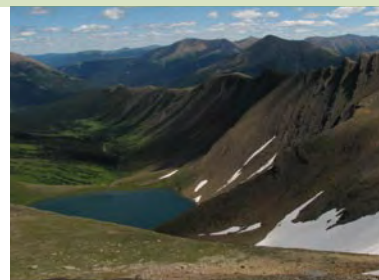




# Alberta Parks

## Whitehorse Wildland Park

*...picturesque falls...pristine landscapes...clean mountain air...*



### Whitehorse Wildland Park

Alberta's wildland parks preserve and protect natural landscapes and ecological processes and provide opportunities for backcountry recreation. In some wildland parks, trails and primitive backcountry campsites are provided to minimize visitor impacts on natural heritage values.

Whitehorse Wildland Park, established in August 1998, is 60 kilometres south of Hinton. The park is approximately 175 square kilometres in size.

### Site Description and Location

Whitehorse is located in the northern front ranges of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region. It shares a portion of its west boundary with Jasper National Park and its east boundary with the Cheviot coal mine.

There are many striking geological features and ground patterns in the park. The majority of the park is located above tree line and its extensive alpine meadows and subalpine slopes are home to numerous plant species. More than 277 species of plants have been documented in the park, including 37 that are considered rare or that have unusual distribution. At

lower elevations there are forests of lodgepole pine, Englemann spruce and subalpine fir. At higher elevations, alpine meadows contain a variety of hardy plant species such as willow shrubs, lichen and small alpine wildflowers. These plants survive in an extremely harsh environment and may take centuries to recover from human disturbance.

Wildlife species in the park include elk, moose, mule deer, bighorn sheep, grizzly bear, wolves, cougar, hoary marmot and pika. The park is particularly important for conservation of the grizzly bears that traverse the mountain ranges between Whitehorse and Jasper National Park. The park is also home to several varieties of high-mountain birds. Studies in the region have recorded 128 bird species. Of these, 70 species breed in the area and 28 are permanent residents. Bird species in the alpine and subalpine areas of Whitehorse include mountain bluebird, horned lark, American dipper, Townsend's solitaire, varied thrush, Townsend's warbler, golden-crowned sparrow and American pipit.

### Significant Features

The **Whitehorse Creek valley** is prime habitat for a variety of carnivores and ungulates, including grizzly bears and bighorn sheep. It is also breeding habitat for harlequin ducks, whose range in Alberta is restricted to the Rocky Mountain Natural Region.

**Fiddle Pass** provides one of the few east-west corridors in the region that penetrate the mountain barrier through to Jasper National Park. **Upper Whitehorse** Creek Falls, where water cascades down a steep rock wall, is a stunning sight.

**Cadomin Cave**, located within the park just southwest of the Town of Cadomin, is a limestone cave that scientists believe began forming many millions of years ago. The cave provides important habitat for bats and is one of four known bat hibernacula (over-wintering residences) in Alberta. To protect the bats from potentially lethal disturbances, Cadomin Cave is closed each year from September 1 until April 30; the cave is also closed from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m. during the month of August. There are significant risks associated with caving, so cave visitors must be knowledgeable about cave safety and be properly equipped for cave exploration.

## Whitehorse Wildland Park

There are spectacular mountain views from the top of **Cardinal Divide**, a wide ridge that separates two major watersheds. To the north, the Athabasca River system (which includes the McLeod River) drains into the Arctic Ocean, while to the south, the North Saskatchewan River system (which includes the Cardinal River) drains into Hudson Bay. The viewpoint at the top of Grave Flats road (a rough but auto-accessible road) provides a magnificent panoramic view of the Rocky Mountains. There are trails to the east and west of the parking lot; however, because the alpine soil is extremely sensitive to erosion travel is by foot only.

**Tripoli Ridge** forms the mountain backbone of the park, connecting Cardinal Divide to Whitehorse Creek. The ridge includes Tripoli, Cheviot and Prospect mountains and their upper eastern slopes above tree line.



The **Cardinal River** Headwaters is an open tundra valley between the western slopes of Tripoli Ridge and Jasper National Park. The upper headwaters beyond the falls are located in the park.

### Recreational Activities

A number of low-impact recreational activities can be pursued in the park including hiking, nature study, horseback riding, camping, hunting and fishing. Mountain biking is permitted on Upper Whitehorse Creek trail only; other areas in the park are either unsuitable or too fragile for mountain biking.



**Whitehorse Creek Provincial Recreation Area**, located 38 kilometres southwest of Robb on the park's eastern boundary, provides basic camping facilities as well as corrals, hitching rails and loading ramps for equestrian users.

