







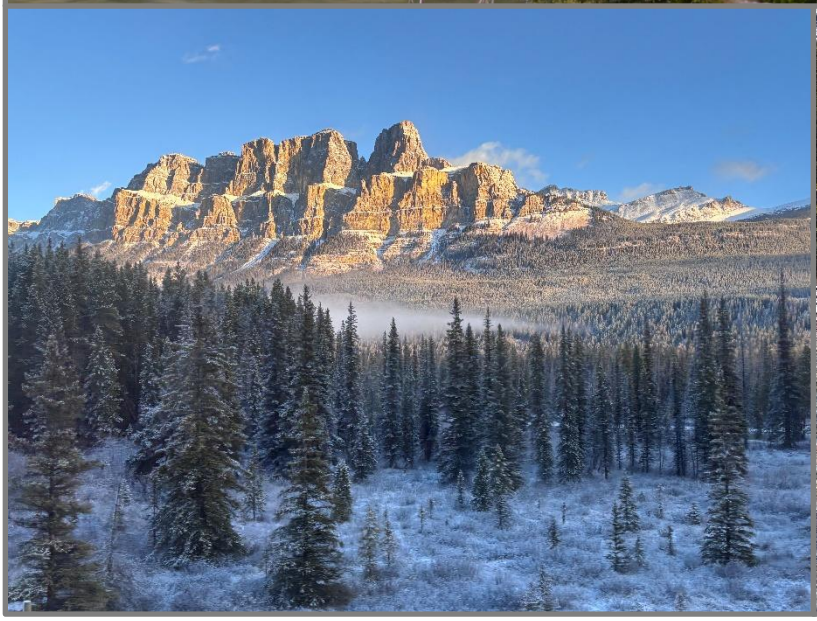


# Kootenays Trip Report Nov. 13-16, 2026

## SD73 International Student Program









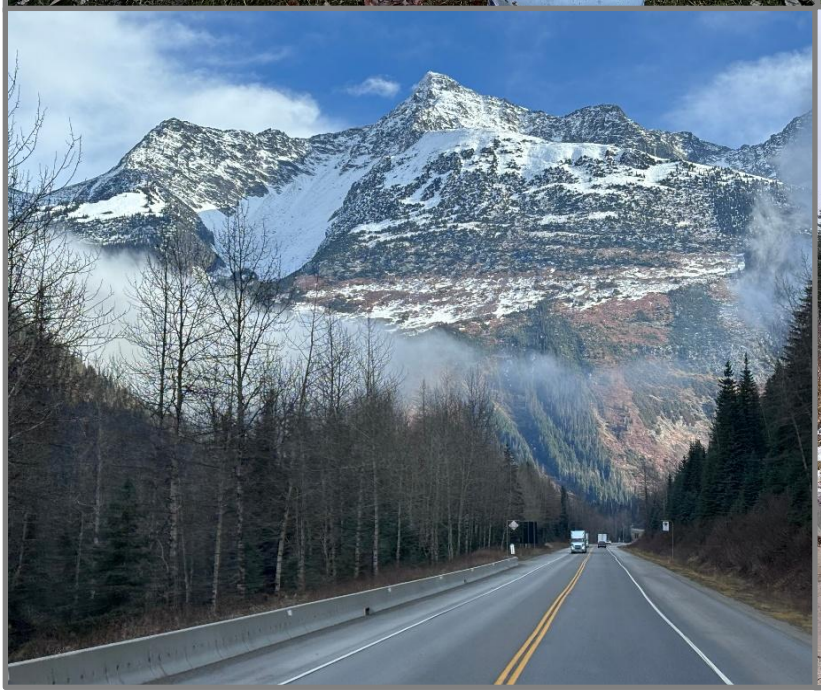
On Nov. 13, 2026, 28 students and several chaperones left Kamloops at 7:00AM and travelled east towards the Rocky Mountains. We stopped for washroom/food breaks at Sicamous, Rogers Pass, and Golden before arriving in Radium Hot Springs at 3:30PM Mountain Time. After we checked in, we had some free time to explore the area, and then met for burgers on the grill at 5:30 PM. Thanks to the Gables Motel for providing the bbqs and seating areas for us to eat dinner that night.













After dinner we left at 6:45 and traveled the 1-2kms to the hot springs.  We then enjoyed the hot springs from 7-9:00.



