

SQUAMISH HIKING – Updates posted June 6th, 2023

Disclaimer: Forest service road conditions change frequently in this region due to storms, fallen trees, washouts and logging activities. The best practice for planning hiking trips that require logging road access is to consult multiple sources to determine the current condition of the road before you go. Sources such as the BC Parks website, various Facebook groups (South Coast Touring, SWBC Peakbaggers), AllTrails comments and the *Road Conditions in the Sea to Sky District* government webpage all provide a good starting point. Posting a question in a Facebook group can often yield good information on current conditions from other users.

Hike 3 – Howe Sound Crest Trail

The description for hiking this trail south to north as described in the guidebook has not changed, but if you wish to hike it north to south, please refer to the Deeks Lake notes for Hike 13 below, which detail some **important changes** to the initial route.

Hike 6 – Unnecessary Mountain

There is a new trailhead sign on the road that is very obvious. You no longer have to worry about an “inconspicuous” entrance. Also, there is a well-traveled trail that breaks right off *Unnecessary Mountain Trail* at about 360 m elevation. This is *Erin Moore Trail/Lone Tree Creek Trail*. Stay left at this junction to ascend toward Unnecessary Mountain.

Hike 10 – Tunnel Bluff Lookout

A new restriction is in place that limits parking at the viewpoint lot on Highway 99 to **30 minutes**. So, if you want to hike the Tunnel Bluff trail as described in the guidebook, you’ll need to find a legal parking spot either at the Brunswick Road exit or in Lion’s Bay and walk (or bike) to the trailhead along the highway. Alternatively, it’s possible to reach the Tunnel Bluff Lookout by starting up the **Brunswick Mountain** trail, a variation that has become popular since the restrictions on the Highway 99 parking went into place. Hike the Brunswick Mountain trail to the junction just past 3 km and keep left. The trail traverses across the mountain slope and soon crosses M (Yahoo) Creek. Just beyond, reach a junction with the Tunnel Bluffs/Hat Mountain trail. Keep right and start hiking uphill until it’s possible to take a left at another junction. This trail leads to Tunnel Bluff Lookout. The map on page 70 shows the details of this route.

Hike 12 – Deeks Bluffs

There is no longer any viable parking on Highway 99 close to the trailhead for this hike. Hiking the trail as described in the guidebook would involve either a bike ride from Brunswick Rd/Lion’s Bay or a drop-off along the Highway. Since neither are convenient, the trail is falling into disrepair. However, a popular option exists to reach the best viewpoint on the trail, the last one described in the guidebook. Simply follow the Deeks Lake hike and turn right (west) onto the spur around 400 m elevation (there is a signpost with a small “Hwy 99 via Deeks Bluffs Trail” sign). This road-like trail undulates westward past a bog before climbing toward the upper viewpoint and bench as marked on the page 78 guidebook map. Total hiking distance from the Porteau Road parking by Highway 99 is about 4 km with an elevation gain of 400 m.

Hike 13 – Deeks Lake

Due to private land concerns, the initial portion of this hike has changed – access along the initial gravel road described in the guidebook is no longer valid. To start, park in the Porteau Road parking area, same as before. From here, follow the paved entrance road back toward Highway 99 and then left alongside the northbound offramp. The trail starts near the bottom of this offramp and is identified by a sign and split-rail fence. Climb steadily through the forest to eventually intersect the old Howe Sound Crest Trail road. Turn right and carry on toward the lake, same as in the past. As indicated at the start of this paragraph, there is **no longer any vehicle access** along this part of the trail. The 4WD parking spot shown at 440 m elevation hasn't been accessible for years and the gate is firmly barricaded at the start.

