

Silvercup Ridge Trail

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| Distance: | 25 km one way |
| | Summer |
| Modes: | entire ridge: hike, horseback road-access basins: 4-wheeler, dirtbike |
| Time: | 2-3 days one-way or day trip |
| Surface: | dirt, rock, mine road |
| Rating: | moderate to expert |
| | Winter |
| Modes: | snowmobile, touring skis |
| Time: | all-day trip into basins |
| Surface: | snowed-in road, glades, alpine basin |
| Rating: | moderate to expert |



Late September backpacker looks toward Fays Peak near a trail cairn

Trail Description

Summer: Silvercup Ridge is a dramatic sawtooth ridge rising high above Trout Lake. The 25 kilometre trail along the ridge incorporates old mine roadway, horse trail and hiking trail as it ascends from the Trout Lake valley to follow the ridge through meadows and alpine basins for the length of the lake. Roads have made Silvercup Ridge accessible for many recreational pursuits: snowmobilers, hunters, horse riders and hikers all share the ridge. The trail is accessible by road from a number of drainages (see Access section), but remains fairly untouched between these points, passable mainly by horse or foot.

From the valley, the northwest end of the trail steadily climbs from its origin in a logging cutblock along the side hill, passing through more cutblocks in various stages of regeneration and crossing creeks and gullies in a typically moist interior cedar hemlock forest. The trail is well worn and marked with bright orange tags. Views of the Trout Lake valley below and the Lardeau Range to the south soon become evident.

In the subalpine, the terrain opens up as the trail winds through small meadows and gullies littered with rhododendron and huckleberry shrubs, balsam, spruce and pine trees. Evidence of bear, deer, small mammals and a multitude of birds abounds. Just past a small lake, the trail winds through an eerie stand of burned timber, evidence of a past fire that magnifies the growing sense of nature's daunting force. Follow the trail up through the gully with the fire to the left until it enters the trees again near the top of the gully, keeping an eye on the trail markers for assistance. Soon after the fire, the trail meets Foggy Day Road, the old mining road (GPS 4), and continues along the road as it skirts the top of Le Beau Creek basin, offering spectacular views of the lake below and the Lardeau mountain range on the opposite side of the valley. Mine tailing piles found along the roadside still yield crystals and mineral rich rocks for those with a sharp eye.

As the ridge opens up, flower-filled meadows and groves of alpine spruce and balsam stretch on and on. In the first open meadow on top of the ridge, walk to the other side for a breathtaking view north across the Badshot Range. At times, both the trail and the road wander through the extensive meadows and groves, either choice leads to the vast open area where the road from the valley bottom intersects (GPS 5). With 4-wheel drive access via Rue du Beau, encounters with more people and vehicles are likely in this area. If out on a day trip, have a picnic, search for remnants of Silvercup Mine or take a short jaunt up one of the nearby peaks for an even better view. Many ideal campsites exist in the meadows between GPS 5 and 6.

To continue along the ridge, follow the mining road southeast until the trail appears again over a knoll just past a little lake on the right of the road (GPS 6). The trail now skirts the top of the Laughton Creek basin, passing through trees, over slopes of talus and open rock, marked now sparingly by cairns and trail tags. A few kilometres along, a small meadow with a few flat rocks makes a nice snack place. At GPS 7, another bowl opens up with a number of small streams running through the meadows, draining the lakes that comprise the headwaters of Laughton Creek. From here, either follow the mine roadway around the basin or take the trail through the basin. A side trip to the north leads to a terrific viewpoint atop the ridge towering above. A trail marker indicates where the trail rises from the basin back into the trees. Shortly after leaving the basin, the trail is intersected by Rady Creek Road, another 4-wheel drive route from the valley bottom to the ridge, and, therefore, a greater chance of meeting people and vehicles. The trees around Rady Creek Road offer well protected campsites.

From here, follow cairns and trail through meadows littered with old hand-dug mine sites before climbing to a narrow pass into the Rady Creek basin. Cairns lead through open meadow with a small lake to the left (GPS 8), another nice campsite option. The trail follows cairns between GPS 8 and 9, as it straddles the ridge between Ottawa Creek to the north and Stobart Creek to the south, with Fays Peak rising authoritatively to the north east; a side trip up the peak affords further sensational views of the Badshot and Lardeau ranges. The cairns are harder to make out along this portion of the trail, although occasional orange or white trail markers on trees help mark the way. Toward the end of the ridge, the trail dips onto the south facing side crossing the talus slopes high above Stobart and Neil Creeks. The cairns lead across and up to 7800 feet, the highest point on the trail, and then veer slightly right and down through the greenest draw to curve around to meet the mining road again (GPS 9). Evidence of another campsite exists here, and the Foggy Day Road winds another 5 kilometers.

