

The Banff Commonwealth Walkway



Sundance Canyon “Red Walk”

Canada's Commonwealth Walkway project consists of an interpretive panel at the southwest corner of Banff Avenue and Buffalo Street. Four routes radiate from this location.

There are 38 points of interest along the four routes. The points of interest are indicated with a bronze marker, bearing the Queen's cypher, that is either set in the walking path or located on large boulders adjacent to the pathway/trail. Refer to the map in the centrefold of the brochure to help you with route finding.

Download the app at: banffcanmorecf.org or banff.ca

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Walk south along Banff Avenue over the bridge and into the grounds around the Banff National Park Administration Building. The marker is located just inside the pedestrian gate on the west pathway.

Marker #23 - Cascades of Time Garden

Princess Margaret, Queen Elizabeth II's sister, visited Banff in 1958 to relax after an extensive tour of British Columbia. To honour her visit, a mountain located in the Fairholme Range was named Princess Margaret Mountain.

Quote: "I hope that at a later date I may be able to come to this part of Canada for a longer visit to renew the many friendships which I have made on this occasion." Princess Margaret at Banff, July 1958 quoted in the Crag and Canyon, 30 July 1958.



A royal garden party. Chief Gardiner Walter Johnstone shows the Cascades of Time Garden to the Princess. Bruno Engler, V190/I.H.-3/NA-05. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, whyte.org

Walk a short distance further south on the pathway.

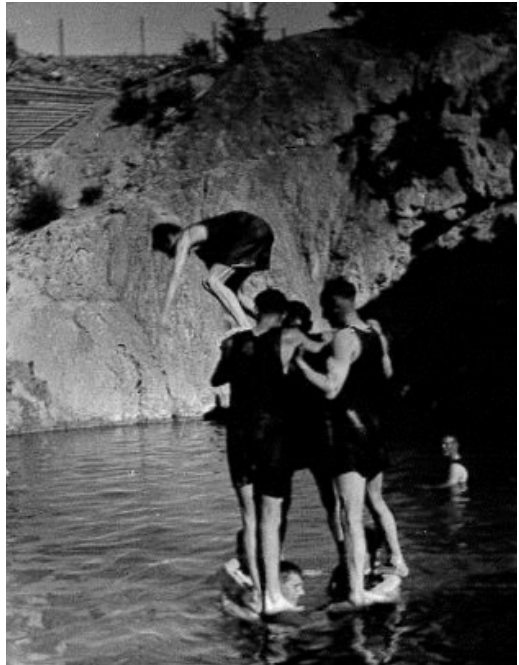
Marker #24 - A place to heal

Canada's national parks have long served as places to re-energize and heal. During and after the First World War Canadian soldiers came here for rest and recuperation. Some stayed at a rest camp near the mouth of the Spray River. Others were patients at the Brett Hospital which was located near the present-day BNP Administration grounds. The soldiers enjoyed soaking in the hot springs.

National Parks comprise the most beautiful parts of the Dominion. They are maintained for all the people of Canada — for the ill, that they may be restored, for the well that they may be fortified and inspired by the sunshine, the fresh air, the beauty, and all the other healing, ennobling, and inspiring agencies of nature. J.B. Harkin, Commissioner of Dominion Parks 1916.

Did you know?

Roughly 620,000 Canadians served in the First World War, this from a population of only eight million. Of the approximately 425,000 Canadians who served overseas, between 60,000-70,000 soldiers and Nursing Sisters were killed in action or died from injury or disease, and over 170,000 were wounded.



Soldiers recreating at the Cave and Basin during the First World War. V683 V-A NA 15. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, whyte.org

Continue south along the pathway towards the large pavilion just south of the parking area.

Marker #25 - Cambrian Pavilion

Royalty for a day! This pavilion is frequented by wedding parties on their special day. Lifetime memories take shape here.



Wedding party at the Cambrian Pavilion in the Cascades of Time Garden.
©Kim Payant

Return north and exit the grounds and cross Cave Avenue. Walk along the sidewalk adjacent to Cave Avenue westward to the intersection with the horse corrals and playing fields.

