

Tepee Falls Hiking Trail (#11)

The Tepee Falls trail is an easy hike through spruce and aspen forests to a dramatic waterfall that leaps over a sandstone lip into a boulder-strewn bowl. Views of the Murray River valley are expansive.

Time/Distance: 2-3 hours/6 km return
Rating: Easy ●

Directions to the Trailhead

The trailhead is on Hwy 52 on the way to Dawson Creek. Head towards Dawson Creek and watch for the signposted parking area 35 km from Tumbler Ridge, on your right. A sign and map are at the trailhead. The trailhead is 5 km north of the trailhead for the Murray Canyon Overlook trail, a very worthwhile hike that has its own interpretive brochure. Many people make a day of it by hiking both trails. If you are coming from Dawson Creek, the Tepee trailhead is 62 km from the junction of Hwy 52 with Highway 97 to Chetwynd.

Trail Directions

The start of the trail is across the highway. Tepee Creek itself is 200 m south along the highway, and is very placid compared to the falls. The first section of trail passes through a patch of forest that was logged in 2002. After this replanted cutblock the trail heads into the forest, crossing a few small creeks on boardwalks. The trail roughly parallels Tepee Creek. The trail passes through another area that was selectively logged in 2014, with consultation with the WNMS.

After 2.5 km a signed junction is reached, with a map indicating that the trail loops ahead. Take the left fork at this junction, which leads down to a viewing site. A branch trail leads left to creek level above a smaller waterfall. The main falls are just over 100 m downstream, and the trail continues above a steep drop, so use caution. It passes under a large fallen spruce tree, then climbs to a

tongue of land above the falls. Do not approach this; instead take the staircase to a safer viewpoint which also has a commanding view of the canyon below. This staircase can be slippery and muddy when wet.

There are huge unfenced dropoffs here - do not approach the edge and supervise children and pets very closely.

The first view of the 15 metre high falls is dramatic, as the creek takes a flying leap off the cliff, falling into a chaotic jumble of boulders and sandstone blocks that have fallen off as the creek has eroded back. These rocks are about 90 million years old, and form a distinctive part of the Cardium Formation from the Upper Cretaceous Period.

Views of the Murray River valley open up here as well. Tepee Creek is one of many tributaries of the Murray River that drop into the valley with waterfalls.

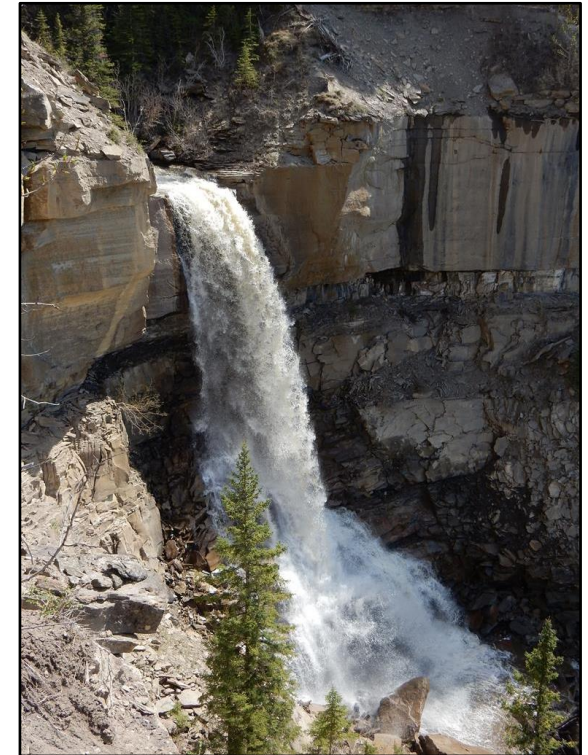
The trail continues along the escarpment, with the falls over your left shoulder. It ends at the final view site on a point overlooking the Murray River. Animal paths lead down the steep slopes below. For those who don't mind losing elevation and then gaining it, this offers a spectacular view of the falls and the boulder filled rapids below it. The rock layers lower in the valley are much more thinly bedded, with alternating layers of sandstone and shale.

Keep an eye out for mountain goats on the black shale cliffs of the lower valley. These animals, seemingly out of place in a canyon some 40 km from the nearest alpine mountains, live wherever they can find steep terrain to avoid their predators.

