



Years in cutblocks indicate when they were replanted

Sinclair Plateau Trail

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Lost? You want to get lost? I'll tell you how to get lost. I have the place for you.

The Sinclair Plateau is a trail-less area above treeline somewhere up the Telkwa River. It's a famously confusing place... to find your way out of.

Starting from Telkwa, set your odometre to zero on the bridge over the Bulkley River and continue out of town on Coalmine Road. Just before 6 km bear right (where Aveling Coalmine Road goes left)l this is kilometer 0 on the Telkwa River Forest Service Road, also known as Road 1000. Just before km 9.5 bear left (a sign proclaims this the beginning of Road 1000). Immediately the potholes are bigger and the surface of the road is noticeably looser.

On your way to km 1028 (24 kilometers ahead now) you will cross the Telkwa River, pass the Telkwa Ponds Rec Site – and possibly notice a series of statements regarding caribou management and snowmobiles (“sleds”) that have been painted on sheets of plywood bolted to roadside trees. These last until you pass the bridge (now barricaded with heavy concrete blocks) which led across the Telkwa and onto the old Howson Creek Road. I encourage you to draw your own conclusions.

One drives just over an hour from Telkwa to get to the parking spot – I hesitate to call it a trailhead. Just after km 1028 take the right turn that bears uphill off the FSR (there is an avalanche warning sign here). This narrow road leads to yet a narrower road when you are 1.8 km in: turn right here. It's hard to believe this is the correct place until you come to the access signage specifying summer non-motorized and winter motorized use. You're parking just ahead, before the deactivation ditch and creek; it's almost too narrow here between the walls of alder to turn around. I recommend parking in fact some 100 m earlier, where there is ample space to reverse.

On the other side of the ditch the road continues, a very pleasant walk, and indeed, eminently bicycle-able if you want to try that. The road is in excellent shape up to the point where, in an old cut block, there is a small brown arrow sign, and you begin the trail in earnest. It's just over 2 km to this point.

You begin the trail, but to be honest it's a two-track, which is nice because you can continue to walk next to your friend and keep talking. The track continues to the upper edge of the cutblock where there are signs confirming that this is the Sinclair Plateau Trail and that it's a winter motorized, but summer non-motorized, area. There's another avalanche warning sign here.

The trail winds up through the forest, climbing 200 metres elevation going almost straight uphill – the kind of track that works best when you are on a machine. Then it begins to angle right as it ascends. You come to a series of wet meadows; in the early season dry feet are almost an impossibility here. Near 1500 metres elevation, and about two hours from your vehicle, you come out of forest into heather covered slopes and the track soon disappears. (Just before this point there is supposed to be a snowmobile club cabin near the trail. Embarrassingly, I was unable to find it!)

After topping out of the drainage you have come up, you are on the plateau. And this is how you get lost. Don't turn around and make a good mental note of what the route behind you looks like. There are many drainages descending the east side of the Plateau and all of them look alike, at least on first glance! So make no notes, leave no marker, place no GPS point. Just assume you'll be able to find your way back here with no trouble. As the mists close in.