


# William A. Switzer Provincial Park

 **Park Guide**

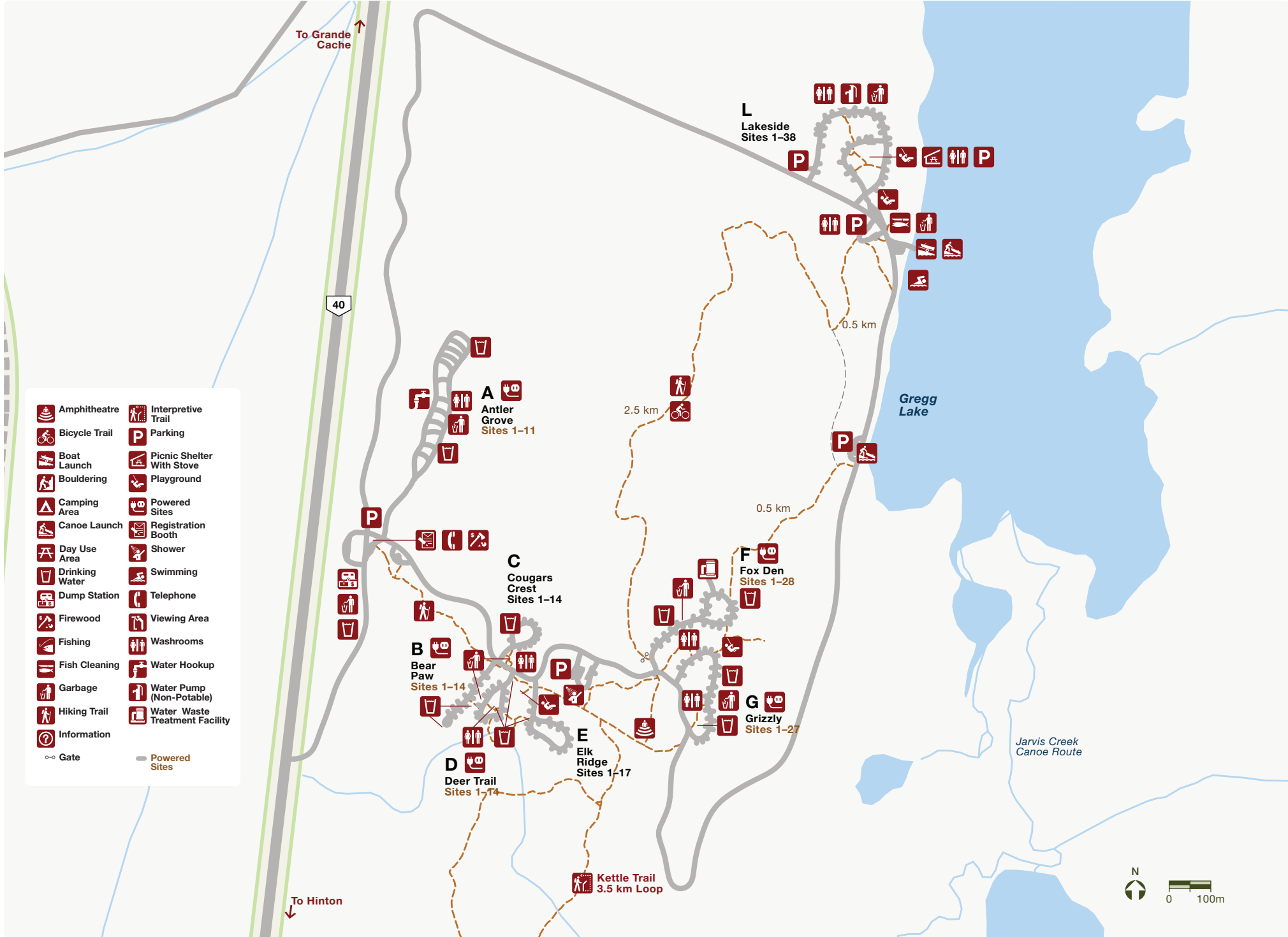


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William A. Switzer Provincial Park is located 20 km northwest of Hinton on Highway 40 in the foothills of Alberta's Northern Rockies. The 63 square km park has magnificent views of the mountains. Switzer Park has five campgrounds spread out through the valley along a chain of five lakes connected by a navigable creek and surrounded by forests of pine, spruce and aspen. It is home to an abundance of wildlife including grizzly and black bears, wolves, cougars, foxes, moose, beavers and loon. The park offers year-round recreational opportunities to connect with nature. Favourite activities include: canoeing Jarvis Creek, relaxing at the beach, water skiing, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, snow shoeing and cross-country skiing.

## Visitor Centre

Come and take in the gorgeous view from the Visitor Centre deck at Kelley's Bathtub Day Use Area. Step inside and explore the nature and wildlife exhibits, and browse the gift shop for a souvenir. Park staff can provide you with maps, brochures and information on provincial parks in Alberta's Northern Rockies region, as well as answer your questions on local flora and fauna. Firewood is available for sale in peak season.



Gregg Lake Campground Map

## Visitor Programs

Switzer Park is the perfect location for environmental education. School groups can select from a dozen curriculum based programs offered throughout the school season. On weekends throughout the summer, join our park interpreters and take part in guided hikes, amphitheatre presentations and a variety of family adventures and interpretive programs. You can also sign out one of our six "family adventure backpacks" from the Visitor Centre to help you discover the park's natural wonders on your own.

### Wildlife Viewing

It's just a short walk from the parking lot on the Cache Lake road to a viewing blind hidden in a meadow, where deer, coyotes, birds and many small mammals frequent at dawn and dusk. Along Jarvis Creek is another location where many visitors spot moose, otters, beavers, eagles, owls, hawks and more. The Friendly Vista Trail provides access to Jarvis Creek and

