

Shipyard–Titanic and Tarn and Towers Hiking Trails (#36)

The Shipyard–Titanic area of Mount Babcock, south of Tumbler Ridge, offers excellent hiking and some of the best rock scenery in the region. It also provides outstanding rock climbing. The rock formations have maritime-themed names; if you use your imagination the bizarre rock formations look like ships and shipwrecks.

Directions to the Trailhead

From Tumbler Ridge, drive south on Hwy 52 (the Heritage Highway, locally known as the Boundary Road). The paved road passes the turnoff to Kinuseo Falls at km 12.7. Keep going straight on the Heritage Highway for 6.8 km to a right turn (signposted “Shipyard & Titanic”) onto the Core Lodge Road. This road is radio controlled - watch for industrial traffic. At 12.5 km, there is a fork. Take the right fork, following the sign saying “all other traffic” (the left fork is for mine traffic only). Take the next right fork, signposted as the West Core Lodge road, and follow this road up the flanks of Mt Babcock for 3 km. On the way, you will pass the Boulder Gardens trailhead. The Shipyard–Titanic and Tarn and Towers trailheads are in the curve of a switchback, along with an outhouse.

Shipyard – Titanic Trail

Time/Distance: 2-3 hours / 3 km return

Elevation Gain: 50 m (165 ft)

Rating: Moderate, steep and rocky in places ■

This route leads onto the southwest slopes of Mount Babcock, initially through forest of spruce and fir. Watch for pink flagging tape that marks the route. Once it emerges from the forest, the scenery becomes superb, with views of the peaks that encircle the headwaters of Babcock Creek, the Rockies in the distance, and the Anglo American Trend mine which operated from 2005 until 2015.

A valley of enormous boulders is crossed, thanks to the arduous work of Thomas Clark, who converted the jumble of rock into a trail surface with his pry-bar, and the help of one short bridge over a crevice. A few hundred metres further on there is a magnificent view of the iconic Armada Ridge, a series of gravity-defying rock towers. Further climbing brings you to the level of the Shipyard, and the walking is more level from here on.

The rock formations alternate with flower filled meadows which make for great hiking. Keep an eye out for mountain goats, there is a herd of about 50 in this area that enjoy the exposed cliffs above. Listen for the song-birds common at this elevation and terrain, such as Hermit Thrush, Wilson's

Warbler, Fox Sparrow, and Golden-crowned Sparrow. A sign indicates a spur to the left to Chockstone Ridge. This short side trail leads along the top of one of the rocky ridges, and reaches an obvious end after making use of a chockstone (boulder wedged between two rock walls) to cross a gap.

Further meadows lead into the gap between the Bismarck on the left and Titanic Rock on the right. The views from each of these rock summits are exceptional. For a gentler option, continue along this valley to where it ends at a spectacular viewpoint 100 metres further on.

The massif of the Bismarck is intersected by deep cracks which can be explored. Working your way around the bottom of its cliffs on the southern aspect is also worthwhile; this is a favourite climbing area. Craig Waters has led the climbing initiative here and at Boulder Gardens, and has opened up numerous challenging routes.

The route up to the Titanic crosses the meadow, then climbs steeply before leading onto this rocky promontory. Seen from the Waterline side trail, the resemblance to the sinking ship is obvious. The Titanic narrows as you walk along it, and although the surface is fairly flat, there are enormous drop-offs on either side with no barricades. Gusts of wind are common, so please use caution if you venture right to the prow.

Tarn and Towers Trail

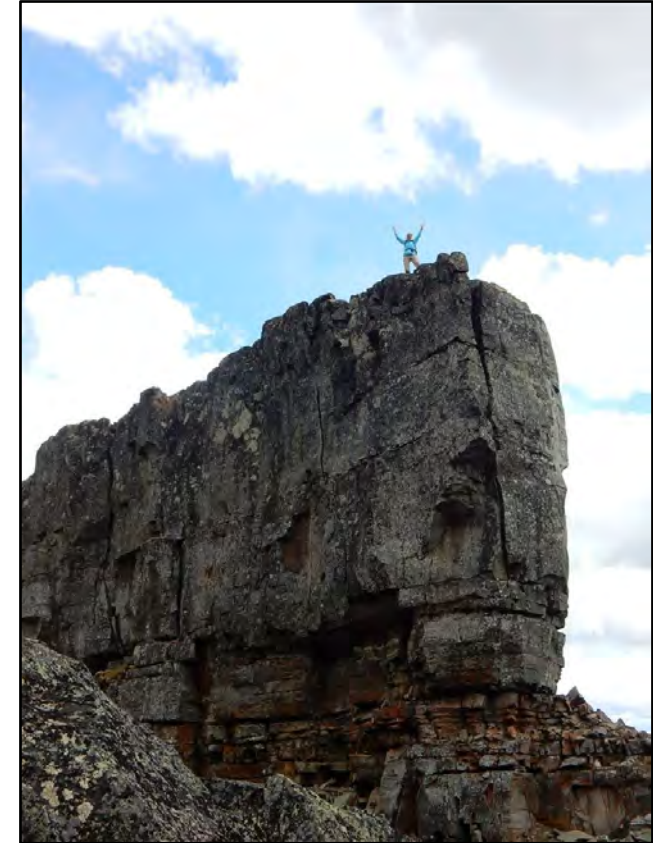
Time/Distance: 0.5 hours / 500 m return

Rating: Easy ●

The Tarn and Towers Trail provides a much shorter option, just 250 m long and fairly level. It leads past a couple of attractive tarns, with boardwalks over the moist areas, and ends at a viewpoint below the towers of Armada Ridge.

