

CONNECT WITH Colourful History

CONNECTED BY RIVERS... THEN AND NOW

Rivers connected the north in days gone by, and the history of river trade is one of the main links between the communities of the Deh Cho Travel Connection today. For centuries, birchbark and spruce canoes silently plied the northern waters, and these were the main trade & transport routes for Aboriginals and during the fur trade in the 1700s, for the gold seekers of the latter half of the 1800s, and for the homesteading pioneers of the early 1900s.

Deh Cho ("big river") is the Dene name for the Mackenzie River, which parallels the highway at the top of the Deh Cho loop. Europeans first saw the Great River in the late 1700s, when Alexander Mackenzie explored it all the way to the Arctic Ocean. He left his mark throughout the north, and there is Mackenzie history in most of the area covered by the Deh Cho Travel Connection.

The Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies established trading posts along the Peace/Athabasca systems throughout the 18th century, forging constantly northward. By the 1820s, the Hudson's Bay had taken over its rival, had established posts along the Mackenzie Valley, and was actively trading in what is now northeast BC. Many French Canadian and Métis voyageurs formed alliances with the Aboriginal peoples, settled in all these areas, and helped create the unique flavour of the modern north.

In 1861, gold was discovered along the Peace River, bringing in a whole new breed of pioneer. Steam-powered sternwheelers replaced York boats on the great rivers of the north, and gold seekers bound for the Peace Country, or even further north to the Klondike, came by canoe, scow and rowboat. Those bound for the Klondike would follow the Athabasca, Slave and Mackenzie Rivers, cross huge lakes, and face many mountain ranges. Some made it to Dawson City... others were left behind, many taking up homesteads wherever they landed.

In the desperate 30s, prospectors flocked north into the NWT for radium and gold. Food, equipment, tools, tents, supplies and men were lugged by rail, wagons and steamers. In 1939, low water on the Mackenzie necessitated a land route, and the Mackenzie Highway was born. Initially only a winter road, supplies were transported by tractor-train from Grimshaw (Mile 0) to Hay River, NWT. Tonnes of freight are still shipped "down north" from Hay River every summer – a lingering reminder of the days before roads were built in Canada's north.



John Russell/NWT Archives

CONNECT WITH Our Major Cities



GRANDE PRAIRIE, AB is the southern anchor of the Deh Cho loop. A major trade & service centre for much of northwest Alberta and northeast BC, this city of about 40,000 offers everything from casino fun to amateur theatre productions to concerts in the park and hot air balloon rides. The city's agricultural roots are featured in the **Grande Prairie Museum**, and a new dinosaur exhibit at the **Centre 2000** Visitor Information & Interpretive Centre captures the prehistoric finds of the **Kleskun Hills** area east of the city. Grande Prairie is also known as the Swan City, named after the formerly endangered Trumpeter Swan, which has important nesting habitat in the area and may be seen at nearby **Saskatoon Island Provincial Park**.

YELLOWKNIFE, Capital of the NWT, is located 340 km north of the junction of Hwys 1 and 3. Stop at historic Fort Providence, the craft shop specializes in moose-hair tufting. Gas up here—no services along Highway 3 for another 224 km. As you drive north you enter the vast **Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary**. Keep an eye out: these shaggy heavyweights sometimes wander onto the highway. Yellowknife, pop. 18,000, has all the services of a larger city with small city friendliness. Founded on gold mining, diamonds now provide the glitter. Lots to see and do! Canoeing, hiking, fishing, golfing, swimming. Join in summer festivals, visit the **Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre**, the **NWT Legislative Assembly**, or drive the **Ingraham Trail**.



