

# YA HA TINDA RANCH

Welcome to the Ya Ha Tinda Government Ranch and Bighorn Campground. This guide will assist you in the proper use of the ranch and campground during your stay in this beautiful area. Please assist us in protecting this treasured spot for generations to come.

This brochure was produced by



Parks Canada Parcs Canada

## Ya Ha Tinda Ranch

Welcome to the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch. The Ya Ha Tinda covers 3,945 hectares, running 27 km along the north bank of the Red Deer River. Approximately one third of the ranch area is natural grassland and two thirds is mixed forest. This productive montane area has an abundance of wildlife including grizzly bear, wolf, cougar, moose, deer, and bighorn sheep. Today the area is a major winter range for elk, with about 1,000 elk wintering in the area.



The Ya Ha Tinda is private property owned and managed by Parks Canada. It is not a National Park. This ranch is the only federally operated working horse ranch in Canada. Horses are wintered and trained here to be used as working horses for patrolling and protecting Canada's Western National Parks. As an active working ranch, staff regularly use tractors, trucks, quads and other equipment on the property.

## Ranch History



In the early 1900's the Brewster Brothers Transfer Company obtained a grazing lease in the area. By 1908 they were raising and breaking horses here for their guiding and outfitting business. Horses were wintered in the area and trailed to Banff and Lake Louise for the summer.

The Ya Ha Tinda ranch area was formerly within the boundaries of Rocky Mountains National Park. The boundary changed a number of times before the present day Banff National Park Boundary was established. In 1917, National Parks took over the area as a winter range, breeding and training facility for park horses.

Tours of the ranch buildings area are available, with schedules posted at the campground. For more information, please call (403) 770-3085 or e-mail yahatinda1@hughes.net .

## Prehistoric Use

Archaeological evidence indicates that the area has been used by aboriginal people for over 9,400 years. Many camps, tipi rings and artifacts have been found. Remains of pre-historic bison have been found here as well. The Red Deer River may have been a major trading route since more camps exist west along the river towards the continental divide. **Ya Ha Tinda** means "Mountain Prairie" in Stoney.



## If You're Heading Into Banff National Park

Banff National Park is about a 3 hour ride west from the Bighorn Campground. For full information on equestrian travel in the park, see the *Banff National Park Horse Users' Guide*. This may be obtained from the ranch staff or by contacting:

Banff Warden Office  
P.O. Box 900, Banff, Alberta T1L 1K2  
(403) 762-1470

-  Overnight trips into the park require both a Wilderness Pass and a Grazing Permit.
-  Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times in the park. For this reason we recommend that you leave your dog at home.
-  Possession of firearms is not permitted while in the backcountry of a National Park.
-  A National Parks Fishing Licence is required for fishing in all National Parks.

## FRIENDS OF THE EASTERN SLOPES ASSOCIATION

The Friends of the Eastern Slopes Association is a nonprofit society founded in 1994 which has the following objectives:

- To provide input into the recreational use of the Eastern slopes of Alberta.
- To encourage, foster and develop among its members a recognition of the importance of recreation and environment within the Eastern slopes of Alberta.
- To encourage and foster recreation and horse use in Alberta.

The association has been responsible for significant improvements to the Bighorn camp-ground. Please assist us in the proper use and maintenance of this area and campground.

For further information on the Friends of the Eastern Slopes please contact:

**Friends of the Eastern Slopes Association**  
5500 Davies Street, Innisfail, Alberta T4G 1E3  
phone (403) 227-1869

## Ya Ha Tinda Ranch Use

-  Hiking, hunting and horse travel is permitted on the ranch property.
-  Travel is not permitted within the fenced pastures along the east side of the main ranch road. These areas are posted and are shown with **RED** fence lines on the map. Please do not hike, bike, ride or hunt in these posted areas.
-  The staging and parking area (trailhead) for all users is at the Bighorn Campground. Parking elsewhere is not allowed.
-  The DRIFT FENCES adjacent to the Red Deer River and along the east boundary of the ranch have gates where trails intersect them. Travel through these drift fences is permitted, but PLEASE CLOSE ALL GATES.
-  No camping or campfires are allowed on the ranch property except at the Bighorn Campground.
-  Motorized and/or horse drawn vehicles are not allowed off the main ranch road or beyond the perimeter of the Bighorn Campground.

-  Dogs must be under control on the ranch property.
-  Cutting of trees is prohibited.
-  Grazing of horses is prohibited.
-  Avoid approaching Ya Ha Tinda horses to prevent the transmission of contagious diseases and for your own safety. Do not chase or harass ranch horses in any way.
-  Riders are requested to stay on the main trails as identified on the map on the reverse side of this brochure.

