



# Time for Nature



## From miner's trash to treasure

### Maintaining the Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site of Canada

On the Chilkoot Trail, hikers pass through spectacular and rugged terrain of Alaska and British Columbia – but that's only half the story. The trail is also a gold mine for history buffs intrigued by tales of the Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s.

The Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site of Canada commemorates the mass movement of people over the Chilkoot Trail en route to the Yukon during the Gold Rush. Parks Canada co-manages the trail with the United States National Park Service. The agencies work together to ensure hikers have a memorable trip while respecting the area's cultural and natural treasures.



The Gold Rush brought thousands of miners to the Chilkoot Trail in the 1890s.

© Parks Canada / National Archives Canada, 1898.

### Natural wonders in a historic setting

The trail begins at the Alaska coast and passes through the Pacific northwest coastal forest. The U.S. National Park Service manages this portion of the trail as part of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park.

The trail then climbs above the tree line into the alpine tundra reaching an elevation of 1,074 m at the pass. Mosses, lichens, dwarf shrubs and low-growing willows survive on the thin alpine soil. Hikers often spot arctic ground squirrels, mountain goats and ptarmigan – even the occasional Rufous Hummingbirds or wolverine.



Horse sled artefact on the Chilkoot Trail.

© Parks Canada, 1971.

When descending, the trail enters the subalpine boreal forest of subalpine fir, lodgepole pine, willow and alder. The forest is home to moose, wolves, black and grizzly bears, porcupine, ruffed grouse and white-throated sparrows.



## Tin cans are now historic artefacts

If the animals prove elusive, history is ever-present on the trail. Reminders of the Gold Rush are still strewn where stampedeers left them: boot soles, tin cans, pack saddles, and sled frames.

These artefacts make the Chilkoot Trail an outdoor museum of Gold Rush history. Removed from their original setting, artefacts lose much of their historical significance. For more than a century, hikers have respected their value where they lie.



Parks Canada limits entry to the national historic site to protect the site and maintain a quality recreational experience.  
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## Even the rocks tell a story

On the Chilkoot, even rocks can tell a story. An apparent jumble of rocks may prove to be the foundation of a hotel. Because tampering with these features would destroy the story, damaging or removing natural or cultural resources is an offence under the National Historic Park Regulations.

At all its properties, Parks Canada works to protect cultural and natural resources. Use of the Canadian section of the Chilkoot Trail, for example, is carefully controlled. Each day, only 50 people are allowed to enter the national historic site over the Chilkoot Pass. The limits are based on natural and social science research, input from field staff and campsite capacities.

## Stepping lightly

Parks Canada and the U.S National Park Service urge trail users to follow the Leave No Trace philosophy. Leave No Trace is an international program that advises visitors travelling and camping on public lands. Its Principles of Outdoor Ethics encourage us to dispose of waste properly, to leave behind what we find, and to respect both wildlife and other visitors.

For more information visit [www.pc.gc.ca/chilkoot](http://www.pc.gc.ca/chilkoot)