Connect With Us

1-800-661-0788 (NWT Tourism)
www.dehchotravel.com

Alberta

Travel Alberta North
Toll Free: 1-800-756-4351
www.travelalbertanorth.com

Grimshaw Tourist Information Centre
Ph: (780) 332-2200

Manning Tourist Information Centre
Ph: (780) 836-3875

Mackenzie Crossroads Museum and Visitors Centre
Ph: (780) 926-2470
www.highlevelchamber.com

Fort Vermilion Tourist Information Centre
Ph: (780) 927-3216

Grande Prairie Visitor Information Centre
Toll Free: 1-866-202-2202 (AB/BC)
www.northernvisitor.com

Peace River Tourism Information Centre
Ph: (780) 624-2044

Beaverlodge Tourist Information Booth
Ph: (780) 354-2201

Mighty Peace Tourism
Toll Free: 1-800-215-4535
www.mightypeace.com

Northwest Territories

NWT Tourism
Toll Free: 1-800-661-0788
www.explorenwt.com

Enterprise Regional Information Centre
Ph: (867) 984-3017
www.tourthenorth.com

Hay River Visitor Centre
Ph: (867) 874-3180

Wood Buffalo National Park Headquarters
Ph: (867) 872-7960
www.parkscanada.gc.ca/buffalo

Northern Frontier Regional Visitor Centre (Yellowknife)
Toll Free: 1-877-881-4262
www.northernfrontier.com

Fort Simpson Visitor Information Centre
Ph: (867) 695-3182

Nahanni National Park Reserve
Ph: (867) 695-3151
www.parkscanada.gc.ca/nahanni

Acho-Dene Native Crafts Tourist Information Centre (Fort Liard)
Ph: (867) 770-4161

Fort Smith Visitor Information Centre
Ph: (867) 872-3065
www.town.fort-smith.nt.ca

British Columbia

Hello North (Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association)
Toll Free: 1-888-785-2544
www.HelloNorth.com

Fort Nelson Visitor Information Centre
Ph: (250) 774-6400
www.northernrockies.org

Fort St. John Visitor Information Centre
Ph: (250) 785-3033
www.fortstjohnchamber.com

Taylor Visitor Information Centre
Ph: (250) 789-3392

Dawson Creek Visitor Information Centre
Ph: (250) 782-9595
www.tourismdawsoncreek.com

Pouce Coupe Visitor Information Centre
Ph: (250) 786-5555

Northern BC Tourism
Toll Free 1-800-663-8843
www.nbcourism.com

HIGHWAY AND FERRY INFORMATION

Alberta Road Reports: 1-800-642-3810 ama.ab.ca
British Columbia Road Reports: 1-800-550-4997 www.th.gov.bc.ca
British Columbia Alaska Highway: (north of Fort St. John) 1-250-774-7447
NWT Road and Ferry Reports: 1-800-661-0750 www.hwy.dot.gov.nt.ca/highways

THE Deh Cho TRAVEL CONNECTION



map and
guide inside



A scenic and historic route through
NORTHWEST ALBERTA
NORTHEAST BRITISH COLUMBIA
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

www.dehchotravel.com



Leslie Leong



Leslie Leong/GNWT

WELCOME TO OUR Driveable Wilderness

The Deh Cho Travel Connection links the Mackenzie, Liard and Alaska Highways through three different regions: Northern Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Northern British Columbia.

These are uncrowded highways, well-maintained roads to adventure that take you along the historic corridors travelled by traders and explorers who came north centuries ago. They came to buy furs from the Aboriginal people of Canada's northwest, and they paddled the river routes the Native people had known for countless generations.

Deh Cho is the Aboriginal name of the Mackenzie, the broad river that sweeps north from Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Ocean, carrying waters from a quarter of Canada—the bigger-than-life lands drained by the Slave, Peace, Liard, Athabasca and a hundred more untamed waterways. This is the world of the Deh Cho Travel Connection, true wilderness where big rivers rule.

EXPLORE CANADA'S NORTH AT YOUR OWN PACE

Drive out of your everyday life. See the world as it used to be, long before traffic jams and urban clutter were invented. Discover unrivaled vistas—mountains and forest, plains and valleys. Immerse yourself in the ancient heritage of northern Aboriginal people. Experience the sheer adventure of wild rivers and secret lakes. The air's clean, the waters are pure.

