

FARMLIVING

DOCUMENTARY CAPTURED SPIRIT OF UNIQUE CO-OP

As part of our series commemorating *The Western Producer's* 100th anniversary, this month we look at a National Film Board documentary about the Churchill Park Greenhouse Co-op in Moose Jaw, Sask. | **Page 20**



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Golden is British Columbia's outdoor adventure centre

TALES FROM THE ROAD



ARLENE & ROBIN KARPAN

Golden, B.C., is the only town in the world to be within a two-hour drive of six national parks — Glacier, Mount Revelstoke, Yoho, Kootenay, Banff, and Jasper.

Add a few nearby provincial parks, wildlife areas, plus attractions in and around town, and it's easy to see why Golden has become a popular destination.

The town of 4,000 lies along the Trans-Canada Highway, close to the border with Alberta. Located at the confluence of the Columbia and Kicking Horse rivers, and surrounded by soaring mountain peaks, Golden is a mecca for outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, canoeing, whitewater rafting, fishing, wildlife viewing, skiing, and mountain climbing.

A great place to start is the river walk along the banks of the Kicking Horse River beside the compact downtown where sidewalk restaurants look over the water. A highlight is the Kicking Horse River Pedestrian Bridge, which is as much a work of art as it is functional. At 46 metres (151 feet) across, it's the longest freestanding timber frame bridge in Canada.

To get serious about bridges, head to the Golden Skybridge on the outskirts of town. Opened in 2021, it is home to Canada's highest and second-highest suspension bridges, the perfect place to find out if you have a fear of heights. Halfway across the 150-metre-long upper bridge, you look 130 metres, or 426 feet, straight down into an expansive canyon where a 200-foot waterfall far below looks like a tiny trickle. The lower bridge is 80 metres high. You can do a loop walk taking in both bridges.

The Skybridge is also an adventure park with several adrenaline-pumping activities if peering into an abyss from a swinging bridge isn't exciting enough. You can soar across the canyon on a 300-metre-long zipline. Or take in the Railrider Mountain Coaster, which twists along a kilometre-long track down the mountain slope. It's somewhat like a roller coaster except that each passenger has a car and you can control the speed as you race down the rails.

The craziest option, but one that we didn't try, is the Giant Canyon Swing where visitors are fitted with a harness and then free-fall on the end of a cable that swings above the canyon.

The nearby Kicking Horse Mountain Resort is the main ski area in winter, while at other times, visitors



The Kicking Horse Pedestrian Bridge in Golden, B.C., is as much a work of art as it is a functional bridge. | ROBIN AND ARLENE KARPAN PHOTOS



ABOVE: The Golden Skybridge on the outskirts of town is home to Canada's highest and second-highest suspension bridges.

LEFT: Bear Creek Falls is located in Glacier National Park.

take the gondola to go hiking high in the mountains. It is also home to a 20-acre Grizzly Bear Refuge where Boo, the area's most famous bear, resides.

Boo and his brother Cari were born in the wild in British Columbia's Cariboo Mountains but were orphaned at a few months old when a poacher shot their mother. Cubs that young can't survive on their own and are usually euthanized. But these two were given a new lease on life when the refuge was built specifically for them so researchers could study grizzly bear behaviour. Cari died within the first year but Boo is now 20 years old.

Cat Cowan, refuge manager, leads visitors on tours that highlight everything you could hope to know about grizzly bears. It's the closest we can get to one of these huge bears outside a zoo.

Golden's biggest draw is its proximity to so many parks in every direction. Yoho National Park is only around 50 km to the east along the Trans-Canada, and Lake Louise about 30 km farther. From there, it's a short drive to Banff, the Icefields Parkway, and the northern entrance to Kootenay National Park.

Radium Hot Springs and the southern entrance to Kootenay Park are slightly more than 100 km south along Highway 95, which fol-

lows the Columbia River. Along the way, we pass the wildlife-rich Columbia River Wetlands, considered one of the largest undisturbed wetland ecosystems in North America. An odd roadside attraction nearby is the World's Largest Paddle, recognized as such by Guinness World Records. Built entirely of wood, it measures 18.5 metres long.

Heading west from Golden, it's about 78 km to Glacier National Park, with its intensely green old-growth rainforest, and historic Rogers Pass, which played an important role in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway and later the Trans-Canada Highway.

The biggest news is the imminent completion of the rebuild of the Trans-Canada Highway through Kicking Horse Canyon. The stretch just east of Golden is the most rugged section of the highway — great for scenery but challenging for roads. Construction of the modern four-lane thoroughfare between Golden and Yoho has been ongoing for years, with plenty of disruptions, closures and long detours. By November it will be finished, making it a lot easier and safer to access this region.

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