



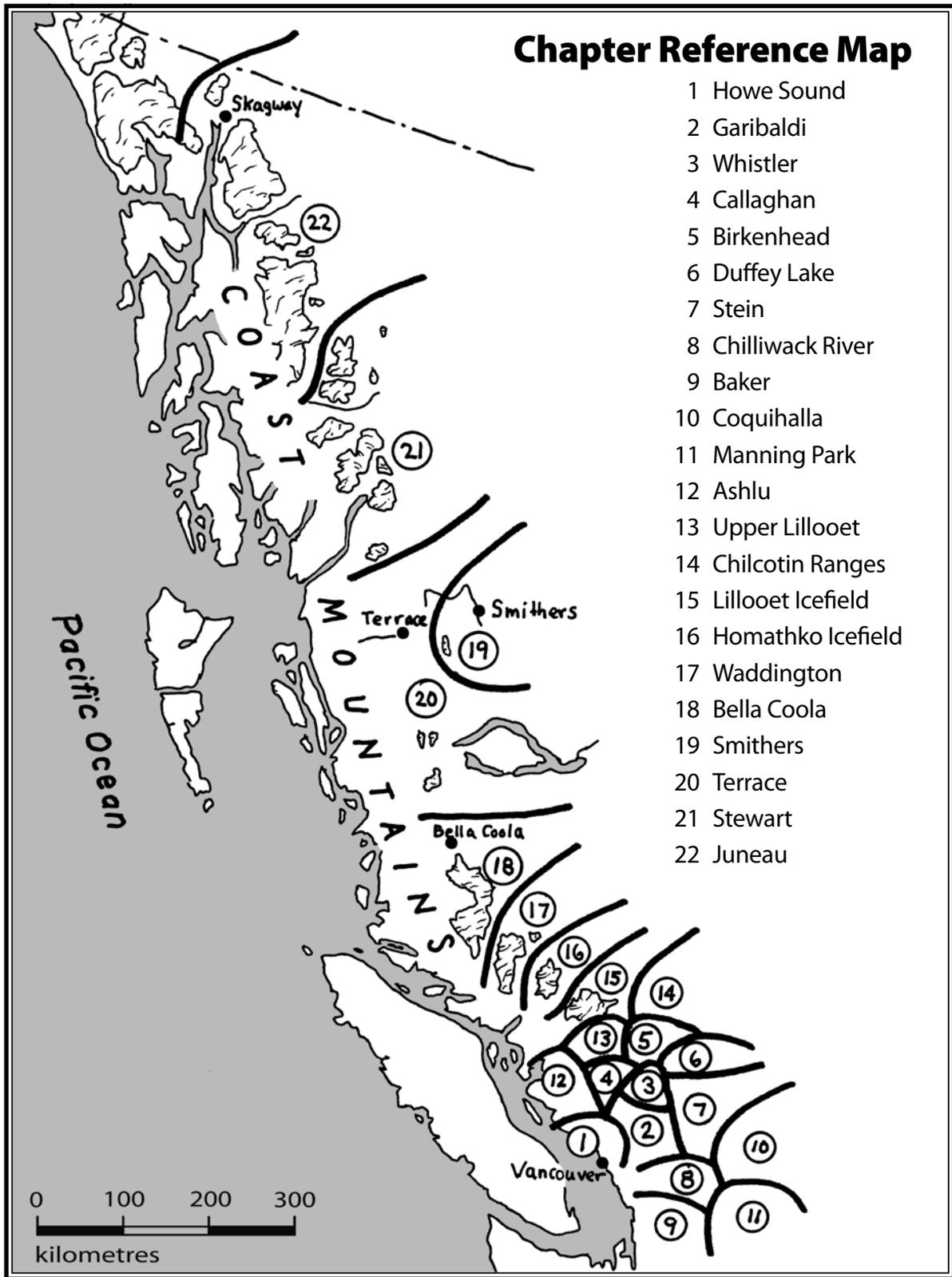
Exploring The Coast Mountains

On Skis

A Guide to Ski Mountaineering

John Baldwin

Third Edition



Contents

Using this Guidebook	9
Trip Planning	15
About the Coast Mountains	21

Pacific Ranges

1. Howe Sound	35
2. Garibaldi	51
3. Whistler	69
4. Callaghan	87
5. Birkenhead	105
6. Duffey Lake	119
7. Stein	153
8. Chilliwack River	163
9. Baker	173
10. Coquihalla	191
11. Manning Park	203
12. Ashlu	213
13. Upper Lillooet	233
14. Chilcotin Ranges	261
15. Lillooet Icefield	271
16. Homathko Icefield	287
17. Waddington	299
18. Bella Coola	333

