

Lake Louise Area Trails

Difficulty ratings are based on trail length, elevation gain and remoteness.

1 Bow River Loop

7.1 km loop, no elevation gain, easy

Trailhead: Lake Louise Campground or Bow River Bridge opposite the historic Lake Louise train station (Station Restaurant)

Ideal for families, this gentle riverside trail travels both sides of the Bow River and can be shortened by cutting across any of the bridges. Interpretive signs along the way highlight the Bow River ecosystem. This trail is popular with pedestrians who may not hear your approach above the river's sound: ride respectfully and make your approach known. Connects with the Tramline Trail (#2).

2 Tramline

4.5 km one way, elevation gain 195 m, easy

Trailhead: Opposite Lake Louise train station (Station Restaurant) beside Bow River bridge. This wide trail is the former route of a tramway (1912 to 1930). It offers a quiet ride up and down from the valley floor to upper Lake Louise. The trail comes out at the upper Lake Louise parking lots, an alternative starting point for a downhill ride on this trail.

3 Ross Lake

7.3 km one way, no elevation gain, difficult

Trailhead: Tucked behind the Chateau Lake Louise staff residences

This trail winds and dips through sub-alpine forest to a small lake nestled against an impressive rockwall. Expect to yield to horse traffic on the first 100 m. A challenging 1.3 km trail down along Ross Creek connects to the Great Divide Road (#8) allowing a loop return.

4 Moraine Lake Highline

10 km one way, elevation gain 305 m, difficult

Trailhead: Small parking area on the right, 2.5 km up Moraine Lake Rd

The most demanding of the Lake Louise area trails, this single-track trail climbs onto the shoulder of Mount Temple and then descends to Moraine Lake. Hikers are mainly encountered on the first km from the trailhead. Roots and rocks on the narrow trail challenge your skills. The upper trail section, often exposed as it sidehills along, offers tremendous views. Combine with Moraine Lake Road (#9) to make a loop. When buffaloberries, an important bear food, ripen in mid to late summer, the upper section of this trail is closed to all users. This allows grizzly bears to forage undisturbed and keeps people safer. A stub trail allows access from the trail to the Moraine Lake Road at the bottom of the seasonal trail closure. Check with Lake Louise Information Centre staff and trailhead signs for closure dates and important information.

5 Pipestone

6.7 km one way, elevation gain 165 m, moderate

Trailhead: Slate Road, turn off Trans-Canada Highway~1.5 km west of Lake Louise

This well-defined gravel and dirt trail heads up along the Pipestone River into the Pipestone Valley north of Lake Louise. Watch for horse users and bears. Not far from the trailhead, an 800 m side trail offers a short, sometimes muddy, trip to Mud Lake. Cyclists are not permitted beyond the bike turnaround point at km 6.7.

6 Temple Access Road

4.0 km one way, elevation gain 305 m

Trailhead: Fish Creek parking lot off Whitehorn Road near the Lake Louise Ski Area

