



# Kootenay National Park Backcountry Guide

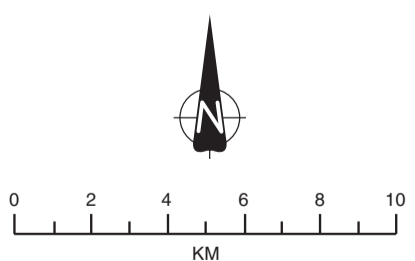
YOHO NATIONAL PARK

BANFF NATIONAL PARK

Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPGROUNDS					
Number	Location	# sites	Privy	Food storage pole	Fire box
4	Helmet/Ochre Jct.	6	X	X	X
6	Helmet Falls	18	X	X	
10	Tumbling Creek	18	X	X	
11	Numa Creek	18	X	X	X
12	Floe Lake	18	X	X	
16	Verdant Creek	6			X

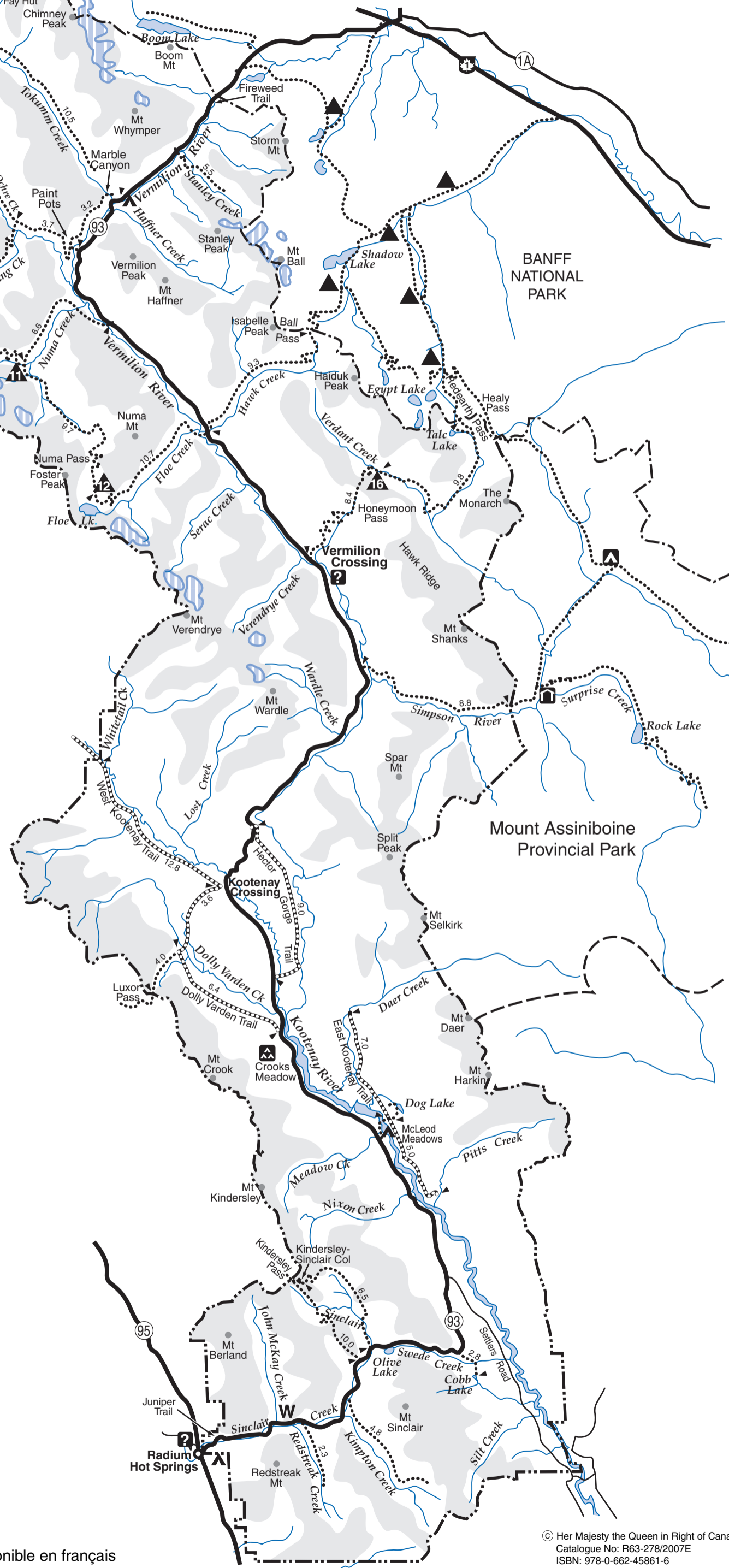
LEGEND	
Paved Highway	
Gravel Road	
Trail	
Distance indicator	
Mt Biking Permitted	
Information	
Warden Office	
Frontcountry Campground	
Group Camping	
Backcountry Campground	
Warden Station	
Hut	
River, Creek, Lake	
Glacier	
Mountain Peak	
Park Boundary	



Note: distances on map are indicated in kilometres

This is not a topographical map and is not suitable for route-finding.

