

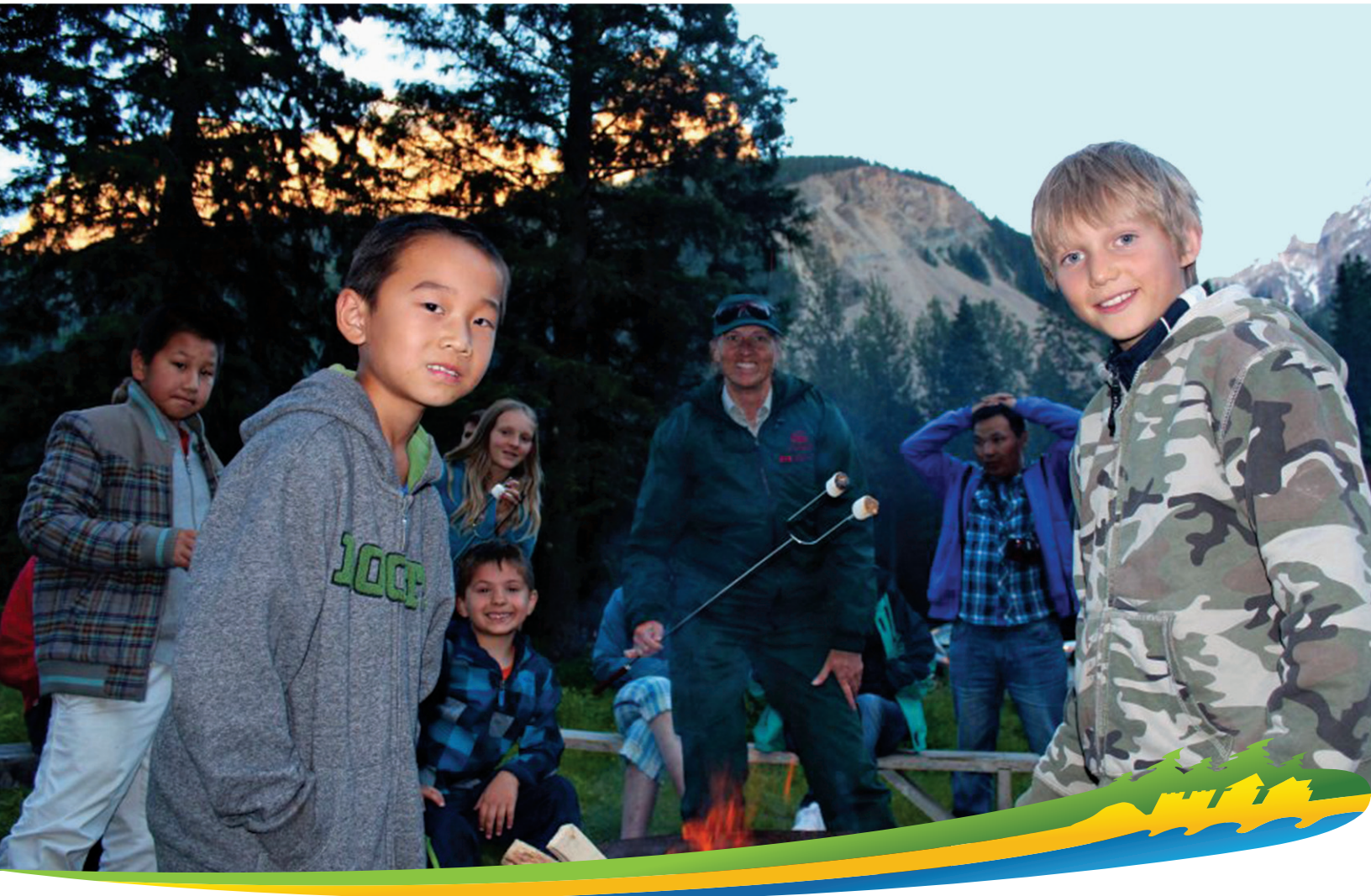


# Yoho

National Park of Canada

## Management Plan Implementation Report

2012 - 2013



## Superintendent's Message

It is with pleasure that I present this report to Canadians, highlighting progress in implementing the 2010 Management Plan for Yoho National Park of Canada. The past year and a half has included some significant challenges, yet Parks Canada staff and our partners have made significant progress in advancing priorities of the management plan and the Parks Canada Agency.