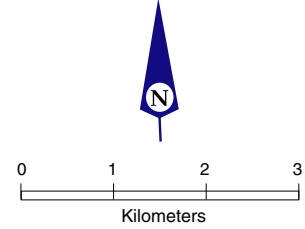
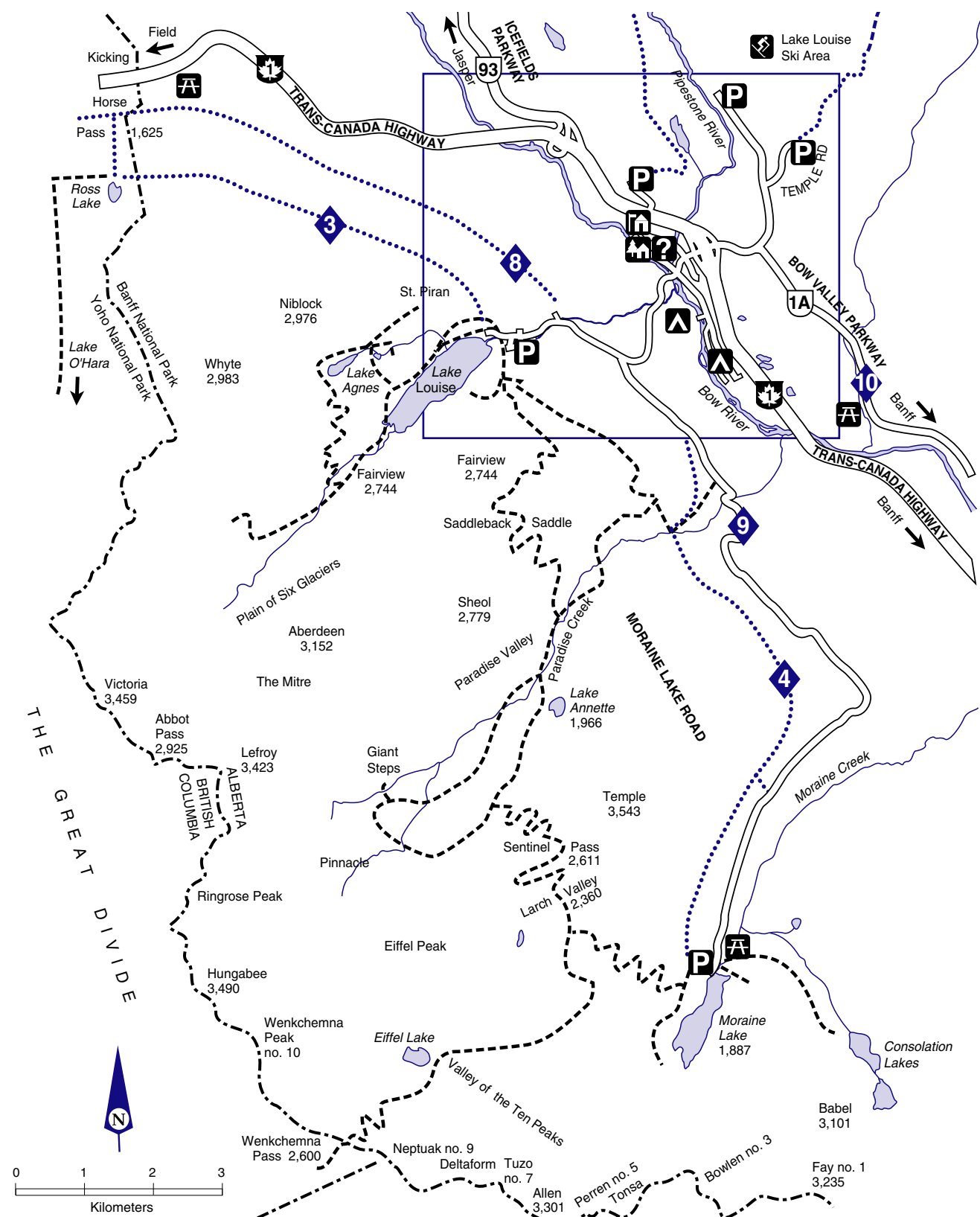
This steep gravel road provides maintenance access to Temple Lodge. The road ends by the lodge; the hiking trail beyond provides access to Skoki Valley and is not open to bikes. Watch carefully for vehicles, hikers, horse users and bears. To give several resident female grizzly bears the space they need to survive, ski hill runs, other ski hill roads, and all trails leading off Temple Road are closed to biking.

7 Alexandra River (not on map)

20.8 km one way, minimal elevation gain, difficult

Trailhead: Small unmarked pull-off, west side of the Icefield Parkway (Hwy 93 N), 26 km north of Hwy 11 junction.

This unmaintained route offers rough and tumble riding on an old fire road. After the first 6 km the trail becomes a serious challenge. The first unbridged crossing of the Alexandra River occurs at 11.7 km. Other difficult creek crossings and the rampaging



Alexandra River make this a trip best done at low water levels in late summer by advanced riders with solid backcountry skills. Bushwhacking is necessary to get by recent washouts.

Lake Louise Area Road Rides

Difficulty ratings are based on ride length and elevation gain.

8 Great Divide

10.5 km one way, minimal elevation gain, easy

Starting Point: Parking lot at 3.6 km mark of Lake Louise Drive

This route (formerly the 1A Hwy) is closed to vehicles. Though paved, the surface is rough. It winds past the Great Divide at 7.5 km and continues to the Trans Canada Highway in Yoho. About 500 m west of the Divide, a challenging 1.3 km trail up along Ross Creek connects to the Ross Lake Trail (#3). It allows an alternative return to the trailhead for mountain bikers.

9 Moraine Lake Road

15 km one way, elevation gain 385 m, difficult

Starting Point: Lake Louise Information Centre

This narrow, mountain road has no shoulders, rough pavement, and heavy mixed traffic; it's best to ride it and Lake Louise Drive early or late in the day when traffic volume is low. From the turnout at the 3 km mark of Lake Louise Drive, Moraine Lake Road climbs to spectacular views of Consolation Valley and the Valley of the Ten Peaks. Mountain bikers can create a loop by combining with the challenging Moraine Lake Highline Trail (#4).

