

Trophy Mountain Summit via Sheila Lake

Location: Wells Gray Provincial Park, British Columbia

Drive Time from Spahats Creek Resort: 30 to 45 minutes (12.2 km / 7.6 miles)

Walking Distance from Spahats Creek Resort: Not recommended due to the distance and rough terrain.

Difficulty: Challenging (Scramble)

Distance of Hike: 20 km (12.4 miles) round trip

Elevation Change: Approximately 1,200 meters (3,937 feet)

Estimated Hike Time: 8 to 10 hours round trip

Overview: The Trophy Mountain Summit is a rewarding yet challenging hike that takes adventurers beyond Sheila Lake into the high alpine of the Trophy Mountains. This trail requires advanced preparation and scrambling skills, as the route becomes steep and rocky near the summit. Those who reach the top are rewarded with breathtaking panoramic views of Wells Gray Provincial Park's expansive wilderness and surrounding peaks. This hike is suitable for experienced hikers seeking a full-day adventure.

Drive Description: From Spahats Creek Resort, drive back to the main entrance and turn right onto Spahats Creek FSR. Drive to the 4 km fork and go left, following the signs for Trophy Flower Meadows. The gravel road involves several steep and winding sections, requiring careful navigation. Upon arrival, you will find a newly installed pit toilet at the trailhead and a small parking area suitable for standard-sized vehicles. Larger RVs are not recommended.

Hike Description:

1. Trailhead to Sheila Lake (3.1 km / 1.9 miles):

- Begin at the Trophy Flower Meadows trailhead, following a well-maintained path that ascends 300 meters (984 feet) through a forested area.
- After approximately 2 km (1.2 miles), the trail emerges into expansive alpine meadows renowned for their vibrant wildflower displays in late July and early August.
- Continue for another 1.1 km (0.7 miles) to reach Sheila Lake, a picturesque alpine lake with nearby primitive campsites and an outhouse.

2. **Sheila Lake to Plateau of Tarns (2 km / 1.2 miles):**
 - Proceed past Sheila Lake, ascending gradually through high meadows toward the Plateau of Tarns, a collection of small alpine lakes.
 - This section offers stunning views of the surrounding peaks and valleys, with opportunities to spot local wildlife such as ptarmigans and grouse.
3. **Plateau of Tarns to Summit Ridge (2 km / 1.2 miles):**
 - From the Plateau of Tarns, the trail becomes steeper as it approaches the cirque below the summit.
 - Navigate through rocky terrain and lingering snow patches (depending on the season) to reach the ridge between Long Hill and Trophy Two.
4. **Summit Ridge to Trophy Mountain Summit (2 km / 1.2 miles):**
 - Follow the rocky ridge, which requires scrambling skills and careful footing, to ascend to the summit of Trophy Mountain.
 - At the summit, enjoy 360-degree views, including sights of Cwem Cwem Lake to the south, Table Mountain to the north, and the rugged Cariboo and Monashee Ranges in the distance.
5. **Return Journey:**
 - Descend via the same route, taking caution on the steep and rocky sections, for a total round-trip distance of approximately 20 km (12.4 miles).

Tips:

- **Preparation:** This hike requires excellent physical fitness, scrambling experience, and navigation skills. Plan accordingly.
- **Gear:** Wear sturdy hiking boots, carry trekking poles, and bring gloves for scrambling sections.
- **Safety:** Carry bear spray, a map, and a first aid kit. Inform someone of your plans before starting the hike.
- **Supplies:** Pack plenty of water, high-energy snacks, and layers for changing alpine weather.
- **Seasonal Note:** This trail is best attempted during the summer months when snow and ice are minimal.

Summary: The Trophy Mountain Summit via Sheila Lake is a challenging and rewarding hike for experienced adventurers. With its combination of wildflower meadows, rocky scrambles, and unparalleled summit views, this trail offers a true high-alpine experience in Wells Gray Provincial Park. It's a bucket-list hike for those seeking an unforgettable challenge.