



THE GREAT DIVIDE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

What is the Great Divide Trail ?

The Great Divide Trail (GDT) is a spectacular and challenging wilderness hiking route which follows as closely as possible the spine of the Canadian Rockies (the hydrological Continental Divide) from Waterton Lakes National Park to Kakwa Provincial Park and Protected Area, 150km NW of Mt Robson in British Columbia. It passes through lands under many jurisdictions in Alberta, British Columbia, and the National Parks of Waterton Lakes, Banff, Kootenay, Yoho and Jasper. It's southern terminus at the Canadian-US border is shared with the northern terminus of the Continental Divide Trail (CDT)

The full length of the route is over 1100km, of which over 500 km (46%) is in National Parks. This surpasses the Bruce Trail in Ontario by 300km, and is second in length only to the Trans Canada Trail. Conditions range from rugged remote routes, to some of the most popular trails in the Canadian Rockies.

The Great Divide Trail passes through the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Tsuut'ina, Tȷāhē Nakoda, Cree, Lheidli T'enneh, Ktunaxa, Secwepemc, Sinixt and Métis. The Great Divide Trail Association acknowledges the long history of the routes along the Great Divide, used by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial



Carthew Lakes, Waterton Lakes National Park (photo courtesy of Joan Pendleton)

The Role of the Great Divide Trail Association

The Great Divide Trail Association is dedicated to maintaining, protecting and promoting the Great Divide Trail. Each year we organize multiple trail building, maintenance, and scouting trips (53 in the last 5 years and another 10 planned for 2022)

The GDTA also educates the public about the Great Divide Trail, and promotes and encourages its use in a manner consistent with the conservation and preservation of the scenic and wilderness value of the Rocky Mountains of Canada.

In 2022 we will also celebrate the opening of the first new section of GDT trail in decades. In the Crowsnest, the 48km High Rock Trail bypass leased land in BC and avoids the Alexander Creek Access Management Area

Challenges Facing the Trail

- Unlike the US, Canada does not have a National Scenic Trails Act. Meaning the GDT lacks the same protections as equivalent trails like the Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, or Continental Divide Trail. The trail is currently recognised in bits and pieces along the route. A trail is as good as its weakest link
- Permitting can be a challenge as no single jurisdiction or organization manages the entirety of the route
- We are also seeing growing interest in the trail and a substantial increase in the number of people thru-hiking or section hiking the trail

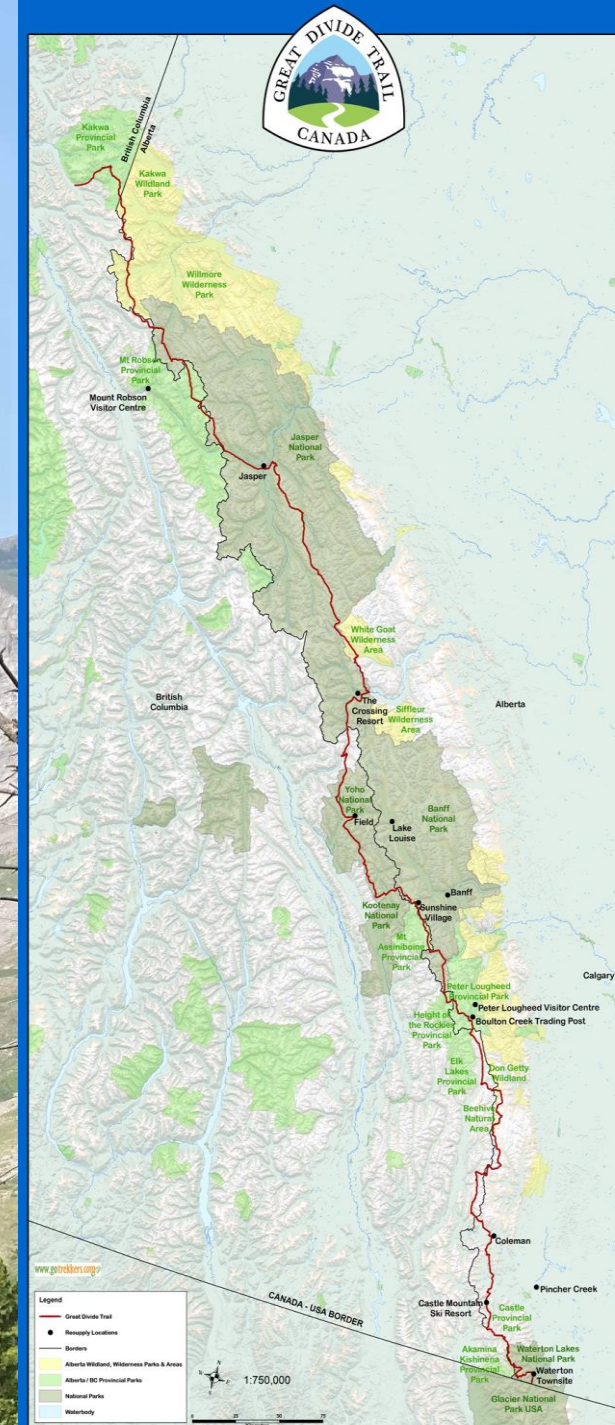


Barnaby Ridge, Castle Wildland Provincial Park (Photo courtesy Brad Vaillancourt)

Goals for the Future

- Obtain designated trail status under the new Alberta Trails Act
- Ensure the trail is represented in ongoing integrated regional and sub-regional land use planning for Alberta's Eastern Slopes
- Obtain Section 56 dispositions under BC's Forest and Range Practices Act
- Formal recognition of trail by Parks Canada
- Integrated permitting process for thru hikers and section hikers to better manage growth and impact of the trail

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Supporters

