

**Guide to Hiking Trails in the vicinity of
Storm Mountain Lodge**



"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."

John Muir, 1871

Introduction

Over 60 kilometres of hiking trails are found within 15 kilometres of Storm Mountain Lodge. These trails lead to scenic treeline vistas, to alpine meadows, and to nearly 20 mountain lakes.

As it is the intention of the lodge to encourage guests to explore the nearby trails of Banff and Kootenay National Park, we have prepared this guide to assist you in selecting hikes. All trails in this guide are well marked along roadways and possess trailhead parking areas.

For more detailed information, ask our staff or consult the *Canadian Rockies Trail Guide*, which is available at the front desk.

Gem Trek Publishing's *Banff-Egypt Lake* 1:50,000 map covers all of the trails in this guide either fully or partially. National Topographic System 1:50,000 maps are available at the Banff and Lake Louise Visitor Centres, and Storm Mountain Lodge is located at the centre of the four most popular sheets:

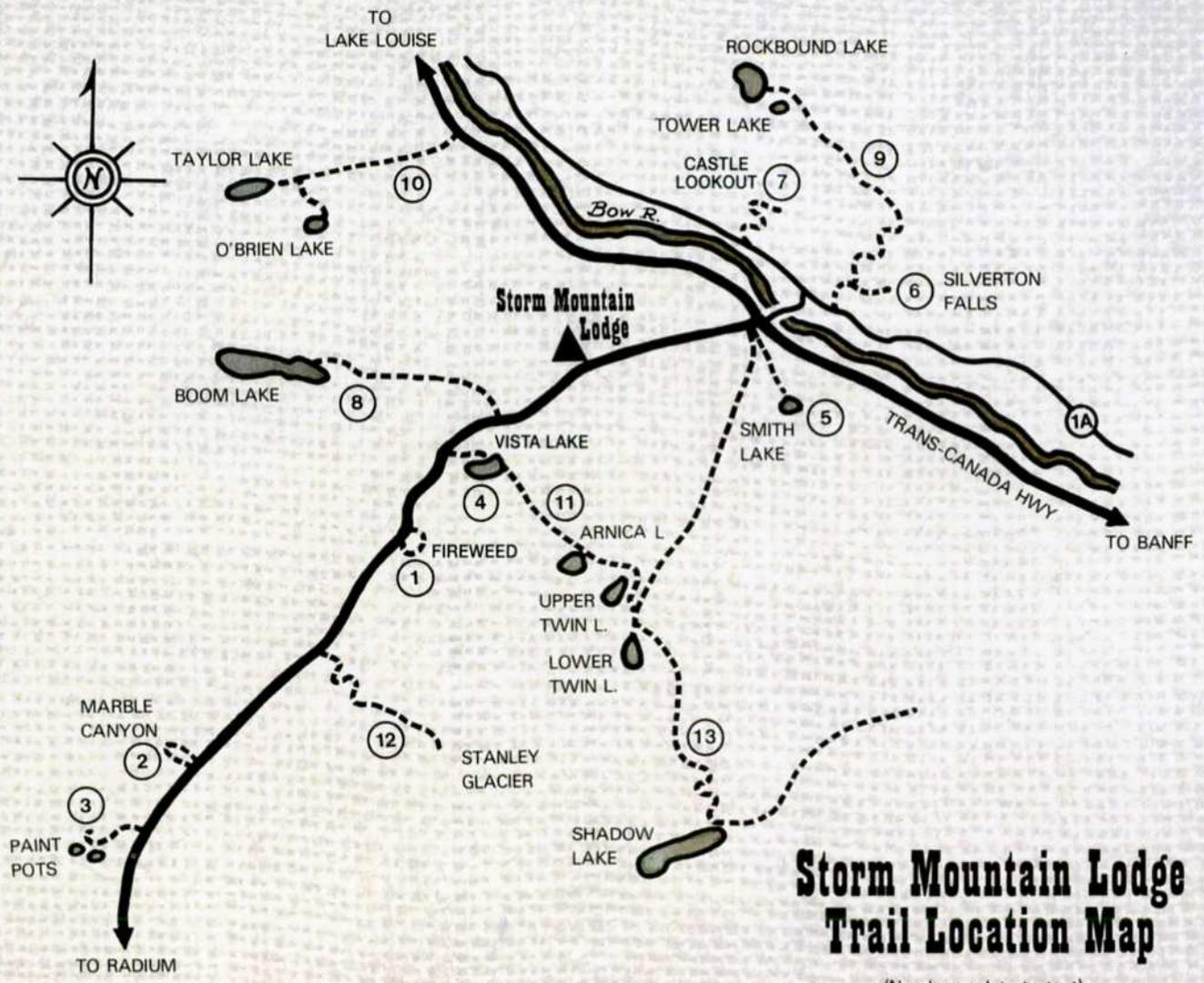
Banff 82 O/4
Castle Mountain 82 O/5
Lake Louise 82 N/8
Mount Goodsir 82 N/1

