

# Monck Provincial Park

SITE #070301

GC1TTW0

Written & Researched by Angela Wynton

## SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Merritt, V1K 1B8  
 Location/Parking: N 50°10.585'  
 W 120°32.271'  
 Geocache Location: N 50°10.614'  
 W 120°32.414'  
 Accuracy: 6 meters  
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page  
 UTM: East 0675627;  
 North 5561197 10U  
 Geocache altitude: 730 m./2,395 ft.  
 Overall difficulty: 1.5  
 Terrain difficulty: 2.5  
*(1=easiest; 5=hardest)*  
 Date Established: 1951  
 Ownership: BC Provincial Park  
 Access: • Public Road  
 • Year-round  
 • Vehicle accessible  
 • *Detailed access information on next page.*

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:  
 Gold Country Communities Society  
 P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0  
 Tel: 1-877-453-9467  
 email: [info@exploregoldcountry.com](mailto:info@exploregoldcountry.com)

For more site pages go to:  
[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com) or  
[www.GeoTourismCanada.com](http://www.GeoTourismCanada.com)

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Monck Park offers an extraordinary combination of First Nations history and biodiversity. Amid the ponderosa pine, black cottonwood, douglas fir, tule and cattail, are remarkable Kikuli depressions and native petroglyphs. Originally part of one of the largest ranches of the last century, the land was bequeathed as a park and protected environment in 1919 by Charles Sydney 'Major' Goldman and named after his son, Commander Victor Robert Penryn Monck of the Royal Navy. The provincial park was established in 1951.

Monck Park is 92 hectares bordering Nicola Lake and complimented by the gentle rolling hills of the



Thompson Plateau, surrounding hills rise to nearly 610 meters above the lake. While the south-east side of the lake is grasslands and meadow, the northwest area is a light forest of ponderosa pine. The shores are covered in sage brush, bunchgrass, cactus and rabbit bush, making it an ideal habitat for some of the smaller creatures.

From the lake shore one can look back at the steep uplands. These lava cliffs, and the broader area, are scattered with boulder-sized rocks, known as glacial erratics, remnants from glacial wash and landslides. The bench of the lake is a flat natural beach where both tule and cattail, once used by aboriginal people to make mats, grow in dense patches on the white sandy shores.

The varied vegetation and diverse ecosystems that make up the park are home to mammals, including wapiti and mule deer. These fauna were an important part of aboriginal existence and their



*Salish subterranean home, 1907*

community economy; other key populations include beaver, hare, marmot, porcupine, muskrat and tree rodents. Additionally, a variety of edible roots, berries and fruits supplement the diet of regional fauna. The pristine waters of the lake reveal kokanee (land-locked salmon), carp and trout. A bird watchers' paradise, you may find hidden in the scrub and underbrush families of grouse and ptarmigan. A variety of migrating waterfowl decorate the lake seasonally.

Artifacts found within the park unveil evidence of the unique cultural history of the Nicola Valley Salish people dating back to 1500 BC. Further evidence of Salish culture revealed with the Kikuli pit houses of Monck Park. Kikuli houses are subterranean winter dwellings with central stone hearths. The traditional Kikuli is an efficient log frame conical structure, earth sheltered and protected, and often open to the sky. There are several in the area that were originally excavated and recorded in the 1890s by anthropologist and photographer James Alexander Teit. The dwellings are now covered over as pit house depressions to be preserved and protected, vestiges of ancient Salish living.

Further along from the park, past the second beach, one can again travel back several thousand years. On these great glacial rocks are the legends and drawings of the Salish people. These petroglyphs, prehistoric drawings on stone, are pictographs depicting the stories, values and culture of the inhabitants of the Nicola Valley thousands of years past.

Monck Park is rich in geological history, an archaeological gold mine and a scenic glory, bearing a kingdom of wildlife. With Nicola Lake it is a picture perfect landscape, a shining jewel, in the heart of Gold Country.



**Detailed access information:**

- From Merritt, follow Hwy #5A north to Monck Park Rd.
- Kikuli pits are visible near the grass playing fields within the park.
- Private property borders the park, please be respectful and practice no trace hiking.
- Parking is available at Monck Park entrance and within the park day use area.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

Archer, D. (1970). Monck Park Site: EbRd3 Summary Report. In *B.C. Ministry of Forests Library. Monck Park Provincial Management Plan.* (1996). In *B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks.*  
 Teit, J. (2006). The Salish Pit House. In *Canadian Encyclopedia.*