offers good opportunities to discover some of the 120 or more bird species that frequent Switzer Park. Sign out a wildlife viewing pack from the Visitor Centre, equipped with field guides and binoculars.

### Athabasca Lookout Viewpoint

At 1585 metres, this viewpoint offers breathtaking views of Joachim Valley and Rocky Mountain front ranges. Bring binoculars and watch for hawks and eagles soaring high above the valley below. Athabasca Lookout is ablaze with wildflowers in the month of July. The 1 km uphill hike to the viewpoint starts from the luge parking lot, at the end of the Hinton Nordic Centre Road, and takes approximately 20 minutes one way. The viewpoint connects with a beautiful ridge-walk trail, providing 4 km of unforgettable mountain scenery. Don't forget to bring your camera!



## Recreation

The five lakes in the park are ideal for fishing, paddling and other water sports. Water skiing and tubing are permitted on Jarvis Lake, where a sandy beach with a playground, picnic area, and a boat launch are found at the day use area. Gregg Lake also has day use area with a playground and boat launch (boating speed restrictions apply). Another favourite swimming hole is located at Kelley's Bathtub Day Use Area. Here you will find a small beach, picnic tables with fire pits, a day use shelter with wood stove, and hiking trails including the popular 1 km Kelley's Bathtub Loop that begins from the deck of the Visitor Centre. Switzer Park has a variety of easy to moderate hiking and mountain biking trails for the whole family. Winter visitors can enjoy over 50 km of groomed cross-country ski trails throughout the park at the Hinton Nordic Centre, Joachim Valley, Gregg Lake Trail and Jarvis Lake Trails.



## Canoeing/Kayaking

Jarvis Creek connects all five lakes and offers a unique paddling adventure. Birds, beavers, otters and moose can often be seen while you paddle through the lakes and wetlands. A self-guided canoe route begins where Highway 40 crosses Jarvis Creek near the turnout to Kelley's Bathtub Day Use Area. Signs along the way will guide you to the take out point at Graveyard Lake or you can return to your starting point by paddling back upstream. The route will take approximately one hour on a one way trip, or longer if you take your time and explore the lakes along the way. Be prepared to get your feet wet while making small portages over beaver dams. It's all part of the adventure!

