

Quality Canyon and Quality Mouth Hiking Trail (#8)

The trail to Quality Canyon and Quality Mouth is an interesting destination close to Tumbler Ridge. It leads via some steep descents through mature spruce forest to the twin destinations of Quality Canyon and the confluence of Quality Creek with the Murray River. It is an historic pack trail, probably built in the early twentieth century, and used by such intrepid pioneers as Bill Warn and John Terry as a means to avoid the steep cliffs that line the Murray River close by. Ancient blazes can be seen on the trees in places.

Time/Distance: 3-4 hours/7 km return
Elevation Gain: 180 m (600 ft)
Rating: Moderate ■

Directions to the Trailhead

The trailhead is at the large roadside pullout known locally as Albert's Point, 6 km from downtown Tumbler Ridge on Hwy 52 (the Heritage Highway). When approaching from Tumbler Ridge, use the second entrance to this pullout, as the first has poor visibility for approaching traffic. Below the pullout there is a large flat area. Follow the signs down through this area, along an ATV trail for a 50 metres, then into the forest (marked by another large sign).

Trail Directions

The trail is easy to follow. Boardwalks have been installed over a number of wet areas in the first kilometer. At one point the trail approaches close to a cut-block on the right. In 2002 there were plans to log in the vicinity of the trail. After discussions between WNMS and Chetwynd Forest Industries, a division of West Fraser Mills, the company generously agreed to change its plans and not log this area. This act of co-operation typifies the constructive role industry has played in preserving important and sensitive areas and trails. Further on, after a long descent, the trail crosses a fireguard, a cleared swath built to try to protect the town of Tumbler Ridge during the 2006 Hourglass Fire.

After 2.5 km there is a signed fork. From here the route forms a triangular loop, with one side of the triangle formed by Quality Creek. It can be hiked in either direction, but is more attractive (although steeper) if hiked clockwise.

Keeping left at this fork leads steadily downhill until you reach the level of the Murray River. The trail leads beside the river through large cottonwoods until it reaches the mouth of Quality Creek at a pleasant spot, good for fishing and relaxing.

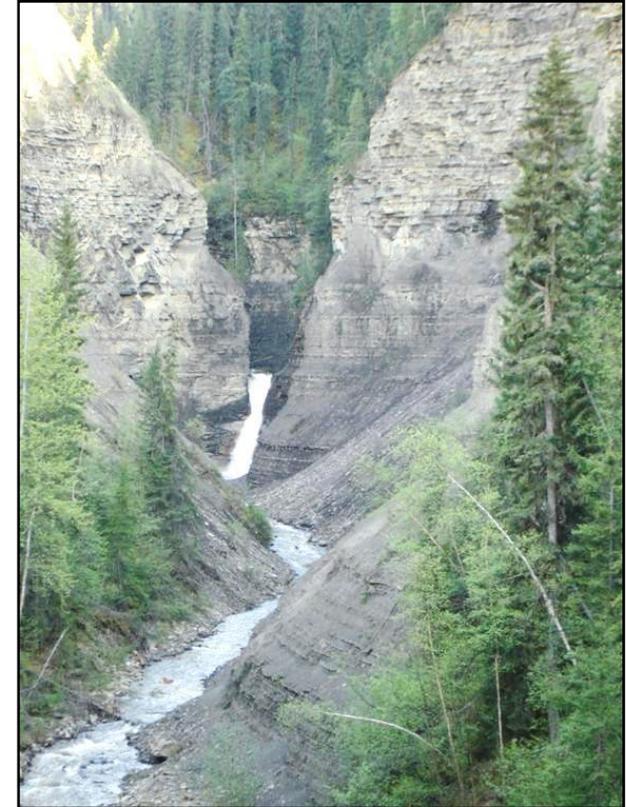
The creek can then be followed upstream at times of low water. After 300 m, the bottom falls of Quality Canyon are reached, where the creek emerges dramatically from between the cliffs. This scenic spot is ideal for another break and a dip in the shallow pool.

The return leg of the trail then climbs steeply to give a wonderful view of the lowest and deepest section of this impressive canyon, which is the most spectacular geological feature close to Tumbler Ridge. This section of trail then leads back past a viewpoint over the Murray River and the mountains in the distance, and completes the loop.

Just before the viewpoint into the canyon, there is a sign on a tree beside the trail warning hikers not to descend into the canyon at times of flood or high water. At other times it is possible for more adventurous hikers to enter the canyon, descending with the help of a rope. Be especially careful to stay clear of the creek at the lower end, as it rushes down the narrow canyon and over the bottom falls just downstream.