This report provides a glimpse into a range of accomplishments as diverse as providing new and improved visitor experiences, extending the reach of our stories beyond park boundaries, protecting wildlife populations, and advancing efforts to restore species-at-risk.

These accomplishments reflect Parks Canada's three priorities that are being advanced by the work we do in Yoho National Park. Our first priority is maintaining our role as an international leader in conservation. Participating in ground-breaking research aimed at reducing unnatural grizzly bear mortality is an excellent example of how leading scientific researchers and Parks Canada staff are working together to address conservation challenges in Yoho.

Our second priority is encouraging more Canadians to experience their national parks. Whether taking a stroll around Emerald Lake during a day trip or ski touring to a new alpine hut on the Wapta Icefield, welcoming new and returning visitors is an important part of what we do.

The third, but no less important priority for the Agency is taking the stories of Yoho National Park to the places where Canadians live and work. The social media and web-based initiatives described in this report are just one example of bringing national parks to homes and work-places of Canadians.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank our Parks Canada team, and our many partners who have contributed to this success. I remain confident that this spirit of collaboration and dedication will continue to achieve great results for Yoho National Park in 2014.

Sincerely,  
Melanie Kwong,  
Field Unit Superintendent,  
Lake Louise, Yoho and Kootenay

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*Cover photos, clockwise from bottom: Learn to Camp program (© Parks Canada); interpretive program (© Parks Canada); Spiral Tunnels display (© Friends of Yoho); Takakkaw Falls (© Destination BC / Dave Heath)*

## Park Management Plan Implementation Reporting

This report summarizes many of the important accomplishments from the past year and a half in Yoho National Park, from spring 2012 to fall 2013. The achievements are reported under the six key strategies outlined in the Yoho National Park Management Plan 2010. The report is intended to provide local residents and others with an interest in Yoho National Park, with an overview of how Parks Canada is achieving the goals and objectives set out in the management plan. It is also an opportunity for Canadians to provide feedback to Parks Canada on the park management priorities, and the progress that is being made in achieving them. A previous annual implementation report was published in 2011 and can be found at:

[www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/yoho/plan/gestion-management/plandirecteur-mgmtplan.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/yoho/plan/gestion-management/plandirecteur-mgmtplan.aspx)

## A Showcase of National Park Stewardship



*Electric mat experiment at railway crossing mock-up.  
(© Parks Canada / D. Rafla)*

**Parks Canada - Canadian Pacific Grizzly Bear Project**  
Addressing conservation challenges with innovative approaches is one of the key strategies of the management plan. One such approach is the five-year, \$1 million research partnership between Canadian Pacific and Parks Canada to determine the root causes of grizzly mortality along the railway through Yoho and Banff national parks and explore potential mitigation methods to reduce rail-caused bear mortalities. The University of Alberta and the University of Calgary are also partners in this project. Now in year three of the project, several important investigations are well-underway, including experimental off-site testing of electro-mats and fencing that could be used to exclude bears from railway tracks, examination

of landscape and biological factors that affect use of rail corridors by bears, and monitoring of grizzly bear behaviour in Banff and Yoho through the use of radio telemetry. In 2012, more than 19,000 geographic locations were obtained from six female and five male grizzly bears fitted with GPS collars. The 2013 data has not yet been compiled. There are currently five bears with GPS collars, and additional collars will be deployed in 2014.

Parks Canada also continues to collect occurrence and distribution data on grizzly bears and other wildlife species using a network of remote wildlife cameras stationed throughout the park.

