Alberta's capital city, **Edmonton** (www.edmonton.ca; 1-800-463-4667), maintains more than 160 km of paved and improved gravel trails for walking, jogging, inline skating and cycling; many of the river valley paved trails are regularly cleared of snow in winter. There's also more than 400 km of single track, natural surface trails for mountain bikers, runners and hikers wanting to get away from the busier, maintained trails.

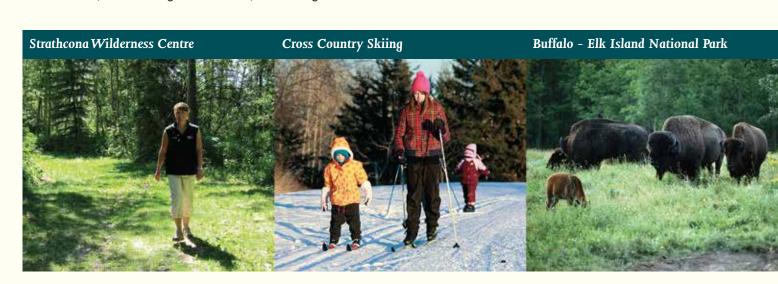
The heart of this vast network of trails lies in the deep, forested North Saskatchewan River Valley, which meanders for 48 km through the city and passes through 22 major parks, making it the largest expanse of urban parkland in North America. This allows for long linear trips as well as short outings, thanks to the many access points and feeder trails. A 28.7 km stretch of the city's river valley trail system, from Terwillegar Park in the southwest to Rundle Park in the northeast, is part of the **Trans Canada Trail** (www.tctrail.ca).

Several trails branch off the river valley system, including ones that meander along narrow Mill and Whitemud Creeks and through several parks. The Whitemud Park and Hawrelak Trail is designated for equestrian use. This trail starts at the riverside Whitemud Equine Learning Centre and follows the east bank of the North Saskatchewan River to Groat Bridge.

Besides longer linear routes, the river valley trail system also offers numerous shorter outings. At the John Janzen Nature Centre (beside Fort Edmonton Park), for example, families can venture on two self guided interpretive walks through some of the city's best river valley scenery. One is the 1 km Birch Tree Trail, looping along the riverbank and through a large stand of birch. The downtown Louise McKinney Riverfront Park offers outstanding river valley views, a horticultural walk and access to the city centre valley trails. It is also the site of the Capital Region Trans Canada Trail Pavilion. Farther east, Gold Bar Park's extensive riverside walking and cycling trails include a 10 km loop.

The city and the Edmonton Nordic Ski Club (www.edmontonnordic.ca) maintain groomed cross country ski trails in nine river valley and other parks and on two municipal golf courses. Trails at Gold Bar/Goldstick, Kinsmen and Snow Valley Parks are lit for night skiing, and most parks have shelters and washrooms.

Five km of ungroomed cross country ski trails can also be found in **Strathcona Science Provincial Park**, located just east of Edmonton and connected to the city's river trail system by a pedestrian bridge from **Rundle Park**. Strathcona Science Provincial Park is a popular on leash dog walking and cycling area, featuring 8 km of cycling paths along the North Saskatchewan River and has a ski hill (www.sunridgeskiarea.com) and tubing hill.



East of Edmonton

Just east of the busy metropolis of Edmonton, refuge can be found in several dense systems of trails within Strathcona County (www.strathcona.ca/recreation), an urban/rural community of nearly 90,000 residents. The more heavily populated **Sherwood** Park features walking, cycling and inline skating trails that wander through the municipality. Interpretive signage focused on ecosystems, wildlife and history, is being developed for open spaces such as Heritage Hills Wetlands, Centennial Wetlands and South Cooking Lake Park.

Just south of town, the **Sherwood Park Natural Area** offers good bird, deer and moose watching from 3 km of gravel walking trails through aspen forest and from an observation platform. A short section of the **Old Edmonton Trail**, a historic wagon route, runs through the natural area en route to Cooking Lake. To the near east of Sherwood Park, Ardrossan is expanding a network of paved and granular non motorized trails to make the town a more walkable community.

