Whitehorse Wildland Park

Alberta’s wildland parks preserve and protect natural landscapes and ecological processes; they also provide opportunities for low-impact 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 66 kilometers south of Hinton. The park is approximately 175 square kilometers in size.

**Site Description and Location**

Whitehorse Wildland Park is located in the northern forest ranges of the Rocky Mountains in 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 within the park. The majority of the park is located above tree line and its extensive alpine meadows and sub-alpine slopes are home to numerous plant species. More than 277 species of plants have been documented in the park, including 57 that are considered rare or that have unusual distribution. At lower elevations there are forests of lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce and sub-alpine fir. At higher elevations, alpine meadows contain a variety of hardy plant species such as willow scrubs, lichen and small alpine wildflowers. These plants survive in an extremely harsh environment and can 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.

**Recreational Activities**

A number of low-impact recreational activities can be pursued in the park including hiking, nature study, horseback riding, backcountry 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.

**Insect Control**

A number of insects inhabit the park, including ticks, black flies and mosquitoes. Many hikers and backcountry users are bitten by these pests. It is recommended that you take precautions before venturing into such areas.

**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 toiletries (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 the clothes you wear when you cook.**
- **Cooking and food storage areas should be at least 100 meters away from your tent to decrease the chances of you being in the way should a bear decide to check out your food supply.**
- **Seal your garbage in plastic bags; never burn or bury food scraps; always pack out your garbage.**
- **If possible, hang your food, garbage and equipment high in a tree to discourage bears from investigating them.**

If you plan to go into Jasper National Park from Whitehorse Wildland Park, 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 more information about Jasper National Park call 780-852-8177, email them at jnp_info@pc.gc.ca, or visit their website at www.pc.gc.ca/jasper.

**For more information contact:**
Alberta Community Development Parks & Protected Areas
Edson District Office
107 Provincial Building
111-54 Street
Edson, AB 780 778-3582

To call toll free from anywhere in Alberta, dial 1-866-427-3582, or visit our web site at www.albertaparks.ca

To obtain a copy of the Whitehorse Wildland Park management plan (or other protected area management plans), visit the Parks & Protected Areas web site at www.ed.gov.ab.ca/parks/managing, or call 780-427-3582.

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When visiting Whitehorse Wildland Park:

- Protect vegetation from trampling; stay on trails wherever possible; do not build cairns or remove stones that protect small plants.
- Be prepared for backcountry travel. Travel with others, bring extra clothing and gear such as food, matches, a first aid kit and an emergency blanket (even on day trips).
- Be informed; obtain maps of the area you plan to travel through; know how to use a compass so that you can keep track of your whereabouts at all times.
- Familiarize yourself with regulations pertinent to the area.
- Practice "no-trace" camping.

• It is recommended that all backcountry travelers use camp stoves; they are lightweight, compact and efficient; camp stoves are more convenient than wood fires and they leave no scars in the backcountry. If a camp-stove becomes inoperative or an emergency necessitates the use of a wood fire, use existing fire pits or learn how to properly construct a fire pit; use only dead wood lying on the ground (trees in the sub-alpine zone 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; therefore grain and/or alfalfa pellets are recommended.

Remember - take only memories; leave only footprints.

Note:
Elk Valley Coal, Cardinal River Operations 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.