

## 2 MAUSE CREEK TO TANGLEFOOT LAKE

*After enjoying the lake for a while, we felt as though we could just keep hiking, “if we just went over that next pass....” The passes are easy to cross in this compact hiking area and there are a multitude of rewarding destinations. Autumn is my favourite time to visit the subalpine and alpine larch forests of this area. Although the alpine larch is a coniferous tree, its delicate needles turn bright yellow in autumn and glow against the deep blue sky of late September—a magnificent display in anticipation of the coming winter! When their needles drop, the brittle branches are left undorned and so are safe from the damaging weight of winter’s heavy snow loading.*

The headwaters of Mause Creek hold a special appeal for most visitors. With its wide-open grassy plateau dotted with little tarns around which wildflowers dance briefly during summer, this area has a rugged charm. The Mause Creek tarns are very shallow and reflect the skylike mirrors, changing colour according to the sky. The reflected colour creates a magical impact of gold, grey and blue.

Mause Creek makes a good destination in winter, although the road is not maintained. Ski touring in the basin is good for intermediate skiers, and steep mountain slopes welcome more experienced enthusiasts. Caution must be exercised as most of this area is avalanche terrain.

Summer is the most popular season to visit this region. From the calm by the Mause Creek tarns to the rocky hike over Tanglefoot Pass and down the mossy gully to Tanglefoot Lake, there is much to explore. The emerald-green water of Tanglefoot Lake shimmers in the afternoon light and alpine larch trees crowd along the shore. The eastern side of Mount Fisher reflects in this 300-m triangular-shaped tarn.

From the parking spot, the hike begins at elevation 1707 m (5600 ft.) where a narrow log spans Mause Creek. Walk up the road 1.2 km and cross the creek again. The crossing doesn’t have a bridge, so during early summer the high water may be deep and turbulent. Continue up the road for another kilometre to the Victor Mine site. The mine was established in 1893. At that time

**Rating** moderate

**Time** full day to Windy Pass

**Distance** 7.8 km to Tanglefoot Lake

**Elevation gain** 549 m (1800 ft.) to first pass

Mause Creek tarns 2073 m (6800 ft.)

Tanglefoot Pass 2256 m (7400 ft.)

Tanglefoot Lake 2103 m (6900 ft.)

**Trail** trail to tarns, creek crossings, routefinding down to Tanglefoot Lake

**Maps** 82G/11 Fernie

82G/12 Cranbrook

**Trail map** page 26

### Drive

**Road** high-clearance truck or 4x4

**Road map** page 23

Follow the directions for Mause Creek Road on page 24.

The road becomes steep and rocky toward the Fisher Peak trailhead marker at 10.1 km. Continue driving up to a large graded parking area at the end of the road, at km 13.1. The road has been deactivated beyond where it crosses Mause Creek.