### Burgess Shale research expedition

During the summer of 2012, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) conducted a Burgess Shale research expedition in Yoho and Kootenay national parks. This research follows ROM expeditions in 2008 and 2010 that helped to confirm the potential of some of the lesser-known fossil sites in the two parks. The 2012 expedition in Yoho completed an investigation of the Mount Odaray area near Lake O'Hara, and culminated in the discovery of a significant new fossil site near Marble Canyon in Kootenay National Park. The results of this ongoing research will improve our understanding of this globally significant fossil resource and will be incorporated into guided hike programs and educational resources.

150 different Burgess Shale species have been found. (© Royal Ontario Museum)



### Volunteerism

Attracting volunteers to participate in hands-on experiences is an important way for Parks Canada to connect Canadians to their national parks. Recently volunteers have helped with special events, campground hosting, Nordic trail track-setting, wildlife tracking, a litter pick, and a restoration of the Field cemetery. The Field cemetery is the oldest continuously operating cemetery in the mountain parks and marked its first century in 2013. During the summers of 2012 and 2013 local residents and international volunteers worked with park staff to replace and paint fences and wooden crosses, scrub headstones and upgrade the cemetery trail.



International volunteers spruce up the Field cemetery. (© Parks Canada / R. MacDonald.)

## Experiencing the Authentic... and the Spectacular

### Visitation Stats

The Yoho Park Management Plan includes an objective to increase visitation by 2% annually. Data for the last four fiscal years (April to March) are presented in the table below. Visitation has increased in each of the last three years. From April 2010 until March 2013 visitation has increased by 6.2% or an average of just over 2% per year. During this same time, camping statistics indicate that the number of camping site nights has decreased by approximately 5% per year. The summer of 2012 shows a significant rebound from the previous year when the Kicking Horse Campground was closed for the season due to avalanche damage caused in 2011.

YOHO	2009-2010	2010-2011	change %	2011-2012	change %	2012-2013	change %
Visitors	527,501	547,436	3.8	550,832	0.6	560,201	1.7
Camping	15,641	14,987	-4.2	9,823	-34.5	13,156	33.9

## Learn to Camp Program

Yoho National Park and Mountain Equipment Co-op teamed up to present the Learn to Camp program on July 21 and 22, 2012 at Kicking Horse Campground. A group of 26 adults and 20 children from the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society participated in the program. The participants were taught basic camping skills; they learned how to set up and take down a tent, as well as how to start a fire. They also participated in a variety of activities, including a guided interpretive walk around Emerald Lake and an evening interpretive program at the campground. The Learn to Camp program was scheduled to take place again at Kicking Horse Campground on June 22 and 23, 2013 but was cancelled due to the flooding event in Alberta. Watch for the return of this program in 2014.



*Learning to camp at Kicking Horse Campground. (© Parks Canada)*

## Trails

Natural events in both 2012 and 2013 provided plenty of challenges for Parks Canada trail crews, although Yoho did not experience the severity of flooding that occurred elsewhere in the region. In 2012 trail bridges were washed out on McArthur Creek and Hoodoo Creek, and in 2013 a bridge on the Twin Falls trail was lost due to high water. The McArthur and Twin Falls bridges have been replaced, and the Hoodoo bridge has been repaired. In both years, storms and severe wind events caused the blowdown of hundreds of trees that required clearing along the Ottertail and Ice River trails.

In the winter of 2012-2013, the Kicking Horse Ski Club in partnership with Emerald Lake Lodge and Emerald Sports and Gifts took over responsibility for grooming Nordic ski



*Yoho is renowned for its trails. (© Parks Canada / C. Siddall)*

trails around Field and Emerald Lake. The club will continue to provide groomed trails on a volunteer basis in 2013-14. In the fall of 2013 the club funded and had built a 600m trail re-route on the Connector Trail that avoids an area of avalanche hazard that is closed to ski trail grooming. As a result skiers can once again travel on track-set trails all the way from Field to Emerald Lake.

Also in 2013, Parks Canada negotiated a new agreement with the Lake O'Hara Trails Club to fund trail work in the area. This 5-year agreement will see the club provide \$15,000 per year to support trail maintenance and re-construction in the Lake O'Hara area.