10 Bow Valley Parkway

28 km one way, elevation gain minimal, moderate

Starting Point: Lake Louise Information Centre From Lake Louise to Castle Junction, the Bow Valley Parkway (1A) winds through montane forest near the Bow River. This is a busy road with narrow shoulders; consider riding midweek when traffic is lighter. Numerous short hikes, viewpoints and inter-pretive signs are accessible from the road. Combine with Banff Trail #17 for a 55 km ride (one way).

Lake Louise: Keep Bears Wild!

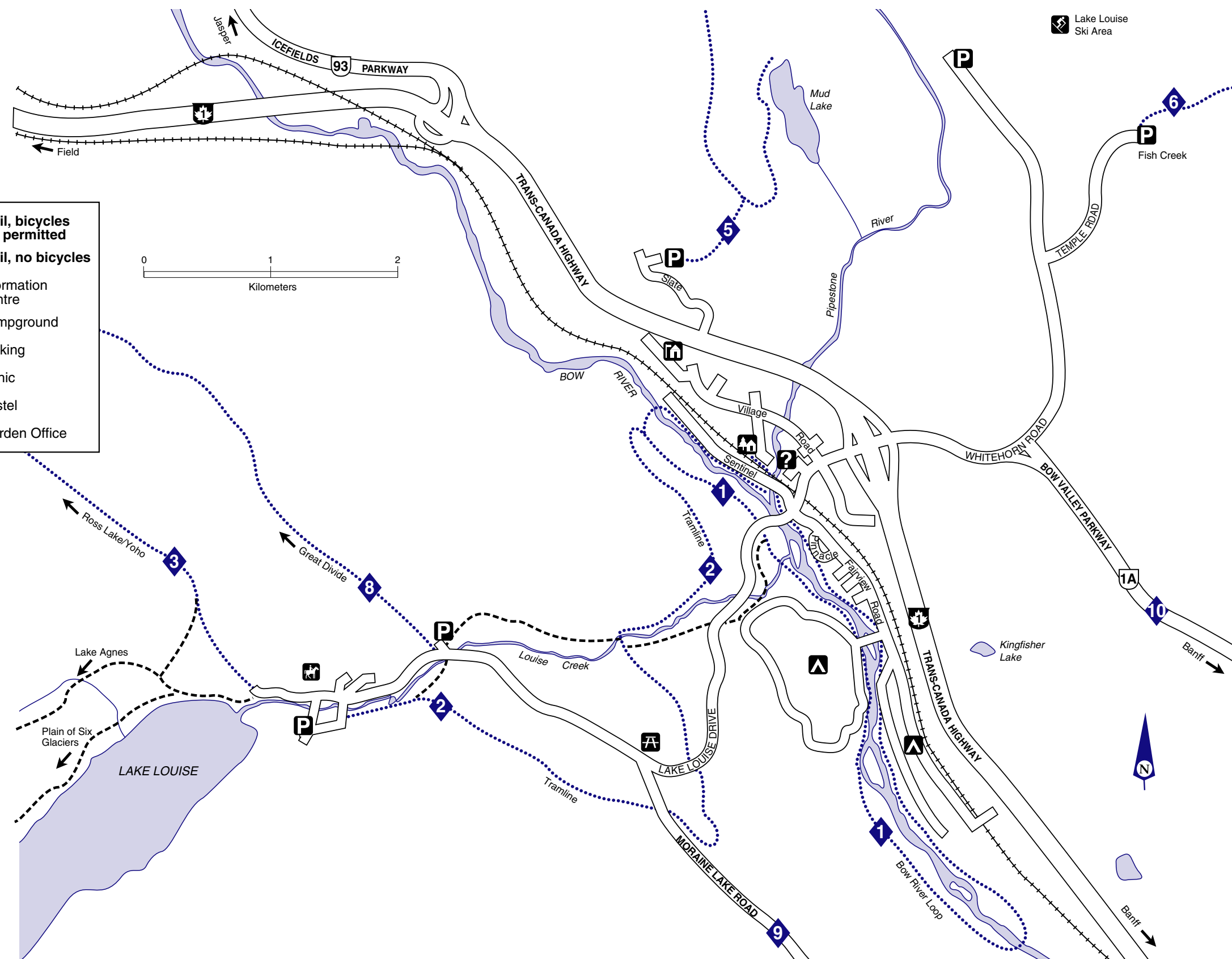
The Lake Louise area is important wildlife habitat and is heavily used by people. When you venture out on the trails, you influence how wildlife uses habitat and moves through the landscape. But with thoughtful consideration of how you use wilderness, you can help conserve it.



