

THE TRAILS OF WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK



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This park contains, someone has said, a maximum of scenery in a minimum of space. More than one hundred miles of graded and well maintained trails run a network throughout the 202.8 square miles of the park's area offering an introduction to unique alpine scenery impossible to reach by automobile.

The following notes are offered to provide information on distances, altitudes and other details of interest. The trails are separated into different groups in relation to their locations within the various sections of the park: The townsite section consists of those radiating from the Waterton Park townsite; the Akamina Highway-Cameron Lake section are those which extend from the Akamina highway and Cameron Lake; the Red Rock Canyon section are those radiating from the area of Red Rock Canyon, and the Belly River section are those which extend from the Chief Mountain highway which passes through the most easterly section of the park. Directional signs have been placed at every trail junction and at the beginning of every trail. As long as these signs are observed and studied, there is little, if any, danger of the traveller becoming lost.

THE TOWNSITE SECTION

THE TOWNSITE-GOVERNMENT COMPOUND PONY TRAIL (1 Mile) – This trail may be entered at Cameron Falls or at the junction of the main entrance road at the Akamina highway, which it crosses. Beside the traffic bridge at Cameron Falls is a smaller bridge for saddle horse traffic. From this smaller bridge the trail ascends the north bank of the creek turning slightly to the left from Evergreen Avenue and traverses the lower wooded slope of Mount Crandell passing behind the residential houses along Evergreen Avenue in a northerly direction. Near Emerald Bay it crosses the Akamina highway, is then carried to a higher elevation by a few switch-backs then parallels the main entrance road passing behind the information centre building and emerges at the government compound area near Lake Linnet.

The purpose of this pony trail is to provide a safe route for horse traffic through the townsite eliminating the dangers of horses travelling amongst the heavy automobile traffic.

THE BEAR'S HUMP TRAIL ($\frac{3}{4}$ Mile)

This trail extends from the parking lot at the information centre, crosses the pony trail which leads to the compound area, and ascends the wooded slope of Mount Crandell in a westerly direction. The grade becomes quite steep near

timberline where it is carried by a series of switch-backs to the summit of the Bear's Hump, which is a prominent shoulder on Mount Crandell approximately 600 or 700 feet above the townsite. The climb to the summit of the Bear's Hump is well worth the effort for the climber is rewarded with one of the most magnificent views overlooking the lakes and townsite.

The Bear's Hump derives its name from the mountain which was originally named Black Bear Mountain.

FOOTPATH TO LAKE LINNET (*approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from townsite to north shore of Lake Linnet*)

This trail is for pedestrians only and provides an enjoyable walk through the pines from the townsite to Lake Linnet. The trail is reached by following the main entrance road out of the townsite as far as the Akamina highway junction. Just past this point, turn right up the driveway which leads to the buildings that are located about 100 yards east of the main road. Near the buildings the trail branches off to the left and traverses the side of the embankment at a slightly lower level than that on which the buildings stand. Immediately past the buildings the trail enters the pines, emerges near the information centre, crosses the road leading to the Prince of Wales Hotel and descends, again through the the pines, to the shoreline of Lake Linnet. At the shoreline a choice may be made of which side of the lake to travel.

TO BOSPORUS AND COMPOUND AREA (*approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile*)

This trail is reached by passing through the picnic area on the north shore of Emerald Bay. The trail follows the shoreline in a south-easterly direction to the Bosphorus (a narrow body of water which joins the upper and middle lakes together). From the Bosphorus the trail continues along the shore of the middle lake in a northerly direction and terminates at Lake Linnet.

