

LEGEND

- CDR Leg 1
- CDR Leg 2
- CDR Leg 3
- CDR Leg 4
- CDR Leg 5
- 1 Described Trails
- Other Trails
- Fire Road
- Cutlines
- Rivers
- Creeks
- Highway
- Town Roads
- Gravel Roads
- Train Tracks
- Backcountry Camping
- Trailhead
- Horse Trail
- ATV's
- Nordic Ski
- Waterfall
- Scenic Spot
- Golfing
- Baseball
- Canadian Death Race Trails
- Campground
- RV Park
- Picnic Area
- Police
- Hospital
- Information
- Landmark
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Boating
- Swimming
- Fishing
- Skating
- Playground
- Toboggan

Scale
KILOMETRES
MILES

DISCLAIMER: Neither the Author nor The Town of Grande Cache makes any warranties, express or implied, nor assumes any responsibilities for the accuracy of the trail information contained on this Map. Many of the trails are unmarked and unmaintained. Some of the trails described are remote and users may encounter conditions due to weather and other factors that were not present when the original trail maps were created. There are inherent risks and potential hazards using all trails and any portion of a trail may be unsafe. Users assume the entire responsibility and risk for use of the information in this Guide and the trails. The Author and The Town of Grande Cache disclaims all responsibility and liability for death, injury or other damage that may be sustained by anyone using the information on this Map and the trails described.

Grande Cache Trails Map

Pierre Grey's Lakes Trails

Pierre Grey's Lakes Provincial Park
(Not pictured on larger map)
This recreation area is located 32km south of Grande Cache, on the east side of Hwy 40. The park has about 48 km of trails that lead along the shores of sparkling trout-filled lakes, and through old-growth lodgepole pine and spruce forest - important habitat for the remaining caribou which inhabit this area. Access to the trails can be easily gained from almost any campsite. You can also visit what's left of Pierre Grey's trading post, a 1.6 km walk from the Moberly Area boat launch, or a 3.1 km walk from the McDonald Day-Use Area.

Pierre Grey's Lakes is a great place to spend a couple of days hiking, biking, canoeing, fishing, or just relaxing.

PIERRE GREY'S LAKES PROVINCIAL PARK
Access is 32km southeast of Grande Cache on Highway 40.

Townsite: enlarged view

Passport to the Peaks

WHAT IS IT? *Passport to the Peaks* is a hiking incentive program: a collection of 21 peaks, all visible from the Grande Cache townsite, which are divided into bronze, silver, and gold categories according to the level of difficulty in reaching their summits.

How can you take part? Purchase your 'passport' from the Tourism & Interpretive Centre, and begin your adventure! Each of the 21 peaks has an individualized stamp on its summit, with which you stamp the appropriate page in your passbook. When you are finished a category, receive your pin for that category and have your accomplishment recognized on the website and on a board in the Tourism & Interpretive Centre. For more info go to www.passporttothepeaks.ca



Taste of Wilderness Tours

"Learn about our natural and human history as you explore our most spectacular wild places."
HIKING GUIDE: Terry Deamer: Author, Grande Cache Trails Map.
780-827-4250 www.tasteofwilderness.ab.ca

Grande Cache Tourism and Interpretive Centre

Bighorn Gift Shop - Museum
Esson Gale Art Gallery & Studio
Meeting & Conference Rooms
Bear Awareness Kiosk
Passport to the Peaks Program

Phone Toll free 1-888-827-3790
Local Phone 780-827-3300
www.grandecache.ca
tourism@grandecache.ca
Located at: Hwy 40 & 99 Avenue
Find us on Facebook

Grande Cache RV CAMPGROUND

LARGE, TREED SITES
FULLY SERVICED
LAUNDRY • FIREWOOD \$
LIT ROADWAYS
FREE SHOWERS • FREE WIFI
Located Beside Golf Course, Bmx Track & Ball Diamonds.

OPEN MAY - OCTOBER
For Reservations call: 780-827-2404

Grande Cache Golf & Country Club

Spectacular views from every hole

9 Hole course - Driving Range
Power Cart & Golf Club Rentals
Practice Green - Banquet Room
Outdoor Patio - BBQ Facilities
Clubhouse & Licensed Dining Lounge

Memorial Drive & Shand Ave
Pro Shop: 780-827-5151

Mt. Hamel, southeast ridge, cont.)

TRAILHEAD: Drive 12.5 km north on Hwy 40 and turn left opposite the gun range. Follow this a short distance to the signed trailhead. Note: This ridge is heavily infested with ticks in the spring months. At first the trail is deceiving, leading off wide and level through lush forest. Suddenly it changes character, just before coming to the bank of Hells Creek, it veers to the right and straight up a rocky slab. This next section gives a good indication of what lies ahead as it climbs steeply up the northern rim of the ever-deepening gorge to gain the main northeast ridge. Scrambling onto the ridge itself may be a little tricky, but once you've made it that far, you can breathe easy—most of the 'worst' is below.

