

Foothills Region Route

(Eastern Kananaskis Country)

Type of Trail: Less than an hour's drive west of Calgary, you can join the Foothills Section of Alberta's Trans Canada Trail (TCT). But don't let the term "hill" fool you: this route is challenging. Cox Hill reaches 2180 m (6760 ft), the highest point on the entire TCT, and the spectacular view is worth the effort!

This is also the only trail that traverses the foothills, connecting the rolling topography near Bragg Creek with the monumental front ranges of the Rockies. Most of the trail passes through spruce and pine forest, with periodic viewpoints. The trail is well defined throughout, but maps should still be carried.

This portion of the TCT makes an excellent, three or four day backpacking trip. The landscape is dramatic, while presenting fewer hazards than the Rocky Mountains. Alternately, the route can be traveled in several day trips. Cox Hill is a popular but advanced mountain

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bike route included in the TransRockies Challenge. The sections of TCT near West Bragg Creek are popular for cross-country skiing. While the trail is isolated, there are several access points (see below).

Location: West Bragg Creek to Dead Man's Flats.

Terrain: The Barrier Lake area has Montane Forest featuring Douglas Fir. The top of Cox Hill has alpine meadows, while the Bragg Creek area has pine and spruce forest with sedge meadows

Access: The east end of this section can be reached by going west from Calgary on Highways 1 or 8, south on Highway 22 to Bragg Creek, then west 9 km to the trailhead at West Bragg Creek. The west end is at Dead Man's Flats (a.k.a. Pigeon Mountain), on the south side of the overpass. Other access points are the Dawson Campsite, Barrier Dam on Highway 40, and the Heart Creek Trailhead.

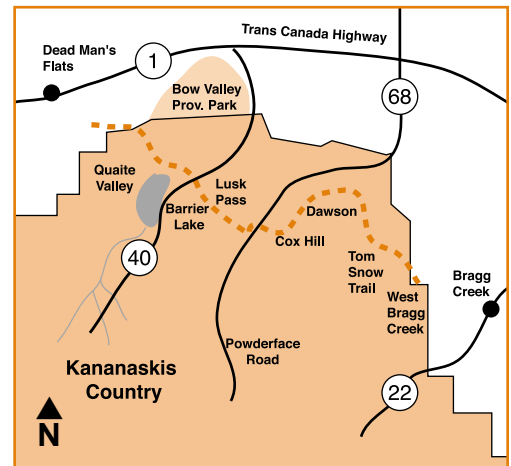
Historical Perspective: North from West Bragg Creek, the trail follows an early wagon trail now known as the Tom Snow Trail. Further west, the trail climbs ridges used as recreation routes for fifty years.

The area now occupied by the University of Calgary Field Station was once a World War 2 prisoner of war camp. An interpretive trail tells this story.

Just above Lac des Arcs, a 200 m side trail leads to large caverns that reportedly were quarried in the 1960s to hold valuables during a nuclear war. Long abandoned, this cold war legacy also has a great view of the Bow Valley.

Points of Interest: Both grizzly and black bears can be expected in this area; take appropriate precautions. Moose, deer and smaller mammals also live here.

Barrier Lake is one of six dams that provide hydro power for the Calgary region. Increasing electrical demand in the evening causes the flow of the Kananaskis River to increase rapidly to the surprise of people relaxing along the banks. This river is also a popular place for whitewater kayaking and canoeing.



Trail Operators: Kananaskis Country, Don Cockerton (403) 297-5969
M.D. of Bighorn, Emily Smith (403) 673-3611

Length: 68 km are registered.

Surface: This trail has a natural surface.

Width: The trail is about one metre wide.

Permitted Use: Hiking, biking and horseback riding are permitted, and parts can be skied in the winter. Between Lac des Arcs and Dead Man's Flats, the rough terrain is unsuitable for horses and skiers. Bicycles will have to be carried up stairs.

Signage: TCT signs are posted every few kilometres.

Facilities: Travelers will find commercial facilities only at Bragg Creek and Dead Man's Flats. Campsites are located at Dawson, Lusk Pass, west side of Barrier Lake, Quaiite Valley, Lac des Arcs and Dead Man's Flats. Water is also available in streams, but should be treated before drinking.