All along the Deh Cho Travel Connection highways, stopping-places beckon: wayside picnic grounds, Heritage parks, quaint churches, traditional villages, tumbling rapids or roaring waterfalls. You'll find countless places to camp, fish, take a photo or a hike. There's outdoor adventure, from kayaking and climbing to biking and bird-watching. Play a quiet game of golf, troll for

trophy pike. Admire wildflowers or go berry picking. Shop for northern artworks or one-of-a-kind crafts.

CONNECT WITH THE LAND

The land that unfolds as you roll along northern highways is little changed since the world was young. You'll pass through unbroken forest and Boreal plains, lush farmlands and stretches of fertile spruce bog. There are soaring mountains to the west, Precambrian Shield in the east. Here, where magnificent wildlife roams free, you can too.

CONNECT WITH NORTHERN PEOPLE

Visits to northern communities will introduce you to a special way of life. From quiet hamlets where the traditional way of life is preserved, to cosmopolitan towns with every amenity, Northerners welcome travellers. Join the fun at seasonal festivals. Explore community museums and restored pioneer villages. Chat with elders, guides and artists. You'll discover what we mean by "northern hospitality."

HOW TO MAKE THE DEH CHO TRAVEL CONNECTION

You can get into the Deh Cho circle from east, west and south – from the east via Edmonton and Valleyview; from the west via Prince George and Chetwynd; from the south via Hinton, Grande Cache and into Grande Prairie. Whether you head north by way of Mile Zero of the world-famous Alaska Highway, at Dawson Creek, British Columbia, or Mile Zero of the Mackenzie Highway in Grimshaw, Alberta, either way, you'll connect to a new touring experience and drive through fresh, uncrowded landscapes.

Regardless of where you enter the loop, you'll travel 1800 kilometres through two provinces and the southern Northwest Territories, surrounded by wild beauty and the whispers of history.



Travel Alberta

Wolfgang Weber/GNWT

CONNECT WITH *The Mackenzie Highway*

If you begin your journey on the Deh Cho Connection in Alberta, you'll be driving two-lane, paved Highway 35 through the famous Peace River Country. It's a territory with rich Aboriginal, fur-trading and pioneer history.

The main communities along this stretch of the Deh Cho Travel Connection are Grimshaw, Manning and High Level and Fort Simpson, all with a full range of services for visitors.

Visit the new and unique truck museum at **Grimshaw** or, just to the north, **Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park** at **Lac Cardinal** features a **Pioneer Village and Museum**. It hosts Pioneer Days in mid August, with demonstrations of a shingle mill, threshing and butter making. **Manning** offers two historic stops, the **Old Hospital Gallery and Museum**, and the **Battle River Museum**. Heading north, camp and fish at the confluence of the Peace and Notikewin Rivers, at **Notikewin Provincial Park**, or in the small stocked lake at **Twin Lakes Recreation Area**. In **High Level** enjoy a round of golf on Alberta's northernmost grass greens, or visit the **Mackenzie Crossroads Museum & Visitors Centre** to explore its extensive collection of trading post memorabilia. High Level is the last full-service stop before entering the NWT.

North of **Indian Cabins**, you cross from Alberta into the Northwest Territories, at the 60th Parallel. Don't miss the Visitor Centre, where first-time tourists are awarded a North of 60 Certificate. Highway 35 now becomes NWT Highway 1, also known as the **Waterfalls Route**. To see why, stop at **Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park** and take the trail that connects Alexandra and Louise Falls. The Dene Aboriginal people of this region call Alexandra Falls "Hatto deh Naili," a place of power protected by spirits. Louise Falls cuts through stone formations that date back 400 million years.