From here, the route continues steeply up the narrow rock spine. Use caution on this section when coming down; the conglomerate rock is littered with small pebbles that make the footing treacherous. The angle eases off a little, and the route is straightforward until the ridge fizzles out into a sandy-colored scree slope. The slope is crisscrossed with a multitude of goat paths, and red markers point the general direction to regain the ridge above. Once on top again, the going is flat and easy for a time (even a short downhill along some old exploration road). You can marvel at the amazing rock strata of the east face as you stroll along. As you approach the north slope, watch to the left for a marked route through the last patch of gnarled subalpine fir. From here, make your way up the steep, but grassy slope, then a short distance along the top to the summit. The fine lookout is occupied all summe. You may want to stop in to say hello, however, respect that this is someone's home. The Passport to the Peaks cairnbox is a short distance away.

14. TWIN FALLS: *Short Hike*

Distance: 0.6 km / 0.4 miles | Elevation Gain: 50 m / 150 feet

This short, pleasant walk takes you to a small but scenic set of falls which spill out of the great gorge on the east side of Mount Hamell. To reach the trailhead drive approximately 11.3 km north on Hwy 40 and turn left onto a dirt road. Follow this about 0.7 km to where it reaches a powerline and dead-ends at Hells Creek. The trail leads up the south side of the creek to a signed viewpoint of the falls. Caution: This creek is prone to sudden mudslides after periods of high rainfall or fast thaw; take this into consideration and do not descend into the creek at such times; also, the steep mud banks erode easily and may be unstable. As you go, watch for mountain goat and bighorn sheep on the hillsides, and deer or elk in the nearby woods. It is possible to continue a short distance beyond the viewpoint, but this is not recommended.

(Mount Mawdsley, cont.). a great place to take a well-earned break. At least two other trails leave this camp, and the trick is to hit the right one. A couple of red markers on trees should put you on the right track, which leads out to the southeast before later swinging southwest. About 45 minutes travel brings you to a small, clear stream beneath a rocky ridge, visible through the trees to the left of the trail. Shortly after crossing the stream watch for another trail which branches left (grid ref. 586/645) and climbs steeply the final distance to treeline before veering left to traverse the upper slopes. From treeline follow it around to gain the shoulder, or force your way directly up the rocky slopes to the summit and the "Passport to the Peaks" cairnbox.

10. MOUNT STEARN: *Day Hike*

(2,013 m / 6,600 feet)
Distance: 7.6 km / 4.7 miles one way | Gain: 1,006 m / 3,300 feet
Mount Stearn is the broad mountain with the small knobby peak on its southern end, situated to the west of Grande Cache. It offers great views of town, Willmore Wilderness Park and Lightning Ridge from its summit, or leisurely rambles through its vast alpine meadows and rolling hills in the high valley behind.
TRAILHEAD: Drive 5.8 km north on Hwy 40 and turn left onto the Sulphur Gates road. Drive 3.6 km and park across the road from the signed trailhead, just past a small gravel pit. The well-worn trail follows the crest of a ridge alongside a small stream for a short distance before leading up through varied montane forest. There are a few steep sections, but overall the grade is reasonable. At about 2.8 km, the forest changes noticeably from an airy mix of pine and aspen to dense spruce and subalpine fir. This marks the transition into the subalpine zone. An old campsite makes a good place to take a break. From here, the trail continues winding its way upward with occasional glimpses of the mountain's upper slopes. At about 4.8 km, it suddenly emerges from the trees into flower-filled meadows. But, the trail soon re-enters a final stand of subalpine fir. As you again break into the open meadows, the trail splits temporarily, with the right (lesser) trail following a small stream in a shallow depression and the left maintaining slightly higher ground. From here, the trail continues at an easy grade to the head of the valley and a small knoll, where it turns westward toward Lightning Ridge. Those not drawn by the summits can wander the meadows and slopes for hours. For those summit-bound, the shoulder of Mount Stearn is to the left: pick a route anywhere up the grassy slopes then simply stroll to the summit knob. A short, easy scramble gets you on top, where you should be sure to sign the visitor's log or stamp your passbook.

