

National Hiking Trail in Eastern British Columbia

Trail sections are described from east to west, starting at the Alberta border

Shown on the accompanying 1:250,000 NHT topographic map 83E:

The favored connection to the National Hiking Trail in Alberta will be at Bess Pass in Jasper National Park. The NHT will connect to Jasper Park's North Boundary Trail at Bess Pass (11U, 0343361, 5911558); more specifically at the confluence of Chown Creek and the Smokey River (11U, 0349000, 5912523).

Bess:

From the North Boundary Trail the NHT follows an historic outfitter's trail over Bess Shoulder in Bess Pass to Jackpine Pass (11U, 0338415, 5914634); a distance of 13.2 km. At this point there are two possible options to parallel the Great Divide and wind up at Loren Lake (11U, 0313192, 5931193). Note that neither of these routes are accurately gps-ed on the map shown.

1. Divide Low:

One is to go north over Jackpine Pass and follow a horse trail down the Jackpine River to Meadowland Creek (11U, 0321121, 5934055) and then follow Meadowland Creek upstream about nine km, to its source in Loren Pass on the BC Alberta border. This route is entirely in Alberta's Wilmore Wilderness Provincial Park. The Jackpine River portion of the route is maintained by horse users that frequent the Wilmore. The section along Meadowland Creek has probably not been maintained for some time. This route is mostly in timber and along (and in) streams. An advantage is that much of it is being actively maintained. We would need to work with the horse users to do our share, as well as take full responsibility for the Meadowland Creek section. Something to keep in mind is that they often use these high elevation braided streams as actual trail without cutting an adjacent path on dry ground. This is probably not acceptable to us for hiking. Length is 38.3 km.

2. Divide Hi:

The second possibility is to stay very high and work along the crest of the Divide to a point near Chalco Mtn where the route would pick up an old horse trail in the upper Chalco Creek to Loren Lake or slightly downstream from there. This route is high, mostly rolling alpine, but there is a difficult section (near Chalco Mtn?). Dave King led a group along much of this route appx. 2010. An advantage of this route is that there is less timber-clearing maintenance requirement (appx. nine km). A disadvantage is the high elevation: it will have snow on much of the route until mid-July most years. The other disadvantage is the difficult section will require significant construction to make it less difficult. This route length is a slightly shorter 35.6 km.

Chalco Access:

There is a trappers cabin at the north end of Loren Lake. This area would also be called Loren Pass. From Loren Lake, a route can be taken south for 7.9 km to the confluence of Chalco Creek and Wolverine Creek where logging and a deactivated road system are encountered (11U, 0307873, 5928215). From the Chalco-Wolverine confluence, it is another 6.8 km south along the Chalco FS Road to a road-accessible campsite, locally known as Hunters' Camp (11U, 0307873,

5928215). Hunters' Camp should be considered the Chalco Trailhead, but is not yet marked as such on the ground.

The total distance between the Jasper Park's North Boundary Trail (at Chown Creek- Smokey River confluence, near Bess Pass) and the Chalco Trailhead is 55.7 or 58.4 km, depending on route chosen. This added onto the North Boundary Trail portion in Jasper Park makes for a very long distance trek between accessible trailheads (100+ km). However, a possible exit exits via a trail to alpine at Blueberry Creek, to the Holmes FSR.

The Chalco Trailhead is accessible by vehicle on the Chalco FSR that branches off the Holmes River FSR that intersects Highway 16. It is at Km25 on Chalco FSR, which is approximately 10 km from Chalco FSR intersection with Holmes FSR mainline. The Chalco FSR has been deactivated, but is passable to the Chalco Trailhead. It may require 4wd after branching off the Holmes FSR. It takes about 1.5 hrs to drive the 25 km from Highway 16 to Hunters' Camp.

East Twin- Chalco Trail (83E portion):

From the Chalco-Wolverine confluence, follow Wolverine Creek on an occasionally maintained trail through logging blocks and timber to the alpine. A long broad alpine valley continues west to the edge of mapsheet 83E (11U, 0301083, 5932926). This section is 9.4 km. Nearly all the route is easy walking in alpine meadows, in the Wolverine Cr. watershed. The trail continues onto mapsheet 93H. This trail was fully cleared through the short timber section in appx. 2005. Rock cairns were placed in the alpine and markers were placed in timber. More cairns should be erected.

Loren Alternate:

Note that an alternative route is available (but not yet cut or marked on the ground) between Loren Lake and the edge of mapsheet 83E. It would head up to the divide from Loren Lake/ Pass and intersect the East Twin- Chalco Trail near where it first enters the alpine (11U, 0304720, 5932101). It is 9.6 km in length.

