

## BIG BEAVER TRAIL

The Big Beaver Trail covers some 37km (23 mi.) from Ross Dam to Stillwell Camp, where it joins the Little Beaver Trail. The entire trail passes through mountain forests with only occasional glimpses of distant peaks. The lush forests, wide variety of understory plants and general ease of travel make it a pleasant hike of three or four days. The sections between Ross Dam and Big Beaver Creek and between the mouth of Big Beaver Creek and the beaver ponds are frequently done as day trips. A mountaineering route to Mt. Challenger begins at Beaver Pass, and some considerable bush-whacking is necessary to gain the sub-alpine zone. Excellent views of Challenger and Luna Cirque can be obtained by an easy bush-whack and scramble up a slope east from the snow survey marker at Beaver Pass. Snow usually persists on the pass until early July, though a marked route is normally put in by late June.

The shortest access to the trail for most hikers is by way of the Ross Dam Trail, which begins at a gravelled parking area above Ross Dam on Highway 20 about 8km (5 mi.) east of Colonial Creek Campground. The trail drops steeply for 1km (.6 mi.) to a gravel service road. Go left, down this road, for a short distance, then right down an incline to the top of Ross Dam. Cross the dam and go right heading north along the west shore of Ross Lake. It is 10 km (6 mi.) to Big Beaver Creek and Big Beaver Campground.

The trail follows the west shore of Ross Lake and passes through stunted stands of Lodgepole pine, and later, stands of Douglas Fir. Evidence of a forest fire in 1926 is apparent nearly everywhere along this section of trail. The route is relatively easy walking, with rolling dips and rises, and refreshing creek water along the way. The access trail to the Green Point boater's camp will be seen 2km (1.2 mi.) from Ross Dam. It is a fairly steep 1km (.6 mi.) descent. Green Point Camp can be used by hikers.

At the north end of the Big Beaver Creek crossing is a trail junction. A right turn leads to Big Beaver Camp on the shore of Ross Lake,  $\frac{1}{2}$ km (.3 mi.) away; a left turn leads up the Big Beaver Valley. Big Beaver Camp is designed for boaters, and hikers should use the new Pumpkin Mtn. Camp 100m south of the bridge. Horsemen must use the designated horse camp, 200m east of the trail junction.

The trail up the Big Beaver Valley passes through a rich spectrum of forest plant communities, highlighted by a superb grove of Western Redcedar about 5km (3 mi.) west of the Big Beaver Creek crossing. The trail also passes close to an active beaver pond, where these handsome animals can occasionally be seen during the early morning or evening hours by quiet and respectful observers. The raising of Ross Dam would flood the lower 10km (6 mi.) of the Big Beaver Valley, including this beaver community and the grove of Western Redcedar. The entire Big Beaver Valley can be seen by scrambling up Pumpkin Mtn. above Big Beaver Campground or the talus slopes 3km (2 mi.) up the Big Beaver trail. The distance to Beaver Pass from Ross Lake is 22km (14 mi.). Beaver Pass to Little Beaver Creek is about 4 km ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  mi.)

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