15. GRANDE MOUNTAIN: *Day Hike* (1,988 m / 6,520 feet)
Distance: 5.3 km / 3.3 miles one way | Gain: 768 m / 2,520 feet
Grande Mountain, with its slopes rising directly from the townsite, is our closest neighboring mountain. This trail allows easy access to great views of Grande Cache and the surrounding area via a steep power line which forces its way up the mountain's southern flanks.
TRAILHEAD: Drive north on Hwy 40 less than a kilometer, and turn right onto the stables / cemetery road, then left toward the cemetery. When the road swings right to enter the cemetery gates, continue straight onto a dirt track and park here. Continue along this track on foot until it intersects the power line. Once on the power line, the way is steep, but the panoramic views open up quickly, with the townsite below. Willmore Wilderness Park is a sea of peaks to the south and west. Watch for elk or deer grazing on the grassy slopes. There is a deep descent before the final steep climb to the top, and here the route strays from the power line slightly, but the way is clear. Many choose to call it a day without doing this final section. If you choose to continue on to the summit, be sure to stamp your 'Passport to the Peaks' passbook. As a shorter and possibly more interesting option to the summit, branch off at some point onto the grassy, westerly facing slopes, and explore the network of elk trails here. Allow as long as you want for this shorter option.

16. MUSKEG FALLS: *Short Hike*

Distance: 1.2 km / 0.8 miles one way. | Loss: 50 m / 150 feet
Muskeg Falls is located 16 km south of Grande Cache on the east side of Hwy 40. The trailhead is not signed, but park at the highway rest stop, which is adjacent to the trailhead. Look for a small trail on the eastern side of the highway, it is usually flagged. The trail meanders on easy ground through mixed forest until steepening suddenly. Here the trail splits. Left will take you on a very steep descent to the river below the falls. Don't venture close to the cliff edges here - they are very unstable. The right fork is much more frequently traveled, and continues down, eventually emerging immediately above the falls. Note: extreme caution should be exercised here, as the rocks are undercut, and can be extremely slippery. Play it safe: the dangers are not immediately apparent.



10a. STEARN HIGH COUNTRY LOOP: *2-5 Days*

Distance: 24 km / 15 miles complete loop | Gain: 960 m / 3,150 ft
For those willing to haul their packs up out of the valleys, this is a good choice. It offers a number of different camping sites, and several options once you're up into the high country.
TRAILHEAD: Begin as for the Mount Stearn day hike (see previous entry). As you emerge from the trees at about 4.8 km, there are two possible campsites. The first (best in nasty weather) is just in the trees to the right as you follow the trail through the final stands of subalpine fir. The other is alongside the creek; just a short distance beyond. Unfortunately, this site has become very heavily impacted in recent years. With some scouting, suitable sites can be found for random camping. This location is a good place from which to ascend Mount Stearn or to explore the nearby hillsides and meadows. For those with energy to continue, better camping and more spectacular country exists in the next drainage, along the foot of Lightning Ridge. To get there, follow the trail as described in the Lightning Ridge hike (next entry). A campsite is located where the trail from Stearn meets the trail that follows the bowls of Lightning Ridge. This site offers a good location from which to ascend Lightning Ridge or to roam the large expanse of alpine meadows here. Two other established campsites exist in the high country along the base of Lightning Ridge, offering further opportunities to explore the area and/or make ascents of Lightning Ridge or Volcano Peak. When you are ready to return home, keep things fresh by taking the trail over the pass at the south end of Lightning Ridge and down to Kvass Flats. This route offers some great views and a new perspective as it descends through alternating dense forest and wide open slopes. On reaching the valley bottom, stay another night at Kvass Flats or make the two hour trek out to Sulphur Gates, where it's best to have another vehicle waiting.

11. LIGHTNING RIDGE: *1-2 days*

(2,485 m / 8,150 feet)
Distance: 11.3 km / 7.0 miles one way | Gain: 1,480 m / 4,850 feet
Lightning Ridge, rising behind Mount Stearn to the west of town, stands nearly a full mile above the Smoky Valley floor and is the highest point in the immediate area. A trip to its summit makes for a long day, but for those who are up to it, it's a worthy destination. From the top one can see it all; the Sir Alexander Group to the west, the Smoky Valley winding its way through Willmore Wilderness Park, a sea of mountain peaks toward Mount Robson to the south, Grande Cache and the Grande Cache Valley far below to the east, and to the north, the northern prairies stretching into the distant horizon. Start as you would for Mount Stearn (previous entry).

1. GRIFFITHS TRAIL: *Short Hike*

Distance: 1.5 - 15km: varies as there are many segments.
Access points are located throughout the community. This trail has many viewpoints and is popular for walking, running and biking. Some areas are well-developed and well-marked, but other areas are fragmented and can be challenging to follow.
TRAILHEAD: The main trail sign is located on the north side of Hoppe Avenue, southwest of the town site, just before the Grande Cache Federal Correction Institution sign. If driving, park on the north side of the road in the graveled area.
Other Access Points:
Sheldon Coates School: From the school parking lot, cross the field to the cutline. Go down the cutline about 30 metres to the trail.
Toboggan Hill: Corner of 105 St. and 105 Ave.
Golf Course Road: Trail starts on the corner as road turns left towards the Campground and Golf Course.
Highway 40 North: just north of the 'Welcome to Grande Cache' sign. Trail is on both sides of highway.