## Fishing

Switzer Park was historically known as "Fish Lakes". All five lakes are home to native whitefish and northern pike. The trout pond next to the Cache Lake Road is stocked with rainbow trout. Remember to abide by fishing regulations. Happy fishing!

## Contact

**Campsite Reservations**  
Web: [reserve.albertaparks.ca](http://reserve.albertaparks.ca)  
Toll Free: 1-877-537-2757

**Alberta Parks Visitor Information**  
Web: [albertaparks.ca](http://albertaparks.ca)  
Hinton Office: 780-865-8395  
Visitor Centre: 780-865-5600  
Gregg Lake Campground Booth: 780-865-5152  
Toll Free: 1-877-537-2757

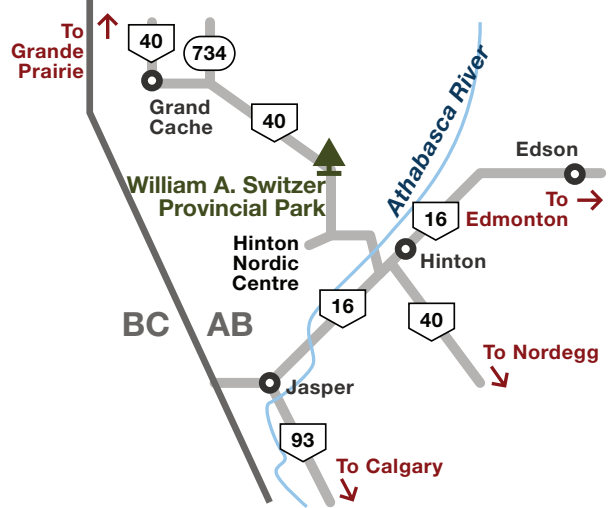
**Fire Bans in Alberta**  
Web: [albertaparks.ca/firebans](http://albertaparks.ca/firebans)

**Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance)**  
Phone: 911

**Illegal Activity/Public Safety (24/7)**  
Phone: 310-LAND (5263)

**Report-A-Poacher**  
Phone: 1-800-642-3800

**Forest Fires**  
Phone: 310-FIRE (3473)

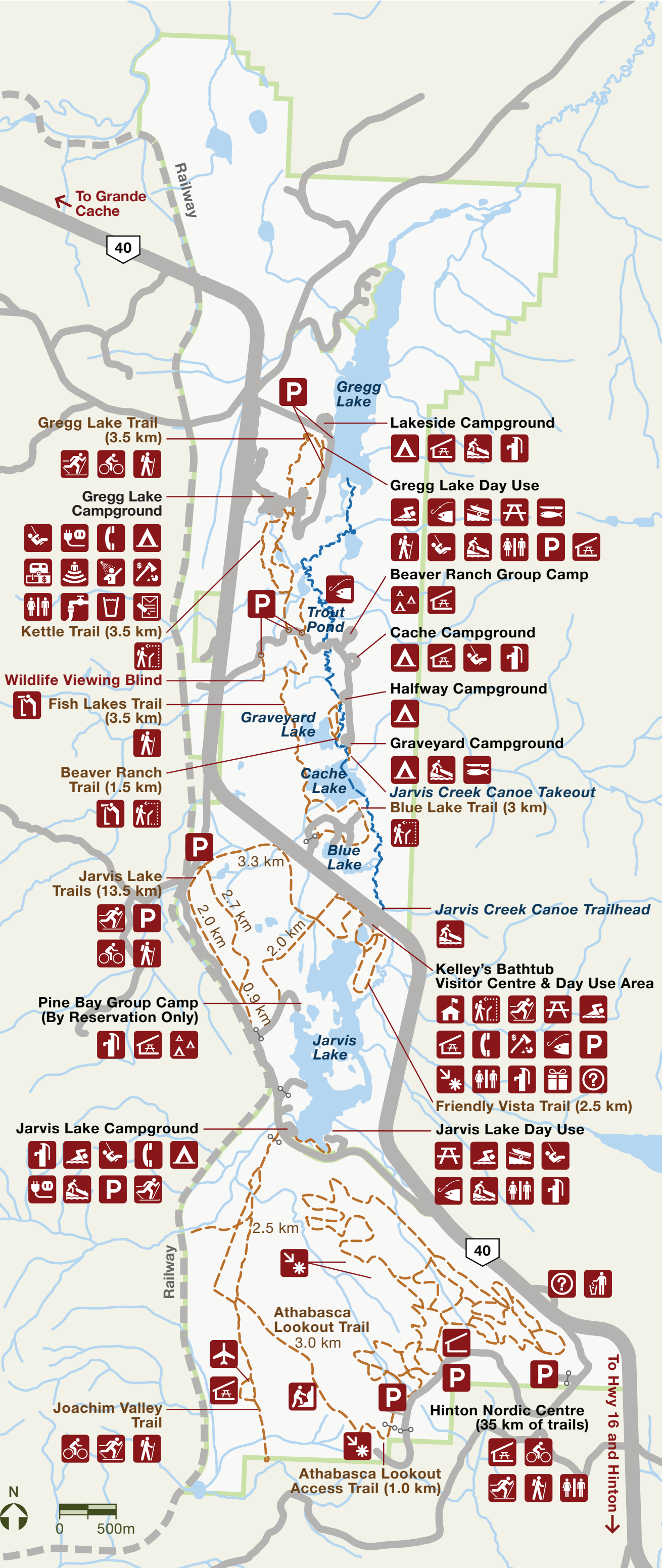


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William A. Switzer Park Map

## Hiking

### Gregg Lake Trail 3.5 km loop

Hike or bike this hilly 2.5 km trail through mixed forest from the Gregg Lake Day Use Area to the upper campground and amphitheatre area, and return on the 1 km trail connecting F-loop to the lake shore.

### Kettle Trail 3.5 km interpretive loop

Walk on an esker, view a kettle lake and see the evidence of thousands of years of geological activity. The trailhead is located behind the Gregg Lake shower building.

### Fish Lakes Trail 3.5 km connector trail

For a taste of backcountry hiking, the Fish Lakes Trail connects Blue Lake trails to the Kettle trail. The trail follows ridges through rolling hills and thick spruce forests with viewpoints along the way.

### Beaver Ranch Trail 1.5 km interpretive loop

In the late 1940s some short-lived beaver ranching was attempted along Jarvis Creek. Remnants of this ill-fated project can still be seen today. After you cross the creek, hike along Graveyard Lake to a viewpoint that showcases the surrounding wetlands. The trailhead is at Halfway Campground.

### Kelley's Bathtub Trail 1 km interpretive loop

Take an easy stroll around the "bathtub" to see stunning Rocky Mountain views across Jarvis Lake and catch a glimpse of birds and other wildlife. Trailhead begins at the Visitor Centre deck.

### Friendly Vistas Trail 2.5 km loop

This wheelchair accessible trail meanders along the eastern shoreline of Jarvis Lake through mixed forests and the scenic Jarvis Creek wetlands. There are excellent birding and wildlife viewing opportunities as well as viewpoints with rest areas along the way.

