



## TRANS CANADA TRAIL CHALLENGE 2008

MYRA STATION TO PENTICTON TCT PAVILION

Watch for the official yellow TCT Challenge km. markers along the way.

### KM 0.0

**Myra Station.** Welcome to Myra Canyon and the 2008 TCT Challenge. You will bike 80 kilometres, across 20 trestles and bridges and encounter four tunnels, one of which is blocked.

Who was Myra? Myra was the daughter of tracklaying foreman J.L. Newman. That girl is now famous worldwide for lending her name to one of the planet's most spectacular bicycle rides! Speaking of superlatives, the Kettle Valley Railway, a subsidiary of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was one of the last North American lines to be built with primarily manual labour. It also traversed some of the continent's roughest terrain. The Myra Canyon's potential instability was always a concern given the effects of rain, drought and the massive weight of a train. They say track conditions between Myra and West Fork Canyon bridge were so unpredictable that right up until the late-1950s a track patrolman ran ahead of every passenger train and most freights. The grades, the curves and the weather conditions along the KVR resulted in numerous serious derailments and accidents. However, when it came to transporting passengers, the KVR was among the safest railways in the country, with not a single passenger fatality in 49 years of passenger service.

After the last train in 1973, people started exploring the area for fun and recreation. Once the tracks were removed eight years later, cycling the area became popular. In the early 1990s one woman died and another woman sustained serious injuries falling from bikes while cycling across the undecked trestles. The subsequent efforts to provide decks and railings consumed an estimated 80,000 nails and more than 10,000 volunteer hours in the mid-1990s. And, in September, 2003, just months after the canyon and its trestles were declared a National Historic Site, the Okanagan Mountain Park Wildfire shifted and razed most of the trestles. The trestles have been rebuilt and the trail is again open to all. For more information about the incredible process of rebuilding, go the website of the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society: [www.myratrestles.com](http://www.myratrestles.com).

### KM 2.2

**Trestle 18.** Here is the first railway bridge you will cross on this route. This is also one the best views of the city of Kelowna. Myra Canyon, the first 11 km. of today's Challenge, features 18 bridges and trestles and two tunnels. When the original construction took place between 1912 and 1914, each timber was cut at a KVR sawmill at Carmi, 60 km. southeast of here, where some 50 carpenters were employed to precisely cut each massive length of wood. They prefabricated trestle bents for the spans and sent them by flatcar to the end of the track for assembly. More than 25 railcars of bridge bolts were required for the assembly of the original trestles!

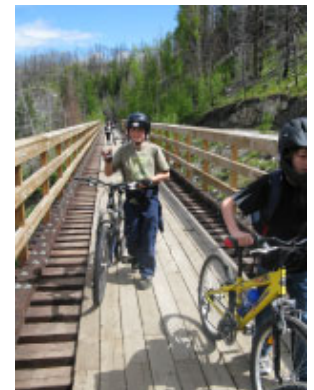
### KM 2.9

**Trestle 11.** This bridge is the summit of the day's ride. It may not feel like it sometimes, but it is all downhill from here. Actually, from this point to Chute Lake the elevation loss is insignificant, but after Chute Lake (KM 36.2) the noticeable 2.2% descent begins all the way to Penticton.



### Salute to Volunteers

*Evidence of the spirit of community volunteerism is seen all around you on the TCT Challenge: the decking and refurbishing of the original trestles in the 1990s; the massive undertaking of raising funds and managing the rebuilding in recent years; the outhouses, signage and points of interest in the Naramata-area; the building of the McCulloch Trestle on the outskirts of Penticton; the people taking care of the TCT Challenge checkpoints and doing the shuttle driving and event organization. Hats off in a salute to all volunteers!*



**KM 3.6**

**Second tunnel of the day.** As you pass through the coolness of the tunnel, think about the summer of 1931, one of the hottest on record in the Myra Canyon. Several times through the summer, trestles in the canyon were threatened by wildfire. Special trains of tank cars would work to wet down the trestle timbers from above, amid thick smoke and heat from approaching fires. Also that summer on the KVR outside of Princeton, a swarm of grasshoppers covered the tracks for several days. This resulted in trains being unable to climb the gradual 2% grade due to squishy crushed grasshoppers on the rails!