Sixteen km east of Sherwood Park, the **Strathcona Wilderness Centre** (www.strathcona.ca/wildernesscentre; 780-922-3939) boasts over 12 km of hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoe loops of varying difficulty that wind through aspen forest and along Bennett Lake. Highlights include 3 km of interpretive trails, a Firesmart trail, a spruce bog boardwalk, good wildlife viewing (birds, moose and deer), recreation programs for cross country skiing and other activities, and equipment rentals for skiing and snowshoeing. The Centre is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Day or season passes must be purchased for cross country skiing. There are some walk in tent camping opportunities for families and groups which require phone in registration. The Centre also has geocaching and a disc golf course.

A bit farther east along Highway 16, the 194 km² Elk Island National Park of Canada (www.pc.gc.ca/elkisland; 780-992-2950) protects a large swath of boreal mixedwoods. It is home to free roaming herds of 800 wood and plains bison, along with moose, elk, deer and more than 200 bird species. A park pass is required. While wildlife viewing from park roads, pullouts, viewpoints and trails, is excellent year round, care must be taken around the large animals, especially the unpredictable bison.

Elk Island's 100 km of trails feature 11 hiking routes that wind through aspen parkland and past spruce bogs and small lakes. The 10 km **Hayburger Trail** offers a good half day hike, crossing a bog where boreal birds and moose can be seen and traversing through open aspen forest and meadows preferred by bison. The 2.5 km Amisk Wuche Trail is a good family choice, meandering through aspen, birch and spruce forest, with floating boardwalks crossing small kettle lakes and beaver ponds. Another highlight is the 3.5 km Lakeview Trail, which features panoramic views of Astotin Lake and two beaver ponds where lodges and dams can be

Elk Island trails are unlikely to be groomed for cross country skiing, however visitors are welcome to set their own tracks. Snowshoeing is recommended on the short but diverse Lakeview and Amisk Wuche Trails.

Along Highway 14, southeast of Sherwood Park, the hamlet of **South Cooking Lake** offers some gravel trails along the lakeshore. Long range plans call for a network of non motorized paved and natural trails here, as well as a proposed year round trail linking the community and the nearby Hastings and Ministik Lakes with Sherwood Park.

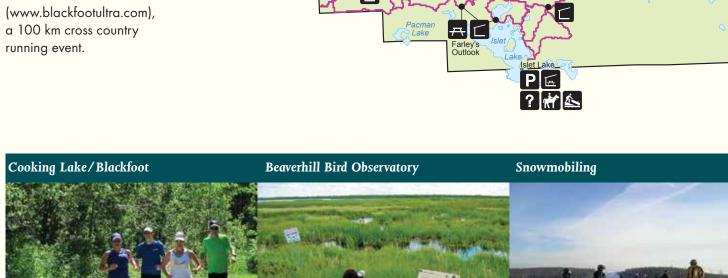
Just to the south, 75 km² of mixed wood boreal forest makes up the **Ministik Lake Bird Sanctuary** established in 1911, the oldest such preserve in Alberta. This area is characterized by rolling terrain covered in lakes, meadows, bush and creek beds and is frequented by deer, moose, coyotes and other wildlife. The area includes the **Waskahegan Trail** (www.waskahegantrail.ca).

Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area

mountain biking, equestrian, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and dog

Further south, the 97 km² Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area (www.dotheblackfoot.ca and www.albertaparks.ca/ cooking-lake-blackfoot.aspx) is set in a rich ecosystem containing forests, pastures, wetlands and glacial moraines. Touring the Cooking Lake-Blackfoot trails is a great way to view the region's diversity of animals and more than 200 species of birds. It boasts a sprawling 170 km network of walking, hiking, P ₩ ⊆ ?

