



Wates-Gibson Memorial Hut

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Wates-Gibson Hut by David Zemrau

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Booking, Payment and Cancellation Policy

Elizabeth Parker Hut is very popular in the summer and therefore a lottery system has been put in place. For information on the summer booking policies visit: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/ep.html#bookings>

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 Wates-Gibson Memorial Hut is located on the north shore of Outpost Lake in the Emerite/Tonquin Valley, Jasper National Park, Alberta. The following information should be used in conjunction with the correct topographic map (maps are listed below).

Summer approach

Access to the hut in the summer months is either over Maccarib Pass, or over the Astoria River from the Edith Cavell Hostel. The Astoria River route is the fastest way into the area, while the Maccarib Pass route is without a doubt more scenic. Both routes are well defined, but can be very muddy early in the season and are subject to the occasional closures due to bears.

Astoria River Access

Summer

Trailhead location:	12 km down Edith Cavell Road from Highway 93A
Hiking distance:	19 km
Elevation gain:	1050 feet (320 metres)
Approximate time:	5-6 hours

Approximately 8km south of the Jasper Townsite on Highway 93 is a junction with Highway 93 A. This junction is well signed on Highway 93 from both directions. Follow Highway 93A south for 5.5km to a right turn on Edith Cavell Road. Drive the Edith Cavell Road for about 12km to a parking area on the right side of the road by a trail sign indicating the route to the Tonquin Valley.

From the road the trail drops down to a bridge over a small creek and an immediate trail junction. Follow the trail to the right which contours along the northwest slopes of Mt. Edith Cavell and descends to the Astoria River in about 5km. The trail crosses to the north side of the Astoria and follows the north bank for approximately another 3.5km to a fence and the remains of the Oldhorn Wardens Cabin. The Amethyst Lakes Trail continues on along the north side of the river, but this is where you want to get off, taking a small log bridge across the Astoria back to the south bank. The trail to Chrome Lake and Outpost Lake is not as wide or as well maintained as the Astoria River Trail from the parking lot to the bridge, and can be very muddy and washed out in places. The trail crosses streams, washed out hillsides, a boulder field and swampy meadows before crossing to the north side of the river again at Chrome Lake. The trail circles around the north side of Chrome Lake, follows Penstock Creek up a hill and turns south to the hut on the north shore of Outpost Lake. The final section of the trail, gaining the last couple hundred feet to the hut, is deeply rutted from the horse traffic that still uses this route, and can be very muddy in wet conditions.

From the Edith Cavell Hostel parking lot the trail loses about 250 feet to the first crossing of the Astoria, and then gains about 800 feet up river to the hut. Taking into account that this hike is about 19 km long and the only real section of uphill is just before the hut, it could be considered pretty much flat. Five to six hours is standard for this hike, although fast parties can get there in less than four hours, pushing it.

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Maccarib Pass Trail

Summer

Trailhead location:	Portal Creek Parking lot, 6.5km from Highway 93 A
Hiking distance:	30km
Elevation gain:	2,600 feet gain, and 1,300 feet loss
Approximate time:	7-10 hours

As for the Astoria River approach, take the Highway 93A south from Highway 93. Drive the 93A for 2.5 km to a right turn onto the access road for Marmot Basin Ski Hill. There is a parking area 6.5 km along this road on the left at Portal Creek. The trail to Maccarib Pass is signed at the trailhead.

The first 12 km of the trail, up to Maccarib Pass itself, is all uphill. The trail is well graded and rises continuously, but the elevation gain of 2,400 feet (732 metres) to the pass is a pretty good grunt. The trail down the other side to Amethyst Lakes is a nice stroll, and the views of the Ramparts when you arrive at Amethyst Lakes are stunning. At a trail junction near the north end of Amethyst Lakes, turn left and follow the signs to Amethyst Campground and Clitheroe Campground beyond. Just before the Clitheroe Campground is a trail junction with Surprise Point Campground signed to the right. Take the trail to Surprise Point and follow it south to Chrome Lake. From Chrome Lake, the trail follows the same route as the Astoria River Trail, following Penstock Creek uphill to the west and the Wates-Gibson Hut on the north shore of Outpost Lake.