BOSPORUS TRAIL TO STONEY FLATS (*3- $\frac{1}{4}$ miles from the Bosphorus*)

The Bosphorus (or Narrows) may be reached by trail from either the townsite or Lake Linnet. It is nearly a half mile by either way. From the Bosphorus to the south end of Stoney Flats is a distance of 3- $\frac{1}{4}$ miles. The depth of water in the Bosphorus is enough to make horses swim throughout most of the year. Leading from the Bosphorus in a southerly direction the trail gently ascends a rocky height of land for the first half mile, crosses this height of land at approximately 400 feet above the level of the lake then descends a short distance to a trail junction. Here, posted signs indicate that the trail which branches sharply to the right is the way to Hell Roaring Canyon and Crypt Lake, while the trail which branches to the left is the way to Stoney Flats and Vimy Peak. This branch to the left is a continuation of the Bosphorus trail which makes a further descent to the south shore of the middle lake and follows it closely for the remainder of the distance of the south end of Stoney Flats. There the junction of the trail to Vimy Peak occurs.

VIMY PEAK (approximately 6-¾ miles via Bosphorus trail; 8 miles via Pass Creek Flats; 13 miles via Waterton River Bridge and Camp INUSPI – from the townsite).

A trail extends to the very top of Vimy Peak. This Peak was originally named Observation Peak by members of the Palliser Expedition in 1858 because of the marvelous view attained upon reaching this point. The elevation from the water level of Middle Waterton Lake to this peak is 3,632 feet. Although it is not amongst the highest peaks in the vicinity of the main lakes, it is one of the most picturesque. Many of the peaks that border the upper lake extend 4,000 feet above the water level.

The Vimy trail has its junction with the Bosphorus trail at the extreme south end of Stoney Flats near the east end of the middle lake. The Vimy trail branches off sharply in a southerly direction, ascends for one mile to the top of a long wooded ridge which is an out-run of Vimy mountain, then from the summit of this ridge the trail turns to the right and makes an ascent on the mountain itself following a narrow, shallow valley caused by a water course, for 1-½ miles to near the top of Vimy ridge. Here, a geological feature is evident in the form of a fairly large depression resembling an ancient lake bed where, at one time, a glacier may have rested. From here it is only a short distance to the summit of Vimy ridge and about a half mile farther to the peak. A concrete box has been installed in the edge of the peak in which one may safely sit while photographing the picturesque landscape.

To approach the Vimy trail via Pass Creek Flats follow the main road from the townsite for two miles then turn off to the right onto a secondary road which leads across Pass Creek Flats in an easterly direction. This secondary road is almost opposite the short road that turns off the main road in the opposite direction and leads to the cemetery.

After proceeding south on the secondary for a short distance across Pass Creek Flats, another road junction is approached. Here, a sign will indicate that the turn to the left leads to the Marquis Hole picnic site. Upon reaching the picnic area signs will indicate where to ford the river (or Dardanelles) to reach Stoney Flats. Midway across Stoney Flats another sign will indicate that the trail which branches to the right is the way to the Vimy trail at the extreme south end of the flats.

The route which allows the nearest approach to the Vimy trail by automobile is via the Chief Mountain highway. The turn-off to Camp INUSPI occurs ¾ mile distance after crossing the Waterton River bridge and following the Chief Mountain highway. This turn-off is onto a secondary leading to the youth camp. It is not advisable to take automobiles beyond the youth camp area after the occurrence of a heavy rain or before mid-June on account of muddy conditions. During dry weather it is possible to reach Stoney Flats by automobile, driving carefully. When weather conditions are ideal it is possible to almost reach the Vimy trail by automobile, driving very carefully.

The Vimy trail has one other junction along its course which occurs one mile from its junction with the Bosphorus trail. Just as the trail reaches the summit of the long wooded ridge south of Stoney Flats, a trail branches to the left, descends through the forest to cross Sofa Creek, then traverses the north slope of Sofa mountain to join the Chief Mountain highway and the Belly River area to the east.

THE TRAIL TO HELL ROARING CANYON AND CRYPT LAKE (3 miles to Hell Roaring Canyon and 7-½ miles to Crypt Lake – from townsite).

The trail to Crypt Lake affords one of the most scenic trail trips in the park. The altitude at Crypt Lake is 6,500 feet. From the shore of Upper Waterton Lake the trail ascends 2,307 feet within five miles. The wild flowers that grow at the various altitudes are indeed evident all along this trail. Those that grow in the vicinity of Crypt Lake are in full bloom even as late in the season as the latter part of July and August.

