

Banff National Park
parkscanada.gc.ca

Winter Trails in the Banff Area

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EASY

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING – TRACK SET

1 Castle Junction
8.7 km of trails in area
Trailhead: Castle Junction on the Bow Valley Parkway (1A)
A series of interconnected forested trails that begin at Castle Mountain Bungalows.

Whyte Museum na66-1108

2 Brewster Creek
10.5 km one way to Sundance Lodge
Trailhead: Take Sunshine Road 0.3 km from Trans-Canada Highway to Brewster Creek Trailhead.
Ski along the south side of Healy Creek for 1.7 km to the Brewster Creek junction. This trail follows an old road steadily up through dense forest. A moderate climb turns into a quick ski on the return trip. The turnaround point is at Sundance Lodge.

© Travel Alberta

3 Cascade Valley
3a) 6.4 km one way to Cascade River Bridge
3b) 14.6 km one way to Stoney Creek Bridge
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka parking lot.
Double trackset with skating lane to Cascade River Bridge. Single trackset with pleasant rolling terrain for the remaining route to Stoney Creek Bridge. A sunny trail with good views and a fun downhill return trip.

4 Spray River Trail West and East
4a) 5.7 km one way from Spray River West Trailhead to Spray River Bridge
4b) 5.6 km one way from Spray River Bridge to Spray River East Trailhead (Golf Course Road)
Trailhead: Park at Spray River West Trailhead (behind The Fairmont Banff Springs) or from the east side, start at the Bow Falls day-use area and cross the Spray River Bridge (gated in winter). Trail starts at the Spray River East Trailhead.
The entire trail is double trackset with an additional skating lane on the west side of the river. This trail is the locals' favourite offering rolling terrain in a picturesque river valley, with views of The Fairmont Banff Springs. Bring a snack; there is a picnic spot beside the river at the bridge.

MODERATE

5 Goat Creek and Spray River
18.7 km one way
Trailhead: Goat Creek Trailhead 8 km south of Canmore on Smith-Dorrien Road or Spray River West Trailhead.
The trail can be skied in either direction. Most people choose to start at the Goat Creek Trailhead located just outside the park boundaries above Canmore and ski downhill most of the way to Banff. Vehicle shuttle recommended.

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6 Redearth Creek
10 km one way
Trailhead: Redearth Creek Trailhead, 20 km west of Banff on the Trans-Canada Highway.
The trail climbs gradually through lodgepole pine forests to the Shadow Lake Trail. The last few kilometres to the highway can be exhilarating.

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Be a mountain park steward. Show courtesy to fellow outdoor enthusiasts!

- Do not walk or snowshoe on the track set portion of cross country ski trails. The packed smooth middle is for skate skiing and the groomed tracks are for classic skiing.
- Do not skate-ski on the track set portion of a classic ski trail.
- When climbing, yield the right of way to descending skiers.
- If you fall, move off track as quickly as possible.
- When taking a break, step to the side, out of tracks.
- Leave no trace. Pack out everything you pack in.

DOGS

If you are planning to take your dog out on a trail, please respect the following:

- Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times.
- Dogs are not allowed on the following groomed cross country ski trails: Cascade Valley, Spray River Trail, Goat Creek and Spray River, and Redearth Creek.
- Dogs can add stress to wildlife; the sight of a dog reminds some animals of predators like wolves and coyotes. Keep your dog on a leash at all times to prevent it from chasing wildlife.

Winter, a season to play ...

Welcome to winter in Banff National Park, Canada's first national park. Whether you are here for a family adventure or a relaxing getaway, there is no better way to experience Banff's pristine mountain landscape than on foot. Lace-up your boots, wax up your skis, strap on a pair of snowshoes and enjoy one of our many winter trails.

Whyte Museum v484-na29-46

SNOWSHOEING

7 Johnson Lake Trail
2.8 km loop
Trailhead: Park at Johnston Lake day-use area, walk just past the Johnson Lake picnic area.
Picturesque trail follows the lakeside shoreline. Breathtaking views of Cascade and Rundle mountains. Nestled amongst Douglas fir, spruce and pine trees, visitors can experience the richest biological zone in Banff National Park – the montane ecoregion.

8 Sundance Trail to Sundance Canyon
3.6 km one way
Trailhead: During the renovation of the Cave & Basin National Historic Site park at the recreation grounds and walk to the Sundance trail.
This trail starts just after the Cave and Basin National Historic Site. It offers spectacular views of the Bow Valley and winds through the forest to the Sundance Canyon picnic area.

