

## Puntzi Air Base

There is a weather station on well known Puntzi Mountain that has recorded some of the coldest winter temperatures in North America. Here there are the remnants of a radar station built by the US Air Force in the 1950's as one of the thirty-four stations in the Pine Tree Defense line, set up to defend against attack of North America by the USSR. With a range of 150 miles, the radar scanned the skies day and night and base personnel were in constant contact with the Air Defense base in Seattle and the Canadian Air Force base at Comox. There was also a 6000 foot airstrip built, the second longest in British Columbia at the time. You can still take the Airport Road to the summit of Puntzi Mountain for a spectacular 360 degree view of the Chilcotin Plateau. The base was eventually turned over to the Canadian Government and was closed down completely in 1966.



Photo courtesy Andrew MacMath

## Puntzi Lake

Puntzi Lake is located along Highway 20 about 35 miles or 60 kilometres west of Alexis Creek. The lake is 5 miles or 8km off the highway after you turn off at Chilanko Forks. At over 3000 ft. in elevation, Puntzi Lake is a high plateau lake set among rolling hills with Puntzi Mountain the highest point of land nearby. Puntzi Lake is 7miles (11km) by 3 miles (5km) across and is an extremely deep



Photo courtesy Andrew MacMath

lake for the Chilcotin, averaging 100 to 120 feet in depth and going to 145 feet at its deepest point.

There is excellent fishing for kokanee and rainbow trout in the lake. There is an annual fishing derby which is held the second weekend in July. Call local operators for details.

Puntzi Lake offers many recreational activities. There are numerous quad

trails, bike trails, canoeing, kayaking and let's not forget the bird watching. There is a small island on Puntzi lake which is a protected site for nesting pelicans. It can be covered in the huge white birds during nesting season as well as for feeding. It is an amazing sight to see!



Photo courtesy Andrew MacMath

## Wildlife Management Area

Puntzi Lake is an important lake for the American White Pelican as a source of food early in the spring and throughout the summer. Trumpeter Swans arrive to feed in the fall until the lake freezes over. Near the airstrip at Puntzi Lake, there is the Chilanko Wildlife Management area. This protected marshland is home to 50 different species of birds in the summer, caribou in the spring, and an excellent moose habitat year round, making for some great photo opportunities.

The Puntzi area is sponsored by:

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