

The Banff Commonwealth Walkway



Tunnel Mountain “Green 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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Marker #1 - Banff's early days

The corner of Banff Avenue and Buffalo Street has witnessed many changes but the iconic view looking north along Banff Avenue to Cascade Mountain remains as picturesque today as it did in 1886. Banff National Park's first superintendent, George Stewart, was asked to perform many tasks (e.g. road and bridge construction, lease negotiations, upgrades to the hot pools, forest fire protection and new business applications) when he arrived shortly after the park was created. One of Stewart's first tasks was to survey and lay out the streets and building lots on both sides of the Bow River. The north side of the river was a classic grid of streets that has changed little from his original plan. South of the river, the plan was for larger "villa" lots for people who would be attracted to the hot springs and spas. Beneath your feet are the foundations of the Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP) Barracks. Just south is the Banff Park Museum National Historic Site. It was built in 1903 and also served as the park headquarters for many years. Further west along Buffalo Street, in present day Central Park, was the Moulton Park Hotel.

Did you know? In 1890, the cost of operating Banff National Park was \$11,498.38.



Caption: Banff Avenue ca. 1886. NA 673-27, A.B. Thom, Glenbow Archives.

Walk east on Buffalo Street to Beaver Street. Turn north on the east side of Beaver Street to find St. George-in-the-Pines Anglican Church.

Marker #2 - St. George-in-the-Pines Anglican Church

Step inside one of Banff's oldest places of worship. Here, 11 Taylor Peal bells ring out the joy of Banff's glorious nature every Sunday morning, and 50 stained glass windows depict Banff's flora and fauna alongside angels and saints.

The first service was held onsite in 1887, before the church was built. The cornerstone was laid in 1889 by the then Governor General, Sir Arthur Stanley, the Earl of Derby, who is also famous for donating the Stanley Cup. The future Queen Mary worshipped here in 1901 – in fact all Banff's British royal visitors have stopped here; most notably, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1939. A plaque marks the pew they sat in.

Did you know? St George-in-the-Pines is the first of only two churches in Canada with a set of 11 Taylor Peal bells, cast by the John Taylor Bellfounders in Lobarough, England. Only one person is needed to play the bells. They are affixed to a steel beam and struck by clappers operated by levers.



King George VI and Queen Elizabeth attend private church service at St. George in the Pines with Rector Canon H. Tully Montgomery. V436/PA3-8, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, whyte.org

Return to Buffalo Street and travel east to the vehicle entrance to the Old Banff Cemetery.

Marker #3 – Old Banff Cemetery

In 1890, baby Adelia Woodworth became one of the first registered burials in what today is known as The Old Banff Cemetery. A designated heritage site, the old cemetery is a tranquil stroll through Banff's history. The storied pioneers and community builders lay here, side by side with those whose tales are less known but equally compelling; more than 2,000 Banffites are buried here.

The cemetery also served the nearby community of Bankhead, and the Bankhead Miners Memorial honours the 15 miners killed over the 22 years of operations. Here too, lay some of Banff's veterans of the first and second world wars, along with notable mountaineers, such as Arthur Wheeler, founder of the Alpine Club of Canada. William McCardell, one of the rail workers who first stumbled upon the hot springs at Cave & Basin, is also buried here.

Mary Schaffer Warren, who lived across the street in Tarry-a-While, described the cemetery as a "place of rest and kindly neighbours". She rests among her kind neighbours in the southeast quadrant.



Did you know? You may be dying to be in Banff, but only permanent residents at the time of passing, or previous Banff National Park residents of 25 years or more, or individuals who are immediate next-of-kin to someone already interred, can be buried in Banff.

Grave marker for Tom Wilson, early outfitter in the Canadian Rockies. Photo courtesy of Bill Fisher.

Exit the cemetery and walk along the north side of the cemetery to the entrance to the Ken Madsen path.