Hike 14 – Lost Lake

This hike shares the same start as Deeks Lake, so the changes to Deeks Lake mentioned above apply here as well. To start, follow the new Deeks Lake hiking route to where it intersects the old Howe Sound Crest Trail road just past the kilometre “1” circle as shown on the page 77 guidebook map. From here, turn LEFT and walk about 30 m to reach the Lost Lake road spur and a right-hand turn. Hike up this road and after 5-10 minutes watch very carefully for an overgrown spur road on the right. It isn't obvious, but it's the route that leads to the lake. From here, the road-trail has become quite overgrown, so it's best not to do this hike in wet weather or you'll get soaked. As you ascend toward the lake, there are a number of direct forest bypasses that skip long switchbacks on the road. Despite being steep, these bypasses are recommended since they give you some reprieve from the bush on the road!

Hike 15 – Deeks Peak

The “Hiking via Lost Lake Route” option to reach the summit of Deeks Peak described on page 84 in the guidebook has been affected by the same routing changes to Deeks Lake and Lost Lake mentioned above. Follow the new directions if you wish to attempt an ascent of Deeks Peak via the Lost Lake route option.

Hike 16 – Mount Windsor

Since an ascent of Mount Windsor requires hiking to Deeks Lake first, please refer to the changes to the start of the Deeks Lake hike mentioned above.

Hike 17 – Capilano Mountain

The map for this hike, as seen on page 92–93 of the guidebook, is somewhat misleading. It shows a road crossing Furry Creek, roughly between kilometre number 6 on the north side and kilometre number 7 on the south side. There is indeed a road on the north side of the creek that leads down to a small dam on the water, but there is no way to cross the creek. And if there was ever a road on the south side of the creek leading up to kilometre number 7, it's long overgrown. Rest assured, the best way to do this hike is exactly as it's described in the guidebook. Don't experiment by trying to approach from the north side of Furry Creek.

Also, the small spur roads shown at 2.3 and 3.4 km that drop off the Furry Creek FSR are completely blocked now. There's no way down from the Furry Creek FSR to cross Furry Creek.

Hike 20 – Petgill Lake

The map on page 107 shows a “brushy spur” coming off Skyline Ridge hike on Sea to Sky Gondola. This goes all the way to Petgill Lake and saw a bit of love by members of the Squamish Trails Society in 2016. The trail is now easy to follow, but remains somewhat brushy since it follows an alder-choked logging road. It is, however, an interesting way to reach Petgill Lake that requires little to no ascending. If you choose this option, it’s best to leave a vehicle at Murrin Park and descend via *Petgill Lake Trail*.

Hike 22 – The Papoose

Some have commented that the trail is steeper than described. It may not be appropriate for young children.

Hike 24 – Sea to Summit Trail

The language around dog use on the gondola trails is inaccurate in the guidebook. The following text is taken directly from Sea to Sky Gondola’s website: “Dog owners can hike to the summit via the Sea to Summit Trail network and then download with their dog on the gondola. Dogs are required to be on a leash at all times. Dogs are not allowed on any other Sea to Sky Gondola trails, bridges or viewing platforms. However, they can visit the backcountry trails.”

Hike 25 – Evac Trail (new version)

The line of this hike has changed since the publication of the guidebook, a result of the vandalism that has occurred on the gondola line. **Here’s a description of the new route:** Start as before, at the wooden fence blockade on the connector trail that leads to the Shannon Falls parking lot. Head up the old Evac trail (unmarked) until a “closed” sign directs you right. Continue up to a fixed rope on a rock face, which is a rather difficult and dangerous feature but is possible to bypass via a steep, slippery trail on the right using a fixed hand line. Once above, continue very steeply uphill to eventually intersect the Sea to Summit Trail. Turn right and follow this trail uphill for about 3-5 minutes until it snakes beneath a couple of giant old-growth logs. Where a series of prominent arrows direct you right on the Sea to Summit Trail, turn left on a less defined trail and continue directly uphill. Intermittent flags now mark a route that eventually shares a significant portion of the old Evac Trail. Avoid heading up any sections marked with a closed sign or rope barricade; use the alternatives that head right instead. The new route makes a final merge with the old Evac Trail a couple minutes downhill of Wrinkle Rock. From this point forward, the route to the top is the same as before.