From the parking lot on the Marmot Basin Road, the trail gains 2,400 feet (732 metres) to the crest of Maccarib Pass, loses about 1,300 feet (396 metres) to Chrome Lake, and then gains a final 200 feet to the hut. This approach is longer than the Astoria River Trail, covering about 30 km and gaining substantially more elevation. Allow a full day for this approach; seven to ten hours is standard.

Winter approach

The winter access routes to the hut generally follow the same terrain as the summer trails. There are however some important differences and hut users should refer to Chic Scott's Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies for a complete description. The descriptions below are only a summary of the routes in winter, and while the information describes the character and difficulty of the undertaking, it is inadequate information to plan or carry out the trips themselves.

Astoria River Route

The route begins down at the bottom of the Edith Cavell Road, where it turns off from Highway 93A. This road is not plowed in the winter. The trip up the road to the summer trailhead is a ski trip in its own right, and a night is usually spent at the Edith Cavell Hostel.

The hostel is locked in the winter, but is available by picking up a key and leaving a deposit. The following arrangements must be made to stay at the hostel:

Reserve your place at the Hostel by calling the Jasper Hostel at (403) 852-5560. Reservations are mandatory, and they will require a Visa or Mastercard number to guarantee the booking.

Pick up a key to the Edith Cavell Hostel at the Jasper Hostel, which is located about 3km up the Skytram road and about 0.5 km before the Skytram parking area. The turnoff for the Skytram road is located south of Jasper on Highway 93, about 2km south of the Highway 16 intersection. The Hostel is open from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm Friday and Saturday. You will be required to leave a refundable \$50 deposit. For the key and sign a risk acknowledgement and waiver form. Payment for the overnights at the Edith Cavell Hostel must be made at this time. Pack out all garbage, restock all firewood and clean the hostel completely when leaving.

Return the key to the Jasper Hostel and collect your \$50 deposit. The staff would very much appreciate any information on the state of the hostel and the status of the supplies.

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The facilities at the hostel are similar to ACC huts, with a wood-burning stove, cook stove, lanterns, complete cooking and eating utensils and foam mattresses for 32 people. Additionally, the hostel is supplied with propane and white gas for cooking and light. Water is available across the road and down a hill to a bridge over a creek, about 300 metres away.

From the road to the Edith Cavell Hostel the route ascends about 1,750 feet (533 metres). From the hostel the trail gains a net 550 feet (168 metres) to the hut. This trip is rarely done in a day from the highway; at least one overnight is planned, usually at the hostel. Early in the season, with a great deal of trail breaking to do, some very strong parties have spent two nights out.

The ski trip up the road is about 12 km long, and the trip can take as little as four to five hours in good conditions, or as much as a full day if you are breaking trail in deep snow.

From the hostel, the winter route follows the same trail as the summer route until the log bridge over the Astoria River at the Oldhorn Wardens Cabin remains. From here the route stays either on the north side of the river or on frozen river itself to Chrome Lake. From Chrome Lake the route follows the drainage of Chrome Lake to the northwest and up Penstock Creek to the north side of Outpost Lake. Complete details of the route descriptions are found in Chic Scott's Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies.

Maccarib Pass Trail

Again, the route pretty much follows the summer trail, except that you cannot see the trail. The ski to Maccarib Pass is a long uphill grind, but you can make up some time down the west side of it. The route crosses Amethyst Lakes to the southeast, and then goes around Surprise Point, over Penstock Creek and to the hut on the north shore of Outpost Lake.

Skiing this route involves the same elevation gain as the summer trail: uphill 2,400 feet (731 metres) to the pass, down 1,300 feet (396 metres) to the north shore of Amethyst Lakes, and another 200 feet (60 metres) of gain to the hut.

Maps and Guidebooks

All of the following books and maps can be purchased through the ACC office or online through the ACC online store at: www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/store/index.html

Map and GPS references

Map reference:	83D/9 (Amethyst Lakes)
Grid reference:	151354
GPS coordinates:	52°39' 48"-118°15' 24" NAD83 11U 415108 5835479
Hut elevation:	1,900 metres (6,235 feet)

Maps

- Canadian Government Issued 1:50,000 Topographical Map 83D/9 (Amethyst Lakes). The hut, the climbing, and skiing in the area are found on this map, as well as the approach to the hut via the Astoria River.
- Canadian Government Issued 1:50,000 Topographic Map 83D/16 (Jasper) is needed for the approach into the Wates-Gibson Hut via Maccarib Pass.
- (Please note that 83D/16 (Jasper) is a metric map, while 83D/9 (Amethyst Lakes) is imperial. Metric maps have contour lines at 20-metre intervals up to 2,000m and at 40-metre intervals above 2,000m. Translating contour lines between metric and imperial maps can be difficult.
- GemTrek Publishing 1:100,000 topographic map entitled "Jasper & Maligne Lake". This excellent map shows trails and highlights of the area.