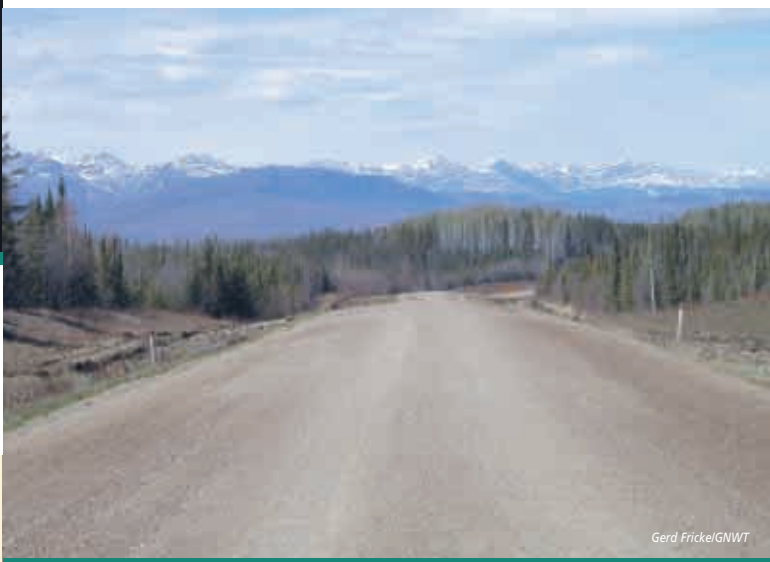
The next junction is at **Enterprise**, jumping-off point for side-trips to Great Slave Lake at **Hay River**, or **Fort Smith** and **Wood Buffalo National Park**. The Deh Cho Travel Connection continues west on Mackenzie Highway 1, parallel to the Mackenzie River as it crosses the boreal plains. **McNallie Creek** offers a scenic picnic stop. Trails lead to picturesque waterfalls and a deep gorge. **Lady Evelyn Falls** is a fine place to idle away a whole day. To reach it, drive 6.5 km off Highway 1 on the road leading to the Dene village of **Kakisa**. There's a campsite and good fishing for grayling and pickerel at the base of the falls.

At the junction of Highways 1 and 3, you can turn off the Deh Cho Travel Connection for a side trip to **Yellowknife**. The Mackenzie Highway itself continues west to **Sambaa Deh Falls Territorial Park**, located on a bluff overlooking the Trout River near Coral Falls – an excellent fossil hunting location.

Still on Hwy 1, the Waterfalls Route becomes the Heritage Route, as it continues north to **Fort Simpson**, 64 km past the Liard Highway Junction at **Checkpoint**. The largest community in this region and the oldest former trading post on the Mackenzie River, the town at the confluence of the Liard and Mackenzie Rivers boasts a population of 1,200. Stop at the **Fort Simpson Park and Visitors' Centre** to learn about trips into **Nahanni National Park**. Also of interest are **Albert Faille's Cabin** and the **MacPherson House**, both part of the area's colourful history. **Fort Simpson Territorial Park** is known for its birds in summer. If you wish to drive the complete length of the Mackenzie Highway, continue on to **Wrigley**, a scenic 2.5 hr drive northwest of Fort Simpson. To reach this quiet Dene village, you cross the Mackenzie River near Burnt Island by ferry. The view of the Mackenzie Mountains, as a backdrop to the majestic Mackenzie River Valley, is a picture that will remain in the mind's eye forever.

To continue the Deh Cho Travel Connection, drive back from **Fort Simpson** to Checkpoint, where you turn south to continue your circle tour towards British Columbia and Mile Zero (Alaska Highway) at **Dawson Creek**.

CONNECT WITH *The Liard Highway*



Gerd Fricke/GNWT

At the Liard Highway junction you can leave the Mackenzie Highway and join Highway 7, second link in the Deh Cho Travel Connection.

You're now headed south towards the NWT's border with British Columbia.

This all-weather gravel road features inspiring views of the Liard River and the Nahanni Mountains, especially at Blackstone Territorial Park. **Blackstone Territorial Park and Visitor Centre**, 152 km from the BC border, offers a great view of the Nahanni Mountains and features an information centre, campground and interpretive facilities. **Nahanni Butte** is a Mountain Dene village that can be accessed only by boat or plane.

