

# Promontory Lookout

SITE #110301

GC1TTWQ

Written & Researched by Angela Wynton

## SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Lower Nicola, V1K 1B8

Location: N 50°11.669'  
W 120°58.338'

Geocache Location: N 50°11.650'  
W 120°58.358'

Accuracy: 5 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page

UTM: East 0644704;  
North 5562186 10U

Geocache altitude: 1,715 m./5,625 ft.

Overall difficulty: 1

Terrain difficulty: 2

(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: 1862

Ownership: BC Forestry Rec Site

Access: • Gravel Road

• Seasonal

• 4x4 Vehicle accessible

• Detailed access information on next page.



Promontory Lookout used to be the site of a Forestry Lookout Tower, however it was removed in 2007

High above the town of Merritt, between Shulus and Lower Nicola, is a botanical and geological treasure, and a view worth its height in gold. Promontory Mountain, so aptly named, is a prominent mass of land 1734 metres above sea level, overlooking the Nicola Valley, in Gold Country.

Promontory Mountain is an ideal lookout. One has a 360 degree view of the surrounding Promontory Hills and the exposed rock of the Upper Triassic Nicola Group. These rocks are intruded by Lower Jurassic Guichon Creek *batholith* to the north. The *batholithes*, are the largest of the *plutons*, large igneous bodies that have congealed from magma underground, and are at least 100 square kilometres in area. To the south they are *Coyle stock*, similar but smaller *plutons*. Looking west the rocks are of the Lower Cretaceous Spences Bridge Group and to the east they are of the Upper Cretaceous Kingsvale

Group.

The large area leading up to and about the lookout is surrounded by a variety of minerals and rock. These vary from volcanic *brecias*, andestic lavas and *lapilli* to limestone, greywacke and some marine fossils. A small occurrence of galena and *sphalerite* also can be found at the top of Promontory Mountain.

Adding to the interesting geology of the mountain is the discovery of the washoe pine tree cluster (*pinus washoensis*) surviving in the broken, rocky terrain. It shares the summit with Douglas fir and an herbaceous ground cover of pine grass (*calamagmstis nibescens*). Washoe is an atypical ponderosa pine and is not native to Promontory Mountain.

Beginning in interglacial or pre-glacial time the pine originated from the seeds of the North Plateau ponderosa pine that were carried upwind from lower

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

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Tel: 1-877-453-9467

email: [info@exploregoldcountry.com](mailto:info@exploregoldcountry.com)

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altitudes. There is no evidence of seed cones or pine reproduction on Promontory above 1400 metres, indicating that the pine is not an established species. This washoe pine has genetically adapted to the harsh, high altitude environment of the mountain. The leaves, called needles, are generally shorter, stiffer and stouter than those of the ponderosa. As there is sparse evidence of seed cone production at the higher altitude, the existence of *pinus washoensis* will probably cease after the adult trees live out their lifetime or succumb to the moods of nature.

On the trek along the pathway one also has the opportunity to observe, very carefully, the characteristic jumping cholla cacti (*opuntia bigelovii*). It is also called the teddy bear cactus, but cute and cuddly it is not. This unusual cactus is notorious for very loose joint or spine attachment. These spines easily attach themselves to

unsuspecting wanderers-by, therefore giving the impression of 'jumping' at their prey.

Some believe it is the vibration of footsteps that make them 'jump,' but it is more likely a slight brushing while passing in the vicinity of the cactus that causes the loose spines to so readily dislodge and attach themselves to any contacted surface. Whether or not they are actually 'jumping cactus,' you can decide for yourself. They are however, definitely an interesting specimen to be cautious of. Perhaps, tweezers should be taken along as a precaution.

When you have explored the natural science of the mountain, wander up to the Forestry Recreation site and enjoy the majestic view. You will see the town of Merritt, the Nicola Valley and beyond the four directions of the Promontory Hills. If you have chosen the clearest of days to visit Promontory, look south southeast and you will be able to see Mount Baker in Washington State.

Promontory Mountain Lookout gives one the sense of being on top of the world. It is a treasure of natural science and a geological wonder. Surely you will agree Promontory Mountain lookout is 'a view worth its height in gold', in the heart of Gold Country, British Columbia.

#### Detailed access information:

- From Merritt, follow Hwy #8 west to Woodward Road.
- Turn left at the landfill sign and follow the gravel road ~ 14 km.
- Park near the Forestry Recreation site.
- Rough, back country road, 4x4 recommended and use caution in inclement weather.

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#### BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

- Bradshaw, T.C. (1997). *Washoe and Ponderosa Pines on Promontory Hill near Merritt, B.C.* Retrieved from Natural History Museum of Vienna, Austria Web Site: <http://www.biologiezentrum.at/de/bz/>
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