sledding trails. Ranging from less than 1 km to 25 km in length, the trails offer something for many levels of ability. These are accessed from four staging areas, complete with all weather shelters and warmup stoves. Snowmobiling (www.tri-county.ab.ca) is allowed in designated fields and on 17 km of trails when snow is sufficient. The area hosts two big annual sporting events: the Canadian **Birkebeiner** (www.canadianbirkie.co one of the largest classic cross country ski races in North America held the second Saturday of P = ? ** February, and the Blackfoot Ultra



Just to the south Parkland Natural Area features aspen forest mixed with numerous ponds and wetlands in knob and kettle terrain, providing habitat for beavers and nesting ducks. To the east near Tofield, there's a self guided marsh walk at the **Beaverhill Lake** Nature Centre (9) (www.tofieldalberta.ca/recreation/attractions/nature-centre), which heralds the lake's designation as an Important Bird Area and international renown as a staging area for more than 270 species of birds, especially migrating geese. Good bird watching can also be found at the nearby **Beaverhill Lake Natural Area**, which contains a network of some 7 km of walking trails between Beaverhill and Lister Lakes (www.beaverhillbirds.com/docs/bbo_trailmap.pdf)

Farther east along Highway 14, the Village of Ryley features a rubber surfaced walking path in its Historical Park. To the southeast, a collection of rocks sacred to Aboriginal people and known as the **Viking Ribstones** 67 features native carvings that resemble a buffalo carcass. Heading north towards the junction of Highways 16 and 15, the Parkland Conservation Farm has hiking trails among its demonstration crops and wetlands.

The nearby Vegreville (www.vegreville.com) is noted for its elegant World's Largest Ukrainian Pysanka 72 (Easter egg), historic train station and main street plaques embedded in sidewalks. Walking and cycling trails meander through town and along the winding Vermilion River. Close to Innisfree, Wapasu Lake Conservancy Project is a migratory stop for white swans and has 8 km of nature trails that pass bird viewing and native botanical sites.

Farther east of Innisfree, Vermilion (www.vermilion.ca) has community trails along the Vermilion River as well as walking tours through its historic downtown. On the western outskirts of town, **Vermilion Provincial Park** features 23 km of trails through grasslands, marshes and meadows along the river, offering excellent bird watching. The challenging cross country ski trails that crisscross this scenic valley were the early training grounds of Olympic gold medalist Beckie Scott, who has an annual loppet held in her honour in late January.

South of Edmonton

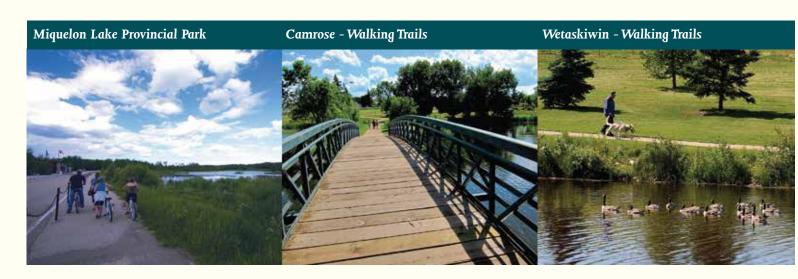
Just beyond Edmonton's southeast boundary, Beaumont (www.beaumont.ab.ca) is a fast growing bilingual community. Its extensive network of pathways link the town's many parks and residential areas.

Straddling Highway 2 to the near south, Leduc (www.leduc.ca) has developed more than 35 km of multi use paved trails throughout the city, of which 25 km are cleared during the winter. A 10 km stretch of this system is part of the Trans Canada Trail. Routes along the shores of Telford Lake and Leduc Reservoir (the latter includes a nature path on its west side) provide good wildlife watching.

South of Leduc on Highway 2A, Millet (www. millet.ca) features shale and paved walking trails through the gently rolling Pipestone **Creek Recreation Park**. For a longer outing, these trails can be combined with a walking tour of the town's historic buildings (www.milletmuseum.ca/Walking-Tour).

