

# Winter Trails in the Lake Louise Area



## WINTER THE SEASON TO PLAY IN...

Welcome to winter in Banff National Park, Canada's first national park. Whether you're here for a family adventure or a relaxing getaway, there is no better way to experience the Lake Louise area'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.



### SEASON

Although snow can fall at any time of the year in Banff National Park, optimal skiing and snowshoeing runs from mid-November to early April. Lower elevations in the park may be available for hiking year-round.

### CROSS-COUNTRY TRAILS

Cross-country ski trails are groomed regularly, especially after a fresh snowfall. Trails are classified as novice, easy, more difficult or most difficult based on the nature of the terrain and width of the trail. Please look at the map legend for trail difficulty ratings as some trails contain sections of varying levels of difficulty. Actual difficulty can vary day to day depending on snow conditions.

### HIKING AND SNOWSHOEING TRAILS

Most of the hiking and snowshoeing trails outlined in this guide 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 hiking.

If you're looking for trails not in this guide, consult with Parks Canada visitor centres for more trip planning assistance.

# Cross-Country Ski Trails

## TRAILS IN LAKE LOUISE

**1** **1** **Moraine Lake Road** (map A)   
15.6 km return, 250 m elevation gain.  
Double trackset with skating lane

Climbing steadily, this trail includes both gently rolling and hilly stretches. Tracksetting ends at a viewpoint of Consolation Valley and the Ten Peaks. Beyond the viewpoint, the road crosses large avalanche paths.

**2** **2** **Fairview** (map A)   
4.6 km one way, 60 m elevation gain.  
Single trackset

A beautiful trail, the Fairview runs through sections of open clearings and snow-draped woods. It's also possible to make a 7.5 km loop (160 m total elevation gain) using the Fairview trail, the Moraine Lake Road and the Tramline trail: the recommended direction is counter-clockwise.

**3** **Tramline** (map A)   
4.8 km one way, 195 m elevation gain.  
Double trackset

This trail runs from valley bottom to Lake Louise at a steady 3% rise, following the old grade of the tramline that once connected the train station and the Chateau Lake Louise.

**4** **4** **4** **Lake Louise Loop** (map A)  
4.1 km loop, 15 m elevation gain.  
Double trackset

This loops features a wide open trail across frozen Lake Louise, followed by a fun "up & down" trip back through the woods – just 100 metres uphill from the lakeshore walking path. Use the Fairview – Lake Louise Connector trail to ski directly from the parking lot onto the lake. Tracksetting ends at the back of the lake, as the trail up the valley crosses large avalanche paths.

**5** **5** **5** **6** **Upper Telemark** (map A)   
1.4 km one way (65 m elevation loss).  
Double trackset

This trail has several steep and technically demanding hills. If you find them too imposing, they can be avoided by taking the "Hillside" bypass. Start in front of the Chateau Lake Louise as if going to Lake Agnes, then turn right onto trail #5. Once up and behind the Chateau, ski steeply down to the Great Divide and Lower Telemark trails.

**6** **6** **Great Divide or "Old 1A"** (map A)   
20 km return, 60 m elevation loss.  
Double trackset with skating lane

Mostly flat, but trending gently downhill, this trail takes you to the "Great Divide" – the BC / Alberta border at km 7. From here, you can continue into Yoho National Park another 3.5 km (irregular grooming) to the Lake O'Hara parking lot.

**7** **7** **Peyto** (map A)   
2.2 km one way, 45m elevation loss.  
Double trackset

The trail starts at the upper Deer Lodge parking lot, and connects skiers to the Great Divide and Lower Telemark trails on a gentler grade than trail #5.

**8** **Lower Telemark** (map A)  
4.0 km one way (110 m elevation loss).  
Double trackset

Park at Great Divide trailhead, ski 700 metres, and turn right at the #8 trail sign. After 4.0 km of twists and turns, exit back onto the Great Divide trail, and turn left to return to your vehicle.

