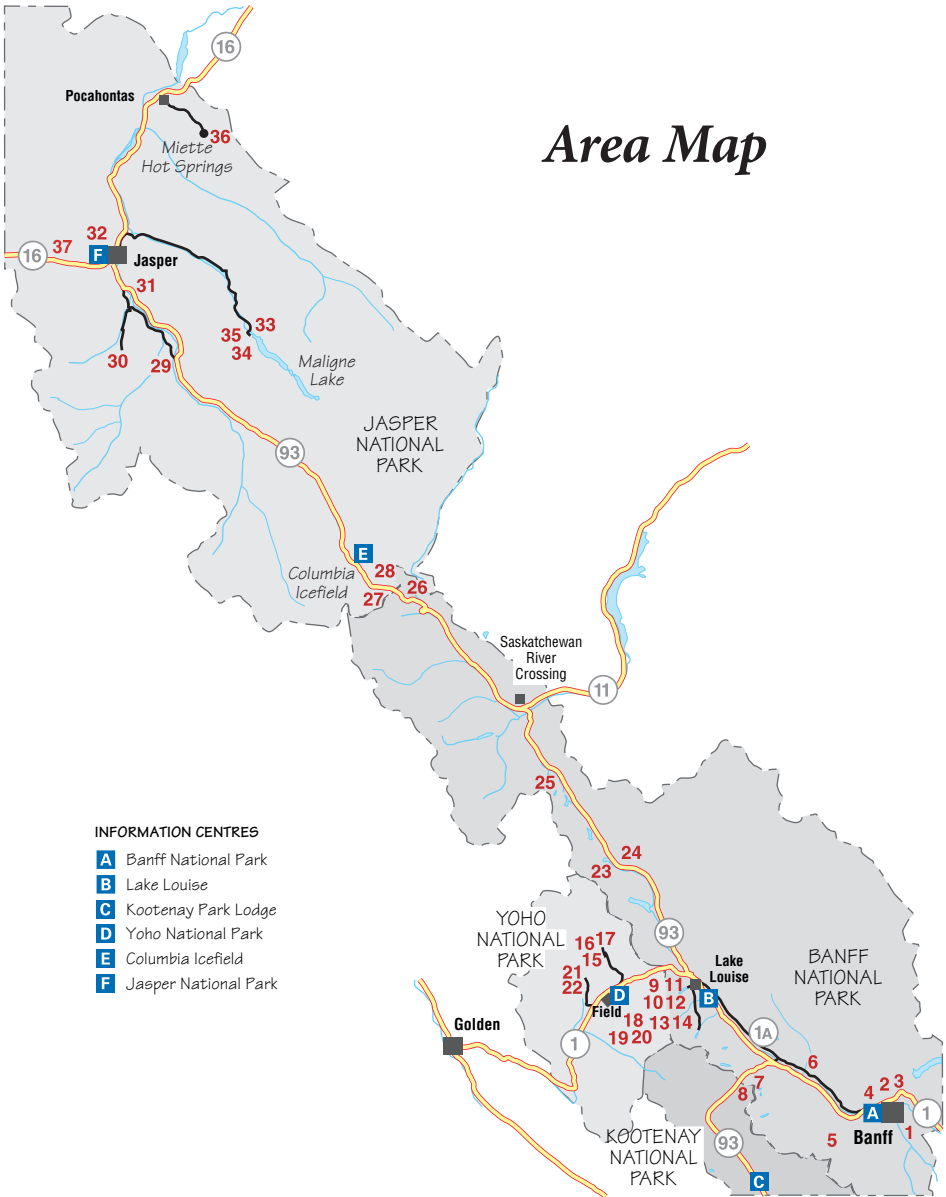


Area Map



The Trails

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16 Iceline–Celeste Lake Loop

Distance 19.1 km loop
Height gain 730 m
High point 2230 m
Strenuous
Mid-July to end of September

Start: Drive the Trans-Canada Hwy. to the Yoho Valley Road, 3.7 km east of Field (the first junction to the right after the bottom of the hill if you are coming from Lake Louise). Drive the Yoho Valley Road for 13 km to the parking lot at Takakkaw Falls. Although the trail starts from the Whiskey Jack Hostel you may only park at the trailhead if you are staying at the hostel.

Difficulty: A good, well-graded trail that climbs high above treeline. It is best avoided in poor weather when you may wish to consider the less exposed hike #15 to Yoho Lake.

A high ascending traverse into a stark land of rocky moraines, sparkling glaciers, grey-green lakes, tumbling waterfalls and expansive views of snow-clad peaks.

1. From the southern end of Takakkaw Falls parking lot, follow the paved tourist trail toward the falls. At the bridge, continue straight on to the trailhead near the Whiskey Jack Hostel.

2. The trail switchbacks steeply up a large avalanche path to where a trail branches left to Hidden Lake. Keep straight ahead and climb to a second junction to Yoho Lake. Turn right onto Iceline Trail.

3. Continue zigzagging upward across avalanche paths toward treeline and increasingly better views across the Yoho Valley. Arrive at a junction with the Highline Trail, which heads back to Yoho Lake. Keep straight on.