Fort Liard, population 456, is 5 km off the Liard Highway. **Hay Lake Campground** and picnic site is located on the access road. This community of log buildings was built in one of the North's oldest continuously settled regions. Ask at the **Visitor Centre** about local legends or interesting hiking trails, or book a flightseeing tour into **Nahanni National Park**. Fort Liard's birchbark baskets, decorated with traditional Dene quillwork, are famous throughout the North. Gas up here - **Fort Liard** is the only point of service along this 400 km stretch of highway, and basic accommodation and groceries are also available. Heading south from Fort Liard, the next service stop is **Fort Nelson, BC**, 210 km away.

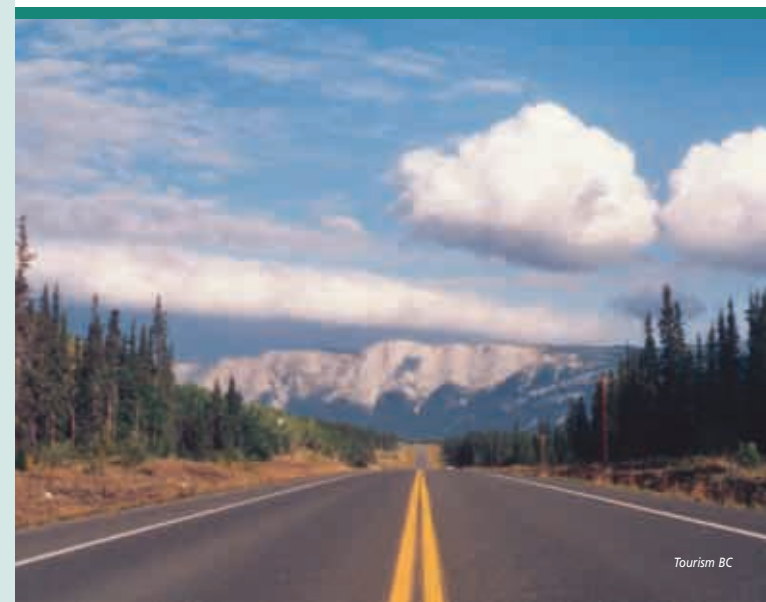
On the BC leg of the Liard Highway, stop and fish at the **Petitot River** for walleye and pike.

CONNECT WITH *The Alaska Highway*

The BC link in the Deh Cho Travel Connection, takes you on the first 300 miles of the world-famous Alaska Highway.

The first community you will reach heading south from the NWT is **Fort Nelson**, at Mile 300 of the **Alaska Highway**. Founded as a fur trading post, this town actually came into its own with the building of the Alaska Highway in 1942. Check out the **Heritage Museum**, portraying Fort Nelson's place in the history of the Highway and featuring a vintage car collection. And take in the **Welcome Visitor Program**, where volunteer ambassadors share stories and a slide show about the region and all it has to offer. Follow the Rockies south, and get a real taste of Alaska Highway hospitality at various lodges and café stops along the way. There's good hiking at **Sikanni Falls** and **Buckinghorse River**.

The oldest former fur trading post in the region, founded in 1792 by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, is **Fort St. John**, population 17,000. Fort St. John offers a range of cultural and recreational facilities and experiences, and all services and amenities. The **North Peace Cultural Centre** is home to an art gallery featuring the work of local artists and artisans, the public library, and a 413-seat theatre that hosts live theatre, dance productions and concerts. Its tiny neighbour, **Taylor**, hosts the **World Gold Panning Championships** on the first weekend of August each year. Before you get to **Dawson Creek**, be sure to take in the old **Kiskatinaw Bridge**, a curved wooden structure remaining from the original Alaska Highway. **Dawson Creek**, at Mile Zero on the Alaska Highway, welcomes you with a **Visitors' Centre and Museum** located in the historic railway station. Other sights include the **Mile Zero Signpost** and **Walter Wright Pioneer Village**.