Hike 28 – Sky Pilot to Mt Habrich Loop

When following the route described in the guidebook, I’ve been told that some hikers are missing the handline descent into the gully just prior to reaching the “Brain”. Instead, they are following a well-defined trail which leads directly to the base of the Brain and a very steep rock wall with a rope fixed in place. Ascending this fixed rope leads to very dangerous and exposed fifth-class rock climbing terrain, which gains the top of the Brain. This is *not* the route described in the book. Look for the descent into the wide gully right (east) of the base of the Brain to stay on route.

Hike 39 – Watersprite Lake

Dogs are being discouraged on this hike. Please keep in mind that the lake and streams are everyone's drinking water. Also, the BCMC cabin is locked and is for the exclusive use of

paying guests only. Bookings may be made at the BCMC Web site. Note that this area has become extremely popular in the summer season.

Hike 40 – Seed Peak

Logging activity around the Seed Peak trailhead has resulted in the road being improved significantly. It's currently possible to drive up the E-100 and E-110 to between 1240 and 1320 m (reports vary) in most types of 4WD/AWD vehicles with a bit of clearance. Driving beyond this point is steep and loose so most will need to continue on foot. Note that logging activity has **essentially destroyed the start of the original hiking route**. It's now best to walk about 1 km up the new logging road to its very end and then cut left for a few hundred meters to gain the original trail. This helps avoid navigating around a lot of fallen trees. Once on route, the trail is easy to follow and marked into the alpine.

Hike 45 – Estuary Trails

The final sentences in paragraph one for *Swan Walk* indicate the trail reaches a road and a “No Trespassing” sign. This road has been decommissioned and is now trail-like, and the sign is gone. To find *Forest Loop Trail*, watch carefully for a trail that goes into the trees on the left once on the decommissioned road.

Hike 46 – Echo Lake

A debris slide during the winter of 2018–2019 changed the landscape at the start of this hike significantly and some recent trail work has impacted the accuracy of the original guidebook description. The following updates are worth noting before embarking on this hike:

The **put-in** location described in the book is no longer the best option. Instead, look for a well-defined trail that leads down to the river about 475 m along the spit road. The trail is just right of a small channel that flows beneath the road and is easy to spot. The **take-out** for the Echo Lake trail is only 175 m downstream on the far bank, so start crossing the river as soon as possible to avoid paddling back upstream. The “forested island” mentioned in the guidebook description still exists, but no longer has a water channel on the far (west) side, so it's no longer an island. Instead, simply look for a forest of alder trees set out from the west side of the river. Also, the “log pilings” no longer exist, either. However, the take-out is in the same location (N49.71390° W123.17355°), just south of the tip of the “forested island”. Land just south of the “island” and just upstream of a small creek flowing into the Squamish River and you'll easily find it.

Once in the trees on the far side of the river, walk a short distance upstream (10–20 m) and then head straight back toward the mountains following an obvious, open gravel debris fan that flowed through the forest. The walking is easy and after 50 m or so, watch for dull orange blazes on a couple of trees that mark the start of the defined hiking trail. The most popular way to reach Echo Lake is to follow the waterfall (Monmouth Creek) trail, so keep left at any junctions (all are well signed). This waterfall trail leads to some amazing viewpoints, but is rugged, steep and exposed in places. It's very strenuous and not to be taken lightly. Dogs would be inappropriate and parents with very capable children should still keep them very close since real dangers, such as falling into the creek, exist in numerous locations.

A **new descent trail** has been constructed from Echo Lake all the way to the Squamish River and is highly recommended. Descending the waterfall trail is not only dangerous but increases erosion on an already highly-impacted trail. The new descent trail takes a wonderful traversing and switch-backing line through a beautiful, open forest and is very easy on the knees. There is a short, well-signed connector trail just above the top of the waterfalls if you don't plan on going all the way to the lake. So, either way, you can hike a loop by ascending the waterfall-creek trail and then descending the new trail back to the river.

