

# Winter Trails in the Banff Area



For current trail updates, visit [www.pc.gc.ca/banfftrails](http://www.pc.gc.ca/banfftrails) or our visitor centres

## CROSS COUNTRY SKI – 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.



**2 Brewster Creek / Healy Creek**  
2a) 10.5 km one way to Sundance Lodge  
2b) 4.8 km one way to Sundance Canyon junction (Trail 8)  
Trailhead: Sunshine Road 0.3 km from Trans-Canada Highway to Brewster Creek trailhead

Brewster Creek, the more popular trail, takes skiers along the south side of Healy Creek for 1.7 km to the Brewster Creek junction and up to Sundance Lodge. When snow conditions are good, the Healy Creek trail provides skiers rolling, treed terrain to the Sundance Canyon junction. Return via the same route or take a side detour to Sundance Canyon (not trackset).

**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.

**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.

**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.

## WINTER WALKING

**7 Johnson Lake**  
2.8 km loop  
Trailhead: Park at Johnston Lake day-use area, walk just past the picnic tables.  
This 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 renovations 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).

**11 Johnston Canyon**  
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 to the spectacular 30 m 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**  
1.5 km one way  
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka trailhead past the day-use area  
A short walk through the Lake Minnewanka day-use area will lead 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**  
1.4 km one way to Cave and Basin NHS from the Bow River bridge, 2.4 km to hike the Marsh Loop.  
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. The interpretive boardwalk trail and the Marsh Loop lead you to an unique thermal spring habitat. A great place for winter birdwatching!

**14 Hoodoos Viewpoint**  
14a) 5.1 km one way from Surprise Corner to Hoodoos viewpoint  
Trailhead: Start at Surprise Corner parking lot on Tunnel Mountain Drive.  
14b) 2.3 km one way on 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.



**10 Ink Pots via Moose Meadows**  
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.

**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 townsites. Take in breathtaking views of the Bow and Spray valleys. This steep trail can be extremely icy. Hiking poles are strongly recommended.

**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 from Banff townsite, start at Central Park and follow the Bow River to the Fenland trailhead. Walk east, just over the railway tracks on Mt. Norquay Road (0.9 km one way).

**17 Spray Connector**  
1.96 km one way  
Trailhead: Start at the Spray River West trailhead and take the Spray Connector located 0.7 km on the left side of the trail to end at the Spray River East trailhead located on the Golf Course Road.  
For those seeking a short walk or snowshoe opportunity close to town, the Spray Connector links the Spray River East trail to Spray River West trail via a small scenic bridge. The trail can be enjoyed from either direction.

### Have you tried snowshoeing?

Explore the trails in an authentic, traditional way by snowshoe! If you can walk, you can snowshoe – and you don't need any special gear – just snowshoes. Like hiking, pick a trail that suits your challenge and you're off to solitude and clean, fresh air. Travel by foot to enjoy Banff's scenery up close and personal, and you might even spot some wildlife.

## 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 who have some basic trail experience and are generally prepared.
- Estimated time to complete the trail is no longer than 5 hours.
- May experience moderate elevation gain with some short steep sections.

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

## LEGEND

- Suitable for snowshoeing
- Use of cleats is recommended
- Dogs on leash at all times
- Dogs not permitted

## WILDLIFE

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 a Rocky Mountain winter, but you can help make it easier. If tracks are observed, do not follow them towards 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.



## 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 the Banff Visitor 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 the Banff Visitor 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 [www.pc.gc.ca/banff](http://www.pc.gc.ca/banff).

## AVALANCHES

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

For avalanche conditions: visit the Banff Visitor Centre or [www.pc.gc.ca/banff](http://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 Ratings* publication.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Banff Visitor Centre:**  
224 Banff Avenue, 403-762-1550  
[www.pc.gc.ca/banff](http://www.pc.gc.ca/banff)