2. LAKES TRAIL: *Short Hike*

Distance: Approximately 5 km one-way
TRAILHEAD: The trail starts on the south side of Hoppe Ave., just west of Highway 40. It goes south behind the houses and heads down the hill towards Victor Lake. You can also access the trail from the Tourism Centre. Cross the highway towards the metal building on the west side of the highway. The trail is just to the left of this building. No trail head sign. Our newest trail, going from the town site to Victor Lake and on to Grande Cache Lake. The first part of the trail is downhill, ending at the old airstrip on Victor Lake. From the east end of the lake, the trail follows the canal from Victor Lake to Grande Cache Lake. Once past a bridge across the canal (the Mt. Louie Trail intersects here) look for the trail markers branching off to the west. The next section of trail cuts through the trees to the side of Highway 40. The trail follows the highway to the beach at Grande Cache Lake.

3. MOUNT LOUIE: *Day Hike*

(1,844 m / 6,050 ft)
Distance: 5.5 km / 3.4 miles one way | Gain: 714 m / 2,350 feet
Mount Louie is well worth your time to explore. The fairly steep trail pushes directly up a northwest facing ridge and the exposed, erosion-resistant conglomerate rock keeps footing interesting for much of the way. Views soon present themselves, and the combination of alternating terrain and great scenery make this hike a local favorite. (see next panel for more details...)

CANADIAN DEATH RACE (CDR) TRAILS

The CDR trails is a 125km race course that teams from 1 to 5 racers run every August long weekend. The course is divided into 5 sections, or 'legs'. Below is how to hike or train on the trail, omitting most highway and street portions that form part of the official course. Almost all of the race course is marked with orange flagging and paint once you leave a roadway.

LEG 1: Official Course Length: 19km

Start from Hwy 40 and Shand Ave. Head north for 400 meters to the Griffiths Trailhead on the right side of the road (NE). Follow the Griffiths Trail for 5km; the trail is abraded, so look for orange flagging and paint. Emerge on the south side of Grande Cache, above Grande Cache Lake, where the trail goes down to the highway, close to the DFI industrial site. Shuttle a car to the Cowlick Creek Staging Area, which is across the highway from DFI. Or, you can now hike or bike 5km back to town. Or, to continue on the CDR trail, turn left (S) and follow the highway 500 meters to the horse barn road. Cross the highway, and pick up the trail on the south side of Hwy 40. The trail continues to the Grande Cache Lake boat dock. Go through the lake parking lot to the gravel road, stay right (S) and follow the road, which parallels Hwy 40. Travel 3km to where the road turns sharply left, returning to the highway. At this point, don't turn - go straight off the gravel road onto a 4x4 trail. Follow the trail for 1km. You'll pass the Peavine Lake tips, and immediately after, keep right and pick up a smaller trail. About 500 meters later, at the top of a steep rise, the CDR trail goes right to the bluffs overlooking Peavine Lake. 500 meters later you'll cross the Carconte Creek foot bridge. Stay on the trail to the LaPrairie Group blue & white quonset. This is the Leg 1 finish.

LEG 2: Official Course Length: 27km

Start from Hoppe Ave. and Hwy 40. Travel 10km south, and turn left (N) just before a train overpass that crosses the highway. Park in the small clearing where an off-road '4x4' trail starts. Follow the rising trail north up Flood Mt. It's flagged and marked. In 7km, intersect with another trail. Turn right to do the Flood Mt. summit loop (4km). Or, turn left to continue on the 'Slugfest' portion of the CDR trail. This next 3km is single track, over rough terrain and can be strenuous and wet. Once you reach the Grande Mt. radio tower road, turn right (W) for 1km. You'll cross a culvert over Carconte Creek. From here, ascend 1.6 km to the intersection of the radio tower road and the summit road. Turn left to return to Hwy 40 via the radio tower road. Or, turn right to stay on the CDR trail and go 5km more to the summit. At the summit, follow the powerline trail back down to Hwy 40. The trail exits on the gravel access road for the Grande Cache Saddle Club and cemetery.

(Lightning Ridge, cont.) From the little knoll at the head of the high valley behind Mount Stearn, (grid ref. 531/705), turn and follow the trail west toward Lightning Ridge. Choose a route between one of the more southerly erosion scars. Steep at first, the grade mellows out gradually above the scar. Now, angle right as you climb. Arriving on top, a saddle separates you from the summit ridge to the north. On your way up, look for what appears to be lightning-struck rocks – a reason for the ridge's name (take a hint though, and retreat if faced with a thunderstorm!). Sign the summit log, and/or stamp your 'Passport to the Peaks' passbook.

