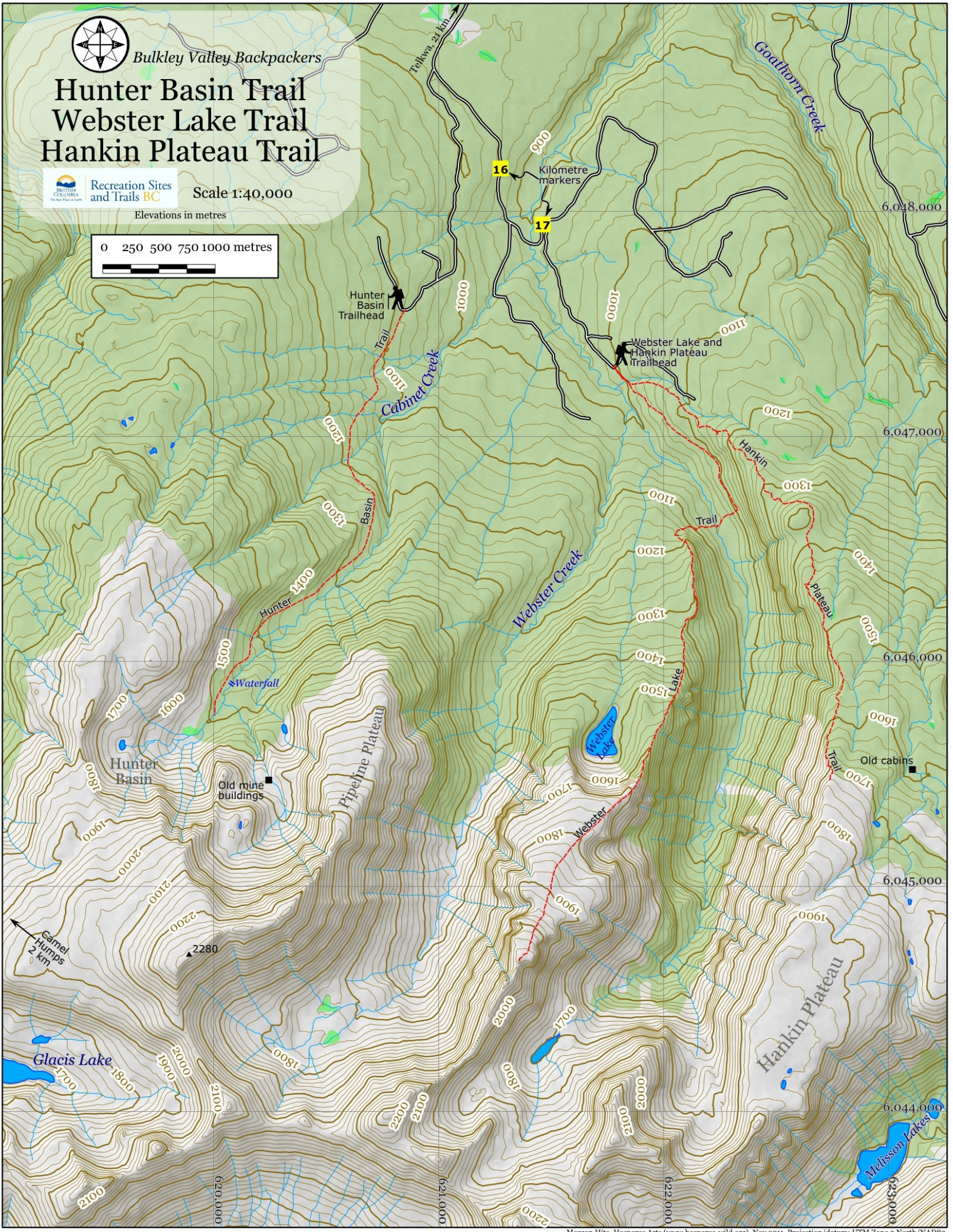
Hunter Basin Trail Webster Lake Trail Hankin Plateau Trail



Scale 1:40,000

Elevations in metres

0 250 500 750 1000 metres



THE TELKWAS

Hunter Basin, Hankin Plateau, Webster Lake

Telkwa Caribou Recovery Project

Voluntary Recreational Access Management Plan
To assist in the recovery of the herd of Mountain Caribou of the Telkwa Mountains, recreationists are asked to respect the following restrictions

*No motorized vehicles, year-round

*No dogs, year-round

*No access, for all, from Oct 1 (rutting) to July 14 (calving)

Hiking, mountain biking and horse-back riding are permitted, July 15 to Sept 30

If you see any motorized vehicle, please report the activity to Ministry of Environment, at 847-7303.



