

# Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

Alberta Parks **Equestrian Trail Guide**



## Introduction

Ride along winding trails through mature forest or through stirrup high grasses while taking in the astounding vistas and sweeping views of the surrounding plains or the Sweetgrass Hills of Montana far to the south.

Explore the forest and valley edges overlooking the clear waters of streams and lakes, or set out across the native prairie, through the mixed forest or down one of the many creek valleys or coulees. Watch for elk feeding along the forest edge, or mule deer meandering across an open field. Observe a cow moose and calf feeding along the shoreline of a lake, or a majestic eagle soaring on the warm air currents above the Reesor Hills.

## Equestrian Trail Use

When bringing horses into Cypress Hills Provincial Park for the day, equestrian users do not require a permit.

Equestrian camping is permitted at the Spring Creek Equestrian Campground and requires you to obtain a permit in advance of your arrival. A base fee will apply for each camping accommodation unit (including two horses). An additional fee will apply for each horse in excess of two.

## Equestrian Camping

A small rustic camping facility is available for overnight camping (reservation only) with corrals included and day use without corrals. With stunning views to the south, this area provides room for several camping units, group fire pits, picnic tables and corrals. Water is available for horses. There is no power or other services on site. Campers using the area should be self-contained with their own water.



Manure must be cleaned from the corrals and the campsite area, and placed in the provided bin. Do not clean out trailers while on site. If possible, pack manure out. Pack out all of your garbage and leave your campsite clean.

You must bring adequate feed for your animals. The use of certified weed-free hay or cubes/pellets is strongly encouraged to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds and non-native plants into the area.

When you leave please clean up and remove any unused feed.

Highlining between trees is not permitted in the camping area. Please use the corrals provided or erect portable metal panels to secure your horses. High lines will be permitted between trailers. Avoid wet or low lying areas when setting up corrals or campsites. If you are staying for longer than 48 hours, relocate corral panels to avoid excessive trampling of one location.

Campground bookings can be made on [shop.albertaparks.ca](http://shop.albertaparks.ca).

When setting out on your trail ride, please ensure that your vehicles and horse trailers are parked on the side of the road or on a pullout. Park in such a way that emergency vehicles are still able to access the area if required. To prevent rutting and destruction of the native grasses, do not drive off-road.

## Recommended Rides

1. Spring Creek Ski Trail: Ride out right from the equestrian campground on this short, two hour loop (approximately 6.0 km). It offers an easy, shaded ride on those hot summer days. You can also continue riding across the open grasslands to the west and take a lunch break while enjoying the vistas from Head of The Mountain.
2. Spruce Coulee Trail: This ride can range from 3 km to a 16km loop, or longer. Choose a shorter shaded ride in the mature forests, or a longer ride along the valley edges taking in spectacular views of the surrounding countryside.
3. Nine Mile Area: Take off into one of the backcountry areas of the park and choose your own adventure-riding the open plains or finding your own trail through the coulees while exploring the area. Take a lunch and make it an all day trip.

## Contact

**Visitor Centre**  
Open Year Round  
Phone: 403-893-3833 ext 5.

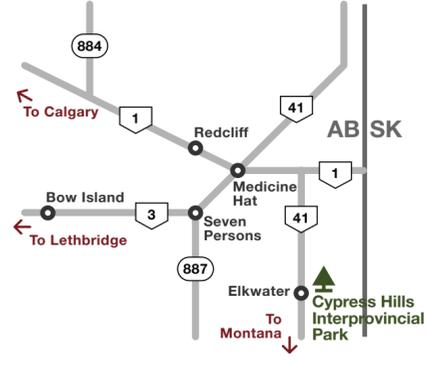
**Campsite Reservations**  
Phone: 1-877-537-2757  
Web: [shop.albertaparks.ca](http://shop.albertaparks.ca)

**Alberta Parks Visitor Information**  
Web: [albertaparks.ca](http://albertaparks.ca)  
Phone: 1-877-537-2757

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

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

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



Updated March 2024



## Safety on the Trail

Inform family or friends of your route and your expected time of return.

Check weather conditions before you ride out. Be prepared for weather changes and carry appropriate clothing.

If someone in your party is injured or becomes lost,

call for help immediately. **Do not delay.** In the case of an emergency, Conservation Officers can be reached by dialing the Park Emergency Line at **403-893-HELP (4357)**.

Cell phone reception varies throughout the park. The best area to receive a strong signal is on the plateau but this varies with weather conditions. Do not rely on your phone to work at all times.



Know where you are at all times. Keep track of your location by carrying a map and compass, GPS, or both. Know how to use these items. Carry extra batteries.

Be alert for other park users and wildlife on the trail.

## Close Encounters

Be aware that cougars live in CHPP. Watch for signs that cougars are in the immediate area (i.e. covered kills).

### If you encounter a cougar on the trail:

Stop. Don't panic. The animal may leave the area on its own.