12. AMBLER MOUNTAIN: *Day Hike*

(1,905 m / 6,250 feet)
Distance: 3.8 km / 2.4 miles one way. | Gain: 381 m / 1,250 feet
At just over 1,900m, Ambler Mountain is a small mountain. However, it does just reach into the alpine environment. With a trailhead at an elevation of 1,525m/5,000ft, it's a reasonable goal for a wide variety of people. To reach the trailhead drive 8.0 km north of Grande Cache on Hwy 40 and turn left onto the Beaverdam Road. This logging road can be a little rough depending on weather and other factors, but with some extra care and attention shouldn't be a problem for most vehicles. After climbing steadily for 6.5 km you reach a low pass and begin to descend. As soon as the road starts down, watch for a signed crossroad. Right leads to Mount Hamell, while left is what's known as the 'Ambler Loop'. Park your vehicle here at the crossroads, and walk the Ambler Loop 0.5 km to the actual Ambler Mtn. trailhead, which branches off to the left.

The trail (well used by ATV's) meanders through damp subalpine forest a short distance and then heads up sharply to emerge on a ridge overlooking Bergamot Creek, with the Sheep Creek valley on the right. From here the trail veers left to skirt the upper Bergamot, and then swings back to cut diagonally across the northern flank of Ambler Mountain. Because of its northern aspect, this part of the trail may still be snowbound until early June. In late July and early August, the trail is ripe with a variety of wildflowers. After a series of switchbacks you suddenly find yourself out of the trees and in windswept alpine environs, faced with a striking view of the bowls of Lightning Ridge. At this point the trail becomes indistinct, so be sure to note this spot carefully for the return trip before continuing on up the ridge. There are actually two minor summits, each with respectable views. The "Passport to the Peaks" cairnbox is located on the second peak. Attaining your summit stamp will add another hour or so to the trip.

MOUNT LOUIE CONT.

TRAILHEAD: Drive 4.0 km south on Hwy 40 and park at the Cowlick Creek Staging Area. The Cowlick Creek trail begins as old road, which quickly brings you to a manmade canal linking Grande Cache and Victor Lakes: a great place to view waterfowl and other wildlife. Veer right and follow the canal to a bridged crossing. Once across, the trail cuts through a boggy stand of black spruce before gaining higher ground where tall aspen and poplar trees dominate. The undergrowth is lush and filled with raspberries and gooseberries in late summer. Watch carefully for the lesser trail which branches off to the left at about 1.1 km. After branching off, onto the Mount Louie trail, the terrain changes as you gain the rocky ridge and begin to climb. The rock supports a rich variety of lichen communities which become very slippery when it rains. At about the 3.5 km point, the ridge fades and you enter forest. Watch for red markers and axe blazes on the trees. Eventually, the forest breaks up and you emerge onto open slopes for the final push to the summit. The trail may become intermittent here, so take note of your position for the return trip. Once on top, take some time to admire the views, and be sure to sign the visitor's log or stamp your 'Passport to the Peaks' passbook.

4. COWLICK CREEK: *2-4 Days*

Distance: 16 km / 10 miles one way | Gain: 150 m / 500 feet
An extended trip into Willmore Wilderness Park. Cowlick Creek Staging area is one of the least-used access points into Willmore Wilderness Park, and so it offers the backpacker an experience that is more 'out there' than the more popular Sulphur Gates Staging Area. The Cowlick Creek trail is also a good option for those who prefer to stay in the valleys.
TRAILHEAD: Drive 4.0 km south on Hwy 40 and park at the Cowlick Creek Staging Area. Follow the trail right at the canal, and then cross on the bridge a short distance west. Branch right at the Mount Louie junction, and continue on. Uphill at first, it eventually tops out and begins to descend. At approximately 6.5 km, it joins onto another, wider trail which leads through dense woods before dropping down to Cowlick Creek itself. Here, a small campsite provides your first camping option, but it's best to continue on. The views soon begin to open up as you get into the upper meadows and flats. The trail may be a little less defined here. Random camping opportunities is anywhere in the meadows along the creek, but the best site is a little farther yet. You'll know it when you arrive.

