

Salmon Valley



Photo: Baillie Stewart

Site Identification

Nearest Community:

Quilchena B.C.,
Merritt, B.C.

Geocache Location:

N 50°19.444'
W 119°58.339'

Altitude:

941m

Ownership:

Crown Land

Accuracy:

3 meters

Overall Difficulty: 2

Overall Terrain: 2

Access Information and

Restrictions:

Follow the Douglas Lake-Salmon Valley Road for approx. 56 km from Quilchena. Go past Douglas Lake Ranch and Salmon Lake. Pull off is just past the unmarked forest service road that is on the right.

Parking Advice:

At pull off on Douglas Lake Road

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

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

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

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

Apply Sticker Here

Salmon River Route

Travelers from the Okanagan heading into Gold Country usually go over Highway 97C (Okanagan Connector) to Aspen Grove, then down to Merritt. There is another route, though from the North Okanagan, the Salmon River Route. This is a quiet and scenic backroad with much to see for anyone wanting to explore a new area.

Westwold is 61 kilometers northwest of Vernon on Highway 97. During the Fur Trade, it was called Grande Prairie and was a camp for the fur brigades along the Hudson Bay Company Trail connecting Fort Kamloops with Fort Okanagan. Today it is a rural farming/ranching community. Near the north end of Westwold, turn left (west) onto the Salmon Valley/ Douglas Lake Road. The Salmon River flows south past Falkland, then east and north to Salmon Arm and into Shuswap Lake. This road starts as a paved road, but turns to gravel. It follows the Salmon River upstream at the bottom of the narrow river valley, climbing gradually up to the Douglas Plateau. There are two small forest service recreation sites at 17 km. Weyman Creek Falls Forest Service Site has a short trail up to the waterfall.

Leaving a wetter Interior zone at Westwold, the road climbs to the Interior grasslands and at 35 kilometres arrives at Salmon Lake. The Douglas Lake Ranch has a resort on the lake, known for fly fishing for stocked Rainbow trout. Continuing west is Rush Lake and then Chapperon Lake, one of the first ice-free lakes of the area. First Nation people established a seasonal fish camp here early in the spring.

All of the lands on either side of the road are open rangeland, part of the Douglas Lake Cattle Company. The eastern center operations are located on the east shores of Chapperon Lake.

Canada's largest working cattle ranch, the Douglas Lake Cattle Company's Home Ranch is on the shores of Douglas Lake. The company owns 222,750 hectares (over half a million acres) and averages 20,000 head of cattle and 300 horses each year. The first settler here was in 1872 and in 1884, the Douglas Lake Cattle Company was formed. There have been many owners over the years and the fortunes of the ranch have had peaks and valleys. Today the ranch employs 75 people, some of whom have been with the ranch for their entire working careers. The company also owns the Alkali Lake Ranch and runs resorts on Minnie Lake, Salmon Lake, and Stoney Lake.

At the west end of Douglas Lake, the road crosses into the Spahomin Indian Reserve. Grasslands stretch in both directions as the road parallels the Nicola River. Side roads go up to Minnie Lake, Glimpse Lake and Hamilton Mountain and the Douglas Lake-Salmon Valley Road ends at the Nicola Lake Indian Reserve on Highway 5A. South lies Quilchena and the Nicola Valley. North is a string of lakes on the way to Kamloops. The Salmon Valley route covers 78.5 km, linking Highway 97 to Highway 5A, offering views of ranches, fishing lakes, grasslands, pioneer buildings, cattle grazing, and cowboys at work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

<http://www.douglaslake.com/>

Shewchuk, Murphy. *Coquihalla Trips and Trails*, Fitzhenry Whiteside, 2007

Mussio, Russell and Wesley. *Thompson Okanagan Mapbook*, Mussio Ventures ltd. 2010

Shewchuk, Murphy. *Coquihalla Country, An Outdoor Recreation Guide*, Sonotek, 1990

Coordinates

Junction of Highway 97 and the Salmon Valley Road: N 50°28.401 W 119°46.926

Salmon Lake: N 50°16.434' W 120°00.231'

Chapperon Lake: N 50°13.266' W 120°03.450'

Douglas Lake Cattle Company: N 50°09.994' W 120°12.087'

Junction of Highway 5A and the Douglas Lake Road: N 50°11.528' W 120°28.375'

Letterboxing Clues: By big log.