

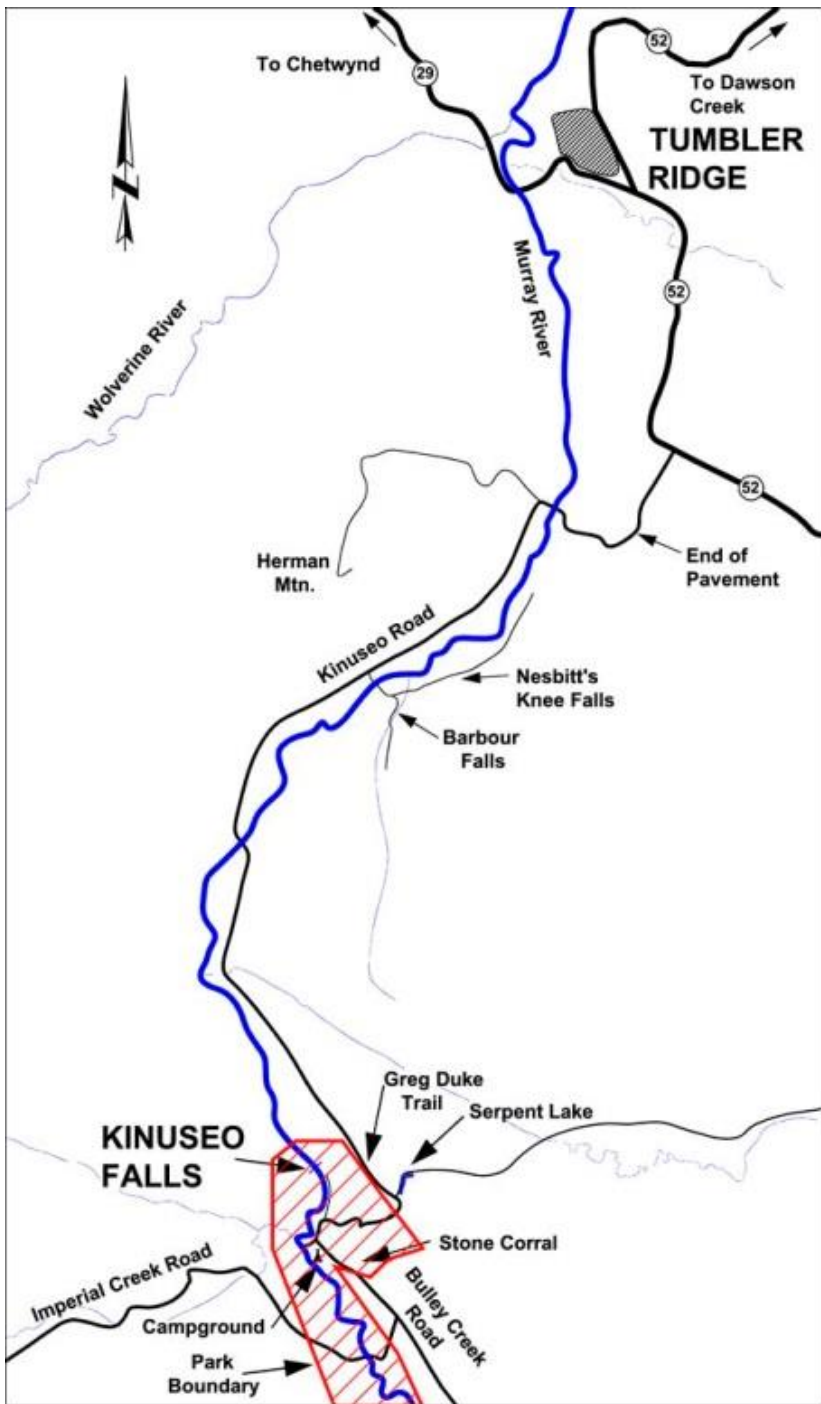
Visiting Kinuseo Falls Monkman Provincial Park