LEG 3: Official Course Length: 19km

Start in town at the top of the 'Toboggan Hill', accessed off 105 St. and 105 Ave. Head north down the hill for 1km, and cross Hwy 40 to the Landfill Road. Stay on the Landfill Road for 300m, keeping to the right. Ascend the large 4x4 trail that takes you above the landfill. Be wary of bears here! Once past the landfill, stay on the dominant, rocky trail that runs downhill for 5km. There are many smaller trail offshoots. At about 7km from the landfill road, the trail runs close to the Smoky River and under the train bridge. At this point, the terrain is rolling meadows and is very scenic! In about 3km, the trail becomes a road, part of the Grande Cache Coal site. Follow the black coal dust road until it reaches the mine bridge that crosses the Smoky River. Once across the bridge, turn left (S) and follow Hwy 40 for 3km south until you reach the Leg 3/4 exchange hut on the west side of the highway. The hut is located about 14km north from the Tourism Centre in Grande Cache on Hwy 40, and the hut is the best place to leave your shuttle vehicle.

LEG 4: Official Course Length: 38km

The Leg 4 trail summits Mt. Hamel, which has 4 summit routes. The other routes, **13.a) South Access Road** and **13b)Northeast Ridge**, are described previously in this brochure. Leg 4 is the longest route to the summit. The trailhead is at the Leg 3/4 race exchange hut, about 14km north from the Tourism Centre, on the left (W) side of Hwy 40 in a large clearing adjacent to the highway. From the hut, follow the highway south for 1km. Then, the trail leaves the highway and follows power line poles. In 200 meters, look for a quad trail that goes to the right (W). It's flagged and marked. Stay on the quad trail for about 4km before coming out on the mine lease road. Turn right (N) on the road, and go 200 meters. Turn left (W) onto the descending '4x4' trail that switches back. Follow the trail for 4km, then keep your eyes open for a quad trail that goes off to the right. Follow this track, switchback trail as it takes you to the summit (about 1.5km). Once at the summit, go left (E) for 400 meters to check out the spectacular cliff bluffs. To descend from the summit, turn right past the Forestry Look-Out Cabin, and continue to follow the quad trail 5km down to a trail intersection. From here, you can limit your hike to about 15km by staying straight on the main trail (E) down to the garden plots that are located on Hwy 40, 10 km north of Grande Cache. Or, to continue on the CDR trail, turn right at the intersection and travel another 5km to the Beaverdam Road. This spot is also the 'trailhead 2' described in the 13a) South Access Road. From here, you can do an optional additional 2.5km on the 'Ambler Loop' portion of the CDR trail by turning right onto Beaverdam Road and going West

13. MOUNT HAMELL: *Day Hike*

(2,130 m / 6,986 feet)
Gain: 1,128 m / 3,700 feet | Allow 6 - 8 hours round trip
Mount Hamell is the striking mountain to the north of Grande Cache. For hiking and exploring, it is probably one of the most interesting and diverse mountains in the (easily accessible) area, with everything from small, peaceful meadows to harsh, barren rock faces. As well as good hiking and scrambling in the summer, in winter there are a number of icefalls. Of the many possible routes to hike or scramble here are two examples, each very different in nature. You won't be disappointed, so be sure and bring camera and binoculars since the scenic panoramas open up early and wildlife is abundant. Also, take a moment to marvel at the crazily folded rock strata which makes up the east face of Mount Hamell and the upper walls of Hells Creek gorge. From the top Mount Robson is visible to the south, and the Sir Alexander group to the west.

13a. Mount Hamell (South Access Road): *Day Hike*

Distance: 9.8 km / 6.0 miles one way

This straight-forward route follows a forest look-out access road up the south side of the mountain. However, its relatively easy grade is more than made up for in distance; it may take some determination if your goal is to reach the summit.
TRAILHEAD : Drive 10.2 km north on Hwy 40 and turn left at the north end of a grassy flat. The access road enters the forest on your right (don't confuse it with the gas line, which parallels the highway). Park here and continue on foot. Follow the red markers, turning left at the first junction (0.3 km) and then right at the next, (0.2 km) and you're on your way up.
TRAILHEAD : Drive 8.2 km north of Grande Cache and then 6.8 km on the Beaverdam Road (rough for some vehicles) to the top of the pass. Just as you begin to descend, look for the well-traveled trail on the right. This route is a little longer, with more time spent in forest, but you save about 1,700 feet/ 520 m of climbing. These routes are also used by ATV's, and some places are at the limits of the machine's capabilities, so give them lots of room on blind corners or very steep sections.

