

Horseshoe Bend Trail

Site Identification

Nearest Community:

Lillooet, B.C.

Geocache Location:

N 50°51.608'

W 122°09.318'

Ownership:

Crown Land

Accuracy:

4 meters

Overall Difficulty: 2.5

Overall Terrain: 3

Access Information and

Restrictions:

From the Mile 0 Cairn go north 2 km and turn left on Hwy 40 and follow for 28 km approximately to Horseshoe Bend pull off. Do not drive down old road. Beware of cliff edge. Watch for falling rock. Caution if with children and pets. Do not walk on upper rim of Horseshoe Bend.

Parking Advice:

Between trees off the road at a natural view point.

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

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Photo: Wayne Robinson

The Horseshoe Bend is located on Highway 40, along the Bridge River just south of the confluence of the Bridge and Yalakom Rivers. This is an interesting feature marked by a dramatic bend within the river. The canyon walls are laced with hoodoos and made up of deep sand and gravel deposits left behind by retreating glaciers. At first glance the Horseshoe Bend looks to be a marvel of geological forces, but it is a human made feature. This feature is sometimes called Horseshoe Wash; this helps describe the way in which the feature was created, through hydraulic mining for gold. It is amazing that this is a mine. Operations began here in the 1908 and continued off and on until relatively recent times. Between 1908 and 1914 over a million dollars' worth of gold was extracted from this area (using the historic gold value of \$32 per ounce).

Hydraulic mining involves using high pressure jets of water that washes away sediment and rock. This creates slurry of rock, sediment and water which runs into sluice boxes to extract the gold. Hydraulic mining has been around a long time; there are examples of its practice in ancient Rome. Hydraulic mining is devastating to the riparian environment. The heavy silt load that is washed into the river clogs fish gills and can ruin water quality. It can also lead to the widening of waterways which can slow the flow of the water (and decrease the depth) significantly when the season is dry. Hydraulic mining will never again be permitted in this area due to destruction of adjacent property and the degradation of fish habitat.

The Bridge River (Xwisten in the St'át'imc language) which flows through Horseshoe bend empties into the Fraser River. It is at this confluence that the Bridge River Fishing rocks are located. This is the most important inland fishing site on the entire Fraser River. Salmon are still caught by the traditional means of using a dip-net; the fish are eaten

fresh or air dried for later consumption. Coho, Chinook (locally called ‘Springs’), Steelhead and Sockeye Salmon travel up the Bridge river to spawn yearly. Above the confluence on the Bridge and Yalakom rivers is the Bridge River Canyon. This is a spectacular, but little known canyon that divides the Shulaps Range and Mission Ridge. Further along is the Terzaghi Dam named for the civil engineer, Karl von Terzaghi, who founded the science of soil mechanics. The dam retains Carpenter Lake Reservoir, a large body of water that extends 50 km along the upper Bridge River Valley to the community of Gold Bridge.

The land at the river bottom of Horseshoe bend can offer excellent pockets of riparian habitat. Animals of note include bald eagles and beavers. The bench lands immediately surrounding Horseshoe Bend can be very hot and dry in the summer months. Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) are the dominant trees. Drought tolerant shrubs are also very common, including: Saskatoon Berry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), Common Rabbit-Brush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), and Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*). Rabbit-Brush is heavily browsed by mule deer that can often be seen along highway 40 when heading to Horseshoe Bend. Rabbit-Brush displays yellow flowers in the late summer. This shrub was used by the St’at’imc people as an infusion to relieve sore throats.

Detailed Access Information:

The rim of Horseshoe bend is dangerous and one should take care not to get too close. Park at the south end of the canyon and descend along an old road to the river, any other location to ascend is too hazardous.

Beware of deer when you are driving to this spot, deer are often along Hwy 40.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

“BC Ministry of Environment: Ecology, Part 2 – Ecoregion Unit Descriptions” (Web) 2012. <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/ecology/ecoregions/dryeco.html>

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“Moha, Yalakom, Camoo and Applesprings”, (Web), 2012. <http://www.cayoosh.net/moha.html>

“The Bridge River Canyon”, (Web), 2012. <http://www.cayoosh.net/canyon.html>

“Wikipedia: Hydraulic Mining” (Web) 2012. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydraulic_mining

“Wikipedia: Terzaghi Dam” (Web) 2012. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terzaghi_Dam

“Wikipedia: Bridge River” (Web) 2012. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridge_River

Letterboxing Clues:

Descend via old road to the West of the viewpoint. Follow the road down to the bottom. Follow the path across the waterway to the 2 large mounds of gravel. Cache hidden in rocks above rim of normally empty built up pond on the left.