Tourism BC



Wayne Lynch



The Creek Golf Course

Get Sidetracked WITH SIDE TRIPS FROM THE DEH CHO TRAVEL CONNECTION

GRANDE CACHE, AB

Grande Cache is located on Highway 40, 180 km south of Grande Prairie and is the southern link into the Deh Cho Travel Connection. This town is home to the Canadian Death Race, an extreme adventure run traversing 125 km of mountain trails with a total of 17,000 feet of elevation gain. Grande Cache is also a destination for mountain recreation enthusiasts, from climbing, to white-water rafting, to mountain biking and more. It's also an excellent destination for ATV touring.

PEACE RIVER, AB

Where 3 rivers join in a majestic valley, Peace River is a progressive community straddling the mighty river from which it takes its name. Peace River has a long history dating back to explorers like Alexander Mackenzie but is best known for the Klondike Gold Rush legend of 12-Foot Davis. The town combines modern amenities, excellent restaurants, and accommodations with the spectacular beauty of the valley. Peace River is located 24 km east of Grimshaw on Highway 2.

LA CRÊTE AND FORT VERMILION, AB

Turn east off Highway 35 at High Level to visit **La Crête** and surrounding communities established in the early 1900s by Mennonite settlers. Farmer's Day in August features pioneer demonstrations and traditional Mennonite food. **La Crête Mennonite Heritage Village**, 2 km south of town, includes the refurbished Sheridan Lawrence Flour Mill. **Fort Vermilion**, 50 km north of La Crête, calls itself the community "Where Alberta Began." It was one of Alberta's first two settlements (Fort Chipewyan was the other) established as Forts in 1788. Highway 58, 22 km north of Fort Vermilion, leads you directly back to High Level to resume your trip on Highway 35.



HAY RIVER AND FORT SMITH, NWT

Leave the Mackenzie Highway at Enterprise and travel Highway 2 to **Hay River**, "Port of the North". This town of 3,253, the largest shipping centre in the north, has great sportfishing and a beautiful golf course. The **Hay River Reserve** has the **Dene Cultural Institute**, 19th century churches and sandy beaches. Take Highway 5 southeast to **Fort Smith**, "Garden Capital of the North", to see the **Northern Life Museum** and Slave River rapids. Great whitewater rafting, bird watching and a gorgeous golf course.

WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

At 45,000 sq km, **Wood Buffalo** is the second largest national park in the world. It's a naturalist's paradise, with free-roaming bison, waterfowl, moose, lynx, wolves, and black bears plus amazing geographic wonders. Things to do at Wood Buffalo include viewing the **Salt Plains**, hiking, and camping at **Pine Lake** campground, 60 km south of **Fort Smith**. For more information, call (867) 872-7960.

MUNCHO LAKE AND LIARD RIVER HOT SPRINGS, BC

From **Fort Nelson**, a side-trip west leads right into the Northern Rocky Mountains and offers some of the most spectacular scenery and wildlife in North America. Drive west on BC Highway 97 to **Stone Mountain** and **Muncho Lake Provincial Parks**, for world-class back-country hiking, fly-in fishing, lakeside lodging, and remote retreats. At **Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park**, you can enjoy the hot pools year-round. These are the second largest natural pools in Canada—an oasis surrounded by ostrich ferns, delicate orchids and insect-eating plants.

TUMBLER RIDGE, BC

Tumbler Ridge is located on Highway 52, 125 km southwest of **Dawson Creek** in the middle of BC's "new" Dinosaur Country. Visit the **Cabin Pool** on Flatbed Lake, where some of the best and most accessible dinosaur tracks in the area are located. Tumbler Ridge also offers miles and miles of well-maintained hiking and biking trails that will take you to the top of a mountain, waterfalls, caves, alpine vistas, and many other unique geological features.