**go for a dip near some dinosaur tracks**

There are not many places on Earth where you can follow dinosaur tracks down to a swimming hole. The Cabin pool in Tumbler Ridge is one of those places.

As the story goes, in 2000 two local boys fell off their inner tube while descending rapids in Flatbed Creek. Walking back upstream on bedrock, they correctly identified a dinosaur track way. They contacted palaeontologist Rich McCrea, who confirmed their find (which is the longest known accessible track way in BC) and taught members of the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation how to look for further tracks.

 The following year, more tracks were found 100 meters upstream from the first tracks. This large rock slab contains over 150 dinosaur footprints some with good claw marks and rare dewclaw impressions.

▲ The tracks near the picnic table are the most prominent and look like they head towards the water.

Footprints have now been discovered in eight other canyons, in rock cuts, and in the alpine. Some of these are from an age (Turonian) in which no footprints have previously been found.

Others are well preserved, and show unusual features such as dew claws and skin impressions. There is one pathological footprint, “the dinosaur with the broken toe”, and other natural footprint casts are made up of fossilized oyster shells.

In 2001 BC’s second dinosaur bone was discovered right alongside the boys’ original trackway, in the same layer of rock. In 2002 BC’s first dinosaur bonebed was discovered in a nearby canyon, and excavation began in 2003. This is Western Canada’s oldest dinosaur material.

The best place to start your adventure is at the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery. From here you can book a daytime tour of the Cabin Pool site and a lantern tour of the Wolverine site,Tours are recommended as some of the prints have faded over time and are difficult to find. The original tracks found by the boys are located right across the creek from the viewpoint but are hard to see without a trained eye. The prints at the Wolverine site are best seen under the light of a lantern. People are discouraged to visit the site on their own in an effort to preserve the site. Tours are provided from Thursday to Monday in the summer season.



For more information, check out *Exploring Tumbler Ridge* by Charles Helm. He was a founding member of the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation. His son Daniel was one of the boys who discovered the original trackway.

*The Tumbler Ridge dinosaur footprints fall into three groups:*

***Theropods*** *- These meat-eating dinosaurs were built for speed. Their trackways are narrow and show three-toed prints that are often longer than they are wide, often with claws at the end of the toes.*

***Ornithopods*** *- These herbivorous dinosaurs left wider trackways; their footprints are wider than they are long, with three fairly blunt toes, and they occasionally left tiny hand prints.*

***Ankylosaurs*** *- These armoured dinosaurs walked on all fours; the hind feet had four toes, and the front footprint resembles a crescent moon, with five toes.*

**HOW TO GET THERE** – From the Tumbler Ridge Visitor’s Center, take Mackenzie Way and turn left onto Highway 29. Go 400 metres along the highway, and the parking lot is on the right. The trail to the dinosaur tracks is 1 kilometre. If you continue on the trail you will find two more pools along the creek that are great for swimming. Picnic tables are provided along the trail as well as benches.

▲ Top: One of the many tracks at the picnic table. Bottom: Original tracks found by 2 local boys 800 meters downstream of the picnic table tracks.