

Flatbed Cabin Pool Dinosaur Footprints (#1)

In 2000 two local boys fell off their inner tube while descending rapids in Flatbed Creek. Walking back upstream on bedrock, they thought they saw a dinosaur trackway. They contacted palaeontologist Richard McCrea, who confirmed their find (which was the longest known accessible trackway in BC) and taught members of the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation (TRMF) how to look for further tracks.

Footprints have now been discovered in numerous other canyons, in rock cuts and quarries, in all the regional coal mines, and in the alpine. Some of these are from an age (Turonian) in which no footprints have previously been found. Others are well preserved, and show unusual features such as dew claws and skin impressions. The Tumbler Ridge area boasts the majority of the world's known tyrannosaurid tracks, including the only known group of parallel tyrannosaurid trackways.

In 2001 BC's second dinosaur bone was discovered right alongside the boys' original trackway, in the same layer of rock. In 2002 BC's first dinosaur bonebed was discovered in a nearby canyon, and excavation began in 2003. Since then a second excavation was undertaken on BC's first articulated dinosaurs. The first skull elements were discovered near the Lions Campground on the banks of Flatbed Creek in 2017.

The Tumbler Ridge dinosaur footprints fall into three groups:


Theropods - These meat-eating dinosaurs were built for speed. Their trackways are narrow and show three-toed prints that are often longer than they are wide, often with claws at the end of the toes.

Ornithopods - These herbivorous dinosaurs left wider trackways; their footprints are wider than they are long, with three fairly blunt toes, and they occasionally left tiny hand prints.

Ankylosaurs - These armoured dinosaurs walked on all fours; the hind feet had four toes, and the front footprint resembles a crescent moon, with five toes.

The best ways to enjoy the Tumbler Ridge dinosaur experience are:

- 1) Take a guided tour to the Wolverine River field site (1.5 hours) or the Flatbed Creek Cabin Pool field site (2 hours). Tours run from June through August. For details and booking, call the museum at (250) 242-3466.
- 2) Visit the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, located at 255 Murray Dr, which opened in 2009 and contains impressive displays of fossils.
- 3) Visit the TRMF's palaeontology displays in the Community Centre.

Time/Distance: 1-2 hours/3 km return
Rating: Moderate 

Directions to the Trailhead

In Tumbler Ridge, drive south on Mackenzie Way and turn left onto Hwy 29. Drive 400 metres along the highway; the signed parking lot is on the right.

Trail Directions

You will see and learn far more by taking a guided tour, but you can visit the site on your own. The trailhead is on the left side of the parking lot, beside the Ministry of Transportation commemorative sign that celebrates the boys' trackway discovery. After 1 km, a fork is reached. The right hand fork leads to the Flatbed Cabin Pool and two dinosaur track sites. It descends to the creek level, where the rock slab with tracks is found.

When walking on the rock, please take care not to walk directly on the prints. Walk across at its uppermost section, and then down the rock as close to the creek as possible. There are a few tracks on the smaller rocks above the main rock. Note two well preserved theropod tracks with dewclaw impressions at the upper (downstream) end of the main rock (this is not a short trackway, as both are left footprints). Towards the lower (upstream) end there are also many readily identifiable prints.

A signed extension of the trail leads downstream from the Cabin Pool tracks to a sign that provides more detail on the boys' initial discovery, along with a bench and view across the creek to the discovery site. These tracks have since been eroded by floods, and are hardly visible.

The Tumbler Ridge dinosaur material is of Cenomanian and Turonian Age, in rocks from the Upper Cretaceous Period. If you discover what you think may be a dinosaur footprint or bone, please do not remove it. Instead, please report your find to the museum at (250) 242-DINO, or email gallery@trmf.ca.

