

OKANAGAN VALLEY MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

1) Myra-Bellvue Park (Crawford)

Myra-Bellvue Provincial Park is located at the end of Stewart Road in the upper Mission area of Kelowna (right beside Crawford Estates). Drive south up Benvolin Road in Kelowna and continue up the mountain staying left after the bridge over Mission Creek. At the four way stop drive straight through to the end and park in the upper parking area.

Myra-Bellvue is a treasure trove of trails with riding suitable for all levels. By far the most extensive network in the area, the main double track heads up the mountain right off of the parking lot and trails branch out in all directions. For those looking to climb up single track just turn onto the trail beside the first cattle guard. Passing areas such as Teddy Bear Junction and Flamingo Flats you will see various trails dropping in heading back down towards the parking area. Some trails are very technical so ride within your skill set. The park offers endless riding and amazing views of Kelowna, the Westside and Lake Okanagan. The area was burnt by the 2003 fire so the scenery is rather strange in areas. Be on the lookout for fallen trees across the trails.

The entire trail network is mapped. The Friends of The South Slopes (FOSS) worked very hard to produce a fully GPSed detailed trail map of the park. Pick a map up at your local bike shop and ask for advice of what trails to ride for your personal riding ability. Enjoy!

2) Knox Mountain Park

Located at the end of Ellis St. just off on downtown Kelowna.

Knox Mountain Park can be ridden by driving to the first or second lookout up the paved access road or by climbing up the road itself. From the first lookout the main trail heads up beside the white access gate and meanders up to the top lookout. From the top parking area trails head off up to the lookout and off the back of the park behind the pavilion. These trails descend down into the Paul's Tomb area of the park at lake level. These are also walking trails so be aware of other trail users and always be courteous. There are some very technical trails off of this side as well so ride within your limits. They are the narrower single track trails that descend off of the hill above the Pavilion area. The trail off the front of the mountain starts at the top lookout.

The main descent (also the climb I first mentioned from the first lookout) is a great, smooth, flowing trail and is able to be ridden by intermediate riders quite easily. The top section of the mountain has single track loops all over, many in the area by the kid's playground area. Spend some time up top exploring the various trails that shoot off of the roadway on both sides.

You can complete a full loop, climb and descent down the main front trail in about an hour and half at a moderate pace. This is a great loop right close to town that rewards you with amazing views of Kelowna and North up Lake Okanagan. No maps exist for these trails, but the main loop is very easy to locate.

3) Glenmore Highlands

The highland trails trailhead is located at the end of Granger road in Kelowna. Turn right off Clifton Road about two thirds of the way up. Park your car by the gate. The trails head off to the left just past the gate. The trails are also accessible off of Union Road in the Wilden development.

This trail network consists of flowing singletrack and wide double track paralleling Glenmore Road up on the ridge. Many of the trails branch out off of a central double track road. The trails are beginner to intermediate level with some difficult climbs on a few trails. This is one of the least technical trail networks around the city and is great for newer riders as none of the trails are overly rocky, steep or long.

You can ride the distance from Granger road to Union road and back in about an hour and fifteen minutes at a leisurely pace. No trail maps exist for this network, but navigation is made easy as Glenmore is visible below the ridge from many locations. Just stay of the upper trails as many off shoot trails decent into Glenmore.

4) SilverStar Mountain Resort

Located above Vernon at the top of Silverstar Road, Silverstar is a mountain biking paradise.

With a full service Village with open restaurants, stores and a bike shop SilverStar turns a day of riding into a one day vacation. All trails are lift access so just line up, slide your bike onto the trays and enjoy the amazing scenery as you cruise to the top. Once at the summit have a look at the large trail map and pick a run that suits your riding ability. Remember, a mellow warm up run is always a great idea. With trails like SuperStar, RockStar and World Cup there are runs for all riding levels. All of trails on the mountain do require that you have a basic ability to control your mountain bike effectively. For those new riders out there that wish to gain some insight into the skills required to boost your riding ability just sign up for a session with the mountain bike school! There are approximately twenty different trails at SilverStar to master so getting bored is out of the question. Top trail pick for newer to intermediate riders: SuperStar its fast, flowing and smooth turns with optional small in medium size jumps to learn on.

The entire trail network is mapped so drop by your local bike shop to get a map and a day pass then head up for a day of riding like no other.

5) Rose Valley Reservoir Trails

Located on Kelowna's Westside, once over the bridge turn right at ? road and continue up the hill to the public school on the left. Park on the street and ride in across the school ground to the trails directly behind the yard. Trail branch off in both directions from here. To the left the trails head off into various loops around the slope back down towards the road. To the right the main trail climbs up steep terrain until it tops out by the end of the street you have parked on (another optional parking area for those wishing to miss the hard climb). The trail then turns left and descends down into Rose Valley.