Aussi disponible en français



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**K**OOTENAY National Park protects a landscape unique to the rugged west slopes of the central Canadian Rockies. This guide provides basic information for backcountry visitors. For more information or advice please contact the park.

Your stewardship is vital to maintain the integrity and beauty of this special wild place. Please practice minimum impact and observe these key regulations:

- Pack out all garbage including food waste, diapers, tampons and sanitary napkins.
- Do not feed or approach wildlife — this harms their health, alters their natural behaviour, and may expose you to danger.
- Keep your pet on leash at all times.
- By law: rocks, fossils, horns, antlers, wildflowers, mushrooms, nests and all other natural or historical objects in a national park are protected. Leave them in their natural setting for others to discover and enjoy.
- Angling requires a National Park Fishing Permit.

#### PLAN AHEAD

- Read this guide, other pertinent park brochures or web pages, and guide books.
- Obtain a topographical map.
- Contact a Parks Canada information centre for current information and to obtain permits. A current trail report is posted on the Kootenay National Park web site.
- Be aware of park regulations that affect you.

#### MANAGE RISK

- Know your physical limits. Safety is your personal responsibility. Be prepared for possible hazards and always exercise caution.
- Ensure that you have adequate food, water, clothing and equipment for your trip. Consider your need for these important basics: first-aid kit, map and compass, flashlight, bear spray, fire starter, knife, sunglasses, whistle and a bivouac shelter.
- If you are planning an activity which you feel is hazardous, you may choose to complete a **Voluntary Safety Registration**. If you do register out, you must by law, register your return. Registration will ensure the initiation of a search if you are overdue. Backcountry travellers should be prepared for at least one day more than their planned trip. Inform friends or family of your itinerary.
- Read the brochure: *Bears and People: a guide to safety and conservation on the trail*.

- Boil or filter **drinking water**.
- Mountain **weather** is unpredictable. Be prepared for rain or snow at any time, particularly at higher elevations. Above 1500 metres, freezing temperatures are not uncommon, even in summer.

#### RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT

- To dispose of human waste where no facilities are provided, select a spot at least 70 m (seven bus lengths) away from trails, campsites and water sources. Dig a shallow hole with a stick or heel of your boot. Cover the hole with soil or rocks afterwards. Pack out used toilet paper or burn it if the fire hazard is not extreme.
- Do not wash yourself or your dishes in streams and lakes – carry the water to your campsite and wash there. Minimize use of soap; even biodegradable soaps are pollutants. Strain out the last bits of food waste and pack them out. Dispose of grey water on land, well away from water sources and campsites.

#### HORSES

Some trails are open for horse use. Check ahead at park information centres or the Warden Office for current information and regulations.

#### MOUNTAIN BIKING

In Kootenay National Park, former fireroads have been converted to trails. These are the trails in the park where biking is permitted. Please ride with care, bike bear-aware, and give right of way to hikers and horse parties.

**East Kootenay Trail**, two sections of this former fireroad are maintained:

**1. Pitts Creek to Daer Creek** ..... 12 km one way  
Begins at McLeod Meadows picnic area via the Dog Lake trail. Biking is not permitted on the Dog Lake trail. Note: there is no bridge over Daer Creek.

**2. Hector Gorge** ..... 9 km one way  
Trail starts 1.8 km north of Dolly Varden picnic area.

**West Kootenay Trail** ..... 12.8 km to park boundary  
Trail starts at Kootenay Crossing.

**Dolly Varden Trail** ..... 10 km one way  
Trails starts at Kootenay Crossing or Crooks Meadow Group Campground.

#### BACKCOUNTRY ACCOMMODATION

The Alpine Club of Canada is rebuilding the Fay Hut (2005). Contact their Canmore, Alberta office for current information.

#### BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING

##### Wilderness Pass

Anyone planning an overnight trip into the backcountry by foot, mountain bike or horse, at any time of year, must have a Wilderness Pass. There is no charge for children 16 years and under. You can purchase a Wilderness Pass from Parks Canada visitor centres or the Parks Canada's office in downtown Calgary. An annual Wilderness Pass, valid for one year from the date of purchase, is also available. Camping is permitted only at designated campgrounds. Climbers on routes that cannot be completed in one day require a Wilderness Pass to bivouac.

##### Reservations

Backcountry campsites can be reserved three months in advance of your first day of stay. A non-refundable reservation fee applies.

June to September: phone 250.347.9505

October to May: phone 403.522.1264

Group size can be no greater than ten people, including guides and leaders.

##### Campfires

Campfires are allowed only at campsites where fireboxes are provided. Keep fires small and use only the wood provided. In all other campsites, stoves are required. Gas burning stoves are cleaner and more efficient than open fires for cooking.

##### Wildlife Safety

To reduce your campsite's attractiveness to bears and other wildlife, all food, garbage, toiletries and cooking equipment must be suspended from the food storage cables provided at designated campgrounds. Prepare meals away from your tent.

#### DIRECTORY

• **Kootenay National Park:** Box 220, Radium Hot Springs, B.C.

V0A-1M0 250.347.9615 E-mail: Kootenay.Info@pc.gc.ca  
www.pc.gc.ca/kootenay (Mountain Time Zone)

• **Kootenay Visitor Centre,** P.O. Box 220, Radium Hot Springs, B.C. V0A 1M0 250.347.9505

• **Kootenay Warden Office,** McKay Creek Compound, Hwy 93S 250.347.9361

• **Kootenay Park Lodge Visitor Centre,**  
info@kootenayparklodge.com 403.762.9196

• **Parks Canada,** Calgary, Alberta 403.292.4401,

• **Friends of Kootenay National Park:** 250.347.6525

• **Alpine Club of Canada:** 403.678.3200  
www.alpineclubofcanada.ca

• **British Columbia Parks:** 250.489.8540

www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/index.html

• **Environment Canada** weather forecasts: 403.762.2088  
weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca

• **Leave No Trace:** www.LNT.org

# Trail Descriptions

Note: Trail distances are one way.

#### SHORT HIKES (1 to 2 hours)

**Juniper Trail** (elevation gain 106 m) ..... **3.2 km**  
The trailhead kiosk is located in the parking lot across from the Radium Hot Springs Pools. The route follows the north rim of Sinclair Canyon and then descends to Sinclair Creek and the highway. Walk 1.4 km back to the trailhead via the sidewalk.

**Redstreak Creek Trail** (elevation gain 193 m)..... **2.3 km**  
Starts in a small parking area 4.3 km east of the park's west gate. The hike starts at a footbridge across Sinclair Creek.

**Cobb Lake Trail** (elevation loss 190 m)..... **2.8 km**  
The trail descends 1.7 km to cross Swede Creek before climbing slightly to the lake.

**Dog Lake Trail** (elevation gain minimal) ..... **2.6 km**  
From the picnic area, the trail travels through McLeod Meadows Campground to cross two bridges over Kootenay River. It then crosses the East Kootenay trail and continues on to the lake.

#### DAY HIKES (4 to 8 hours)

**Kimpton Creek Trail** (elevation gain 335 m) ..... **4.8 km**  
Starts at the Sinclair Creek footbridge downstream from the small parking area 7 km east of the park's west gate.

**Sinclair Creek Trail**  
(elevation gain 937 m to Kindersley-Sinclair Col) .... **6.5 km**  
A large snow patch is often encountered just below the col by early season hikers. Follow the markers. The trail along the ridge to the north eventually drops to Kindersley Pass and follows the Kindersley Pass trail back to the highway. The complete circuit is 16.5 km. Add another 1.2 km up the highway to return to the Sinclair Creek trailhead.

**Kindersley Pass Trail** (elevation gain 1135 m to Kindersley-Sinclair Col) ..... **10 km**  
This trail offers a longer, gentler route to the Kindersley-Sinclair Summit col than the Sinclair Creek trail. Kindersley Pass is on the park boundary at kilometre 8.4. The steepest part of the route is beyond the pass where the trail climbs the flanks of Kindersley Peak to join the Sinclair Creek trail.

**Stanley Glacier Trail** (elevation gain 395 m) ..... **5.5 km**  
The trail gently switchbacks up into a hanging valley. Once in the valley, the route is fairly level along Stanley Creek.

#### MULTI-DAY HIKES (2 to 3 days)

**Rockwall Trail** ..... **55.6 km**  
The Rockwall trail has two main points of departure: the Floe Lake trail to Floe Lake Campground (#12) on the south end; and the Helmet Creek trail to Helmet Falls Campground (#6) on the north end.