**KM 6.2**

**West Fork Canyon Bridge** Originally, there was a timber trestle at this crossing, but the steel bridge replaced it in 1931-32. Actually, the timber trestle came dangerously close to being blown up in 1923. Several boxcars derailed on the old trestle in July of that year, plunging down onto the canyon floor, smashing into pieces. After the crash, work crews discovered that one of the cars contained eight cases of dynamite. It is a miracle it had not exploded on impact and destroyed the bridge. The last train through here was in June, 1973. That train was a steam locomotive used for the filming of the "National Dream," a film by the CBC based on Pierre Berton's book of the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

**KM 11.6**

**Ruth Station.** The credit for the construction of the Myra Canyon, as well as other sections of the Kettle Valley Railway, rests with Andrew McCulloch, the chief engineer. Through McCulloch's determination and outstanding engineering ability, the railway traversed some of the most difficult terrain in North America. Early in the survey and construction process, the men under his direction dubbed the KVR "McCulloch's Wonder." Following the construction of the KVR in 1915, McCulloch continued for the next 18 years in the role of Chief Engineer. Right up to the age of 69, he would annually climb up and down the canyon slopes to visually inspect every bridge and trestle. Ruth, the station at the west end of the canyon, is named for McCulloch's daughter.

**KM 13.0**

**Little White Forest Service Road and Myra Canyon bypass trail, westend.** This bypass climbs up and around the canyon and was constructed in 2004/05 for cyclists and hikers to use as a bypass around the burned bridges during the reconstruction.

**KM 20.0**

**Bellevue Creek bridge and checkpoint.** This bridge was retrofitted with decking and railings in the summer of 2000, a few days after the death of a 19 year old man on July 1<sup>st</sup>. He fell off the bridge late at night while he and friends had gathered to observe Kelowna's Canada Day fireworks in the distance. This is the longest bridge (780 feet, 238 metres) you will cross on the TCT Challenge. Originally there was a timber trestle here, but it was replaced in the 1930s during a railway upgrading project.

While cycling in this area, you should be able to see the new W. R. Bennett Bridge in Kelowna, completed in May of this year to replace the former floating bridge dating from 1958. This new bridge was completed at a cost of \$145-million, about nine times the cost of replacing the trestles of Myra Canyon. It is designed to serve about 80,000 vehicles per day. Kelowna has waiting for a new

bridge for many years. A newspaper article on April 1, 2001, stated that the provincial government had secret plans to dismantle the Myra Canyon trestles, take sections of the railway spans by helicopter down to Kelowna and use them to take a new bridge for Okanagan Lake. Newspaper readers were shocked by this news, until they realized it was published on April Fool's Day!



### **Side Trails Exploration**

*The TCT Challenge will keep you busy with an 80 km. trek, but, please come back to this area in future to explore some more! Go to [www.tracksandtrails.ca](http://www.tracksandtrails.ca) and search "Kelowna Crawford Trails" to get information on many of the hiking attractions located off the KVR in this area, such as Fraggie Rock, Crawford Falls and Lost Lake.*

**KM 23.4**

**Gillard Creek.** Watch for the derelict trestle to the right. It was replaced by the earthen fill on which the railbed now sits several decades after the KVR was completed. Railtracks sitting on earth fills required less long term maintenance than trestles! Near here was Lorna station, named for the daughter of the KVR president J.J. Warren. Gillard Creek is named for early settler August Gillard, who indirectly may be responsible for Kelowna getting its name, which is a loose translation of a First Nations word meaning 'grizzly bear.' Gillard built an earthen home in this forested area in 1862. Apparently, when the red-bearded, gruff-mannered Gillard emerged from his half-buried dwelling one day, he reminded his First Nations neighbours of a crotchety bear after a long hibernation. They called him *kim-am-touche*, or brown bear. Use of the word spread, and other settlers then adopted a form of the word as a name for the area.

**KM 24.2**

**Gillard Forest Service Road.**

**KM 31.2**

**Lebanon Lake.** Starting in this area, you will see white signs with numbers, such "108, 127, etc." These signs indicate the distance in miles from Midway, BC, the town at Mile Zero of the KVR.

**KM 36.2**

**Chute Lake Lodge checkpoint**

Chute Lake was named for Chute Creek, a swiftly moving stream that resembles a chute or waterfall on its descent to Okanagan Lake. Remnants of the railway here include the octagonal watertower foundation, and a railway structure, now a private cabin.

Chute Lake Resort features rustic cabins and rustic lodge rooms. Behind the lodge there is the 'antique museum', a collection of farm, railway and assorted memorabilia.

The lake is a popular ice-fishing spot in the winter.

At the north end of the lake, you passed by the site of a railway wye, two stretches of railbed veering off shaped like the letter "Y" to enable the helper engines to turn around and head back to their base in Penticton. These helpers assisted long freight trains up the continuous 2.2% grade from Penticton. It was claimed that when the KVR was built in 1914 that the descent from Chute to Penticton was the longest 2.2% rail grade in Canada.