Finally, try to time your hike so you are crossing the river at **high tide** when you return. A high tide reduces the strength of the downstream current and helps cover the numerous gravel bars. Although it's possible to cross at low tide, high tide is far easier. Also, pay attention to the daily **thermal inflow winds** in the summer, which can be very powerful and problematic on the river. These usually whip up around noon and continue into the evening. If you wait until late evening to cross, you should be fine.

Hike 52 – Brohm Ridge

As noted in the guidebook, there are two options for driving the approach: Brohm Creek Branch FSR and Cheekye FSR (the road that runs by Cat Lake). In recent years, the Brohm Creek Branch has been the go-to option for most, although the upper half before it joins the Cheekye FSR is getting very rough. Logging activity over the fall and winter of 2022/2023 may improve the Cheekye road significantly – postings on the ministry site seem to indicate this. I'll update this page if I get better info, but it's worth investigating both options before your trip.

Hike 58 – Cheakamus Canyon

The trailhead at the Cheakamus River is now properly signed and the walking surface all the way up to Highway 99 is now mostly packed gravel. So, the condition of the first half of this hike is better than described in the guidebook. Parking at the north end of this hike (on Highway 99) has now been restricted, so it's best to do this hike as an out-and-back from Paradise Valley.

Hike 59 – Lake Lovely Water

The most recent attempts to contact Patrick Lewis for a river crossing have failed. However, **Jay Bickwell** is offering a similar service: park on his property, get a shuttle to the trailhead and a ferry across the river for something like \$20 per person. Jay can be reached at 604-815-9647. Squamish River Jet is also an option for reaching the trailhead, but many opt to get a group together and fly in to the lake by helicopter, skipping the hike up altogether. A few companies offer this service. To book a night in the hut, go to accvancouver.ca and click on Huts. Then click on bookings, scroll down to bottom and click on make a reservation. For questions, contact the custodian at mountainhutsbc@gmail.com. Ron Royston is no longer the hut custodian and calling him won't get you a reservation. The Tantalus Hut and adjacent campground is often full on weekends and holidays so it's best to plan ahead. This has become a busy summer destination.

Hike 60 – Sigurd Creek

The log bridge across Sigurd Creek at 8 km is currently broken. It's possible to wade across the creek about 50 m upstream, but water levels will dictate whether this is safe or not. In the midsummer when it's dry, wading should not be a problem. In the spring, especially in the

afternoon heat, water levels rise and become problematic so proceed with caution. It's worth noting that the trail between the 5 and 8 mark is one of the most impressive stretches of old-growth forest in the entire guidebook. I highly recommend hiking this far just to appreciate the size and diversity of trees.

Hike 62 – Pokosha Creek

The road bridge over Pokosha Creek has **washed out** and the crossing is now impossible by vehicle. However, most vehicles with decent clearance and traction should still be able to reach this point. If you choose to do so, was a makeshift log pedestrian bridge across Pokosha Creek as of 2022 (hopefully it lasts) that allows hikers to continue on foot. From this spot, it's a 2 km hike with a 140 m elevation gain along the road and rough, left-hand spur to reach the four-wheel-drive parking spot described in the guidebook, the trailhead for the original hike description.

Hike 63 – High Falls Creek

There is a new trail that breaks left off the original trail around 140 m elevation. This branch rejoins the main trail around 290 m at the upper viewpoint of the falls. This trail bypasses the section of trail that traverses along the rim of the canyon and misses the best falls viewpoint, the one shown on the map. It's a safer hike and might be better if you need to descend this way for some reason, but it lacks the ambiance of the original route. Whatever you choose, make sure to stay vigilant for the unmarked junction on the way up, which is easy to miss.

There is another new trail that breaks left off the original trail around 500 m elevation. This leads up to a cut block before rejoining the original trail in the old growth forest below. If you take this new trail, you'll miss the final viewpoint off the slabs above High Falls Creek, which is a real pity. Keep your eyes peeled for this junction, since it's easy to stray left onto the new cut block trail. The two trails diverge on a small, mossy bench just after the final steep climb through the forest that leads to the rock slab viewpoint about the creek.