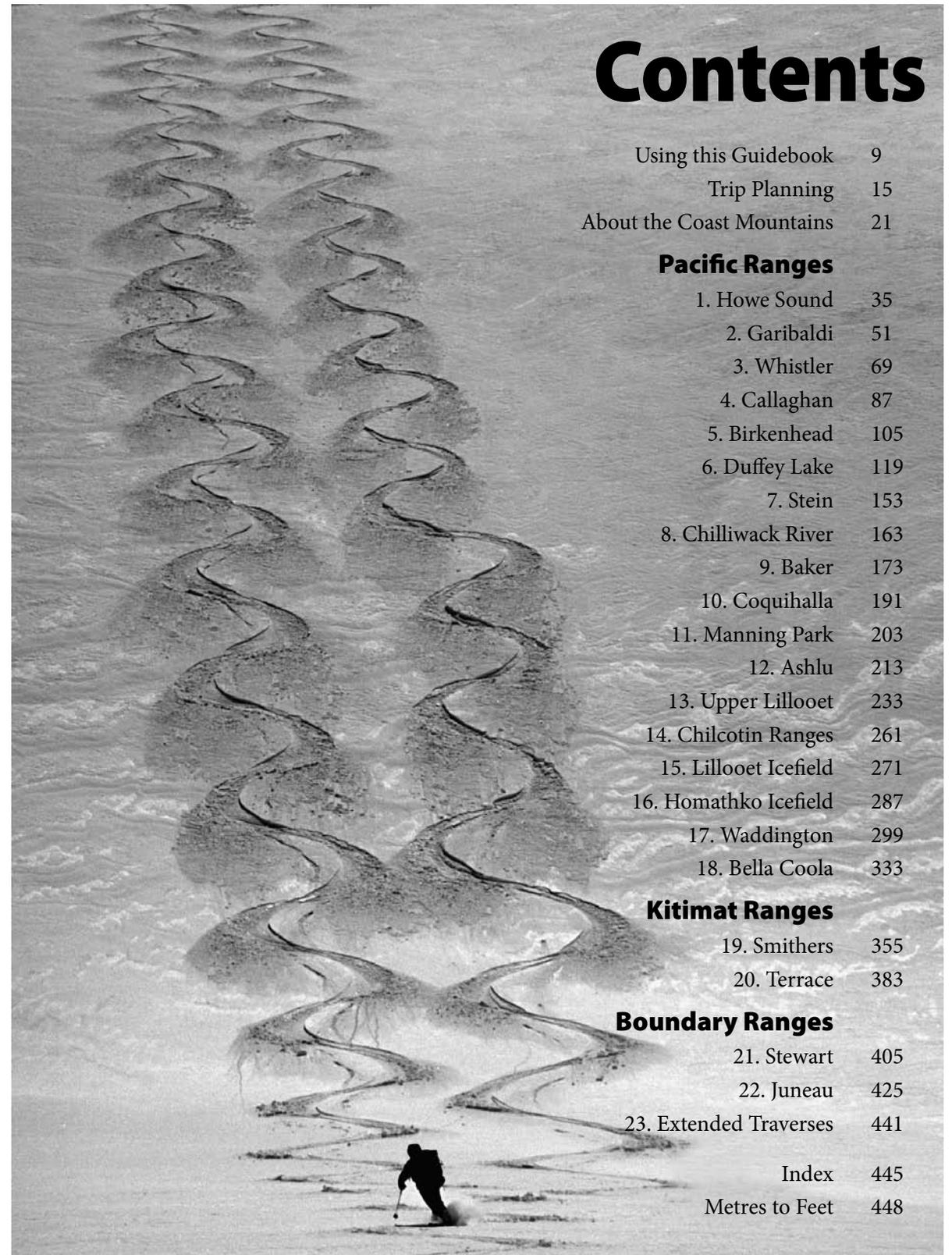
Kitimat Ranges

19. Smithers	355
20. Terrace	383

Boundary Ranges

21. Stewart	405
22. Juneau	425
23. Extended Traverses	441

Index	445
Metres to Feet	448



A Guide to Climbing and Hiking in Southwestern BC, Bruce Fairley

Scrambles in Southwestern British Columbia, Matt Gunn

A Climber's Guide to the Coastal Ranges of BC, Dick Culbert (out of print)

Stein Valley Wilderness Guidebook, Gordon White (out of print)

Alpine Select, Kevin McLane

Cascade Alpine Guide: Climbing and High Routes—Vol. 3: Rainy Pass to Fraser River, Fred Beckey

100 Classic Backcountry Ski and Snowboard Routes in Washington, Rainer Burgdorfer

100 Hikes in Washington's North Cascades Region, Ira Spring and Harvey Manning

The Waddington Guide, Don Serl

Bella Coola Valley & Vicinity: Hiking Trails and Routes, Scott Whittemore

Hikes in Tweedsmuir South Provincial Park, Scott Whittemore

Trails to Timberline in West Central British Columbia, Einar Blix

Hot Springs of Western Canada, Glenn Woodsworth

Island Turns and Tours, Philip Stone

Satellite and Aerial Photographs

Satellite imagery and air photographs are a useful aid to route planning and selection. Information that is difficult to discern from topographic maps is sometimes readily apparent. This can include forest cover, cliff bands, crevasse patterns, glacier recession and even the lay of the land.

www.earth.google.com

Google Earth offers high resolution satellite photographs of many areas that can be viewed in three dimensions.

www.pbase.com/nolock/

John Scurlock has compiled an incredibly useful database of oblique photographs of the Coast Mountains and Cascade Mountains taken from a small plane. Most photographs are taken in winter or spring.

Journals

The following journals frequently contain descriptions of ski mountaineering trips to the Coast Mountains. They are available at libraries in Vancouver. References are given to relevant articles within the text.

Canadian Alpine Journal (CAJ), Alpine Club of Canada

B.C. Mountaineer (BCM), B.C. Mountaineering Club

Varsity Outdoor Club Journal (VOCJ), Varsity Outdoor Club, University of BC

Websites

www.bivouac.com

The *Canadian Mountaineering Encyclopedia* is an excellent online guidebook that contains route descriptions, photos, detailed road information and updates and trip reports.

www.clubtread.com

Online forum and trip reports.

www.turns-all-year.com

Online forum and trip reports focused on Washington.

www.alpenglow.org

History of ski mountaineering in the Pacific Northwest.

www.skimountaineer.com

Cascade ski mountaineering.

www.mountaineers.org/nwmj

Northwest Mountaineering Journal.

www.avalanche.ca

Check out the regional discussion board.

www.acmg.ca

Association of Canadian Mountain Guides.

Reading

Round Mystery Mountain, Sir Norman Watson and E.J. King, 1935

The Unknown Mountain, Don Munday, 1948

Glacier Ice, Austin Post and Edward LaChapelle, 1971

Ice Runway, Roy Mason, 1984

Towards the Unknown Mountains, Rob Wood, 1991

The Great Bear Rainforest, Ian & Karen McAllister, 1997

Wild Snow, Louis Dawson, 1997

Mountains of the Coast, John Baldwin, 1999

Pushing the Limits, Chic Scott, 2000

Clubs

More than a dozen clubs run organized ski-mountaineering trips to the areas covered by this guide. A club directory and contact information is available through the Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia at www.mountain-clubs.org. In addition to trips, clubs provide instruction and an organized voice to address important issues affecting ski-mountaineering.



Howe Sound

1



Skiing runs on the N side of Mt Strachan above Howe Sound.

