

Jasper National Park of Canada

★ www.pc.gc.ca/jasper

At 11,228 km², Jasper is the largest national park in the Canadian Rockies and one of several parks that make up the Rocky Mountain World Heritage Site. While much of Jasper's great expanse lies in the deep backcountry, most of its 1,200-plus kilometres of trails can be easily accessed from paved roads. Some 190 km of the park's trails can also be found in and around the Jasper townsite.

Jasper truly has something for every type of non-motorized trail user. The choices on foot range from short, paved trails to dramatic canyons and groomed cross-country ski tracks to some of the most famous backpacks in Canada. Mountain bikers can spend days exploring networks of trails, while equestrian enthusiasts can take a day's or a week's ride.

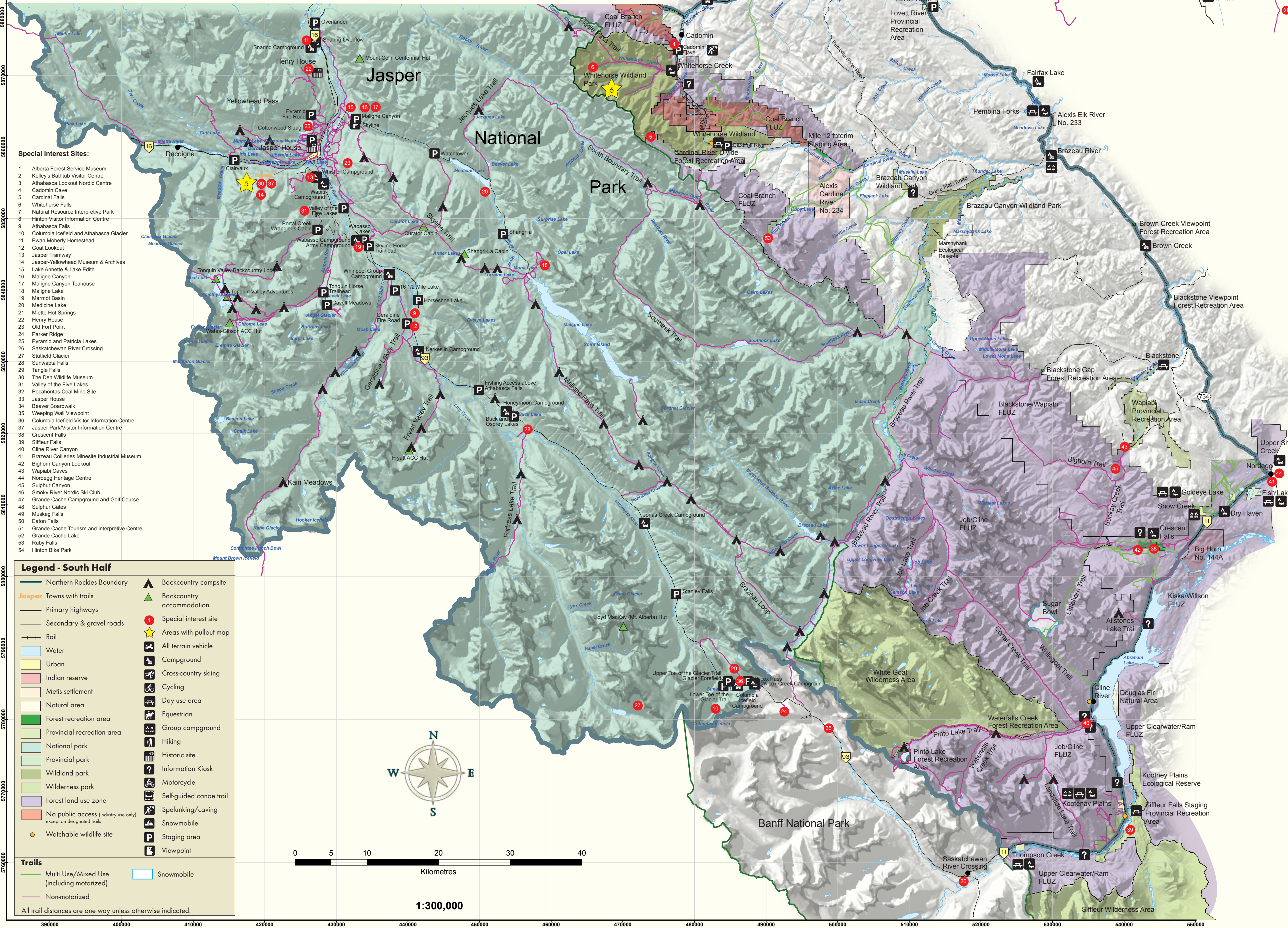
Jasper's valleys are long and wide, providing unobstructed, distant views of a panorama of peaks. The forest cover also tends to be light, frequently giving way to viewpoints overlooking the alpine splendour. The valleys, too, offer substantial rewards: big, glaciated lakes and even rare alpine sand dunes.