Shown on the accompanying 1:250,000 NHT topographic map 93H:

East Twin- Chalco Trail (93H portion):

Continuing from the intersecting edges of mapsheets 83E and 93H (10U, 0698867, 5932913), the trail continues west, skirting slightly north of Mt. Renshaw and follows an alpine ridge between McKale Creek and Cushing Creek until it encounters the headwaters of the East Twin Creek. It then follows a ridge parallel to the creek down through the timber to the valley bottom, where the creek crosses the end of a deactivated logging road (10U, 0681620, 5937636). This should get a bridge. The section from the mapsheet edge to the deactivated road is 19.8 km. The majority of the alpine section is easy walking and fairly level and straight forward. However, there are a couple of sections of talus or scree that have had some work but require more grubbing. More cairns should be erected.

East Twin Access:

Head south along the deactivated logging road for 6.8 km to reach a spot that can be accessed by vehicle. This point is what should be marked as the East Twin Trailhead (but isn't marked on the ground yet: 10U, 0678084, 5932003). This is a creek crossing of a tributary that is currently bridged, but may soon be pulled by the BC Forest Service for liability reasons. There are two other bridges in this section that almost certainly will be pulled in 2015. They both cross the East Twin in close proximity. It may be possible to put in a foot trail that completely bypasses them. There is also a set of three large spruce logs across another tributary stream (further upstream)

that were left in place for the trapper for ATV and snowmobile access. BCFS engineers told us that they were to be removed as well. Furthermore in late 2014, there was a slide across the road along a tributary creek about 1 km from the trail first intersection of the road. Thus at least two bridges will be required, perhaps as many as five or six. There was a great deal of brush crowding the deactivated road portion of the trail when we inspected in 2014, but were able to carefully drive a quad through until the afore mentioned slide. There is potential to work with the local trapper, Brian Monroe. His family has a deep history here. He has pointed out that the East Twin was used in the 1930s (?) to access the North Boundary Trail from McBride. The total distance between the East Twin Trailhead and the Chalco Trailhead is 36.0 km.

East Twin FSR:

The East Twin Trailhead is at Km6.8 on the East Twin FSR, accessible by 2wd vehicle from McBride along Mountain View Road. The East Twin FSR (Km0) meets Mountainview Forest Service Road at UTM coordinates: 10U, 0674047, 5926934. Mountainview FSR is a continuation of Mountainview Road that intersects Highway 16 just east of McBride. Mountainview Road is 21.1 km in length and then becomes Mountainview FSR. The East Twin FSR branches off the Mountain View FSR at Km7.2 (total 28.3 km from Highway 16).

Mountain View FSR:

Continue NW along Mountain View FSR (2wd) for 13.5 km to Km20.6 to the Mountainview Trailhead (10U, 0665750, 5933779). A major stream crossed along the way is Fleet Creek. Mountain View FSR is also the boundary of the West Twin Protected Area, starting at Fleet Creek. The trailhead is not yet clearly marked.

JR Trail:

Note that most of this section of trail is in the West Twin Protected Area. From the Mountainview Trailhead, follow very old roadbed for approximately 21 km to the JR Trailhead: a (locked?) gate where it intersects the Morkill FSR (10U, 0653642, 5940607). This trail was partially brushed from the Mountainview Trailhead in 2005-6. We have not yet traversed the entire trail. There are at least two sizable stream crossings, Lasalle Creek being the largest. Although it is mostly old public roadbed and mostly Crown Land, there may be some that goes through vacant private property. It definitely goes through some agriculture-lease land. There may be portions that can re-routed around the private property and/or to avoid the more active road sections.

Crescent Spur roads:

The JR Trailhead is at Km1 on the Morkill FSR. Follow the Morkill FSR (2wd) south and cross the Fraser River on a bridge, then the railroad on a second bridge to Loos Rd. Turn left on Loos Road and follow it for 2.6 km. Turn left on Prospect Road and follow it for another 2.6 km (pass the Crescent Spur Heliski Lodge on the left) to the Karr Trailhead of the Lower Goat River Trail (10U, 0655409, 5937057). Total active public road between JR Trail Head and Karr Trailhead is 6.2 km.