Fort Ethier Provincial Historic Resource 29, is located on Pipestone Creek 10 km north of Wetaskiwin. This small fort was built in response to concerns related to the 1885 North West Rebellion

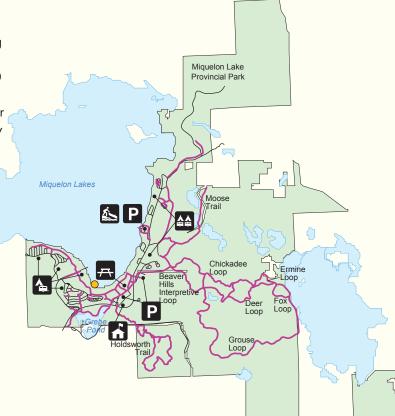
In bustling **Wetaskiwin** (www.wetaskiwin.ca; population 12,500), take a self guided walking tour of the original 1909 water tower (13) and the many other historic downtown buildings or follow paved and gravel trails that pass through town and extend out to rural parks. On the City's western outskirts, **By-The-Lake Park** features a paved 2.5 km walking and cycling trail that skirts the lakeshore and provides good birdwatching, especially of local favorite, the Canada Geese. The Lake is stocked for summer and winter fishing. Peace Hills Park includes gravel and grass paths which surround a wetland overlooked by an observation deck. The Peace Hills Cross Country Meet is run along these trails each September. There is also a free Disk Golf Course in the park. After a day of hiking, visit the new Manluk Centre: Wetaskiwin Regional Aquatics and Fitness, where surfing lessons are offered.



Miquelon Lake Provincial Park

Sixty-three km southeast of Edmonton, Miquelon Lake **Provincial Park** (www.albertaparks.ca/miquelon-lake; 780-672-7274) is a 12.9 km² natural jewel. Part of the Cooking Lake moraine, the park is situated in aspen and spruce forest dotted with kettle ponds and wetlands. It attracts more than 200 bird species and has long been a bird sanctuary and a designated Important Bird Area, for providing nesting habitat for threatened species. Over 20 km of trails perfect for backcountry hiking, cycling, snowshoeing and cross country skiing thread through the park. They include the popular **Beaver Hills**

Interpretive Loop Shoreline Path and Grebe Pond Trail. Comfort camping opportunities are available in this park

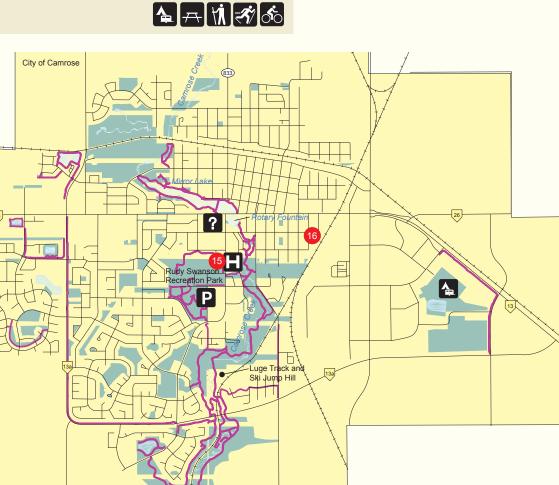


City of Camrose 3

In **Camrose** (www.camrose.ca), some 11 km of paved, walking and cycling trails meander around Mirror Lake (watch for Trumpeter Swans) and through quiet Jubilee and Stoney Creek Parks, the latter a great place to watch wildlife. Another 10 km of paved trails connect the city's

Stoney Creek Park houses some 30 km of groomed cross country skiing trails, from easy flat sections to challenging hills, including 3.5 km of lit loops for night skiing. The park is home to the Camrose Ski Club, (www.camroseskiclub.com) founded in 1911 and offering active ski, biathlon and luge programs, an annual loppet and facilities such as a heated clubhouse and waxing room.

residential and commercial



Red Deer

Red Deer (www.reddeer.ca) is the third largest city in Alberta, home to a fast growing population of 90,000 and offering a full array of visitor services. It boasts one of the finest urban park systems in the province, with more than 140 km of trails linking parks, natural areas, historic sites and neighbourhoods.