From the bottom the trail winds around the Reservoir to the right on flowing, fun cross country singletrack. Once around the other side of the reservoir the trail gets quite a bit more technical as it runs off camber along the band of the lake. The loop ends at the Rose Valley Dam and heads back out to the road you came in on where you must climb back up to your vehicle. This ride rewards you with amazing scenery and tranquility.

You truly feel like you are in the middle of nowhere in your own little valley. For those interested in a shorter version of this ride, just ride the first section around the lake and then turn around and come back the same way you entered. The entire loop takes about an hour and fifteen minutes and is shorter if you choose to come back the way you entered. The area also makes for a great family hike with great scenery and terrain.

Rose Valley is a mapped trail. Drop by your local bike shop to pick up a "Trails of the Westside" map and ask for detailed directions.

6) Smith Creek (The Holy Pail)

Smith Creek is an area of Westbank with a great loop located off Old Okanagan Highway and
Turn right at onto old Okanagan Highway at the

This loop is one of the few that offer a great meandering single track climb instead of a fire road ascent. The trail snakes its way up the mountain on smooth, flowing single-track with tight technical turns. Towards the top of the climb the trail gets steeper and a little more difficult to climb, but by this point you are nearly up. Once at the top drop your saddle and drop in. The trail is loose in mid summer so watch your speed. On the descent you will be rewarded with small, flowing jumps and technical rocky roll-downs. The trail is very technical in places but most intermediate to advanced riders will find it very rideable and super fun. Part way down the descent is a great cliff line with a beautiful view of the canyon below and mountain ridge across from it. This entire loop takes about two hours to ride and most likely a little longer for intermediate riders. One of the areas best cross country rides by far.

Trail maps for the area are available at all the local bike shops in Kelowna and Westbank. Just ask for the "Trails of the Westside" map.

7) McDougall Rim (Byland's Loop)

McDougall Rim trail is located on Kelowna's Westside. From town drive across the bridge and turn left off Byland's Road just before Westbank. Follow the paved road out then continue along as it turns to gravel. You will pass a small community area as the road narrows (drive slowly through this area in respect of the homeowners as they have pets and children). When the road passes the last home you will see a parking area on the right. The ride begins by climbing up the fire road from this point.

McDougall Rim Trail is the ultimate cross country loop. Regarded as the benchmark of what makes a strong, skilled cross country rider. The trail begins by climbing a long, often disheartening fire road. Pay close attention to your map and advice you have been given about what turns to avoid. It is easy to get off onto the wrong road on this ride! The climb on this section takes about 40 minutes at an average pace. Toward the top the second section of fire road narrows and steepens before you turn right onto the singletrack portion of the climb. Through this section you will be rewarded with great technical singletrack like none other in the valley. You will also be tested to your limits as you have now climbed for an hour and continue to do so up steep short single-track sections before reaching the 'true' top of the trail. It's now time to drop the seat a little and enjoy! This descent is a masterpiece with perfect turns, super fast sections to open it up on and technical log roll-overs and loose chutes. On the way down you will pass at least three different look out points that offer the

best view of Kelowna and Lake Okanagan you will find. You can even glimpse the Monashee Mountains from the top look out on clear days. Part way down you will roll through some double track before turning left back onto the single track into the bottom section. This section requires a great deal of control as it gets very rocky and loose the further down you descend. This section will reward skilled riders with rugged, technical rock sections and fast loose turns before dumping you out right at your car! This trail really has it all. The entire loop can be ridden in about two and quarter to three hours. Bring a snack, spare tube and a riding partner for this one.

The 'Trails of the Westside' map details this one well, but it is advisable to ask for specific tips about the exact route to follow. Riding with someone who has been on the loop before will ensure you don't miss any of the turn offs.

8) Gillard

Gillard forestry service road is located on the south slopes of Kelowna. Drive south up Lakeshore road until you see a power line (and road) heading straight up the mountain. Turn onto this road and follow it up to the first big gravel switch back. Park your vehicle here as this ride is a shuttle and requires two vehicles, preferably trucks as the road to the top is very rough. At the top (the Kettle Valley Rail Bed KVR) you can park and ride in left or right and drop in on any number of great descents.

