

The Fabulous High Rockies Trail in Kananaskis Country

Finished in time to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, the 80 kilometre High Rockies Trail is the most westerly piece of the Trans Canada Trail in Alberta. It travels continuously from the Goat Creek Trailhead at the border of Banff National Park through three provincial parks in Kananaskis Country – including the Bow Valley Wildland, Spray Valley and Peter Lougheed to finish at Elk Pass on the Alberta - British Columbia border. The trail will be most appreciated by the mountain biking community though it's certainly hiker friendly too.

The trail is easy to access from numerous parking lots and picnic areas along the Smith Dorrien Trail (Highway 742) but unless you're super human, you'll want to explore the trail in manageable sections. There are no shuttle systems in place so you'll have to arrange your own or plan on an out and back bike ride.

The trail is well-signed and well-built, even though there is a major washout near the start at Goat Creek. Enjoy a mix of old and new trails including road and single-track; short connectors have been added so it's easy to access existing day use areas along the Smith Dorrien Trail.

You can expect to come across a diverse landscape. Much of it is in the forest, yet there are plenty of open areas and views. Lakeside riding is very pleasant and mostly flat – while those sections with particularly great mountain views, like the Sparrowhawk Day Use Area to Buller Creek section will test your aerobic conditioning.

Nature lovers will also enjoy the trail. There are wildflowers in season including fireweed, asters and arnica. In fall sections of the trail are ablaze with yellow aspen and to a lesser extent larch. Birding can be very good with close to 120 bird species nesting in Kananaskis Country. Watch that your lunch isn't stolen by gray jays or ravens. Bear, moose and coyote sightings are common.

Tips for Biking the High Rockies Trail

- There are no services for food or bike repairs along the length of the trail. Take a patch kit and high energy food for the day. Treat or filter water from streams or lakes along the trail. Take rain gear with you.
- Pick up a map at the Barrier Lake Information Centre. Although it doesn't have a lot of detail it will help you plan your outing.
- The trail travels through a wildlife corridor so make noise, ring your bike bell and take bear spray with you.
- There are campgrounds near the High Rockies Trail at Spray Lakes and around Upper and Lower Kananaskis Lakes.
- For a detailed guide to the High Rockies Trail check out Tony Daffern's [Kananaskis Trail blog](#).

This recently completed 80 kilometre section of the Trans Canada Trail is a fantastic addition to the network of mountain biking trails in Kananaskis Country. You can look forward to more services and improvements in the coming years.

Visit [Alberta TrailNet](#) for more information and [HikeBikeTravel](#) for a blog and photos about the High Rockies Trail.