The heart of this system is **Waskasoo Park** (www.waskasoopark.ca), which extends the length of the deep, wooded Red Deer River Valley within the city. The park offers some 100 km of paved trails and shale paths to walk, cycle and access riverside picnic areas, recreation tacilities and trout ponds

Heritage Ranch 34, along Highway 2 and beside the Red Deer Visitor Information Centre, is a good place to access many of these trails (a small network of equestrian trails, for guided rides, is nearby). For example, the **Ranch Loop** is a popular, 7.5 km trail circling the **Bower Ponds** and crossing Taylor Bridge. Other popular routes include the 1.4 km **Pond Loop**, past the restored 1911 Cronquist House. Hiking and cycling trails meander along Piper Creek in scenic **Kin Canyon**, **Rotary Park**, all the way to Westerner Park. North of the river, Mountain Bike Park provides a range of cycling challenges, including some limited stunt and jump areas. Pedestrians share this natural park area bordering a sensitive wetland. The Trans Canada Trail winds through Red Deer with a Trans Canada Trail pavilion located along the Pond Loop trail at Bower Ponds.

City of Red Deer

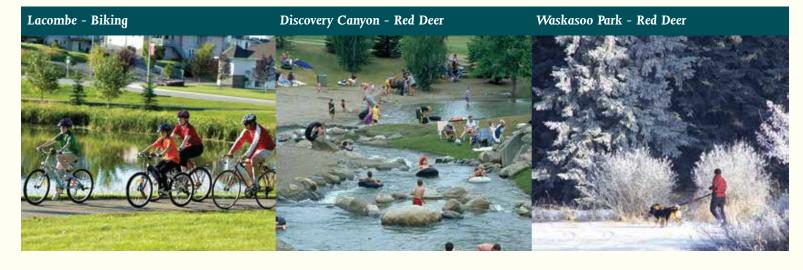
Near Waskasoo Park's east end is the excellent Kerry Wood Nature Centre (39), which operates a number of natural history programs. Nearby is the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary 32, Alberta's oldest federal migratory bird sanctuary (established in 1924), which protects 11.8 km² of spruce, poplar, and mixed wood forest along with meadows, marshes, and two oxbow lakes. Visitors can explore the Dr. George Trail, a 1 km paved loop (wheelchair accessible) through poplar forest, with a bird blind and viewing deck, and the 4 km **Wishart Trail**, which circles the West and East Gaetz Lakes, passing through meadows and deciduous and spruce forests and climbing to several lookouts.

More than 30 km of groomed cross country ski trails are maintained in Waskasoo Park, centered around Heritage Ranch, Great Chief Park and the Riverbend Golf and **Recreation Area**, the latter featuring a biathlon shooting range (www.reddeernordic.ca). Shorter trail loops are also available at Barrett Park and Red Deer College.

the trails and canoe launch at the McKenzie Trail Recreation Area. The paved 9 km North Bank Trail follows the north side of the Red Deer River linking Heritage Ranch to the Three Mile Bend Recreation Area, where trails, the Central Alberta Freestyle Ski Club's facilities, and a remote control car track offer diverse recreation opportunities.

