

# YUKON RIVER TRAIL WEST (SOUTH END)

Let's reconnect the Yukon River West trail from downtown to the bridge at Marsh Lake. Step 1 is to get to behind Golden Horn

More Yukon River trail and Hepburn Tramway discussion coming soon on [whitehorseWalks.com](http://whitehorseWalks.com).

The map is intended for discussion purposes only and is not to be used for navigation; it does not claim safe, or even legitimate, walking trails. Improvements will come as people walk the area more, mark all the trails, discuss the route and install good trail signage! The important thing is to keep the walking trail as much in sight of the river as possible. Map colours are explained in the Legend.



**DRAFT**  
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**Bodies of water. Trails.** Cities on significant rivers often have walking trails alongside them. We hiked around the Isle of Man a few years ago. They needed economic development and looked to tourism. They decided to designate a coastal trail by identifying existing trails, and then connecting the missing pieces — at first taking the trail inland then back to the coast, then by building bridges, switchbacks and by obtaining landowner permissions to move fences. The result, *Raad ny Foillan*, is 152 km in length. We spent 11 days on the island hiking around the coastal trail.

Here, on the Traditional Territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, people followed trails on both sides of the Yukon River, from Marsh Lake to Lake Laberge. A South Yukon River loop trail between the Yukon River and Robert Campbell bridges would likely be about 100 km.

There's a neat opportunity for a very distinctive signage that can be used on signposts along the way. Is there a First Nation name appropriate for this?



By connecting existing pieces of named and unnamed riverside trails from the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre on the Waterfront Trail and past Wolf Creek Campground, Whitehorse gains a significant 35-km section of a Yukon River Trail (see thin double white line on map. However, in places, compromises lose the experience of the river (see discussion below in map notes).

**Whitehorse South Neighbourhood Trail Task Force.** This June 2106 process can address compromises, possibly through tenure negotiations, and certainly by creative trail work.

Walking the individual trail segments, passing through the many very different landscapes, will be popular for locals and tourists. The health benefits are obvious. Waymarking using a medallion-style of signage will provide a confidence-building way of ensuring people don't get lost in the maze of trails. With many trails in back of residences, good signage is critical — especially on both ends of public walkways. A solid trail map should show all trails, parking, short cuts to enter and enter segments.

Not only does the trail follow important traditional trails along the Yukon River, it also follows the gold rush-era Hepburn Tramway, still easily followed after all these years, and parts of the old telegraph line, also visible in spots. It's a walk through time following the Yukon River. You truly feel that you are in a 'wilderness city' as you walk high up on the escarpments above the river gazing over impressive valley views, the basalt walls of Miles Canyon, Canyon City, and the many trails on the east side of the river; the walk along Wolf Creek is exceptional. Interpretive opportunities abound.

Many historical places are also on the route: the Old Fire Hall, S.S. Klondike, Robert E. Lowe footbridge, Yukon Energy power dam, Robert Service Campground, McCrae, Wolf Creek Campground.

The trail also passes over, or near, the downtown Waterfront Trail, the new public library, the Visitor Reception Centre, the Yukon Government building, the Robert Campbell Bridge, the Millennium Trail, Rotary Centennial Bridge, the fish ladder, Yukon Energy's LNG plant, the float plane base...

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## Legend

**Areas:** coloured as in 2012 Zoning Bylaw  
green: PG greenspace, (bright) PR recreational  
blue: water, (blueish green) PE environmental sensitive  
purple: (light) Future development(FD), (dark) FNFD  
red: industrial  
yellow: residential  
muddy yellow: commercial

**Icons:** Scenic spot; red circles are bridges

**Lines:**  
thin blue: creek  
thin red: powerline  
brown: smaller dirt roads  
turquoise: public right-of-ways  
yellow: WP&YR, (thin yellow) cutlines  
black: Bylaw motorized trail network  
green: trails; some walked, some from others  
white, thin double:  
DRAFT Yukon River Trail West (south end)



Walking down the Hepburn Tramway towards Miles Canyon

**Robert Service Campground** Getting past the Yukon Energy dam could be made safer:

- By making a distinct trail from Robert Service Campground to the road alongside of the LNG plant. See yellow dashed line above.

- By extending the current trail through the woods to the LNG plant, bypassing a walk along the road by the spillway. See black dashed line above.

Miles Canyon Road is closed in winter. Could it be open from the highway until Miles Canyon?

Should it be one way in summer (between Miles Canyon pullout and where it hits the winter gate at the foot of the hill by the Grant cabin) with runners, bicyclists, motorhomes on a narrow windy road?

As part of the long-term repairs to the Robert E. Lowe footbridge, it's a good time to replace the old concrete stairs leading down from the parking lot and make a more attractive, accessible entrance to this spectacular spot. Not only is it an entrance to Chadburn Lake Park, it's a viewing location in its own right.

**Robert E. Lowe footbridge** Dirt bikes are starting to use trails here. It is zoned PE (Environmental Protection). There could be separate routing, switchbacks, at spots where steep slopes are becoming badly rutted. The footpath should stay in sight of the river as much as possible, perhaps following the path of the telegraph line (see dashed cyan line).

A 2-km section (red diamond line) of the 1898 Hepburn Tramway still exists between Miles Canyon and the American Laundry.

- The section adjacent to the parking lot road at Miles Canyon needs work: the last 300 metres needs rebuilding where the bank slid over the trail ( see dashed yellow line).

- Generally the rest of the tramway is easy walking—a narrow trail with very gradual slopes on the hills. It needs brushing in spots, downed tree removal, but don't change its character.

**American Laundry** The American Laundry road is in rough shape and is likely pretty bad if wet.

Once the tramway crosses the American Laundry Road it needs to be brushed and made to have a fitting end at the river. See white dashed line.

The crossing at Basalt Creek needs a small bridge. One of the little creek bridges beside the Fox Farm Road should be replaced, and the site cleaned.

We need a better connection between Fox Haven Estates and the Fox Farm Road. The trail could be more more along the river, but for now takes advantage of hiking on escarpments.

The route shown, using the dusty Fox Farm Road and the highway ditch, is a temporary, not very nice solution.

Well-signed, cleared public walkways will make it easier for people to walk individual segments of the trail; getting lost and being able to make one's way back to a roadway using a walkway is important along this stretch of river.

Trails down by the river might provide an alternate route through the area.

As part of the Canada150 celebrations, Yukon Parks wants to make the Wolf Creek Campground trail accessible and to redo interpretation. Campers will delight in this strong stay-another-day activity. The trail will become a worthy local destination, an anchor on an important long-distance trail.

This area is also the focus of the City's Wolf Creek Park, established by the 2010 OCP.



Lower Canyon City trail with Flat and Pilot mountains on horizon

Trails behind Spruce Hill towards Golden Horn are still being explored. It seems that there would be a trail around the island formed by the oxbow. From in back of Golden Horn?

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