



# Wells Gray Corridor

PROVINCIAL PARK



**W**elcome. Wells Gray Provincial Park is a vast, untamed and primitive wilderness area encompassing the greater part of the Clearwater River watershed.

Throughout the Corridor there are four campgrounds, several viewpoints and a number of picnic areas that offer an infinite variety of superb scenery and interesting topographical features.

**Thompson Region**

## A Special Message

Provincial parks are some of the few places where wild bears are easily visible in their natural setting – wild and free.

Seeing bears is an exciting experience – the first time and every time! It's important to realize that wild bears can be dangerous. A passive bear is not a guarantee of safety. It only takes a running child, barking dog, honking car horn or an approaching person to trigger a bear's "fight or flight" instinct.

Bears come out of hibernation in April, ravenously hungry from a long sleep. At first they find little to eat except cottonwood buds, skunk cabbage or carrion. Later in May they feed on new grass and dandelions along the park road. This is the best time to view them on the pleasant drive to Clearwater Lake. Bears prey on moose calves and fawns at this time, so never approach a feeding bear as they are very possessive of a fresh kill.

During the summer, bears move away from the roads into the park, feeding on berries, insects and the occasional rodent. Chances of seeing a bear at this time are greatly reduced but the occasional one is seen around the Ray Farm and along the corridor road(s) sides. In autumn, bears join anglers on the Clearwater River to take advantage of spawning salmon. Watching the riverbanks in the late evening or early morning from August to mid-October will usually turn up a bear or two. Grizzlies may also be seen at this time, however, it is unusual to find them so near to humans. Watch all bears from a safe distance and noisily announce your approach if you travel the trail systems of Wells Gray.

For your safety and the bear's safety, please learn and follow the basic guidelines in this brochure when viewing, filming and photographing wild bears. You can be a good example for others while watching bears in their natural habitat!

**Failure to follow the guidelines can lead to the destruction of a bear and a park ranger giving you an eviction from the park and/or fines.**

## Facilities

There are 4 campgrounds:

**Pyramid** (50 units) 8 km north of the Hemp Creek entrance; **Clearwater Lake** (39 units) and **Falls Creek** (41 units) 32 km north of Hemp Creek entrance; and **Mahood Lake** (32 units, including 5 double units) at the west end of Mahood Lake, 88 km east of 100 Mile House. Water and toilets, plus firewood sales located at each site. Wilderness camping areas are located at various sites on Azure, Clearwater, Mahood and Murtle Lakes.

Picnic areas are located at Helmcken Falls, at Clearwater Lake and at various sites along park roads.

Boat launching ramps are located at Mahood Lake and Clearwater Lake. Power boating is popular on Mahood, Azure and Clearwater Lakes. Use caution when navigating the channel between Azure and Clearwater Lake and stay well away from the outlet of Clearwater Lake. **The falls are dangerous.**

Viewing areas are located at Spahats Falls, Helmcken Falls, Clearwater Lake and at Green Mountain where there is a viewing tower.

A variety of commercial facilities and recreational services are available in and near Wells Gray Park including; canoe rentals and guided horseback, hiking, skiing, whitewater rafting, boating and fishing trips as well as a full range of accommodation and meal service.

## For More Information

BC Parks, Thompson Region  
<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks>



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

## Bear Watching Etiquette

### Use Good Judgement

- Never approach or follow bears; respect their need for space. This includes not following fresh tracks.
- Do not block their line of travel or escape routes.
- Keep a safe distance from bears and remain in your vehicle (minimum 50 metres/150 feet – the length of three buses).
- Use a telephoto lens, spotting scope and binoculars to get “close”.
- Pull well off the road with your vehicle to prevent motor vehicle accidents. Under no circumstances should you leave the safety of your vehicle.
- Limit the time you spend viewing the bear to 1 minute or less to preserve its natural behaviour.
- Respect the special needs of denning bears and newborn or young bears – leave them alone.

### Do not cause Stress in Bears by these Activities

- Approaching or cornering, following or chasing.
- Herding bears into a better scene.
- Throwing objects or calling out to change behaviour.
- Direct eye contact, even through a camera lens can be threatening to a bear.
- Circling or standing around a bear by yourself or in a group.

### Take special Precautions for Children

- Children should never be encouraged to approach, pet or feed bears.
- Always keep children in immediate sight. they're often the same size as many bears' prey.

### Do Not Feed Bears

- Feeding attracts bears to roadside areas where they can be injured or killed.
- Feeding creates habituated bears – more likely to be a danger to people. Conflict will result in the death of the bear.
- Feeding leads to eating garbage. Bears eat wrappers, cans and bottle caps, destroying their digestive systems.
- Eating human foods can cause, among other things, tooth decay, gum infection and ulcers in bears.

### Wells Gray Park is Home – Treat it With Care

- Respect the posted speed limit. It exists to protect bears and humans.
- Care for our bears' home – the land, plants water and air.
- Support the creation of protected spaces – for biodiversity, and the health of our human habitats.

We share the same space, air water and soil with all other living things. Please do your part to continue the legacy of free-ranging bears in wildlands like Provincial parks.

