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Golden BC Canada, The Outdoor Sportsman's Paradise

August 2nd, 2009

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Winter Activities: Tobogganing, skating, or Nordic skiing through rolling windy trails through woods. Downhill Skiing, Snowboarding, Heli-Skiing, Cat Skiing, Snow mobiling, Dog Sledding, and Ice Climbing from mid-November to the End of March.

Summer Activities: Pilots from all over the world flock to the Mount 7 flying site to paraglide and hang-glide. Horseback Riding, hiking, mountain biking, golfing, fishing, and air tours. World class white water rafting, ATVing, motocross, and rock climbing attract international thrill seekers. Bird and wildlife viewing, slow floats, wetland scenic forest tours.

Boating and angling are common activities at recreation sites. Most sites allow car top boat launching only. That means you can hand-launch only canoes, kayaks and boats small enough to be carried on top of your car. Trailered boats can be launched safely and conveniently from those sites with ramp facilities. In most cases, the ramps are suitable only for small and medium-sized boats.

A plane or helicopter ride will show you the Selkirk, Purcell and Rocky Mountain ranges and their glaciers. You can even land on a glacier for a closer look. Air tours are available year-round.

For local history there's the Golden Museum where you can learn about the important role that Swiss Mountain Guides played in the birth of Canadian mountaineering traditions. Or at Ray's Antique & Collectable Museum you can browse through some old farm equipment and antique tools. Take a guided hike way, way back [some 515 million years] and visit the fossils of the renowned Yoho Burgess Shale or, if art is your scene, there are many local art shops.

Tours: Cruise the numerous small mountain roads. Tour season is [weather permitting] from May to October.

Bird / Wildlife Watching: The Rocky Mountain Trench is a major migratory path, and a great diversity of birds also settles in the Columbia Valley. 265 transient and resident species have been counted in Golden so far. Reflection Lake, the Edelweiss slough and Moberly Marsh are favourite birding spots. You can do bird watching year-round, although there are more species during migration in spring [April to June] and fall [September to October].

Canoe / Kayak Tours: At the Columbia River you can view birds of prey, herons and ducks. Paddle the Blaeberry River for more action. The Kicking Horse River is the place to be for great whitewater action. For very experienced kayakers the lower canyon with its class IV rapids is ideal. Season: May to October.

Climbing: In 1912 six Swiss Mountain Guides and their families moved permanently to Golden. Canadian Pacific Rail had hired them as professional mountain guides for the many tourists who wanted to explore the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Today there are many ACMG certified mountain guides who live and work in Golden and the mountains around. Golden attracts climbers from all over the world.

Cross-Country Skiing: Track-set trails are just minutes from town at the Golden Golf Course. More challenging trails can be found at Dawn Mountain Nordic Trail System at the base of Kicking Horse Mountain Resort. Many more tracks set by XC-enthusiasts can be found in the Blaeberry and Columbia Valley. The season is from December to April.

Cycling: Golden is the centre for the 'Golden Triangle' Tour where you cross the Continental Divide twice. You can go at your own pace or book a package with one of the tour companies.

Dog Sledding: Season lasts from late November to April.

Downhill (Alpine) & Cat Skiing / Snowboarding: The new Kicking Horse Mountain Resort is being developed into a 250-acre resort, encompassing 4005 acres of ski and snowboarding terrain, with views of the Canadian Rockies. The new gondola rises to the summit of the Dogtooth Mountain Range at an elevation of 7705 feet [2350 meters] where the new Eagle's Eye Restaurant is located. The excellent snow conditions will include a vertical drop of 4,133 feet [1260 meters] from the top lift, making it the second highest in Canada. Ski season is from early December to the end of April.