Rating: Easy to Moderate



Time: 1–3 hours



VISITING KINUSEO FALLS

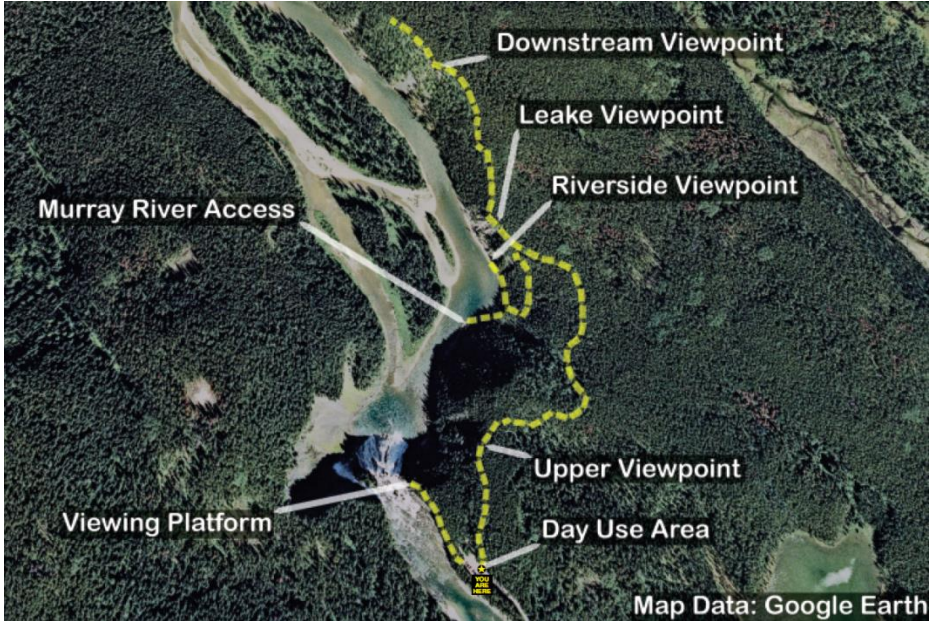
At Kinuseo Falls the Murray River accelerates over a series of ledges, then plunges 70 m into a deep pool. It lies at the northern tip of the 63,000 hectare Monkman Provincial Park, proclaimed in 1981. To the south lies the park's protected wilderness of mountains, lakes and waterfalls.

Driving to the falls and visiting the viewpoints is one way to see them. In addition, **jet boat trips** up the Murray River to Kinuseo Falls are popular, and provide an in-your-face view of the falls from below as well as access to the trails. Please note that BC Parks only authorizes licensed, permitted tour operators to offer access to shores within park boundaries. **Helicopter trips** over the falls and to the Cascades provide another means of seeing these features. Check at the Tumbler Ridge Visitor Centre for details on tour operators. Three major **exhibits** in the Tumbler Ridge Community Centre interpret the history of the Monkman Pass Highway in the 1930s.

Time/Distance: 1-3 hours/0.5 to 4 km return

Rating: Viewing Platform and Upper Viewpoint - Easy ●

Other Viewpoints - Moderate ■



Map of Trails to Kinuseo Falls Viewpoints



Kinuseo Falls from the Leake Viewpoint

The driving distance from Tumbler Ridge to the falls is 65 km (14 km pavement, 51 km gravel). Approximate driving time from Tumbler Ridge is 1 hour 15 minutes. There is a 150 metre universally accessible trail to the Viewing Platform at the lip of the falls, and it is a 250 m walk to the Upper Viewpoint. A 1.5 km trail leads to the Leake Viewpoint, and it is 2 km each way from the trailhead to the Downstream Viewpoint and Riverside Viewpoint. Monkman Provincial Park, 2 km from the falls, has a 22-site campground with five pull-throughs and is open from May to October. For more information contact the Tumbler Ridge Visitor Centre at (250) 242-3123.

Directions to Kinuseo Falls

To reach the falls follow Hwy 52 E for 14 km south from Tumbler Ridge, then turn right onto the Kinuseo Falls Road. This road is gravel all the way to the falls for another 51 km, with directional signage at intersections. This gravel road can be rough, so please drive with caution. There are some kilometre markers along the road. Once you enter Monkman Provincial Park, the falls are reached by a sign-posted 1 km spur road to the right. There is a large parking area with picnic tables and outhouses before the falls.