Marker #4 – Banff Winter Carnival

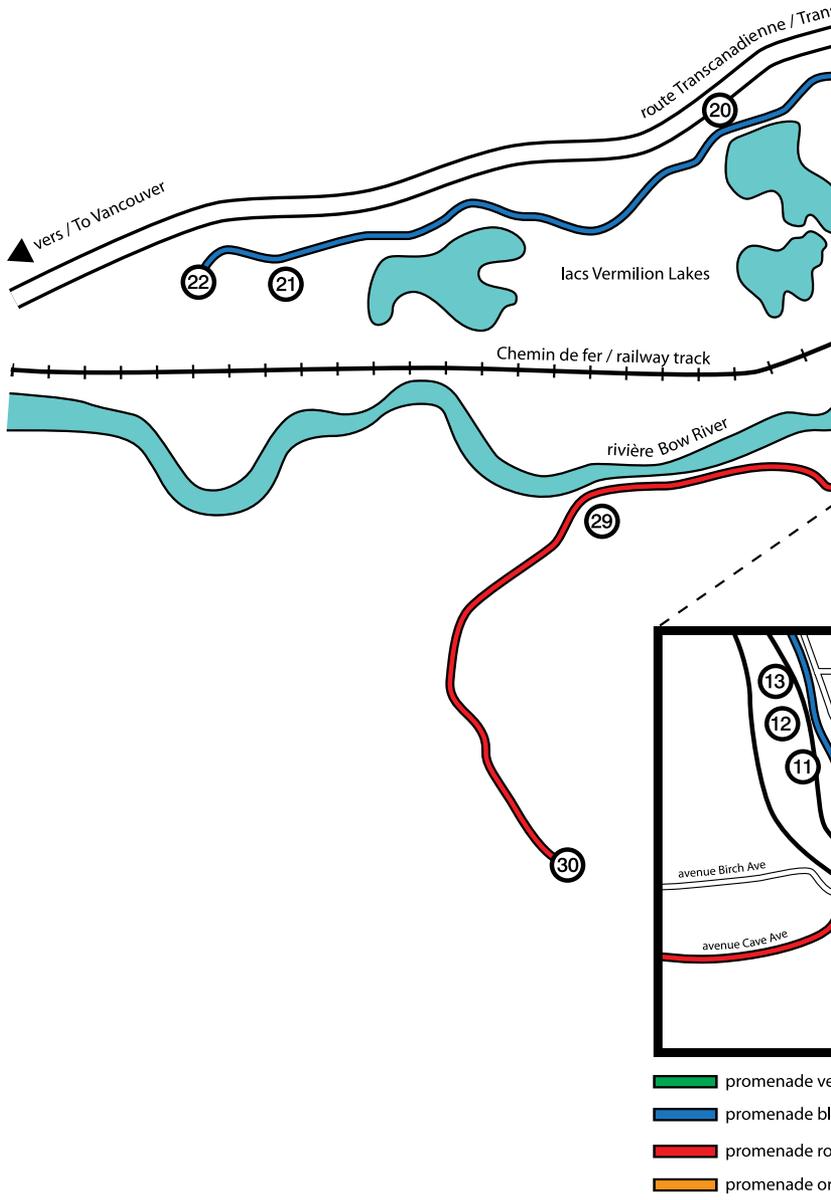
On the slope above this rock is the cutline used by ski jumpers in the 1920s. Ski jumping and later “sliding” or downhill skiing was one of the latest winter sports to grab the attention of early Banff residents. Ice-skating, curling and hockey were already popular when Conrad Kain, an Austrian mountain guide, created a ski club in Banff in 1911 and helped build this small ski jump. A few years later, the Banff Winter Carnival was born. A January 1917 article in the Crag and Canyon newspaper noted that “ski-ing, toboggan-ing, ice-boating, hockey, snowshoeing, speed and fancy skating, trap-shooting, swimming contests in the hot sulphur pools, etc. will each and all be staged.” A large ice palace located along Banff Avenue became a central attraction.

Did you know? By 1920, local residents and mountain guides were beginning to explore new slopes in the Bow Valley and in 1927 the Norquay Ski Company Ltd. was created. The era of winter recreation and tourism was now well established.



Boys ski jumping on Learn's Hill (Wolverine Street). V263 NA71-3980, Byron Harmon. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, whyte.org.

Commonwealth Walkway Map



Walk up Ken Madsen Path to the Banff Centre. Find the Kinnear Building, the marker is on the east side of the building on the sidewalk above the Kinnear Building and north of the Sally Borden building.

Marker #5 – Queen Elizabeth II visits Banff Centre

In 1959, Queen Elizabeth II toured Banff Centre with its director, Donald Cameron. Cameron liked to call Banff Centre “a campus in the clouds”. This occasion marked the first of numerous official Royal visits to Banff’s campus. In the summer of 1985, Prince Philip returned here to open the Leighton Artist Studios – a group of cabins in the woods on the edge of Banff Centre that are dedicated to working artists; in 2009, Prince Edward toured the construction site for the Kinnear Centre for Creativity and Innovation – he returned the following summer, in July 2010, for the official opening celebration of Kinnear.

Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, located on Treaty 7 territory, has been welcoming artists and leaders since 1933 to train, create, and advance their crafts. As Canada’s leading post-graduate arts institution, Banff Centre offers intensive training and career development programs for emerging and established arts across all disciplines.



Queen Elizabeth II and Banff Centre director Donald Cameron (1959). Prince Philip and Stella Cameron can be seen to the left in the photograph. Photo courtesy of Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

Walk north and find the Eric Harvie Theatre. The marker is located outside the main doors to the theatre.

Marker #6 – H.G. Glyde

A British-born painter and teacher, H.G. Glyde played a vital role in establishing Banff Centre's visual arts programs, and he taught painting courses almost every summer here between 1936 and 1973. Over the course of his tenure, Banff's painting programs evolved from dozens of students to hundreds. Currently Banff Centre welcomes over 3,000 artists from across all artistic disciplines annually with dedicated studio facilities and a public art gallery to support its visual and media artists. Glyde Hall, which opened in 1976, serves as a base for training and showcasing visual artists; it is named in honour of Glyde's creative legacy.

Banff Centre was born in the Great Depression with a vision inspired by Alberta's entrepreneurial spirit to develop creative potential in talented artists from Alberta, Canada, and around the world. Over the decades Banff Centre has grown from a few small chalets in the woods to a state-of-the-art global training centre, supporting and celebrating thousands of Canada's unique creative voices. Banff Centre's role as a specialized Arts and Culture Institution providing non-parchment programs in the arts and creativity, and in leadership development, mountain culture, and the environment will continue to attract and inspire artists and leaders, and drive the Centre forward.



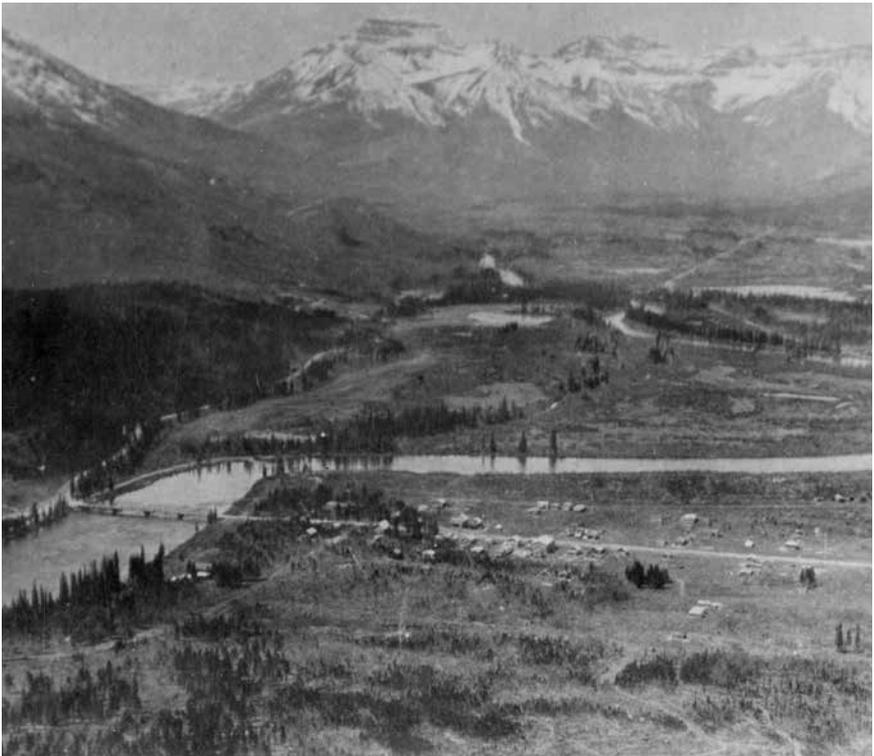
H.G. Glyde teaches a painting class in 1947, one year after Parks Canada allowed the Banff School of Fine Arts a permanent home in Canada's first National Park. Photo courtesy of Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

Find St. Julien Road and walk north to the large parking area on the east side of the road. The trailhead to Tunnel Mountain is located here, along with this marker. Take the Tunnel Mountain Trail.