Lower Goat River Trail, Crescent Spur Section:

The Karr Trailhead is at a locked gate to a gravel pit. It is well signed. Cross the sty over the fence and follow the pit access road, staying to the right until an obvious footpath intersects the road at the back of the pit. The trail is generally well maintained, has frequent markers and is a relatively easy walk. This section is approximately 11 km in length and terminates at the Rest Area Trailhead at the Highway 16 Goat River Bridge (10U, 0658758, 5929960). About half of the trail uses old deactivated logging roads. The rest makes use of old human and game trails, including an historic Lasalle Lake Trail. It passes through some very old forest of cedar, hemlock

and Douglas-fir. A tree along the trail is registered as one of the very largest Rocky Mountain Douglas-fir in BC and named Gigi's Giant. Km markers are also in place.

Lower Goat River Trail, Kopas Section:

From the Rest Area Trailhead, cross the Goat River Bridge and head up the bank to the right on a marked trail. This section is about 3 km in length and terminates near Kopas Camp, named for Cliff and Ruth Kopas who passed through McBride and the Goat River Trail on horseback on their 1933 honeymoon (*Packhorses to the Pacific*, Cliff Kopas. 1976). It terminates at the Goat River FSR Trailhead at about Km4.6 (10U, 0657070, 5927739). This trail section is mostly congruent with the original 1886 Historic Goat River Trail. It is all forested with very old western red cedar until it enters a 1970s logging block just prior to Kopas Camp. Km and other markers are in place and the trail is generally well maintained (needs deadfall removed as of Nov 2014).

Goat River FSR:

Follow the Goat River FSR (2wd) from the Goat River FSR Trailhead at Km4.6 to Km13 where the road forks. Take the right hand fork for .2 km to the Milk River Trailhead (10U, 0652113, 5921846) and a concrete bridge across the Milk River. Total 2wd FSR distance is 8.3 km.

Upper Goat River Trail:

From the Milk River Trailhead, cross the bridge and follow the brushy 14 year-old logging road (4wd) for about 1 km to a dead-end, where the foot trail intersects. At trail Km4 the Goat River must be crossed either by ford or cable car (10U, 0649256, 5919997). At Km14 (10U, 0640962, 5919557), Macleod Creek must also be crossed, where fording is the only option at this time. Ideally, a cable car or bridge can be installed in the future, as there is significant volume in this major tributary. The trail stays in the valley bottom, usually fairly close to the Goat River until it goes over a low pass into the Wolverine Creek [River] watershed. This is also the eastern boundary of Bowron Lake Provincial Park. Wolverine Creek empties into Isaac Lake in the Bowron chain. The trail is well marked, but maintenance is occasional. It then follows Wolverine Creek very closely until UTM coordinate 10U, 0640962, 5919557. At that point it veers away from the original 1886 trail and heads steeply uphill to intersect logging roads built in the 1970s. The highest point of the trail is at Rockbed Creek (10U, 0626689, 5915073). A spectacular view of Isaac Lake is visible from near this point. It then follows the deactivated logging roads for another 17 km, exiting Bowron Lake Park, to the end of the Littlefield Creek FSR at the Littlefield Trailhead (10U, 0614086, 5911638). This is the junction of Kruger Lake FSR and Littlefield Creek FSR. The total length of the Upper Goat River Trail is 50 km. The 33 km through pristine wilderness is interspersed with old-growth spruce-fir forest and avalanche chutes. One of the latter is more than one km wide. The severity and frequency of these slide areas is the major reason that the Goat River Trail has not been developed as a modern transportation corridor route. The historic Goat River Trail was much longer, connecting Barkerville to McBride. The current route uses as much of the original route as possible, but has obstacles such as roads that have pre-empted the trail and a park management plan designed to avoid conflicts between the canoe circuit and hikers.

Kruger Lake FSR

From the Littlefield Trailhead follow the Kruger Lake FSR (2wd) for 15.7 km to Kruger FSR Trailhead (10U, 0609535, 5906870), passing Wolverine Mountain Outfitters on Kruger Lake, near the Littlefield Creek Trailhead.

Kibbee Lake Trail:

From the Kruger FSR Trailhead, a route of 5.5 km exists into Bowron Lake Park and to the portage trail at the west end of Kibbee Lake. The trail then picks up the portage trail for another 2.1 km, terminating at Boron Park HQ (10U, 0607323, 5902541). The route was cleared and marked in about 2001 with permission from BC Parks, since it enters Bowron Lake Provincial Park. However, the unprotected Crown Land portion may have been logged since and needs rehabilitation and possible revision. The trail crosses a marshy area within the park and perhaps should be rerouted to avoid it and instead cross the exiting stream just upstream from Thompson Lake. A bridge would be needed there. A renewed agreement with BC Parks is also required. The trail passes by the historic Thompson cabin on the smallish Thompson Lake at the north end of Kibbee Lake. Total trail distance between the Kruger FSR Trailhead and Boron Park HQ is 7.6 km.