*Fishing at Emerald Lake. (© Destination BC / Dave Heath)*

## Lake O'Hara Bus Shelter

In September 2013 the Lake O'Hara Trails Club, Lake O'Hara Lodge, and the Alpine Club of Canada, with the support of Parks Canada, completed the construction of a new bus shelter to replace the old facility that had been in place for 30 years. The new shelter is a roofed, open timber frame structure where up to 30 visitors may gather while waiting for transportation to Lake O'Hara. Parks Canada is continuing to work with these stakeholders on the creation of new information and interpretation panels and prevention messaging to be installed in the facility. Parks Canada thanks this dedicated group for providing the resources to complete this upgrade.



*New bus shelter at base of road to Lake O'Hara. (© Parks Canada / T. Keith)*

## Proposed New Alpine Hut on the Wapta Icefields

As indicated in the park management plan, Parks Canada examined the feasibility of establishing a new hut in the vicinity of the Des Poilus Glacier and found that a hut in this location could support enhanced ski touring opportunities in Yoho without causing significant environmental impacts. The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) subsequently submitted a design for a proposed hut that would accommodate up to 18 people for winter use only. An Environmental Impact Analysis was completed and posted for public review. No comments were received. The ACC continues to work through the planning process, and if approved, construction of the new hut could occur during the summer of 2014.

## Burgess Shale Guided Hikes and Fossil Display

Parks Canada has continued to provide opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about some of the world's most significant fossils. The Burgess Shale guided hikes had a record high number of visitors in 2013 with 800 guests participating in 70 hikes, up from 439 in 2011. The Burgess Shale Geoscience Foundation also continues to provide guided hikes to the two main fossil sites in Yoho.

Visitors to the Yoho Visitor Centre can now view a wider selection of the rare and exceptionally-preserved fossils of the Burgess Shale. In 2012, two new fossil cabinets were built by the Friends of Yoho. These have been stocked with a selection of fossils from the Yoho National Park collection and are available for visitors to view at their leisure.



*A Parks Canada guided hike to the Burgess Shale fossil beds. (© Parks Canada / R. Hostin)*

## Experiences with Park Interpreters

New 'discover the park' programs were developed in 2012 and 2013 to complement the popular evening Kicking Horse Campground theatre shows and geocaching program. These new programs emphasize hands-on activities such as art classes, interactive fossil demonstrations, and wildlife tracking. A guided hike around Emerald Lake is offered for an additional fee.



*Park interpreters on stage. (© Parks Canada)*

# Bringing the Mountains to People Where They Live

## Web Page Renewal

Work continues to improve Yoho's website, and Parks Canada has become active on social media, maintaining a presence on Facebook and Twitter. Check us out at:

[www.facebook.com/yohopnp](http://www.facebook.com/yohopnp)

[www.twitter.com/yohopnp](http://www.twitter.com/yohopnp)

Parks Canada's YouTube channel has several short videos on Yoho National Park including "Birdsong - Yoho National Park", and "Burgess Shale Interpretive Hike".

[www.youtube.com/parkscanada](http://www.youtube.com/parkscanada)

## Outreach

Parks Canada has continued to share stories of Yoho National Park in regional and national media. Parks Canada has partnered with the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network to support student field trips into the mountain national parks. In 2013, park research programs were highlighted at the East Kootenay Regional Science Fair in Cranbrook. During the summer of 2013, six students hired by Parks Canada profiled western national parks, including Yoho, at numerous venues including Science World, Vancouver Aquarium and special events throughout Greater Vancouver. The students contacted 55,000 people.

Parks Canada upgraded the Burgess Shale Edukit that showcases the remarkable Burgess Shale fossils. A new collaborative agreement with the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) now makes this educational resource available to school districts across Canada.



Outreach Team in Vancouver. (© Parks Canada)



Burgess Shale edukit. (Photo © Parks Canada / D. Griffith.)

