



GETTING HERE VIA SOUTH CANOL ROAD

Detail description for journey from Whitehorse to Frances Lake

The adventurous option via South Canol Road: On the Alaska Highway 130 km east to Johnson's Crossing (1.5 h driving time). Afterwards along the South Canol Road (Hwy 6) 220 km north just up to Ross River (approx. 5 h driving time) and another 180 km east along the Campbell Highway (Hwy 4) to Frances Lake (approx. 3 h driving time). **All in all 530 km or 9 – 10 h driving time.**

The South Canol Road is a narrow and winding mountain road. Take your time and allow two days for the entire trip; there are nice campgrounds along the way.

From Whitehorse you will make good progress on the paved **Alaska Highway** until **Johnson's Crossing** (road house with gas station). From there an impressive steel bridge leads up high across the Teslin River. With a span of 540 m this is the third longest bridge along the entire Alaska Highway. 600 m after the bridge, on your left, there is the turn off to the South Canol Road.

The **South Canol Road** from Johnson's Crossing to Ross River offers the shortest mileage between Whitehorse and Frances Lake, but due to its narrow and winding course involves the longest driving time. The sporadically maintained gravel road is closed for most of the year except a few months in summer; and even then it can be closed at times. Get up-to-date road information before heading out there, either from the Highway Department, in a Yukon Visitor Center or latest in the road house at Johnson's Crossing. The route, however, is very scenic and offers some *nice campgrounds*: two along *Quiet Lake* and a rudimentary one at the *Lapie Lakes*. Also "wild camping" is possible without any problems.

From Johnson's Crossing the road soon climbs up above tree line and then continues parallel to the Nisutlin River down to the deep blue basin of Quiet Lake. Later, along the bubbling Rose River it climbs back up into the mountains, leads across a high plateau past the Lapie Lakes and finally drops along the Lapie River back into treed areas.

Normally, the road can be well traveled in conventional vehicles and is allowed for rental cars and campervans. A four-wheel drive vehicle is not necessary, but you are advised to have a sturdy and reliable vehicle. A full-size spare wheel and personal equipment, food and water allowing to spend the night out there in case of a breakdown are absolutely essential. There is very light traffic along this road (only few cars per day, if any) and break-down service is hard to organize (cell phones have only reception within a few kilometres of towns and communities).

A short distance before Ross River the South Canol Road merges into the Campbell Highway. From this junction it is 8 km west along the Campbell Highway and another 11 km north along an access road to Ross River. **Ross River** has a gas station, a shop and offers other basic services. Worth seeing are the *suspension bridge and ferry across the Pelly River*, just north of town. Back on the Campbell Highway it is worthwhile heading west for 2 km to the bridge across *Lapie Canyon*. Immediately afterwards is the turn-off to the Lapie Canyon Campground with a nice rest area. A side trip to Ross River is likely to be necessary just for filling up the tank of your vehicle, for the entire distance from Johnson's Crossing via South Canol Road – Frances Lake to Watson Lake is almost 600 km long without a gas station!

In order to continue the drive to Frances Lake, take the **Campbell Highway** east in direction to Watson Lake. The well-developed gravel road leads along the *Pelly River* (with various access points to the river) and over a nice plateau past *Finlayson Lake*. About 200 km east of Ross River you'll finally get to **Frances Lake**. There is neither a town site nor a road house or telephone here, but only an unmanned campground and a few wooden sheds. Don't expect to meet any other people here – except us!

Access to the boat ramp at Frances Lake

The Campbell Highway nowhere leads entirely to the lake, but at one place goes close past it. **About 200 km from Ross River**, at the *signpost „Frances Lake Campground”*, turn off in direction of the lake and drive **1 km STRAIGHT AHEAD** through dense forest to the concrete boat ramp (the access road to the campground proper turns off left again shortly before you get to the boat ramp; do NOT take this turn off). At the boat ramp you can park your car safely and we will bring you by motor boat to the lodge (30 min. ride). If nothing else was arranged, 5:00 pm is our pick-up time at the boat ramp.

Normally we are on time. In case we are delayed, please wait on site. Should you be behind schedule, we normally wait for one hour before we return to the lodge and will come back later in the evening. Maybe we will leave a note on the back side of the boat ramp sign. If you have the opportunity, please announce a big delay as early as possible by phone (1-780-628-5322, leave a voice mail message) or by e-mail (info@franceslake.ca).