

Echo Valley Ranch



Photo: Jack Taylor

Site Identification

Nearest Community:

Jesmond, B.C.,
Clinton, B.C.

Geocache Location:

N 51°14.715'
W 121°59.675'

Altitude:

1132m

Ownership:

Private Property

Accuracy:

5 meters

Overall Difficulty: 2

Overall Terrain: 2

Access Information and

Restrictions:

59 kms from Clinton. From Clinton follow Kelly Lake Road for 16 km and then turn onto Jesmond Road. Follow road signs to Echo Valley Ranch. Turn right on to Echo Valley and travel 3 km to dirt road on your right. Walk along dirt road for 150m to cache location.

Parking Advice:

Park at the entrance to dirt road.

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society
PO. Box 933
Cache Creek, BC.,
V0K 1H0

Tel: 1-877-453-9467
email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

For more site pages go to:
www.goldtrail.com

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Early settlers discovered the fertile grasslands along the Fraser River south of Williams Lake almost by accident, as they sought out a route north from Lillooet to the goldfields. Would-be prospectors, and pack trains carrying supplies, were the first to make the difficult journey, but it soon became apparent that very few people “struck it rich” in the goldfields. The newcomers all needed to eat, however, and many people realized that there was good money to be made in cattle ranching. The world-famous Gang Ranch—once the largest ranch in Canada, if not the world—was established in the area in 1863, and was soon followed by the Empire Valley Ranch to the south, in the area around Churn Creek.

By the early 1900s several families had settled in the vicinity of Churn Creek, establishing small ranches and homesteads, and turning cattle and sheep loose on the grassland. Several of the families had young children, but there weren't enough students to meet the minimum requirement for a provincially-funded school and teacher.

That changed when the Zimmerlee family, emigrating north from California, arrived in the area in 1908. They were en route to the goldfields, but were persuaded to stay in the valley, settling initially in a small cabin near Brown's Lake. With the addition of the Zimmerlee children, there were enough students for the establishment of a school, which was constructed in 1910.

The Zimmerlees, however, did not stay long in the cabin on Brown's Lake, instead moving southeast to a site in the shadow of the Marble Range, where they established a cattle ranch. Although members of the family still live in the area, the ranch was eventually sold, and in 1992 became the Echo Valley Ranch and Spa. Today the ranch boasts a mix of traditional western and Thai architecture and

decoration, but the site's homesteading roots are still visible, as several of the original Zimmerlee buildings—including a log cabin, a root cellar, and two animal shelters—remain on the property.

The valley has, over the years, played host to film crews: the movies *The 13th Warrior* (1999) and *The Thaw* (2009) were both shot, in part, to the north of Echo Valley Ranch. More recently, the ranch property itself played a starring role in the CBC TV series *Arctic Air*, which concerns a group of pilots working for a small airline in the remote regions of the Canadian north. The final episode of the first series, which aired in spring 2012, concerned a plane going down in rough, snow-covered terrain, and the efforts of various *Arctic Air* pilots to find the crash site and rescue the survivors. The show's producers needed a suitably remote-looking and rugged location surrounded by forests and mountains and covered in snow, but which also had an airstrip nearby, plus accommodations for the cast and crew.

Echo Valley Ranch, with its own landing strip, fit the bill perfectly. However, when the time came to shoot there was just one problem: for the first time since anyone could remember, there was hardly any snow in the valley on the days scheduled for filming. Undaunted, the crew trucked in snow from other locations, and filming proceeded as planned.

Those who know Echo Valley Ranch and the area around it speak of its magic; the same magic which lured so many people to stop there on the way north, and build their lives along the Fraser. People also speak of the magic of film, transporting us to places we might never otherwise see. At Echo Valley Ranch, both types of magic come together.

Written and Researched by Barbara Roden

BIBLIOGRAPHY & Sources

(Winter 2011). Friends of Churn Creek Protected Area Society Newsletter. Retrieved September 2012 from <http://www.friendsofchurn.ca/Friends-of-Churn-Newsletter-2a.pdf>

"Arctic Air and Echo Valley Celebrate the Renewal of the TV Series". Retrieved September 2012 from <http://blog.evranch.com/arctic-air-and-echo-valley-celebrate-the-renewal-of-the-tv-series/>

"Canoe Creek Band History". Retrieved September 2012 from canoecreekband.ca/history.html

"Echo Valley Ranch and Spa: History". Retrieved September 2012 from <http://www.evranch.com/cms.asp?wpID=428>

Letterboxing Clues:

Look for the giant stump on the left across from two big pieces of log on right. Look in giant stump.