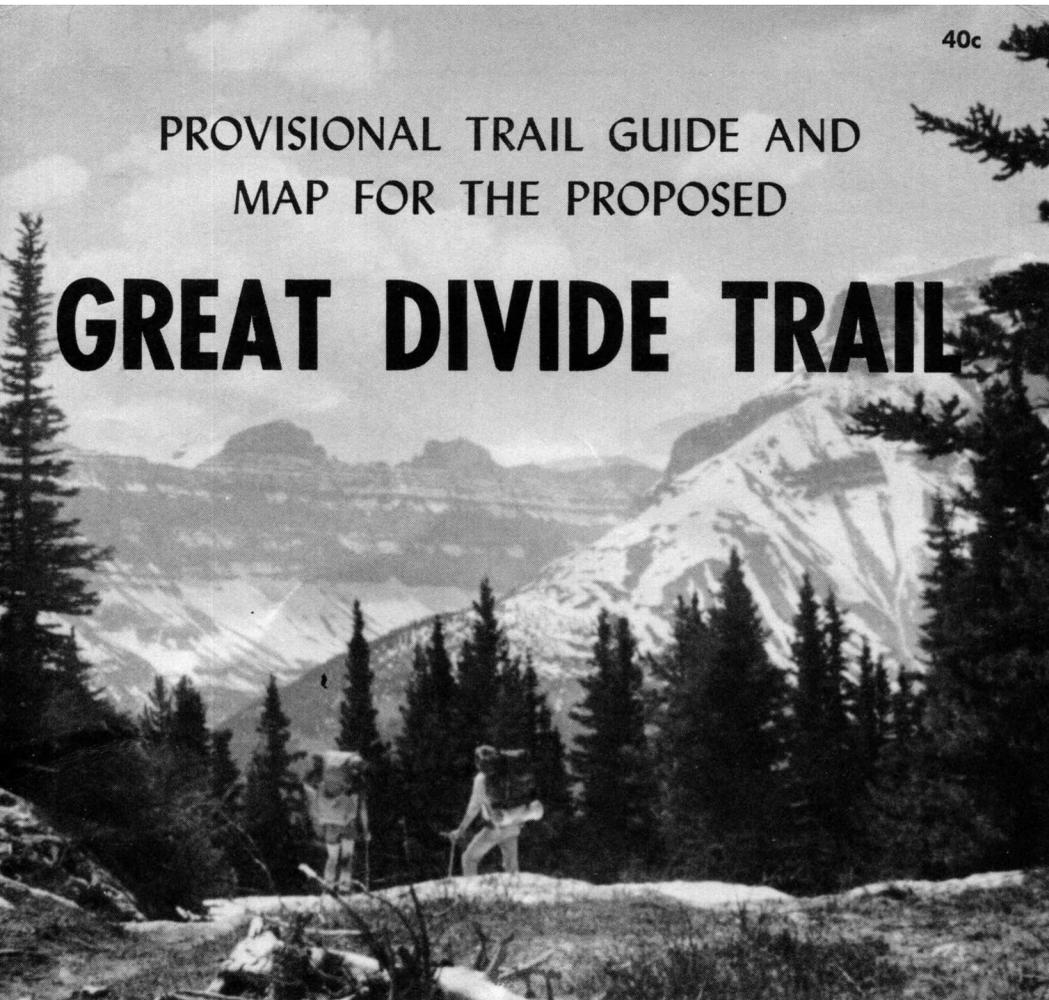


PROVISIONAL TRAIL GUIDE AND
MAP FOR THE PROPOSED

GREAT DIVIDE TRAIL



Sunset Pass

A Cross Country Wilderness Footpath through Banff, Kootenay, Yoho, Jasper, Mt. Assiniboine and Mt. Robson Parks.

Produced by Jim Thorsell for

THE
NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL PARKS
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA



GTD THE GREAT DIVIDE TRAIL

CONCEPT

The Continental Divide which forms the border between Alberta and British Columbia is the backbone of one of the world's most spectacular alpine areas. The Canadian Rockies, for a great portion of their length, are buffered by a 9,000 square mile complex of National and Provincial Parks and Reserves dedicated to preservation and public enjoyment of the natural environment.

There is interest in establishing through this area a long distance trail similar in concept to the Bruce Trail in Ontario and the Appalachian Trail in the U.S. The National Parks Branch of the Federal Government has sponsored several summers of research on the feasibility of such a trail and planning for its proper use and development.

A 350 mile route has been selected from the south end of Banff Park through Assiniboine, Kootenay, Yoho, Jasper, and Robson Parks and the White Goat Wilderness. Except for 20 miles of connecting links and 80 miles of very poor but mostly passable trail the route for the GDT already exists. Eventually primitive shelters may be constructed every ten or so miles apart, a guidebook prepared, and the route extended south to meet the American Continental Divide Trail at Waterton Lakes.

The GDT is intended for use by both hikers and horsemen. It follows, when possible, the high ridges near and above timberline. Altitude varies from 4,075 feet at Field to 8,747 feet at Duchesnay Pass. No special equipment is required outside of normal backpacking gear. It is not necessarily the shortest route between two points but the most interesting. Total hiking time for the 350 miles would be about one full month. Most people will prefer selected trips along its length of anywhere from three to ten days duration.

PURPOSE

Here are some of the objectives behind the establishment of the GDT:

- to stimulate wilderness travel in the Canadian Rockies by providing visitors with the opportunity to hike as well as drive through the mountains.
- to enable a year round, reasonably accessible, educational, and economical outdoor recreational experience in a high alpine environment.
- to aid in the portraying of the parks as wilderness hiking and natural areas consistent with their stated purposes.
- to provide a functional backbone linking the many separate trail systems of the mountain parks, and
- to provide impetus for a nationwide system of scenic long distance trails.

The purpose of this limited edition provisional guide and map is to introduce the concept of the GDT to the public and hopefully gain support for its establishment. It is not the intention here to give a mile by mile description of the route or to extol the joys and virtues of wilderness travel — the mountains will speak for themselves. Rather this is but a general introduction to the potential of the GDT to suffice until an interpretive guidebook is made available.

When using this guide remember the advice of Renny Russell: "Adventure is not in the guidebook and Beauty is not on the map. Seek and ye shall find."

CAUTIONS

Remember that this trail has not yet been formally established. Few directional signs have been placed to help guide the traveller and trail conditions in many sections are poor. Rivers will present special problems for hikers where there are not footbridges. This is a wilderness trail — all forms of motorised travel are prohibited. Although there are many primitive campsites along the route only one shelter is now open for public use. It is important to have good lightweight equipment and be prepared for all weather conditions. Secondly, remember that this brochure is an introductory guide only — before starting refer to the topographic map reference provided. Mileages and most elevations here are approximate. Finally, National Park regulations require that you REGISTER OUT with Park Wardens for overnight and off-trail trips. Check with wardens before and after your trip.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

First be a considerate and sensitive wilderness user — especially burn and carry out garbage and be careful with fire.

Secondly you can support the establishment of the GDT and other related park and conservation issues by belonging to The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada at 43 Victoria St., Toronto, Ontario. Order other copies of this guide from this address. If you feel strongly about particular aspects of the project offer your opinions to us or to the Park offices.

For general information write: The Director, National and Historic Parks Branch, Ottawa, Ontario. For more detailed local information write the Park Superintendent of the particular park you are interested in. Then, as John Muir said many years ago: "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine into the trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."