Returning from the final viewpoint, keep left to complete the loop. This brings you back to the signposted junction, where you can return to the start along the main trail.

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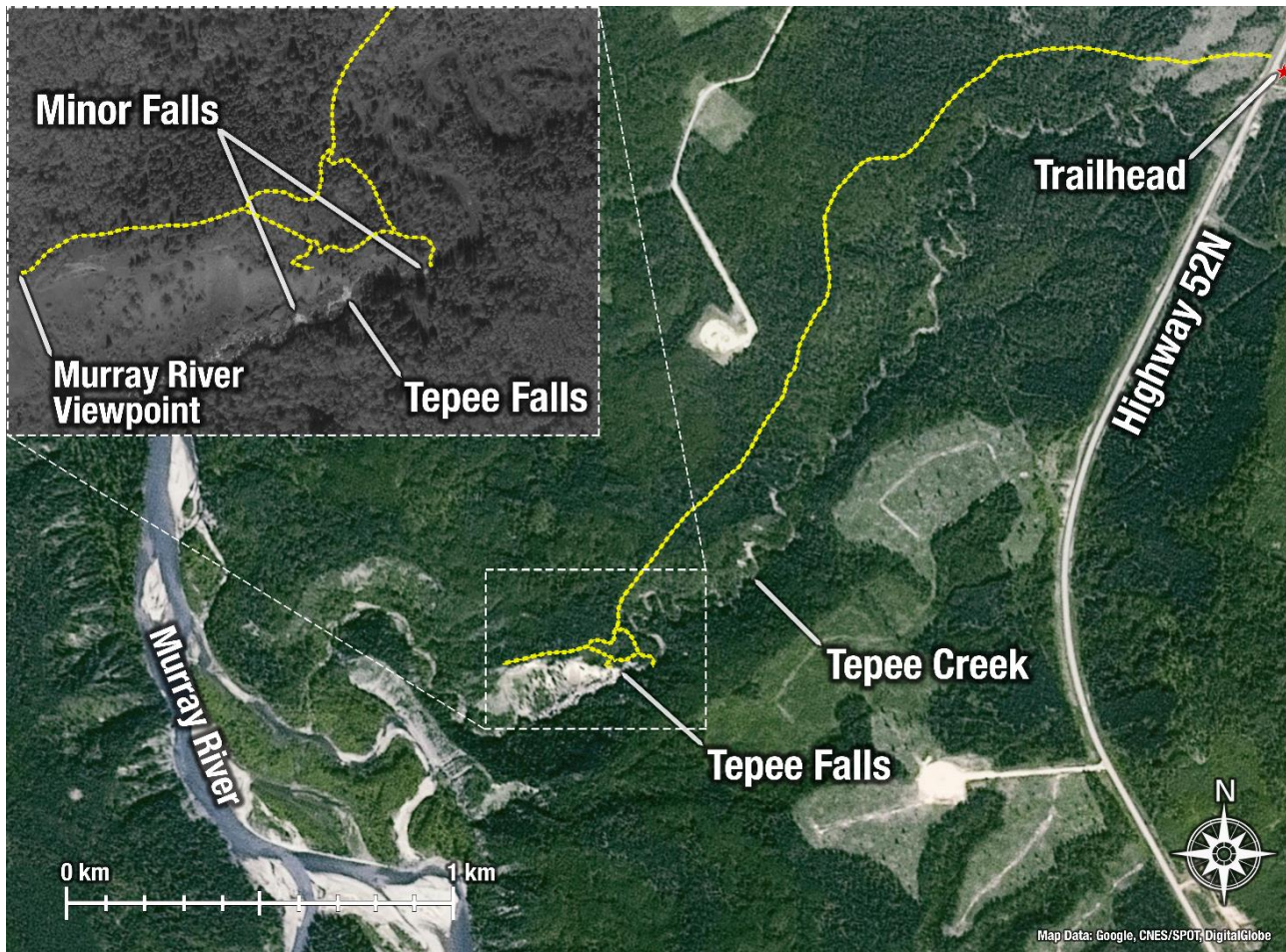
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Rating: Easy ●

Time: 2 - 3 hours





Tepee Falls Hiking Trail

- Use extreme caution near cliff edges
- This route is in bear country; travel in groups and make noise
- Please pack out what you packed in



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Tourism website: www.TumblerRidge.ca

Photo Credit: Kevin Sharman

Map: Steven Tory



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