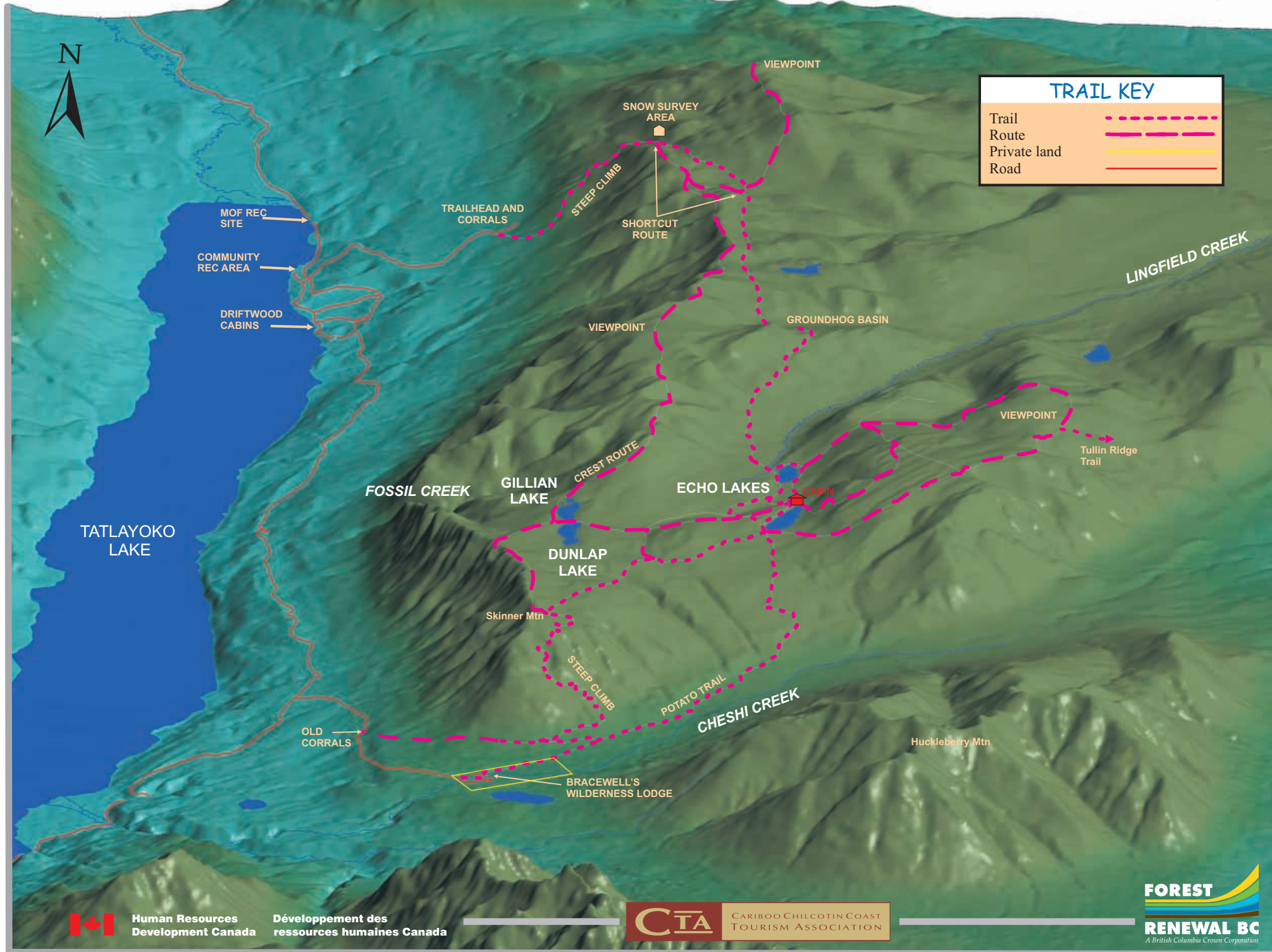


POTATO RANGES

TRAIL DESCRIPTION



Most hikers will want to take the Potato Crest Trail, avoiding cattle entirely (stick to lower trail in poor weather).

The Potato Ranges can be explored from north to south or vice versa. There are also several good options to complete loops within the Potato Ranges, from the south end. A well used trail off the east ridge of the Potato Mountains (Tullin Ridge trail) follows open alpine ridges to Tullin Mountain in nearby Ts'il'os Park. Other routes, not mapped, connect to the trail along the west side of Chilko Lake. Information on these options is beyond the scope of this guide. Please check with BC Parks in Williams Lake before planning to hike trails within Ts'il'os Park. The main Potato trail is described below, beginning at the south trailhead and heading north.

After checking on local conditions, leave your vehicle at Bracewells' Lodge and head north-east on the cattle trail, remembering to close gates. If the weather is fair, the best route is to immediately climb up through the subalpine to the Crest trail (see map). Alternatively, follow the main Potato trail as it begins a gentle ascent up Cheshi Creek through a mature fir forest. The trail continues to climb with steeper grades (+25%) as it forks north into the Potato Mountains. At about 1760 meters elevation the trail enters the subalpine meadows at the south end of Echo Lake. Continue to the north end of Echo Lake to Bracewell's cabin. This is a good spot for a rest, shelter or a warm up. Please leave the cabin tidy and split some wood if you make a fire.

From Echo Lake options include exploration of several trails and routes from the cabin extending east up to Tullin Ridge or west up to Dunlap-Gillan Lakes and the Potato Crest Route. Hiking up the main trail and heading back south along the Potato Crest Route to Bracewells' Lodge (see map) is one recommended loop. The main Potato trail continues north from Echo Lake contouring up the west slopes above Lingfield Creek for 4km and then dropping into Groundhog Basin. After a steep climb out, the main trail continues north on gently sloping alpine meadows for 5 km and then descends off the mountain for 6 km on a moderately steep grade to the north access (see trailhead info).

Before descending into a meadow system at the north end of the trail, we recommend you take a short-cut off the ridge. This by-pass (no trail) heads down through semi-open forest, in a north-westerly direction, to once again link up with the main Potato (cattle) trail coming up from Tatlayoko Lake, on the west side of the Potato Mountains. Taking this route will avoid any conflict with cattle grazing near the wet meadows and also a muddy section of trail. The cattle trails winds its way down the west side of the mountains and ends at a set of corrals on an old logging road. See map reverse for north trailhead description and inset map.

If heading up the main cattle trail from the north trailhead, take the trail cut-off in reverse. Finding the best spot to cut off is a bit tricky. If you reach an old snow survey area on the trail, you've gone too far. One good spot to head up to the Crest is after the cattle trail passes through an old burn (about 1km south) of the snow course. Head southeast up through a semi-open forest to the Crest trail and continue south along the ridge. The other option is to head further up the trail and cut-off about 200-300 meters before the snow survey. This route involves more bush-whacking.

