

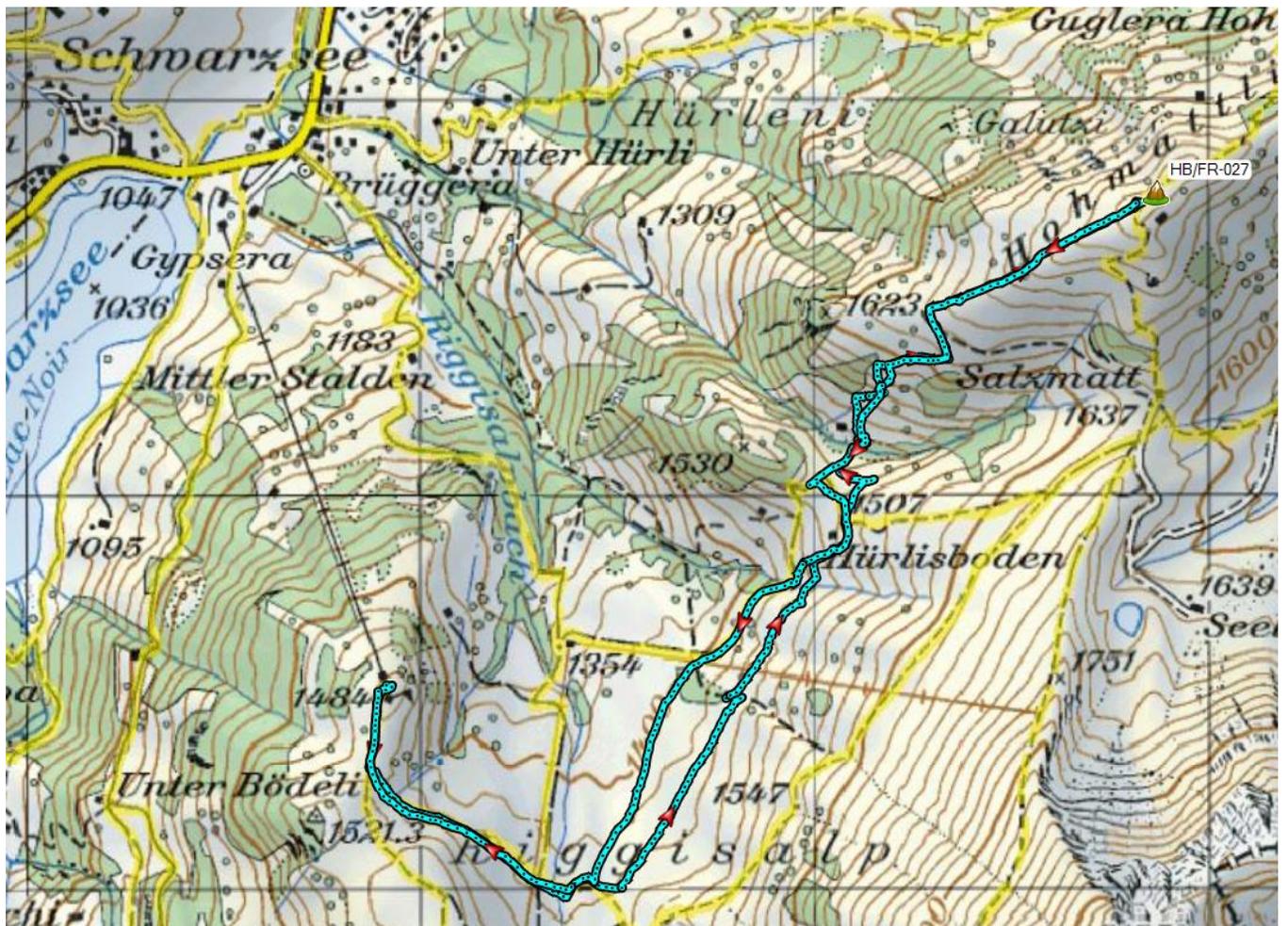
HB/FR-027 Hohmattli

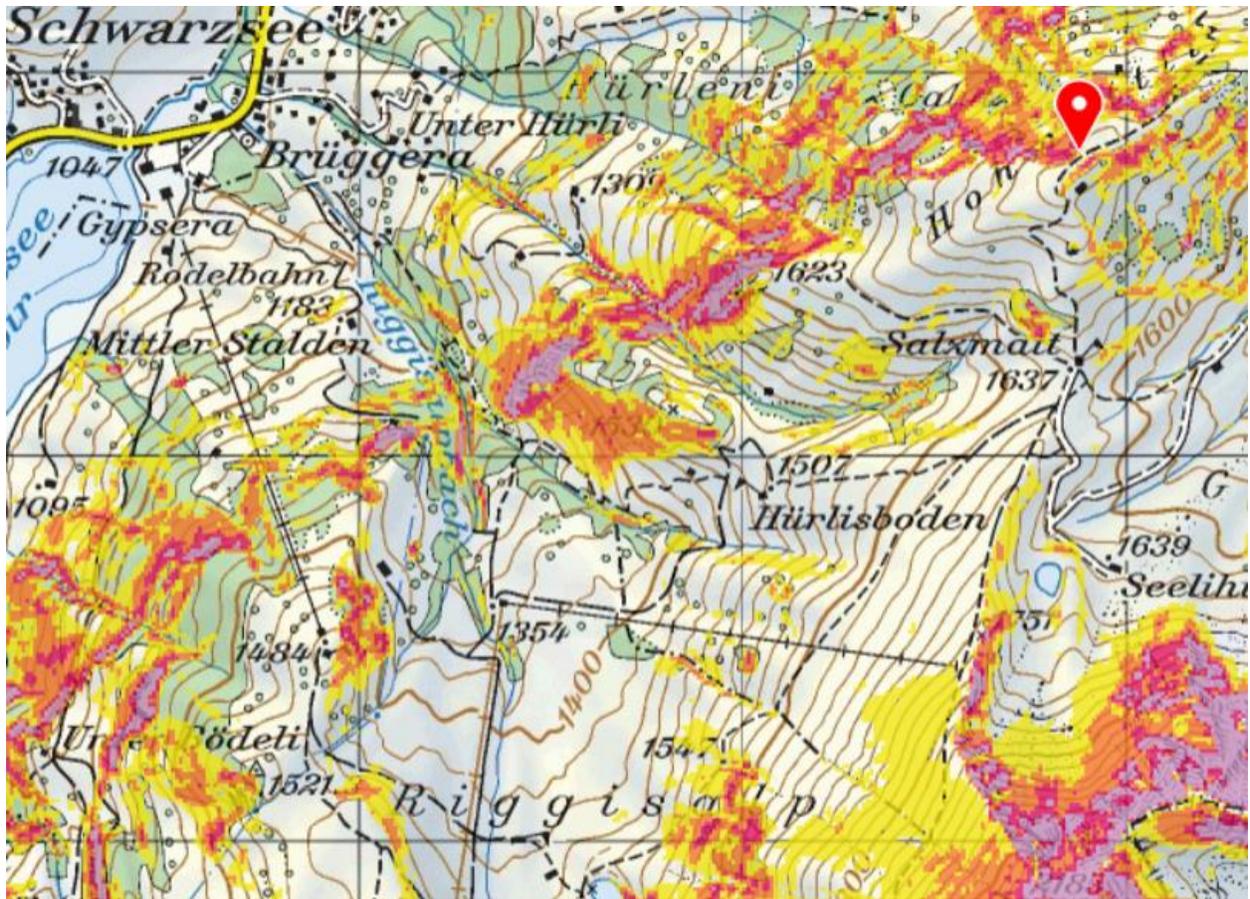
February 14, 2015

by Paul Schreier, HB9DST

Summary: Not technically difficult, but strenuous; all the work is in the second half of the ascent. I would avoid this hike if there is a large amount of new snow.

The point of departure is in Schwarzsee at the valley station of the Riggisalp chair lift (ample parking available, bus connections 1x per hour from Fribourg). This is a popular ski area for families with many slopes perfect for children. Skiing conditions this day were quite good.





Color indicating slopes > 30 degrees. The route chosen keeps you away from dangerous hillsides.



Looking at FR-027 Hohmattli from the chair lift summit station. Before you can start the ascent, though, you must go down 60 meters into the valley and then start back up.

From the chair lift station, you follow a prepared trail almost the whole way to the first main waypoint, the cluster of buildings at Riggisalp. This involves a drop of roughly 60 meters. From here, on this day there were not yet any snowshoe trails, so I made my own way, which was not too terribly difficult because the snow was still pretty solid at this point in the day. You hike northeast to just under the next chair lift, and then the real fun begins. You start hiking up to the next major waypoint, the mountain restaurant at Hürliisboden. After that there is a small descent to a stream bed, and from then on it's straight up to the summit.



Just in front of the trees in the center is the mountain restaurant at Hürliisboden, the second major waypoint. Behind it is the destination.

The ascent is somewhat steep; you can't really go straight up in the snow but must instead zig-zag. Fortunately, there were some ski tracks going up that I could follow, and this made my hike much easier. If I had to blaze my own snowshoe trail, it would have been much, much tougher work than it already was. And if there had been plenty of deep new snow, it might be a bit dangerous and even more work. The final 100 meters or so is somewhat less steep than climbing up the approach hill, a welcome break.



Following the zig-zag ski tracks up the hill leading to the summit.