Freshwater Fishing / Ice Fishing / Heli-Fishing: The area's fishing opportunities are endless, ranging from early and late rainbow trout, small cut-throat trout in alpine lakes to char in the river and giant ling [turbot] and Dolly Varden in the hydro reservoir. Guides can take you to the type of fishing you prefer and provide all the equipment from boats to heli-fishing. One of the more popular lake areas is south of Golden, near Parson and Brisco. Many of the lower lakes open early in May, and more fishing can be found at higher elevations as summer arrives. A popular lake is Mitten Lake. Also excellent are the Cleland and Jade Lakes, and to the west, the Blackwater Lake. Stocked rainbow trout up to 24-inches can be caught in these areas. North/northwest of Golden are the Susan and Jeb Lakes in the area of the Big Bend Highway and are usually open by early July. These two lakes are

renowned for their Brook trout. Anglers should note that the waters to the north remain cooler longer in the summer and often provide a more vigorous fish than the lethargic ones of the southern waters. Many of the higher alpine lakes, which open at various times later in the summer offer exciting and picturesque fly and spin- cast opportunities. The more popular areas include Gorman, Quartz and Silent Lakes - and all trailheads are within 25 minutes of town. Hike-in distances range from several kilometres to much longer.

For river fishing, the Columbia opens early in the spring providing Rainbows and Char. With a red and white spoon or a wet fly you'll likely nab one. Also available in the Columbia are Dolly Varden, Whitefish and Kokanee. Creeks and streams open officially on June 14. and a lightweight fly rod is recommended. In the Glacier and Yoho National Parks is superb fishing but you must have a special permit aside from your regular license to encourage catch and release in these areas.

Golfing: The Golden Golf & Country Club is rated one of the top 10 in B.C., the 75th best course in Canada by Score magazine, with Golf Digest rating it three-and-a-half stars. Whether you play pro or beginner there are complete facilities and services at the 18-hole championship course. The season is from mid April to October. The course ranges from 5,380 yards to 6,818 yards long. One hole, the 11th, has such a fine setting that wedding parties have utilized the spot for photographs. It is a par 4, running 385 yards downhill from an elevated tee, with Holt Creek running beside it. This course features a pro shop, which can completely outfit all golfing needs. As well, there is a full-service restaurant, lounge and outdoor patio.

Hangliding ~ Paragliding: The Mount 7 hangliding site is one of the top ten sites in the world. Mount 7 is year after year the site of National and International Championships. If a novice you can take a tandem-flight with an experienced instructor. The season is [weather permitting] from May to October.

Heli-Hiking / Skiing: The birthplace area of the sport and one of the best in the world. Daily to weekly packages.

Hiking and Hiking Guides: Take a stroll along the dike of the Kicking Horse River or along the numerous trails to the alpine on your own or join a group at one of the remote alpine lodges accessible by helicopter or a guided tour to the world heritage site of the Yoho Burgess-Shale.

The day-hike trail at Gorman Lake is the most popular. Mammal Activities and sightings of bear, muskrat, fox, and many others are not uncommon just strolling in the woods. Some areas are known to shelter abundant wildlife.

Back- country camping sites: The lake affords excellent fly-fishing. You can find marmots and pikas along talus slopes and goats on the cliffs above. The hike is three kilometres in length, ending at the lake, and takes about 90- minutes.

The Moonraker Trails at Canyon Creek are popular for hiking as well as biking and horseback riding. There are some 45-kilometres of loop trails stretching from the Cedar Lake area to Canyon Creek. This is only minutes from town but home to wild mountain goats and bears.

The Mummery Glacier Trail is three-kilometres in length through old-growth cedar and hemlock and spectacular views of the glacier for which it is named. After a short trek up an old creek bed and across the creek by bridge you'll arrive at the immense moraines left by the glacier. The trail ends at one of these moraines, near the top where there is a view of the glacier and waterfalls above - but look out for calving ice off the glacier! The Quartz Lake Trail west of town is a five -kilometre hike and is recommended for the area's pristine beauty.

The recent elimination of the Ministry of Forests' recreation program, may have lead to the dismantling of signs, toilets, and picnic tables at some recreation sites, but you may find a guidebook at Golden's bookstore.