The dome shaped mass of Mount Babcock has been explored for its coal since the 1970's, and Quintette Operating Corporation mined for 3 years on its northwest side. The top of the mountain is composed of a thick bed of resistant sandstone which dips to the south. This has slid on soft layers of clay in the underlying shales. Pieces of the sandstone have broken off during this process, creating the ridges and labyrinths of large blocks and rocks that form the Shipyard.

Shipyard-Titanic Hiking Trails



Shipyard-Titanic

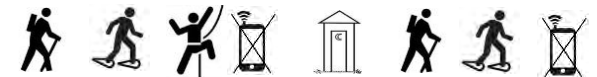
Rating: Moderate ■

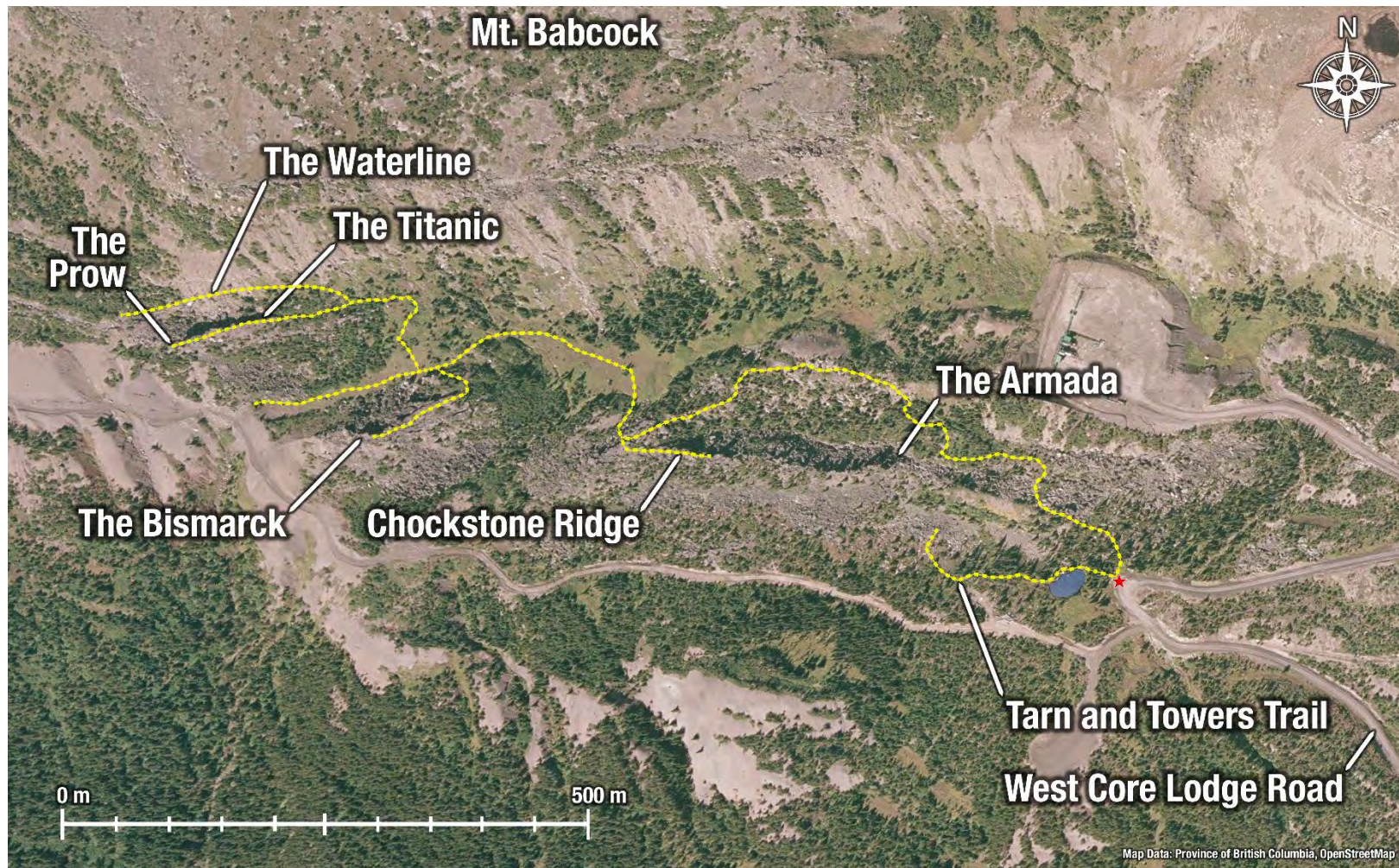
Time: 2-3 hours

Tarn and Towers

Rating: Easy ●

Time: 0.5 hours





Shipyard-Titanic and Tarn and Towers Hiking Trails

- *These routes are in bear country; travel in groups and make noise*
- *Please pack out what you packed in*
- *Use caution near cliff edges, especially when wet*

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Photo Gallery website: www.wnms.ca

Photo Credit: Kevin Sharman Map: Steven Tory



Tarn and Towers Trail

Tumbler Ridge Visitor Centre (250) 242-3123

Tourism website: www.TumblerRidge.ca