The easily traveled mining road skirts the top of the steep American Creek drainage until it rounds another ridge and enters the Horsefly Creek basin. From here, panoramic views down into Haskins Creek to the north and across Trout Lake to the south inspire awe of the raw beauty and sheer magnitude of the area's landscape. An old cabin perched on the edge of the Haskins Creek draw provides an enticing side trip before starting down the mining road which turns into American Creek FS Road. Follow the road from GPS 10 as it heads down, switching back and forth for 11.5 kilometres, to Highway 31. Having the foresight to drop off a vehicle somewhere along this road ensures a more pleasant end to this extended ridge walk, as the trip down the logging road is far less exciting than the walk up top. Check the American Creek Rd. access instructions below to help navigate this road from the valley bottom.

For winter snowmobiling or ski touring, park on Highway 31 and ride up Rue du Beau (moderately difficult) or Rady Creek Road (more advanced), into the wide alpine bowls and meadows atop the ridge. Once on top, either route provides plenty of open, gladed, hilly and flat terrain for a full day's fun for intermediate, advanced and expert snowmobilers or advanced backcountry skiers. The reputation of this area for backcountry recreation is spreading and a concurrent increase in popularity will likely continue, and for very good reason.

Silvercup Ridge Access

Views down Laughton Creek to Trout Lake blanketed in early morning fall fog and across to the Lardeau range rising in the distance.



Access:

Silvercup Ridge has a number of access routes. The following instructions are from the community of Trout Lake, but access can also be gained from Kootenay Lake by following Highway 31 from Kaslo to the South east end of Trout Lake, 26 km from the town of Trout Lake. To get to Trout Lake from Nakusp, follow Highway 23 north for 48 km, turn right at the junction of Highway 31, then drive another 28.5 km to the historic town.

Hike northwest valley bottom to southeast valley

bottom: To access the northwest trailhead, set your odometer to 0 at the Trout Lake General Store, drive 8.1 kms east along Highway 31 and sharply turn left onto an unnamed logging road (300 metres past the 28 km sign). Keep left at the fork 1.2 km along, follow the road another 200 metres and park in the cutblock (GPS [P](#)); a good high clearance vehicle can continue on for another .5 km. From here, travel the slightly washed-out and brushed-in road by foot, ATV, bike or horse for 1.5 km to the trailhead (brown 4x4 post at GPS 3). The trail heads northeast up the hillside for about 5 km, then meets Foggy Day Road, the old mining road that runs intermittently along the whole ridge.

Drive Rue du Beau to northwest ridge top: From the Trout Lake General Store, drive 9 km east along Highway 31, turn left onto Rue du Beau and set your odometer to 0. Stay on the main road, veering right at 3.1 km, left at 3.5 km, 4 km and again at 5.3 km. Take the right fork at 6.1 km and the left fork at 8 km. At 9.2 km, intercept Foggy Day Road, the mining road along the top, and turn right, follow the road to 9.7 km, where it meets the trail (GPS 5). Park out of the way here to enjoy the wide open meadows or drive to 11.3 km, (GPS 6) where the trail becomes passable only on foot. Rue du Beau is a popular winter access route for snowmobiles, which park at the bottom on Highway 31 and ride the road up to the top of the ridge. The route is not recommended for unguided novice snowmobilers, and even experienced riders will need patience and skill in poorer conditions. The Trout Lake Hotel can provide information on current conditions.

Drive American Creek Rd. to southeast ridge top: From the Trout Lake General Store, drive 25.8 km east along Highway 31 and turn left onto American Ck Rd. (0.6 km before Gerrard Creek and the Rainbow trout spawning observation platform). Set the odometer to 0, and keep left at 2.6 km and right at 4.1 km. Keep left at 5.3 km and again at 6.9 km. At 8-9 km, the road gets quite rough but is passable for another 3 km, where it meets the mining roads atop the ridge. American Creek Road could be used for winter snowmobile access, but it is not a popular route due to poorer sledding conditions.

Drive Rady Creek Rd. to mid ridge top: Rady Creek Road, 15 km from the Trout Lake General Store, also accesses the ridge, meeting the ridge-top mining road between GPS 7 and 8. The bottom portion of the Rady Creek Road is a logging road, while the top is a rougher trail. Rady Creek is used for winter access by snowmobile also, parking on Highway 31 and riding the road to the ridge. This route can be more challenging than Rue du Beau and riders should be well experienced.