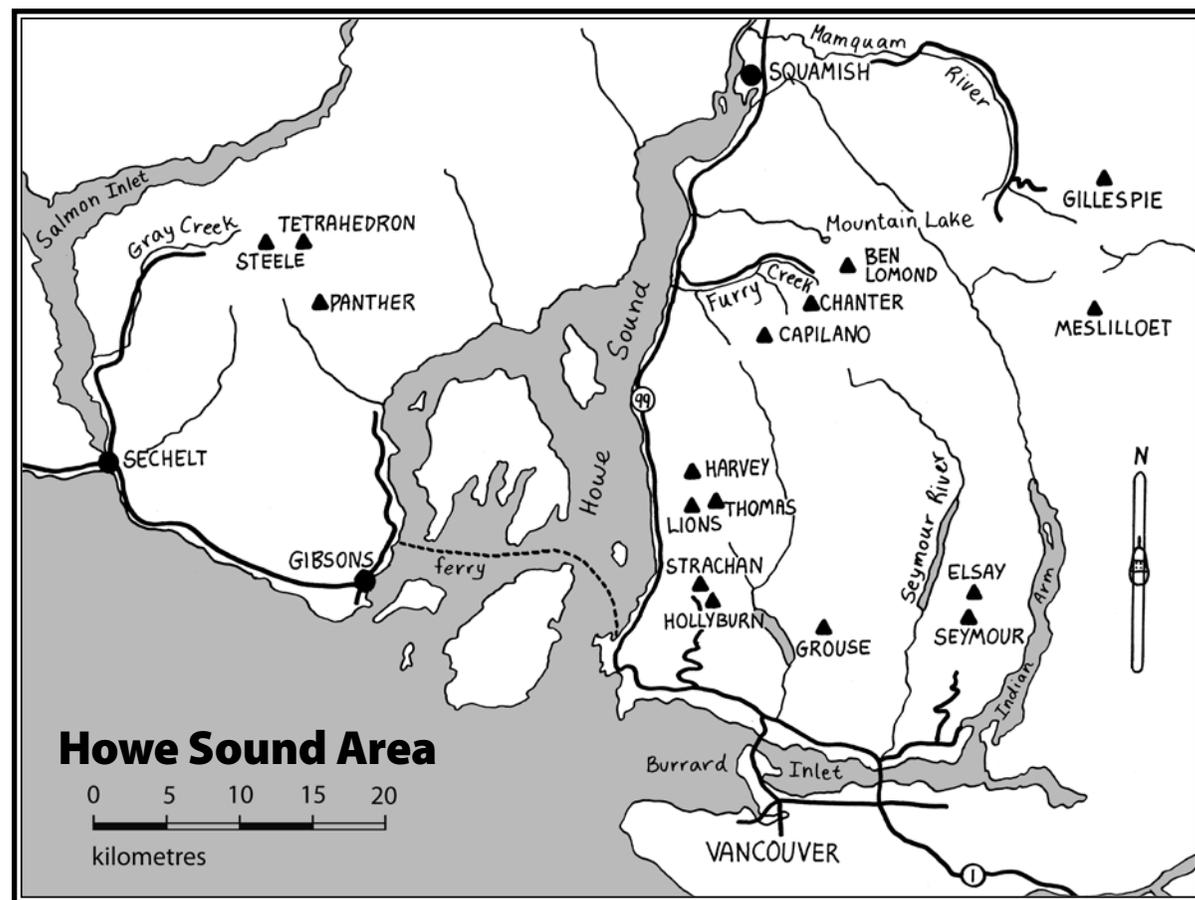
Rising 1500m above the ocean, the mountains around Howe Sound offer the closest backcountry ski trips to Vancouver. This is not classic ski terrain, as the mountains are steep sided and heavily forested, but the rounded peaks are alpine near their summits and receive huge snowfalls. There are some great trips here to open ridges and subalpine bowls, with tremendous views of the ocean below and runs of 100–400m. Almost all trips are day trips.

The most popular trips are ski ascents of Hollyburn Mountain and Mt Seymour in the North Shore mountains above Vancouver, which offer quick wintry escapes from the city. Beyond the North Shore, ski trips can be made to the peaks above Howe Sound. These are off the beaten path for most skiers, but ski ascents of peaks such as Mt Harvey and Thomas Peak are highly recommended trips.

Snow Conditions

The mountains surrounding Howe Sound are lashed with copious amounts of moisture from major storms that sweep

off the Pacific Ocean. Local ski resorts on the North Shore mountains record annual snowfalls of 7–10m, and typical snowpacks reach 3m at an elevation of 1100m. At higher elevations, snowfall is closer to a whopping 15m and snowpacks of 4–5m are common, with record years approaching 10m. Snow conditions fluctuate greatly due to the lower elevations of the summits around Howe Sound and their proximity to the coast. There can be excellent snow one day and rain the next. Typically the snowline is between 600 and 800m. In winter, fresh snow can be expected 3 or 4 days a week. Typical amounts are 10cm overnight, but record storms have dumped over 60cm in 24 hours. Snow quality varies from drier snow to classic mashed potatoes. Rain can be expected 1 or 2 days a week. To ensure you have good snow conditions, check the weather forecast and freezing level before you go. As a general rule, a temperature of 6°C in Vancouver corresponds to a freezing level at 1000m on the North Shore mountains. The maritime influence generally builds a deep, well-consolidated snowpack



that can be considerably different from inland areas such as Whistler, Duffey Lk or the Coquihalla. Note that fog is common in bad weather.

Access

Access to the North Shore mountains is from the Trans Canada Highway running through North and West Vancouver.

Areas along the E side of Howe Sound are reached from Hwy 99, which runs north to Squamish. Several trips farther inland are reached from an extensive network of logging roads along the Mamquam River. These roads branch E from Hwy 99 1km south of Squamish, directly below the Stawamus Chief. Check the Squamish Forest District website at www.for.gov.bc.ca/dsq or www.bivouac.com for updates on road and snow conditions and for recent trip reports.

Summits on the W side of Howe Sound lie above what is known as the Sunshine Coast. Access is via a 45-minute ferry ride from Horseshoe Bay.

Maps

North Shore 1:30,000 by TerraPro.

Open forest on the SW ridge of Hollyburn Mtn.



Looking SW across the Strait of Georgia from the summit of Hollyburn Mtn.

Hollyburn Mountain

Length: 1 day
Total Distance: 5km
Elevation Gain: 430m
Start: 900m

1326m

Difficulty: 2
Terrain: Simple
Map: 92G/6
Best: Nov–Apr

Perhaps the most popular trip in this book, Hollyburn Mtn is a pleasant subalpine summit in Cypress Provincial Park with excellent views of the Strait of Georgia. It is great for a quick wintry break from the city and offers a few 100–200m runs through glades. It is the easiest ski trip on the North Shore mountains and is feasible in all but the worst weather.

From Hwy 1 in West Vancouver, take exit 8 for Cypress Mountain and follow the all-weather highway 13km to the cross-country parking lot at 900m. It is approximately a 30-minute drive from downtown Vancouver. Cypress Mountain also runs a shuttle bus from the city (see www.cypressmountain.com).

