



Elliot Creek Trail

Morgan Hite, August 2010

Basic instructions

Drive to Evelyn on Highway 16 and turn on Owens Rd (that's the turn with the sign for the fish hatchery). Drive over Toboggan Creek, past the fish hatchery gates, and over the railway tracks. The road curves first right, then left, goes straight for a while and finally turns left again. 400 metres after this third turn, turn right on Raufer Rd. Drive up to the entrance to the Ministry of Highways gravel pit and park outside its gates, being careful not to block the gate.

Walk up through the gravel pit to the road that ascends the hill on the far side. Walk up this for 20 minutes to half an hour, and just where the road, which has been climbing steadily, levels out, there is a pull-out on the right and trailhead on your left. **[Note: As of 2012, Rec Sites and Trails BC is building, or has built, a trail that allows you to skirt the gravel pit, since the Ministry of Transport does not want the public walking through it.]**

Follow the trail west for approximately 4km and 800m elevation gained to treeline. Allow 2.5 hours for ascent, 1.5 hours down, plus plenty of time to explore the peaks and basins.

Commentary

The Pope gravel pit used to have a gate, but it is gone now. On Sundays you can drive right up into the pit, and with a 4WD vehicle you should be able to go up the logging road to the trailhead. The road has been recently maintained and is in excellent shape.

The trailhead is marked by nothing more than a piece of old yellow flagging tape, knotted and torn. Immediately you enter cool dark fir forest. The path joins and keeps to the narrow ridge crest, ascending sometimes gradually, sometimes steeply; Elliot Creek is audible far below on the left. Originally built by Evelyn resident Mack Schat, the trail, is in excellent condition and seems to be receiving ongoing maintenance. (Those responsible, thank you!)

At about 2km and 400m gained, immediately after a very steep section, the trail emerges briefly into the open at the top of south-facing cliffs, with good views west into the head of Elliot Creek, and of the avalanche chutes on the north side of Mt. Evelyn.

Over the next kilometre the approach of treeline is heralded by decreasing tree diameters, and finally the appearance of heather among the trailside plants. Treeline is itself spread out over a fourth kilometre, as you ascend 200 m through gradually thinning stands of krummhotz. The final tree is about 2.5 hours from the trailhead. There are excellent views north to Rocky Ridge and Brian Boru, and south to Hudson Bay Mountain, the Toboggan Glacier and Mt. Evelyn.

From here an easy ridge leads further west, and steeply up to the first of a chain of three peaks, all of which share an elevation of approximately 2000 m, set around the head of Elliot Creek. From the first, the second is accessible via a 1km ridge. Descent via the Toboggan Creek Rd. or the Silvern Lakes should be possible.