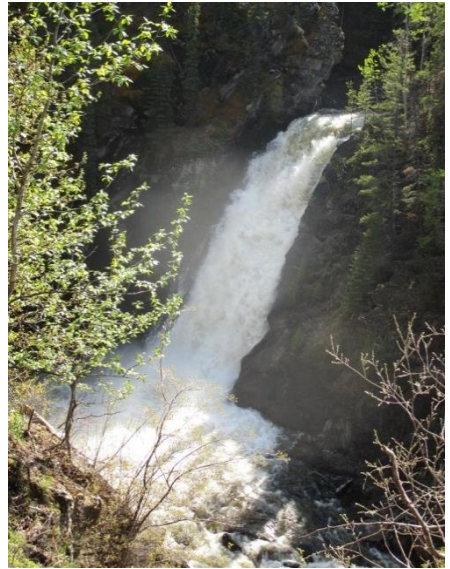
Interesting Features en Route

Just after the paved road ends (17 km from Tumbler Ridge) the road passes the plant site of the Quintette coal mine, then passes through two short tunnels under mining roads. The road crosses the Murray River 23 km from Tumbler Ridge. There are two bridges further upstream: one is reached by a side road that leaves the main road 35 km from Tumbler Ridge, and 43 km from Tumbler Ridge the main road to the falls crosses the river again. These bridges allow for the **canoe trip down the Murray River** (Class 2 with small rapids) to be broken up into shorter sections. You can also portage a canoe for 1.5 km from the Kinuseo Falls parking lot down to the river. A canoe trip from here to Tumbler Ridge is best done as an overnight trip.

Just after the first river crossing, 23 km from Tumbler Ridge, a spur road to the right leads up onto **Mt Hermann**. This road, rough at times and more suitable for 4WD vehicles, leads to a subalpine summit with views of the surrounding hills and mountains, which is a popular ATV destination.



Nesbitt's Knee Falls



Barbour Falls

The sign-posted spur road on the left that begins 35 km from Tumbler Ridge leads to hiking trails to two attractive waterfalls: **Nesbitt's Knee Falls** and **Barbour Falls**. Each trail is just over two km return distance. The trails are

mostly easy and flat, with steeper options down to creek level. Trail descriptions and maps are available at the Tumbler Ridge Visitor Centre or at www.wnms.ca. After crossing the Murray River for the second time there are several views of Castle Mountain, the Shark's Fin, and Boone Taylor Peak.



Irene Lake, Greg Duke Memorial Trail

The small parking area for the **Greg Duke Memorial Trail** is reached 58 km from Tumbler Ridge. A short trail leads for 400 metres to the shore of Irene Lake, and then continues up to Norden Lake (4 km return). There is a dock at Irene Lake, and viewing benches at both lakes.

Just before the entrance sign for Monkman Provincial Park, and just over 59 km from Tumbler Ridge, there is a narrow spur road on the left. This was the original route in to the falls from Alberta. In the first kilometre the road hugs the shore of narrow **Serpent Lake**, a good place to look for loons and beavers.



Corral Cave, Stone Corral Trail

The parking area for the trails to the **Stone Corral** and **Green Bowl**, and **Lake Joan** and **Canary Falls** is 62 km from Tumbler Ridge. An interpretive brochure for the Stone Corral trail describes twenty points of interest. This very scenic, moderate 3 km trail leads through a limestone landscape past a variety of geological and hydro-

logical features. Take a flashlight along to explore **Corral Cave** and

Porcupine Cave. The trail to Lake Joan and Canary Falls (two km return distance) is rated moderate, and starts across the road from the parking lot. The final kilometre of road to the falls runs beside the Murray River. This is a good place to look for Harlequin Duck in the fast-flowing waters, which then accelerate and drop down a series of diagonal ledges before the final plunge. There is a small, precariously situated island at the top of the falls. Part of the waters flow left around it and fall down in a separate jet.