### Jasper National Park

If you plan to go into Jasper National Park from Whitehorse, please be aware that different regulations and restrictions apply and that national park wilderness passes must be purchased for overnight stays in the backcountry. For information about Jasper National Park:

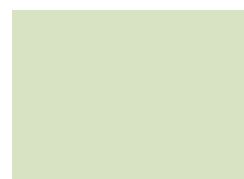
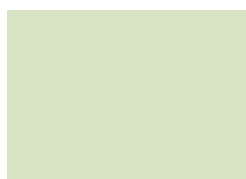
Phone: 780-852-6177

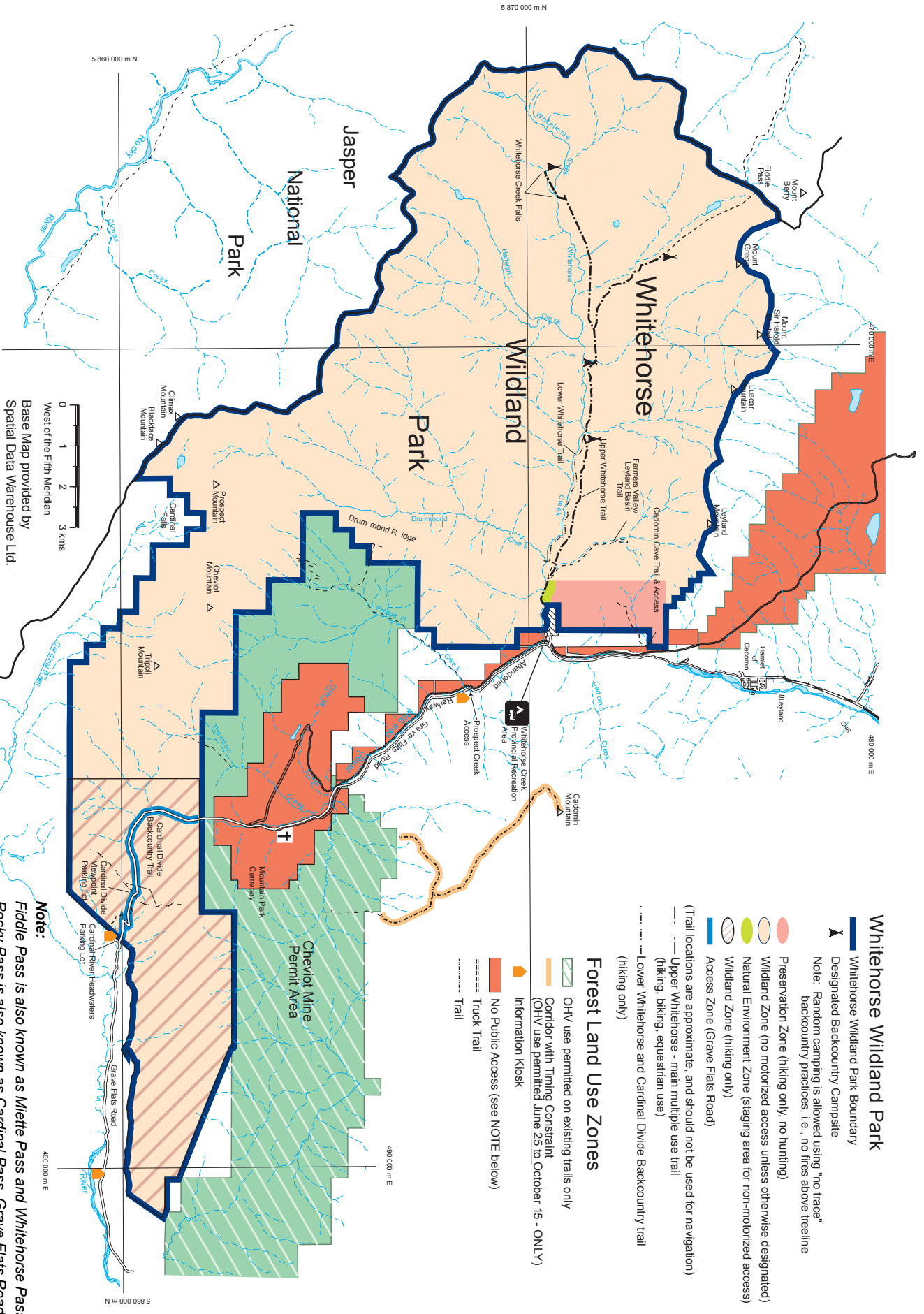
E-mail: [jnp\\_info@pch.gc.ca](mailto:jnp_info@pch.gc.ca)

Web site: [www.parks canada.gc.ca/jasper](http://www.parks canada.gc.ca/jasper)

### Cheviot Coal Mine

Elk Valley Coal's Cardinal River Operations has begun mining activity at its Cheviot Creek mine site. Start-up of mining operations has resulted in public access closures in the area, particularly west of Mountain Park. Access availability may change over the course of mining operations. For more information, call Elk Valley Coal at 1-866-306-9886 or visit their web site at [www.elkvalleycoal.ca](http://www.elkvalleycoal.ca).





