



## Naydeena Mountain: Standing Up Alone

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Nadina Mountain Provincial Park, south of Houston, is a Wilderness Recreation park, meaning it's large, hard to get to, little visited, non-motorized and has no facilities. But what a spectacular peak! Unlike other mountains in the area, Naydeena ("standing up alone") is a 2100m dome of quartz monzonite, a granitic rock that is blindingly white on a sunny day. Thanks to its curious location, it is invisible from the Highway 16 corridor. The peak is valued by the Wetsuweten people, and is a traditional place to hunt caribou, marmot and mountain goat. If you go, be prepared for a steep trail that is cleared only to a rugged standard, but has some spectacular views above treeline.

From Houston take Highway 16 west of town to the left turn for the Houston Forest Products mill. This is the start of the Morice River Road. Follow it to kilometre marker 39 (note: go straight at KM 27 where the Morice West FSR turns off to the right). At KM 39 turn right into the Owen Lake Rec Site. There are two dirt roads through the rec site, but both lead to the little bridge over Owen Creek. Cross this bridge and continue driving 6 km to the sign that says "Park Here" for the Nadina Mountain trail. The road is fine for low-clearance, 2-wheel drive cars to this point. You're at about 860m elevation.

Less than a minute's walk following the signs leads to a tree festooned with flagging tape, and the beginning of the trail. For the first 20 minutes it goes through an old cutblock full of bushes and mudholes, and then into uncut forest. The trail ascends, steeply at times. You will pass a fork where the "Rope Trail" goes left; continue straight on the "Snow Bowl trail."

After about 50 minutes pass the BC Parks boundary sign. The trail is unmaintained and is encumbered in places by deadfall. Sometimes it passes through tight forest, weaving creatively through the trees. At other times it's not unlike a staircase.

First views come after about an hour and 20 minutes, near 1400m elevation, and you will reach the krummholtz zone shortly after. The trail grows even narrower and slipperier. As the trees grow smaller watch for small pieces of flagging tape that continue to indicate the route. When there are no more trees, note your location and surrounding landmarks carefully. If you ever want to get home, you will need to return here to find the trail down.

Heather-covered slopes continue steeply upward. Because of a subtle change in direction made by the trail just before treeline, the bulk of the mountain now lies up and to your right (southwest). Turn right and continue ascending. You may be lucky enough to find more cairns and ribbon for a while.

Heather gives way to grass interspersed with boulders of granite. After about 1800m elevation even the grass gives out, but the higher you climb the more extensive the views. You can see from the Telkwa Mtns in the north all the way round to Francois Lake, Owen Hat and Ootsa Lake in the south. Morice Mtn is right across from you (although not as high). Owen Lake makes a nice snakey S-curve below you.

Visiting the edge of the big cirque in the north side of the mountain is highly recommended. You may see the Berkey-Howe Union Spire, a rare, free-standing granitic pillar located at the head of the cirque.

Two cautions. The trail is dry: take water! And, not disturbing goats is a priority. They mostly keep to the southwest side of the mountain.