Marker #26 – Horses and Pack Trains

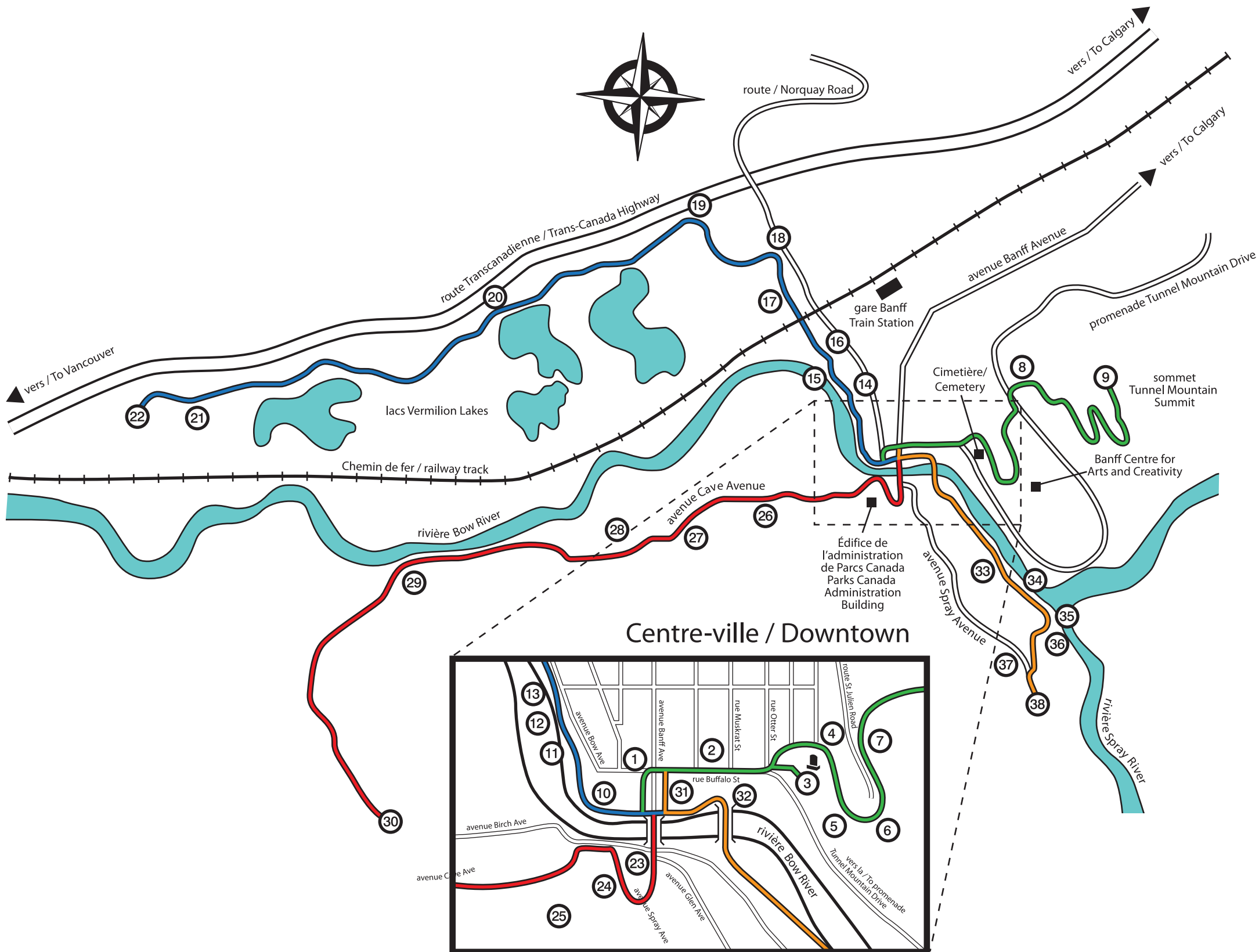
Horses were the preferred mode of transportation for hundreds of years in the Canadian Rockies. The Stoney Nakoda are renown for their riding skills.

