

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Cache Creek, B C,
 Walhachin, BC
 Geocache Location: N 50 48.030'
 W 121 06.954'
 Altitude: 632m/2073ft.
 Accuracy: 2 meters
 Overall difficulty: 1.5 (1=easiest; 5=hardest)
 Terrain difficulty: 2.5
 Ownership: Crown land

Access Information and Restrictions:

Macbee Fossil Creek Area on Battle Creek Road. Look for marker # 2. This is the trail head.

Letterbox Clues:

Follow trail until you reach power pole #394, walk between poles, Just through in sage brush. Ammo can.

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.GeoTourismCanada.com

Code: GC3P2VX

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 Here

GEOLOGICAL AND VIEWS

Battle Creek Road



Photo: Kurt Evans

The Battle Creek area encompasses many unusual and unique characteristics in its velvet-like sage green hills and red rocky outcroppings which behold its secrets and treasures. Mule deer, black bear, and bighorn sheep are regulars here and less common are cougar, moose, dry land toads and the occasional elusive badger. Historically, this region is known to be a battle ground between the Chilcotin First Nations from the north and the Shushwap First Nations from the east. The hills are littered with basalt flakes left from chipping, known as knapping, arrowheads. The Arrowstone Mountain basalt quarry to the north of this region, was coveted by First Nations people for its abundant supply and superior quality basalt used for making tools and projectile points.

Spearheads as old as 7000 years, have been discovered in the Battle Creek area. The bow and arrow technology reached this region about 1200 years ago and therefore, the smaller arrowheads, one half inch to one inch in size, are commonly found.

In more recent times the Christian family is the name most associated with the ranch land found on the south side of the TransCanada Highway. Purchased from the McAbee (Mack-a-bee) family in the 1960's and covering 1100 acres, it has been home to 300 cow/calf pairs per year for the last 50 years. The ranch once belonged to Savona settler John Wilson who, through his many land rich wives, acquired thousands of acres throughout the Thompson River Valley from Savona westward.

Mr. Wilson's daughter married a McAbee in the early 1900's and inherited the ranch subsequently known as the McAbee (now Christian Ranch).

The most exciting characteristic of this area is the McAbee fossil beds on the north side of the TransCanada highway. This site is amongst three of the most important fossil finds in British Columbia in terms of significance and first in Canada for its diversity of well-preserved species for the Eocene era 56 to 34 million years ago. It has become internationally renowned for its large quantity of mixed variety species of fish, insects and vegetation during one of earth's warmest periods in history. Many fossils discovered here are entirely new to science. The site has been open to the public under a mining claim as a pay-as-you-dig commercial enterprise. The site has seen many years of excavation by both professional and amateur fossil collectors and busloads of school children. Meanwhile, the hills behind the fossil dig were undergoing another sort of excavation. Due to the highly absorbent properties of the fossil rock it was being crushed and sold as kitty litter. Earlier this spring of 2012, the area was closed to the public temporarily, while its destiny as a provincial heritage site is under discussion.

There have been considerable changes to the Christian ranch in the last few years when it was acquired by the CN railway. The hay lands are still under production by private lease and

cows are overwintered here but, today its main function is as a rock quarry for railroad ballast. The rock being mined and crushed on site is essential to the railway bed on which rail ties are laid. The quarry area is not visible from the highway but can be seen by boat on the Thompson River below. This special rock is unique to this area and another quarry can be found for the CP railway overlooking the town of Walhachin.

Bibliography

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
News release February 25 2012,
2012 For0017-000194
McAbee Fossil Site Assessment
Final Report July 30 2007
by Mark V.H. Wilson Ph.D
Edmonton Ab. Canada

Personal communication with
Ruth McAbee spring 2012
Personal communication with
Charlie Christian spring 2012

Terra Archaeology Limited, 100
Mile House Forest District,
HCA Permit 2005-112