**KM 37.0**

**First rock oven sign pointing to number 12.** The Chute Lake - Naramata area has twelve rock ovens, and you could spend all day looking at every one! We suggest that you make two stops for rock oven viewing at KM 51.2, which also includes an interpretive sign on the rock ovens story; and at KM 52.8, which has an interesting bridge made from an old growth pine log.

**Post Fire Landscape**

*Besides its massive destruction to most of the Myra Canyon Trestles, the Okanagan Mountain Fire of August-September 2003 resulted in the evacuation of 45,000 people and destroyed 244 homes in the Kelowna area. Overall, the fire consumed 250 square kilometres or 62,000 acres of forest.*

*What were some of the other outcomes of the fire? Along the KVR trail, between Myra Canyon and Chute Lake, with the trailside forest burned, the views are much more open now. In the spring and summer following the fire, the varieties of wildflowers growing in the charred area were magnificent. There was also opportunity for morel mushroom harvesting in 2004 and 2005.*

**Side Trails Exploration**

*Here is another opportunity for a future visit to explore the side trails of this area.*

*Go to [www.rdos.bc.ca](http://www.rdos.bc.ca) and click on "Click, Hike and Bike" to get information on many side trails located off the KVR in the Naramata area, such as Lady Bug Trail, Tote Road Trail, Creek Park and the Woodwackers Trail.*



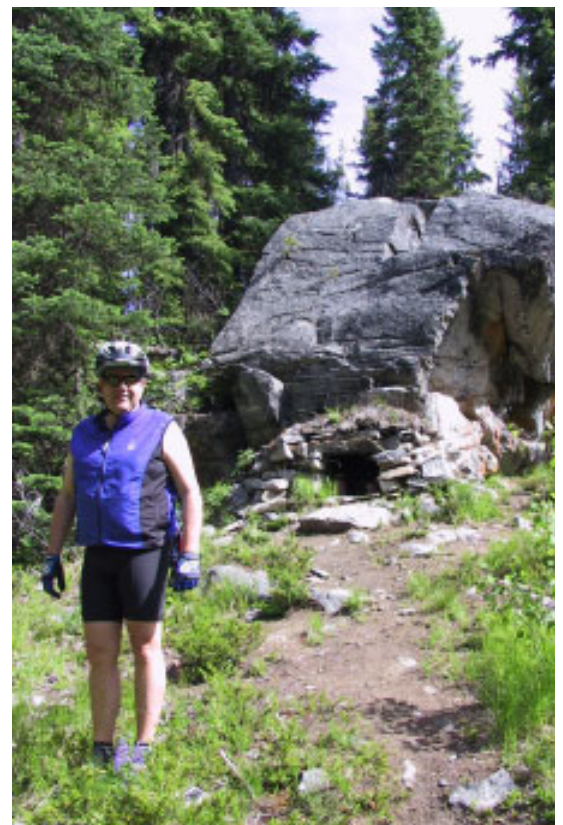
At Chute Lake Lodge (photo left) visit the antique museum out back, full of farm and railway memorabilia. The foundation for the railway water tower now supports a windmill (photo above).

**KM 47.0**      **Adra Station and water tower foundation.** It is said that Adra was named after a seaport in Spain.

**KM 48.0**      **Adra Tunnel bypass trail and checkpoint.**  
In order to keep the incline gradual at 2.2%, engineer McCulloch designed the KVR above Naramata to be a series of loops or switchbacks. The Adra Tunnel forms the first switchback, and is therefore horseshoe shaped and was the longest tunnel on the KVR at almost a half kilometre in length. The tunnel was finished in 1914 and has always been plagued by water problems. Much of the tunnel had to be lined with timber cribbing, similar to one of the tunnels in Myra Canyon. The massive timbers prevented water soaked rock from falling off the tunnel ceiling and upper sides. Over the years, the timbers have rotted, and the Adra Tunnel is blocked inside by timbers, large rock falls and pools of water in the immense darkness.  
Please use caution on the bypass trail. The last 10 metres of the bypass trail is especially hazardous to cyclists and veteran KVR cyclists report seeing numerous 'wipeouts' resulting in 'roadrash' at this location. Once off the bypass trail, make sure you turn right and head north to resume the KVR toward Pentiction. The northbound cycling may seem confusing, but there will be another switchback at KM 56.2 ahead, which will turn you southbound for the final leg into Pentiction.