Jasper has a full range of tourist attractions and services, including two park information centres [Jasper townsite³⁷ and Columbia Icefield³⁶], historic sites, museums and accommodations ranging from hostels and campgrounds to world-class resorts. Check www.jaspercanadianrockies.com (800-473-8135) for more information on events and attractions.

Hiking

The Columbia Icefield¹⁰ is arguably the signature attraction in Jasper National Park. From the lower parking lot across the highway from the Icefield Centre, scores of visitors trek up a well-beaten path (1.5 km return) to the toe of Canada's most accessible glacier, the Athabasca (Note: Travelling onto the crevassed glacier beyond is dangerous). For a superb overview of the Athabasca Glacier¹⁹ and a glimpse at the expansive icefield beyond, head south to the Wilcox Campground and hike into the alpine meadows of **Wilcox Pass** (2.4 km return to the first viewpoint), often frequented by grazing bighorn sheep.

Heading north, the Icefield Parkway (Highway 93) passes two thundering waterfalls, Sunwaga²⁸ and Athabasca⁹, both reached by short, paved walks. A detour up the winding Cavell Road leads to the base of the towering Mount Edith Cavell. Here, the well-used **Path of the Glacier Loop** (1.6 kilometres return) passes near a hanging glacier, while the 7 km (return) **Cavell Meadows Trail** circles through alpine terrain. Back on Highway 93, a popular family trail (4.2 km return) loops through the scenic **Valley of the Five Lakes**.



Family walks abound in and around the Town of Jasper (www.jasper-alberta.com). The **Jasper Discovery Trail**, with lots of interpretive signage, rings the town, and quiet nearby walks circle the tranquil, turquoise waters of **Lake Annette**¹⁵ (2.4 km, wheelchair accessible) and **Lac Beauvert**; the latter passes the famous Jasper Park Lodge³⁴ and its renowned golf course. The slightly greater effort of hiking up to the bald summit of **Old Fort Point**²³ (3.5 km return), across the Athabasca River from town, is amply rewarded by a stunning panorama of the surrounding peaks and valleys.

Just north of town, the long Maligne Valley offers plenty of choices for walkers and hikers. A 2.1 km paved trail around **Maligne Canyon**¹⁶ is a magnet for visitors, who gawk from several bridges into the depths of the limestone gorge. Further up the valley at Maligne Lake¹⁸ – the largest glaciated lake in the Canadian Rockies – options range from the lakeside **Mary Schaeffer Loop** (3.2 km return) to stiffer climbs to **Bald Hills** (10.4 km return) and **Opal Hills** (8.2 km return) and their superb views over the lake. Near the park's northeast boundary, a side road off Highway 16 leads to Miette Hot Springs²¹, a perfect place to soak after a fine, steep hike up **Sulphur Skyline** (9.6 km return).

The following three multi-day hikes are very popular, so making campsite reservations (780-852-6177) well in advance is recommended; park wilderness passes are also required for backcountry overnight trips. Because they are in sensitive caribou range, all three routes prohibit dogs.