The main winter route to Hollyburn Mtn starts from the cross-country parking area, directly under a large powerline. The trailhead is well marked, and a sign here displays the current avalanche danger rating. Note that the winter trail is shared with snowshoers and hikers and is separate from the adjacent groomed cross-country trails, which require a ticket. The winter trail climbs NE for several hun-

dred metres beneath the powerline before turning N along Hollyburn Ridge. About halfway up, the trail passes the top of the groomed cross country runs. Above this, the forest starts to become open and a wide swath provides an open ski route to the summit. The descent is a pleasant ski run in good conditions. There is also some enjoyable skiing N and E of the summit, with 100–200m runs.

A more secluded (and off-trail) route to Hollyburn Mtn ascends the indistinct SW ridge through mostly open forest to join the above route on subalpine benches S of the summit. Park on the Cypress Bowl Rd approximately 0.6km before the parking lot for the downhill ski area, just S of the obvious bend in the road at the central branch of Cypress Cr (signed as overnight parking). Stay right as you climb to avoid steeper terrain. This route is best with at least a metre of snow in the forest. The descent through the trees is a decent 300m run in good conditions. Another recommended descent route for this variation, if avalanche conditions are acceptable, is to drop NW off the summit and veer left down steep W-facing slopes, emerging from glades into a flat clearing beside the downhill runs on the S side of Mt Strachan at about 1120m. Ski out the downhill runs and walk the 0.6km back to your car.



The W side of Mamquam Mtn as viewed from Paul Ridge.

Mamquam Mountain 2595m

Length: 3 days
Total Distance: 52km
Elevation Gain: 3260m
Start: 940m

Difficulty: 3
Terrain: Complex
Map: 92G/15, 92G/14
Best: Mar–Apr

A large sprawling summit E of the Diamond Head area, capped with a small icefield. The summit is attractive for ski mountaineering and is a recommended ski ascent.

The classic approach to Mamquam Mtn is from the Diamond Head area. Beyond the shelter at Elfin Lakes, the out-

Kicking steps up the final summit pyramid on Mamquam Mtn.



lines of a narrow road can be picked up. This road contours N at about 1430m before dropping across avalanche slopes to the main forks in Ring Cr at 1300m. Use caution crossing these slopes. Open terrain S of Opal Cone (1740m) leads E to recommended camping at Mamquam Lk (1280m). To climb Mamquam Mtn, drop S across Eanastick Meadows (1130m) and ascend SE through open timber to gain the head of a small basin near treeline (GR069159). It is a 600m climb up broad W-facing slopes to the Mamquam Icefield from here. The recommended route makes an ascending traverse S across the E side of this basin for almost 1km to pick up an indistinct ridge that can be ascended due E to a 2100m notch leading onto the Mamquam Icefield. Skirt appropriately named Delusion Pk (2500m) on the E. Mamquam is easily climbed from the N. This is a superb 3-day trip: a combination of a tour to Mamquam Lk and a ski ascent from there with a 1500m descent to Eanastick Meadows.

Logging roads in Skookum Cr have also been used for access, and Mamquam Mtn has been climbed in 1 or 2 days in spring using this approach. These roads were deactivated in 1997 and are becoming overgrown (see www.bivouac.com).



The N side of Mt Garibaldi. Photo by John Scurlock

Mt Garibaldi 2678m

Length: 1 day
Total Distance: 27km
Elevation Gain: 1680m
Start: 1000m

Difficulty: 4
Terrain: Complex
Map: 92G/14, 92G/15
Best: Mar–May

A prominent glaciated summit rising from sea level NE of Squamish. This is a superb spring ski ascent with tremendous views of Howe Sound and Garibaldi Park.

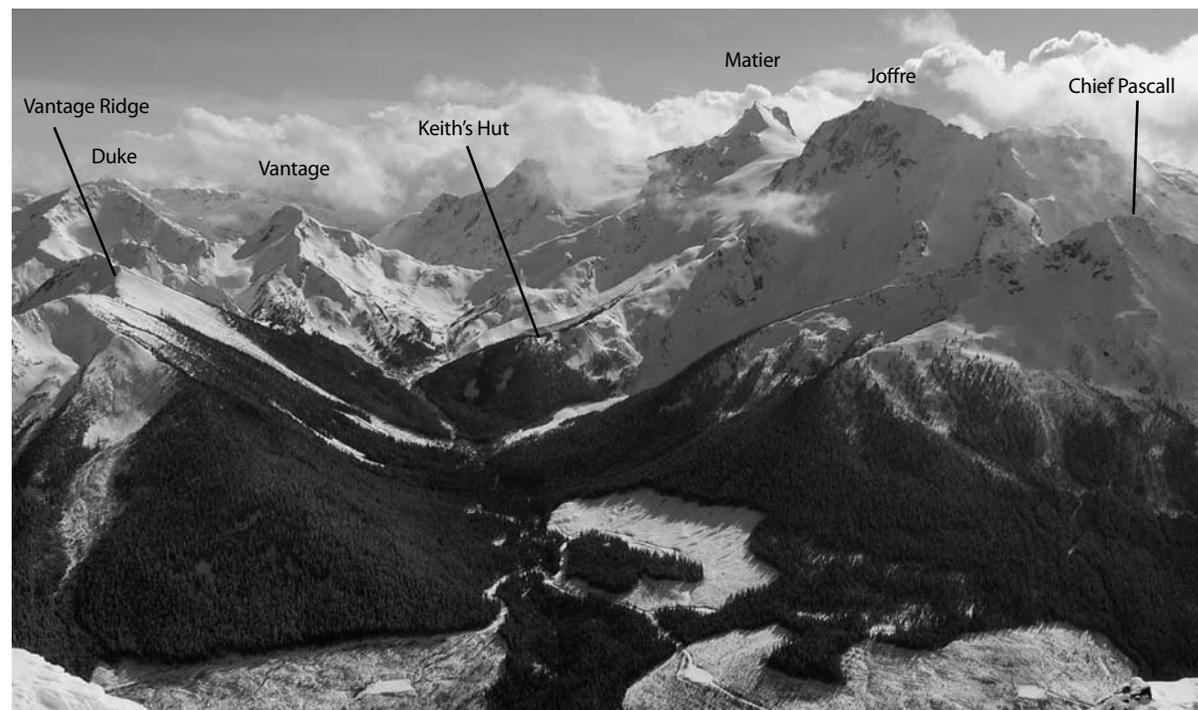
Access is via Brohm Ridge, running W from Mt Garibaldi. This is an attractive alpine ridge. It is also a designated snowmobile area used by the Black Tusk Snowmobile Club (www.btsc.ca) so consider coming mid-week. Snowmobiles are not permitted in Garibaldi Park, which begins above 1900m, so you will eventually climb out of the snowmobile area.