## Special Features and Hiking Trails

Welcome to the corridor area of Wells Gray Park. The Clearwater Valley Road provides access to the central corridor area of Wells Gray park. The following are some of the most popular special features and hiking trails found enroute to Clearwater Lake.

**Flat Iron:** Watch for parking lot on west side of road at 30.6 km. This trailhead provides access to a network of trails including Trout Creek, Hoodoo Rim, West Rim Tote, Clearwater River and White Horse Bluffs. These trails are popular with horse riders (this is the only trail system in Wells Gray where a letter of permission for horse use is not required), and with hikers.

**Park Info:** Check the kiosk for information about Wells Gray Park.

**Green Mountain Road:** A 3.6 km steep and winding access to the viewing tower, with its panoramic view of the south end of Wells Gray, plus trails to Foot Lake and White Horse Bluffs. Road is very narrow; motorhomes proceed with caution. Watch out for mountain bikes.

**Placid Lake:** From the parking area at the base of the Green Mountain Road, enjoy a 8 km return hike through old-growth forest. Carry water and insect repellent. Good birding, the occasional moose, and great ice fishing in the winter.

**Majerus Farm:** From the trailhead at the warming hut, the hardy can hike or mountain bike a 32 km loop (in the winter this is a cross-country ski circuit). Carry water; insect repellent is essential.

**Dawson Falls:** Two viewpoints overlook this spectacular waterfall on the Murtle River, one at the brink and one downstream, providing a photographer's view.

**Helmcken Falls Rim Trail:** A parking lot at 42.4 km for the hiker's view of Helmcken Falls. The trail is about 10 km return. There are no safety fences; please watch your children. Helmcken Falls viewing platform cannot be reached from this trail.

**Mushbowl:** A small parking area at 43.2 km enables visitors to access the Murtle River near the Mushbowl.

**Pyramid Mountain/Horseshoe Falls:** Leave your vehicle in the parking lot at Pyramid Campground and hike to the top of Pyramid Mountain (5.5 km and spectacular views!), Pyramid Lakes, or Horseshoe Falls at 16 km. Carry insect repellent and water. Wilderness camping area at 7 km and at the top of Majerus Falls.

**Helmcken Falls:** Wells Gray's best known waterfall. Viewing platform is wheelchair accessible. Hiking trail along canyon rim. Picnic area at viewpoint. Limited safety fencing; please watch your children!

**Redspring:** Grassy picnic area with views of the Clearwater River. The name comes from the iron-oxide rich mineral springs in this area.

**Deer Creek:** Grassy picnic area with access to the Clearwater River. Anglers: Clearwater River is catch and release only!; there is a no keep quota for trout/char/dolly varden.

**Horseshoe Trail:** Access to the Clearwater River. Anglers please note the fishing regulations! Hikers and anglers should be aware that bears frequent this area during salmon migration in August through October.

**Ray Farm/Mineral Spring Trail:** Wells Gray's only family homestead where children were raised. A number of the buildings still stand, and both John and Alice Ray are buried here. Excellent birding with a good chance to see black bear, deer and other small mammals. Trail to the mineral springs can be hiked as a loop, coming back past Alice Lake. Please stay on the viewing platforms. They have been constructed to protect sensitive habitats around the mineral springs.

**Alice Creek/Mineral Creek Trail:** Parking on the west side of the road for a picnic area between Alice and Lonespoon Creeks, with hiking trail on the east side of the road leading to the mineral springs. Insect repellent essential.

**Bailey's Chute/West Lake:** A cool hike through old-growth forest to the first of a series of cataracts on the Clearwater River. Watch salmon jump against the Chute in late August and early September. Continue along the trail to the Upper Chute and Donkey Falls, named for a donkey engine rusting away on the west side of the river – remnants of a failed logging operation from 1913. A 4 km loop past West Lake returns to the Bailey's Chute trail at the viewing platform.

**West Lake Loop:** From Donkey Falls, take the West Lake trail and return to the original trail just past Bailey's Chute. West Lake provides excellent fishing from shore for small rainbows, and is a great place to take kids.

**Shadow Lake:** Roadside parking for boaters and anglers on this peaceful wilderness lake. Good birding, may see the occasional moose, black bear or beaver.

**Norman's Eddy:** A “catch-all” pool in the Clearwater River, popular with fly-fishermen. Remember that the Clearwater River is catch and release only.

**Falls Creek:** The campgrounds of Falls Creek and Clearwater Lake are on the river side, with the Chain Meadows trailhead on the east. This trail can be taken in short sections (to the Dragon's Tongue lava beds and Sticta Falls on Falls Creek) or the entire 17 km loop. Caution: Beyond the Dragon's Tongue a strenuous route extends 24 km to Kostal Lake. Wilderness travel experience is required.

**Clearwater Lake:** From the picnic area at the north end of Clearwater Lake campground, hikers can follow the lakeshore trail past the government wharf, skirting the lakeshore all the way to the public boat launch. This can be walked as part of the Chain Meadows loop trail.

**Boat Launch/Easter Bluffs:** Parking is provided for marine users. Camping fees are paid via a self-registration system at the boat launch. This is also the trailhead for the Easter Bluffs trail, which is a section of the 12.8 km Chain Meadows trail.

**Notice: Personal watercraft are prohibited on Clearwater and Azure Lakes.**

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