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

**AMA Road Report:**  
1-877-262-4997

**Avalanche Bulletin:** 1-800-667-1105  
[www.avalanche.pc.gc.ca](http://www.avalanche.pc.gc.ca)

**For Banff area maps and guidebooks, visit a retail 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.**



# RATINGS

- EASY
- MODERATE

## CROSS COUNTRY SKI – TRACK SET

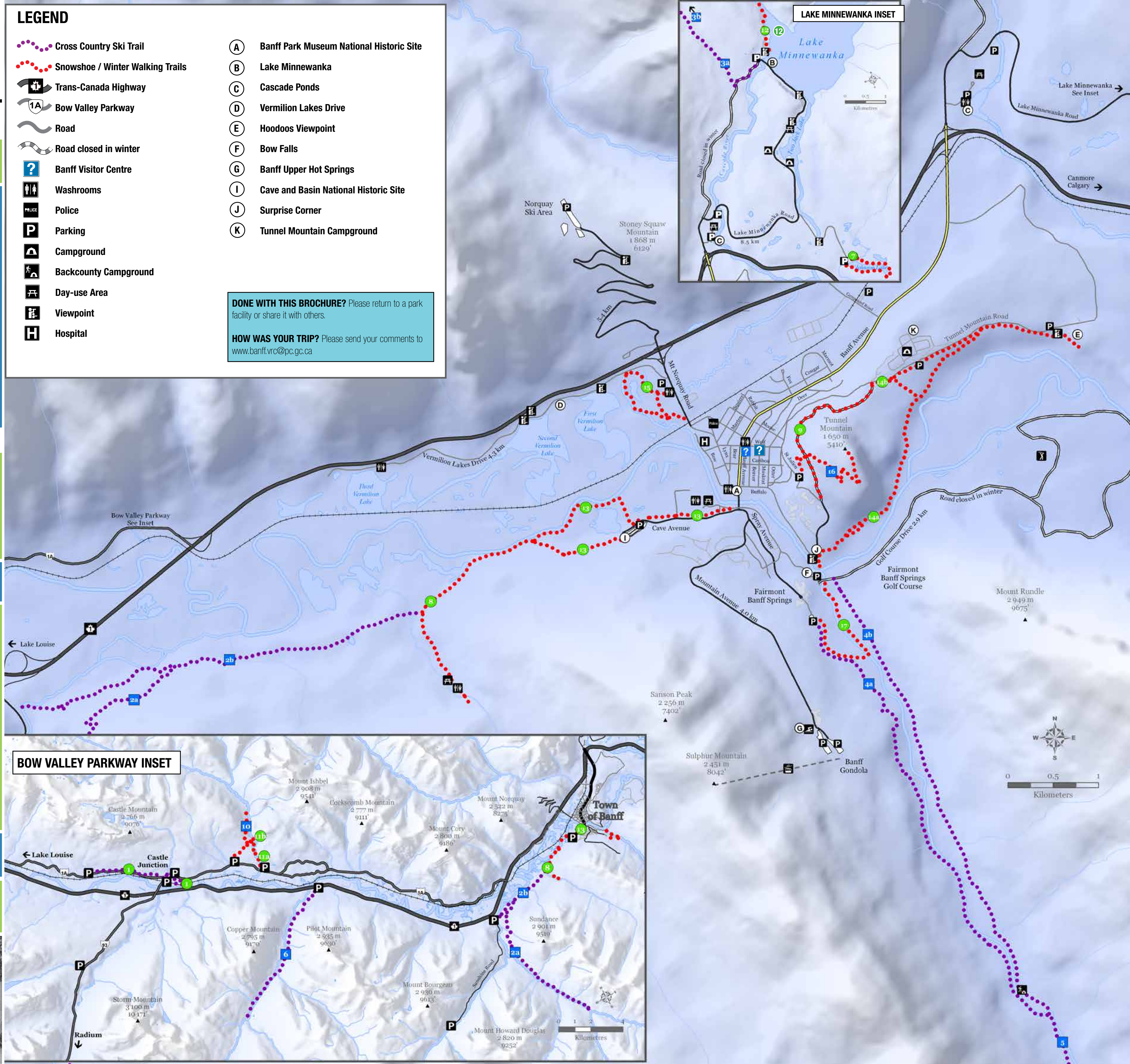
- 1** **Castle Junction**  
8.7 km of trails in area,  
elevation gain 31 m
- 2a** **Brewster Creek / Healy Creek**  
10.5 km one way to Sundance Lodge,  
elevation gain 173 m
- 2b** 4.8 km one way to Sundance Canyon junction (Trail 8)  
no elevation gain
- 3a** **Cascade Valley**  
6.4 km one way to 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
- 7** **Johnson Lake**  
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**  
5.3 km one way,  
elevation gain 217 m
- 11a** **Johnston Canyon**  
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**  
1.5 km one way,  
elevation gain 50 m
- 13** **Bow River Bridge to Cave and Basin NHS**  
1.4 km one way to Cave and Basin from the  
Bow River Bridge; 2.4 km loop to hike the Marsh Loop,  
elevation gain 17 m
- 14a** **Hoodoos Viewpoint**  
5.1 km one way from Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint,  
elevation gain 30 m
- 14b** 2.3 km one way from 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
- 17** **Spray Connector**  
1.96 km one way  
elevation loss 46 m