## Google Earth Street View

Parks Canada partnered with Google Street View to capture popular roads, short trails, and day use areas in the mountain parks during the summer of 2013. Many of the images are now online at [maps.google.ca](http://maps.google.ca) and in Google Street View galleries. Virtual visitors can now tour the Takakkaw Falls day use area and Emerald Lake Loop, in addition to previously mapped locations including the Village of Field. Additional locations, including all Yoho campgrounds, were mapped and will come online after the images have been processed by Google. Learn more at:

[www.pc.gc.ca/eng/apprend-learn/cartes-maps.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/apprend-learn/cartes-maps.aspx)



Google Earth trail camera in Yoho. (© Parks Canada /A. Krause)

## Burgess Shale Web Pages

Parks Canada has created a dedicated section within the Yoho website to highlight the globally-significant Burgess Shale and the guided hike program. Online users can now easily book a hike, learn about the discovery of the fossils and current research, or peruse the photo gallery. The site has links to media coverage and to our partner the Virtual Museum of Canada's online Burgess Shale exhibit. Visit these web pages at:

[www.parksCanada.gc.ca/burgessshale](http://www.parksCanada.gc.ca/burgessshale)

## Celebrating History, Culture and the World Heritage Site

### Spiral Tunnels Model

In 2013 a new model of Kicking Horse Pass and the Spiral Tunnels was unveiled in the Yoho Visitor Centre in Field. When the Spiral Tunnels were first opened in 1909, they reduced the gradient on the rail line between Wapta Lake and Field, B.C. from 4.5% to 2.2%, thereby providing a safer and more efficient transportation link across the Great Divide. The new model, commissioned by the Friends of Yoho, features a scale model of the tunnels, working miniature trains, and thousands of hand-made trees. Funding for the project came from the Friends of Yoho, Canadian Pacific, Parks Canada, and the Columbia Basin Trust.



*Spiral Tunnels model and exhibit in Yoho Visitor Center.*  
(© Parks Canada / R. MacDonald)

## Managing Development

### Chancellor Peak Campground Decommissioning

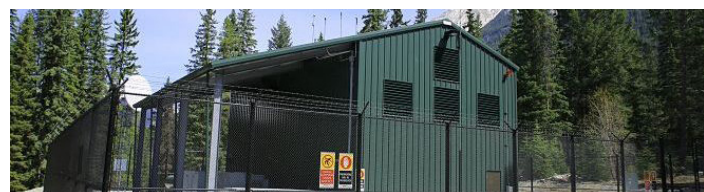
In June of 2012, heavy rains and snowmelt caused the Kicking Horse River to overflow its banks in Yoho. The Chancellor Peak Campground was inundated with water, and when the water levels subsided the river had carved a new main channel through the middle of the facility. The costs of protecting this campground from future flooding, along with the costs of required bridge upgrades on the access road, led to the decision to decommission this campground. During the fall and winter of 2012-2013 the entire campground infrastructure was removed from this area. The bridge to the campground was removed during the winter of 2014.



*Flooding in Chancellor Peak Campground on July 13, 2012.*  
(© Parks Canada)

### Community of Field – Battery Storage

In 2013 BC Hydro completed the Field Energy Storage Battery-Back-Up Project which was announced in 2010. The Field Energy Storage Facility (ESF) became operational in July 2013. From July to the end of November, Field experienced eight power outages, planned & unplanned. The outages were caused by motor vehicle accidents, fallen trees, storm conditions, and scheduled work. During this period the ESF supplied a total of 53.5 hours of back-up power – an average of approximately 6.5-7 hours for each outage.



*The Field Energy Storage Project - this innovative battery storage facility is the first of its kind in Canada.* (© BC Hydro)

## Trans Canada Highway Twinning – First Underpass in Yoho

The Trans Canada Highway twinning project in Banff National Park was completed in the fall of 2013. This phase of highway twinning extended into the western edge of Yoho National Park and included construction of the first wildlife crossing structure in the park – an underpass. A wildlife crossing study has been completed for the park which identifies options for establishing additional crossing structures to mitigate the impact of potential future highway twinning projects in Yoho.