Other Attractions in Monkman Provincial Park

The 22-site unserviced campground with five pull-throughs and adjoining day-use area is three km from the falls. Just 300 metres downstream from the campground, accessed by a short riverside trail, is the confluence of the Murray River and Hook Creek, a good place from which to enjoy the sunset. In addition to the trails to the Stone Corral, Lake Joan and Canary Falls, there are longer multi-day hiking trails into the Monkman backcountry. These start at the far end of the campground. It is 7 km to the suspension bridge across the Murray River, where there is a primitive campsite downstream on the far bank. There is another primitive campsite past km 13. There are spur trails to the right at km 17, 19 and 20 to the **Cascades**, a magnificent set of waterfalls



Brooks Falls, one of the Cascades

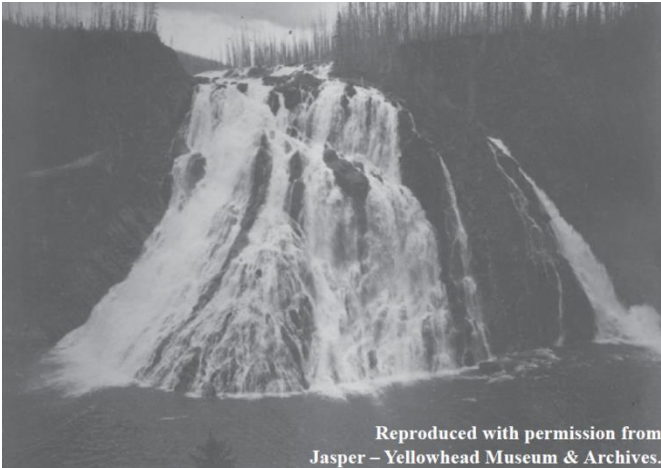
on Monkman Creek, with two more primitive campsites. The shores of **Monkman Lake** are reached at km 24. More adventurous hikers may choose to continue 8 km on a rough route to the alpine above the historic Monkman Pass, to Hugh Lake and the spectacular **Monkman Tarns** area.

History

The first documentation of the falls was on a 1906 map by surveyor R.W. Jones, who was searching for suitable railway passes for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. On what he called the South Pine River he indicated: "falls 215 ft". When the blueprint was traced by the American Geographical Society it was incorrectly copied as "falls 25 ft". On this intriguing copy, "Pine Lake" is one of the Blue Lakes, and "Contrary River" is Kinuseo Creek. Some errors can be seen: Monkman Creek and Monkman Lake are missing, and the Limestone Lakes drain into the Murray River.

1914: PRESCOTT FAY, AND THE FIRST WRITTEN DESCRIPTION AND PHOTOGRAPH

In 1914 Samuel Prescott Fay led a party of five men and twenty horses on a scientific expedition from Jasper to Hudson's Hope. He provided the first known written description of Kinuseo Falls:



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"There were some big falls roaring ahead and a canyon below... they had a drop of about 250 feet and were very magnificent. Such a thing as a big falls was certainly an unexpected sight. They are fine enough if they were accessible, to be a sight such as

tourists would travel a long distance to see." Fay named the falls "Kinuseo" (Cree for fish) for the large numbers of trout he observed above and below

the falls. Downstream from Kinuseo Falls the Fay party found meat racks, tipi poles, boats, a paddle, a log cache, and campsites. There was also a blaze on a tree with Cree writing and the name Issidore, likely referring to Issidore Gladu, a prominent resident of Kelly Lake.

1927: PRENTISS GRAY, AND THE FIRST MOVIE



Prentiss Gray, a wealthy explorer, photographer and hunter, led a party of twelve men from Hudson’s Hope to near McBride in 1927. He knew about Kinuseo Falls through Fay’s description, made a special detour to see them, and wrote: *“What a sight met us! A great river... poured over a series of shale ledges that extended across the river bed... Then it made a sudden drop 235 feet to a deep pool. Perpendicular to this pool on both sides rose black cliffs that seemed to frown down on the river for having escaped their iron grasp.”* Gray took movie film of his expedition; in time most of the nitrate films perished but the one of Kinuseo Falls miraculously survived. A copy can be watched in the Tumbler Ridge Museum. Gray also recorded a traditional Cree name for the falls: *“Kapaca Tignapy”*, meaning *“falling water”*.

1937: ALEX MONKMAN, AND THE MONKMAN PASS HIGHWAY

In the late 1930s grain farmers in Alberta’s Peace Region were faced with great challenges in getting their products to Pacific markets. They decided to take matters into their own hands and build a road across the Rockies, reasoning that a railway would follow.

