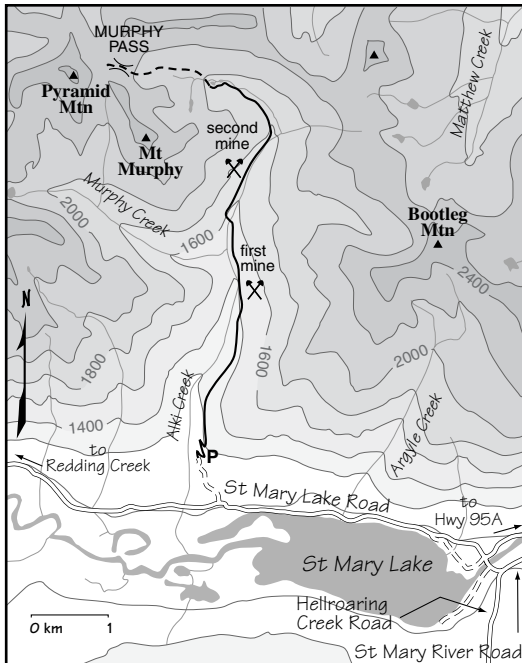


58 ALKI CREEK TO MURPHY PASS

Prospectors first came to Alki Creek, a tributary of the St. Mary River, in the 1890s. Originally Alki Creek was named John Creek. The first mining camp you reach along the trail is the Mystery Mine. Its historic remains of an old log building and pieces of rusty metal hint at stories of yesteryear.

The Mystery Mine was worked by Mr. Leveque in the early 1890s, and mining continued for several decades. He mined tunnels over 150 ft. deep, and more than 250 tons of ore were stockpiled for assay. The results indicated 20 per cent copper, but that was not enough to make the operation of the mine profitable.

Several kilometres farther along the trail on the west side of Alki Creek are the forgotten foundations of the Blue Peter Mine camp. It was in operation during the early 1900s. Additional tunnels were made in the 1920s by C. Hungerford Pollen and the trail that continues up to the pass was cut out by Steve Nogalski in the 1920s.



Rating moderate/long

Time full day hike

Distance 9.7 km

Elevation gain 1200 m (3950 ft.)

Murphy Pass 2300 m (7550 ft.)

Trail graded forest trail by two old mines, to meadows and alpine pass

Map 82F/9 St. Mary Lake

Trail map page 183

Drive

Road 4x4 final 800 m

Road map page 180

Drive Highway 95A, just 500 m north of Marysville and turn left (west) on to the St. Mary Lake Road.

0 km St. Mary Lake Road and Highway 95A

16.6 km Pavement ends. St. Mary Lake on south side of road. Follow road around lakeshore to the western end of the lake (past the 29-km sign).

19 km Don't cross the new metal bridge across Alki Creek. Stay east of the bridge and drive up a steep rocky 4x4 road on the right (north), or just walk the remaining 1 km.

20 km Park at the end of the road where it levels out in a clearing. The road gains 100 m (300 ft.) elevation.



*Talus slope along upper Alki Creek
looking west down St. Mary River.*

Alki Creek is one of the few unlogged valleys in this district and the trail winds through this precious lodgepole pine forest habitat, making a pleasant hike for a hot day. Some large lodgepole pine trees have managed to escape the frequent fires that have swept through this unlogged valley, and their branches join the rest of the forest canopy in providing a cooling shade. The trail passes by the two pre-1900's mining camps mentioned above and leads up toward subalpine lakes on its way to Murphy Pass. Pyramid Mountain, 2655 m (8711 ft.), is west of the pass. The trail climbs steadily along Alki Creek where there are some very slippery log bridges to cross.

Start from the clearing by heading to the right (east). After several steps turn left and follow the steep skid trail north. It ascends a dry ridge and eventually meets up with the old mining trail.

The first 20 minutes or so are the steepest and also the most confusing. The original mining trail has been cut off by the road and the new trail ascends to meet it. A few switchbacks near the beginning require attention in order to avoid wandering off the narrow, forested route.

Beyond the switchbacks the trail is wide and easy to follow. It heads north on the east side of Alki Creek. After about 4 km along the trail, cross a slippery log bridge over a tributary to reach the first mining camp (Mystery Mine). Just after the creek crossing and before reaching the buildings, the main trail up the valley heads uphill to the right.

After another 45 minutes, the trail traverses a huge avalanche swath and bends down to cross Alki Creek on another mossy and slick log bridge.

After crossing to the west side of Alki Creek, follow the trail for about 15 minutes to the second mining camp (Blue Peter Mine), a temporary operation of which only the foundation remains. Gradually the trail condition deteriorates, but the route is discernable.

After about 8 km, the trail passes near a marshy meadow and a small tarn in the subalpine. Then it's basically route-finding to the pass. The route heads north from the meadow for a bit, and then bends obviously to the northwest toward the pass. It is just over 1 km from the tarns to the pass.