9 Tunnel Mountain Drive
1.7 km one way
Trailhead: Start at the closed gate at the intersection of Tunnel Mountain Drive and St. Julien Way.
Closed to vehicles in the winter, this route provides splendid snowshoe opportunities with views of Cascade Mountain. It also connects with the Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint trail (#14).

10 Ink Pots via Moose Meadows Trail
5.3 km one way
Trailhead: Moose Meadows Trailhead 27 km west of Banff on the Bow Valley Parkway (1A).
A quiet alternative to the busier Johnston Canyon Trail, this trail climbs through thick forest to an open meadow with brilliantly coloured mineral springs.

© Parks Canada

TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

EASY

- Suitable for any type of visitor.
- Estimated time to complete the trail is no longer than 2 – 3 hours.
- Little or no elevation gain or loss.

MODERATE

- Suitable for most visitors with some experience and at least an average level of fitness.
- Estimated time to complete the trail is no longer than 5 hours.
- May experience moderate elevation gain with some short steep sections.

DIFFICULT

- Suitable for experienced visitors with above average level of fitness.
- Estimated time to complete the trail may exceed 5 hours.
- May experience major elevation gain with long steep sections.

***Note: Easy and moderate trails can become difficult trails due to weather change, icy conditions and poor visibility.**

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Safety is your responsibility. There are always hazards involved with outdoor recreational activities, especially during the winter. Be prepared. Even short trips from the Town of Banff can have serious consequences. Minimize your risk by planning ahead.
- Ask for advice at a Parks Canada Information Centre regarding current trail conditions, weather, and trail classifications.
- Be sure you have the most current information on trail conditions by checking trail reports online or by visiting Parks Canada's Information Centre. The report is updated as conditions change and trails are rated for their overall condition; grooming reports are included for cross country ski trails.
- For a suggested list of appropriate outdoor gear, please visit the Parks Canada website listed below.

AVALANCHES

Travel beyond these trails may take you through avalanche terrain. In such cases, make sure you have the appropriate knowledge, skills and rescue equipment.

For avalanche conditions: visit Parks Canada's Information Centre, or www.pc.gc.ca/banff, and click on the trail conditions report, avalanche bulletin, or visitor information for a downloadable copy of the Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale publication.

Season

Although snow can fall at any time of the year in Banff National Park, optimal skiing, winter walking and snowshoeing opportunities are from late-December to early April.

Winter Walking and Snowshoeing Trails

The winter walking and snowshoeing trails outlined in this publication follow summer hiking trails. They are not groomed or maintained during the winter season and may be slippery. Weather can change quickly and dramatically in Banff National Park. Be prepared to adjust your activity based on current conditions. As a general rule, if there is fresh snow, conditions may be better suited for snowshoeing; if the snow is old and well-travelled, it may be better for winter walking. If you are looking for trails not listed in this publication, visit Parks Canada's Information Centre for additional trip planning assistance.

Symbol indicates that the use of cleats is recommended.

WINTER WALKING

11 Johnston Canyon Trail
11a) 1.1 km one way to the Lower Falls
11b) 2.7 km one way to the Upper Falls
Trailhead: Johnston Canyon day-use area 22 km west of Banff on Bow Valley Parkway (1A).
Travel in the depths of the canyon along walkways that lead to the Lower Falls or the spectacular 30m high frozen Upper Falls. The trail is usually very slippery - cleats are strongly recommended. Travel an additional 3.5 km beyond the Upper Falls to reach the Ink Pots.

12 Stewart Canyon Trail
1.5 km one way
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Trailhead past the day-use area.
A short walk through the Minnewanka day use area will take you to the Stewart Canyon Trailhead. Explore the Cascade River which feeds Banff National Park's largest lake. This trail can be very icy, especially during the spring.

13 Bow River Bridge to Cave and Basin National Historic Site Interpretive Boardwalk/Marsh Loop
1.4 km one way to Cave and Basin from the Bow River Bridge, 2.4 km loop to hike the Marsh.
Trailhead: Start at Bow River Bridge downtown Banff or at the recreation grounds.
A short walk on the south side of the Bow River will take you to the Cave and Basin NHS. While it is closed this winter for renovations, the interpretive boardwalk trail and the Marsh Loop remain open for exploration of unique thermal spring's habitat. A great place for winter birdwatching!

