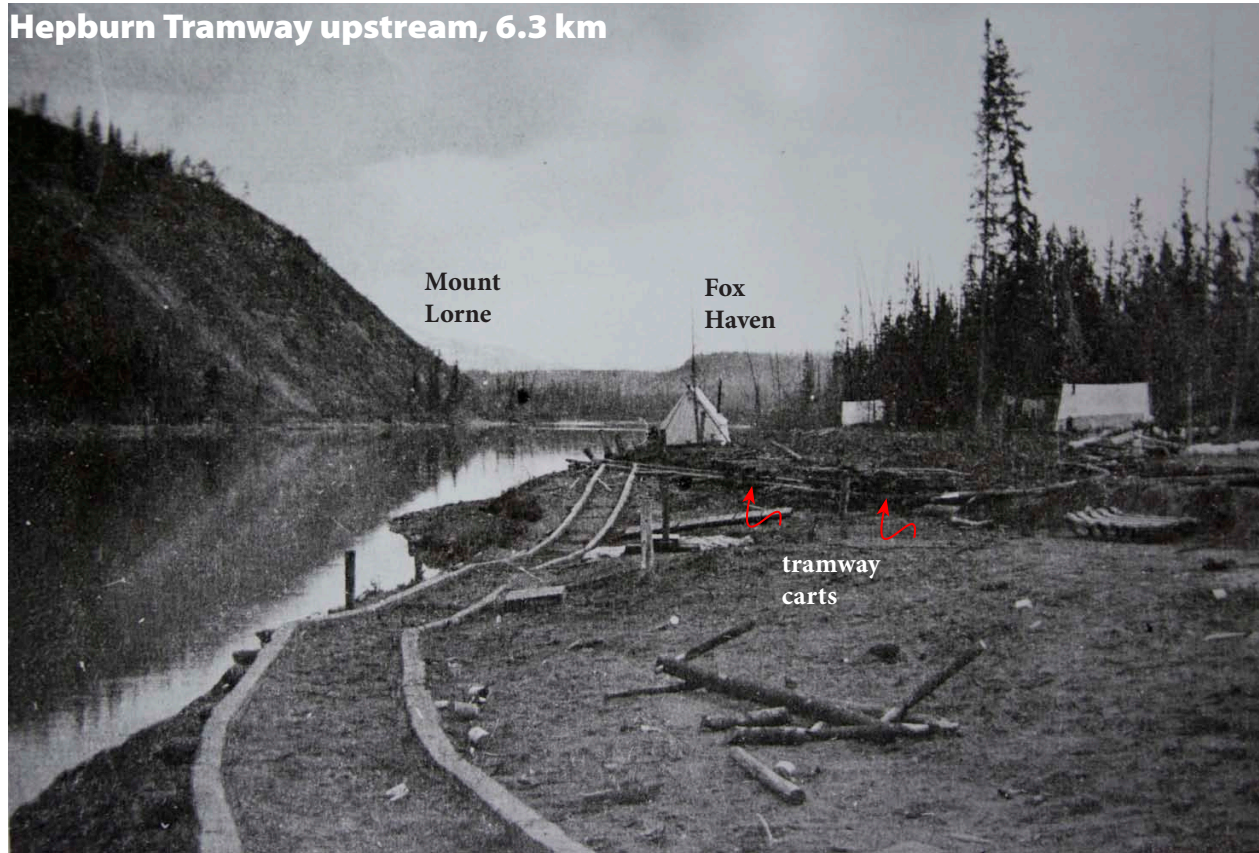


Hepburn Tramway upstream, 6.3 km



This loop walk (see map on reverse) follows the historic Hepburn Tramway as it comes into Miles Canyon. The loop has gradual climbs and descents, surprising considering the height above the river. This will be a popular walk once the section of tramway closest to Miles Canyon is repaired.

You'll walk a pristine section of the goldrush-era Hepburn Tramway; follow a route likely used by First Nations; pass stretches of 1899 telegraph line; have neat views overlooking the basalt walls at the start of Miles Canyon with Flat and Pilot mountains as a backdrop; look across at Canyon City and the Macauley Tramway; pass artifacts from when American Laundry was the largest camp on the wartime Alaska Highway building project; walk along the decommissioned oil pipeline route. You even cross the 135° meridian a few times.

Left: Upstream terminus of Hepburn Tramway at today's American Laundry site, Mount Lorne in back; tram cart(s) are visible. Yukon Archives. J.E. Beatty fonds, 82/390, #4

Right, t: Miles Canyon at low water, spring 1899; red arrows show tramway still there today. Yukon Archives, Emil Forrest fonds (80/60) #7

Right, b: Miles Canyon road and tramway. Yukon Archives. E.J. Hamacher fonds (Margaret and Rolf Hougen collection), 2002/118 #957

Trailhead: Park at the Miles Canyon parking lot.