The paved 7 km **South Bank Trail** links Heritage Ranch to



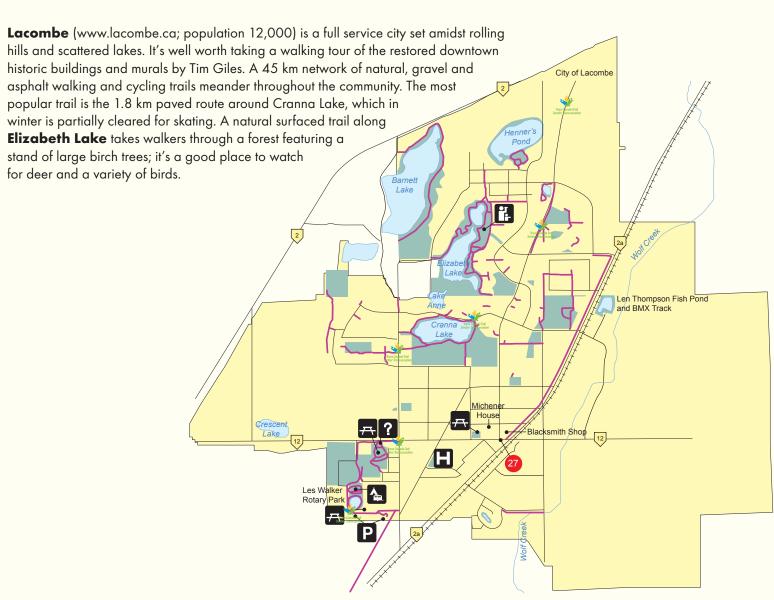


North of Red Deer

Sections of the Trans Canada Trail are being built to the north and will eventually connect Red Deer and Ponoka (www.centralalbertatrails.org). The trail now extends north from Red Deer, crossing the Blindman River south of Blackfalds and the Federal Agricultural Field Station on its way to Lacombe.

Blackfalds (www.blackfalds.com; population 6,767) has 7-8 km of completed trails and pathways within town and is an important connection of the Trans Canada Trail. The first indoor section of the Trail is currently being built within the Abbey Master Builder Centre. The Trail will pass through the recreation centre allowing users to view a wonderful tile mosaic featuring the heritage of

City of Lacombe 5



To the north near **Morningside** and east of Highway 2A, the **J.J. Collett Natural Area** preserves 6.57 km² of rolling terrain formed from glacial till and stabilized sand dunes. More than 18 km of walking trails wind through shrubs, aspen groves, white spruce stands and meadows.

Not far away, portions of the Trans Canada Trail are in place south of Ponoka. Eventually residents and visitors will be able to walk and cycle on the trail between Morningside and Ponoka and ride their horses to the new Calnash Ag-Event Centre.

Within the vibrant Town of Ponoka, (www.ponoka.org; population 6,600) the paved Diamond Willow Trail follows the east banks of the placid Battle River for 5.2 km. It's a great place to walk, jog, cycle or inline skate, while watching for waterfowl and song birds and stopping to read interpretive signage. At the nearby Ponoka Community Golf Course, some 5 km of cross country ski trails, from novice to more advanced, are maintained in winter.

Northeast of Red Deer

In the Village of Alix (www.villageofalix.ca), the 6 km gravel Alix Lake Nature Trail follows the shore of this parkland lake. It's a relaxing spot to walk, cycle and look for birds, deer and wildflowers.

To the east, Stettler (www.stettler.net) features a downtown historical walking tour, and is the launching point for Alberta Prairie Railway (2) (www.absteamtrain.com) steam train rides going north to Red Willow and south through rural countryside to Big Valley. A network of walking and cycling paths runs through town, including a partially paved route from West Stettler Recreation Park and along Red Willow Creek to Cold Lake Migratory Bird Refuge 19.

Rochon Sands Provincial Park features gravel walking and cycling trails around the campground, along the shore of Buffalo Lake and into the hills behind.

The new **Donalda Hiking Trail** travels 1.2 km north from the **Village of Donalda** to a 120 acre site that can be explored on and off trails (www.village.donalda.ab.ca/hiking-trails/). Here, visitors can enjoy stellar views from overlooks, explore a deep coulee or have a picnic. The **Donalda and District Museum** 23 features First Nations and Metis history, historic buildings from the Donalda Cooperative Creamery and 900 antique lamps. To celebrate its lamp collection, in 2000, the town built the world's largest lamp 71 which is lit each evening at dusk.

Farther east, the Nature's Way Walking Trail meanders for 2 km through the Village of Alliance (www.villageofalliance.ca). While in town, check out the steel sculptures and main street murals.

Bashaw's (www.townofbashaw.com) Centennial Nature Trail features interpretive sign and benches in a secluded setting. There are opportunities for ice fishing, cross country skiing and snowmobiling in the area.