The next morning we had breakfast before meeting at the bus at 10:00AM.  We headed east into Kootenay National Park and enjoyed several stops at areas in this beautiful part of the Rocky Mountains.  We spotted more Bighorn Sheep and a couple of American Dippers diving for food in a crystal clear lake.  We were back at the motel by 12:00 and then had free time to see the town and have lunch until 2.

















At 2:00 we drove back into Kootenay National Park and enjoyed the views of the Rocky Mountains again until 5:30. We stopped at Marble Canyon and Numa Falls. We also spotted several Mountain Goats high up on the cliffs along the road. We were thankful for the high clouds so we could see the mountains on this beautiful drive.

















Back in Radium Hot Springs, we had 1.5 hours for dinner and then enjoyed the hot springs again from 7-9PM. The next morning, we checked out and left our motel by 10:00. We briefly stopped at the visitor's center and grocery store before heading back into the park and driving to Lake Louise. This center showcases a lot of the region's wildlife.



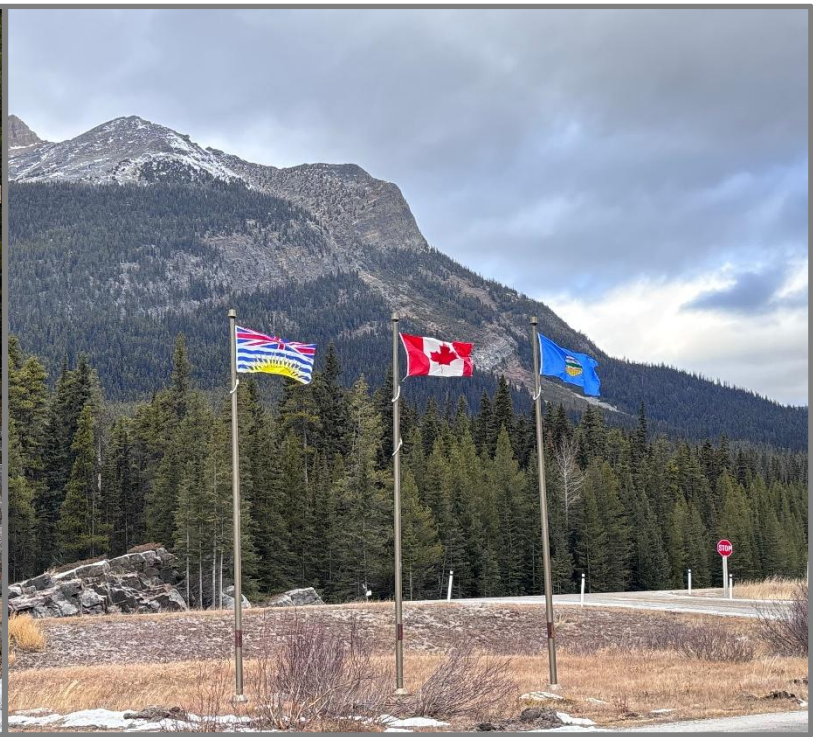




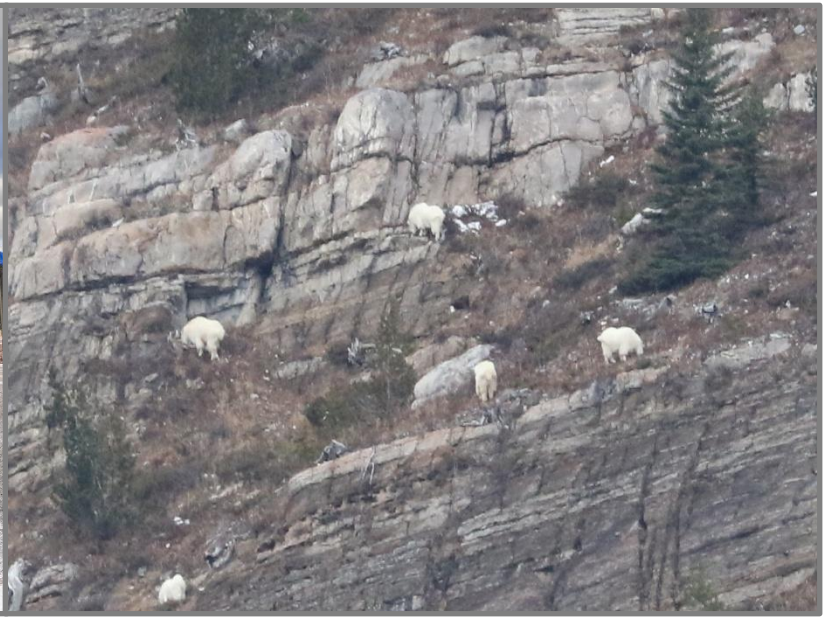
Radium Hot Springs in the daytime

On the way from Radium Hot Springs to Lake Louise, we stopped at the continental divide. This is a high point area where if water drains on either side, it will end up in different oceans. This is also where we crossed into Alberta. We also spotted more Mountain Goats. The rest of the drive to Lake Louise was beautiful and we took in gorgeous mountain views.