Or, park at the Chadburn Lake Road Ski Trails parking lot and walk 1.2 km, as per orange dotted line on map.

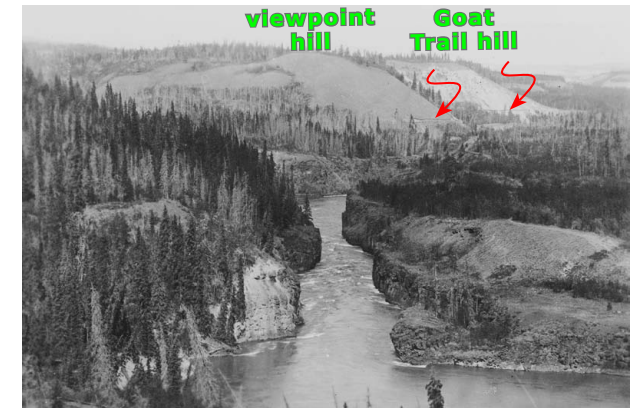
Or park at the foot of the American Laundry Road, and start hike at #7 on the map.

Or, in the winter when the Miles Canyon Road gates are closed, park at the gate on the highway. Follow the orange dotted line 500 m to #2 on the map.



Historic Walk: Whitehorse has the opportunity to create an official Historic Walk based on the Hepburn Tramway. The upstream terminus, at the foot of today's American Laundry Road, is shown on the photo (left). The water level would have been much lower in the pre-dam era, but still you can feel the magic in the site.

The first third of the original tramway is walked in this hike. It needs trail help but generally, it's in great shape.



The second third goes from Miles Canyon to Cora Grant's cabin at Schwatka Lake. Much of this section exists but needs to be made safer, more inviting, especially along the Goat Trail.



The last third, from Cora's cabin to Robert Service Campground is mostly under today's Miles Canyon Road, under Schwatka Lake or under the dam. This section presents an opportunity to build a promenade along Schwatka Lake, starting from the campground.

Hepburn Tramway, upstream, 6.3 km

1: The trail starts just before the big rocks on the bend going down to the parking lot (by summer outhouses!) Take the trail going immediately uphill on your right. The overgrown Hepburn Tramway is just below. Follow the trail up the slope and through the woods.

2: Turn left when the trail intersects the original 1899 railway bed. Shortly, you will be looking out over the canyon, Schwatka Lake and Grey Mountain. Earlier industrial activity here caused dirt to overflow the tramway on the slope below (see lower inset map). There's a proposal to create a quarry in the area on your right!!

3: Follow the trail branching off to the left for about 500 m, ignoring side trails.

4: At the junction with the Hepburn Tramway, cross over and follow the Escarpment Trail. After about 600 m, there's a large viewpoint looking over the canyon with a dirt road going back away from the edge.

5: As you start down the dirt road, immediately take the small trail that goes off to the left. The trail descends gently along the escarpment edge high above the river, with views of Canyon City and the high escarpment on the opposite side.

Pieces of the 1899 telegraph wire (pink dotted line on map) can sometimes be seen alongside the trail, on the ground or in the trees.

6: After about 1.2 km, the trail is just below the American Laundry Road. *Option: If it's wet or you want to avoid bushwalking, climb up and walk down the road. Brushing would make this piece of trail much nicer!* Otherwise, follow the trail until you come to the large clearing at the river.

7: Wander and explore the remains of various structures; Basalt Creek is at the far end of the open area. The photo on the reverse shows the start of the

tramway at this spot. Then return to the road, walking about 200 m back up until a small side road on your left.

8: The tramway is in the bushes here. It has an obvious raised bed with a ditch alongside where they took the dirt for the raised bed. Follow it, crossing back over the American Laundry Road to continue on the tramway. Watch for old squared rail timbers on the edges of the bed. The old burnt stumps are from a pre-goldrush fire.

(4): After about 1.7 km, the Escarpment Trail appears on the right. The tramway continues down along the escarpment edge beside a steep slope.

9: Option: (dashed yellow line) After 300 m, take the trail on the right, rough from dirt bike use. Follow the left fork down to the river, then downstream back to the trailhead.

10: Trail reconstruction is clearly needed! After about 150 m, the trail starts to narrow and then temporarily disappear. This is from the industrial activity at the top of the slope above. Walking poles are nice in this part of the tramway! Follow the trail off the tramway and through the woods to a dirt track.

Option: Turn right down to the river, and follow the track (dashed yellow line) downstream back to the trailhead.

To get back the original tramway, turn left and follow the dirt track, basically paralleling the covered-over tramway. After 125 m, access the flagged tramway on your left. Follow it around to the trailhead at the canyon. Near the end you need to scramble around a few large trees that have grown up in the middle of the tramway.



Inset: Hepburn Tramway (red arrow) descending from escarpment ~1900. Yukon Archives, Eric Hegg fonds, #2582