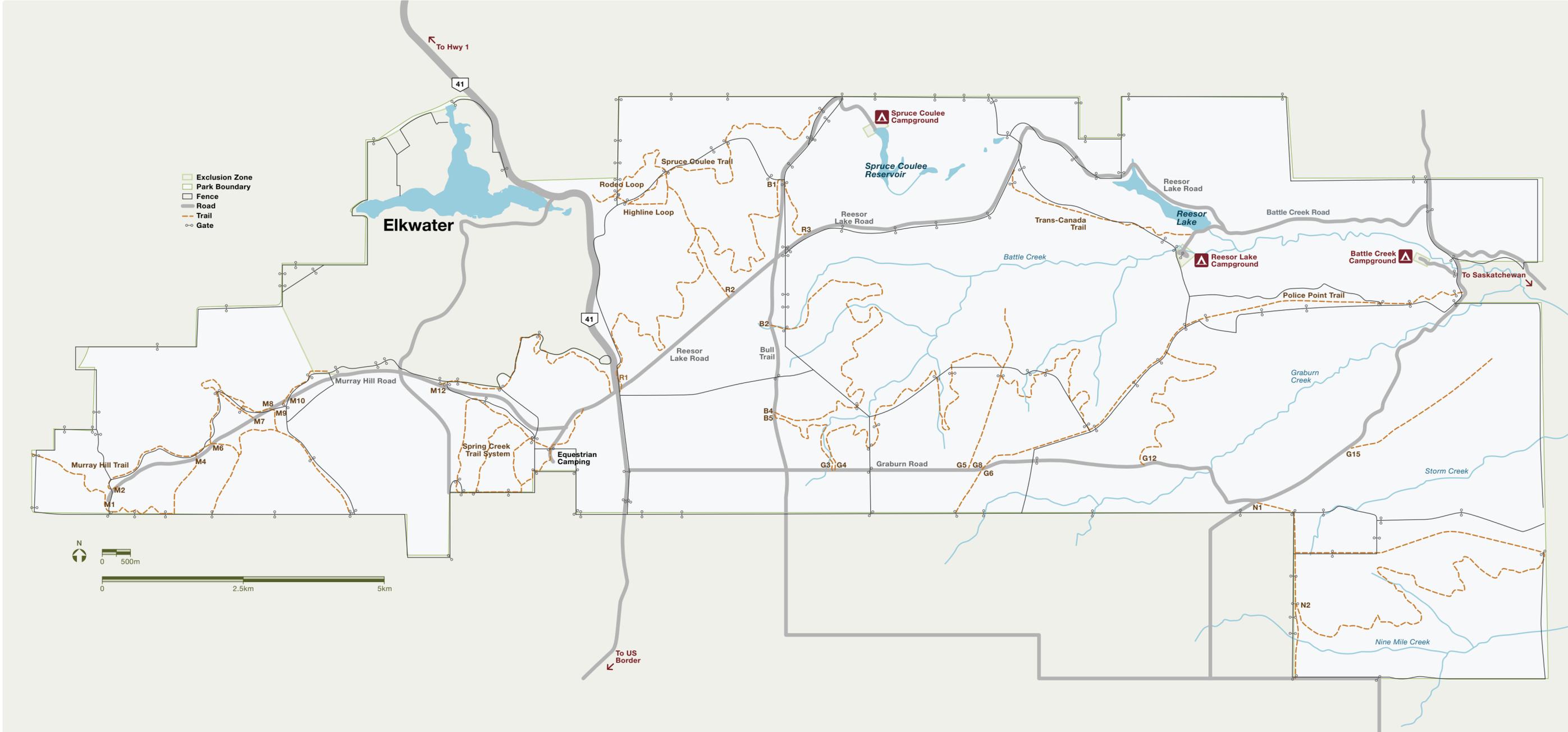
If the cat remains, back up your horse. Make yourself as large as possible. Maintain eye contact with the animal. Raise your arms and make noise.

Stay calm for the sake of your horse. Your actions and body language will affect the horse more than the cat on the trail will.

If a cougar attacks, **fight back** with anything at hand.

Report cougar sightings to the Conservation Officers by calling the Park Emergency Line at **403-893-HELP (4357)**.

Remember that other wildlife, such as moose, can also be dangerous. Stay alert and aware to avoid dangerous close encounters.



Cypress Hills equestrian trail map

## General Information

Horse use is not permitted in the areas around Elkwater townsite, and within Spruce Coulee, Reesor Lake and Battle Creek Campgrounds. **These areas are shown in grey on the map.**

All equestrian use trails are also multi-use. You may encounter hikers and mountain bikers on the trails throughout the park.

If you bring along a pet, please ensure that it is kept on a leash at all times while you are in the park, including at the campground.

Cattle grazing occurs throughout the park. Ensure that gates are closed immediately behind you, and DO NOT chase or harass cattle or wildlife while riding.

Cobblestone is present in most areas of the park. You may prefer to have your horses shod before riding here.

Contact your local veterinarian to inquire about recommended vaccinations. You should also bring insect repellent for you and your animals.

Open fires are not permitted except in the facilities provided. Be extremely cautious with cigarettes while on the trail.



When around water, stay on hard ground surfaces to prevent bank erosion.

Permission must be obtained from adjacent land owners to ride on lands surrounding the park.

## Where Are We?

- Approximately 75 km southeast of Medicine Hat.
- The total area of the Alberta portion of the park is 205 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Over 140 km of trails and Fire and Resource Trails to explore on horseback.
- The plateau sits approximately 600 metres above surrounding area.

