

Farnli HB/BE-108 and Napf HB/BE-154

Sunday, October 13, 2013

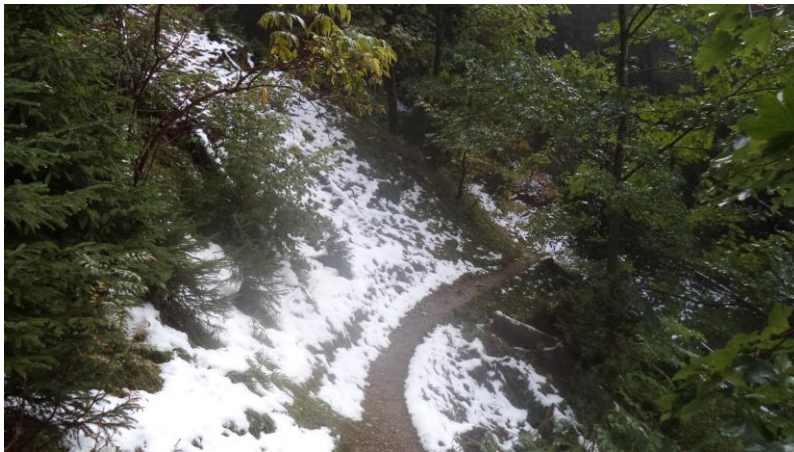
by Paul, HB9DST

Summary:

Napf, a very famous summit in central Switzerland, is a straightforward activation. With Farnli, however, it's far easier to approach the summit from the east than from the west.

The special "Napf hikers' bus" runs only on Sundays, and only from early May until late October, so I figured this was my last chance this season to take advantage of it. I took the first bus up, arriving at Lüdneralp at roughly 9:30 a.m., and took the last bus down, departing at 4:16 p.m. from Mettlenalp. Those times, along with a total hiking distance of more than 14 km up and down trails, left me only enough time for brief activations of the two summits, but enough time to work through the small pileups.

For once the weather forecast was correct. There was rain overnight and dense clouds the next morning but with clearing predicted. On the train from Lucerne going north, I saw more than a little snow on some mountaintops, and I even saw some people with snowshoes. I asked myself if I was properly equipped and might even have to abandon my plans for the day. As it turns out, there was snow on the ground but the trails were clear, but with plenty of mud. Late in the morning the sun started peeking through the fog, and by noon it turned into a beautiful fall day. Temperatures were obviously quite mixed. During my first activation I had three layers of clothes and needed my gloves, and I felt like this was my first winter activation of the season; for the second activation I needed just a shirt and was very comfortable.



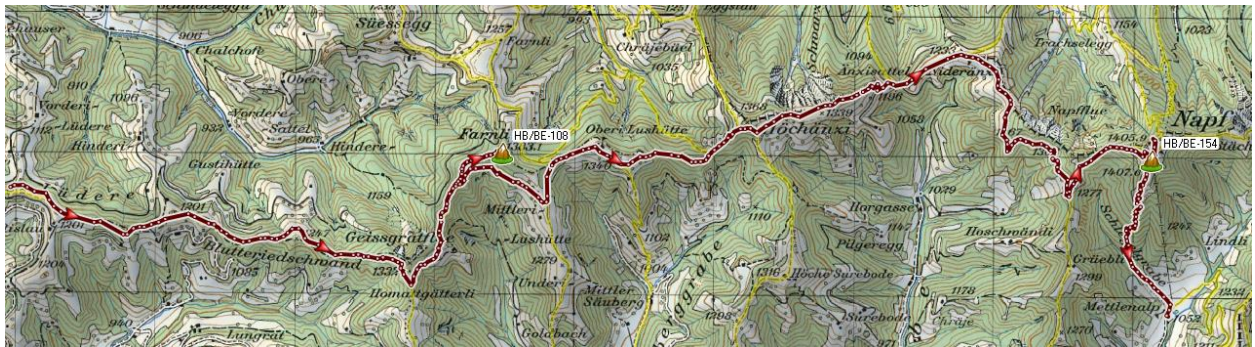
Trail conditions in the morning before the sun came out.

The trail from Lüdneralp to Napf is very popular, and lots of people do exactly what I did: take the bus up to one spot and then return from the other. While hiking between BE-108 and BE-154, I shared the trail with the Napf marathon, having to give way to runners many times, which slowed me down somewhat. It was fun watching the cowbell ringers lined up to encourage the runners on their way.

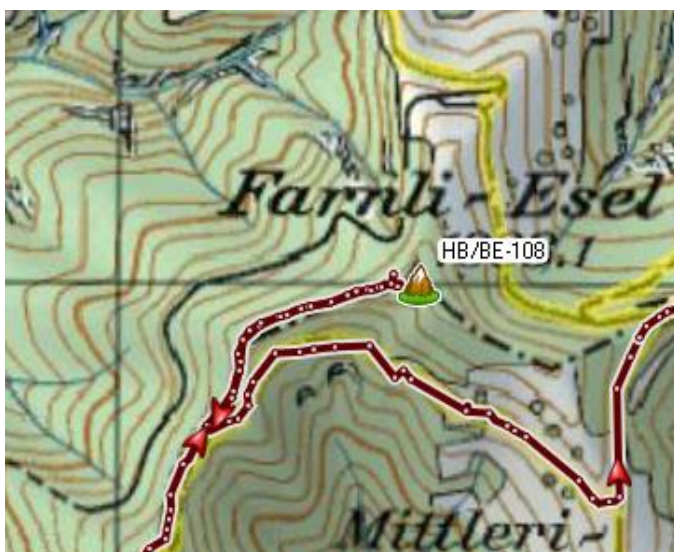


Snowmen in mid October? Fortunately the trail had no snow, but plenty of mud. Cowbell ringers encouraging the runners.

The activation of Napf BE-154 is very straightforward and doesn't warrant much discussion. T2 trails the whole way, nothing particularly dangerous. Napf is a very popular spot, but even so the activation zone is so large you can always find a spot to erect an antenna without disturbing other people.



The real reason for this report is to talk about BE-103. As you can see on the map, the only approach is to walk along the E-W ridge, which runs roughly parallel to the main trail (see expanded view). Because I started out from Lüdneralp and was hiking west to east, it made sense to approach the summit from that direction. It turns out this was not the optimal choice.



It turns out that this is the difficult route. First, under the conditions (steep, wet, patchy snow) it was slow, tricky going in some spots. There's not much of a trail at all in spots. Worst of all, the final approach to the summit is extremely steep. It would be dangerous in the best of conditions, but today it was downright treacherous. Luckily, my GPS told me that at the base of this last approach I was still in the activation zone (whew!). But this summit has been activated 10 times -- how did they do it?



The initial approach to BE-103 from the west.



At the base of BE-103 as seen when coming from the west. Under good conditions very difficult; today, downright treacherous.

Well, when I continued my hike and saw the approach from the east, it seemed much easier to do. Summary: when activating BE-103, do yourself a favor and approach it from the Napf side.



The approach to BE-103 from the east (Napf side).

I then proceeded to Napf, did my activation and then rushed down to the bus stop, arriving with just as the last bus for the day was starting to load -- just a tad too close for comfort!



Napf in sight at the top of the hill in the distance.



My operating position on Napf, where there is plenty of room no matter how many people there are.