**9** **9** **Bow River Loop** (map A)  
6.6 km or shorter versions of the loop, no elevation gain.  
Single trackset

Mostly flat, following the river. To start, park near the Station Restaurant or just past the campground kiosk, or use the connecting trail from the Post Hotel or the Samson Mall.

**10** **Campground Loop** (map A)  
2.2 km outer loop, 15 m elevation gain.  
Double trackset with skating lane

This trail loops around and through the campground on gentle terrain. For access, park just past the campground kiosk.

**11** **Townsite** (map A)  
0.7 km one way, no elevation gain.  
Double trackset

This short trail provides access to the northwest end of Village Road, near all the village hotels.

**20** **Pipestone Loop** (map A)  
13.3 km loop, 190m elevation gain.  
Single trackset

Watch for the occasional tight corner and be cautious on the hills. The recommended direction for the outer loop is counter-clockwise.

**21** **Hector** (map A)  
3.0 km one way, 95 m elevation gain.  
Single trackset

This trail features good views at both a major fire protection clearing and tranquil Pipestone Pond.

**22** **Drummond** (map A)  
2.7 km one way, 24 m elevation loss.  
Single trackset

If you need a breather, this is the only flat trail in the Pipestone trail system.

**23** **Merlin** (map A)  
2.3 km one way, 55 m elevation gain.  
Single trackset

Watch for the old pioneer log cabins along this leg of the Pipestone.

## TRAILS ON THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY

**12** **Baker Creek to Protection Mountain Campground** (map C)  
3.5 km one way, no elevation gain.  
Single trackset

This trail, (labelled "#2" on site), runs parallel to the parkway, and starts across the road from the Baker Creek Chalets.

**13** **Castle Junction** (map C above)  
8.7 km of trails, 20 m elevation gain.  
Single trackset

You can park for these trails (labelled #1, #2 & #3 on site) either near the hostel, or at the Rockbound Lake or Castle Lookout trailheads. Detailed maps are available at Castle Mountain Village, the hostel or the Lake Louise Visitor Centre.

# Hiking and Snowshoeing Trails

## TRAILS NEAR LAKE LOUISE

**14** **Lake Louise Lakeshore** (map A)   
4 km return, no elevation gain.

Starting in front of the Chateau Lake Louise, this trail features classic views and at lake's end, a 100 m tall frozen waterfall.

**15** **Fairview Lookout** (map A)   
2 km return, 100 m elevation gain.

This steep trail ends at a viewpoint overlooking historic Chateau Lake Louise. Start by facing the Lake at the World Heritage Site rock. Look left and follow the trail signs for Fairview Lookout. Warning: return via the same path; the loop option is not safe in the winter due to avalanches.

**16** **Louise Creek** (map A)   
5.6 km return, 195 m elevation gain.

This is the best pedestrian option from the village to the lake. From Samson Mall, walk along Lake Louise Drive to the Bow River bridge. Cross and look for the trailhead on the downstream (south) side of the bridge.

**17** **"Highline" Trail to Paradise Creek** (map A)   
9 km return, 60 m elevation gain.

An excellent snowshoeing option. The trailhead is the same as Fairview Lookout, but at the Lookout turnoff, continue for another 40 metres on the main trail then turn left when you see the horse trail sign.

**Avalanche risk:** rated as Simple Class 1 terrain – at km 1, the trail crosses the runoff zone of an avalanche path which rarely runs.

**18** **Mirror Lake, via Lake Agnes hiking trail** (map A)   
5.4 km return, 295 m elevation gain.

From the Chateau Lake Louise, follow the main Lake Agnes trail. **Avalanche risk:** Beyond Mirror Lake, the trail to Lake Agnes is rated as Challenging Class 2 terrain for avalanche exposure and travel is not recommended.

**23** **Taylor Lake** (map C above)   
12.6 km return, 585 m elevation gain.

This challenging trail ends in a scenic hanging valley below Mount Bell. Start at the parking lot 18 km east of Lake Louise or 8 km west of Castle Junction on the TransCanada Highway. Warning: Connecting trails to O'Brien Lake or Panorama Ridge take you into avalanche terrain.