**SKY LINE
TRAIL HIKERS**

**ANNUAL HIKE
1935
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BANFF
EGYPT LAKES
SHADOW LAKE
CASTLE MOUNTAIN
in the CANADIAN ROCKIES
Rate \$22.50**

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from **SECRETARY** - Room 318
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Storm Mountain Lodge Trail Location Map

(Numbers relate to text)

NATURE TRAILS

Three self-guiding nature trails are located just off the Kootenay Parkway (Hwy 93S), a short distance west of Storm Mountain Lodge in Kootenay Park.



1. Fireweed Nature Trail. Two short, interconnecting loop trails introduce visitors to the 1968 Vermilion Pass burn. The trails begin at the Continental Divide parking area 5 kilometres west of the lodge.

As the name suggests, fireweed is an abundant tall pink flower in this post-wildfire lodgepole pine forest. Interpretive panels guide you along the two loop trails, describing many aspects of fire ecology.

2. Marble Canyon Trail. Eleven kilometres west of the lodge is the famed Marble Canyon. Here a 1.4-km loop trail follows the steep-walled Marble Canyon formed by the erosion of Tokumm Creek.

Rebuilt after a wildfire swept the Prospector's Valley in 2003, the trail crosses back and forth over the narrow canyon via 7 bridges, which serve as viewpoints into the deep chasm containing Tokumm Creek.

The area is particularly interesting from a geological point of view as the valley marks the dividing line between the gently dipping grey Cambrian-age limestones of the Main Ranges and the complex, folded, brownish shales and limestones of the western ranges of the Rockies.





3. Paint Pots Nature Trail. A 1.0-kilometre nature trail crosses the Vermilion River on an elevated footbridge to the unique Paint Pots. Also known as Ochre Beds, the Paint Pots are actually a series of springs that emit quantities of iron oxide (common rust).

As the trail signs will tell you, human use of the area, first by the Kootenay Indians and later by commercial ochre miners, adds historical interest to the geological story.

The Paint Pots trail starts at a large parking area on the west side of the Kootenay Parkway (Highway 93S) 15 km west of the lodge.

SHORT WALKS

For those wishing a short 2 to 3 hour hike, four nearby trails are suggested.



4. Vista Lake. Less than 3 kilometres west of the lodge is the 1.4-km trail to Vista Lake. From the road, the lake can be seen 110 metres below the highway. The lake is actually a widening of Altrude Creek, and fish are numerous there but small in size.



5. Smith Lake. This small, picturesque lake is located 1.8 kilometres from the Altrude Creek parking area. Watch for the trail access road branching right through the fencing just as you enter the Castle Junction interchange 5.0 km east of the lodge.

Moose are sometimes seen here and fishing is rated fair. The trail is moderately steep, rising 150 m from the trailhead, but is ideal for an evening stroll.

6. Silverton Falls. If you look closely from the lodge, you will notice a small white sliver of water in the forest just beyond the Bow River and Castle Junction. This is the seldom-visited Silverton Falls.

The 0.9-km trail leaves from the Rockbound Lake trailhead parking area, 200 metres east of Castle Mountain Chalets on the Bow Valley Parkway. Follow the Rockbound trail for 300 m and take the right fork. From that junction you will climb steadily for another 0.6 km to reach the viewpoint for the falls.



DAY HIKES

Within 15 kilometres of the lodge are eight trips ranging from 1.5 to 3 hours one-way. Allowing time for photography, fishing, wine, etc., they will occupy you for most of a day!



7 Castle Lookout. Back when Castle Mountain was still called Mount Eisenhower (1946 to 1979), a fire lookout cabin overlooked the Bow Valley and west to Storm Mountain. But though the lookout is now gone, the site still provides a panoramic view of the Bow Valley and Vermilion Pass.

Follow the Bow Valley Parkway west 4.8 kilometres from Castle Junction to a parking area in the forest on the right side of the highway. The 4-km hike is moderately steep, and you should bring plenty of drinking water.