**KM 51.2**      **Rock Oven Regional Park, ovens 1, 2 and 3.** A good place to rest in the shade, read about the rock ovens and have a look inside. When walking down the side trails, please watch for rattlesnakes. On hot summer days they will take refuge in the cool, grassy areas. Also, do not drink from the stream labelled as "Adra Spring." Cattle graze in the uplands above the KVR and we can not assure you that the water is safe for consumption.  
The rock ovens were often located near the railway construction camps. Much of the tin can debris from the camps is still visible in the forest. In the dry climate of the South Okanagan the cans do not break down quickly and do not get covered with vegetation growth. Litter from 95 years ago has today become a historic artifact!  
There was a shortlived strike at the workcamps and worksites in 1913. Accounts of the event state that 2,000 men laid down their tools between Myra Canyon and Pentiction. They were seeking a wage increase from \$2.75 per day to \$3. After two weeks, the men went back to work without the raise.

**KM 52.8**      **Rock oven number six.** Have a quick stop to cross the Ponderosa pine log bridge and see the rock oven on the other side. Makes a great photo opportunity!



**KM 56.2**

**Glenfir Loop**

According to 1927 railway regulations, passenger trains were not to exceed 30 miles-per-hour, freights 15 miles-per-hour when descending from Chute Lake. Going too fast on this continuous descent could result in a loss of braking power. Freight trains in the era of steam engines were supposed to stop here at Glenfir for ten minutes to let their braking systems cool down before proceeding for the final leg of descent into Penticton. There is a road access here to Chute Lake.



**KM 61.2**

**Little Tunnel.** Here is one of the most stunning views of the day. Actually, two views here, one from the northside of the tunnel and the other from the southside.

**KM 65.6**

**Smethurst Rd. parking lot.** The KVR trail takes a dip down a short distance from here and then climbs back up to grade again.

**KM 67.2**

**Arawana water tank gazebo checkpoint.**

Originally, this stop was called Naramata to serve the nearby community. This led to confusion with the Canadian Pacific Railway system timetables. The timetables covered both the KVR and the CPR's lake boat service. The paddler's scheduled stop at the Naramata dock could get confused with the train stop high on the hill. Therefore, this station was renamed Arawana. The name was taken from a dancehall song of the era.

**KM 70.2**

**Penticton City Limits.**

**KM 73.2**

**Poplar Grove Station.** Use caution when crossing Naramata Road.

**KM 74.4**

**McCulloch Trestle** This bridge was completed in March 2002 and named for the Kettle Valley Railway's chief engineer, the man whose vision, professional aptitude and hard work built this incredible railroad. Andrew McCulloch is buried at Lakeview Cemetery, which overlooks his beloved KVR a short distance from the bridge.

**KM 75.9**

**Wreck of Little Joe Raymond.** Take a few minutes to read the story displayed here of how one alert KVR engineer had a close call at this point in 1949. The twisted 'cow-catcher' from the front of the locomotive is a firm reminder of how dangerous and challenging it was to be a crew member on KVR trains.

**KM 80.0**

**Trans Canada Trail Pavilion  
(Final Check Point)**

**Happy Centennial Penticton**

*In 2008, Penticton celebrates 100 years as a city. There are many special events taking place, go to [www.penticton.ca/centennial](http://www.penticton.ca/centennial).*





# TRANS CANADA TRAIL CHALLENGE 2008

## EVENT SUPPORTERS & SPONSORS



**MYRA CANYON**  
Trestle Restoration Society



Friends of the South Slopes



### Naramata Parks & Recreation

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Sports & Arts**

**BC Parks**

**Summerland TCT Society**

**Okanagan Amateur  
Radio Clubs**

**Societe Maillardville Uni**

#### Further Reading

*Look for these books to learn more about the Kettle Valley Railway and the Trans Canada Trail:*

**Trans Canada Trail: British Columbia**, by Bruce Obee. Complete with maps, coloured photos, route descriptions, interesting facts and listings of service providers.

**McCulloch's Wonder**, by Barrie Sanford. The history of the KVR and the man who built it.

**Steel Rail & Iron Men**, by Barrie Sanford. The pictorial history of the KVR.

**Myra's Men**, by Maurice Williams. This new book chronicles the men who laboured to build the KVR.

**Cycling the KVR**, by Dan & Sandra Langford. The best guidebook for exploring the KVR and other abandoned rail right-of-ways in the southern BC interior. Great maps and route info.

**KVR Mileboards**, by Joe Smuin. A historical field guide to the Kettle Valley Railway.

**Okanagan Trips & Trails**, by Judi Steeves & Murphy Shewchuk. A great regional guide to many trails in and around the KVR route.