14 Hoodoos Viewpoint
14a) 5.1 km one way Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint
Trailhead: Start at Surprise Corner parking lot on Tunnel Mountain Drive.
14b) 2.3 km one way Douglas Fir Trail to Hoodoos Viewpoint
Trailhead: Start just past Douglas Fir Resort at intersection of Tunnel Mountain Road and Tunnel Mountain Drive.
Description: From Surprise Corner, the trail takes you through forested areas until you reach the Douglas Fir Trail. This sunny trail provides open vistas to the Hoodoos Viewpoint. Keep an eye out for wildlife and watch for icy sections. You can make a loop or return to town along Tunnel Mountain Road.

15 Fenland Trail
2.1 km loop
Trailhead: Fenland Trail parking lot on Mt. Norquay Road.
This is a peaceful interpretive trail under old growth spruce trees. Great for families with young children. For a longer walk (0.9 km one way) from Banff townsite, start at Central Park along the Bow River to Fenland Trailhead east just over the railway tracks on Mt. Norquay Road.

Whyte Museum v469-1346 v469-1346

WILDLIFE

16 Tunnel Mountain Summit
2.4 km one way
Trailhead: Lower parking lot on St. Julien Road below The Banff Centre.
Reach the summit of a mountain in the heart of Banff's townsite. Take in breathtaking views of the Bow and Spray Valleys. This steep trail can be extremely icy. Hiking poles are strongly recommended.

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Winter offers a unique glimpse of wildlife as tracks in the snow reveal the story of their movements. It is a challenge for wildlife to survive through a Rocky Mountain winter, but you can help make it easier. If tracks are observed, do not follow them toward the animal.

If you see wildlife, do not approach; give them lots of space and observe from a distance with binoculars or a telephoto lens.

Lynx
 Wolf
 Deer
 Hare
 Elk

CONTACT INFORMATION

Parks Canada Information Centre:
224 Banff Avenue, 403-762-1550
www.pc.gc.ca/banff

Environment Canada Weather Forecast Recorded Message: 403-762-2088

Weather and Road Reports: Park Radio 101.1FM

Road Conditions: 403-762-1450

Avalanche Bulletin: 1-800-667-1105
www.avalanche.pc.gc.ca

For Banff area maps and guidebooks, visit a retail book outlet in the Town of Banff.

In case of EMERGENCY, call 911 or 403-762-4506 Banff Dispatch. Cell phones are not always reliable throughout the park.

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Également offert en français

RATINGS

- EASY
- MODERATE

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING – TRACK SET

- 1** **Castle Junction**
8.7 km of trails in area, elevation gain 31 m
- 2** **Brewster Creek**
10.5 km one way to Sundance Lodge, elevation gain 173 m
- 3a** **Cascade Valley**
6.4 km one way to Cascade River Bridge, elevation gain 70 m
- 3b** 14.6 km one way to Stoney Creek Bridge, elevation gain 171 m
- 4a** **Spray River Trail West and East**
5.7 km one way from Spray River West Trailhead to Spray River Bridge, elevation gain 18 m
- 4b** 5.6 km one way from Spray River Bridge to Spray River East Trailhead (Golf Course Road), elevation gain 56 m
- 5** **Goat Creek and Spray River**
18.7 km one way, elevation gain 274 m
- 6** **Redearth Creek**
10 km one way, elevation gain 325 m

SNOWSHOEING

- 7** **Johnson Lake Trail**
2.8 km loop, no elevation gain
- 8** **Sundance Trail to Sundance Canyon**
3.6 km one way, elevation gain 77 m
- 9** **Tunnel Mountain Drive**
1.7 km one way, elevation gain 5 m
- 10** **Ink Pots via Moose Meadows Trail**
5.3 km one way, elevation gain 217 m

