Walking tour of TLELL

Note: Persons contemplating a visit to Naikoon Provincial Park are reminded that it is a wilderness area with limited resources.
Your safety is your responsibility. Be prepared for emergency situations. Carry what you will need to rescue yourself and your vehicle should it become stuck on the beach. Avoid travelling on the sand dunes as disturbance can lead to loss of plant life, erosion, exposure and damage to cultural sites. Tire tracks and repeated foot traffic through the sand dunes cause extensive environmental damage. Vehicle/ATV use within Naikoon is limited to between the high and low tide lines of North and East Beaches; ATV use on interior trails and sand dune areas is not allowed.

Legend

1. Naikoon Provincial Park
2. Tlell River Day Use Site
3. Richardson Ranch
4. Tlell River
5. Anvil Trail

Suggested Walking Tour Route

- Naikoon Park Land
- Tlaall Conservancy
- Beach Access

NAIKOON PARK EAST BEACH HIKES

Some of these hikes are in demanding wilderness, and all multi-day hikes require sufficient preparation & supplies. All water in Naikoon Park must be treated; water is undrinkable on North Beach/north of Cape Fife. Your safety is your responsibility.

- Tlell to Tow Hill via the Cape Fife Trail - 78 km
- Tlell to Tow Hill via the base of Rose Spit - 89 km
- Tlell Bridge to Tlell River outfall - 4.5 km
- Tlell River outfall to Mayer River outfall - 4.5 km
- Mayer River outfall to Cap Ball River - 6 km
- Cape Ball River to Oeanda River 36.5 km
- Oeanda River to Cape Fife trailhead - 17 km

Two primitive log shelters are located near the Cape Ball and Oeanda Rivers, approximately 2 km south of their respective river mouths, above the high tide line. The Fife Point cabin has a wood stove and is located on the east beach side of the Cape Fife trailhead. All three shelter locations are marked with an orange sign posted on a tree above the beach zone. Please keep a watchful eye for the signs as you approach the Cape Ball and Oeanda Rivers and Fife Point, as they are not directly obvious from the beach zone.
Tlell is a small, spread out community on the east coast of Graham Island, located 43 kilometers north of the ferry terminal at Skidegate. Tlell marks the southeast corner of Naikoon Provincial Park and is the location of the Misty Meadows Provincial Campground. Beaches and sand dunes are easily accessible along the Tlell River, well known for its excellent fishing opportunities. There are artisans & galleries, a cafe, a fine choice of accommodation with several Bed & Breakfasts, a general store and cattle ranch all in the area. They are all well marked. Look for the signs as you drive along the highway.

**1 Naikoon Provincial Park**
From Rose Spit, or “Naikun” as it was called by the Haida, at the northeast tip of Graham Island, broad, sandy beaches seem to stretch endlessly to form the eastern and northern boundaries of this unique park. The park occupies part of the Hecate Depression, a trough between the Outer Mountains to the west and the Coast Mountains on the mainland to the east. The park is largely low and flat. In the northeast corner, Argonaut Hill, the highest point in the park, rises only 150 metres above sea level. Tow Hill, an outcrop of basalt columns, is a prominent landmark about 100 metres high on the north beach. Almost 100km of beaches is the primary attraction for visitors. Wildlife is a curious mixture of introduced and native species. Sitka Blacktail deer, raccoons, red squirrels, muskrats and beaver were brought in about 80 years ago and, with abundant forage and no wild predators, they have prospered. Small herds of wild cattle, remnants of domestic stock from the days of early settlement, have been seen along the east coast. Species native to the park include black bear, marten and river otter which made the salt water crossing from the mainland. The bird population of Haida Gwaii is similar to the nearby mainland, although many species have not crossed Hecate Strait. Others, such as the hairy woodpecker, the saw-whet owl and Steller’s Jay, have developed into unique sub-species. A sub-species of pine grosbeak is found only on the Charlottes and Vancouver Island. A sub-species of song sparrow is found here and on the Alaskan Islands. On the water, you might see harbour seals, sea lions, fur seals, porpoises, dolphins, whales and even a sea otter if you’re lucky! (www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/naikoon)

**2 Tlell River Day Use Site**
Pesuta Shipwreck Trail - This trail begins at Tlell River day use site just north of the Tlell River Bridge. It winds through the forest and then follows the riverbank of the Tlell River to the river mouth and East Beach. The remnant bow of the log barge “Pesuta”, which was beached during a storm in December 11, 1928, is all that remains of this 264 foot log carrier. Best to approach this hike on a low or receding tide to avoid walking the riverbank during high water.
There are many trails to explore from the Tlell River Day Use Site, from short beach hikes to multi-day excursions. Please note that there are extremely limited water resources up East Beach and you must plan accordingly. It is recommended that you hike from south to north to avoid weather - the direction of prevailing winds along East Beach is southeast (a constant of 30 km/hr is not uncommon). Travelling south to north creates a possibility of walking out on the numerous “finger sandbars” which project northward, paralleling the shoreline. Created by currents, they do not connect at their northern tip; this will mean retracing your steps. Your safety is your personal responsibility. Please visit the Naikoon Provincial Park headquarters for more park information and trail updates. (www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/naikoon)

**3 Richardson Ranch**
The Richardson Ranch was preempted in 1903 by Mexican Tom Hodges. Tom stretched his money too thin in establishing his dream ranch and lost it to his creditor in 1908 when it was sold to the Walsh Brothers. In just ten years these Montana cattlemen built a thriving cattle ranch, including large barns, silos and ranch residence (still in use today). Eric Richardson purchased the ranch in 1919. He arrived with his mother, his brother Ken, and his son, Francis Richardson. Eric was a bookkeeper by trade, so most of the farming fell to Francis and Ken. Beef was sold fresh and canned to local markets. In 1952 Doug Richardson, Francis’s oldest son, with wife Alice, took over the ranch. They initially sold fresh beef, door to door, until power and deep freezers allowed them to sell by the side cut and wrapped. In 1980, Doug’s oldest son, Don, returned to the ranch to establish a Veterinary Hospital. He and Doug started a partnership to modernize and rebuild the cattle ranch. This is a family farm with Poiled Hereford cattle, a complete Veterinary Hospital with boarding kennels and a Feed & Pet Store. (www.qcislands.net/docdon)

**4 Tlell River**
The Tlell watershed flows north and east into Hecate Strait and consists of the Lella Creek, Feather Creek, Survey Creek and Three Mile Creek tributaries. It supports an amazing array of forest and wildlife, and the abundance of growth produces the tannin that makes the water tea-like. The Tlell is also a popular fishing river. There are sea run cutthroat in the spring and steelhead at various times, but the Tlell is best known for coho, which come steaming in from the Gulf of Alaska.

**5 Anvil Trail**
The 5 km loop, 2 hour (approximate) return hike starts opposite the Anvil Trail - Mariners Point Parking Lot found on HWY 16 south of the Naikoon Park Headquarters. The Anvil Trailhead was made possible by Teddy Squires and the Tlell Watershed Society, and the entrance is marked by a large sign posted on a tree on the west side of the highway. The trail is mainly single-line hiking and the route is marked by tag colors posted on trees and easy to follow. It is always best to have good footwear, some water, rain gear and plan for plenty of daylight as the trail can get dark. Do not hike this trail in high winds, and from September until April flooding can render parts of the trail inaccessible.