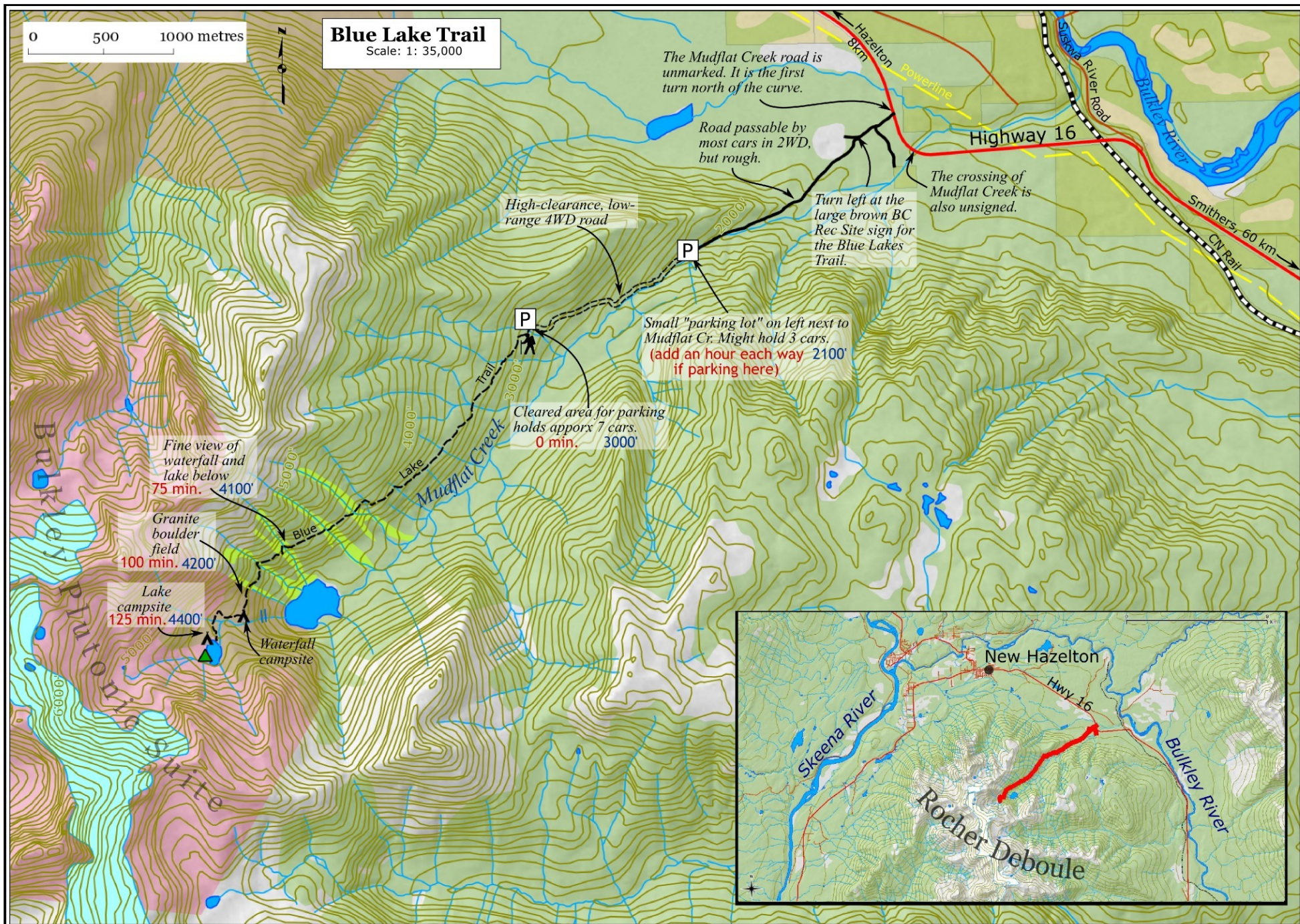






# BLUE LAKE TRAIL

*Morgan Hite, May 2011*

## DIRECTIONS

Turn onto the Mudflat Creek Road, 8 km south of Hazelton on Highway 16. In less than a kilometre, turn left onto a deactivated road at a brown BC Rec Site sign on left for "Blue Lakes." Most 2WD vehicles can proceed slowly for about 2 km to a small pull-out on the left beside the creek (elevation 700m). High-clearance 4WD vehicles can proceed another 2 km to a larger parking area at the trailhead (elevation 1000m).

Trail ascends 400m over 4.25 km to the second Blue Lake at treeline. Allow 2.5 hours up, 2 hours down.

## COMMENTARY

Mudflat Creek is one of the few streams coming out of the Rocher Deboile that has no identifying sign where Highway 16 crosses it. The Mudflat Creek Road, on the west side of the highway just north of the crossing, is not signed either. If one is familiar with the turn-off for the Suskwa River Road (which is itself no longer signed) then, driving north, immediately after this the highway ascends, bends left, crosses the railway tracks and runs dead straight for almost 2 km. At the end of those 2km it bends sharply right. The bridge over Mudflat Cr is in this second bend; the Mudflat Creek Road is the first left after that.

You are about 60 km north of Smithers at this point, and that if you miss the Mudflat Cr Rd, you begin to see advertisements for Ksan campground.

Watch out for potholes on this short stretch of Mudflat Creek Rd.

There are very few places to turn around on the narrow deactivated road. Occasional ruts across the road require you to drive slowly indeed. The pull-out for 2WD vehicles can be recognized by the presence of a second yellow Deactivation sign, but it is well worth driving on to the final parking lot, since it cuts 2km and 300m of ascent off the hike. If you are lucky enough to have 4WD, you may be able to offer a ride to hikers you find walking this section.

Drive as far as you can drive: the road stops at the trailhead. The road is uneven; passengers and possessions are thrown about inside the vehicle. Low-range 4WD is an asset.

There is water at the trailhead in the form of a small stream, and more streams are crossed frequently along the hike. (There is no access to Mudflat Creek itself however, as the trail is hundreds of feet up the valley wall.) Boardwalks indicate the care that has been put into this trail's upkeep. According to a long-time local resident, it was originally constructed as a pack trail to claims in the head of the valley. At that time it would have begun down on the flats near the highway; at present, thanks to clear-cutting in the lower end of the valley, one picks up the trail at the end of the road.

For two kilometres ascend gradually through lovely fir forest. About fifty minutes after leaving the trailhead, you come to a spectacular view of the mountains ahead.

In the next two kilometres cross a series of five avalanche tracks thick with salmonberry in the late summer. Views of the first Blue Lake some 200m below are delightful, as is the waterfall feeding it from the upper lake.

Once past the last avalanche track, the trail briefly crosses a boulder field, and from here you are in a zone of granite which forms the core of the Rocher Deboile. The trail parallels the outflow creek of the higher lake. Note a side trail to a improved campsite here complete with two picnic tables and a badly chewed privy (porcupines!).

Ascending over a slight rise you arrive at the milky blue water of the upper lake. The trail continues around its north side to an improved campsite nestled in krummholtz (again with massive picnic table); however there are many other attractive places to pitch a tent. On the far side of the lake an exposed site on the delta of the inflow stream looks attractive in good weather.

From here the way is clear to access higher portions of the range.