## TRAILS IN BOW SUMMIT AREA ON ICEFIELDS PARKWAY #93N

**24** **Peyto Lake viewpoint** (map B)   
1.5 km return, 25 m elevation gain.

From the parking lot there are two loops. Start by following either the unpaved upper road or take the official trail from the north end of the parking lot. From the viewpoint, a second loop runs through gladed forest.

**25** **Bow Lake Meadows** (map B)   
8 km return, 80 m elevation gain.

Park near NumTijah Lodge. From the lot, snowshoe past the lodge for about 150 metres and then turn north on the old horse trail into the meadows. This trail is difficult to find once it's snow covered, so expect to find your own route and break trail.



## Trail Classification

**Novice**  
• Suitable for any type of visitor.  
• Little or no elevation gain or loss.

**Easy**  
• Suitable for any type of visitor.  
• Little or no elevation gain or loss.

**More Difficult**  
• Suitable for most visitors with some experience and at least an average level of fitness.  
• May experience moderate elevation gain with some short steep sections.

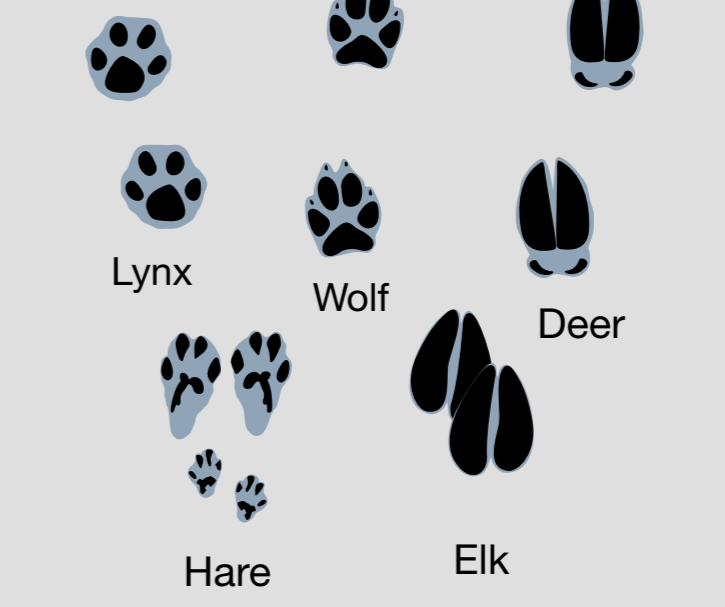
**Most Difficult**  
• Suitable for experienced visitors with above average level of fitness.  
• May experience major elevation gain with long steep sections.

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

## Wildlife

Winter offers a unique glimpse at wildlife because prints in the snow reveal the story of their movements. Learn how to identify a few tracks and find out whose habitat you're sharing.

It's a challenge for wildlife to survive through a Rocky Mountain winter, but you can help make it easier. Give wildlife lots of space and resist the urge to approach. Observe animals from a distance with binoculars or a telephoto lens.



## TRAIL REPORT

Get the latest information on trail conditions by checking trail reports online ([www.pc.gc.ca/banfftrails](http://www.pc.gc.ca/banfftrails)) and at park visitor centres. The report is updated as conditions change and trails are rated for their overall condition; cross country ski trails include a grooming report.

## TRAIL ETIQUETTE:

- **Skiers going downhill have the right of way**
- Keep to the right when meeting oncoming skiers
- When resting or visiting, move off the trail
- When passing say "Track Please" and pass on left side
- Do not walk or snowshoe on ski tracks, travel beside them
- Please respect pet restrictions
- Pack out all garbage

## DOGS:

Dogs on leash are permitted in the park – just not everywhere. Dogs are not allowed on the following groomed ski trails: (1) Moraine Lake Road, (2) Fairview, (3) Tramline, (5) Upper Telemark (6) Great Divide, (7) Peyto and (8) Lower Telemark.

