

Red Rock

SITE #040303

GC1V1V4

Written & Researched by Wendy Fraser

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Lillooet, V0K 1V0
 Parking: N 50°41.534'
 W 121°56.630'
 Geocache Location: N 50°42.112'
 W 121°57.217'
 Accuracy: 5 meters
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page
 UTM: East 0573893;
 North 5617195 10U
 Geocache altitude: 828 m./2,717 ft.
 Overall difficulty: 1.5
 Terrain difficulty: 3.5
 (1=easiest; 5=hardest)
 Date Established: n/a
 Ownership: Crown Land & First Nations
 Access: • Public Road
 • Seasonal
 • Hiking Required (3.5 km)
 • *Detailed access information on next page.*

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:
 Gold Country Communities Society
 P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0
 Tel: 1-877-453-9467
 email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

For more site pages go to:
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The crimson crags of Red Rock loom like a sentinel above Lillooet.

This familiar landmark provides a spectacular vantage point offering panoramic vistas of the town below; the striking confluence of the blue waters of Cayoosh Creek with the muddy brown Fraser River; and the ever-changing play of sun and shadow on the surrounding mountain peaks.

The hike to Red Rock is an experience to savour. It takes you from dry hillsides dotted with Ponderosa pine and up into stands of Douglas fir. Balsam root in season, juniper, several varieties of wild berries and wild roses can be spotted along the way.

Listen for the sounds of chickadees, nut hatches and pileated woodpeckers. A Lewis's woodpecker, a red-listed (endangered) woodpecker, has been spotted near the trail. You could be rewarded with a glimpse of this rare bird, which can be identified

by its dark, iridescent green-black back, rosy breast and red face rimmed with black.

Red Rock is not red sandstone. Instead, it is Mariposite, a kind of nickel silicate. Red Rock gets its distinctive red colour from the oxidized iron on the outside of the rock. Mariposite is found in the Shulaps mountain range northwest of Lillooet and at the base of the steep slopes of Fountain Ridge, directly across the Fraser River from Lillooet and Red Rock. Long before the Fraser carved its deep path through this rugged valley, a swath of Mariposite ran from Red Rock's outcrop across to the base of Fountain Ridge.

The hike to Red Rock is rated moderate, with sturdy shoes and good general health required. But there was once a more challenging way to reach the top of Red Rock.

In the early decades of the 20th century, Lillooet celebrated Canada's July 1st birthday with a community event called simply,

“The July.” One of the highlights of ‘The July’ was a gruelling foot race up to Red Rock. Fleet-footed competitors would run up the mountainside, complete a circuit around Red Rock and then descend pell-mell to Lillooet. Chief Bill Machell’s father was one of those competitors. Chief Machell says his father never won the exhausting race, but he was justifiably proud to have finished it.

The best hiking time is in the morning. Do not try to hike this trail on a hot July afternoon. Also avoid doing this hike in the rain because you will encounter numerous muddy spots and your shoes will feel as though they each weigh fifty pounds. Always bring plenty of water. Black bears have been spotted in the vicinity, so be alert and stay on the road, do not veer off.

On a scale of ‘Easy’, ‘Moderate’, ‘Difficult’ and ‘Most Difficult’, the Red Rock trail is rated Moderate. You can do it in running shoes, but hiking boots certainly do not hurt, and a hiking pole is helpful in navigating the slippery slopes near the top. You can estimate that this will take you one and a half to two hours for the climb to this majestic lookout, with a much quicker return trip of approximately one hour. This represents the average time a fit adult hiker takes to complete the trail, with occasional short stops for drinks, snacks and rest.

Remember, Red Rock is farther than it looks. But the gorgeous scenery is well worth the effort!

Detailed access information:

- Parking is available at the paved turnaround at the south end of Victoria Street.
- Red Rock Trail is the road straight off the end of the turnaround that follows along the bank.
- Follow the trail along the bank and turn right at the intersecting road and follow it up the hill.
- Take the first right, just before the large blue water reservoir.
- Stay left on the flat area under the power lines.
- The proper road runs left and starts to climb again after the power lines.
- Stay on this road all the way up to Red Rock (do not follow any of the small dirt bike or hiking trails off the road)
- There is a new fire road that starts to descend from the switchback just below Red Rock. Do not go down this road, continue your ascent on the old road to the left.
- The road ends at Red Rock. Follow the trail 50 meters down the ridge to the view point.
- Remember this is a hike, be prepared with plenty of water and let others know where you are headed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

- (2005). *Lillooet Hiking Guide: Canyon to Alpine*. BC: Lillooet Naturalist Society.
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- Machell, B. (2009). Personal Interview. Chief of T’it’q’et First Nations.
- Vanderworf, G. (2009). Personal Interview. Local prospector.
- Wortelboer, M. (2009). Personal Interview. Local Red Rock hiker.