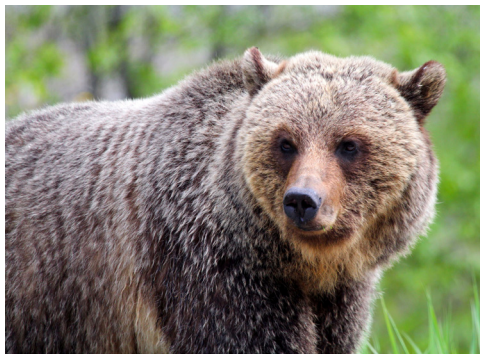


Wildlife underpass in Yoho. (© Parks Canada / A. Dibb)

## Ensuring Healthy Park Ecosystems

### Grizzly bears

Grizzly bears are an iconic species in the mountain parks, and their persistence on the landscape is used as an important indicator of ecosystem health. The Park



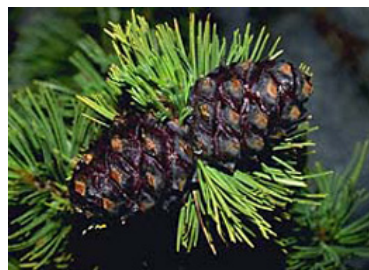
Grizzly bear. (© Parks Canada / Alan Dibb)

### Management

Plan contains objectives to minimise bear-human conflicts and to reduce bear mortality due to unnatural causes. No human caused grizzly bear mortalities were recorded in Yoho over the reporting period. Parks Canada continues to use warnings, area restrictions, and when necessary area closures, to protect both people and wildlife in the park. In the fall of both 2012 and 2013 bear warnings were posted in and around the Field townsite because of bears frequenting the area. These warnings were successful in helping to prevent human-wildlife conflicts.

## Species at Risk

In 2012, whitebark pine was listed as endangered under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). This relatively-rare tree species occurs at upper elevations near the tree-line in the western cordillera, and its nutrient-rich seeds are an important food source for a variety of wildlife. A key factor in the decline of this species is the introduced pathogen white pine blister rust. Other stressors include the mountain pine beetle and climate change. Parks Canada is contributing to a recovery strategy for this species. In 2012 and 2013 work has focussed on collecting seeds from trees that appear to be resistant to the white pine blister rust in Yoho, Kootenay and Banff national parks. In 2012, more than 4,300 seeds were collected from 14 sample trees in six different study areas. Data for 2013 are still being compiled. The collected seeds will be stored and germinated at the National Tree Seed Centre for use in future ecological restoration work. Updated whitebark pine distribution maps have been created to aid future recovery efforts.



White bark pine cone, a species at risk. (© Parks Canada)

## Invasive Species Management

Parks Canada continues to actively combat the spread of invasive weed species in the national parks. Results from the previous two years have been promising, and all invasive weed species, with the exception of orange hawkweed and knapweed are in decline in Yoho and Kootenay parks.



Orange Hawkweed, an invasive non-native weed. (© Parks Canada / A. Dibb)



## Looking Ahead...

Throughout the year there are numerous ways for people to get involved, or stay involved, in activities in the park. Volunteering is one way to contribute while enjoying time in the park. Anyone interested in volunteering can find more information at:

[www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/yoho/ne/benevole-volunteer.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/yoho/ne/benevole-volunteer.aspx)

Some projects and events to watch for in 2014 include:

- Potential construction of the Des Poilus Hut by the Alpine Club of Canada near Yoho Peak;
- A Learn to Camp event to be held at Kicking Horse Campground in June;
- A re-route of a portion of the All-Soul's Prospect trail near Lake O'Hara;
- Re-opening of the Yoho West Gate to welcome visitors and collect park fees.



Takakkaw Falls road. (© Destination BC / Dave Heath)



Canoeing on Emerald Lake. (© Destination BC / Dave Heath)

## How to Contact Us

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Yoho National Park Visitor Centre  
(Open from May until early October)  
Phone: 250-343-6783  
Email: [yoho.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:yoho.info@pc.gc.ca)