



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Golden unveils its 2016 mountain festival on World Wetlands Day

Festival theme to honour two historic rivers & One of North America's largest wetlands GoldenFest.ca

February 2, 2016 - GOLDEN, B.C. To celebrate World Wetlands Day, Tourism Golden announced today that its 2016 mountain festival will be dedicated to showcasing the importance of the world's wetlands and rivers. Home to one of North America's largest wetlands and situated at the confluence of two historic rivers, Tourism Golden is inviting guests to its vibrant mountain town to explore and celebrate some of its natural treasures.

Since 1971, February 2nd has been known as World Wetlands Day, when an international treaty was signed advocating for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands. Currently 169 countries have signed this treaty.

Taking place on the weekend of May 20 – 22, 2016, the Golden Mountain Festival will feature unique events that showcase Golden's rivers and the Columbia Wetlands. "We've got an exciting schedule lined up this year. Some highlights include keynote speaker and world-renowned explorer, Bruce Kirkby, a local film festival, and a river battle on the Kicking Horse," says Joanne Sweeting, executive director, Tourism Golden.

The annual festival commemorates the many facets that define Golden as an authentic mountain town. "Our historic town is lived in and loved by a mountain community that is proud of its heritage of intrepid exploration and mountain tourism. The Kicking Horse and Columbia Rivers have shaped the history of the town of Golden for centuries and have also influenced the lives of our community today. At this year's festival, we want to raise awareness of their importance," says Sweeting. "Last year we had hundreds of people at the festival and this year we're expecting an even larger turnout. I advise lodging to be booked ahead of time to avoid disappointment."

The Golden Mountain Festival will kick off on May 20 at 7:00 p.m. with a local film festival. Guests are invited to the Golden Civic Centre to view up to 12 films that celebrate the theme of "Exploring our Rivers and Wetlands." Film submissions that are no more than five minutes in length are being accepted until March 30. To submit a film for adjudication, load it to YouTube or Vimeo and send the link to gmf@tourismgolden.com.

On May 21 at 7:00 p.m. guests will have the chance to gain insight from the award-winning wilderness writer and adventure photographer, Bruce Kirkby, whose journeys have led him to more than 80 countries over 2,000 days. Kirkby is recognized for connecting wild places with contemporary issues. His accomplishments include the first modern crossing of Arabia's Empty Quarter by camel, a raft descent of Ethiopia's Blue Nile Gorge by raft, a sea-kayak traverse of Borneo's northern coast, and a coast-to-coast Icelandic trek. Learn more about Kirkby at <http://brucekirkby.com>

Situated at the confluence of the Columbia and Kicking Horse rivers, and surrounded by the Canadian Rockies, Selkirk and Purcell Mountain Ranges, Golden is a paradise for outdoor adventure activities. On May 22 families, friends and sports teams have the chance to race down the Kicking Horse River in a homemade watercraft, and complete challenges along the way. The River Battle requires teams of four to build, decorate or modify a river-worthy craft that will transport each member. The starting line will be below the College of the Rockies and teams will complete the race at the Glacier Raft take-out, just below Spirit Square. There will be a prize for the winning team. Adventure seekers can also enter into the weekend-long Adventure Scavenger Challenge.

Outdoor enthusiasts are invited to experience the tranquil, unspoiled wilderness and the diversity of Golden's unique wetlands ecosystem. Rent a canoe, kayak, stand up paddleboard or pedal boat, and explore the Columbia River with a self-guided map. Alternatively, ride with a tour guide from Columbia Wetlands Adventures that can point out up to 200 species (bald eagles, river otters, coyotes, among them) that make this heritage river their habitat. Birdwatch along the way and be in awe of the great blue herons; the wetlands are home to the second largest concentration of these birds in Western Canada (more than 300 pairs). Fishing enthusiasts can soak in the natural beauty of the wetlands while fishing for Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Mountain Whitefish, among other types.

The Kicking Horse and Columbia Rivers were vital arteries for the exploration and trade expeditions that established important trade and transportation routes from east to west and north to south. Today, they provide recreational and environmental sustenance to the local community and its visitors; from whitewater rafting on the renowned Kicking Horse River, to canoeing through the Columbia Wetlands. “This is a fantastic way to continue enjoying the outdoors once the ski season ends. Come down with friends and family for a fun weekend in our beautiful mountain town,” says Sweeting.



Photo caption: A group led by a guide enjoys the peace and tranquility of the Columbia Wetlands
Photo credit: Tourism Golden

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To access Tourism Golden’s fact sheet, click [–here–](#)
For more information on the Golden Mountain Festival click [–here–](#)
To read more about World Wetlands Day visit <http://www.worldwetlandsday.org>

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About Tourism Golden: <http://www.tourismgolden.com>

Tourism Golden is a non-profit, tourism industry-led Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) representing the Town of Golden and surrounding area known as Kicking Horse Country in British Columbia, Canada. Tourism Golden is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors representing accommodations, tourism operators, attractions and local businesses.