

# Tweedsmuir Park West Chilcotin

South Tweedsmuir Park, which forms the north western boundary of the West Chilcotin, is 506,000 hectares and Hwy 20 goes right through the middle of it. However, that's pretty much the extent of 'easy' park access. The rest of the park is pure wilderness and a summer and winter playground for outdoor enthusiasts.

From the Chilcotin side, North Tweedsmuir is only accessible by float-plane, hiking or riding in.

## The Bella Coola Hill

From the west, you enter Tweedsmuir near Heckman Pass at the top of the infamous Bella Coola Hill. In 1952 the BC government refused to help build an



overland route from Bella Coola to Anahim Lake. Locals got together with \$250, dynamite, equipment and two years of sheer determination and back-breaking work to build a road up the rock face of mountains in the Coast Range. On September 26, 1953, the catskinner

from Bella Coola touched the blade of his cat to that of the cat driver moving the last of the boulders out of the way from Anahim Lake above. It still took 10 hours to drive the 90 miles from the port of Bella Coola to Anahim Lake but it was enough to convince the government that it could be done, and they took over road improvements in 1955. It is still an 'interesting' drive and was the steepest highway in Canada with an 18% grade.



## The Wildlife

Tweedsmuir Park is well known for its abundant wildlife including black bears, grizzly bears, moose, caribou, mountain goat, deer, wolves, coyotes, cougar and numerous small mammals including wolverine and marmot. You are encouraged to exercise caution in all areas of the park as it has a large concentration of grizzly and black bear. Prime viewing of these animals is during the salmon runs when bears venture down from higher elevations to feed on the fish.



Photo courtesy Heidy Lenz

## Hiking/Riding the Rainbow Range

The Rainbow Range in the Park is well known for its colors caused by minerals involved in the volcanic formation of the range. This wild, rolling alpine is a favorite of hikers but is even better seen from the back of a horse. Check with your accommodations provider about hiking or riding through the range. It is also a favorite of snowmobilers in winter as well as snowboarders and cross country skiers.



Photo courtesy Miriam Schilling

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