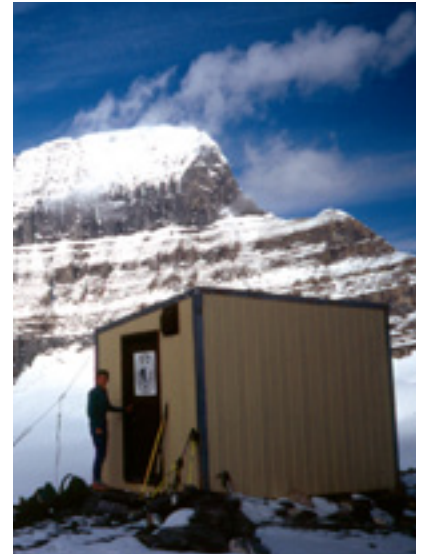




Lloyd MacKay Hut

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Lloyd MacKay Hut by Josée Larochelle

Booking, Payment and Cancellation Policy

View the Booking, Payment and Cancellation Policies at www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/reservations.html

Rates

Visit www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/rates.html for current hut and wilderness pass prices.

Getting There

The hut is located on the north ridge of what is referred to as Mount Little Alberta (unnamed on the maps, with its summit at 700920), 2.5 km east of Mount Alberta in the south end of Jasper National Park.

The following information should be used in conjunction with the correct topographic map (maps are listed below).

Summer

Trailhead location:	2.5 km north of the Icefields Info Centre on Hwy 93 N
Hiking distance:	
Elevation gain:	
Approximate time:	

Portering Services

Need help carrying your load? Check out our portering services!

Trailhead location

Woolley Shoulder Access: There is a pull-out on the east side of the Highway 93 North, 2.5km north of the Icefields Information Centre. Park your vehicle here; the rest if hoofing. Crossing the Sunwapta River is one of the least enjoyable parts of this journey: the river is wide, and the water is cold. Screaming cold. Footwear such as old runners or sandals and a pair of ski poles can make the crossing faster, and some kind of insulation such as wool or neoprene socks will save your feet from a great deal of suffering in the ice cold water.

After crossing the Sunwapta, follow a good trail close to Woolley Creek on the south side. The trail starts with a good uphill grunt, gaining 150 metres or so before it levels out. The trail through this section is very well defined, but may be difficult to locate. If you find you are bushwacking from the start, start again.

The route then follows cairns and less distinct trails for about 3 km, generally on the south side, and remains close to the creek. The trail rounds a corner to the right under the base of Mt. Cromwell (unmarked on 83C/6 summit 733908) continues through a grassy area and heads in a northwesterly direction toward Mts. Woolley and Diadem. The trail follows the creek closely until it reaches the base of Woolley and Diadem, identifiable by the bivi walls in a flat area. At this point there is no longer much in the way of trail in any kind; you are on your own to find the best route to up to Woolley Shoulder. You want to make what amounts to a big left turn under the east face of Woolley, gain the ridge of a moraine (or whatever line looks best to you) and head toward the now visible pass of Woolley Shoulder. The scree on the way up to the shoulder is repungnant and does not resemble fun in any way. Keep to the right at the top of the scree slope for the final approach to the shoulder.

From the shoulder, the hut is visible 1 km away on the end of the north ridge of Mt. Little Alberta (unnamed on 83C/6, summit at 701919), but it is the last thing that you are going to notice when you arrive here. The view from Woolley Shoulder, with North and South Twin and Mt. Alberta immediately in your face is renowned and unparalleled, and few mountaineers ever forget their first time seeing it.

To descend to the hut from the shoulder, it is necessary to cross at least a portion of the glacier which lies between. The distance to the hut is short, but it is necessary to take full glacier precautions for this crossing,

Lloyd MacKay Hut

and be familiar with crevasse rescue techniques. From the shoulder, either drop straight down toward the hut, or (recommended) traverse across the slope toward the south face of Mt. Woolley and contour back toward the hut.