WINTER WALKING

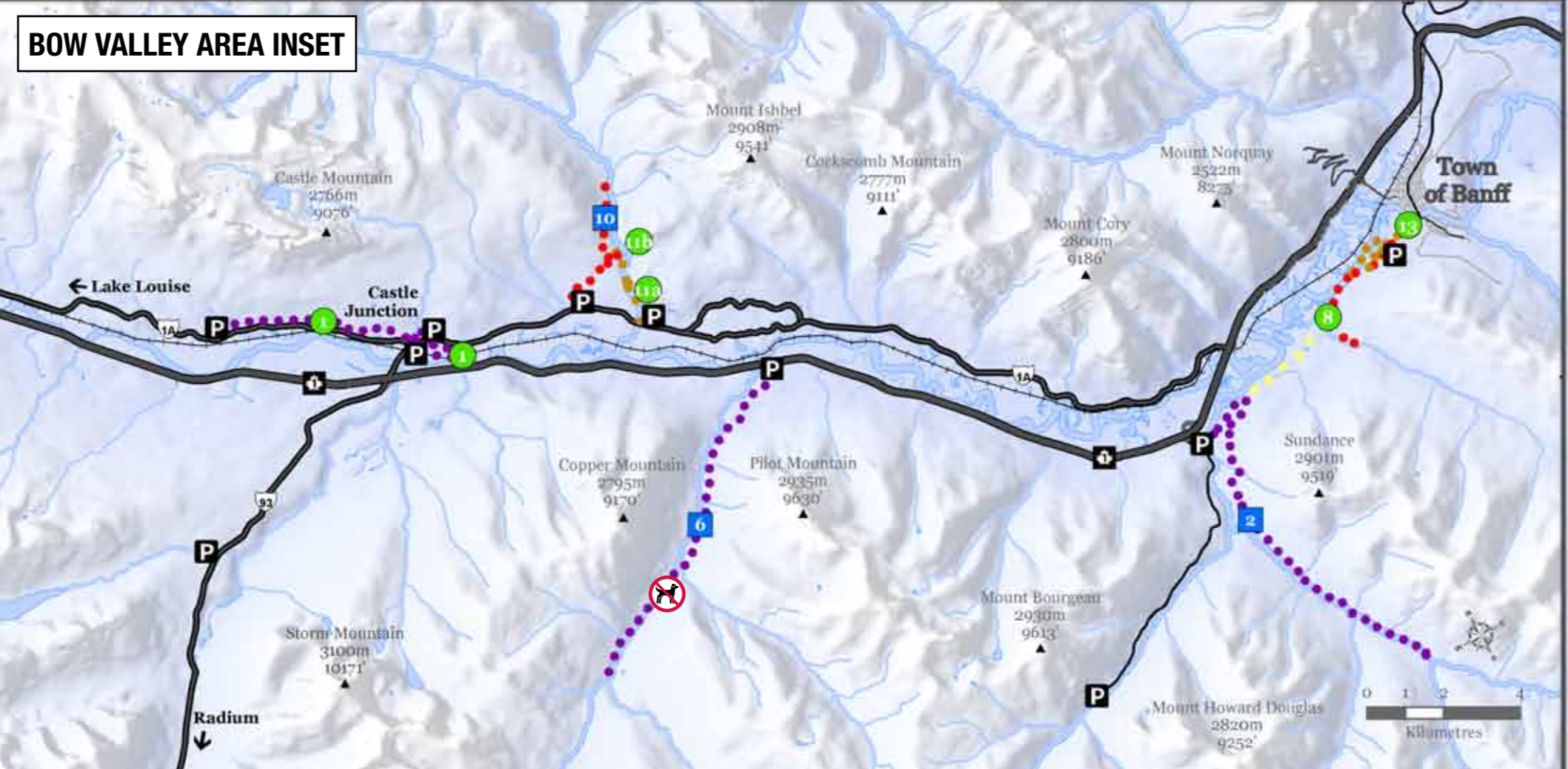
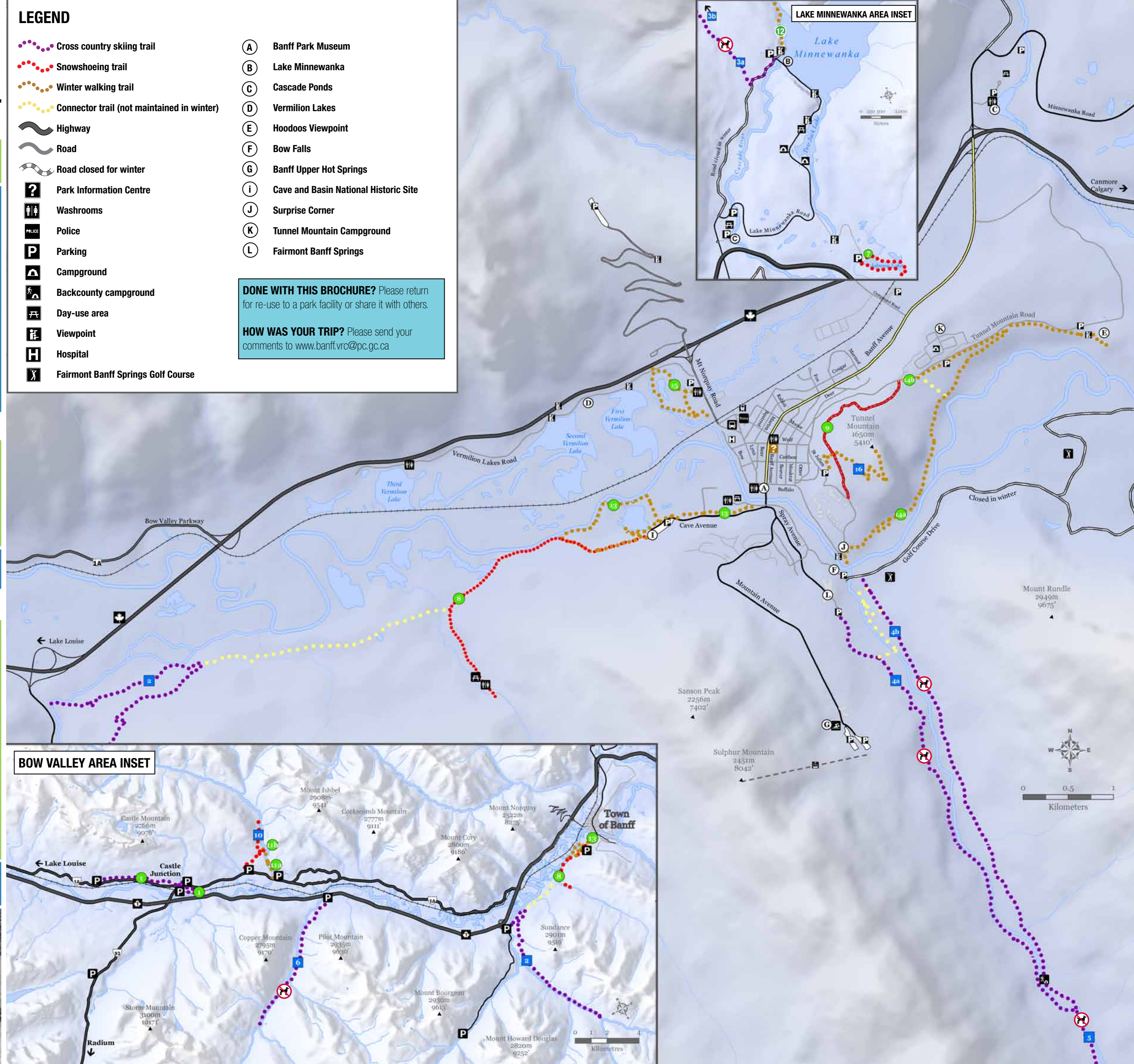
- 11a** **Johnston Canyon Trail**
1.1 km one way to the Lower Falls, elevation gain 68 m
- 11b** 2.7 km one way to the Upper Falls, elevation gain 115 m
- 12** **Stewart Canyon Trail**
1.5 km one way, elevation gain 50 m
- 13** **Bow River Bridge to Cave and Basin NHS Interpretive Boardwalk/Marsh Loop**
1.4 km one way to Cave and Basin from the Bow River Bridge; 2.4 km loop to hike the Marsh, elevation gain 17 m
- 14a** **Hoodoos Viewpoint**
5.1 km one way Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint, elevation gain 30 m
- 14b** 2.3 km one way Douglas Fir Trail to Hoodoos Viewpoint, 39 m elevation loss
- 15** **Fenland Trail**
2.1 km loop, no elevation gain
- 16** **Tunnel Mountain Summit**
2.4 km one way, elevation gain 192 m

LEGEND

- Cross country skiing trail
 - Snowshoeing trail
 - Winter walking trail
 - Connector trail (not maintained in winter)
 - Highway
 - Road
 - Road closed for winter
 - Park Information Centre
 - Washrooms
 - Police
 - Parking
 - Campground
 - Backcountry campground
 - Day-use area
 - Viewpoint
 - Hospital
 - Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course
- (A)** Banff Park Museum
 - (B)** Lake Minnewanka
 - (C)** Cascade Ponds
 - (D)** Vermilion Lakes
 - (E)** Hoodoos Viewpoint
 - (F)** Bow Falls
 - (G)** Banff Upper Hot Springs
 - (i)** Cave and Basin National Historic Site
 - (J)** Surprise Corner
 - (K)** Tunnel Mountain Campground
 - (L)** Fairmont Banff Springs

DONE WITH THIS BROCHURE? Please return for re-use to a park facility or share it with others.

HOW WAS YOUR TRIP? Please send your comments to www.banff.vrc@pc.gc.ca



Whyte Museum v263-na-3874