

Hiking Trails in Golden Ears Provincial Park

Golden Ears Provincial Park is a spectacular mountainous park, offering over 80 km of trails of varying lengths and difficulty. A number of hiking trails lead to backcountry lookouts, waterfalls and mountaintops.

The road and trail systems providing visitors access to Alouette Lake, Gold Creek and the backcountry areas of the Park resulted from B.C.'s greatest railroad logging operation.

During the early years of the 20th Century, the click of fallers' axes, the rasp of crosscut saws and the puff of steam engines were common sounds in the Alouette Valley. Massive trees up to 4 metres in diameter were felled, bucked and hauled on flat cars.

In 1931 a disastrous fire swept through the valley and permanently silenced the operations.

Second growth of western hemlock, western red cedar and douglas-fir cover the scars of the past however observant park visitors can find abandoned steam donkey sleds, railroad rails and steel cables along many of the trails that follow old rail beds.

Listed below are trail descriptions, lengths, suggested hiking times (based on summer hiking conditions) and elevation changes.

NOTE: For more detailed trail information see the latest Trail Report.

Trail Descriptions

Mike Lake Trail: Main Horse Corral near the Park entrance to Mike Lake. Mike Lake was once a thriving logging camp home to some 600 or more men who logged the area in the 1920s. (4.2 km, suggested hiking time one-way 2 hrs, elevation change 100 m).

Alouette Valley Trail: Main Horse Corral to Menzies Trail junction. Trailhead located at the Main Horse Corral. At .8 kilometres the trail crosses over to the side of the Parkway and heads north (7 km, suggested hiking time one-way 3.5 hrs; elevation change minimal).

Menzies Trail: Park Headquarters to Gold Creek Parking Lot. Access to trailhead is approximately 100 metres up the Mike Lake Road by Park Headquarters. This trail was used as rail spur for logging operations in the 1920s. There is a viewpoint offering a glimpse through the treetops to the south of Alouette Lake and down to the dam (9 km, suggested hiking time one-way 4.5 hrs, elevation change minimal).

Eric Dunning Trail: Mike Lake Road to Incline Trail junction. Access trailhead approximately 200 metres up Mike Lake Road (1.2 km, suggested hiking time one-way 1 hr, elevation change 200 m).

Incline Trail: Mike Lake to Alouette Mountain Fire Access Trail. Trailhead 150 m back along Mike Lake Road from the Parking Lot. This steep trail follows the shortcut that was once used by loggers as a route to 'skyline' huge logs down to Mike Lake from the railhead above (Alouette Mountain Fire Access Trail). This shortcut eliminated 5 kilometres of the railroad haul down the mountain (1.2 km, suggested hiking time one-way 1 hr; elevation change 150 m).

Alouette Mountain Fire Access Trail: Fire access road that sweeps up the lower south slope of Alouette Mountain. Used to access the Alouette Mountain trailhead (elevation change 400 m).

Alouette Mountain Trail: This is a strenuous hike to the top of Alouette Mountain from Mike Lake. It requires backcountry experience and proper equipment. Take the Alouette Mountain Fire Access Trail (AMFA) to the trailhead. (4 km, elevation change 930 m).

Lookout and Loop Trails: Providing a circular hike to the Lookout on Menzies Trail. Trails begin on the west side of the Parkway near the entrance to the South Beach day use area. Park at Spirea nature trail parking lot (2.5 km, suggested hiking time one-way 1 hour, elevation change 75 m).

Viewpoint Trail: West Canyon Parking Lot to partial views of Alouette Lake and in wetter seasons a picturesque waterfall can be seen tumbling down from the Viking Creek Viewpoint. Trailhead at .33 km on West Canyon Trail. (1.7 km, suggested hiking time one-way 1.5 hours; elevation change 175 m).

West Canyon Trail: West Canyon Parking Lot to Alder Flats. The trail follows an old logging road for approximately 3 km and then becomes a rough trail that swings into the Golden Ears Valley (5.7 km, suggested hiking time one-way 2 hrs; estimated elevation change 250 m).

Golden Ears Trail: Strenuous and difficult hike to the summit of the North Ear by way of Alder Flats and Panorama Ridge. It requires backcountry experience, route finding skills and navigation equipment. Follow the West Canyon Trail to Alder Flats to reach the Golden Ears trailhead (6.8 km, estimated time one-way 7 hrs, estimated elevation change 1,500 m).

East Canyon Trail: Gold Creek Parking Lot to Viewpoint Beach. Follow the logging road north to Viewpoint Beach and great views of the Golden Ears and Panorama Ridge to the west (4.5 km, suggested hiking time one-way 2 hrs, elevation change minimal).

Lower Falls Trail: Gold Creek Parking Lot to the Lower Gold Creek Falls. A popular easy walk along Gold Creek to the 10 metre high Lower Falls. (2.8 km, suggested hiking time one-way 1 hr, elevation change minimal).

East West Canyon Connector Trail: Connects the East Canyon Trail and West Canyon Trail as well as provides trail access to Hikers Beach. (1 km, suggested hiking time one-way 1 hour).

Hikers Beach Trail: Provides trail access to Hikers Beach (200 m)

Interpretive Trails

Spirea Nature Trail: Staged from the Spirea Nature Trail parking lot, adjacent to the Parkway; near the entrance to the South Beach day-use area. This is a self guided loop trail with boardwalks around a small pond and boggy area. Strategically placed plaques describe the flora and fauna in the forest understory. Designed to accommodate people with a variety of physical abilities. The main trail is 540 metres, there is also a shorter loop trail of 350 metres.

Tiarella Nature Trail: Accessed from the Alouette Campground. This is a self guided loop trail through coastal forest (.5 kilometres, suggested hiking time 10 minutes).

Trail of the Fallen Giants: Loop trail found near the entrance to Gold Creek Campground. Self guided loop trail through second growth western hemlock forest carpeted with sword ferns. Interpret the forest ecology and the logging history of the area (.5 kilometres, suggested hiking time 15 minutes).