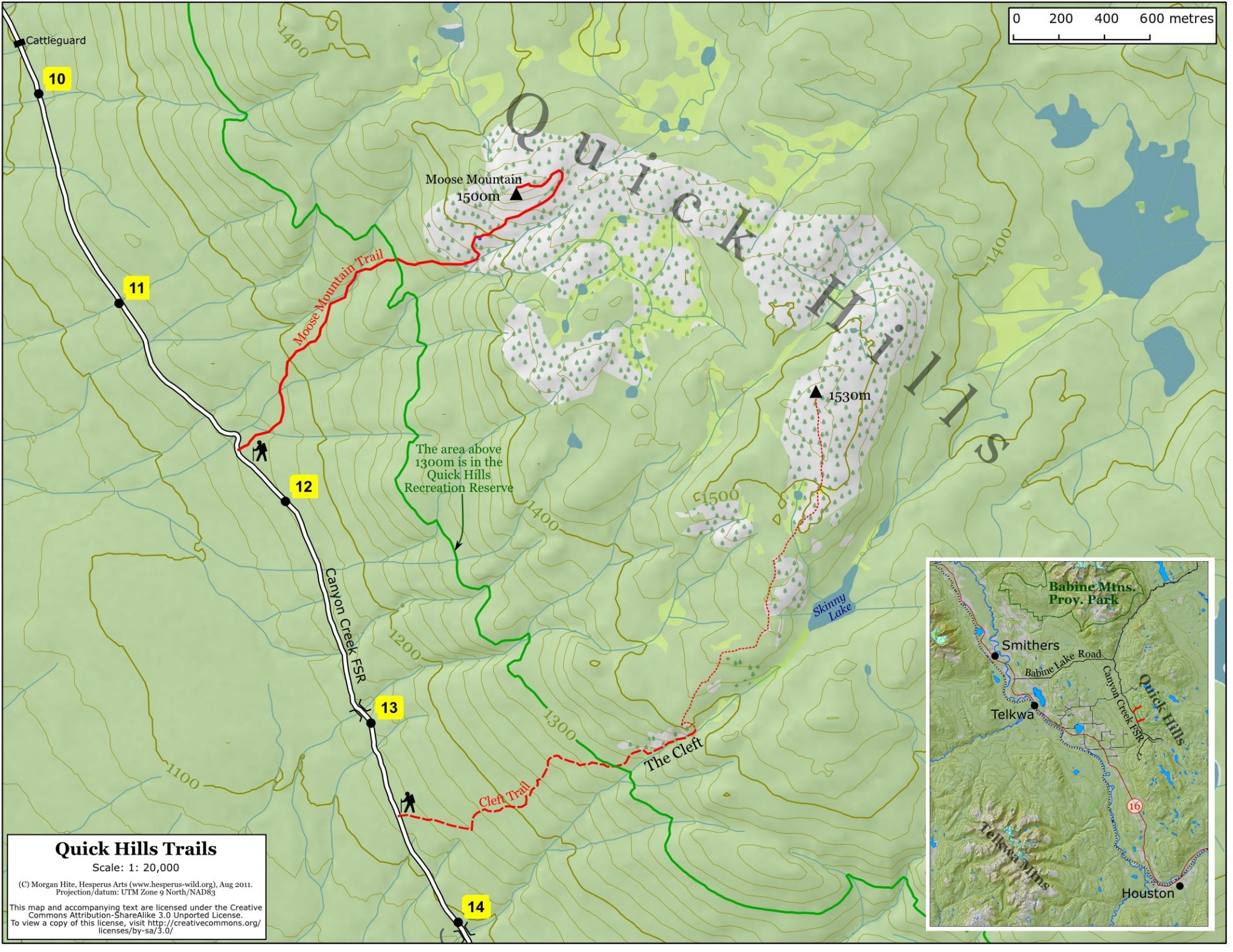


0 200 400 600 metres



Quick Hills Trails

Scale: 1: 20,000

(C) Morgan Hite, Hesperus Arts (www.hesperus-wild.org), Aug 2011.
Projection/datum: UTM Zone 9 North/NAD83

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A Quick Jaunt In The Quick Hills

Morgan Hite, September, 2011

This is a pair of trails up to the summit of the Quick Hills, a delightful area of rock outcrops and a sparse tree cover near 1500m elevation, just the edge of treeline for the Bulkley Valley. The Moose Mountain Trail is short (the hike up takes only about an hour), easy to follow, and leads directly to the rocky summit of the same name. The Cleft is more of a challenge: initially it's a trail (into the Cleft), after which it is more accurately described as a "route" (your own navigation and routefinding required) up onto a series of knobs and outcrops with good views. It is possible to link this route with the Moose Mountain trail, although I have only heard stories of this being done on showshoes during the winter when the wet meadows that dot the top of the Quick Hills are frozen.

Both trailheads are on the Canyon Creek Forest Service Road, a high-line logging road that runs through crown lands along the east side of the Bulkley Valley at about 1000m elevation, from McKendrick Pass to Deep Creek. The easiest access to it is from Babine Lake Road, at Km 19 ½ (about 4 km after pavement ends on this road): turn right on the clearly marked "Canyon Creek FSR". Throughout its length this road is in good condition and is posted with yellow kilometre markers. (It is also possible to reach it from the Deception Lake FSR, a continuation of the north leg of Woodmere Road in Quick. This crosses the Canyon Cr FSR at Km 7 ½, but a short sections of the DL FSR, near Km 3, can be bad enough to stop some vehicles.)

The Moose Mountain trailhead is at Km 11 ¾, marked by a brown post on the left (east) side of the road at the top of a rise. (You are about 35 minutes from intersection of Hwy 16 and Babine Lake Road, just outside Smithers.) The Cleft Trailhead is marked by a similar post at Km 13 ½, where the road is going through a long, straight descent. A formidable barrier placed across the road at Km 14 ½ means you can drive no further south on the Canyon Creek FSR.

Moose Mountain Trail. For most of its length, this trail follows an old cutway about ten feet wide through spruce-fir forest with the occasional pine and alder. The trailway is well-worn and easy to follow on the ground; in winter, snowshoeing, you can follow its wide swath. The cutway crosses a creek early on, and then works its way diagonally left up the slope to another creek, which it follows up and crosses three times. It then diagonals back to the right across the slope towards the first creek again. Now the cutway continues on up the creek into the summit area, but the trail turns left onto rocky outcrops, and parallels the cutway higher up, passing right under the summit, which is a large whaleback of exposed rock. The trail goes to the east end of the whaleback and then doubles back along its top to the high point, where there is a survey marker.

Cleft Trail. For the first 1½ km there is a trail into the Cleft, a series of open meadows in a narrow canyon that trends northeast – southwest. However this is more of an "Advanced" trail: it is not difficult, but tricky to follow, being hardly visible on the ground. It is marked in the trees with dark red flagging tape sporting a black stripe or black dots, or at times just orange flagging tape. It works east across the slope through the forest, sometimes turning north and ascending. Just as you arrive at the Cleft and rock faces begin to appear uphill on your left, the trail loses itself in meadows. If in doubt, follow your compass East, and travel up next to the creek.

From the Cleft you can scramble up onto the rocky outcrops to the left, and then make your way northeast and north along a broad, treed ridge, visiting a series of successively higher outcrops, to a summit. In summer it's preferable to bump up and down along the ridgetop and avoid the wet meadows; in winter the opposite holds, as the meadows make for the easier travel.

Winter access to these trailheads depends on how far the Canyon Creek Rd is plowed, which in turn depends on where logging is taking place. Note that a cutblock is being planned at present in the Cleft trail area.