

Kane Valley Ski Trail



Photo: Vesta Giles

Site Identification

Nearest Community:
Merritt, B.C.

Geocache Location:
N 49°58.053'
W 120°42.426'

Altitude:
1118 m

Ownership:
Provincial Park

Accuracy:
3 meters

Overall Difficulty: 1.5
Overall Terrain: 1.5

Access Information and Restrictions:

From Merritt, travel south along Hwy 97C towards Kelowna. Watch for "Kane Valley Ski Trails" highway signs. Exit highway onto Kane Valley Road 18 km south of Merritt.

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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Located on the Thompson Plateau, the Kane Valley features picturesque rolling hills, Ponderosa and Lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, Engelmann spruce, grassy meadows and plenty of opportunities to get out and enjoy nature in every season.

Historic ranches and logging operations share this vast space with cross country skiers, hikers, mountain bikers, and nature lovers. Actively ranched since the 1890's, the area was once home to John Smith, who settled in the area with his wife in the 1880's before later moving to Spences Bridge. She documented the hardships and details of their lives as homesteaders in "Widow Smith of Spence's Bridge" (Sonotek Publishing, 1989). An old log house that is believed to have been theirs can still be seen in a field about 8 km north from the junction between the Coldwater Road and the Kane Valley Road.

With a microclimate that is perfectly suited to cross country skiing (dry snow, about 1-1.5 m deep, temperatures between 0 C and -15 C), the Kane Valley is home to the Nicola Nordic Ski Club, who have been operating the trails, which now extend 50 km, since 1991. In keeping with the rich natural beauty of the area, the club's vision is to "maintain a wilderness experience where skiers can enjoy nature in peace and tranquility."

As the snow disappears, hikers, mountain bikers, birdwatchers and naturalists descend on the area searching for their own wilderness experiences. Just south of the ski trails lies Harmon Lake, which is a favourite destination for people seeking easy access to outdoor activities. Located on the southeast side of the lake, within easy walking distance from camping spots at Harmon Lake West, Harmon Lake East, and Kane Lake, is a 2.7 km interpretive trail that is suitable for most ages and skill levels and can

even be easily accessed on snowshoes. Interpretive signs highlight the natural beauty of the area, explaining how the forest works and how all the elements that make up a forest interact. The trail winds around the small Secret Lake hidden south of Harmon Lake before winding back to the starting point.

The Nicola Valley Naturalists, who make regular visits to the interpretive area, routinely report seeing mountain bluebirds, rednapped sapsuckers, ring-necked ducks, western terrestrial garter snakes, and the Pacific chorus frog (formerly called the Pacific tree frog) in the area. Plant life also abounds with the sagebrush buttercup, fairyslipper orchids, and the arrowroot balsamroot (sometimes referred to as a sunflower) catching the eye at every turn. Whatever the season, the Kane Valley offers visitors an abundance of opportunities to play and enjoy the natural world around us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

BC Adventure Network, (2012). *Harmon Lake, British Columbia*. Web. 15 Jun. 2012.

Burger, Alan. Email interview. 18 Jun. 2012.

Nicola Nordic Ski Club. Web. 15 Jun. 2012.

Recreation sites and trails BC, *Harmon Lake Forest Interpretive Trail (Merritt)*. Web. 15 Jun. 2012.

Shewchuk, Murphy. (2007). *Coquihalla trips and trails*. Fitzhenry and Whiteside, Markham, On.

Letterboxing Clues:

At Harmon Lake Recreation Site, on the Southern end of the campsite, 27m South from picnic table 36. Cache is located in end of log.