Alex Monkman led this initiative and it became known as the Monkman Pass Highway. Their route lay along Kinuseo Creek, passed close to Kinuseo Falls, and from here led into the heart of what is now Monkman Provincial Park via The Cascades and Monkman Lake. Against the odds they almost succeeded, and only the outbreak of World War II put an end to their epic attempts. Many of these heroic pioneers signed up for service and some paid the ultimate

price. Photo galleries in the Tumbler Ridge Museum's Community Centre exhibits celebrate this history.

1938: AN ARTIST AND A PHOTOGRAPHER

In 1938 the famous Peace Region artist Euphemia McNaught came to paint Kinuseo Falls, and a professional photographer, R.E. Leake, came to capture images that remain evocative and inspiring. To reach the spot where Leake's timeless photo of Kinuseo Falls was taken, follow the marked trail for 1.5 km from the back of the Kinuseo Falls parking lot to the Leake Viewpoint.

1939: THE FIRST TOURISTS

A by-product of the activity of the Monkman Pass Highway was the development of Kinuseo Falls (and Stony Lake to the east) as the first tourist resorts in the Peace Region. Cabins were popular, and attracted increasing numbers of visitors. During one weekend in August 1938 alone there were two hundred visitors to the falls.

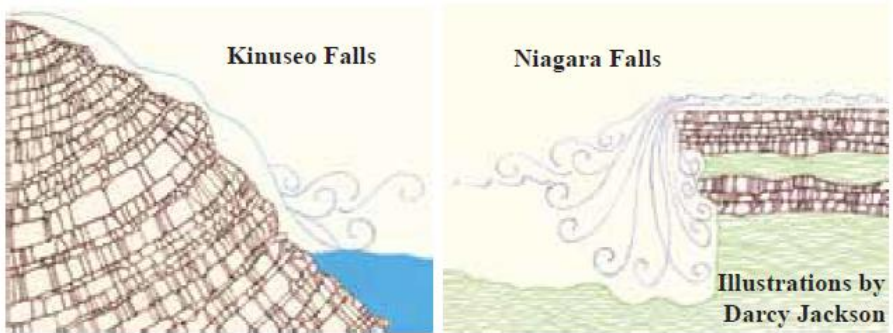
After World War II, the B.C. government prevented further work on the Monkman Pass Highway, and the Pine Pass to the north became the conduit for road and rail traffic through the mountains. The cabins were abandoned, and over time they were vandalised. They were removed during the construction of the current parking lot.



Archaeology in Monkman Provincial Park

While few archaeological surveys have been done in the area, archaeological sites have been discovered upstream from Kinuseo Falls and in the surrounding region, which suggests a long history of First Nations use of the area. One lanceolate shaped spear point found on the shores of Hook Lake, just west of Monkman Provincial Park and upstream of Kinuseo Falls via Hook Creek, has similar characteristics to other ancient stone tools which have been dated to circa 10,000 years ago, potentially making it one of the oldest known sites in British Columbia.

Geology at Kinuseo Falls



The parallel layers of rock over which the Murray River plunges to form Kinuseo Falls are made of marine siltstones and sandstones which were deposited in deep water during the Triassic Period, about 250 million years ago. Further south, near the campground, the rocks are composed of limestone, deposited in shallow water in the Mississippian Period. This abrupt transition between rocks of such differing age is known as an unconformity. In the intervening 90 million years (which includes the entire Permian Period) there was either a lack of deposition or else the rocks that were deposited were eroded.

As time passes, the steepness of the slope forming the falls will decrease due to the Murray River's erosive forces. In the distant future it will change from a free-falling cataract to a series of cascades, and finally to rapids. The ultimate fate of Kinuseo Falls can be contrasted with Niagara Falls, which it is sometimes compared to. Niagara Falls has moved upstream (receded) by

11 km in the last 15,000 years, but has maintained its height of 50 metres. This is related to more horizontally aligned rock layers, which lie on top of more easily eroded softer layers.

Rock Folding

There is an obvious S-shaped pattern in the rock layers of the dark cliffs on the far side of the falls. Two hundred and fifty million years ago these layers were level and formed the ocean floor off the supercontinent of Pangea. Since then, immense forces during the building of the Rocky Mountains have compressed and tilted them, contorting them into this spectacular example of rock folding.



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For more information, contact:

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Photo Gallery website: www.wnms.ca

Tumbler Ridge Visitor Centre (250) 242-3123

Tourism website: www.TumblerRidge.ca



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