Castle Provincial Park & Wildland Provincial Park

Winter Guide

Welcome to the Castle Parks

At more than 150,200 hectares, the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park protect vital habitat for more than 200 rare species. The parks share borders with Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park in the south, the Crowsnest Pass to the north, the Waterton Biosphere Reserve to the east, and British Columbia’s Flathead River Valley to the west. The Castle parks are a part of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, an international region with dramatic landscapes and important wildlife corridors.

Know Before You Go

Stay safe in the Castle Parks. It is up to you to be familiar with appropriate activities whenever you are exploring. Regulations under the Provincial Parks Act are enforced by Conservation Officers who work with local police authorities to support the safety of park visitors.

Please remember:
- Stay on the designated trails and respect other users on the trails.
- Leave no trace of your visit and dispose of your trash in marked bins.
- Keep pets on a leash (2 metres), supervised and under physical control at all times.
- Clean up after your pet.
- Do not put any foreign materials into any watercourses (e.g., fuel, soap, body waste, grey water).
- Do not cut, remove or damage live trees or any other vegetation unless you have a permit.
- Ensure camp fires are attended at all times and extinguished before leaving your site.
- Read and follow signs and notices.

Parks Activities

The Castle Parks offer a wide variety of front country and backcountry winter experiences. Snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, ice fishing, wildlife viewing, backcountry camping and cross-country skiing are some of the activities you can enjoy in the area. Please see trail map for detailed information on the places to go and permitted uses.

Snowmobiling (OHVs)

Please see reverse side.

Cross-Country Skiing

Syncrone Cross-Country Ski Area has packed and classic tracked ski trails, between the South Castle and West Castle river. The scenic beauty of these trails extends through rolling landscapes of montane forests and meadows. A warming hut is available at Syncrone South for public use.

Snowshoeing

Snowshoeing is permitted anywhere in the Castle Parks unless otherwise posted. Please introduce to the side of groomed ski trails and avoid the machine-groomed tracks.

Fat Bikes

There are no trails specifically groomed for fatbikes in the Castle Parks, and many of the trails are shared by motorized and non-motorized users. Do not be afraid to ski on trails that are set for cross-country skiing.

Ice Safety

Ice thickness can fluctuate throughout the season and with changing weather conditions. Ice fishing activity should be carried out on ice less than 15cm thick. In the presence of snow on ice, the minimum thickness would need to be doubled to 30cm.

Safety & Emergency Communication

Plan ahead. There is limited cellular phone service throughout Castle Parks.

Please remember:
- When traveling in the backcountry, bring appropriate equipment, emergency provisions and review safety information.
- Know your routes, carry weather appropriate gear, and safety and navigation equipment.
- Watch the weather. Turn back before severe weather conditions develop, or seek shelter if conditions change too fast.
- Provide family or friends with your detailed trip plans and what to do if you do not report back on time.
- Pay phones are located at the Beaver Mines Store, Castle Mountain Resort (T-bar Pub and the Day Lodge during regular business hours), and in the nearby communities.
- Emergency contact information is listed on the back of this publication.

Recreate Responsibly

Avalanches are the most significant threat to the safety of anyone recreating in the backcountry during the winter months. When the bond within the snowpack or between the snowpacks and the ground weakens to the point that the snowpack can no longer hold itself together, an avalanche may occur. This can happen when a combination of factors, including the amount of snow accumulated on a slope, the steepness of the slope, and the changes to the snowpack caused by wind, temperature and precipitation.

To stay safe in avalanche terrain remember:
- Check Avalanche Canada for reports and updates at avalanche.ca.
- Learn to recognize and when possible, avoid avalanche terrain.
- Carry and use avalanche beacons. Also, carry probes and shovels when travelling in avalanche-prone areas.
- Minimum exposure to snow, sun exposed slopes when the sunshine is strong.
- Use extra caution on slopes if the snow is moist or wet.
- Pay attention to hazards like overhanging edges of snow above you that could trigger an avalanche below them if they collapse.
- Never recreate in avalanche areas alone.

Be Wildlife Smart

Rich with biodiversity, the Castle area contains important habitat and wildlife corridors for many species. Several iconic species include grizzly and black bears, wolves, wolves, elk, trump sheep, cougars, moose and elk. All wildlife can be unpredictable and precautions should be taken when in their habitat.

- Be aware that bears may leave their den at times in the spring.
- Avoid surprise encounters on trails by making noise.
- Stay well back from bears and other large species.
- Store food, garbage and pet food in a secure vehicle or bear-resistant food proof container.
- Keep children close to adults, and keep dogs on a leash.
- Carry bear spray and learn how to use and store it safely. Bear spray is available for purchase at some retail locations in the area.