13b. Mount Hamell (Northeast Ridge): *Day Hike*

Distance: 4.6 km /2.8 miles one way

Very different to the other routes described, this is one of several "natural" routes to the summit of Mount Hamell. Climbing steeply up the rocky northeast ridge along a well-traveled goat path, this is a spectacular and challenging route. But you must be comfortable on steep, exposed, rocky places. *Continued next panel...*

5. SULPHUR RIM TRAIL: *Day Hike*

Distance: 7.5 km /4.7 miles circuit. | Loss: 30 m / 100 feet

Located within the town's corporate limits, the Sulphur Rim Trail is a 'multi-use' trail; designed for ATV's as well as for hikers and nordic skiers. The walking is pleasant and wildlife is abundant. The well-marked trailhead is located 3.2 km west of Hwy 40 on Hoppe Avenue, just before reaching the Grande Cache Institution. Trail junctions are many, which may cause some confusion, but if you take your time you'll find the route is quite well marked. It isn't until about the half-way point, and then only for a short distance, that the trail actually follows the rim of the Sulphur Canyon. However, this short section certainly makes the walk worthwhile. This trail forms part of Leg 5 of the Canadian Death Race. You can also make it a larger loop trail if you exit onto Firemens Park Road and head back into town, entering the townsite on 104 st. Turn left on 97 Ave, and that intersects with Hoppe Avenue. This option is about 15km.

6. SULPHUR GATES: *Short Hike*

Distance: 0.2 km / 0.13 miles

If you have time for just one short walk, or want the best scenery possible for the minimum effort, this is the place you should go.
TRAILHEAD: Located at the southeast corner of the Sulphur Gates Staging Area. Drive 5.8 km north on Hwy 40 then 6.8 km south on the signed access road. Just a few minutes walk on a wide, well groomed trail brings you to the sheer 75 meter cliffs overlooking the confluence of the Smoky and Sulphur Rivers. Caution: Although there are guardrails, keep children and dogs closely in check here. Continuing on to the uppermost vantage platform brings the most impressive views. Spend some time here. Have a picnic. Go exploring. There are many lesser trails which lead to interesting places and offer great views. Also, see 'Eaton Falls' (next).

7. EATON FALLS: *Day Hike*

Distance: 3.0 km /2.0 miles one way. | Gain: 15 m / 50 feet overall
For many who venture into Willmore Wilderness Park on foot, this is their first destination. The trail (actually a very old fire access road) begins from the southwest corner of the Sulphur Gates Staging Area (see previous entry 'Sulphur Gates' for directions.) While there are a few hills to tackle at the start, most people should be able to manage if they take their time. The trail is wide and open, offering plenty of views to take your mind off your efforts. After making your way about 2 km, start watching for the moose antler sign marking the trail junction to Eaton Falls. This much lesser

(Leg 4 continued)

for 2.5km. Turn left (Southeast) onto a rising trail. Along this trail you will pass the Ambler Mt. trailhead sign, as described in 12) Ambler Mountain. Once back on Beaverdam Road, you can hike out 7km back to Hwy 40 (east) if you haven't shuttled a car or bike.

LEG 5: Official Course Length: 22km

Leg 5 of the official course crosses the Smoky River! This is a major tributary and CANNOT be crossed without a boat. This portion of the course is done in two parts. The 'Sulphur Gates Road' trail portion is on the West side of the Smoky River. To start, drive 6km north on Hwy 40 to the Willmore Wilderness Park access road. Turn left onto the road, and park in the field to the right. In the north end of the clearing is the Leg 4/5 race exchange hut. From the hut, the trail follows the treeline back across the clearing. It rises steeply for about 1km, then levels out and heads south for 7km, paralleling the Sulphur Gates Road. A highlight of this trail is squeezing through a house-sized split rock (Crack of Doom) along the way. The trail exits at the commercial staging area (horse corrals) for Willmore Wilderness Park. You can leave a shuttle car here. Or, you can loop back along the trail or the Sulphur Gates Road for a total of 14km.

To do the second part of Leg 5, go to the Treatment Plant Road, which is accessed from Hoppe Avenue in town. About 200 meters before the plant gates is a 4x4 trail. Turn left (S) onto the steeply rising trail. In 1.6 km you will come to an intersection where 4 trails meet. Continue heading south (straight) through the intersection. This trail, (which goes slightly left) is the shortest route. This is best described as the upper left of formed by the intersecting trails.

Stay on this descending trail for 3 km. This ends at the Sulphur Gates, where the Sulphur and Smoky Rivers meet. During the race, a jet boat carries racers across. The CDR trail is well-marked and flagged. Go back to the 4-way trail intersection, following the marked trail. Go through the intersection, staying on the marked trail. Go about 1.5km to the Sulphur Rim Trail turn-off. Turn right onto the Sulphur Rim Trail, on which you'll pass fun landmarks like 'Dead-Dog Look Out' and the 'Soul Tree', and the see the stunning scenery of the Sulphur River Canyon. The trail intersects with the Sulphur River Access road. Cross the road, pick up the small trail that runs to the left of the access road gate. In 200 meters, come the barbed wire fence of Firemen's Park. Follow the fence back to the Firemens Park Road. Turn left and go 2km back to town. The road merges with 104 street back in town.