The now infamous Gillard Trails started off as only two or three technical descents and have now become a major trail network consisting of about twelve downhill trails ranging from technical intermediate trails to very advanced freeride trails. Many of these trails consist of rocky technical terrain and built up wooden stunts such as bridges, drops and transitioned technical jumps. After the fire of 2003 destroyed some of the best trails in the network builders have been hard at work re-inventing the network. The result is a network of shuttle trails matched by none that attract riders from all over the northwest and even from across Canada. All of these trails are meant to be ridden on downhill specific bikes and riders must wear full face helmets, and full armor. With advanced trails like 'Kerplop', 'Liquorsore', 'Hucking grass hole' and 'Boss Hog' even the best riders will find some stunts that may make them think twice. For riders who are new to free riding try the trails off to the left at the top. With about five trails off of this area (and great views of Bellvue Canyon) there are enough new challenging stunts and trail sections to keep you occupied for a whole summer and then some. These trails offer tamer versions of the jumps and stunts found on the trails on the other side of the road. They have more flow to them as well. With the ability to combine different trails on the way down the fun is endless. The entire descent can take anywhere from 30 minutes (pinning it) to about two hours depending on your route and skill level.

Get some advice on what run will suit your skill level while you are at one of the local bike shops picking up a Gillard Trail Map. Remember, Downhill bikes, safety gear and a rugged vehicle is required.

9) Power's Creek/Builders Only

Power's is located near the top of Glenrosa road (on the way up to Crystal Mountain Ski resort). Turn right onto Glenrosa road just outside of Westbank. This is a shuttle run so you will have to leave a vehicle at the big white church on the left side of Glenrosa Rd. Drive up from here until you reach a right hand turn onto a

gravel road near the top. About two kilometers down the road you will come to a small pull off (tough to find so pay attention!) Park here and the trail drops in right beside you.

Like the Gillard trails, Power's Creek is a downhill, technical trail that requires that you be at least an intermediate rider and be properly equipped with a suitable full suspension bike and safety gear. Also like Gillard, this trail has a bit of everything, wide open fast sections with tight turns, steep loose nerve racking chutes, wooden drops and gap jumps and rocky rollovers. Originally built about eight years ago, it has gone through a makeover (about two years ago) that saw the addition of some larger road gap jumps and wall ride sections. This trail is dry and loose in mid summer so it can be very challenging. Like any trail with wooden stunts, look before you leap as things are not always as you may think and occasionally there are broken stunts that could cause injury. Take your time and get to learn the trail before sending it! The trail ends at the subdivision of Glenrosa on a Cul de Sac. Ride straight out from here and you will run right into Glenrosa Road and the white church. Drive back to the top to retrieve your vehicle and ride it again if you think you can! Builders Only is a trail that parallels Power's Creek trail along the same fall line. Like Powers it is full of wooden stunts, but offers much tamer versions for newer riders and cuts out some of the traversing and steep chutes that the Power's trail is known for. It drops in along the same road side not quite a kilometer off of the main paved road. It too ends at the Cul de Sac.

Power's Creek Trail is fully mapped so drop by your local shop to pick up a copy. It is on the same sheet as the Gillard network map.

10) Mission Greenway

Beginner to Intermediate

(Great family ride right in town for less experienced riders)

The Greenway runs along Mission Creek in Kelowna from Okanagan Lake all the way up into Myra Canyon to the Gallagher's Canyon Golf area. Riding the section from the Mission Creek Park entrance up to the canyon is the most scenic route. Park at the Mission Creek Park entrance at Springfield road between Dilworth Drive and Leckie Rd. Ride onto the greenway path just in past the parking area and head to the left. You will have to bypass one block of housing by coming off the greenway onto a side street then cutting back into the greenway right after. This section is almost immediately at the beginning of the path, but there are no further interruptions from this point on.

This section of the Greenway starts out as a wide pathway flowing along the creek side and occasionally narrows into singletrack as it winds its way along the creek up into Myra Canyon. Riders will enjoy the great scenery including Mission Creek, the Myra Canyon walls, old growth trees (further up the canyon) and views of layer cake mountain. The trail is an easy ride in most areas with some steeper climbs once you are up into the Gallagher's area of the canyon. This section of the trail is new just this past year so it is very well built and follows a great route with wooden bridges crossing Mission creek from side to side throughout the ride. The whole section can be ridden in about an hour and half to two hours depending on your desired pace. This is a great family ride or a great ride to do alone for some quality, peaceful time away.

The Mission Creek Park and the entire Greenway trail is mapped on map boards in the park entrance and all along the trail as well. Kilometer markers can be found all along the trail so you can gauge how far you have come and how far it is to get back to your vehicle. Just drop by the park entrance and have a look.

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