In the Lake Louise area, human development and activity have fragmented prime wildlife habitat into patches. The habitat remains, but bears are challenged to use it without bumping into people. Adolescent bears and adult female bears tend to dominate this group. Through constant, repeated exposure to the sights, smells and sounds of people, these bears lose their natural fear of people and they become habituated. Habituated bears are more likely to die a human-caused death on our roads and railways or be destroyed as "problem wildlife".

A number of adult female grizzly bears live in the Lake Louise area. To survive and successfully raise cubs, these bears need safe, predictable, quality habitat. You can help protect bears and keep yourself safer:

- Stay on designated trails: give these animals breathing space in an already tight situation;
- Bike "Bear Aware": minimize your chances of encountering a bear.



Living with Wildlife in Banff and Lake Louise

One of Banff National Park's greatest challenges is to protect wildlife populations while providing visitors with opportunities to enjoy a healthy mountain ecosystem.

- Please respect all Warnings, Closures and Restricted Activity postings. These legal restrictions are used to help keep you safe and to give wildlife the space they need to survive in Canada's oldest and most visited national park.
- **Bike Bear Aware:** Cyclists are particularly susceptible to sudden, dangerous bear encounters because of the speed and silence of their travel. *Slow down, stay alert and scan ahead.* Bear bells are not enough. Yell and let bears know you are coming, especially when biking through dense vegetation, near streams, on windy days, or when approaching corners.
- Watch for bears and signs of their presence such as tracks, droppings and diggings. Leave the area if you encounter a bear or see fresh sign, and report sightings to the Banff (403-762-1470) or Lake Louise Warden Office (403-522-1220)
- If you choose to carry bear spray, keep it handy.
- If you come across a dead animal, leave the area immediately and report the carcass to the Warden Office.

- Remember that park wildlife are wild! Animals will act aggressively if they feel threatened, so keep your distance. Stay at least 100 m. (10 bus lengths) away from bears and large carnivores, and 30 m. away from other wildlife. For more information, contact park information centres or the park web site.

- Dogs may be an intrusion to other trail users, and provoke confrontations with wildlife. Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times. This is unsafe for both the rider and the animal. Consider leaving your pet at home.

Waste Disposal

- Pack out all garbage including diapers, tampons, food waste and foil.
- If you need to relieve yourself, select a spot well away from trails and 100 m from water sources. Dig a hole 12 cm deep, down to the dark-coloured, biologically active soil layer. Fill the hole with soil afterward; do not pack it down. Pack out used toilet paper or burn it if the fire hazard is not extreme.

For more information on low impact travel, contact:  Leave No Trace www.LNT.org

Safety

- **You are responsible for your own safety.** Be prepared for a breakdown or accident. Know how to repair your bike and carry the tools and parts to do so.
- Choose rides that match your abilities. Be conservative—start with easier, shorter trails. Park staff or bike shop employees can help you select a suitable route.
- Wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear.
- Bring extra food, water and clothing. Mountain weather changes quickly and it can snow any month of the year. Surface water may be contaminated with Giardia.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you'll be back.
- Travel with others and keep your group together.



Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance volunteers maintaining the Lower Stoney Squaw Trail, May 2004.



For More Information

Banff Information Centre, 224 Banff Avenue
Tel (403) 762-1550 Banff.trails@pc.gc.ca

Lake Louise Information Centre, Samson Mall
Tel (403) 522-3833 LL.info@pc.gc.ca

Parks Canada - Calgary Service Centre
Tel 1-800-748-7275

Banff National Park Web Site
www.pc.gc.ca/banff

Banff National Park Trail Report
Recorded Message: (403) 760-1305

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

Park Radio 101.1 FM
Weather and Trail Reports

Friends of Banff
Retail outlet for maps and guidebooks
Tel (403) 762-8918
www.friendsofbanff.com

References

- *Backcountry Biking in the Canadian Rockies*, Doug Eastcott (2001)
- *Mountain Bike! The Canadian Rockies*, Ward Cameron (2000)
- Gem Trek recreational maps

Get involved in mountain bike education and stewardship.

- Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance: bvmbanff@telusplanet.net
- Calgary Mountain Bike Alliance: Tel (403) 220-1868 or info@cmbalink.com

Camping and Fishing

If you plan to stay overnight in a backcountry campground, shelter or hut, a Wilderness Pass is required. Anglers require a National Park Fishing Permit and knowledge of National Park Fishing Regulations.

In case of EMERGENCY, phone 911.