Brohm Ridge is reached from Hwy 99. About 13km N of Squamish, a logging road branches E just before Brohm Lk (270m). The road forks 1km from the highway. Take the right fork, which switchbacks up the S spur of Brohm Ridge. Drive as high as snow conditions allow, typically

around 1000m in early spring. The snowmobile club maintains the road. Continue skiing up the road, taking the right fork near 1140m. There is a gate near 1400m, which is locked after the snow leaves. Beyond the gate, the road drops about 100m before climbing past a snowmobile club cabin near 1450m. The road ends near 1600m and the ridge

View of Howe Sound from the summit of Mt Garibaldi.





View of Cerise Cr from the summit of Mt Rohr. Photo by Claudia Schwab

Cerise Creek

The Cerise Cr drainage is one of the best areas for back-country skiing that is accessible from the Duffey Lk road. Easy access leads to a comfortable cabin at treeline surrounded by long glacier runs, attractive ski ascents and lots of tree skiing. It is a popular area, especially on weekends. Cerise Cr is protected as a conservancy area.

Access to Keith's Hut

Length: 1–5 days
Total Distance: 10km
Elevation Gain: 450m
Start: 1220m

1670m

Difficulty: 3
Terrain: Challenging
Map: 92J/8
Best: Nov–May

The Cerise Cr winter parking lot is located on the S side of the Duffey Lk road near km 21, immediately N of the junction of Cerise Cr and Cayoosh Cr. It is 3km past the highway's sand shed at the Marriott Basin parking lot. Access to the hut is from logging roads in Cerise Cr, which are on the S side of the main valley. To reach these in winter, drop down from the parking lot and cross a small bridge over Cayoosh Cr. After a short stretch of old-growth forest, the trail climbs up the W side of an old cutblock to gain logging roads on the S side of Cayoosh Cr. Ski S on this road for half a kilometre to just before it crosses Cerise

Cr. The winter route continues up the E side of Cerise Cr through mostly open forest. After about 2km it breaks out onto the open bank of the creek. Ski up the creek bed and swing W towards old moraines at the foot of Anniversary Gl. Follow the open trough on the N side of the lateral moraine to curve N up onto a partly wooded bench at 1670m. Be wary of passing underneath the moraine slope and stay close to the trees well back from the moraine to avoid any avalanche hazard. Keith's Hut is located near the E of two small lakes 1 km NE of the snout of Anniversary Gl. The trip takes about 2 hours from the Duffey Lk road.

Day Trips

In good weather, winter ascents of Vantage Pk, Mt Matier and Vantage Ridge are all recommended and offer excellent skiing. These can be done either from Keith's Hut or as day trips from the Duffey Lk road and are described separately below. Mt Duke, Mt Chief Pascall and even Snowspider Mtn—though not often done from the hut—can also be reached as day trips from the hut. There are many excellent ski slopes in the area, both near treeline and in the alpine. The longest of these is the 750m run down Anniversary Gl. Skiing is described under each day trip.

Tree Skiing

In poorer weather, there is much good tree skiing accessible from the hut. The closest runs are off the sparsely treed shoulder running SW from the hut up onto Joffre Pk. Climb 230m up the shoulder and ski off the SE side of the shoulder down towards the hut. Runs off the N side are some of the finest in the area and range in length from 200m just N of the hut up to 550m starting from farther up the shoulder. Despite the proximity to the hut, this whole N facing slope is complex avalanche terrain, with bluffs and terrain traps, so use extra caution here. Runs generally trend NE. Another excellent run starts from a knob near the top of this shoulder. Climb N into a notch in the NE ridge of Joffre Pk near 2050m (GR404769). The 600m run begins down a 120m 40° couloir that cuts through cliffs in the NE ridge, drops onto the sheltered glacier below and continues down open slopes to the valley bottom. Farther from the hut there is excellent tree skiing NW of Vantage Pk, with runs up to 350m, as well as runs W of Vantage col on N facing slopes.

Mt Matier

Length: 1–2 days
Total Distance: 16km
Elevation Gain: 1550m
Start: 1220m

2770m

Difficulty: 3
Terrain: Complex
Map: 92J/8
Best: Dec–Apr

This is the highest summit S of Cayoosh Pass and perhaps one of the finest ski mountaineering trips from the Duffey Lk road. Mt Matier is most often climbed from Keith's Hut in Cerise Cr. It also makes an excellent day trip from March onwards.

Access to Mt Matier is via Anniversary Gl. There are several routes onto the glacier, depending on whether you are starting from Keith's Hut or from Cerise Cr.

Heading to the Anniversary Gl from Keith's Hut.



Photo by Katy Chambers

If coming directly from the Duffey Lk road, the glacier is most easily reached by skiing through the gap between the terminal moraines below the snout of the glacier at 1600m. Continue up the glacier to 1900m. To avoid the steeper part of the glacier above, swing right around an obvious rock outcrop and pick up a broad snow ramp higher up that angles left back onto the glacier.

From Keith's Hut a more direct route onto Anniversary Gl is to ski up the ridge W of the hut. Climb above the trees to a knob below the E side of Joffre Pk near 2000m. From the knob, descend a short distance onto a bench that crosses a gully and traverses to a broad snow ramp that angles up onto the upper part of Anniversary Gl.

The upper glacier is easily ascended to the Matier–Joffre col at the head of the glacier. Watch for crevasses early in the season. Mt Matier is a short snow climb via its N ridge



Keith's Hut

Map: 92J/8
GR: 415772
Elevation: 1670m

Cost: by donation
Capacity: 20
Reservations: no

Location Near the head of Cerise Cr at treeline on a timbered knoll 1km NE of the snout of Anniversary Gl, near the E of two small lakes.

Facilities A large bright comfortable timber-framed cabin with a wood stove for heat, a large table, cooking area, and sleeping loft.

Use This hut is heavily used. Please be sure to burn your toilet paper in the wood stove and pack out all your garbage. The hut is maintained by volunteers. Donations are crucial, and money helps to defray the cost of flying in firewood and doing general maintenance. The hut wasn't intended for commercial use or large groups. Try to keep groups small; commercial users should donate at least \$20/person/night.