The **Skyline Trail** is justly considered one of Canada's premiere multi-day hikes. For more than half its 45 km length, the route stays above tree line, offering continuous and varied views over the wild country between Maligne Lake and Maligne Canyon. The **Tanquin Valley** (42 km return) is also very popular for its alpine meadows and the sublime Amethyst Lakes, backed by the impressive long rock wall of the Ramparts. Not far from the Columbia Icefield, the 80 km **Brazeau Loop** explores tremendously varied, remote country, much of it in the alpine.



Mountain Biking

The Jasper townsite area offers 190 km of cross-country mountain biking options, ranging from quick rides to all-day excursions that combine a number of loops on lightly forested benchlands. Favourites include the intermediate **Old Fort Point**²³ to **Wabasso Lake** (15 km), which crosses several low ridges, and two advanced singletrack rides – **Saturday Night Loop** (25 km return) and the scenic **Overlander Trail** (16 km one way).

Close to town are two heart-pounding climbs to fine viewpoints: the **Palisades Lookout** (11 km) and **Signal Mountain Fire Road** (8.5 km). For flatter, quieter rides, cyclists can tour fire roads up the further removed valleys of **Fryatt Creek** (11 km) or **Whirlpool River** (8 km) or venture up to **Celestine Lake** (6.6 km).

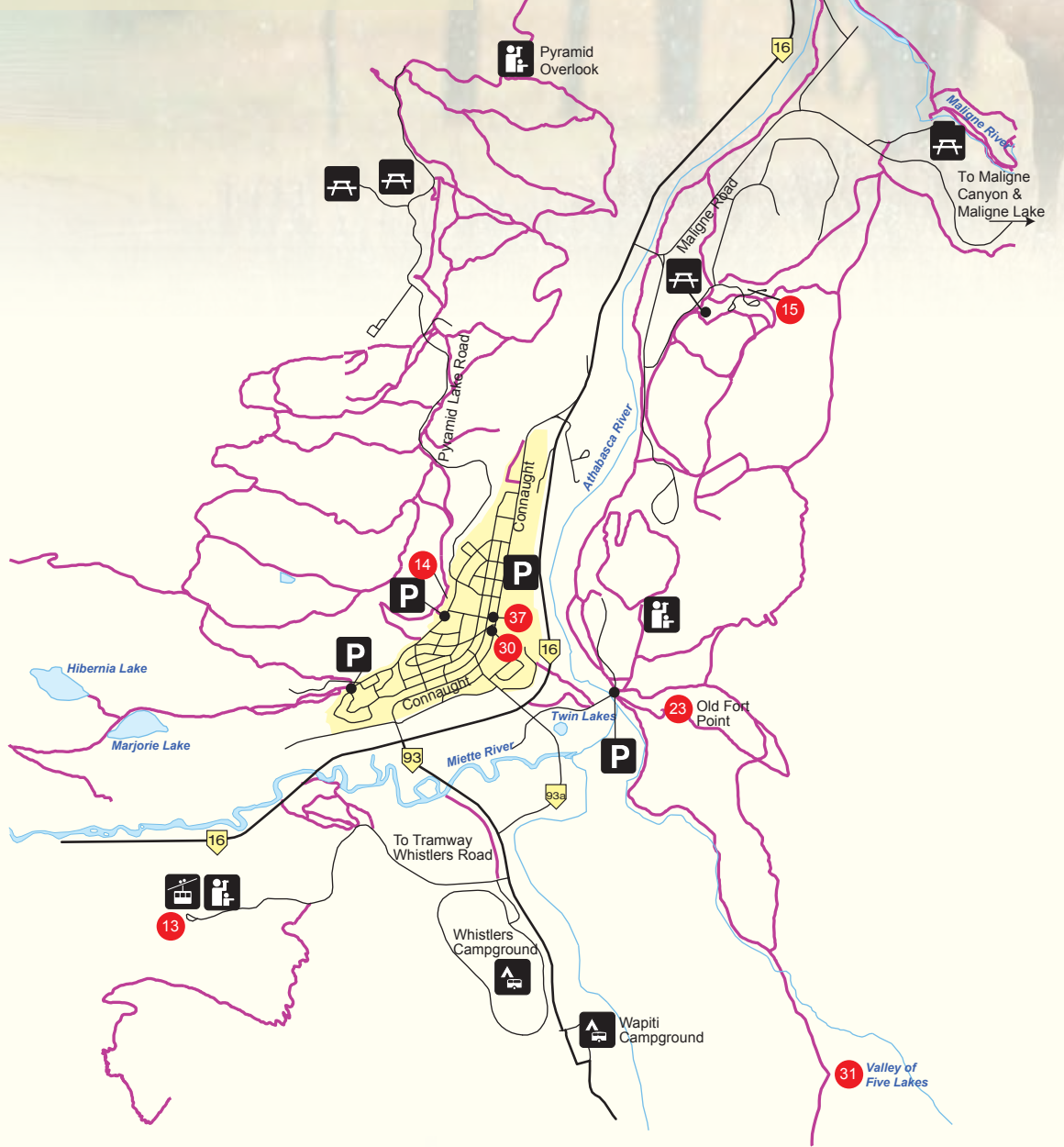
Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