Welcome to Grande Cache

Tucked away in the majestic Rocky Mountains, nestled on a mountain plateau at an elevation of 4,200 feet, Grande Cache has a panoramic view of 21 mountain peaks.

Local hiking guide, Terry Deamer, has spent over two decades exploring the trails that traverse this wonderful landscape, and has created most of the trail descriptions in this guide. The trails are numbered according to the map on the reverse side, with the smallest numbers closest to the townsite. The hikes are rated as a short hike (a walk that most people can manage, a day hike (a few hours in legth) or a multi-day backpacking trip.

Also shown on the map are the Canadian Death Race trails; a globally known endurance event held annually in Grande Cache. Penned by race organizer Dale Tuck, the descriptions included are suitable for hiking or training on the course.

The local trails are what you might call 'raw': the access roads and trails are not always well-maintained, the trailheads and parking areas may not be well-signed trailheads or well-defined, and the trails are not maintained or well-traveled. It is recommended that you have some basic navigational skills and purchase the appropriate 1:50,000 topo map for the hike you intend to do (available at the Tourism & Interpretive Centre).

Consider hiring a qualified guide if you are not experienced with mountain travel, lack navigational skills, are not comfortable with the possibility of encountering a bear, or would simply like to get more out of your hiking experience.

Mountain weather is unpredictable, so hikers should carry some essentials: sweater, rain jacket, hat or toque, gloves, insect repellent, extra water, a first aid kit, and a map and compass (or GPS). Also a cell phone; many of the trails described are within cellular range. This is bear country, and you should be bear aware. Hike in a group. Make noise. Avoid smelly foods. Learn about bear habits, and to best avoid, or react in, an encounter. Carry pepper spray-- to be used as a last resort should an encounter occur.

Alpine areas are particularly fragile; damage is often visible for many years due to harsh conditions and a short growing season. Try to stay on trails, or step on rock; instead of delicate wildflowers and fragile lichen. Pack out all garbage. Respect all wildlife and the environment. Enjoy your hike!

(Eaton Falls, cont). trail branches right and leads the final 0.6 km to the falls. The falls themselves are cut deeply into loose, crumbly sedimentary rock. Caution: Refrain from venturing under the cliffs, as rocks frequently dislodge from above; if you have children or dogs, keep them in check.

8. KVASS FLATS / CORRAL CREEK: *1-4 Days*

Distance: 12.2 km / 7.6 miles one way | Gain: 90 m / 300 feet
TRAILHEAD: Begin as you would for the Eaton Falls hike (see previous entry). After visiting Eaton Falls, return to the main trail and venture on to Kvass Flats. Good camping can be had at Kvass Flats, or go the distance to Corral Creek. For an interesting option, try the smaller trail which veers left from the fire road at about the 4.5 km point. It follows closely to the Smoky River, and has a nicer "feel" to it. You know you have arrived to Kvass Flats when the trail opens out into wide, beautiful meadows surrounded by mountains. There is a campsite used by outfitters. You can follow the main trail home if you choose, after the two re-join at Kvass Flats. The total round-trip distance for this option, assuming you stopped and checked out Eaton Falls, is about 12.5 km or 7.8 miles. Allow 4 - 5 hours.

9. MOUNT MAWDSLEY: *1-3 Days*

(2,134 m / 7,000 feet)
Distance: 11.2 km / 7.0 miles one way | Gain: 1,174 m / 3,850 feet
This trail sees very little traffic from hikers, primarily because to reach the trailhead, you must cross the Smoky River. A canoe and good river paddling skills are required, and it's best avoided during June when water levels are highest. Or, hire the services of the local rafting company, Wild Blue Yonder, to ferry you across.
TRAILHEAD: Drive 5.8 km north on Hwy 40 and turn left onto the Sulphur Gates road. Follow this to the staging area. From the staging area, carry or drag your canoe into Willmore Wilderness Park as if setting off to Eaton Falls, and down the wide trail a hundred meters or so to a small creek. Follow this to its outlet into the Smoky River. Cross the gravel bar diagonally until opposite the small, but obvious, landing site on the far bank. Hint: no obvious landing site means the river is probably too high to cross safely. Once on the other side, pick up the trail and follow the red markers. The trail may be quite vague in places, so stay sharp. After some time you cross a small stream and climb onto a rock spine. Stay on the crest of this spine as it climbs steadily upward. When it levels off, watch for an intersecting trail which cuts through a shallow dip (grid ref. 593/661). Turn right and follow this a short distance to an old hunting camp, which makes *Continued next panel...*

GRANDE CACHE & AREA

Hiking

& ADVENTURE MAP

LOCAL MULTI-USE TRAILS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES