

Guidelines

General

- ▶ Garbage and food odors will attract bears. Once bears become accustomed to human food they can be dangerous and usually have to be destroyed.
- ▶ Dispose of garbage in bear-proof containers.
- ▶ Store food securely in your vehicle.
- ▶ Keep pets leashed at all times.
- ▶ Keep children in sight.
- ▶ Obey all closures and warnings.
- ▶ If a bear approaches you, stay calm. Do not run. Back away slowly.
- ▶ Never approach or feed bears.

Fishing

- ▶ Never fish alone.
- ▶ Bleed and clean your catch immediately – not at your campsite – and throw offal into fast flowing water.
- ▶ Store fish and bait in a sealed container in your vehicle, not in tents or in the open. Bears can open coolers.
- ▶ Handle roe cleanly. Wash your hands afterwards, do not wipe on clothing.
- ▶ If approached by a bear, reel in and leave the area. Cut line if playing a fish.
- ▶ Do not build fires or cook on the river's edge.
- ▶ Grizzly bears range throughout the park, but many of them congregate on the Atnarko and Dean rivers during the fall salmon migration. Fishing and hiking may be dangerous. Make plenty of noise and watch both riverbanks.

Backcountry Camping and Hiking

- ▶ Store food and garbage by hanging it from a tree at least 4 metres above the ground and 2 metres from the trunk, well away from your campsite. Always use bear-proof caches where provided.
- ▶ Do not cook or store food in your tent and keep your campsite clean and odour-free.
- ▶ Do not burn or bury garbage since this attracts animals. Pack it out.
- ▶ Dispose of wash water in the pit toilet.
- ▶ Be alert for bear scats, tracks or trails and do not hike or camp where these are common. Make lots of noise when hiking where bear signs are found.

On the Road

- ▶ If you see a bear from your vehicle, provided road conditions are safe, you may pull over briefly to photograph it. Never get out of your vehicle. Do not observe the bear for more than one minute; this avoids stressing it unduly.

Visitor Information

- ▶ Help us protect your parkland. Enjoy your visit to South Tweedsmuir Park but please leave it as you have found it so that future visitors may enjoy the park as you have.
- ▶ Please be extremely careful with fire. Portable gas stoves should be used for all cooking in back-country areas. If you must have a fire, use existing fire rings and only dead and down wood.
- ▶ Help protect the delicate balance of the park's lakes and streams by washing yourself, your clothing and dishes at least 30 metres away from water.
- ▶ In the interest of safety, firearms are prohibited except during hunting season.
- ▶ Do not forget to bring mosquito repellent!
- ▶ All plants, animals and rocks are part of the park's natural heritage. Do not damage or remove them.
- ▶ Motor vehicles, including motorcycles, are restricted to vehicle roads and parking areas.
- ▶ Keep pets leashed in campgrounds and picnic areas, and under control at all times.
- ▶ If you spot a forest fire, dial 1-800-663-5555.

Hunting

Areas of the park are open to hunting during the fall season. Consult *British Columbia Hunting Regulations* published by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection.

Maps

National Topographic Series Maps 92N/13, 93C/4 and 5, 93C/12 and 13, 93D/8, 9 and 16, at the scale of 1:50,000, cover the park.

For More Information

BC Parks

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks>



Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection



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**Tweedsmuir
(South)**

PROVINCIAL PARK



With some of the most spectacular scenery in North America, Tweedsmuir Park is a magnet for outdoors people. The park offers superb angling, hiking, horseback trips, camping and canoeing. Located in west-central British Columbia, this huge (981,000-hectare) park is roughly triangular in shape. The southern portion of the park, described here, is managed separately due to the park's extreme size.

The park's terrain varies from the high elevation pine forests of the Chilcotin Plateau on the east side, to the vividly-coloured hilltops of the Rainbow Range volcanoes, to the glaciated peaks and deep valleys of the Coast Range on the west. Hunlen Falls is a major attraction, plunging 260 metres and disappearing in a cloud of spray before entering the Atnarko River.

Cariboo/Chilcotin/Coast

Wildlife

South Tweedsmuir is a refuge for a wide variety of large mammals: grizzly and black bears, mountain goats, caribou and wolves. The park's extensive alpine meadows provide summer range for moose and mule deer, and its low-elevation valleys support these animals during winter. The variety of bird-life reflects the large variety of ecosystems found in the park.

History

The Nuxalk and Carrier First Nations have used the park and surrounding areas for thousands of years. Routes known as grease trails enabled the interior peoples to trade furs and obsidian for marine products such as eulachon grease. The Nuxalk people of the Bella Coola valley still depend on the abundance of salmon in the rivers for their livelihood. They catch and process fish from the same rivers in much the same way as their ancestors.

Alexander Mackenzie travelled through the area of the park on his epic journey to the Pacific Ocean in 1793. Mackenzie was the first white man to reach the western seas over land. Mackenzie and his party trekked from the Fraser River over an old grease trail to the Bella Coola River. There they enjoyed the hospitality of the Nuxalk inhabitants, who then guided Mackenzie and his men down the river into Dean Channel. A dispute between the Nuxalk and the coastal Heiltsuk people prevented them from reaching the open sea, but Mackenzie was satisfied that his mission was complete.

Tweedsmuir Park was established in 1938, and was named for the 15th Governor General of Canada, John Buchan, Baron Tweedsmuir of Elfield (also known for writing thrillers). He travelled in the park in 1937, stating: "I have now travelled over most of Canada and have seen many wonderful things, but I have seen nothing more beautiful and more wonderful than the great park which British Columbia has done me the honour to call by my name."

How to Get to the Park

Hwy 20 connects Williams Lake with Bella Coola, a distance of 479 kilometres, all paved except for a 60 kilometre section west of Anahim Lake. Approximately 360 kilometres west of Williams Lake the highway enters the park at Heckman Pass; 1,524 metres elevation. Next it descends "the Hill", a well graded but narrow, switch-backed section of road with up to 18% grades. From the bottom of the Hill, Hwy 20 is paved to Bella Coola, about 40 minutes' drive.

Pacific Coastal Airlines provides scheduled flights from the Vancouver area to Bella Coola and Anahim

Lake. Sharp Wings Ltd. provides a charter service from Williams Lake. There are also floatplane charters available at Bella Coola and Nimpo Lake.

BC Ferries offers scheduled vehicle/passenger service between Port Hardy (on Vancouver Island) and Bella Coola during the summer months.

Supplies and accommodations are available at Bella Coola, Hagensborg, Nimpo Lake and Anahim Lake. There are a hospital in Bella Coola and a clinic at Anahim Lake.

Facilities



There are two vehicle-access campgrounds: Atnarko, at the bottom of the Hill (28 sites including two double units) and Fisheries Pool near Stueie (14 sites). Most trailers and RVs can be accommodated. A sani-station is located near the Atnarko Campground.



Picnic areas are along Hwy 20 (east to west) at Rainbow Range Trailhead, start of the Tote Road, Atnarko Campground, Big Rock, Fisheries Pool, and Mackenzie Heritage/Grease Trailhead.



Three car-top boat launches are available: Belarko, Fisheries Pool and Steep Roof (see map). At high water it is possible to launch trailered boats.



Backcountry camping facilities are basic. The sites marked on the map feature a pit toilet and most have bear-proof food caches. Use these sites rather than camping at random. One small backcountry cabin is open to the public, but do bring your tent, as cabin has no sleeping platforms.

Fishing

Angling is one of the most popular activities in the park. Fish for trout or coho and chinook salmon in the Bella Coola and Atnarko rivers. The lakes of the area can be fished for Dolly Varden, cutthroat trout, rainbow trout or whitefish. The Dean River is renowned for fly-fishing. You must possess a valid BC angling license. Consult the fishing regulations – some special restrictions apply.

Canoeing

The Turner Lake Chain consists of seven high-altitude lakes connected by short portages. Views of snow-capped peaks, white sand beaches and excellent fishing for cutthroat trout make this two-to-four-day canoe trip very rewarding. Canoes may be rented at Turner Lake, or you can airlift in your own. There is a camping fee on the chain. For more details, send for the Hunlen Falls/Turner Lake brochure or check the park's website.

Winter Recreation

A large area is zoned for snowmobiles at Heckman Pass (separate brochure shows the boundaries). Snowmobiling is not permitted elsewhere in the park. There are also cross-country ski trails and a small downhill ski facility nearby.

Multi-day Trails

Many long trails through spectacular country reward backpackers. Detailed descriptions of the trails are given in the Hunlen Falls/Turner Lake and Rainbow Range brochures. Some trails are suitable for horses. For a list of permitted outfitters, contact the BC Parks Cariboo office.

The backcountry of Tweedsmuir Park is an isolated wilderness with infrequent patrols by park staff. You should be experienced in wilderness travel, fit and well equipped. Snow is possible any month of the year. If you plan to visit the backcountry, inform a responsible person of your plans, giving your destination and estimated return time. Distances given are one-way.

- ▶ **Rainbow:** Length 7 kilometres; 2–3 hours; 300 metres elevation gain.
- ▶ **Octopus Lake:** 14 kilometres; 5–6 hours; almost flat. Easy.
- ▶ **Crystal Lake:** 20 kilometres; 8–9 hours; 1,000 metres elevation gain. Moderate.
- ▶ **Mackenzie Heritage/Grease:** 300 kilometres of hiking from near Quesnel to this trailhead; 25–30 days; 1,800 metres elevation gain. Follows Mackenzie's route. Many visitors hike only the scenic 80 kilometres section through the Rainbow Range (5–7 days. Difficult).
- ▶ **Hunlen Falls:** 16.4 kilometres; 6–9 hours; 800 metres elevation gain. The trail starts at the end of an old tote road suitable for 4-wheel drive vehicles only. Be especially alert for grizzly bears on this trail. Difficult.
- ▶ **Ptarmigan Lake:** 12 kilometres; 5 hours; 600 metres elevation gain. Trail starts near Hunlen Falls. Moderate.

Day Hikes

- ▶ **Kettle Pond:** 1 kilometre. An easy one-hour loop trail from opposite the Big Rock/Kettle Pond picnic area to a kettle pond (formed when a large remnant of ice from the last ice age melted).
- ▶ **Valley Loop/Burnt Bridge:** 5 kilometres. This trail starts from the Mackenzie Heritage/Grease Trailhead and leads along Burnt Bridge Creek to a small suspension bridge, looping back down to the parking area. This trail has a viewpoint overlooking the Bella Coola Valley, about 20 minutes from the start and can be completed in 1–2 hours.