Motorists may stop to view wildlife from the road but they must park well off the travelled section on the paved shoulder. The animals are somewhat accustomed to man but they are still wild and unpredictable, making it dangerous to feed or approach them.

The road is kept open during the winter months. However, it may be closed for short periods due to avalanche hazards or dangerous driving conditions. Please check with the Western Park Gate, Park Headquarters or the local R.C.M.P. for the latest information on road conditions.

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Sun, cloud, rain and snow set shifting moods against the mountain background of Kootenay National Park. Each trip is a little different from the last as the play of weather on mountains, valleys, glaciers, rivers and forests creates endless combinations of atmosphere.

Although the Parkway is meant to show visitors the features of Kootenay from the comfort of a car, those who care to explore will find it also gives access to trails, canyons, hot springs, campgrounds and picnic sites.

The history of the Park is to a large extent the history of the road. Sir James Hector, who was the first white man to travel this area when he came through Vermilion Pass in 1858, noted in his journal that the route was the best for a wagon road that he had discovered in his explorations.

However, it wasn’t until the early 1900’s that settlers in the Columbia River Valley began pressing for a route through the Kootenay and Vermilion Valleys from Lake Windermere to Banff. Construction began in 1911 with the British Columbia Government and the Canadian Pacific Railway starting on their side and the Dominion Government starting from Banff National Park.

Mount Stanley

The First World War was instrumental in stopping construction in 1914 after the Province had completed about 15 miles and the Dominion reached the Vermilion Pass summit.

After the War, when a shortage of funds threatened to cancel the project entirely, R. Randolph Bruce of Windermere, a mine owner and later Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, proposed that the province turn the land over to the Dominion as a National Park in return for completion of the road. The two governments reached agreement in 1919 with the province granting a five-mile strip on either side of the right-of-way as Park land.

The road was completed in 1923 and has since become both transportation link between British Columbia and Alberta and gateway to the Rocky Mountain National Parks of Kootenay, Banff, Jasper and Yoho.

The Banff-Windermere Parkway provides the opportunity to view the wide variety of wildlife in Kootenay National Park as well as major geographical features such as the Paint Pots ochre beds and Marble Canyon. The mileage guide contained in this pamphlet indicates the points of interest and locations where different species of wildlife may be observed, particularly the animal lick near the halfway point on the Parkway.

Bighorn sheep may be seen in the Radium Hot Springs area while Sinclair Creek, from the Western Gateway to Olive Lake, is the best area for sighting mule deer. Farther up the Park, from McLeod Meadows Campground to the Kootenay Crossing Warden Station is the best area for white-tailed deer. Rocky Mountain goat frequent the soil banks west of the road at the base of Mount Wardle from the Hector Gorge Viewpoint to just beyond the Hector Gorge Picnic Site. If they are not close to the road they may be spotted with binoculars on the steep slopes and rocky cliffs of Mount Wardle. Wapiti are also frequently seen along the road allowance from the lick north through to Marble Canyon.

Moose in animal lick

Goats on Mount Wardle

Spar Mountain

Paint Pots

Natural Bridge — Marble Canyon
Miles from Eisenhower Junction

64.9 Park Entrance and Information Office. For Redstreak Campground turn off Highway 93 and 95. Drive ½ mile south of Junction. Watch for signs.

64.6 South entrance to Sinclair Canyon. Viewpoint of Columbia Valley and Purcell Range in distance. Geographical point of interest.

63.9 Radium Hot Springs Visitor accommodation and facilities.

63.8 Aquacourt, Radium Hot Springs. Park information trails to Sinclair Canyon Viewpoint and Redstreak Campground — 0.6 mile.

62.9 Iron Gates Tunnel.

62.6 Warden Station.

59.7 Kinmount Creek Trail — 3.5 miles.

59.3 Picnic area — Sinclair Creek.

59.0 Kindersley Pass Trail — 4.5 miles.


55.8 Trail to Cobb Lake — 1.7 miles. Fishing. Eastern Brook Trout.

55.5 Viewpoint, Kootenay Valley and Mitchell Range.

53.3 Settlers' Road — 7 miles to park boundary (Secondary road).


47.4 Viewpoint, Mt. Herkin. Named after the first Commissioner of Canada's National Parks.

42.7 Dolly Varden Creek — picnic area. Fishing — cutthroat and Dolly Varden trout.

39.4 Viewpoint, Mt. Assiniboine. Named after the first Commissioner of Canada's National Parks.

35.8 Trail to Cobb Lake — 1.7 miles. Fishing. Eastern Brook Trout.

34.6 Hector Gorge Picnic Area, beside Vermilion River.

30.8 Viewpoint, Rocky Springs emerging from a cave (dry in late summer).

30.5 Viewpoint, animal lick. Moose, elk and mule deer can be observed here.

30.7 Viewpoint, Simpson Monument. (Historical). Simpson River entering Vermilion River from the east.


27.1 Viewpoint, Mt. Assiniboine — 11,870'. Southeast above lower ranges. Visible on clear days only.

25.7 Vermilion River Crossing. Bungalows and gas during the summer months, picnic area. Fishing, cutthroat and Dolly Varden trout.

25.0 Viewpoint, Mt. Verendrye — 10,125', westward.

20.3 Hawk Creek Road Maintenance Camp. Departmental use only. Trail to Floe Lake 6.2 miles west.


12.4 Paint Pots Nature Trail, ⅛ mile. Geological and historical point of interest. Picnic area near parking lot.

10.9 Warden Station — Emergency facilities.

10.7 Marble Canyon Nature Trail, ½ mile. Geological point of interest. Picnic area near parking lot. Tokumm Creek Trail; Kaufmann Lake.

10.6 Marble Canyon Campground.

9.3 Trail to Stanley Glacier.


0.0 Eisenhower Junction

Note: Trail mileages are one way. © indicates Points of Interest as well as Viewpoints.