

Silent Pass is at the headwaters of Spillimacheen Creek west of Golden, and is a fine destination for a day hike or backpacking trip. Silent Mountain, 2621 m (8600 ft.), is northwest of the Silent Pass. The pass guards Silent Lake from wind and glacier rumblings. Spillimacheen Glacier looks down onto Silent Pass, and the cascading runoff pours into McMurdo Creek.

To reach Silent Lake, hike south from the parking spot at the end of the McMurdo Creek FS Road. In 500 m the road forks. The left fork leads to the public use McMurdo Cabin, at 1750 m (5740 ft.). The old road switchbacks up the steep hillside for 1.2 km, then the trail crosses a creek and traverses wet meadows for about 550 m. The Columbia Valley (McMurdo) Hut Society requires reservations for overnight use of the cabin. Contact the Invermere Forest Service.

For the Silent Pass trail, take the right fork on the road as it wraps around the end of the valley. Follow this deteriorating road for 2.5 km. At the end of the road, look for a skidder track/trail leading up to the right (southwest). The skidder track soon narrows to become a well-worn footpath for about 1 km. Cross riparian areas of moist ground and jump over three small creeks. The

trail switchbacks several times up a steep, slippery avalanche slope for half a kilometre. For the next 1.2 km the trail ascends gradually through subalpine meadows to Silent Lake.

In the evening, while camping by Silent Lake, hundreds of grunting toads or frogs serenaded us until dusk. In the daytime, we had to watch our step to avoid stepping on these creatures of the marsh. The mosquitoes are also abundant at this marsh-surrounded alpine lake.

A day hike from Silent Lake up to the base of the Spillimacheen Glacier is a moderate scramble. Hike up to an alpine ridge, at 2500 m (8200 ft.), south-east of the lake. This ridge separates the McMurdo Cabin valley with the Silent Pass valley. By following this ridge top south, you can access the lower reaches of the massive glacier.

The ridges to the west of Silent Pass also offer enjoyable day hikes through scenic alpine meadows with views of the Glacier National Park summits of Beaver Creek and the glaciers of upper Duncan River.

The Silent Pass is an interesting and diverse area that invites days of alpine explorations.