Built in 1988 by friends and family in memory of Keith Flavelle, who died on the East Ridge of Mt Logan.

Contact Information Donations can be inserted into a metal collection cylinder in the hut or mailed using the addressed envelopes provided in the hut.



Descending SE from the Mongol–Jacobsen col onto the Monarch Icefield.

Monarch Icefield

Length: 10–14 days
Best: Apr–May

Terrain: Complex
Map: 93D/1, 92M/16, 92N/13

The Monarch Icefield is the first large conglomeration of glaciers SE of Bella Coola. It is comprised mainly of the sprawling Jacobsen and Talchako Gls that drain E and is bounded on the S and W by a series of glaciers that plunge from its perimeter into the deep coastal valleys of the Sheemahant and Taleomy Rs. Summits are generally quite high and rugged and offer some of the most spectacular scenery in the Coast Mountains outside of the Waddington Range.

The icefield is about 50km long and 10–20km wide. The W side of the icefield offers fabulous ski mountaineering. Summits tend to be a bit spread out for a true base camp but are well suited to a roving style of base camp with stays of several days in a few different locations.

Traverses across the icefield are also popular and are described separately below.

The Monarch Icefield is named for Mt Monarch (3550m) on the SE corner of the icefield. The huge steep pyramid is

the highest summit in the Coast Mountains outside of the Waddington Range. Skis were first used on the icefield in 1953 by a party of climbers who skied across the icefield from Ape Lk to make the second ascent of Mt Monarch via its W face (CAJ 1954, p. 7). The 1000m 50° face was skied in 2003 by Ptor Spriceniaks and Chris Kettles (www.biglines.com).

Access

Because of its proximity to Bella Coola, access to the Monarch Icefield is relatively straightforward. Overland routes are popular, and many trips do not rely on air support. The most direct approach to the Monarch Icefield is via the Ape Lk area (see above). Follow Ape Lake Trail and alpine benches above the Noeick R to reach alpine terrain surrounding Ape Lk. The usual route to the Monarch Icefield crosses the upper Noeick R on snowbridges about 5km NW of Ape Lk. Ascend the gentle Noeick Gl and traverse E across a glaciated bench at 1850m to reach the upper Fyles Gl. Avoid an icefall on the Fyles Gl at about 2100m by swinging over to the E side of the glacier. Continue to the head of the glacier and ski through the 2350m pass E of



The N side of Cerberus Mtn from the base of Mt Geryon.

Mongol Mtn to a tremendous view of the Monarch Icefield. Descend 250m onto the main branch of the Jacobsen Gl.

This is an enjoyable approach that takes approximately 3 days to ski to the Jacobsen Gl from the Nusatsum forest service road. The route is straightforward—with only a short stretch of forest travel—and is very scenic. This approach is also suitable for lightweight toboggans. The main part of the icefield is only about 50km from the Bella Coola valley,

Ogre Mtn from the S. *Photo by John Scurlock*



and a helicopter drop-off or airdrop is also common, especially for longer trips.

Approaches from Ape Lk have also been used. There is an icefall on the lower Fyles Gl at 1660m, which can be avoided on the W. If ascending directly from Ape Lk, unglaciated terrain W of the Ape Gl provides the best route onto the upper Fyles Gl. An alternative route travels SE from Ape Lk to reach the Jacobsen Gl directly. This avoids ascending the Fyles Gl but requires negotiating some major crevassed areas on the Jacobsen Gl at about 1700 and 2000m.

Ref: CAJ 1992, p. 36

Peaks

Most summits suitable for skiing lie along the corridor surrounding the main divide between the Talchako and Sheemahant drainages. Mountains on the W edge of the Monarch Icefield are particularly spectacular and several are outstanding ski ascents with incredible views of large glaciers spilling off the icefield into the deep coastal drainages of the Taleomy and Sheemahant Rs. Most peaks typically rise 500–800m above the main glaciers and often involve short snow climbs to ascend the final summit.



View SE to Princess Mtn from a camp on the Monarch Icefield.

Monarch Icefield Traverse

Length: 16 days
 Total Distance: 120km
 Elevation Gain: 3800m
 Start: 400m
 John Baldwin, Steve Ludwig, Helen Sovdat, May 1987, CAJ 1988, p. 72

Difficulty: 3
 Terrain: Complex
 Map: 93C/5, 93C/4, 92N/13, 92M/16, 93D/1
 Best: Apr–May

This is an incredibly scenic and varied traverse that is repeated regularly. The route forms a horseshoe around the drainage of the Talchako R. It combines an approach on subalpine lakes in Tweedsmuir Park with a crossing of the Monarch Icefield and either an exit past Ape Lk or a rugged finish along the glaciers of the Nusatsum Divide. It does not involve any complicated logistics and is the most popular traverse across the Monarch Icefield. Routefinding is generally straightforward.

Route

The traverse starts by approaching the E side of the icefield via the chain of lakes on Hunlen Cr in Tweedsmuir South Provincial Park. This is an attractive section of the traverse requiring approximately 4–5 days to reach the Talchako Gl. Begin where the main highway drops to the Bella Coola valley. A jeep road runs 12km up the E side of the Atnarko

R. The rough 2WD road is not maintained in winter and is susceptible to spring flooding in late May and early June. A trail continues beyond crossing the Atnarko R at the outlet of Stillwater Lk and climbing up the ridge W of Hunlen Cr to reach Turner Lk (1100m) after 16km. The spectacular Hunlen Falls, just N of the lake outlet, plunge over a 260m cliff and are a must-see.

It is a pleasant ski down the Turner Lk chain. Junker Lk and Widgeon Lk are especially scenic. There are cabins 3/4 of the way down the W side of Turner Lk. (To use the cabins contact Hunlen Wilderness Camp through www.tweedsmuirair.com or at PO Box 308, Bella Coola, V0T 1C0). Ice begins to leave Turner Lk after mid to late April, and a trail on the E side of the lake can be used to reach Junker Lk later in the spring.

From the E end of Widgeon Lk, climb S to reach meadows near treeline. Traverse S on scenic benches at treeline above Sunshine Valley and the Talchako R and continue S through Pandemonium Pass to reach the edge of the Monarch Icefield on the Talchako Gl near 1430m.

Once on the Talchako Gl, ski W across the Monarch Icefield on the huge upper branches of the Talchako and



Skiing across the Monarch Icefield.

Jacobsen Gl by crossing through the 2500m pass between Mt Dagon and Erehwon Mtn. The icefield is generally straightforward to travel on and is relatively crevasse free.