Lake Louise was almost completely ice free and we enjoyed this famous landmark for an hour or so.





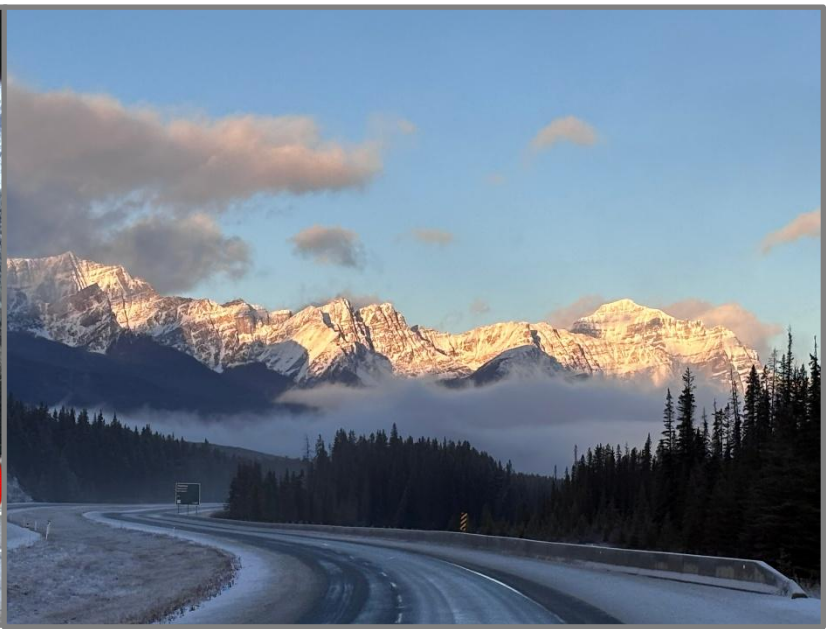


After some time at Lake Louise, we drove the rest of the way to Banff. At Banff, we checked into our hotel and had some time to explore the town and do some tourist shopping. We then met again at 7:30 and drove to Banff Hot Springs and enjoyed 2 hours there. The outdoor pool was very relaxing after a long day of travel.






The next morning we awoke to a small amount of fresh snow and the sky cleared as we drove west revealing the Rocky Mountains in all their glory. The following photos were taken from the bus as we were driving. We also saw a group of Elk.

We left Banff at 9:00AM and arrived in Golden around 10:45. We had an 11:00 tour booked at the Northern Lights Wolf Centre and we rolled in right on time. The students were treated to a 30-minute talk about wolves in the area and their importance in the local ecosystem. We also got to see the wolves housed there. We then drove the short distance back to Golden and had almost an hour for lunch. The rest of the way back to Kamloops happened without incident and we arrived around 5:00PM.











**Students on this trip were from: Belgium, Austria, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, Czechia, Brazil, Mexico, Spain, and Switzerland**

**Mammal List from the Trip: Mule Deer – 10, White-tailed Deer – 3, Elk – 50, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep – 25, Mountain Goat – 12, Red Squirrel – 2**

**Accommodations:**

**Radium Hot Springs: The Gables Motel. The owner Tom seemed happy to have us there and made staying with a large group quite seamless. We were able to use the bbqs there and the area behind the motel for grilling burgers for dinner on the first night. We also had access to discounted hot spring passes through him.**

**Banff: Banff Park Lodge. Located right in the center of the town of Banff. Easy to deal with and no problem with a group.**

