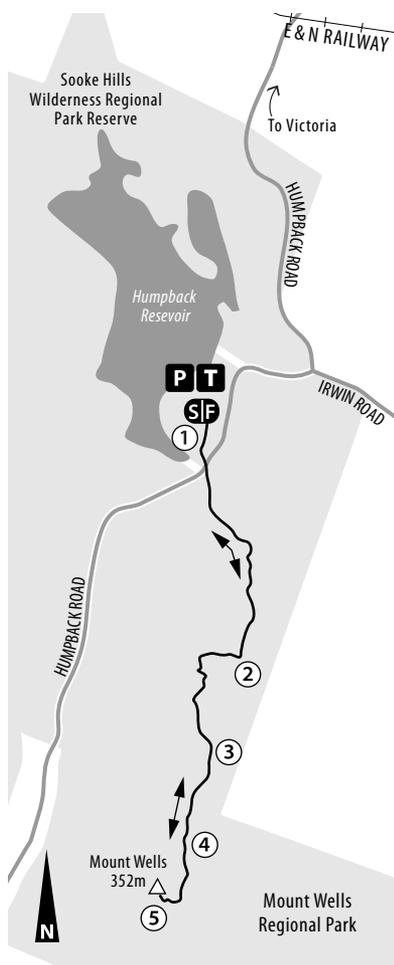


## MOUNT WELLS REGIONAL PARK

*This relatively small wilderness park (it's only 123 hectares) sits on the edge of the largest protected wild area in the region — the Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park Reserve. As you gain the summit of this small park you'll be tantalized by the vista of hills and forest stretching as far as you can see to the west. Mt. McDonald, almost 100 metres higher, is just across the Humpback Road valley. Out of bounds right now, it will one day along with the rest of the reserve, open its secrets to the public. For the present, Mt. Wells has to do. But it won't disappoint. To reach its 352-metre high summit demands a fairly strenuous climb. The summit trail rises through Douglas-fir and Garry oak to grassy bolds with their spindly arbutus trees and bushy manzanita. The CRD Parks*





Mt. Wells. JEFF GEORGE

*department cautions hikers to keep to the trail as the park is a sensitive ecosystem. In fact, Mt. Wells is now the only place in the country where the Prairie lupine grows.*

**General description** An out-and-back summit route that is the only trail in the park.

**Location** Roughly 22 kilometres northwest of Victoria in the municipality of Langford.

**Length** 1.5 hours

**Level** Moderate to strenuous

**Start** Mt. Wells' carpark off Humpback Road.

**Highlights** Summit views over Victoria, the Sooke Hills and the Strait of Juan de Fuca; profusion of springtime wildflowers including camas, shooting star, satin flower and the endangered Prairie lupine.

**How to get there** Take Douglas Street/Trans Canada Highway out of town. After 20 kilometres (and just before Goldstream Provincial Park) turn **L** onto Westshore Parkway and then first **R** following the road to Ma Miller's Pub. Turn **L** here onto Humpback Road. At the intersection with Irwin Road bear **R** still following Humpback. The Mt. Wells carpark is a short distance on the **R**.

## THE HIKE

- ① From the carpark take the well-signed summit trail. You'll soon cross Humpback Road and then, once up a short set of stairs, you begin the steady climb through the wooded slopes of Mt. Wells.
- ② At the first major clearing you catch your first glimpse of Mt. Finlayson to your **R**, the Humpback reservoir below and, across the valley, the 425-metre Mt. McDonald.
- ③ The grade becomes steeper as the trail brings you to a false summit — with good views.
- ④ You drop off the false summit into a shallow gully where the trail heads **R** to enter a grove of Douglas-fir and arbutus trees.
- ⑤ Out of the trees again it's a short climb up to the summit. After taking in the 360° view that includes Victoria, the Olympic Mountains, the Sooke Hills and Goldstream Park, you retrace your route back to the carpark.