### Whitehorse Wildland Park

- █ Whitehorse Wildland Park Boundary
  - ▲ Designated Backcountry Campsite
  - Note: Random camping is allowed using "no trace" backcountry practices, i.e., no fires above treeline
  - █ Preservation Zone (hiking only, no hunting)
  - █ Wildland Zone (no motorized access unless otherwise designated)
  - █ Natural Environment Zone (staging area for non-motorized access)
  - █ Wildland Zone (hiking only)
  - █ Access Zone (Grave Flats Road)
- (Trail locations are approximate, and should not be used for navigation)
- Upper Whitehorse - main multiple use trail (hiking, biking, equestrian use)
  - - - - Lower Whitehorse and Cardinal Divide Backcountry trail (hiking only)

### Forest Land Use Zones

- █ OHV use permitted on existing trails only
- █ Corridor with Timing Constraint (OHV use permitted June 25 to October 15 - ONLY)
- █ Information Kiosk
- █ No Public Access (see NOTE below)
- █ Truck Trail
- █ Trail

### No Public Access Note

Elk Valley Coal, Cardinal River Operators is actively mining the Cheviot creek mine site, resulting in public access closures in the area east of Whitehorse Wildland park. Access to Whitehorse Creek campground, Prospect Mtn. and Drummond Ridge through the mine permit area is still available through Prospect Creek for equestrian, mountain biking and hiking use only. Motorized vehicle access is restricted in this area. Most trails to the east side of Grave Flats road are still accessible to motorized vehicles. This may change as mining activity expands. Obey all signs in this area. For access to the mine site contact Elk Valley Coal at 1-866-306-9886.

0 1 2 3 kms  
West of the Fifth Meridian  
Base Map provided by  
Spatial Data Warehouse Ltd.

**Note:**  
Fiddle Pass is also known as *Miette Pass* and *Whitehorse Pass*.  
Rocky Pass is also known as *Cardinal Pass*. Grave Flats Road  
is also known as *Cardinal River Road*.



## *When visiting Whitehorse Wildland Park..*

- Protect vegetation by staying on trails whenever possible; do not build cairns or remove rocks that protect small plants.
- Never travel alone.
- Familiarize yourself with regulations pertinent to the area.
- Be knowledgeable about your route; obtain maps of the area you plan to travel through; keep track of where you are at all times by map and compass or GPS.
- Study the topographical features of your route and determine how many days your trip will take; be realistic about the amount of time you have and your physical capabilities.
- Inform family, friends or authorities of your intended route, camping spots and estimated return time.
- Bring sufficient clothing and gear such as food, matches, first aid kit and emergency blanket, even for a day trip.
- Weather conditions in wilderness areas are unpredictable – be prepared for sudden and unexpected changes.
- Be cautious when fording streams and rivers – they can be dangerous, especially when streamflows are high.
- It is recommended that backcountry travellers use camp stoves; they are lightweight, compact and efficient; they are more convenient than wood fires; and they leave no scars in the backcountry. Know how to properly construct a wood fire in the backcountry so that you are prepared in the event a wood fire becomes necessary. Use only dead wood lying on the ground (trees in subalpine areas grow very slowly and should never be used for campfires); make sure your fire is out and cold to the touch before retiring for the night and before leaving camp. Never leave your campfire unattended.
- For horses, supplemental feed such as hay, grain pellets and alfalfa cubes can be used to prevent over-grazing. Supplemental feeds should be stored in sealed containers to prevent tampering by wildlife. Please note that using hay as a supplemental feed has the potential to introduce noxious weeds into the backcountry – grain and alfalfa pellets are recommended.
- Leave no trace of your visit – pack out everything you pack in.
- Be respectful of wildlife; familiarize yourself with wildlife safety techniques.

### **Bear safety:**

- Make plenty of noise when approaching blind corners, dense shrubs and streams, and when moving into the wind.
- It is best to leave your pet at home; however, if you do travel with a pet, keep it on a leash at all times (loose dogs can attract and irritate bears).
- Always keep your group together.
- If you see signs of bear activity (i.e. fresh diggings along trails, bear scat, claw marks on trees), go back the way you came.
- Never store food or toilet articles (toothpaste, soap, deodorant, etc.) in your tent.
- Ensure that your cooking area is well separated from your sleeping area to prevent food odour contamination; **never sleep in clothes worn while cooking**. Cooking and food storage areas should be at least 100 metres away from your tent.
- Seal garbage in plastic bags; never burn or bury food scraps; always pack out your garbage.
- If possible, hang food, garbage and equipment high in a tree to discourage bears from investigating them.
- Keep young children close at hand, especially at night, dusk and dawn.
- At night, use a flashlight and move cautiously in and around your campsite.

For more information about Whitehorse Wildland Park:  
Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation & Culture  
Parks, Conservation, Recreation & Sport Division  
Edson District Office  
107 Provincial Building  
111-54 Street  
Edson, AB  
T7E 1T2  
Phone 780-723-8552  
To call toll free from anywhere in Alberta, dial 310-0000 and enter the number.

For information about other protected areas in Alberta or to obtain a copy of the Whitehorse Wildland Park management plan call 780-427-3582 (toll-free 1-866-427-3582), or visit [www.albertaparks.ca](http://www.albertaparks.ca).

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