

West Lake Loop and Bailey's Chute

Location: Wells Gray Provincial Park, British Columbia

Drive Time from Spahats Creek Resort: 52 minutes (49.6 km / 30.8 miles)

RV Parking: The parking area is spacious and can accommodate RVs and larger vehicles.

Walking Distance from Spahats Creek Resort: Not recommended due to the distance.

Difficulty: Easy

Distance of Hike: 3.5 km (2.2 miles) round trip for the West Lake Loop; 500 meters (0.3 miles) for Bailey's Chute

Elevation Change: Minimal (approximately 30 meters / 98 feet for the West Lake Loop)

Estimated Hike Time: 1 hour for West Lake Loop; 15 minutes for Bailey's Chute

Overview: The West Lake Loop and Bailey's Chute offer a combination of serene forest trails and dramatic river views in Wells Gray Provincial Park. The West Lake Loop is a gentle hike through beautiful forested areas around West Lake, while Bailey's Chute is a short walk to a powerful rapid where salmon can often be seen leaping upstream during the late summer and fall.

Drive Description: From Spahats Creek Resort, drive back to the main entrance and turn left (west) onto Spahats Creek Road for 600 meters (0.37 miles). Turn right (north) onto Clearwater Valley Road and continue for 30.7 km (19.1 miles). The road turns to gravel; continue straight for another 18 km (11.2 miles). The parking area is on the right and offers excellent parking facilities.

Hike Description:

1. **West Lake Loop (3.5 km / 2.2 miles):**
 - Begin at the parking area and follow the well-marked loop trail around West Lake.
 - The trail passes through a mix of cedar and fir forest, offering opportunities to spot birds and other wildlife.
 - The lake's tranquil setting provides several scenic spots for a break or a picnic.
2. **Bailey's Chute (500 meters / 0.3 miles):**

- From the same parking area, follow the short path to the viewing platform at Bailey's Chute.
- The powerful rapids offer an impressive sight year-round, but they are especially notable during the late summer and early fall when salmon attempt to leap upstream.
- The trail is flat and accessible, making it suitable for all visitors.

Tips:

- **Bug Spray:** Be prepared with bug spray as the lake and river areas can have intense insect activity.
- **Footwear:** Comfortable walking shoes are recommended for both trails.
- **Seasonal Note:** Visit Bailey's Chute in late August or September for the best chance to see salmon leaping upstream.
- **Facilities:** Pit toilets and picnic tables are available at the parking area.
- **Caution:** Stay clear of the riverbanks near Bailey's Chute as they can be slippery.

Summary: The West Lake Loop and Bailey's Chute offer an excellent mix of tranquility and drama, with peaceful forest trails and the dynamic energy of the Murtle River. These easy hikes are ideal for families, nature lovers, and anyone looking to explore the diverse beauty of Wells Gray Provincial Park.