Early explorations of the mountain valleys and passes, by groups such as the Palliser Expedition, were only possible because of a horse's strength and endurance to carry people and heavy pack loads through all types of terrain in all types of weather. As visitors, alpinists and scientists began visiting Banff National Park, some men saw the potential business opportunities. They included Tom Wilson, Bill Peyto, Billy Warren, Jim and Bill Brewster and Jimmy Simpson. Peyto eventually gave up the guiding business to become a park warden. National park staff continue to patrol the back-country on horseback and outfitters continue to take visitors to remote settings or for short day trips near Banff.

Did you know? Outfitters use a special lashing technique called the "diamond hitch" to secure their boxes and gear to a pack-saddle. It is an ingenious knot that can be quickly released, if necessary.



Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his three sons (left to right), Michel, Alexandre (Sacha) and Justin, on a horse trip in Banff National Park, 1983. Photo courtesy of Ron Warner.



Centre-ville / Downtown

- promenade verte / Green Walk - 4 km, 120 min, 9 points of interest, lieux d'intérêt
- promenade bleue / Blue Walk - 6 km, 90 min, 13 points of interest, lieux d'intérêt
- promenade rouge / Red Walk - 5 km, 70 min, 8 points of interest, lieux d'intérêt
- promenade orange / Orange Walk - 3 km, 45 min, 8 points of interest, lieux d'intérêt

Continue walking west along the Cave Avenue pathway to the Welcome Centre located at the west end of the large parking lot. The marker is located at the base of the hill.

Marker #27 - Cave & Basin

This is where Canada's national parks system got its start in 1885 and celebrated its 100th anniversary. Prince Philip celebrated with Canadians by officially unveiling the plaque commemorating Cave and Basin as a national historic site.

Did you know? Prince Phillip has visited Canada many times — sometimes with his wife, Queen Elizabeth II and sometimes on his own.



Prince Philip speaking at the Cave and Basin National Historic Site plaque unveiling ceremony in August, 1985. The Prince urged Canadians to support expansion of their park's system. ©Parks Canada

*Walk up the hill and around the Cave & Basin National Historic Site.
Follow the road west to the Sundance Trailhead (about 10 minutes).*

Marker #28 - Sundance Trailhead

Stroll and explore this fully accessible trail to discover some of the natural wonders of Banff. At the end of the trail, enjoy a picnic and continue further to experience the deep canyon.

Did you know? The Sun Dance is a sacred ceremony for Indigenous peoples who have lived in and travelled through these mountains for many centuries. Sundance Creek got its name from the many Sun Dance sites near its mouth.



Sun Dance Canyon, Banff.

Sundance Canyon in about 1900. Peel's Prairie Provinces Postcard 7682.

Continue on the paved trail west to the benches overlooking the Bow River (about 20 minutes).

Marker #29 - Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at Skoki

In 2011 the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (Prince William and Catherine) spent an idyllic holiday west of here at Skoki, a back-country lodge in Banff National Park.

"We have been hugely struck by the diversity of this beautiful country...Canada has far surpassed all that we were promised. Our promise to Canada is that we shall return."

-Prince William/Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, July 7, 2011.

And they did in 2016.

Did you know? Canada's official gift to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to commemorate their first visit to Canada was the creation of Parks Canada's Youth Ambassador program whereby two young Canadians are hired each summer to get Canadian youth interested in and experiencing Canada's rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage.



The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at Skoki Lodge National Historic Site, 2011. Photo courtesy of Locke Family.

Continue on the paved trail to the Sundance Canyon Trailhead. This is the end of this arm of the walkway.

Marker #30 - Sundance Canyon Day-use Area

In 1901, the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary) explored Banff as part of their tour of Canada. Their journey was captured by two official photographers — there were no selfies back then! How many photographs have you taken while in Banff?

Did you know? In 1901 both Canada and India were part of the British Empire. Today they are members of the Commonwealth along with 50 other countries.



In 1901, the royal party included four Sikh body guards from northern India. George Paris, V484 NG5-46, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, whyte.org.

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