The trail to Crypt Lake is reached by crossing the Bosphorus, following the Bosphorus trail to the first junction which occurs one mile from the townsite where a sign indicates the turn to the right as the way to Crypt Lake. From here the trail swings toward the south-west and back toward the lakeshore which it more or less parallels as far as the Hell Roaring Canyon warden cabin. Many visitors to Crypt Lake charter a boat at the townsite dock and cross the lake to this point which also contains a small boat wharf. It is a five mile trip from the boat landing at the Hell Roaring warden cabin to Crypt Lake, by trail. A footpath branches off the main trail approximately a quarter of a mile from the boat landing and circles around to Hell Roaring Canyon and Falls. Along the main trail, Twin Falls are a little over a mile from the boat landing and a smaller waterfall is located 2-½ miles from the boat landing. A noteworthy geological feature in the form of a natural tunnel occurs a half mile from Crypt Lake. Pedestrians only are able to pass through this tunnel and horses have to be left at this point which is also a camping area where a kitchen shelter and outdoor sanitary facilities have been erected. Camping parties often have their equipment transported by pack horse to this point. Crypt Lake contains many fine specimens of cutthroat trout and another geological feature is evident midway along the footpath which leads from the tunnel to the lake. This feature is the underground outlet of the lake. The tormented waters of an underground stream emerge from the side of the mountain to go tumbling down the rock cliff for about 600 feet.

THE CARTHEW TRAIL (6 miles to Carthew Lake; 12 miles to Cameron Lake).

The Carthew trail begins about 200 yards south of Cameron Falls. To reach this point one must cross the traffic bridge at Cameron Falls when travelling south from Evergreen Avenue. At the south end of the bridge turn immediately right and follow the secondary road until the "Carthew Trail" sign is reached. Here the trail begins and is immediately carried to higher ground to overlook

Cameron Falls. It continues past the falls in a westerly direction its elevation gradually increasing as it wanders through the pines, crosses a few small streams which invite the hiker to stop for a cool drink, and emerges at Alderson Lake (4-½ miles from the townsite). At Alderson Lake a kitchen shelter and toilets have been erected for picnics and camping. The lake is noteworthy of its picturesque setting and color. It is stocked with cutthroat trout. Its altitude is 5,900 feet.

Near Alderson Lake a sign at the trail junction directs the continuation of the trail to Carthew Lakes. Lower Carthew Lake is the first to be reached after a climb over two formations of rock. The altitude here is 7,000 feet. Both lakes contain cutthroat trout. Upper Carthew Lake is about a quarter mile beyond the lower lake and its altitude is approximately 7,200 feet.

The Carthew trail continues past Upper Carthew Lake, over the Carthew summit, then drops down to Summit Lake where it joins the trail connecting Cameron Lake with Upper Waterton Lake via West Boundary Creek. The Carthew summit is one of the highest passes in the park and the view from its 7,900 foot elevation is well worth the climb from either the townsite or Cameron Lake. Many visitors obtain transportation to Cameron Lake then hike the trail back to the townsite via Carthew Lakes.

THE LAKE SHORE-BERTHA LAKE TRAIL (3-½ miles to Bertha Lake; 5 miles to International Boundary; 9 miles to lakehead (Goathaunt) – from townsite).

The Lake Shore trail is one of the original trails in the park. It is one of the few that provides a direct connection with Glacier Park in Montana. It begins about a quarter mile south of Cameron Falls and may be reached by following the secondary road which turns to the right at the south end of Cameron Falls bridge. The beginning of the trail is well indicated by directional signs which point the way to Bertha Lake and the International Boundary.

A trail junction occurs upon reaching Bertha Creek. Here, again, directional signs point the way. The branch to the right, to Bertha Lake, is carried 1,000 feet above the junction by series of switch-backs. This portion of the trail is made very interesting by the magnificent views obtained along its switch-backs, of the Waterton Lakes and foothills to the east-north-east, and the Bertha Falls. Upon reaching Bertha Lake (altitude 5,900 feet) an additional two miles of trail completely encircles the lake. Camping facilities have been erected at either end of the lake which include kitchen shelters and outdoor toilets. The lake is stocked with rainbow trout that are an invitation to test the skill of fishermen.