Hike 64 – Tricouni Meadows

The road access for this hike has deteriorated since the publication of the book. There is a rather significant washout a few hundred metres up from the Branch 200 turn-off and difficult driving beyond with a variety of obstacles. For now, some high-clearance 4WD trucks are getting through and making it all the way to the upper parking, but most will want to stop and walk the road. The good news is Branch 200 is in good shape, so you should have no problem making it the washout.

For hiking, the alternate route shown on the map has received some chainsaw work recently and it is now easier to follow through the blowdown section. It's a viable option over the normal, muddy trail, but the initial bridge is gone so you'll have to wade the creek to start, which isn't bad if water levels are low. A nice loop hike can be created by hiking in this way and out via the normal, muddy trail.

Hikes 65–71 – Garibaldi Park

The hikes in this park as outlined in the guidebook now require a **day pass** any time between June 23rd and October 15th. This pass may be obtained starting at 7:00 am two days prior to your hike from the BC Parks website. Passes are limited and popular, so book early if you're keen.

Those who book a campsite do not require a day pass – the campground reservation is sufficient. Check the BC Parks website for updates.

Hike 72 – Tricouni East

In 2021, some **road building and logging** occurred along the approach road from Highway 99, which has altered the approach directions slightly. Please note the following changes: Avoid a new spur on the right around 5.9 km, which is currently blocked with small boulders. The 7.8 km junction is now fully overgrown and almost unrecognisable – it's more of just a widened corner now. About 50–100 m beyond the 7.8 km junction is a new quarry area and spur on the left, which should be avoided. The 8.3 km junction road has been improved and it's tempting to stay right uphill. Instead, keep left at this fork, which may be marked with a small cairn. Finally, the road beyond the 2WD parking spot marked in the guidebook has become increasingly difficult to drive up high and the lower portion is very overgrown with alder. It's best to come prepared to walk this section unless you are a very aggressive 4x4 driver.

Also, this area was **closed temporarily** due to grizzly bear activity in fall, 2022. Grizzlies have been seen in this area before, so please use best practices when hiking and camping to avoid a dangerous encounter.

Hike 74 – Brew Lake – Mount Brew

The Roe Creek FSR has been deactivated around 7 km, but most will choose to stop and park just before the bridge over Roe Creek at 6 km. You'll need a decent vehicle with traction and a bit of clearance to get this far, and a high clearance 4WD to get to 7 km. Either way, you'll need to walk 3–4 km farther than what's described in the book. Another way to access Brew Lake is the Brew Creek approach outlined in the guidebook that starts up the campground road. This well-defined trail is steeper and longer than the Roe Creek route and faces east, which makes for a hot hike mid-summer.

Hike 79 – Metal Dome

The snowmobile cabin that's shown on the map on page 294 burned down. It's no longer there so don't use it as a reference point.

Hikes 80-82 – Callaghan Area

The dirt road that accesses these hikes from the paved Callaghan Road gets gated at some point in October. If you plan to do a late season hike, it would be best to check with Callaghan Country (www.callaghancountry.com) to see if it's open.

Hikes 81 – Conflict Lake – Ring Lake

This area is within the Callaghan Conservancy, which means no camping is allowed. The wooden walkway over the creek that's mentioned in the final paragraph of the hiking text has been washed away. The creek is still crossable in low water by jumping from rock to rock, but expect difficulties in medium water, which could occur late on a summer day as the snow above melts. Early in the season the creek will likely be too high for a straightforward crossing due to run-off. Also, the ladder on the far side of the creek is falling into disrepair. It may not be usable much longer...

Hikes 82 – Hanging Lake

The forest service road that accesses Madley Lake and the Hanging Lake trailhead has been **reopened** after two years of closures. I'm told the new gate is about 500 m from the Hanging Lake trailhead near the south end of the lake, so plan to do a bit of road walking to start your day. Let's hope this access continues into the future. Bear in mind this road is seasonally closed once the fall-winter season begins.