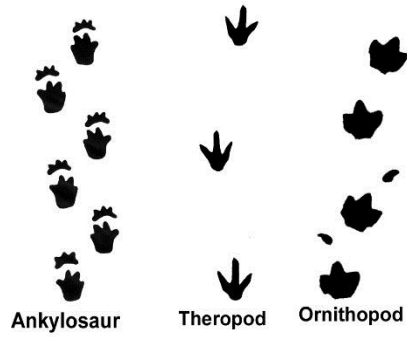
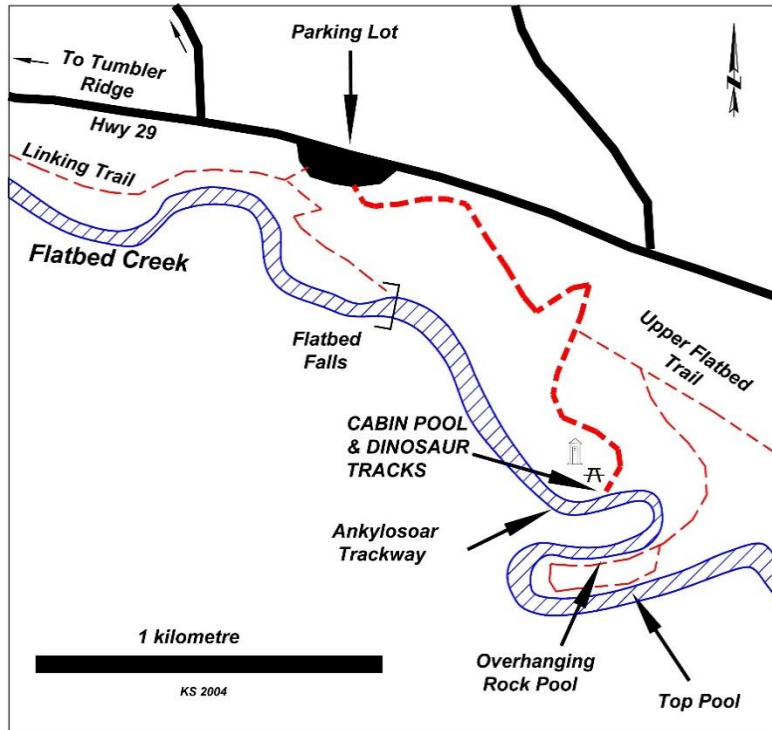
Produced by the TRMF and the Wolverine Nordic and Mountain Society
www.wnms.ca

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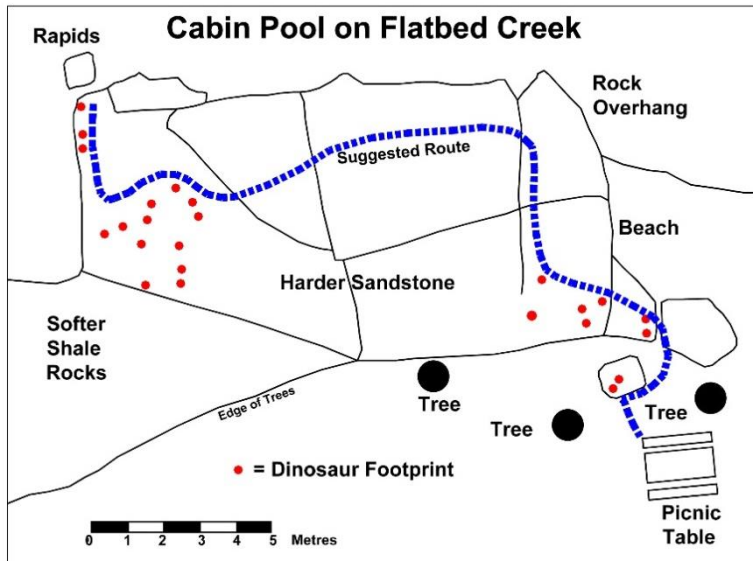
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Flatbed Cabin Pool Dinosaur Footprints



Original trackway discovered in 2000



Rating: Moderate ■

Time: 1 - 2 hours

A set of icons representing various activities: hiking, running, cycling, swimming, skiing, snowboarding, and a mobile phone.