The Lake Shore trail continues south-east from the junction at Bertha Creek until nearing the shore of Upper Waterton Lake then follows the lake shore south until it reaches Boundary cabin, a warden patrol cabin near the

International Boundary. The trail crosses the boundary then crosses West Boundary Creek. Just a short distance beyond the creek it is joined by the West Boundary Creek trail approaching from the west. The Lake Shore trail terminates at the head of Upper Waterton Lake which is the location of the Goathaunt, Glacier Park, ranger's headquarters and from where other trails branch off to the south and west into Glacier Park.

THE TRAIL TO CRANDELL LAKE (approximately 4 miles; continuation completely encircling Crandell Mountain – 12 miles).

This trail begins in the townsite where its junction with the pony trail to the compound area occurs about 400 yards south of the Akamina highway junction and directly west of Crandell Lodge. It crosses the Akamina highway which it more or less parallels from a higher elevation along the south-west slope of Crandell mountain to Crandell Lake.

At Crandell Lake kitchen shelters and outdoor toilets have been erected near each end of the lake. The trail continues around the base of Crandell mountain and approaches the townsite area from the north, passing along the west side of the golf course.

THE AKAMINA HIGHWAY – CAMERON LAKE SECTION

THE TRAIL TO LINEHAM LAKES (3-½ miles from about Mile 5.5 on the Akamina highway).

This trail extends along the course of Lineham Creek to its headwaters. Lineham Creek is signed as such where it is crossed by the Akamina highway. Just a short distance before the highway reaches the creek the beginning of the trail is indicated by a directional sign which also forewarns inexperienced climbers about the dangers of the cliff that must be scaled before actually reaching the lakes. This trail extends in a westerly direction for approximately three miles to the base of the cliff. It is a pleasant trip this far, up an alpine valley, even if the cliff at the head of the valley becomes too great an obstacle to scale. From the base of the cliff to its summit is an almost perpendicular height of approximately 300 feet. Here, a hanging valley or basin of unexcelled beauty (altitude 7,000 feet) contains five lakes. They are stocked with cutthroat trout and are not heavily fished on account of the barrier the cliff presents.

There are other, much longer, routes into these lakes; one is via Lower Rowe Lake which involves climbing over Lineham mountain, and the other is over an unimproved trail via Red Rock Canyon, Lone Lake and over Hawkins mountain.

THE ROWE LAKES TRAIL (Lower Rowe Lake, 2-½ miles; Upper Rowe Lake, 3-¾ miles – from approximately Mile 6 on the Akamina highway).

This trail follows along the course of Rowe Creek to its headwaters which consist of the lower and upper Rowe Lakes. It begins where the Akamina

highway crosses Rowe Creek. Its beginning is marked by a directional sign posted very near the stream. The Rowe Lakes nestle between Rowe and Lineham mountains. The lower lake is reached within 2-½ miles from the Akamina highway. Its altitude is 6,200 feet and it has been stocked from time to time with eastern brook trout. From Lower Rowe Lake the trail continues up the north branch of the valley, enters a fairly large basin, then turns abruptly south to be carried by switch-backs up the wooded slope of Rowe mountain to an elevation of 7,200 feet into a smaller basin containing Upper Rowe Lakes. The scattered alpine larch trees and snowfields add greatly to the beauty of this alpine basin.

"MOTHER DUCK" TRAIL (6-½ miles from north end of Cameron Lake to U.S. boundary).