### Jarvis Lake Trails 2.5 km–11.5 km loops

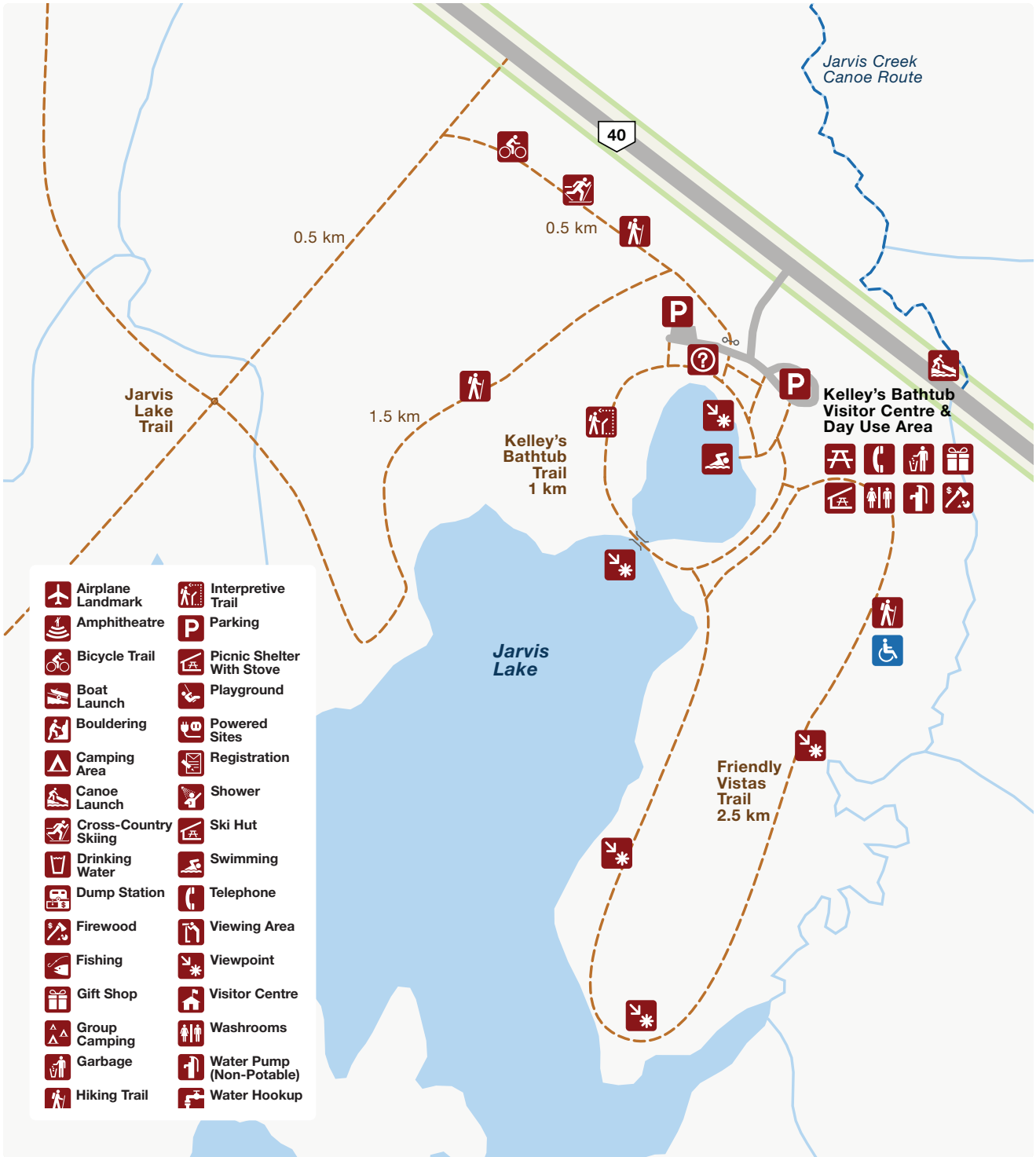
Hike or bike through rolling hills, along meandering streams, meadows, aspen and spruce groves. In the winter, these trails are groomed for cross-country skiing. Trails start from the green gate in the parking lot at Kelley's Bathtub, opposite the Visitor Centre. There are 13.5 km of trails, including Meadow Run, Sunburst, Rolling and Jarvis Lake. Stop by the Visitor Centre for a map or review and snap a photo of the Jarvis Trail information sign at the trailhead.