Horseback ~ Trail Riding: You will find specially trained horses for the beginner to the expert. Tours range from short rides to multiple day excursions. Riding season is from mid-June to October.

Hunting / Guide Outfitters: Although most people like to go hunting with their cameras, some take a rifle and want to come back with a trophy. The BC Government allows hunting of black bears, mountain goats and other animals within limited quotas and led by certified guide outfitters. Hunting seasons vary depending on species.

Mountain Biking: With 7,700 feet of vertical terrain enthusiasts can ride the mountains themselves or with guides, which are available at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort where they launch their rides down the mountain. For the price of a day's lift ticket you can bike down 4200 vertical feet, accessed by the gondola. Mount 7 is the location of the legendary Mount 7 Psychosis downhill race offering some 12 kilometres of downhill drops, steeps and technical woodwork playgrounds. People can pedal to the top, with several jump-off trails at three, five and six- kilometres. Shuttling via truck 15-kilometres to the top is a popular option.

Mountain biking cross-country: Golden has an in-town trail system as well as a 45-kilometre trail system on the west bank of the Columbia River along the Canyon Creek trail along the narrow deep canyon, which is a steep climb up with a long, rolling descent. Motocross racing comes to Golden in late May.

Mountain Climbing: Golden has been well known for its mountain climbing since the end of the 19th century with the coming of the Swiss Guides to the Selkirk and Rocky Mountains. Local climbers have developed several areas around Golden over the last decades. The most popular area is Jubilee Mountain near Spillimacheen, 45 minutes south of town. It offers over 70 climbs, mostly sport [bolted] ranging from 5.8 to 5.12. Another popular area that is easier with low-angle climbs is up the Mount 7 road at the 6-kilometre parking lot, with most of the climbs slab in nature with a handful of short, pumpy climbs. Difficulty ranges from 5.6 to 5.11, some bolted and some mixed. A 60-metre rope is recommended for top-roping the longer routes.

A new climbing area is in the Kicking Horse Canyon, 10-kilometres east of Golden called 'The Glen' after nearby Glenogle Creek. This is a quartzite area and will provide a wide range of climbing, from slab to severely overhanging and difficult routes. Another short, quartzite crag is up the forest service road on the west side of the Columbia River near Nicholson [five-kilometres south of Golden]. This is a steep sport climbing wall with approximately 10 climbs from 5.10 to 5.11 plus.

Snowmobiling is popular with routes too numerous to mention.

Whitewater Rafting: The Kicking Horse River originates from icy glaciers at the western boundary of Yoho National Park and runs along 20-kilometres, has class three and four rapids careening through a canyon and right into Golden. There are roughly a dozen rafting companies in the canyon. These attract thousands of visitors from May to September each year. Rafting begins at the upper canyon through the first set of Class IV rapids known as Shotgun and Portage followed by a dozen Class III rapids. It continues into the lower canyon where Class IV rapids, Double Trouble, Riptide, and the Nozzle spread over three-kilometres. Many guiding companies offer a variety of trips from one-day to multi-day raft outings and even heli-rafting, which takes advantage of other nearby rivers, one being the Blaeberry River.

Flat-water excursions: Available through the Columbia Valley Wetlands, a popular kayaking and canoeing destination.

Before you leave Golden, the new pedestrian bridge is a must-see. This was completed in the fall of 2001 by volunteer timber framers from Golden, Europe, and the United States. Because of the high waters in the fall, the installation of the bridge didn't occur until October 25, with the help of Sterling Cranes from Calgary, which took three full days, inching along and out onto a temporary footing, and finally onto the far shore where it was fitted into its concrete abutments. The bridge is 150- feet-long, with a 210,000-pound burr arch structure. The cost of the bridge is estimated to be \$250,000, but considering the volunteer time and the donated materials its value would be over twice that amount.

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