The mileage of this trail is greatly increased by the series of switch-backs that carry it over the summit of a high, broad ridge separating the Cameron and West Boundary Creek valleys. The trail begins immediately across the small traffic bridge at the north end of Cameron Lake. Starting from the east end of this traffic bridge the trail turns immediately to the right and parallels the east shore of Cameron Lake for about a half mile into the virgin forest. Here, the first switch-back occurs and the trail is then carried by a number of long switch-backs up the north slope of the ridge to a height of 1,100 feet above Cameron Lake. The top of the ridge is about a half mile in width which the trail crosses in a south-easterly direction. Located on the south side of this ridge top is Summit Lake and at this point the trail is joined by the Carthew trail which approaches from a north-easterly direction. The altitude at Summit Lake is approximately 6,400 feet. The Mother Duck trail continues from this small lake in a southerly direction descending to the valley floor of West Boundary Creek. Turning due east the trail then follows West Boundary to join the Lake Shore trail on the west shore of Upper Waterton Lake. It is approximately 14-½ miles from Cameron Lake to the townsite via the Mother Duck and West Boundary Creek trails.

FOOTPATH TO SOUTH END OF CAMERON LAKE (approximately 1-¼ miles).

This footpath begins at the extreme south end of the Cameron Lake campground. It extends along the west shore of Cameron Lake and terminates at a picnic shelter near the south end of the lake.

THE RED ROCK CANYON SECTION

At the Red Rock Canyon warden station directional signs indicate the trails to Twin Lakes, Goat Lake, Lost Lake, South Kootenay Pass, and Lone Lake. Two of the main streams, Bauerman and Blakiston Creeks, join here, each draining the two separate valleys they have created throughout the centuries. Blakiston Creek is the south fork and Bauerman Creek is the north fork;

together they form the main body of Blakiston Creek which drains into the Dardanelles near the south end of Lower Waterton Lake (Knight's Lake).

It is possible to make a complete circle starting at Red Rock Canyon, following the Bauerman Creek valley to Twin Lakes, crossing over a low ridge, south, into the Blakiston Creek valley and following this stream eastward to return to Red Rock Canyon. The complete circle is 15 miles.

TWIN LAKES TRAIL (7 miles from Red Rock Canyon to Twin Lakes)

The trail from Red Rock Canyon to within two miles of Twin Lakes has been constructed into a secondary road. This road is primarily a fire road and is subject to being closed to traffic whenever an extreme fire hazard exists. This is the reason the gate at Red Rock Canyon is often closed and permission from the warden stationed there is required before automobiles can proceed beyond this point.

This road leads from the warden station in a north-westerly direction along the bottom of the valley. At Mile 2.5 the trail to Goat Lake branches off to the right through the forest and ascends the south slope of Newman Peak into a high basin which contains Goat Lake at its south end. It is two miles from the fire road to Goat Lake. The altitude at the lake is 6,500 feet.

The fire road terminates at the confluence of the two small streams that drain Twin Lakes and Lost Lake. Here are located a picnic-camping site and a warden patrol cabin. Two trails lead from this point; one to the left and the other to the right. The right branch leads to Lost Lake (altitude 6,200 feet) a distance of one mile. A continuation of this trail extends over the Castle River Divide and the summit of Avion Ridge can be reached by this trail. The left branch in the trail at the patrol cabin leads to Twin Lakes (altitude 6,500 feet), a distance of two miles.

SOUTH KOOTENAY PASS TRAIL (7 miles from Red Rock Canyon to South Kootenay Pass)

This trail also begins at the warden station at Red Rock Canyon. From the warden station it follows along the west bank of Red Rock creek south, crosses Bauerman Creek over a foot-and-saddle horse bridge, then turns to the right at the south end of the bridge, passing through the pines in a south-westerly direction and entering a semi-forested valley which separates Mount Blakiston (highest peak in the park) and Anderson Peak (one of the most picturesque peaks in the park).

It is seven miles from Red Rock Canyon to South Kootenay Pass. The trail follows the valley floor and gradually swings from a south-westerly direction to a westerly direction. Two trail junctions are encountered approximately six miles from Red Rock Canyon. At the first junction a trail branches to the right to connect with the Twin Lakes trail two miles away. At the second junction the trail branches to the left and leads south for two miles to Lone

Lake. The main trail continues in a westerly direction and is carried by switch-backs over the South Kootenay Pass and into British Columbia. The altitude at Lone Lake is 6,600 feet and at South Kootenay Pass, 7,100 feet. The first portion of this trail, from Red Rock Canyon to Blakiston Falls (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile), is utilized as a nature trail.