The Rockwall trail travels beneath massive limestone walls and hanging glaciers, and traverses three alpine passes. The valleys between these passes each have a trail running up them from the Kootenay Parkway. This allows hikers to enter or exit the Rockwall trail at multiple points. These intervening valleys also allow portions of the Rockwall trail to be traveled on a day hike basis.

**Floe Lake Trail** (elevation gain 697 m) ..... **10.7 km**  
After crossing the Vermilion River, the trail follows a very gentle grade for the first 4 km. Fire swept this forest in 2003. At approximately 8 km, the trail begins a series of steep switchbacks up the headwall. When the trail levels off, it passes through an alpine setting enroute to Floe Lake Campground (#12). The trail continues 2.7 km through more alpine meadows to Numa Pass (2355 m), the highest point on the Rockwall Trail. Numa Creek Campground (#11) is a further 7.5 km down Numa Pass trail.

**Numa Creek Trail** (elevation gain 90 m) ..... **6.6 km**  
This forested trail provides easy access to the famous Rockwall. Beyond the bridge across Numa Creek, the trail climbs gradually through lush sub-alpine forest to a junction with Numa Pass and Tumbling Pass trails. Numa Creek Campground (#11) is less than 500 m to the left. Continue beyond the campground for 7.5 km to Numa Pass. Floe Lake is a further 2.7 km south.

**Tumbling Creek/Helmet & Ochre Creeks Circuit** . **38.3 km**  
Follow the interpretive trail to the Paint Pots. At km 1.4 is the junction with a trail leading to Marble Canyon. Stay to the left. Tumbling Creek trail junction is at km 3.9, while the junction for the Helmet Creek trail is at 6.2 km.

**Helmet Creek trail** (elevation gain 258 m) ..... **8.4 km**  
At km 6.2 on the Ochre Creek trail, turn left onto the Helmet Creek trail and pass through the Helmet/Ochre Junction Campground (#4) to cross and follow Helmet Creek. Helmet Creek trail ends at the junction with the Goodsir Pass and the Rockwall Pass trail. Just to the left beyond this point is Helmet Falls Campground (#6). The

#### IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, CALL PARK DISPATCH (24 hrs): 403.762.4506

Cell phone range is limited in the mountains.

Goodsir Pass trail leads north to Yoho National Park (7.6 km to park boundary).

**Tumbling Creek trail** (elevation gain 427 m) ..... **7 km**  
At km 3.9 on the Ochre Creek trail, take the left fork to follow the Tumbling Creek trail. Tumbling Falls is at km 6.1, just before the trail switchbacks up to Tumbling Creek Campground (#10). A 12.8 km section of the Rockwall Pass trail connects Tumbling Creek and Helmet Falls.

**Tokumm Creek to Fay Hut** (elevation gain 612 m).. **12.8 km**  
The trail starts at the Marble Canyon parking lot, turns right 30m from the parking lot to follow Tokumm Creek upstream. The trail climbs above the canyon to a short road bed then back to a trail. At 10.5 km the trail to Fay Hut branches to the right for a steep 2.5 km climb.

**Simpson River Trail** (elevation gain 138 m to park boundary) ..... **8.8 km**  
Park 5.8 km south of Vermilion Crossing. Horses must ford the Vermilion River at the trailhead. The trail travels the southern edge of the 2001 Mount Shanks Fire. It also provides access to Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park. Contact British Columbia Parks for permit information.

**Hawk Creek Trail** (elevation gain 854 m) ..... **9.3 km**  
This trail begins on the east side of Highway 93 and offers a route to Banff National Park. Fire swept through here in 2003.

##### Verdant Creek/Talc Lake Trail

**Honeymoon Pass** (elevation gain 715 m) ..... **5.6 km**  
**Redearth Pass** (elevation gain 828 m) ..... **18.2 km**  
*This trail has unbridged creek crossings. Caution is advised.*

This trail should be reserved for travellers who enjoy solitude and the challenge of a wilderness trail. The trail climbs steadily through burned forest (2003) for 5.6 km to Honeymoon Pass. It drops 2.5 km to Verdant Creek and soon crosses to Verdant Creek Campground (#16). It continues along Verdant Creek, crossing several times, before turning up East Verdant Creek. The trail climbs steeply to Redearth Pass. It continues on, vaguely in some places, to Banff National Park. An indistinct junction with the steep 1.2 km Talc Lake trail is just beyond the park boundary.