## LEGEND

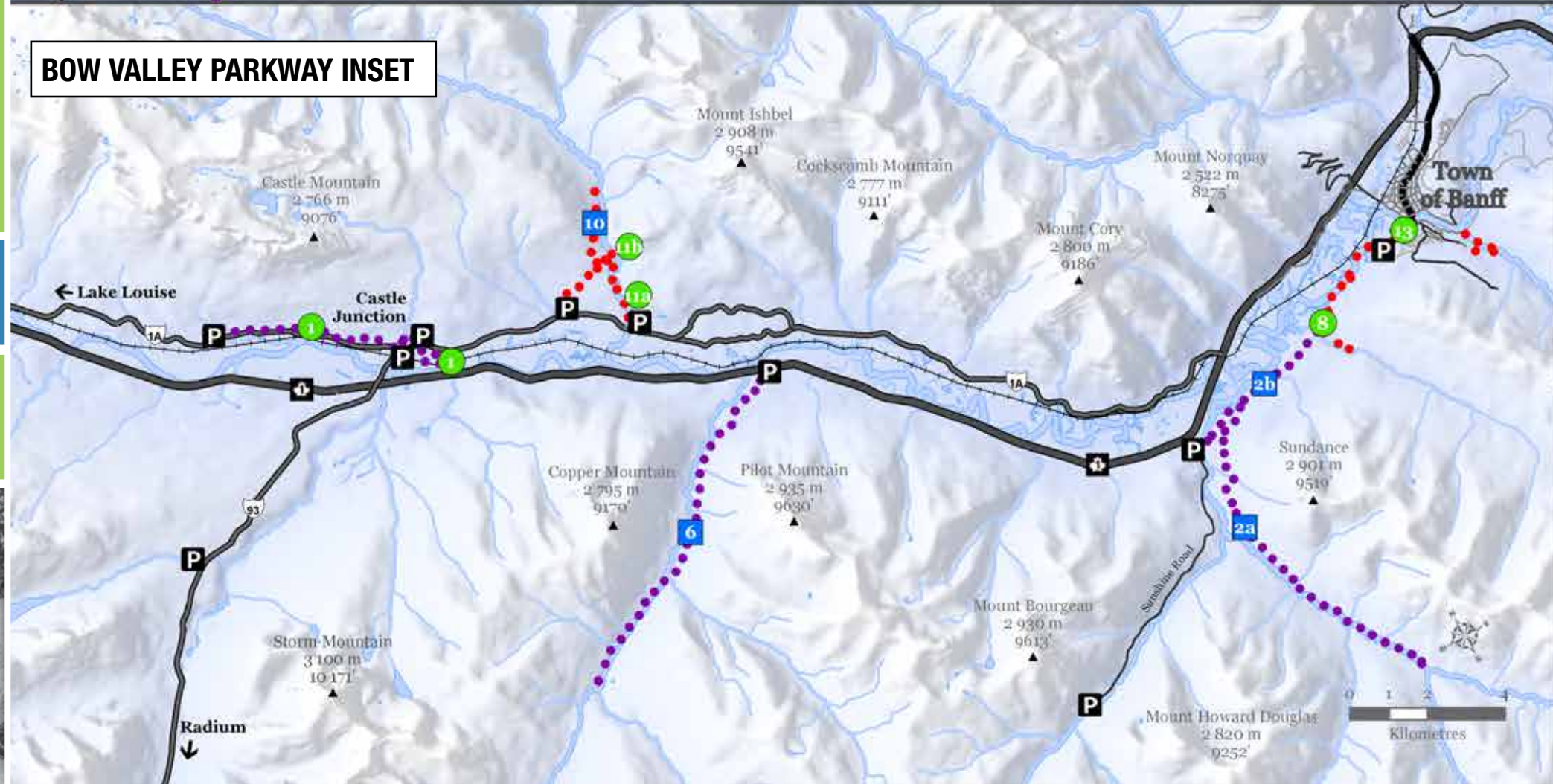
- Cross Country Ski Trail
- Snowshoe / Winter Walking Trails
- Trans-Canada Highway
- Bow Valley Parkway
- Road
- Road closed in winter
- Banff Visitor Centre
- Washrooms
- Police
- Parking
- Campground
- Backcountry Campground
- Day-use Area
- Viewpoint
- Hospital
- (A)** Banff Park Museum National Historic Site
- (B)** Lake Minnewanka
- (C)** Cascade Ponds
- (D)** Vermilion Lakes Drive
- (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

**DONE WITH THIS BROCHURE?** Please return to a park facility or share it with others.

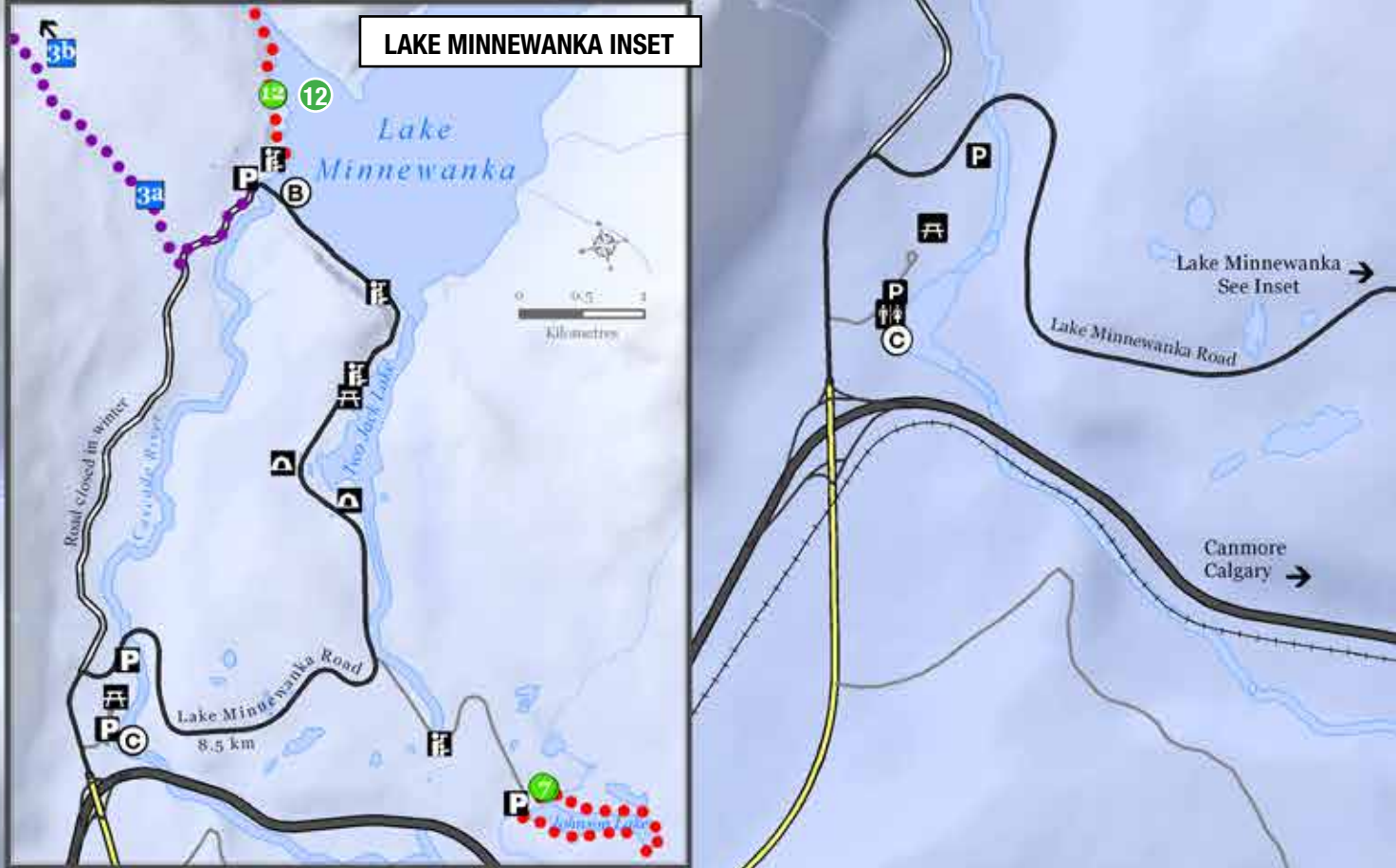
**HOW WAS YOUR TRIP?** Please send your comments to [www.banff.vrc@pc.gc.ca](mailto:www.banff.vrc@pc.gc.ca)



### BOW VALLEY PARKWAY INSET



### LAKE MINNEWANKA INSET



Whyte Museum v263-na-3874