Directions to the Telkwa Mountains

Set your odometer at zero at Highway 16/Hankin Ave, in Telkwa. Cross the Bulkley River and proceed along Coalmine Road. Bear left at 6.4 km. You will encounter a significant wash-out, but pass this barrier and follow vehicle tracks through it. After the sand pit, and at the first road intersection, take the right fork. You will see an old mining building on the right, below. Proceed to a large deactivation at marker 1205. In late summer and early fall, when Goathorn Creek is low, one can cross the creek with a high-clearance 4-wheel drive; a small log footbridge also allows access across the creek. A sign at 21.4 indicates the right-hand turn into Hunter Basin, whose trailhead is at 24 km. Parking is limited. The trail is passable for hikers, with some rough, wet or brushy spots. For Webster Lake and Hankin Plateau, continue past 21.4 km to 23.6 km and turn right. There is good parking here for both trails. Hankin Plateau is passable for hikers, with some blow-down on the trail. Signs posted just past the parking area direct hikers left, to Hankin Plateau or, straight ahead on an old mining road, to the trailhead of Webster Lake.

Hunter Basin is rich in landscape diversity and mining history. It was named after a prospector, William Hunter, who arrived in the valley in 1903. The basin had abundant minerals, mainly copper ores (bornite, chalcopyrite and chalcocite) and from 1914 till 1962, tonnes of copper, gold and silver ores were mined and hauled out of the basin. Remains of the ore bin and buildings, open adits (which can be entered, with caution), ore showings, cables and railtracks bring the lives of miners of the last century back to life.



But Hunter Basin has many other features which add to its appeal as an ideal hike. The basin can be reached with moderate hiking on a well-built mining road, (though current violations by motorized vehicles can make the trail muddy and rutted). In under an hour and a half, hikers enter the basin, rich in vegetative greens and rocky reds, passing by a lovely waterfall. Just beyond, bearing east takes one to the aforementioned mining area; continuing west brings hikers to a lookout point over Glacis Creek and the rock glacier that cascades down its flank, or to the Camel Humps and views west towards Mooseskin Johnny Lake and the Howson Mountains.

From a low of 6 caribou in the mid-1990s, but with the relocation of 32 more animals and the efforts of the public to restrict access, the herd reached almost 100 animals, before numbers again declined. Hundreds of mountain goats also range in the Telkwas, along with grizzly and black bears, marmots and ptarmigan.



The lower part of the Hankin Plateau Trail winds up through timber, until breaking out, just below treeline, at a spectacular viewpoint (this is a good spot for a snack). Ahead, one can see, from left to right, the plateau fanning out, the valley that holds the east arm of Webster Creek and the dramatic rise of the plateau that houses Webster Lake (like Crater Lake on Hudson Bay, this is a tarn lake, created by the gouging out by glaciers).

Continuing into the alpine, hikers can follow the ridge along the steep valley to the end of the ridge, often sighting goats below. One can continue this counterclockwise sweep, around the barren, rocky upper reaches of the plateau or cut south from treeline, crossing creeks that offer water for overnight camping. Continuing south, hikers will arrive at the far edge of the plateau, with glaciers hanging above the valley and the four Melisson Lakes, waterfalls connecting them, far below.

The full journey around the plateau can be done in a long day. Or plan to carry up your gear and camp overnight, so you can do even more exploring. This would allow hikers to access the knife ridge, which is wide enough for walking, to the southwest of the lakes. The highest point on the plateau, at 2000 metres, brings hikers to within a kilometre of the highest, yet un-named, peak in the Telkwas, at 2340 metres.



Webster Lake

From the parking spot, proceed straight along the old mining road, just over a kilometre, to a sign that directs hikers down a short, steep trail, to cross the east fork of Webster Creek. Once across, it's a steady climb till the hiker is on the upper rim of Webster Lake. An expansive, rocky plateau opens up above here, taking one to 2250 metres and dramatic views to the west into a red valley that is shared with the eastern ridge of Hunter's Basin.



Sources: Trails to Timberline, 2009 Edition (Einar & Andrew Blix); Jim Easterday, www.bcnorth.ca

Text and photos: Dina Hanson

Map: http://www.hesperus-wild.org/clients/bvbackpackers/Hankin_Hunter_Webster.pdf