I finally made it to the summit in 2.5 hours and was pretty exhausted (true, I'm not in the greatest shape at the moment). And although the absolute difference in altitude from the chair lift to the summit is 366 meters, I actually climbed 466 meters -- and it felt like a lot more, because all the work is in the second half. There are no exposed spots at all, so this is a T2 from a technical standpoint (T3 with caution if there is lots of fresh snow).



My antenna pole lashed to one of the cow wire poles at the summit.

The whole trip up and while operating I saw only one person on the summit, also on snowshoes. This day there was plenty of sun and occasional wind, but actually quite comfortable with the strong sun.

On the summit there are plenty of cow wire poles that you can use to support a mast. I had a very successful activation with nice pileups on both 40m and 30m. The views from the summit are quite nice, and you're directly across from Kaiseregg, FR-008 (summer only).

Upon initially reaching the summit I said to myself, "I'm so tired that I wish the whole expedition was done," but I knew I had the return trip ahead of me. I thought the trip down would be considerably faster, but it was not as fast as I had expected. The strong sun had softened the snow, and so the trip down the hillside was very slippery and I had to watch every step. Going down I didn't have to zig-zag nearly as much, and this saved time.

Luckily on the trip from underneath the chair lift near Hürliboden across the meadow to Riggisalp there were now some snowshoe tracks, which made the hike considerably easier. Even so, when you start getting near Riggisalp again you realize that you have the 60 meters ahead of you to climb to the chair lift station, and that was discouraging. But one step at a time I made it. It then occurred to me that it might have been smarter to hike the whole way down to the valley station; this is what people on hikr.org had done. In any case, my timing was very good -- I was able to pack up my poles and snowshoes in a leisurely manner, ride the chair lift to the valley station and only had to wait 10 minutes for the bus to Fribourg.



As you approach Riggisalp on the way back, you realize that you have to climb back up to the chair lift station (visible just to the left of the large group of trees on the far left). It looks a lot more than the 60 meters of elevation on the map. Boy, was that discouraging after a long day!