### Blue Lake Trail 3 km loop

Explore the eskers, kettles and Jarvis Creek wetlands between Blue Lake and Cache Lake.

### Athabasca Lookout Trail 1 km access trail, 3 km to Joachim Valley

The Athabasca Lookout Trail is regarded as one of the most picturesque viewpoints in the region. From the parking lot at the far end of Hinton Nordic Centre road, hike 1 km uphill to be rewarded with the stunning views of the Rocky Mountains and surrounding foothills. Continue along the ridge-trail for 3 km where giant sandstone boulders and cliffs dot the landscape creating a climbing playground. The trail descends steeply into Joachim Valley. Continue along the Joachim Valley Trail for another 2.5 km to connect to Jarvis Campground.



Kelly's Bathtub Map

### Joachim Valley Trail 5.6 km to Athabasca Lookout

The Joachim Valley trail gently winds through the meadows and forests of Joachim Valley, once carved out by glacial activity. This trail connects to the Athabasca Lookout trail for astounding views of the Rocky Mountains. An old army training airplane can be seen 3.6 km along the trail, and many enjoy cross country skiing in the winter time, stopping to warm up at Hanington Ski Hut.

### Hinton Nordic Centre Trails 35 km of trails

In winter, the Hinton Nordic Centre has groomed trails for cross-country skiing, warm up shelters, telemark hill and biathlon range. The numerous trails in forested, hilly terrain are suitable for hiking and biking in summer.



## Camping

The campgrounds in Switzer Park offer a wide range of experiences. Sites located along Jarvis Creek are rustic and secluded, while Gregg Lake Campground offers power hookups, showers, flush toilets, a dumping station and an amphitheatre.

### Gregg Lake

163 sites (83 with power, 11 with power and water, 69 basic sites). There is a campground booth, firewood sales, playgrounds, amphitheatre, interpretive programming, flush toilets, potable water taps in the upper loops, a shower facility, dumping station and a boat launch. Reservations are accepted up to 90 days in advance or register on-site during booth office hours. Lakeside loop is open for winter camping by self registration. Reserve online at [reserve.albertaparks.ca](https://reserve.albertaparks.ca) or call 1-877-537-2757.

### Cache Lake

14 rustic treed camping sites with tent pads, water pump (not potable), camp shelter with wood stove, vault toilets, and playground. Reserve online at [reserve.albertaparks.ca](https://reserve.albertaparks.ca) or call 1-877-537-2757.

### Halfway & Graveyard

12 rustic campsites located in a meadow near lakes and Jarvis Creek with a fish cleaning station and vault toilet. Please note: no water pump at these sites. Available by self registration.

### Jarvis Lake

25 powered sites located on popular Jarvis Lake with a small beach, playground, vault toilets, dock, hand launch and water pump (not potable). Reservations are necessary up to 90 days in advance. Reserve online at [reserve.albertaparks.ca](https://reserve.albertaparks.ca) or call 1-877-537-2757.



## Group Camping

Select a group campsite for your next family gathering or event with friends. Please note, group camping is available by reservation only.

### Pine Bay

Enjoy a lovely secluded lakefront area with a cook shelter, 2 group campfire pits, water pump (not potable), private beach and dock. There are 10 walk-in tenting sites along the lake and in the woods, and space for approximately 8 RVs depending on size. Reserve online at [reserve.albertaparks.ca](https://reserve.albertaparks.ca) or call 1-877-537-2757.

### Beaver Ranch

Reserve a spacious group campsite located near Jarvis Creek. The site accommodates up to 18 units and has a cook shelter, pull-in sites, and a group campfire pit. Reserve online at [reserve.albertaparks.ca](https://reserve.albertaparks.ca) or call 1-877-537-2757.