Modes of Use

Silvercup Ridge is suitable for both summer and winter recreation. Well experienced hikers and expert horseback riders can travel the entire ridge in summer, with the bowls and some portions of the trail suitable for day hiking, mountain bike, dirt bike, or 4-wheeler. Winter use is suitable for snowmobiling, snow camping and ski touring, although traveling the entire ridge in winter is not recommended.

Past and Future

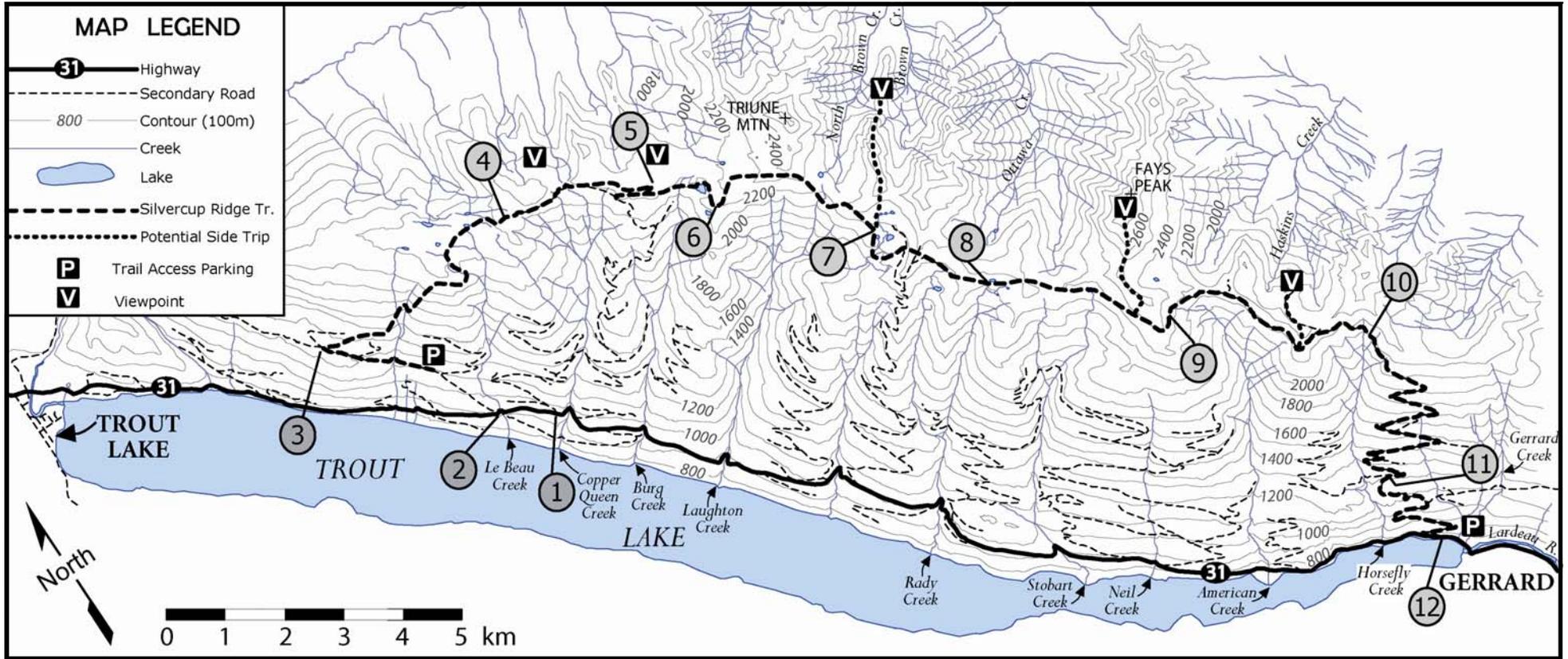
Silvercup Ridge became popular with miners in the 1890s, after the first few car loads of high grade ore came down from the new Silvercup Mine and word spread of the area's potential riches. At the turn of the century, over 1000 miners flooded the area, travelling by paddlewheeler or railway and stocking up at the towns sprouting up all over the region, many of which no longer exist: Arrowhead, Comaplix, Ferguson, Circle City, Thomson's Landing, Lardo and Selkirk City. Trout Lake became a booming mine town with 3 drug stores, 5 hotels, a bank and a bustle of people set on digging themselves to riches. Miners staked over 200 claims on Silvercup Ridge and throughout the valleys, hoping for the motherlode. An aerial tram brought ore from Silvercup and Nettie B mines, situated on different mountains, down to the concentrating plant in the valley. Later, Foggy Day Road ran along the ridgetop to haul minerals down to the valley to sell. Along the road, mine tailing piles still yield crystals and bits of silver and other valuable minerals.