4. The trail continues to climb steadily, zigzagging to the top of a moraine where you get your first view of the sparkling Emerald Glacier, now split into two parts. The trail now heads across the slope over talus and smooth limestone slabs with occasional cairns. Cross a

creek just after a large, flat-topped rectangular rock and climb up and over the first of several lateral moraines. Meltwater from the glacier rushes down across slabs and boulders, forming a number of grey-green glacial lakes. This is the highlight of the trip. Arrive at the Celeste Lake Connector junction.

5. The high point of the trail is atop the moraine about 0.8 km away and is worth a visit. Climb the small knoll for a better view.

6. Return to the Celeste Lake Connector. You may decide to return the way you came so as to further enjoy the high alpine country. If you decide to complete the loop, turn left onto the connector.

7. The trail descends beneath moraine to a flowery alpine meadow and then into trees. Pass Celeste Lake (two lakes in low water conditions) and continue down to Little Yoho Valley. Just after Little Gem Pond, descend to the turbulent creek and cross the bridge. Turn right onto Little Yoho Valley trail at the top of the bank.

8. Pass the junction to the Whaleback after a few metres. While it is possible for strong hikers to cross the Whaleback to Twin Falls, it makes for a long day (25.4 km and 380 m additional height gain). Continue descending to Laughing Falls and the junction with the Yoho Valley trail, passing the junction with the Marpole Connector (a strenuous hike across a rockpile) after 500 m.

9. Turn right and follow the Yoho Valley trail downhill to start with, then broad and almost flat, back to Takakkaw Falls.



The remnants of the Emerald Glacier below Michael Peak (4).

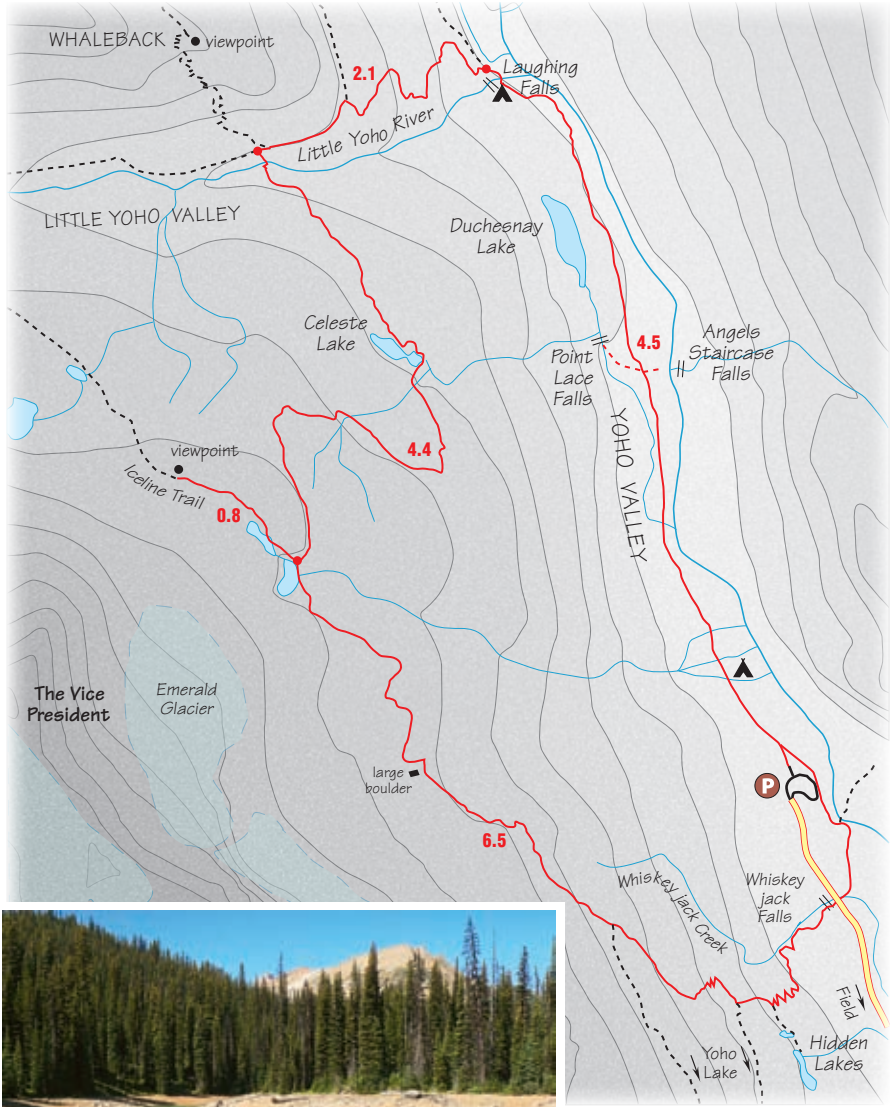


The Emerald Glacier.



Looking down from the first moraine to the creek crossing and the flat-topped boulder (4).

Yoho National Park



The water level was low at the end of August, splitting Celeste Lake into two parts, one of which was little more than a mud hole. Whaleback Mountain in the background.

The northern portion of the Emerald Glacier under The Vice President from the Celeste Lake Connector junction (4).



Centre: Looking across barren talus toward the Little Yoho Valley from the small knoll above the high point of the trail (5). The glaciated peak is Mount McArthur with Isolated Peak to the right.



The meadows below the Iceline Trail (7) are a refreshing contrast to the stark talus slopes above.