Jasper has plenty of track-set ski trails, primarily located south of town along or near the forested Highway 93A, which retains its snow cover well and is largely closed to vehicle traffic in winter (they're not far from the Marmot Basin¹⁹ ski hill). One easy-to-moderate favourite here is the **Athabasca Falls / Meeting of the Waters Trail** (10.5 km), which offers fine views of the Athabasca and Whirlpool Valleys and their surrounding peaks. For more of a wilderness feel, consider track-set trails to **Summit Lakes** (5 km) and **Jacques Lake** (11 km), reached from the south and end of Medicine Lake²⁰ on the Maligne Valley Road.

Most park trails are excellent for snowshoeing, though snowshoers are asked not to use groomed ski trails.

The winter scenery is superb around Maligne Lake, though there are no track-set trails or directional signs for routes such as the 10.4 km (return) **Bald Hills Trail**. Alpine areas such as this are critical winter habitat for dwindling herds of mountain caribou; check at park information centres for restrictions and closures. For avalanche safety information, talk to park staff and check avalanche bulletins (800-667-1103 or www.avalanche.ca).

Jasper National Park



Equestrian

Riders can bring their own horses or hire an outfitter for both short rides and pack trips into the backcountry. The former should consult regulations on permitted equestrian areas, horse stabling and holding corrals and, in the backcountry, campsite rules and reservations and required permits for grazing and overnight stays. To help plan your equestrian trip, go to www.pc.gc.ca/jasper and check "Horseback Riding" under "Activities".

Close to town, equestrian riders can enjoy many of the same trails used by cyclists and hikers. Popular short rides explore **Maligne Canyon**, tour past **Lake Annette**¹⁸ on **Trail 4** and, from stables above town, follow a loop along **Patricia** and **Pyramid Lakes**²⁵.

Popular backcountry rides include guided trips into the Shovel Pass Lodge and the spectacular Tonquin Valley. Longer pack trips can venture far days along historic exploration routes, often looping into the park from trails originating in such places as the Willowme Wilderness, to the north.

