



PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL ROSE-LEE (LEFT) AND CHRIS CHRISTIE (RIGHT)

GETTING TO THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

BY KIM VANLOCHEM

If you are planning to explore Pemberton's trails, leave your headphones at home. Aside from the song of a few birds and the crunch of leaves under your feet, you will find stillness. It's the type of "middle of nowhere" experience that money can't buy.

"The trails in Pemberton offer a remote feeling you don't find on Whistler's hiking trails," said Andrea Devries of the Whistler Alpine Guides Bureau. "You simply don't see civilization."

Whether you hike, bike, ski, or ride horseback, Pemberton's trails have a way of transporting you into the heart of nature. It's this feeling of remoteness that attracts visitors from around the world and one of the reasons the Whistler Alpine Guides Bureau regularly offers trips into the surrounding backcountry.

You don't have to be an expert to explore some of Pemberton's world-class trails. The Pemberton Valley Trail Association (PVTA) Recreational Trail Map marks the routes of 65 popular trails within a few kilometres of the Village of Pemberton. The map is available at the Pemberton Bike Co., and costs \$10.

According to the map, there are 22 horseback riding trails, 42 hiking/walking routes and 63 bike trails in the vicinity. The map also

denotes the overall ease of difficulty of each trail.

Pemberton's most notable routes include Nairn Falls and the trail to Upper Joffre Lake.

The trail to Nairn Falls is a brisk three-kilometre round-trip route. The Provincial Park protects a Lil'wat Nation spiritual site and serves as a dramatic example of the erosive power of water.

The trail to Upper Joffre Lake requires a bit more effort, but the 11-km round trip route leads to crystal clear lakes and glacier views. Located at the northern tip of the Sea to Sky corridor, Joffre Lakes Provincial Park is often dubbed the Rockies of the West Coast.

The park features hiking, camping, mountaineering, wildlife viewing and fishing. The Lower Joffre Lake route is just a few minutes walk while the hike to Middle Joffre Lake is four km. An additional 1.5 km takes you to Upper Joffre Lake. Expect to scramble, but the reward is great.

"Joffre Lakes is one of our favourite trips. People can't believe how turquoise the water is and how every picture they take looks like a postcard. It's stunning," said Devries. "It's just one of many different trails in the Pemberton area that are worth checking out."