Marker #7 – Sleeping Buffalo Guardian Mountain

Follow in the footsteps of over a century of visitors, residents, and royals who have hiked to the top of Tunnel Mountain for the spectacular view. Once you get to the summit, compare this historic image with the view you see today.

Did you know? Tunnel Mountain is also known as Sleeping Buffalo Guardian Mountain “Eyarhey Tatanga Woweyahgey Wakân”, its Stoney Nakoda name. The early surveyors for the Canadian Pacific Railway thought they would have to tunnel through the mountain. Instead, the railway goes around it.



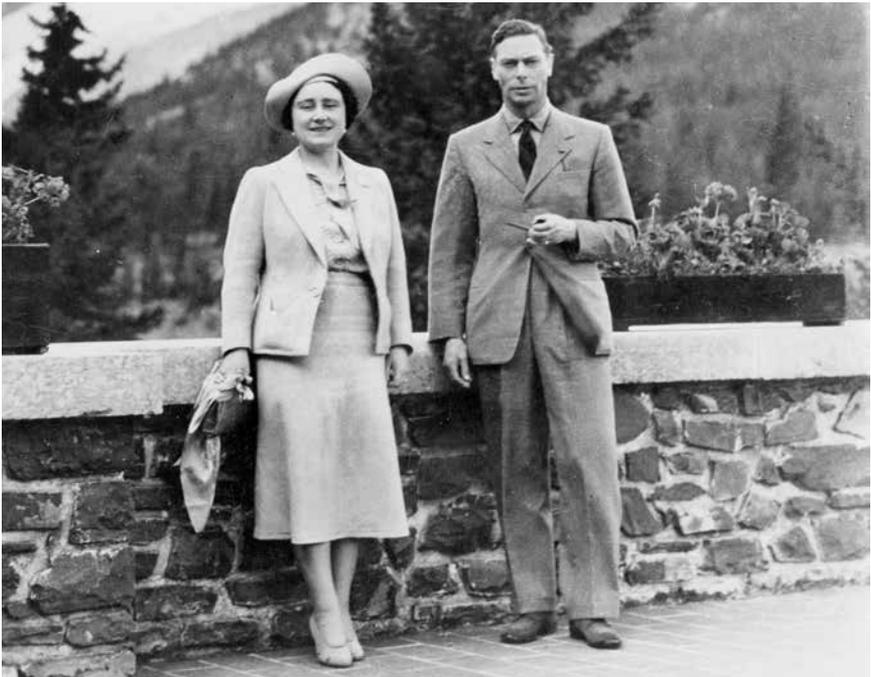
View of Town of Banff from Tunnel Mountain Summit. V408-PA-74, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, whyte.org

Continue on the Tunnel Mountain Trail to the summit.

Marker #8 - Tunnel Mountain Trailhead – Tunnel Mountain Drive

The first royal visit, to what is now Canada, was in 1776. However, the first visit by a reigning monarch, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (later the Queen Mother), was in 1939. The royal visitors stopped in Banff and hiked up Tunnel Mountain. Banff Park Superintendent Major P.J. Jennings served as King George and Queen Elizabeth's tour guide. The King quizzed Jennings about the natural and historic features of the park as he had a keen interest. Quote: "We hope that your short stay with us in Banff will prove most restful and enjoyable." Superintendent P.J. Jennings' greeting to the King and Queen, quoted in the Crag and Canyon, June 2, 1939.

Did you know? For his services as tour guide Superintendent Jennings was given a set of gold cuff links inscribed with a crown and the King and Queen's initials.



King George VI and Queen Elizabeth I at the Banff Springs Hotel in June 1939. Dan McCowan and Mary McCowan Fonds, V408/PA-25. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, whyte.org

Congratulations, you are at the summit. Retrace your route down the Tunnel Mountain Trail.

Marker #9 - Tunnel Mountain Summit

Welcome to the summit of Tunnel Mountain. Learn more about this place by reading the nearby interpretive panels.

Did you know? When Queen Elizabeth reached the summit after a 45-minute climb she rested for a while on a rock ledge. In 1939, the park proposed re-naming this view the “King’s View” and “Queen’s View” to commemorate the visit with signs and a special bench.



View from Tunnel Mountain summit looking west. Photo courtesy of Bill Fisher.

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The Honourable Lois Mitchell, Lieutenant Governor, Alberta

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