Dogs can add stress to wildlife; just the sight of a dog can remind some animals of predators like wolves and coyotes. Keep your dog on a leash at all times and restrain it from chasing wildlife.

## AVALANCHES:

If you are planning to travel in areas beyond the trails described here, you may be in avalanche terrain. In such cases, make sure you have the appropriate knowledge, skills and rescue equipment. For information about a trail you're considering, contact a Parks Canada Visitor Centre, consult the Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale ([www.pc.gc.ca/avalanche](http://www.pc.gc.ca/avalanche)), and read the Banff/Yoho/Kootenay daily avalanche bulletin ([www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca)).

## PLANNING:

- Visit a Parks Canada Visitor Centre for help with trip planning
- Study trail descriptions and maps before starting
- Choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your party
- Check the weather forecast and current trail conditions
- Travel with a friend or in a group
- Tell somebody where you're going, when you will be back and who to call if you don't return (see directory)
- Be prepared for emergencies and changes in weather
- Use Park trails at your own risk. Trails are not patrolled

## PACKING:

- Trail guide and map
- Full water bottle or thermos
- High energy food
- Sunscreen and sunglasses
- First aid kit
- Repair kit
- Lightweight emergency blanket, candle, and lighter or waterproof matches
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Extra clothes: use the layering system! Peel off or add layers of synthetic material, silk or wool as needed to stay dry and warm. Don't forget extra hat and gloves
- Ski wax, cork and scraper
- Camera and binoculars

## More things to do in Lake Louise...

### XPLORER'S PROGRAM

After a day of trail blazing, kids and their families can continue their exploration of Banff National Park through a learning challenge to become a Parks Canada Explorer. Pick up an Explorer's booklet filled with fun activities like quizzes, crossword puzzles, and scavenger hunts to discover cool facts about Banff National Park. Once 6 out of 16 activities are completed, children aged 6 to 11 are eligible to become an Explorer's member by participating in a formal or informal ceremony to receive a certificate and special souvenir. Those interested in sleuthing their way through the park can visit the Parks Canada Visitor Centre in Lake Louise to pick up their booklet.

### LAKE LOUISE VISITOR CENTRE

Spend time learning about the history of Lake Louise. The Lake Louise Visitor Centre has exhibits focusing on the geology of the Canadian Rockies. View an interactive video featuring Dr. G.O. Morph, and discover gems on the history, wildlife, and avalanches in the area. The Visitor Centre also has maps, brochures, permits, backcountry reservations, up-to-date weather, trail, avalanche and road reports, and event information.



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## Directory

**EMERGENCY**  
Cell Phone: dial 911  
Satellite Phone: dial 403-762-4506  
*Note: Cell and satellite phones are not always reliable*

**LAKE LOUISE VISITOR CENTRE**  
Parks Canada: 403-522-3833  
Located at: 201 Village Road, Samson Mall, Lake Louise Village

**GENERAL**  
Banff Weather: 403-762-2088  
Road Conditions: 403-762-1450  
Avalanche Bulletin: 1-800-667-1105  
Parks Canada Website: [www.pc.gc.ca/banff](http://www.pc.gc.ca/banff)  
Canadian Avalanche Association: [www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca)

**Information on accommodations, dining, activities or attractions:**  
Banff Lake Louise Tourism: 403-762-8421  
[www.banfflakelouise.com](http://www.banfflakelouise.com)

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# Hiking and Snowshoeing Trails

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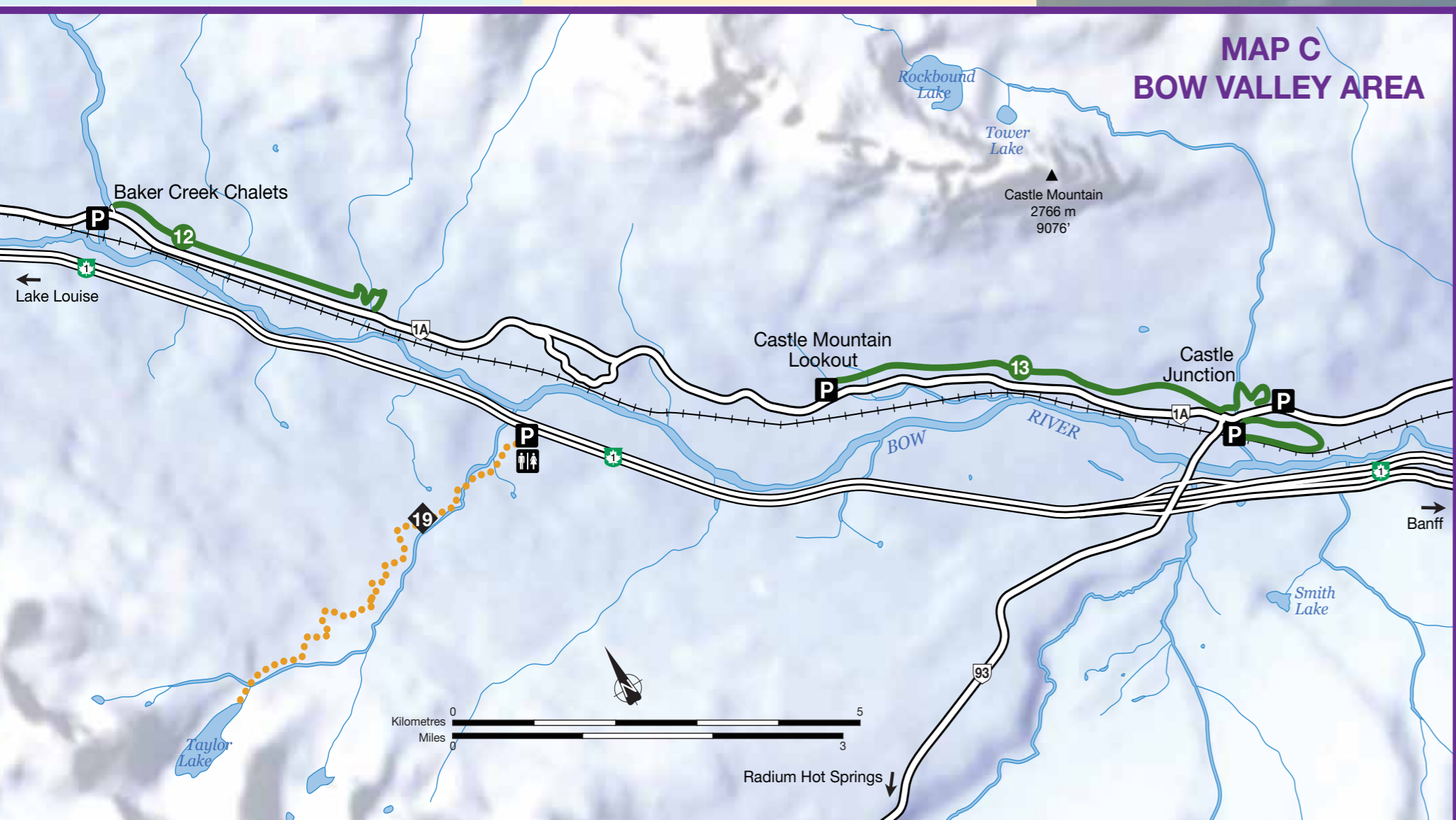
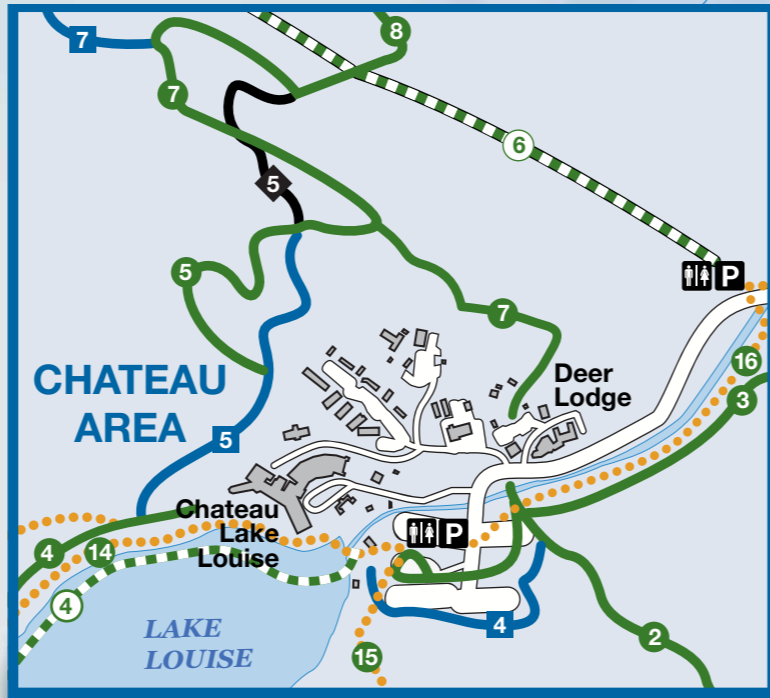
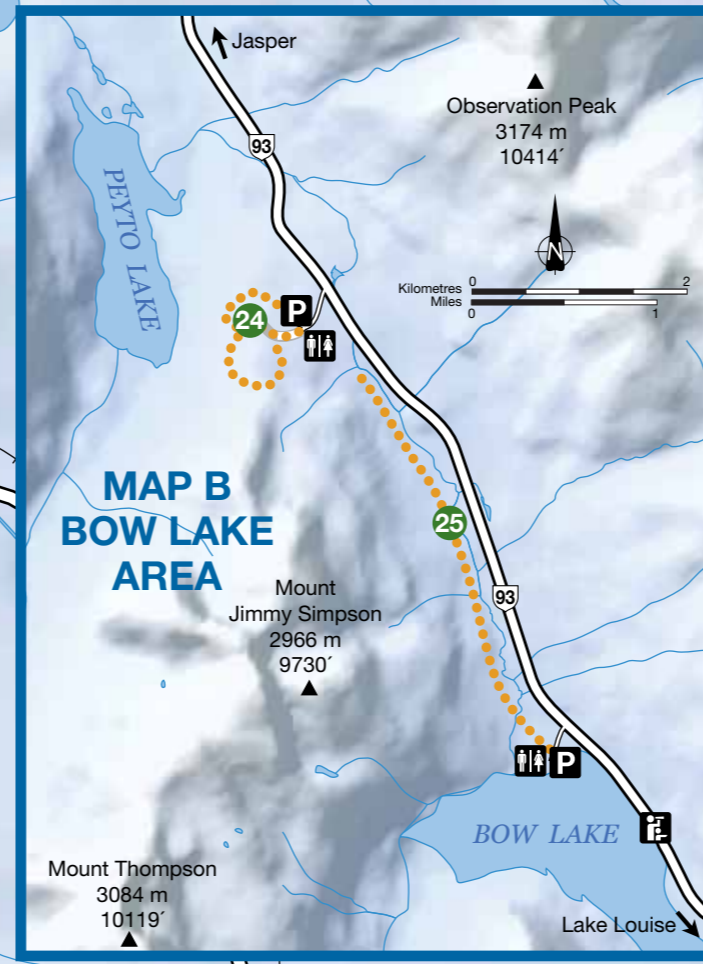
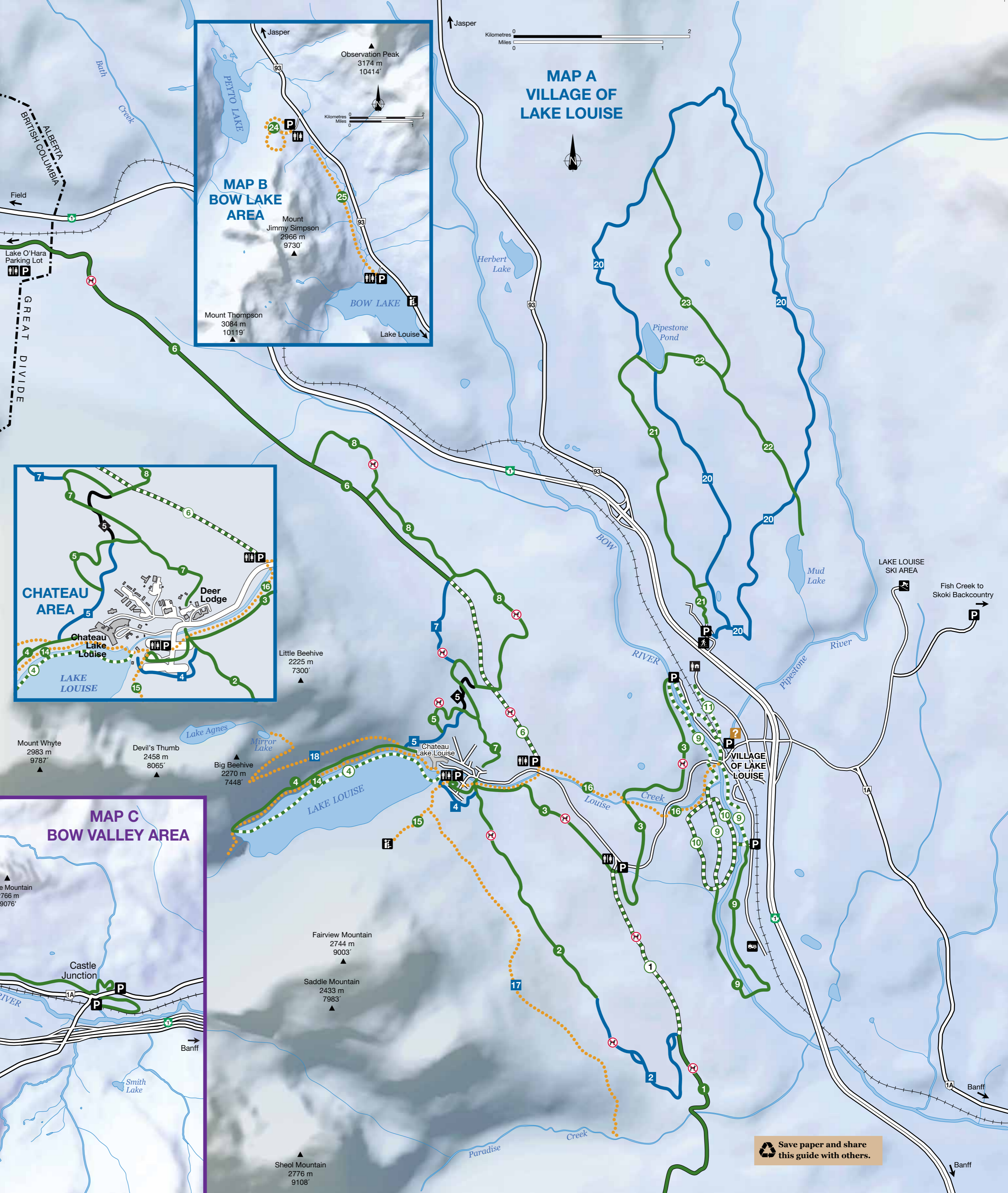
## Legend

### Ski Trails

- Novice
- Novice Track & Skating
- Easy
- Easy Track & Skating
- More Difficult
- Most Difficult

### Hiking/Snowshoe Trails

- Parks Canada Visitor Centre
- Warden Office
- Viewpoint
- Pedestrian Overpass
- Downhill Ski Area
- RV Campground
- Parking
- Washroom/Privy
- No Dogs



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