Camp Responsibly

The Castle Parks offer diverse camping experiences in both front country and backcountry. Visitors should be aware that upgrades to existing facilities in the parks are ongoing, to improve camping experiences for visitors in the future.

- Ensure campfires are attended at all times and extinguished before leaving your site.
- Dismantle fire pits and packing out all your supplies.
- Do not cut, remove or damage live trees or any other vegetation unless you have a permit.
- Ensure camp fires are attended at all times and extinguished before leaving your site.
- Read and follow signs and notices.

Campgrounds in Castle Provincial Park

Camp areas 1-7

Formerly known as the random camping areas, these sites are temporarily designated as campgrounds while natural campgrounds are built. These sites are open for winter camping, subject to snow and road conditions supporting safe access. Please note this is rough, field camping without maintained access or potable water. Garbage receptacles may be found at formal campgrounds.

Please complete the free permit available online at and loo sites throughout the park. Make sure to drop your completed permit off at the loo. This opportunity is suitable for RV users, who are controllable parking in an undeveloped parking area, and who have their own facilities to contain grey water. There is a dry dump station at Oldman Dam RP Castle view.

- Please check albertaparks.ca before heading out.
- Campgrounds at Beaver Mines Lake, Castle Falls, Castle Bridge and Lyons Creek are closed for the winter season. Visitors should be aware that facilities are limited. For opening dates, check albertaparks.ca.

Backcountry Camping in Castle Wildland Provincial Park

Backcountry tent camping is allowed within the Castle Wildland Provincial Park, providing that the campsite is at least 1 kilometre from any facility, road, or boundary, and at least 50 metres from any trail. Please practice trackless camping methods including dismantling the tent and packing out all your supplies and garbage. Camp permits are not required.

Provincial Park

Fires are only allowed inside a receptacle or facility designated and supplied for that purpose. Firewood is available for purchase in nearby communities. Do not bring firewood from another province into Alberta. The collection of wood or any dead vegetation for burning must be authorized by a Conservation Officer or a permit.

Wildland Provincial Park

Tr delicate camping practices are required (e.g., dismantle the rings). Collection of dead wood for fires within the Wildland Provincial Park is allowed.
Snowmobiles (OHVs)

Snowmobiles are permitted from December 1 to April 30 and only on designated winter snowmobiling trails and areas in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Park, as indicated on the trail map and on park signage. Please be respectful when using trails, be cautious of non-motorized trail users, and stay clear of wildlife.

Every snowmobile operating in the Castle parks must have:
- Valid registration and insurance
- Exhaust muffler with spark arrester
- Approved helmets for all off-highway vehicle users
- Direct adult supervision for operators under the age of 14 years
- A license plate that is securely attached on front or rear of OHV and visible to other operators
- Tail lamp on the vehicle rear capable of emitting a red light visible from at least 50 metres (165 feet)
- At least one white headlamp on the front must be of sufficient intensity to reveal a person, another vehicle or a thing that is at least 50 metres ahead (185 feet)

To operate a snowmobile in the Castle Parks, people from outside Alberta:
- Carry proof of residency
- Follow the rules, regarding registration of the vehicle and the display of license plates, that are required by their home jurisdiction
- Produce valid proof of insurance
- If you have been in Alberta for more than 30 days, all Alberta requirements apply

Know Before You Go

It is your responsibility to become familiar with the activities allowed in this area before you visit. Refer to the information in this publication for further details. Pick up or download the Alberta Parks regulations brochure. Look for park information kiosks and contact park staff if you have any questions.

Blairmore Access

Castle Provincial Park Map

Legend
- Castle Wildland Provincial Park
- Castle Provincial Park
- Parks and Protected Areas
- Private Land
- Facility Zones
- Random Ride Areas Designated
- Winter Trails
- Trail Intersections
- Cross-Country Ski Area
- Downhill Skiing
- Fat Biking
- Forestry Office
- Ice Fishing
- Information Kiosk
- Parking
- Firewood/Day-Use Area
- Snowmobile Shelter
- Snowmobiling
- Staging Area/Parking
- Warning Hut
- Accessible
- Frames and Whips
- Fire Lookout
- Mountain
- Pass
- Roads - Paved
- Roads - Gravel

Directional Map

Castle Provincial Park

Blairmore Access

Syncline Cross-Country Ski Map

Legend
- Cross-Country Skiing
- Parking
- Information Kiosk
- Trails
- Cafe
- Visitor Information
- Cell Phone Signal
- A-Frame Trail
- Emergency Services
- Syncline Ski Shop
- Mountain Bike Trail
- Cross-Country Ski Trail
- Staging Area
- Fire Lookout
- Castlegar Alpine Resort
- Castle Mountain Resort
- Castle Hill Resort

Note: Non-motorized use only. Please adhere to the side of the cross-country ski tracks.