From the Jacobsen Gl at the N end of the icefield, ascend N through a 2350m pass E of Mongol Mtn to gain the head of the Fyles Gl S of Ape Lk (see above). The route finishes with a sidehill traverse past Polar Bear Lk and an exit to the Nusatsum forest service road via Ape Lake Trail.

Detailed descriptions of portions of the route, recommended side trips and access are given under the separate headings for Ape Lk and the Monarch Icefield above.

For trip reports see: *VOCJ* 1995–96, p. 25; *VOCJ* 2002–03, p. 63; www.bivouac.com

Logistics

Airdrops can be staged from Bella Coola or with White Saddle Air from Bluff Lk. The traverse has also been done without the aid of air support. With no airdrop, it is recommended that you do the trip in reverse, as the approach to Ape Lk is much better suited to heavy loads than the approach to Tweedsmuir Park. Lightweight toboggans have been used to carry supplies to Ape Lk and across the Monarch Icefield.

Variations

The route described above exits from Polar Bear Lk to the head of the Nusatsum R. This is the shortest and least technical version of the traverse and has been done in as little as 12 days in good conditions. The traverse is often extended by skiing N along the Nusatsum Divide (see above). Leave the above route SW of Polar Bear Pk and follow the Nusatsum Divide traverse across the Itasca Gl and past Mt Arjuna to the head of Noomst Cr. This variation has been repeated several times and forms a complete horseshoe around the Talchako R. It adds 30km to the distance and 2900m to the elevation gain given above and takes an extra 3 days in good conditions.

A side trail climbs W from Turner Lk to Panorama Ridge, and a few parties have included this area in their traverse. Glacier Mtn (2600m) S of the attractive Echo Lk is the obvious objective here and gives tremendous views of the Monarch Icefield and the mountains surrounding the Talchako R.



Burnie Glacier Chalet

Map: 93L/5
GR: 870334
Elevation: 1010m

Cost: weekly packages
Capacity: 11
Reservations: yes

A deluxe backcountry ski lodge offering unparalleled ski mountaineering in the spectacular Howson Range.

Location On the E side of the Howson Range, approximately 50km SW of Smithers. It is situated about 3km N of Burnie Lake, just E of the toe of the Burnie Gl.

Facilities A three-storey, hand-crafted 7m x 7m post-and-beam structure built in 2001. This is a very comfortable backcountry ski lodge with sleeping space for 11 guests in four separate rooms—two bedrooms with two beds, one bedroom with four beds, and one bedroom with three beds. Bedding and down comforters are provided, so a sleeping bag is not required. The main floor has a fully equipped kitchen with wood heat and a large dining and sitting area. Lighting is provided by a hybrid solar/battery/generator system. Water is carried from a nearby creek. There is an outstanding cedar sauna. A large entry room on the main floor provides storage for boots and packs. Additional storage is available in the basement, which also has a workbench for ski waxing, maintenance or repairs. There is a guide's room on the main floor, and two staff rooms in the basement. Composting toilets are outdoors. The lodge is equipped with a radio telephone and Internet access.

Contact Information Bear Mountaineering, 250-847-3351, www.bearmountaineering.ca

Host and Guide Christoph Dietzfelbinger

Cost Guided and catered weeks are \$1750 per person including all meals and accommodation at the lodge, guiding and helicopter transportation. Self-guided and self-catered weeks are available at \$950 per person for a group of 10 taking the entire lodge (includes helicopter transportation).

Environment Bear Mountaineering purchases carbon credits to offset your flight to Smithers and your flight to the lodge, so that each guest's trip is carbon neutral. Bear Mountaineering is a member of ONE PERCENT FOR THE PLANET.



Skiing towards the E face of Howson Pk.

swing out onto the glacier, though there are still a few crevasses just above the icefall. The climb through Polemic Pass is straightforward, though the pass is often windy. Descend onto the glacier beyond the pass. Continue the loop to the chalet by returning as described below for Loft Pk. Note that a higher 2345m col 1km to the W can also be used. This col is especially scenic but is a little trickier to gain and is only recommended in good conditions.

Loft Peak

Total Distance: 11km
Elevation Gain: 1200m

2130m

Difficulty: 3
Terrain: Complex

One of the few high-alpine peaks that is an easy ski ascent, Loft Pk offers stunning views of Howson Peak (2745m) and the best ski run in the area. The summit is easily included in a loop through Polemic Pass or can be climbed directly from the chalet. A ski trail traverses through the forest from the lodge into the open basin in Loft Cr. From the basin ascend the indistinct ridge NE of Lakehead Pk up onto a shoulder at 1450m before using microterrain to traverse open slopes to the broad glacier leading up to the



Descending the Solitaire Gl. Photo by Linda Bily

summit (GR844306). The whole area N of Lakehead Pk is exposed to avalanches. Use caution here. The run off the summit is fabulous, and by veering right off the shoulder at 1400m you can join the lower part of Ptarmigan (see Lakehead Pk) and ski all the way to the Burnie R for a 1200m descent.

Lakehead Peak

Total Distance: 9km
Elevation Gain: 1110m

2010m

Difficulty: 4
Terrain: Complex

The steep E side of Lakehead Pk (GR848301) is a run called Ptarmigan. The top is difficult and committing and is only suitable for good conditions, but the 800m run from the small moraine bench at 1700m to Burnie Lk is on the upper limit of classic.