Twin Lakes, Goat Lake, Lost Lake and Lone Lake have been stocked with trout and have provided good sport fishing for many years. The whole area surrounding these lakes is one of mountain wilderness providing wonderful attractions of wildlife and unexcelled mountain scenery, especially when the summits of passes and ridges have been reached.

THE BELLY RIVER SECTION AND FOOTHILLS

The Belly River area within the extreme eastern section of the park is approximately 35 square miles in area. It contains the most compact warden district of the four into which the park is separated. The Chief Mountain highway passes through the entire length of this district, making its most attractive feature, the Belly River, very accessible. For this reason the trails in this district are not frequented by large numbers of visitors. They are used mainly by wardens patrolling the area. The topography of this section does not include many mountains but mostly foothills and forest. Therefore the grading of trails is hardly necessary when one may hike off in almost any direction following wilderness trails through the timber, over barren grassy hilltops and forested heights of land, without much danger of becoming lost.

The two most frequented trails in this section of the park are the North Fork trail and the wagon road which leads from the Belly River campground south to cross the International Boundary.

THE NORTH FORK TRAIL (5 miles from the Belly River bridge to the North Fork cabin)

This trail commences as a wagon road which begins at the west end of the Belly River bridge, follows the west bank of the river south for nearly a mile onto a large open area known as "Beebe Flats". The wagon road crosses these flats in a westerly direction and at their extreme west side, terminates near the edge of the creek. This creek is named "North Fork of the Belly River". From this point the trail climbs to a higher level on the north bank of the creek and enters the forest. It more or less parallels the creek extending in a south-westerly direction as far as the International Boundary where stand the North Fork cabin, a small warden patrol cabin constructed of native timber. Visitors are attracted to the North Fork area as it offers stream fishing in very primitive surroundings.

THE BELLY RIVER WAGON ROAD (2- $\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Belly River Campground to International Boundary)

This is an original route into the headwaters of Belly River which are in Glacier Park, Montana. The wagon road continues due south from the Belly River campground, parallels the river and makes this major stream accessible to fishermen and nature lovers.

There are other trails that follow along the eastern boundary of the park from the Chief Mountain Customs to the extreme north end at Yarrow creek. A large prairie area known as the "Badlands" lies between the Pincher Creek park entrance and the golf course. This area offers lots of room for riders who enjoy the wide-open-spaces in which to gallop.

At the north end of the Badlands is the buffalo paddock. Between the paddock and Bellevue Hill a trail climbs the grassy slope of a ridge (an out-run of Bellevue Hill) and enters the Horseshoe Basin to the north-west of the paddocks and Badlands. The trail eventually crosses a creek-bed then turns north following the north branch of the valley to its head. Here, it is carried by switch-backs over the west portion of Lakeview Ridge then down into the Oil Basin in the north portion of the park. It is twelve miles from the Waterton River bridge, via this route, to Yarrow creek.

To become well acquainted with the various trail locations in the foothill area of the park, it is advisable to consult the district wardens who are stationed in this area. One warden station is located at the Waterton River bridge and another is located at Mile 7 on the Chief Mountain highway.

OVERNIGHT TRAIL TRIPS AND MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

In Waterton Lakes National Park there are many interesting mountains to climb. Some are accessible from the townsite and the main thoroughfares.

For your own safety and protection and to facilitate mountain search and rescue operations, National Parks Regulations require the registration of mountain climbing activities and overnight trail trips. Anyone who proposed climbing a mountain which involves leaving the trail, must register with a park warden or the chief warden's office in the administration building before leaving, and upon return, report to the place where registered or to the nearest park warden. The same applies to overnight camping in other than serviced or semi-serviced campgrounds. The serviced campground is located in the townsite and semi-serviced campgrounds are located at Cameron Lake, Belly River and Crandell Mountain.

REGISTER - IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