8. Boom Lake. One of the most popular trips in the area, both winter and summer, is to Boom Lake. It starts from the Boom Creek Picnic Site, a large parking area 1.6 kilometres west of the lodge, and proceeds on a wide, well-defined trail 5.1 km to the lake's northeast shoreline. Elevation gain en route is only 175 m.

Once you reach the lake, you can follow rough trail along the northeast shore to the far end and beyond to the basin below Consolation Pass. A fine view of Mount Temple and Hector is afforded from this pass, though the trip beyond the lake is only for tough scramblers.



9. Rockbound and Tower Lakes. The hike to Tower and Rockbound Lakes follows a rather rigorous 8.4-kilometre trail, which climbs into a hanging valley behind the ramparts of Castle Mountain. Tiny Tower Lake lies just below a cliff and a short, steep climb to the much larger and aptly-named Rockbound Lake (above).

The hike starts from the Rockbound parking area, 200 metres east of Castle Mountain Chalets on the Bow Valley Parkway. You gain 760 m of elevation from the trailhead to Rockbound Lake, which lies at 2210 m above sea level. There are lush wildflower meadows leading to Tower Lake and impressive close-up views of Eisenhower Tower on the prow of Castle Mountain



10. Taylor and O'Brien Lakes. The 6.6-kilometre trail to Taylor Lake starts from a parking area on the left side of the Trans Canada Highway 8 km west of the Castle Junction interchange. There is a campsite at Taylor Lake, and both lakes offer good fishing and autumn colours.

The trail has some muddy sections and climbs nearly 600 m in elevation from the highway. O'Brien Lake is accessible by a rough trail that leaves the main trail just below Taylor Lake. If you visit both lakes, you will log nearly 18 km round trip.



II. Arnica and Twin Lakes. An arduous 8.2-kilometre hike one-way if you go all the way to Lower Twin Lake, but many hikers are satisfied with the 5.0-km trip to Arnica Lake (above).

The trailhead lies 3 kilometres west of the lodge, at a viewpoint overlooking Vista Lake—a quick 1.4-km descent and your first lake on the journey (or your destination if you only want a short hike). A moderately strenuous climb beyond Vista brings you to Arnica Lake, and just 0.8 km further, Arnica Summit. From there, it is downhill again to Upper and Lower Twin Lakes. But remember, you've got an up-down-up trip back to the highway.

12. Stanley Glacier. A highly recommended trip for the experience of hiking up a slope recovering from wildfires (1968 and 2003) and for the opportunity to see a glacier close up.

The trail begins from the Kootenay Parkway (Hwy 93S) 8 kilometres west of the lodge. It starts at a bridge over the Vermilion River and proceeds for 4.2 km, climbing into a high, rocky basin and to a viewpoint below the northeast face of Stanley Peak.

From the end of this trail, it is possible to scramble another kilometre or so over talus slopes (snowfields in early season) to a small meadow just below the lower glacier. Parks Canada interpreters also lead guided walks to fossil beds near the glacier.

Waterfalls, snow avalanches, and abundant wildflowers in the early summer make this the best time to travel this trail.



THE BOW VALLEY HIGHLINE OVERNIGHT TRIP



13. Gibbon Pass-Shadow Lake-Egypt Lakes-Healy Pass-Sunshine. One of the most scenic backcountry trips in Banff Park leads 40 kilometres from the Arnica-Twin Lakes trailhead to Sunshine Village near Banff. The trail was conceived by pioneer outfitter Jim Brewster and Parks Commissioner J.B. Harkin in 1915 and first travelled by the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies in 1929. Today, you can backpack the trail and stay in backcountry campsites, or use Shadow Lake Lodge (14 km) as an alternate destination.

The route follows the Arnica-Twin Lakes trail (#11) then climbs over spectacular Gibbon Pass (above) to Shadow Lake. Arrangements can be made for accommodation at Shadow Lake Lodge before either returning to Storm or continuing south over Whistling Pass to Egypt Lakes, Healy Pass and Sunshine. If you complete the entire trip to Sunshine, you will visit nine backcountry lakes and cross four 2300-m passes.

There are several campgrounds on the route, plus the Egypt Lake Shelter just below its namesake lake. At the southern end of the trip, you can ride a shuttle bus down to the Sunshine base station parking area. Or if you are willing to forego one of the high passes, simply hike directly down Healy Creek to the Sunshine parking lot.

A full, detailed description of the Bow Valley Highline Trail is contained in the *Canadian Rockies Trail Guide*.



Mount Ball from Shadow Lake