

# Merritt Viewpoint

SITE #070302

GC1TTVC

Written & Researched by Steve Thornton

## SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Merritt, V1K 1B8  
 Location/Parking: N 50°07.095'  
 W 120°48.265'  
 Geocache Location: N 50°07.113'  
 W 120°48.282'  
 Accuracy: 4 meters  
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page  
 UTM: East 0656937;  
 North 5554119 10U  
 Geocache altitude: 767 m./2,516 ft.  
 Overall difficulty: 1.5  
 Terrain difficulty: 3.5  
*(1=easiest; 5=hardest)*  
 Date Established: c 1970  
 Ownership: Private Property  
 Access: • Gravel Road  
 • Year-round  
 • Vehicle accessible  
 • *Detailed access information on next page.*



*The viewpoint provides a panoramic view of the City of Merritt.*

High enough above Merritt for a view of nearly every nook and cranny in the city and some aspects of the valley beyond it, the Viewpoint has for years provided lovers with solitude and introduced viewers to the geography of a rural city.

In the 1970s, it was a Merritt businessman who saw the value in creating a viewpoint. Henry Norgaard had founded Norgaard Ready Mix, a concrete producer, below a rocky outcrop at the northwest corner of Merritt in 1960-61. Some fifteen years later, he gouged a mile-long road up to the viewpoint and carved out a parking area, then planted a flagpole.

Predictably, the flagpole was hit by vandals, who pulled it down with a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Henry fought back by moving the flag pole higher, out of reach of vehicles, and slung a 9-by-18-foot Canadian flag off it. There is no halyard attached to the pole, since that might also tempt vandals, but

the pole itself is hinged, so that it can be lowered and a wind-torn flag replaced approximately every six months.

Sometime in the 1980s Henry Norgaard and an assistant planted what is surely the Merritt viewpoint's most intriguing feature: a series of sighting tubes arranged to look down on significant structures and formations in and near Merritt. The sight tubes were arranged to present a bird's-eye, tunnel-vision view of everything important, but now, years later, some things have moved, and one or two of the sight tubes are now inaccurate.

Some of the interesting views to be revealed include the community parks full of paths, recreational fun and great events. Other community recreational facilities are visible supporting both summer and winter family fun for residents and visitors alike. The Visitors Information Centres are highlighted and will not only offer a great view, but also are a

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 P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0  
 Tel: 1-877-453-9467  
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For more site pages go to:  
[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com) or  
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Photo: Steve Thomson

*Sight tubes are labeled with the landmark visible by looking through the tube.*

veritable waterfall of information on Merritt and the Nicola Valley region. Stop in to visit the great staff and ask for any assistance you may need planning your visit.

Although looking through the square pipe is a little unnecessary, we dare you to resist. See that large lump in front of you? That is Iron Mountain, at 1,693 meters its peak is accessible via Coldwater Road to Comstock Road and then to Iron Mountain Road. From post three you can see all the way to the Okanagan Connector or Hwy #97C, this is the newest highway connecting Kelowna and Merritt.

The old town of Middlesboro once stood where lumber yards now stand in Merritt, and several coal mines were operated throughout the early 20th century. Coal is no longer mined in Merritt, but its influence remains, as a fire that started in an underground coal seam decades ago continues to burn. In winter, the area of the old burning coal mine is usually free of snow as heat rises through the land. Also once its own village, Collettsville is now part of the City of Merritt. The large grey-blue building viewed from post number five is Collettsville Elementary School.

You are invited to enjoy the glorious views and tidbits of history from this unique viewpoint.



Photo: Nicola Valley Museum & Archives Association



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*The changing view of Merritt over the years.*

**Detailed access information:**

- From Merritt follow Nicola Ave./Hwy #8 to Juniper Dr.
- Turn up the dirt road between the gravel pit and the cemetery, follow this 1.5 km.
- Steep terrain, be careful of footing.
- Restrictions: No overnight camping, no motorbikes or ATVs, no garbage.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

Norgaard, H (2009). Personal Interview.