Sedgewick features a 2.5 km trail from town to Sedgewick Lake, renowned for its bird watching, especially during spring and fall migrations. North of **Killam** is the site of the Iron Creek Meteorite, known to Aboriginals as the Manitou Stone, which was removed in the 1860s and is now located in the Syncrude Gallery of Aboriginal Culture in the Royal Alberta Museum. Nearby, the Hardisty Nordic Ski Club maintains 7.5 km of cross country ski trails around **Hardisty** (www.hardisty.ca) and its golf course. A summer trail links Hardisty Lake Park to the town. Grazing reserves in the Amisk, Hughenden and Bodo areas located in the southeast corner of the map region have non motorized trails; permission from the lease holders is required to use them (www.esrd.alberta.ca).

Wainwright (www.wainwright.ca; population 5,800) is located close to the scenic Battle River Valley and Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Wainwright. The **Tatanka Trails** ("buffalo" in Sioux) circumnavigate the town and feature 6 km of asphalt walking and cycling paths. This network is highlighted by four short loop trails in Bevan's Park and Nature Area and the Baier Subdivision that travel through rolling plains, aspen forest and a bullrush wetland rich with bird life.

Near town, CFB Wainwright sits on the location of the former Buffalo National Park, created in 1909 to help preserve dwindling herds of bison and closed in 1939. A buffalo statue in Wainwright commemorates the herds that once roamed the park.

Located 7.7 km northwest of Wainwright on Hwy 14 and township road 45, at 2,775 feet long and 195 feet high, the historic 1908 Battle River Railway Trestle Bridge (8) is the second largest free standing trestle in Canada. A rest area and lookout site provide views of this active trestle bridge and the Battle River Valley.



♣ ₩ 60

Dillberry Lake Provincial Park 6

Located 41 km northeast of Wainwright, along township road 470 you will come to the **Koroluk Landslide** 41 (www.mdwainwright.ca/attractions), which extends over a one mile area with an interpretive kiosk and footpath offering information and views of the slide.

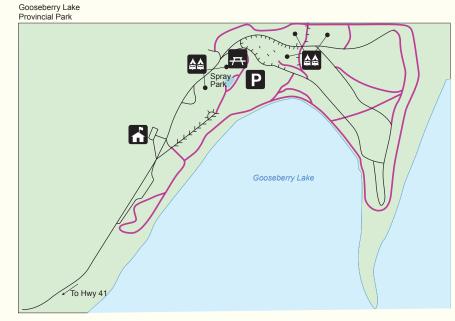
Just southeast of Wainwright, the Arm Lake Recreation **Area** includes a 15 km network of hiking trails around the lake. It's a fine place to watch for wildlife, including the occasional pair of Turkey Vultures that may live in the area.

Dillberry Lake Provincial Park is set in a striking landscape of sand dunes, grasslands, shrubs and stunted aspen. Its scattered lakes are an internationally recognized staging area for migrating shorebirds and the park is also home to a mix of boreal, grassland and parkland bird species.

Three loop trails—**Kettle Lake** (6 km), **Loon** (5 km) and Ranger Lake (2.5 km) provide fine opportunities to view this diversity of landscapes and wildlife.



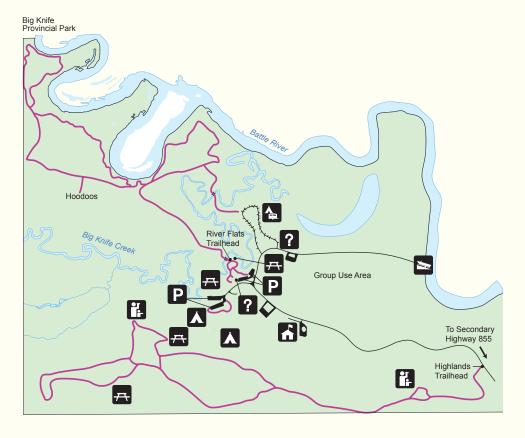
Gooseberry Lake Provincial Park



Gooseberry Lake Provincial Park contains a mix of upland aspen forest, harbouring deer and small mammals, and an alkaline lake fed by seepage springs that sustain a diversity of plants. Gooseberry Lake, a designated Important Bird Area, is a major staging area for migrating shorebirds, highlighted each May and August by thousands of Red-necked Phalaropes. A short grassy walking and cycling trail from the campground follows the edge of the lake.