What Is At the Hut

Summary

Heating:	None
Lighting:	White gas lanterns
Cooking:	White gas stove
Sleeping:	Dormitory style on thick foam mattresses
Capacity:	6 in the summer, 6 in the winter
Drinking water:	Glacial streams or snowmelt. Boil or filter all water!
Human Waste:	Outhouse 10 m south of the hut
Dishwater:	Porous scree slope
Garbage:	Pack it out!

The building and sleeping arrangements

The Lloyd MacKay is a very practical hut. It is not palatial on the scale of the Fairy Meadow Hut, nor is it large and functional for huge groups like the Bow or steeped in the grand tradition of the Abbot Pass Hut; it is a simple one room shed with a door, six bunks and a couple of windows. It is probably smaller than what your lawn mower lives in. However, it is the Mt. Alberta area, its views and (if you are lucky) the climbing that you will come here for. The area has some of the tallest precipices on the continent south of Baffin Island, enormous peaks and an absolutely amazing scope. The hut is a pure example of the humblest architecture of man juxtaposed against the grandest architecture in all of nature – the hut is modest, but it resides in one of the most inspiring and awesome places in the Rockies.

Capacity

The total capacity of the two huts is 6 people in the summer as well as in the winter.

Kitchen

The hut is equipped with the essentials, including a two-burner Coleman white gas stove, a small set of cooking pots and pans, and eating utensils for six people.

Lighting

A Coleman white gas lantern is provided for light.

Heat

The hut does not have a wood stove for heat, but it is small and well insulated and gets warm from the stove and lantern.

Tools

The hut has a good supply of tools including water buckets, axes, saws, shovels, etc.

Drinking Water

Drinking water is available from either small pro-glacier streams near the hut or from snowmelt. There is snow within a few metres of the hut on the glacier leading back toward Woolley Shoulder 12 months a year. It is recommended that all water be boiled or filtered before drinking.

Grey Water

There is no designated grey water site; however, the area around the hut is a porous scree field, and as the hut sees little traffic, dumping strained water into the scree adequately disperses it. Strained food scraps from the grey water should be packed out as garbage.

Human Waste

The outhouse is 10m to the south of the hut. Please do not dispose of any unnecessary waste into the outhouse.

Garbage

Burn all paper garbage and food scraps, and pack out all other garbage and unused food.

What you need to bring

- combination lock number for the hut door (call the ACC office to confirm before you go to the hut)
- sleeping bag
- toilet paper
- food for the length of your stay
- newspaper for lighting the fire
- matches
- first aid kit
- 9V battery for the smoke detector
- reservation form from the ACC (to show the custodian)
- Parks Canada overnight or annual wilderness pass (the former will be on your reservation form if you purchase it through the ACC).

Hut Rules

Here is a list of simple rules we ask that you follow in order to maximize everyone's enjoyment of the "hut experience".

While at the hut:

- No smoking.
- Dogs are not permitted in any ACC facility (with the exception of seeing eye dogs).
- Some Parks also outlaw dogs entirely; leashed or not. Check before you go!
- If you arrive at the hut before 2:00pm, put your belongings where they will not disturb the previous nights' occupants.
- Please be considerate of others; the hut should be quiet by 10 pm.
- Carry out all of your garbage.
- Do not do personal washing in cooking pots or nearby streams - use wash basins and slop pits.
- Fill stoves and lanterns outside the hut and leave extra fuel outside.
- Clean the stoves after using them.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Follow posted instructions for care and maintenance of toilet systems so that they function properly with minimum odor and environmental impact.

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When leaving a hut:

- If your belongings will be in the hut after 2:00pm, and you are not staying that night, be sure to pack everything up and leave it out of the way in a corner so the new guests can move in.
- Leave all tools inside the hut when not being used.
- Empty all water containers and slop buckets before leaving the hut.
- Take out all leftover food as food left in the hut encourages rodents. (Other people generally won't use it as they don't know how old it is.)
- Bring out damaged axes, lanterns or stoves and discharged fire extinguishers - advise the national office.
- Close & latch the outhouse door when leaving to keep out rodents & snow.
- Close/lock hut, replace shutters (if applicable), before leaving the hut.
- A nearly full outhouse, damage to hut & similar matters should be reported to the national office (you may call collect)

Please leave the hut in better condition than you found it. Thank you for your consideration in following these rules, and have a great time!

