



Banff National Park of Canada



ON - THE - GROUND @ LAKE LOUISE Group Access in the Moraine Lake Area

Where the scenery inspires and the land sustains

Group Access legally requires people entering the Moraine Lake backcountry area to travel in a tight group of four or more. It can come into effect at any time when grizzly bears are remaining in the area to forage on bear foods and not simply travelling through.

Group Access applies to the following areas:

Consolation Lakes, Larch Valley, Sentinel Pass, Wasatch Pass, Eiffel Lake, east Wenkchemna Pass, Sheol and Paradise Valleys. (see map, over)

The Lakeshore and Rockpile trails at Moraine Lake do not fall under Group Access.



A tight group of hikers in Larch Valley

Climbers or scramblers must be in a group of four or more when travelling through Group Access areas to and from technical routes. Climbs not affected by Group Access are:

- Tower of Babel via the Rockpile trail
- Neil Colgan Hut and surrounding peaks via the Lakeshore trail and connector trail to the Perren or Schiesser routes, and
- Peaks between Mt. Babel and Wenkchemna Pass that are approached via the Lakeshore trail and peaks further west via the Wenkchemna Moraine/ Glacier.

Cyclists, Group Access does not affect the Moraine Lake Highline trail. A section of trail near Moraine Lake is closed mid to late summer when fruit bearing shrubs, such as buffaloberry (Shepherdia), ripen. Riders can get to the Moraine Lake road via a short connector trail.

Please bike in a bear aware manner at all times:

- Slow down, stay alert and scan ahead.
- Yell to let bears know you are approaching.

Paradise Valley Campground is closed under Group Access. Horse users must travel with two or more riders in Paradise Valley under Group Access.



A sow grizzly and her two cubs travel the Eiffel Lake trail

PLAN AHEAD ...

Trail reports: www.pc.gc.ca/banff,
403.762.1550 or 403.522.3833



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Why Group Access

A number of grizzly bears use habitat in the Moraine Lake area. Following several serious human-bear encounters, Area Closures lasting from five to ten weeks were required in 1996, 1997 and 1998. Group Access was piloted in 1999 to allow people to use the area, but also reduce encounters between people and bears. Initially, a group size of six or more was chosen based on bear incident data to achieve a high level of human safety.

After a review of Group Access protocols in the mountain national parks, and with input from bear expert Dr. Stephen Herrero, a decision to change to a tight group of four or more was made for 2007.

Why change to a group of four?

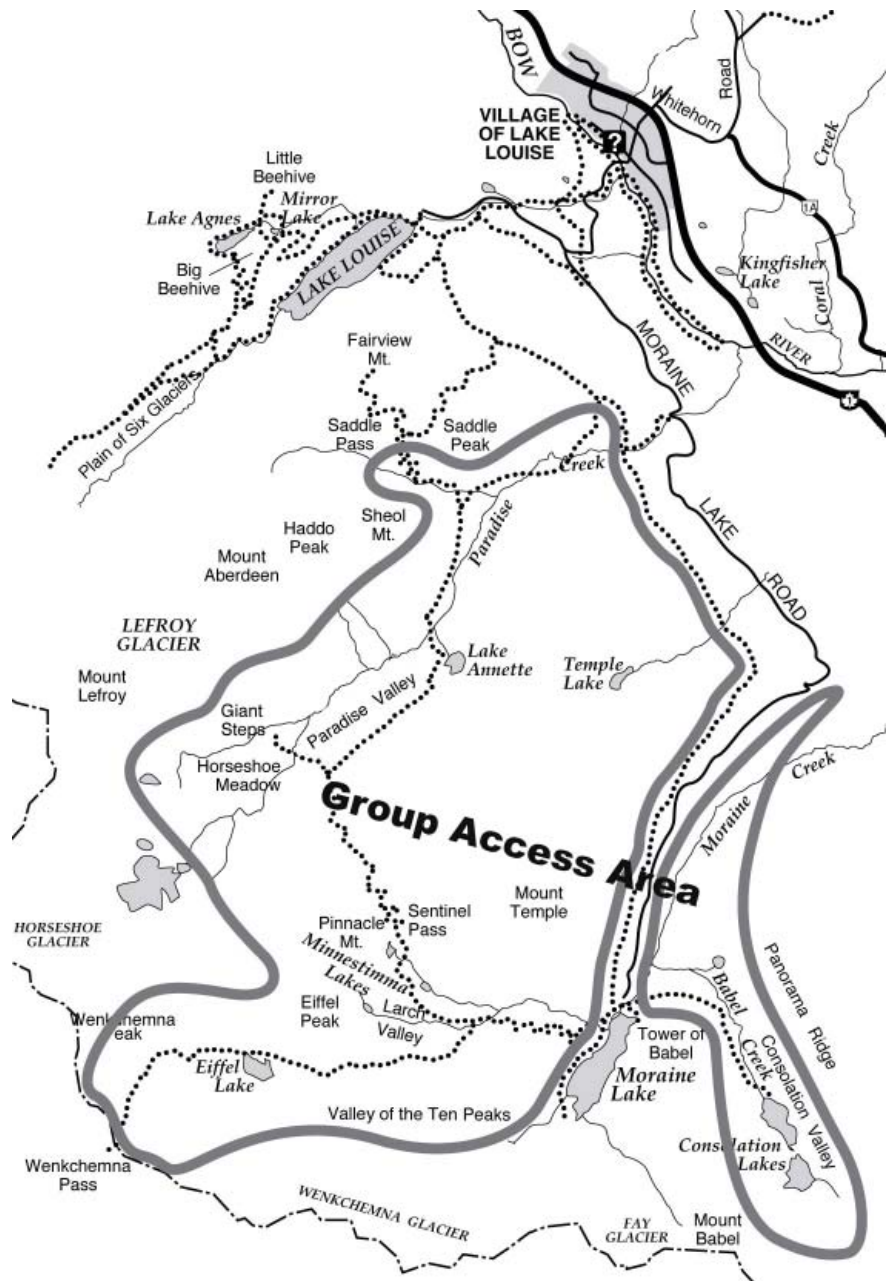
Research indicates larger groups are less likely to be attacked by a grizzly bear. When people hike in a tight group of four or more using standard bear safety precautions, acceptable human safety is achieved. *A tight group means that the person in the front must be able to comfortably speak with the person at the back at all times.*

Is Group Access working?

The number of aggressive bear encounters and the need to close this area to protect people and bears has decreased since Group Access has been used.

On-the-ground @ Lake Louise

The Lake Louise area supports one of three concentrations of female grizzly bears in the park. Their survival is important to the health of the regional grizzly bear population. Group Access is one tool being used to improve conditions for people and wildlife as part of the Lake Louise Area Strategy under the park management plan.



Bear Safety Tips

Be sure to read *Bears and People: a guide to conservation and safety on the trail*, available at park information centres and www.pc.gc.ca/banff-bears

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Banff National Park

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