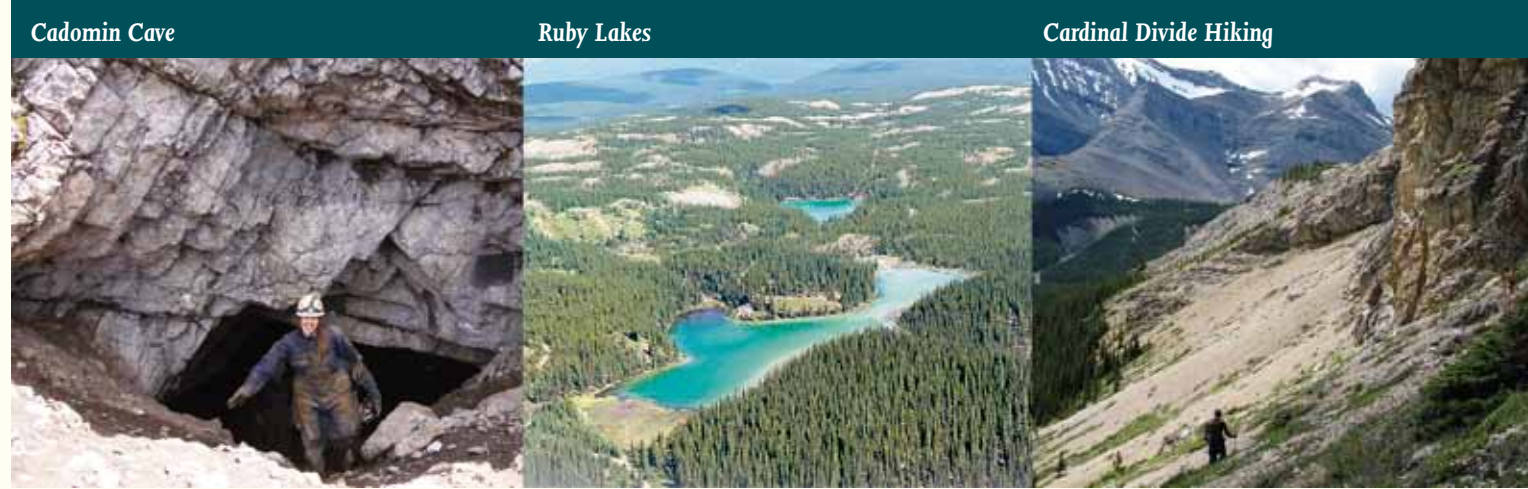
Whitehorse Wildland Provincial Park Area

Immediately west of Mount Cadomin is the entrance to the 175 km² **Whitehorse Wildland Provincial Park**, which protects prime habitat for such wildlife as bighorn sheep, grizzly bears and breeding harlequin ducks. This mountain haven is an increasingly popular destination for hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders and backpackers – the latter two can travel over **Fiddle Pass** to Miette Hot Springs²¹ in Jasper National Park.

The campground and corrals at Whitehorse Creek Provincial Recreation Area provide a convenient spot for launching scenic hiking, biking and horseback day trips along park trails to **Whitehorse Falls**⁶ (12 km one way), **Leyland Basin** (4 km) and **Drummond Creek** (9 km). Close by is the popular 2 km trail to **Cadomin Cave**⁴, which provides critical habitat for bats.

Further south along Grove Flats Road, the delightful 1.5 km **Cardinal Divide East Trail** quickly leads hikers to an alpine ridge with outstanding views of the surrounding mountains and foothills. The nearby 15 km **Cardinal River Headwaters Trail** takes users, including off-highway vehicles, through alpine terrain to Cardinal Falls.