Big Knife Provincial Park

Big Knife Provincial Park is at the junction of Big Knife Creek and the Battle River and features marshy oxbow lakes and badlands The 3 km Highlands Trail loops through aspen forest and follows the scenic river valley, while the 4 km River Flats Trail travels through open meadows and forests, offering excellent viewing of wildlife such as white-tailed and mule deer. Both trails are on natural surfaces and can be cross country skied (ungroomed) in winter. At the nearby **Diplomat Mine Interpretive Site 21**, visitors can walk for 1 km along a shale interpretive trail that passes by reclamation areas and antique coal mining equipment, including a huge



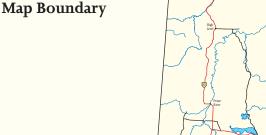




The landscapes of Battle River are a fascinating mix of parklands and prairies. They range from glacially carved topography and aspen dominated forests to rolling plains and prairie lakes, with a healthy sprinkling of urban river valleys. Throughout this varied terrain are trail systems for all types of

This map region is framed by three highways (Hwy. 16 on the north, Hwy. 2 along the west and Hwy. 12 on the south), and by the Saskatchewan border on the east. Its western anchors are the cities of Edmonton in the north, and Red Deer in the south, both boasting extensive river valley trail networks for a diversity of non motorized uses. To the east are scattered smaller cities and towns, many of them offering fine trail systems for walking, cycling and, in some cases, cross country skiing. The primary snowmobiling area covers lands around the Ministik Lake Bird Sanctuary, southeast of Edmonton.

Outside the population centres are expansive protected areas, offering nature lovers and outdoor recreationists plenty of opportunities to explore trails through diverse terrain and watch for wildlife. Just east of Edmonton, for example, the wetlands and boreal forest of Elk Island National Park of Canada and Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area (www.beaverhills.ca) harbour a wealth of bird and animal life (including Elk Island's prized bison herd) and some of the province's densest trail systems east of the mountains. Even prairie provincial parks in the eastern reaches of this map contain internationally renowned staging areas for migratory



Battle River Trail



Respect the Land

Access to recreational opportunities on public and private lands is built on a oundation of responsible use. By

focusing your activities on managed trails, you are contributing to the sustainable enjoyment of Alberta's magnificent natural landscapes.

Trail Etiquette and Safety

Be a leader and ambassador for your favourite outdoor activity. Join the many hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, cross country skiers, off highway vehicle users, snowmobile enthusiasts and other recreationists who proudly take a stewardship role by:

knowing and abiding by applicable regulations and trail

- staying on designated trails and restricting use to approved
- sharing trails with courtesy and respect Wheels yield to heels; heels yield to horses. Motorized users should pull over to the right side of the trail, turn off the engine and
- remove helmets when horses are approaching; respecting landowners by leaving gates and fences as found and avoiding livestock;
- leaving artifacts and natural features undisturbed;
- controlling pets and keeping them on leash;
- properly disposing all waste in provided facilities and following the pack-in, pack-out philosophy;
- avoiding the spread of invasive species by cleaning recreation equipment (vehicles, tents, packs, boots, etc.) after every trip and using certified weed-free feed for pack
- minimizing the threat of wildfire by ensuring flammable debris is kept away from hot exhaust systems, and by keeping campfires small, contained and in designated areas, and ensuring they are fully extinguished;
- respecting wildlife by observing from a distance and properly managing food and garbage;
- avoiding recreation use during sensitive times (e.g. wet conditions, wildlife mating and rearing seasons) and in sensitive areas (e.g. watercourses, stream banks, wetlands
- and alpine areas); ensuring motorized vehicles are licensed and insured, and that all vehicles and equipment are operated with care;
- actively participating in local club and trail stewardship

wearing an approved helmet for your particular activity;

programs. For more information on responsible recreation and

stewardship opportunities, visit www.esrd.alberta.ca. and www.albertaparks.ca