Once on the canyon floor you can then walk for 200 m beside the creek, crossing it in places. The route leads between towering rock walls hundreds of feet high, to the next set of falls at a great swimming hole. Be aware of the possibility of falling rock from above. You will need to retrace your steps and use the rope to get back out of the canyon.

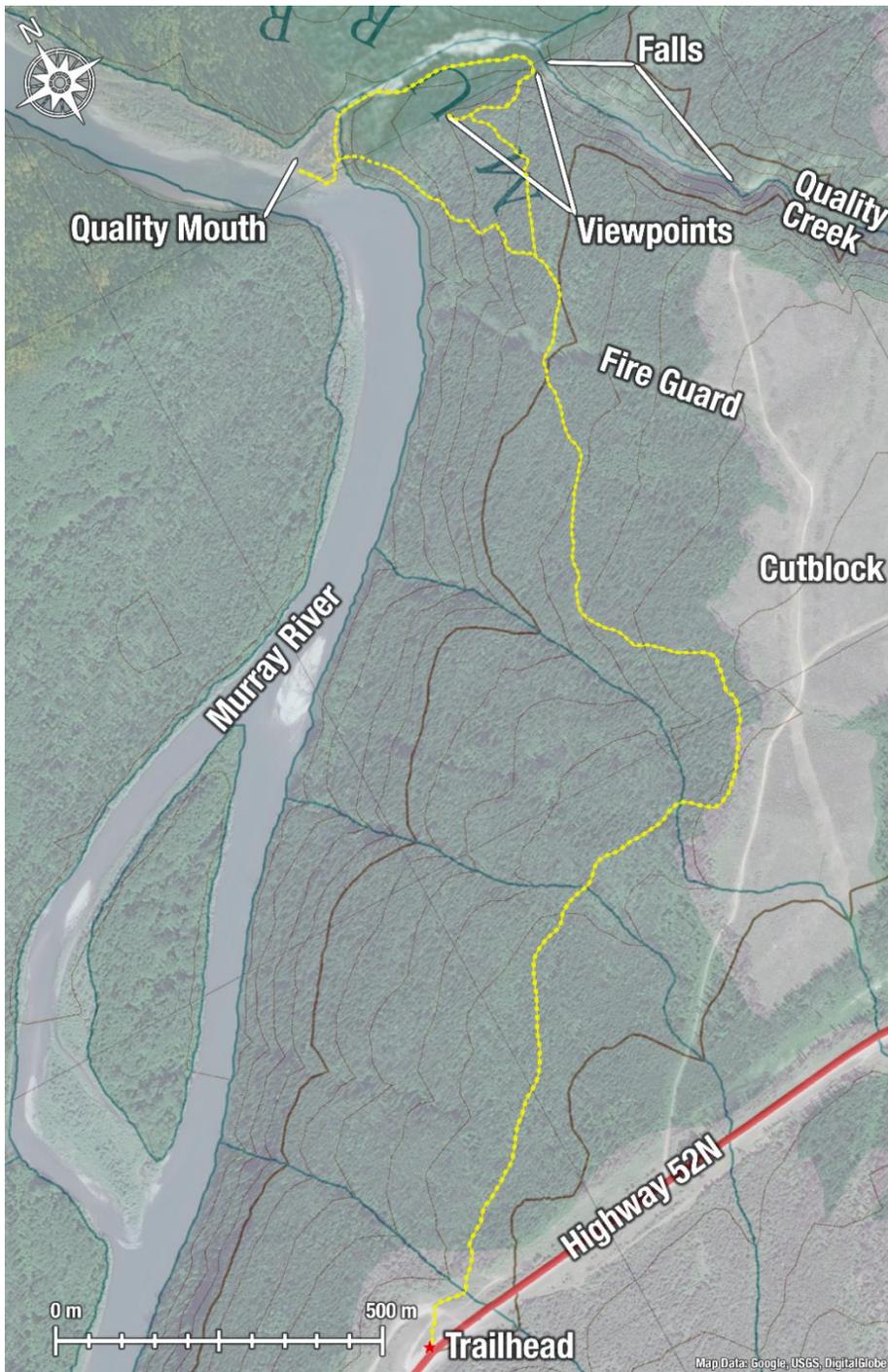
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Rating: Moderate ■

Time: 3-4 hours





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Murray River at Quality Mouth

- ***These trails are in bear country – travel in groups and make noise***
- ***Please pack out what you packed in***

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Tourism website:
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*Photo Credit: Kevin Sharman, Natalie Sharman
Map: Steven Tory*