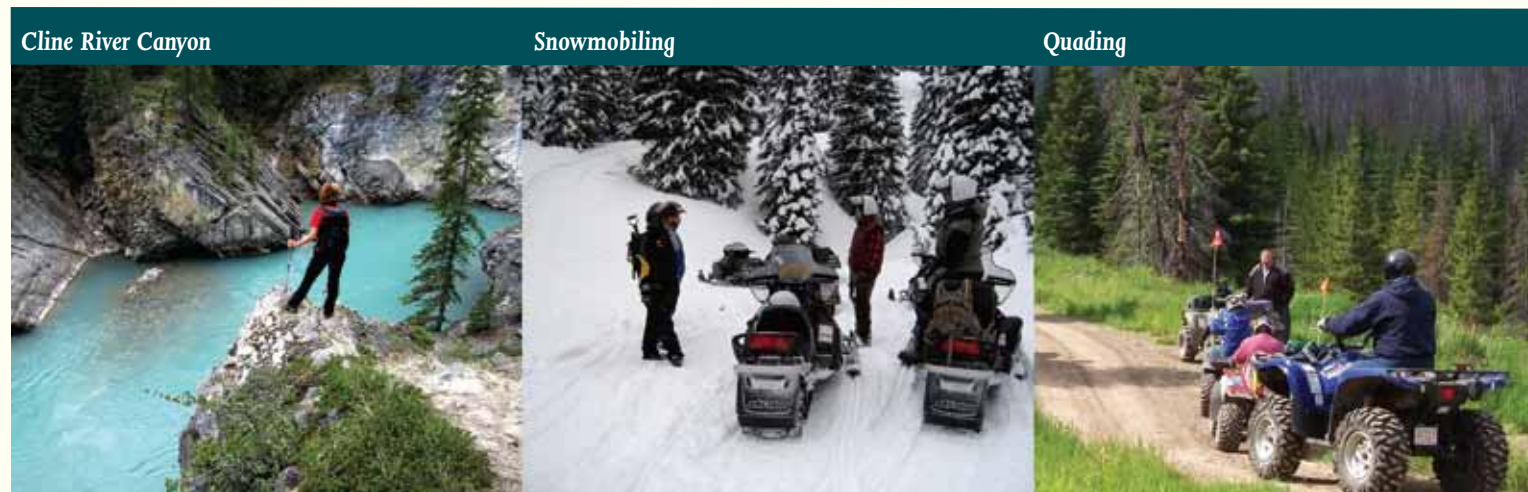
As Grove Flats Road swings east, it passes trailheads for several routes frequented by OHVs – these include the 8 km trail along **Toma Creek** (it becomes a hiking trail after reaching the Coal Branch FLUZ boundary) and a longer ride to **Ruby Lakes**, where camping is available. The latter trailhead also provides access to a much larger network of OHV trails west of **Brazeau Canyon Wildland Provincial Park**. OHVs are not allowed in the park.



Whitehorse Wildland Provincial Park



Bighorn Backcountry



This map encompasses the northern half of Bighorn Backcountry, 5,000 square kilometres of public lands east of Jasper and Banff National Parks. Here, numerous multi-use trails wander through forested foothills and front-range mountains, with many routes following fast-moving streams into alpine terrain. The nearby town of **Nordegg**⁴⁴ (www.travelnordegg.com; 403-721-2625 in summer) is a good gateway to the area, offering accommodation, other services, historical coal-mining sites⁴¹, scenic viewpoints and nearby trails.

Bighorn Backcountry is carefully managed to protect its sensitive environments and wildlife while still providing superb experiences for a wide range of trail users. For more detailed information, consult the Bighorn Backcountry map, available from Sustainable Resource Development. For current trail conditions, visit www.srd.alberta.ca/RecreationPublicUse/RecreationOnPublicLand/BighornBackcountry/TrailAreaUpdates.aspx

The **White Goat Wilderness Area** is included in this area and offers an uncrowded backcountry experience for hiking and camping. For more information, check www.albertaparks.ca

The Blackstone/Wapiabi FLUZ, west of the Forestry Trunk Road, contains a number of backcountry hiking, equestrian and cycling trails. From the Blackstone Gap Forest Recreation Area, the **Mons Chungo Trail** leads north into the scenic Mons Lakes area, the **Southest Trail** heads west towards Jasper National Park and the **Bighorn Trail** swings south along George Creek.

The Job/Cline FLUZ lies southwest of the Blackstone/Wapiabi and provides hiking, biking and equestrian trails that lead to spectacular views and wildlife viewing; the majority of its trails accessed from Highway 11 near Abraham Lake. The 42 km **Coral Creek Trail**, for example, is a gateway to longer explorations of remote areas to the north including **Job Creek**, **Whisker Creek** and **Brazeau River Trails**.

In winter, the **Whitegoat** and **Littlehorn Trails** are open to motorized traffic, providing access from Highway 11 to the **Sugar Bowl**, a sledding area for advanced snowmobilers experienced at travelling in avalanche terrain. A network of trails around **Shunda** and **Goldeye Lakes** provides a popular playground for off-highway vehicles and non-motorized activities, with lots of nearby camping available.

The southern reaches of Bighorn Country (on this map) are popular among overnight equestrian riders and hardy backpackers. A favourite trip is the 33 km trail to the lovely **Pinto Lake** along the south side of the Cline River. A trail on the river's north side provides access to the south end of White Goat Wilderness Area. The trails into picturesque **Allstones Lake** and, farther south, **Landside Lake**, **Lake of the Falls** and **Michele Lakes** are popular, with some seasonal equestrian closures.