Telkwa Peak

Total Distance: 18km
Elevation Gain: 1680m

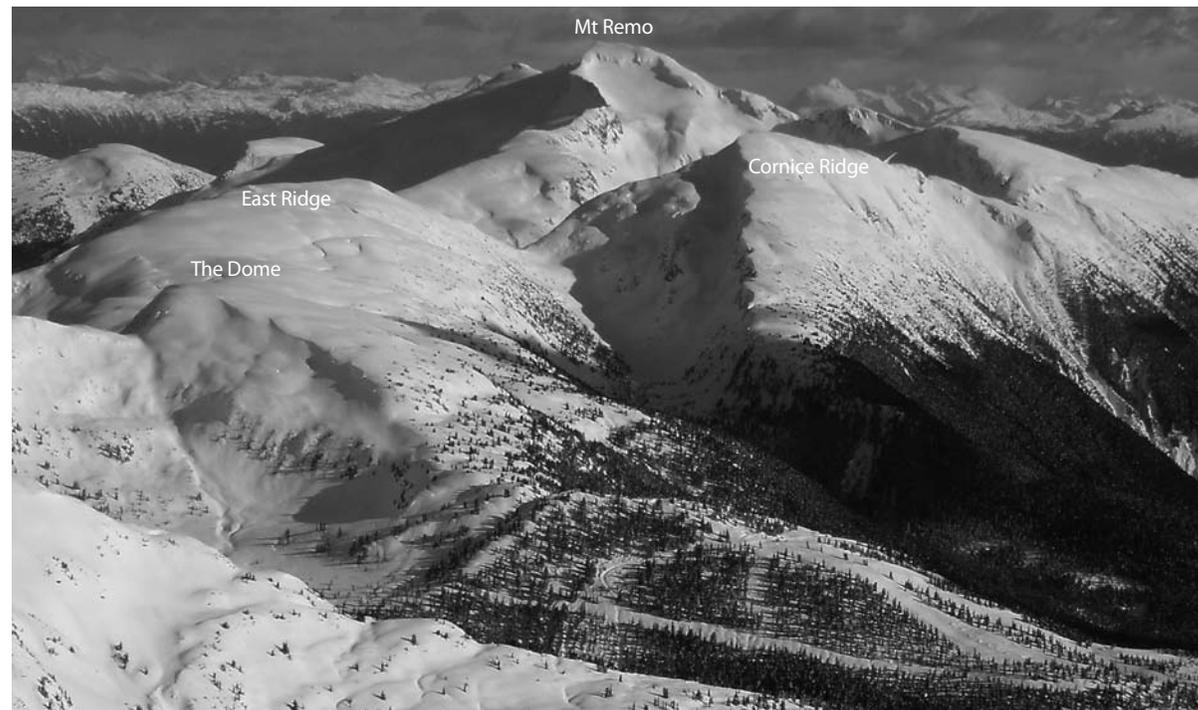
2440m

Difficulty: 3
Terrain: Complex

Also called Outcast Pk, this summit is a good high-alpine tour across the S Telkwa Gl, reached from the upper Burnie Gl by crossing N through a 2050m col. Telkwa Pk (GR

Tracks on Loft Pk.





The Dome and ridges close to the Shames ski area, which is visible on the right. *Photo by Roger Fehr*

Shames Mountain Backcountry

Shames Mountain is the downhill ski area just W of Terrace. As a downhill ski area it is a great local resort that has been in operation since 1990, but what puts it on the map for this guide is its “unrivalled backcountry access” (Powder magazine). From the top of the lifts, almost a dozen alpine bowls can be reached in a day of touring, offering everything from moderate glades to open basins or narrow chutes. Most runs are 600–800m with a few up to 1000m.

Access to Shames Mountain is 35km W of Terrace on Hwy 16. The mountain base is 13km up the Shames access road at 700m. Backcountry access is from the top of the Red T-bar at 1190m. A one-ride ticket is available. There are short bootpacks accessing nearby glades (see www.shamesmountain.com), but the real plums are longer backcountry ski trips to the nearby ridge crests and surrounding alpine basins. A detailed online guide to the Shames backcountry with names and photographs of ski lines is available at www.mtremo.ca (see also links from www.azadadventures.com). Many variations exist, but some of the more popular routes are described below.

Note that the Shames Mountain backcountry is expert terrain, and avalanches can be triggered anywhere outside

the ski area boundary. All persons venturing beyond the lifts here should be familiar with travel in complex avalanche terrain, carry avalanche rescue gear and know how to use it. There is no cell phone coverage.

The Dome

Length: 2–3 hours
Total Distance: 5km
Elevation Gain: 400m
Start: 1190m

1430m

Difficulty: 3
Terrain: Challenging
Map: 1031/7, 1031/10
Best: Dec–Apr

The Dome is the first high point on the ridge N of the ski area. Aside from bootpacks, it is the shortest backcountry outing beyond the lifts and gives access to the main divide and the closest alpine basins. This is an easy trip, which offers a good introduction to backcountry skiing at Shames Mountain.

From the top of the Red T-bar, gain the first knoll on the ridge about 100m above the lift. The ridge crest flattens out above this and can be followed NE for about 1km up onto the broad rounded high point known as The Dome (GR036396). Once above the first knoll, you are above treeline and it is easy to become disoriented in flat light or white-out conditions. There is usually a bootpack trail along the ridge.



N side bowls on Zymacord Ridge. *Photo by Rod Gee*

From the top of The Dome, there are several options depending on avalanche hazard, weather and length of trip desired. The shortest and safest outing is to retrace your ascent route back to the ski area.

In good conditions, the main attraction is the excellent 200m run in North and Powder Eights Bowls immediately NW of The Dome. From the bottom of these you can return to the ski area by dropping W down the valley to 1100m and skinning up to the Deliverance downhill run either by the Viagra-Boys up track (yep-straight up!) or via the Grateful Dead route, which meanders gently through low-angle terrain to gain the Cat track.

If conditions aren't quite right to try the back bowls, another popular option is to ski SW from The Dome and drop down chutes known as The Fay-zurs that lead back to the main ski runs. An indistinct ridge run 500m farther E is known as Waterfall Trees. It drops about 600m back to the base of the ski area.

Zymacord Ridge

Once at The Dome, you are on Zymacord Ridge, which runs to the W and forms the main divide between the Shames and Zymagotitz Rs. (Note that locally the Zymagotitz R is

called the Zymacord R.) This rounded, undulating ridge gives access to more than half a dozen N and S facing alpine basins that offer some of best runs in the area.

The standard route is to leave from the top of the T-bar and go along the ridge towards The Dome. Traverse North Bowl on the N side of The Dome to gain Zymacord Ridge or ski up The Dome and ski down upper North Bowl. Ski along the ridge to the top of the desired basin.

South Bowls

Length: 1 day
Total Distance: 7km
Elevation Gain: 600–800m
Start: 1190m

Difficulty: 3
Terrain: Complex
Map: 1031/7, 1031/10
Best: Feb–Apr

The alpine basins on the S side of Zymacord Ridge are visible from the top of the ski area and offer the most accessible runs. Most trips involve one or more runs.

Fish Bowl is the SW facing bowl that starts from the first high point 1km N of The Dome. It offers 250m runs on slopes up to 30°. From the bottom of the run at 1100m it is a short skin back up to the ski area.

Geronimo Bowl is the prominent S facing bowl directly across from the top of the T-bar. This is a big terrain feature with runs that vary from the central 30° Men-Who-