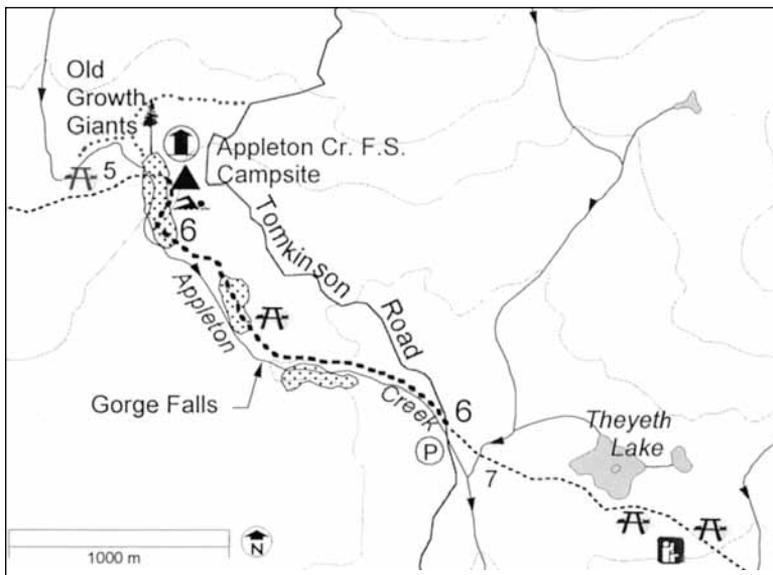


6. Appleton Canyon Trail



Trail Location: At the junction of Wharf Street and Marine Avenue, drive north toward Lund, past Willingdon Beach, through the Townsite, Wildwood and Sliammon. At Scuttle Bay at about 12 km turn right onto Wilde Road heading uphill for exactly 6 km. Where the road branches in the hamlet, keep to your right onto Tomkinson Road. Pass the access to Big Sliammon Lake at 4 km on your right. Another 2 km and you will come to the bridge across Appleton Creek. Just 100 m beyond the bridge, turn left into a gravel pit which is a good place to park. The northern end of the Sliammon Lakes Trail lies directly across the road from the entrance to the pit. There are two trailheads for the Appleton Canyon Trail. One is located on the upper side of the gravel pit where a cairn has been erected. A second can be found along the road 15 m uphill from the pit entrance.

Trailhead GPS Coordinates: N 49°56.590', W 124°35.005'

Altitude: 400 m to 200 m

Hiking Time: 1 hr, one way

Distance: 2.1 km, one way

Difficulty: Moderate, Level 3

Other: SCT Section 3, waterfalls, old growth

Map: 92 F/15, Recreation Map

Advisory: Like all trail sections of the SCT described in this book, this trail description is given from north to south to provide seamless information for the through hiker. A hiker entering the Appleton Creek Trail from the access off Wilde Road and hiking it in the opposite direction needs to read the description in reverse order, from bottom up.

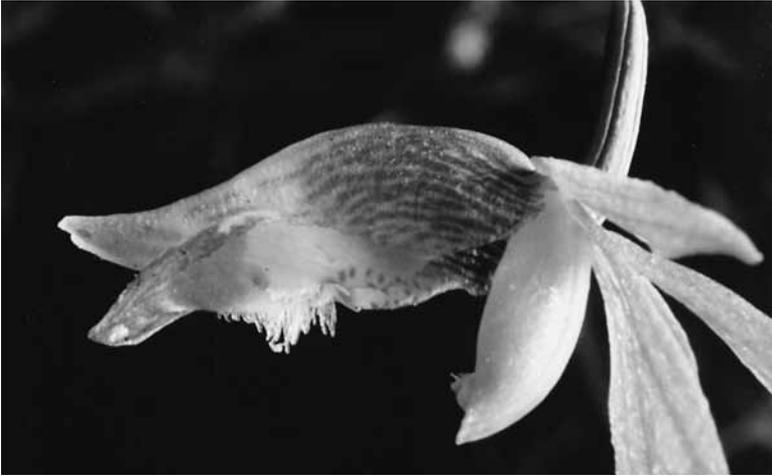
Trail Description: As you approach Appleton Creek from the north, sounds of rushing water will draw you into their mesmerizing rhythm. The pounding of turbulent waters is never far as you hike this trail.

At a T-junction directly above the creek bank, a wooden sign points back up the Marathon Trail over which you have just travelled, advising that Rieveley's Pond is an hour away. A left turn will take you up a 100-m-long side spur to a picnic table overlooking a swirling swimming hole. This spot lends itself well to a symphonic lunch and, in the summer, to a refreshing swim.

Meanwhile back down at the T-junction, turn right and follow the SCT downstream to a newly refurbished BOMB Squad bridge that takes you safely across to the other side of the creek. A sign declares that you have arrived at the Appleton Forestry Recreation site. It signifies the beginning of the Appleton Canyon Trail. This small flood plain is home to a handful of ancient Douglas firs that tower above two picnic tables.

The Appleton Canyon section of the SCT slants up onto the rim beyond the campsite. At the top the trail branches. The left branch will carry you 300 m up along the ridge toward an outhouse. Here the original Appleton Creek Trail presents a short exit out to Tomkinson (Wilde) Road 8 km from the highway. If you keep left beyond the outhouse you'll reach another picnic table. Below it you will see the same falls and swimming hole at the end of the side spur described earlier on the opposite side of the creek.

Back down at the campsite junction, stay right as the new Appleton Canyon Trail continues to balance on the rim, following the lively creek downstream. You come to a high spot overlooking the big bend where, invisible to the casual eye, the creek turns abruptly. From a certain vantage point, two sections of the creek are visible—apparently running in opposite directions—and providing a puzzling illusion. The trail keeps dropping along a side hill, and if you look below it you'll see more large giants. One huge tree, measuring about 1.5 m in diameter, leans at a precarious angle, its lofty top attempting to grow vertically again.



Calypso bulbosa, a fragrant rose-purple orchid, is also known as false ladyslipper. *Jessie Jones photo*

The path continues downhill and soon levels out on another flat (36.2 km). Here, during low water conditions, you can cross to the other side and explore what might eventually become part of a loop returning downstream on the west bank.

At Gorge Falls (36.3 km), you can get down to the creek on a spur and have a swim in the pool, or even a skull-numbing shower underneath the tumbling sheet of water. Though the vegetation is generally maturing second growth fir, you will see some old growth growing on the slopes toward the creek.

Next, beyond another flat, a short spur to the right will take you down to a pool at the bottom of Sylph Falls. A few minutes farther the trail dips down onto another flat where you can get right next to the creek.

The trail swerves away again and minutes later you will approach the edge of the canyon where a short but steep loop off the main trail will allow you a look at the waterfalls and pools directly below you. This is the waterfall that prevents salmon from getting further upstream. About 300 m below this point you will emerge at the gravel pit that serves as a parking lot for people who do dayhikes in a northerly direction, or the Sliammon Lakes Trail southward. Exit the gravel pit onto Tomkinson (Wilde) Road and find the trailhead of the Sliammon Lakes section (37.7 km) across the road and slightly below. Ω