Farther north, and west of Highway 11, there are a number of fine day hikes, offering spectacular views of waterfalls and alpine lakes. These include **Crescent Falls**³⁸ (6 km return), **Allstones Lake** (13 km return) and **Cline River Canyon**⁴⁰ (6 km return) and **Kinglet Lake** (12 km return).

Northern Rockies Trails

The Northern Rockies area is a trail lover's paradise. Several thousand kilometres of trails crisscross the mountains and foothills of this expansive region. They range from short interpretive walks close to major roads to remote week-long backcountry adventures.

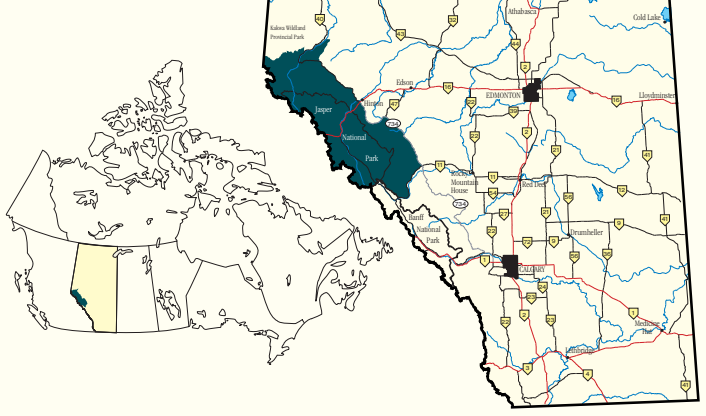
The map area embraces the northeast slopes of Alberta's Rocky Mountains, marked on the west by the Continental Divide separating the province from British Columbia. From this height of land – featuring some of the Rockies' loftiest, most glaciated peaks – the terrain tumbles down into broad valleys cut by the headwaters of big, wild rivers such as the Athabasca, North Saskatchewan and Smoky. The topography continues its eastward descent through the front ranges and into forested slopes of pine, fir and spruce.

The Northern Rockies area is big country, much of it protected and designated for non-motorized recreation use. Within its boundaries are the immense Jasper National Park of Canada, two sizable wilderness areas – Willowme and White Goat – and three provincial wildland parks – Rock Lake-Solomon Creek, Whitehorse and Brazeau Canyon. Here hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, cross-country skiers and snowshoers can explore canyons, visit waterfalls and venture over high passes into alpine meadows and mountain basins with stunning views. In many cases, the trails are designed to accommodate a variety of users. This map also covers the 500 km northern stretch of the Great Divide Trail, which links various hiking trails along the often-wild and remote Continental Divide.

There are also considerable opportunities for motorized trail uses on the lower slopes of the Coal Branch area and eastern portions of the Bighorn Backcountry region, with access to trails leading to splendid mountain and foothills landscapes. These public lands are managed by the Alberta government to ensure protection of sensitive environment and wildlife, with timing restrictions often in place for horses and OHVs.

The Northern Rockies is home to a wealth of wildlife with larger species including black and grizzly bears, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, woodland caribou, deer, wolves and cougars. Within the vast, mostly unsettled region covered in this map, there are only a few towns which offer a diversity of multiuse trails within and close to their boundaries as well as a full range of tourist services and attractions. Besides trails, the Northern Rockies region offers abundant opportunities for other recreational activities such as camping, fishing, rafting and sightseeing.

Northern Rockies Trail Map Boundary



Respect the Land

Access to recreational opportunities on public and private lands is built on a foundation 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 signs;
- staying on designated trails and restricting use to approved activities;
- 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 animals;
- 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;
- wearing an approved helmet for your particular activity; and
- actively participating in local club and trail stewardship programs.

For caving etiquette and safety visit www.caving.ab.ca/safety_and_manners

For more information on responsible recreation and stewardship opportunities, contact Alberta's recreation associations or visit www.srd.alberta.ca.