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Guidebooks and general interest books

- *Backcountry Huts and Lodges of the Rockies and Columbias*, by Jim Scott
- *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies*, by Chic Scott
- *Summits and Icefields of the Canadian Rockies*, by Chic Scott
- *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies*, by Ben Gadd
- *Waterfall Ice Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*, by Joe Josephson
- *Mixed Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*, by Sean Isaac
- *Don't Waster Your Time in the Canadian Rockies*, by Kathy & Craig Copeland
- *Scrambles in the Canadian Rockies*, by Alan Kane
- *Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*, by Sean Dougherty

Website Links

Current conditions

Weather: Go to www.weather.gc.ca click on <BC>, then scroll down to <Jasper National Park>. The weather forecasts are updated 3 times daily.

Avalanche Hazard: Go to www.avalanche.ca click on the <Public Avalanche Bulletins> and review the section for <Jasper National Parks>. The avalanche forecast for this region is kept currently updated.

Area information

Avalanche Terrain Rating System (ATES): Parks Canada has developed a classification system for avalanche terrain, and has applied ratings to approximately 250 trips in the Mountain National Parks. For more information, visit www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/visit/visit7a1_E.asp

Google Earth Reference: A good overview of the trip into the Tonquin Valley can be seen on Google Earth. Go to <http://earth.google.com/>. You will find the hut at 51° 31' 36" N, 116° 33' 48" W.

1:50,000 Topographic Map: The Canadian Government offers free downloads of their regular 1:50,000 topo maps. The map files are large (25 MB) and take a few minutes to download. You will find this service at: <http://www.geogratis.gc.ca/geogratis/en/product/search.do?id=10119>. Perform your search by selecting "NTS Mapsheet", and enter 083D09. Next, press "Search" under "Search Options" (without changing any of the information in "Search Options"). Select 083D09 from the options and download it.

Parks Canada Info

Wilderness Passes in National Parks

Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, Yoho, and Glacier National Parks collect a fee for backcountry overnight use in the Parks. The fees collected from the wilderness passes go towards maintaining trails, supplying the voluntary registration service, avalanche forecasting, backcountry bridge-building, etc. Overnight users of the ACC huts (ages 16 and over) are required to pay this fee. A copy of the wilderness passes should be carried in the backcountry at all times as a Parks Canada representative may ask to see proof of purchase.

We encourage you to buy these passes from the ACC, as 40% of the monies collected goes to a special huts account for our heritage huts and environmental improvements. You will be offered the option to purchase the pass when you make a reservation, or you can buy an annual pass from our online store at: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/store/index.html>. For current rates, visit: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/rates.html>.

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Vehicle Permits

All vehicles stopping in a National Park must have a Park Motor Vehicle Permit. Annual or single day permits can be purchased at most Park entrance gates and Park visitor centres.

Maximum Group Size

The maximum group size for hiking is 10 persons. If your group is larger, you will need to split into smaller groups.

Voluntary Hazardous Activities Registration

It is recommended that anyone participating in hazardous activities in the backcountry register with the Park Wardens. This registration is free and is the best method of ensuring that someone comes looking for you should the worst happen. You can register at any Parks Canada Visitor Centre.

What Is At the Hut

Summary

Heating:	Wood stove
Lighting:	Propane
Cooking:	Propane oven & range, cookware, dishes & utensils provided
Sleeping:	Dormitory style on thick foam mattresses
Capacity:	26 in summer, 24 in winter
Drinking water:	From the creek (boil or filter)
Human Waste:	Outhouse
Dishwater:	Ground sump
Garbage:	Pack it out!

The building and sleeping arrangements

The Wates-Gibson is a very large, handsome log building with the main floor divided into a large common area and a large kitchen. The upstairs sleeps 26 comfortably on foam mattresses on two large sleeping platforms.

Capacity

The total capacity of the hut is 26 people in the summer and 24 in the winter.

Kitchen

The kitchen is well supplied with dishes, cutlery, utensils, pots and pans. There are several two-burner propane stoves for cooking.