**My Favourite Moment:**

1. **Sarka – Being at Lake Louise because it was really nice there and I would like to spend more time there.**
2. **Ayleen – Free time in the town of Banff because it was very beautiful.**
3. **Clarissa – Lake Louise because the view was really nice and I like lakes.**
4. **Lucy – Lake Louise because I saw so many insta reels about it and it was so beautiful in real life too.**
5. **Ines – The drive to Radium Hot Springs because it was beautiful with the mountains.**
6. **Klara – Seeing the wolves because I've never seen them so close up before.**
7. **Sarah – Walking through Banff because it was very beautiful, especially with the Christmas lights.**
8. **Paola – Being at Lake Louise and the town of Banff because Lake Louise was so pretty and I had seen it before on social media. I also got a lot of souvenirs in Banff.**
9. **Heloisa – Day 3 at Lake Louise and Banff because I could see more about Canada, the culture, and the views.**
10. **Jessie – Walking in the town of Banff in the dark with all the Christmas lights and when we went to the wolf centre because I love wolves and that they can teach about wolves to the public there.**
11. **Yume – Lake Louise because I took a lot of pictures with my friends and I was able to experience Canada's beautiful nature.**
12. **Alice – Banff because I've watched a lot of Christmas movies with my grandmother that were filmed in Banff.**
13. **Louis – Being at Lake Louise because my host family told me it was beautiful and it is.**
14. **Hannes – Lake Louise because the water was so turquoise and also the mountain view was really cool.**
15. **Felix – Lake Louise because of the view and the clear water.**
16. **Finn – When we entered the Banff Hotel, it was really beautiful.**
17. **Jonte – Being at the first viewpoint in Kootenay National Park because it was a beautiful view of all the mountains.**
18. **Momme – Lake Louise because it was very beautiful.**
19. **Paul - The first viewpoint in Kootenay National Park because it was something I've never seen in this way before.**
20. **Carla – Seeing Lake Louise because it was so beautiful with the teal waters and glaciers in the back.**
21. **Lena – Walking through Banff because the city was so nice and cute.**
22. **Pepe – The short stops at beautiful places to see mountains and wildlife.**
23. **Ignacio – The first time in Radium Hot Spring because it was the first time in my life in a hot spring.**
24. **Alvaro – At Lake Louise when we fell down on the icy trails because we tried to see a better view but everyone was falling down.**
25. **Joyce – Being in Banff because it was really pretty there.**
26. **Patty – Going to Lake Louise because I really wanted to go there.**
27. **Theo – Being in Banff because we did a short hike and could see the city and all the mountains around it.**
28. **Laszlo – Walking up to a high place around Banff and seeing the entire town.**

**One Thing I Learned:**

1. Sarka – That wolves are really important for an ecosystem.
2. Ayleen – That wolves are usually in a pack because it is difficult to survive by themselves.
3. Clarissa – Hot Springs happen because the earth's heat is close to the surface in that area.
4. Lucy – the Bighorn Sheep in Radium Hot Springs do not care if they are really near people or cars.
5. Ines – That the Bighorn Sheep at Radium Hot Springs are in their rutting phase in November.
6. Klara – How to use an ATM in Canada.
7. Sarah – The difference between Mountain Goats and Bighorn Sheep. Goats are all white and live in cliffs to protect themselves. Bighorn Sheep live closer to towns and are brown with thicker horns.
8. Paola – More about the Canadian environment and landscapes because we saw the birds that were diving for food, wolves, and Mountain Goats.
9. Heloisa – More about different countries when I talked with other students on this trip.
10. Jessie – Bighorn Sheep are as big as deer. I didn't think they were that big.
11. Yume – Wild animals are very important. More is better and we should protect them.
12. Alice – Both here and Tofino helped me interact more with animals because in Brazil I live in a city and don't have much experience with animals.
13. Louis – Seeing how trustful the animals are around people (sheep in Radium and squirrels at Lake Louise). Animals can adapt to living around people.
14. Hannes – In Radium Hot Springs, Bighorn Sheep are very numerous, even in town.
15. Felix – That many visitors in Kootenay and Banff National Parks have so much effect on the wildlife there.
16. Finn – That Kootenays National Park is connected to Banff National Park.
17. Jonte – That people learn from their mistakes. (Reintroducing wolves to Yellowstone)
18. Momme – The town of Radium Hot Springs was only built because of the hot springs.
19. Paul – Hot water from a hot spring stinks like rotten eggs.
20. Carla – There are so many goats, sheep, and deer around Radium Hot Springs.
21. Lena – The problems with so many people in the parks and how that affects the number of wolves.
22. Pepe – To be more open with the people on this trip in order to get to know them.
23. Ignacio – How Canada is different from place to place and how to be open with others to meet people from other cultures.
24. Alvaro – We need to protect nature and be more careful with that.
25. Joyce – That Gray Wolves have an alpha and an omega in their pack.
26. Patty – That Mountain Goats live on mountains.
27. Theo – How the forest and nature changes in winter. This doesn't happen in Brazil.
28. Laszlo – The colour of Lake Louise is because of a special rock.