Gaining popularity, Silvercup Ridge has seen an increase in motorized recreation over the past 10 years, mostly snowmobile and 4-wheeler. This trend is likely to continue as more adventure seekers hear of the area's beauty and excellent conditions.

If You Liked This Hike

Summer alpine ascents include Saddle Mountain Lookout, near Nakusp, and Idaho Peak Lookout and Whitewater Mountain near Sandon. Lower elevation day hikes, accessible in spring, summer and fall, include Nakusp Hotsprings, Rosebery Railbed and Kimbol Lake Trails.

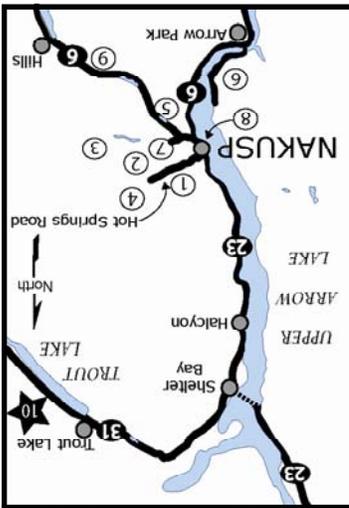
Silvercup Ridge



| Point | GPS | Description |
|----------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| P | 50° 37' 12" N 117° 27' 25" W | Parking in Cutblock |
| 1 | 50° 36' 16" N 117° 26' 19" W | Turn off—Rue du Beau |
| 2 | 50° 36' 52" N 117° 26' 38" W | Turn off—Unnamed Rd. |
| 3 | 50° 37' 55" N 117° 28' 33" W | Trail starts—4x4 post |
| 4 | 50° 37' 59" N 117° 25' 23" W | Trail meets mining road |
| 5 | 50° 37' 29" N 117° 23' 23" W | Open meadow |

| Point | GPS | Description |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6 | 50° 37' 1" N 117° 22' 46" W | Walking trail starts |
| 7 | 50° 37' 1" N 117° 21' 4" W | Alpine basin/ridge trail |
| 8 | 50° 35' 2" N 117° 20' 7" W | Meadow by a lake |
| 9 | 50° 33' 53" N 117° 18' 16" W | On mining road again |
| 10 | 50° 32' 51" N 117° 16' 11" W | Ridge ends/start down |
| 11 | 50° 31' 32" N 117° 16' 55" W | Branch in road |
| 12 | 50° 30' 49" N 117° 16' 47" W | Turn off—American Ck. |





- Trails in Series:**
- ① Kuskanaux Mtn.
 - ② Hotsprings Trail
 - ③ Kimbol Lake
 - ④ Cedar Grove
 - ⑤ Box Lake Loop
 - ⑥ Saddle Lookout
 - ⑦ Wensley Creek
 - ⑧ Nakusp Loop
 - ⑨ Rosebery Railway
 - ★ Silver Cup Ridge



General Information
 Be prepared for hiking. Even if your journey is a short one, you should have:

- solid walking shoes or boots
- water and nutritious food
- first aid supplies
- comfortable clothing – loose layers with rain gear

In the backcountry, prepare for the unexpected:

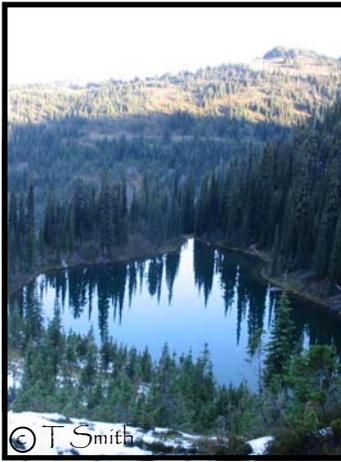
- tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return
- bring emergency supplies eg. warm clothes, extra food & water, matches, knife, compass, map
- make noise to alert wildlife to your presence eg. sing, whistle, clap

Trails are shared by many and maintained by few, so follow trail etiquette:

- keep to the designated trails
- take only pictures; leave only footprints
- foot traffic yields to horses, bikes and motorized traffic (only use on trails allowing motors)
- travel in pairs or groups, and keep kids in sight at all times
- keep pets under control; be aware they may pose a hazard with backcountry wildlife

~ Detailed information on the inside ~

This brochure is informational only. Trail users assume all responsibility for personal injury or damage to equipment.



* All brochures in the *Trails of Nakusp* series are available online at : www.nakusparowlakes.com

For more information, try:
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Trails of Nakusp
 Day or Multi-day Hikes
 Summer
 Snowmobile or Ski
 Winter

Silvercup Ridge



Snow dusted peaks of the Badshot Range in September