Lighting

The hut is lit by several propane lights. Propane is supplied by the ACC via a large outdoor tank.

Heat

There is a very good wood-burning stove on the main floor between the kitchen and the common room. The wood supply is kept in the woodshed to the rear of the hut. We recommend that you be prepared with very warm clothing and sleeping bags if the temperatures are very low and the hut has not been used for a few days.

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Tools

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

Drinking Water

Water is taken from Outpost Lake in the summer; in the winter water can be obtained by digging through the snow and chopping a hole in the ice. It is recommended that all water be either boiled or filtered before drinking.

Grey Water

There is a ground sump located outside the back door, near the woodshed.

Human Waste

The outhouse is located 30m west of the front door of the main hut. Do not dispose of any garbage in the outhouse.

Garbage

Burn all paper garbage and food scraps, and pack out all other garbage and unused food. Do not use any garbage behind!

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
- food for the length of your stay
- toilet paper
- 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.



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- 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.

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

Hiking

Popular hikes from the hut include trips up the Emerite Valley, around Amethyst Lakes, to Moat Lake, and up to Maccarib Pass. More adventurous hikers will find interesting terrain up Campus Creek to the east or further up the Tonquin Creek to the northwest. The ever popular Canadian Rockies Trail Guide is the best source of information on the hikes.

Mountaineering

The Ramparts and the peaks around the Wates-Gibson Hut provide some of the finest climbing in the Rockies. There is a great range of difficulty, and the routes have a reputation for excellent climbing and much more solid rock than is generally found in any other area of the Rockies. Another pleasant element of climbing in the Ramparts is that you very rarely see another person on the same route, or even the same mountain as you. The climbing is primarily on rock, with some snow and ice thrown in to make things interesting. Check out the route descriptions in Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies by Sean Dougherty.

Backcountry Skiing

Some excellent tours and runs can be found on the Fraser Glacier coming off McDonnell Peak to the southwest, and the unnamed glacier at the southeast end of the Emerite Valley. The lower north slopes of Outpost Peak to the south of the hut make for an excellent, but potentially dangerous telemark run. The best source of info is Chic Scott's guidebook Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies.

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History

The present Wates-Gibson Memorial Hut is the third ACC structure on the third different plot of land to serve skiers and climbers in the Emerite-Tonquin Valley. The original Memorial Hut was on Penstock Creek some 500 metre north of the present hut site. It was built in 1930 and lasted 17 years before the foundation gave way and a better location was sought. The Wates-Memorial Hut remained for the next 12 years on the north shore of Outpost Lake. Unfortunately the location was too close to the shore of the lake for expansion, and in 1959 when the ACC applied to Jasper National Park for a permit to enlarge the hut, it was turned down. The completely new Wates-Gibson Memorial Hut was built on the present site in 1959 after the idea of moving the existing hut and then renovating it was rejected.

The Edmonton section of the ACC initiated the idea for a climbing and skiing hut in the Jasper area in 1927, but found they could not finance it alone. They approached the National Club to assist with the financing, specifically from two funds: the Soldier's Memorial Fund, set up in remembrance of Canadians who gave their lives in the Great War, and the Slark-Rutishauser Fund, established in the memory of the first ascensionists of Dedoubt Peak in the Ramparts. Redoubt, named in concurrence to a protected place of refuge; ironically, Slark and Rutishauser apparently had an accident while descending and they were never seen again. The first hut, built on the north shore of Penstock Creek in 1930 with money from these funds, was simply named the Memorial Hut.

Cyril G. Wates was a well-known climber and Club member to the time of his death in 1946. Among other climbing accomplishments, Wates participated in the first ascent of Mt. Geikie, the highest mountain in the Ramparts. Wates was active in the administration of the Club and a driving force behind the construction of the original Memorial Hut, and served as Club President from 1938 to 1940. The second hut in the area, the Wates-Memorial Hut, was a fitting tribute to a true lover of the Rampart area and a man for whom "the mountains weaved a thread of worship...a thread of peace."

Upon the building of the third hut in the area, the name of Rex Gibson was added to its title. Gibson was the president of the Club from 1955 to 1957, when he died in a climbing accident after being elected to a second term. Gibson also had a strong affinity for the Tonquin Valley and the Ramparts in particular, where he did much of his earlier climbing with Cyril Wates.