Things To Do Around the Hut

With the exception of a couple of attempts at climbing Mt. Alberta in the winter, this hut and the Mt. Alberta area get very little use outside of June to September. The climbing area is generally of a very high standard and quality, with routes which are long and typically very committing. The area is not recommended for beginning to intermediate climbers or those new to the area and its terrain. If you do have an opportunity to climb in the area, however, it will likely be a highly rewarding experience, and bagging a route on Mt. Alberta is typically a highlight of a mountaineer's career.

Mountaineering

There are three major lines on Mt. Alberta itself, as well as a very good route on Mt. Woolley, which are accessible from the hut. What the area lacks in diversity and number of climbs, it certainly makes up for in quality of line, history and boldness of the undertaking. All of the routes involve snow as well as intensive rock climbing, and are serious propositions in any condition.

The routes on Mt. Alberta include the standard Japanese Route, the North Ridge Route and the spectacular North Face Route, the latter being one of the most sought after difficult routes in North America. The south face of Mt. Woolley provides some interesting climbing at a lower level of commitment, good for a shorter day from the hut. More information on these routes can be found in Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies by Sean Dougherty.

History

Mount Alberta

Steep and imposing on all sides, Mt. Alberta, the sixth-highest peak in the Canadian Rockies, resisted several attempts and remained unclimbed until 1925. That year, a very strong team, guided by the great Conrad Kain, was turned back by poor weather conditions. Later that year a team of Japanese climbers and Swiss guides successfully climbed to the mountain's summit, effectively ending an era of mountaineering in North America. An ice axe was left on the summit by the Japanese, spawning the rumor of a silver ice axe, a gift from the Japanese Emperor. The axe was retrieved 23 years later during the second ascent of the mountain by an American party and, although made of ordinary wood and metal, remains one of the most important symbols of the advancement of mountaineering on the continent. The Japanese Route, certainly for reasons surrounding the historical significance of the first ascent rather than the quality of the rock or the climbing, is considered a classic climb of North America, and attracts climbers from across the continent and from overseas. The axe itself, sheared off low on the shaft where it was removed from the summit ice, resided for more than 35 years in, of all places, the American Alpine Club's office in Manhattan, N.Y. before those offices were moved to Golden, Colorado, where it remains today.

The Lloyd MacKay (Mount Alberta) Hut

“One could say a great deal about Lloyd’s climbing successes – his early days forging bold new routes on Yamnuska, his travels and exploitations in the Alps, and his pioneering new routes on the Canadian Rockies’ North Faces. But, although second to no one as a climber, his great strength lay in his personality. Anyone who ever climbed a mountain with Lloyd had a great time.”

Thus read the obituary for Lloyd MacKay, one of the greatest climbers of his generation, who died in 1976 at the age of 36. In his memory, his family donated funds to the Alpine Club of Canada for the construction of a high altitude shelter for mountaineers in a remote area of the Rocky Mountains.

The site chosen for the Lloyd MacKay Hut was near the Freshfield Glacier. The site was selected in 1976, but due to administrative delays with Banff Park, the hut was not built until 1984. A subsequent change in Parks philosophy, however, made preserving the Freshfield Glacier as an area without human presence a priority, and the hut was removed. At that time the ACC was very interested in developing the hut system on the Wapta Icefields and, in exchange for removing the MacKay Hut from the Freshfields, the new Balfour Hut was funded by Banff National Park. It was suggested that the new Balfour Hut bear Lloyd MacKay’s name, but the idea was rejected because it did not fit the family’s original request for a high altitude shelter for mountaineers; the Balfour Hut is more of a skiing hut than a climbing hut. In 1993 the existing Mt. Alberta Hut, the quintessential climbing hut in the Rockies, was renamed the Lloyd MacKay Hut.