### Hunters

Shooting is not permitted within 500 metres of the ranch buildings or in the direction of the ranch buildings.

**Alberta Wildlife Regulations, Road Corridor Wildlife Sanctuary:** this sanctuary encompasses the main ranch road from Eagle Creek to ranch headquarters buildings. Hunting is not allowed and firearms must be cased and unloaded, from the center-line of the road to 400 yards on either side of the road.

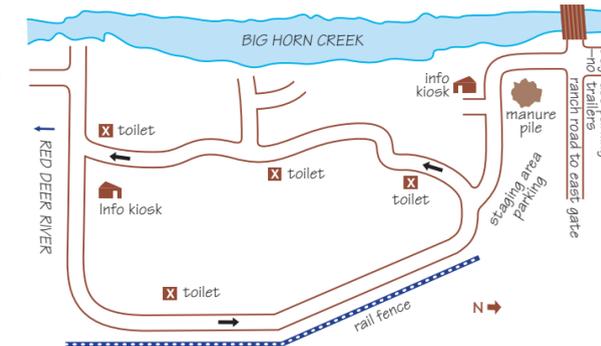
*Thank You*

## Bighorn Campground

The Friends of The Eastern Slopes have spent many volunteer hours in maintenance and improvements to the campground. Please assist us in keeping these facilities in good condition.

### Campground Rules

-  Camping is only allowed within the perimeter of the Bighorn Campground.
-  Camping is free of charge at this time.
-  Garbage facilities are not available at the campground. Be sure to remove all garbage and leave your campsite clean.
-  Both grizzly and black bears frequent this area. Please ensure that bears and other animals have no access at any time to your food or garbage.
-  All manure must be cleaned up and deposited at the manure pile.
-  Cutting of trees is not permitted. Please bring your own firewood.



-  Tie your horses to your trailer or use the tie stalls provided. Use panels in the designated area, or highline between trailers. DO NOT tie your horse to trees or shrubs. DO NOT highline between trees.

-  Grazing of horses within the campground or anywhere on the ranch property is not permitted.
-  DOGS - must be kept on a leash so as not to bother other campers. Please clean up after your dogs.

Persons who do not comply with ranch and campground rules will be asked to leave by ranch staff.

### Emergencies

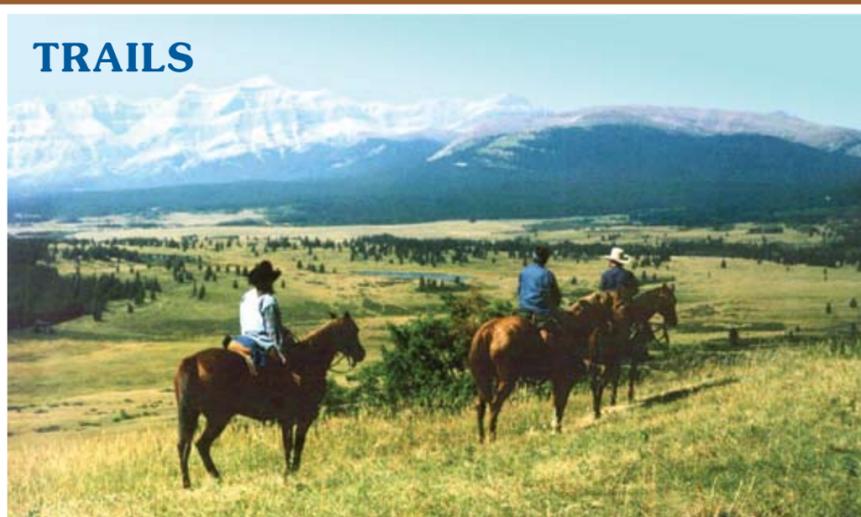
There is no phone service or cell range at the Bighorn campground. In the event of an accident where medical attention is required, please contact ranch staff who have phone capabilities.

If your horse has serious injuries or dies, you are responsible for its removal. If you require assistance, please contact the ranch staff.



OVER 100 YEARS of NATIONAL PARK PROTECTION  
&  
90 YEARS of HORSE TRAINING

## TRAILS



All trail descriptions start from the Bighorn Camp-ground. Times noted are general travel times without stops.

### (1) Banff Park Trail

The main Banff Park Trail is on the north side of the Red Deer River. This trail heads west crossing Bighorn and Scalp Creeks. It's about 13 km to the park boundary. There is an alternate trail to the park on the south side of the river (marked 1a) which involves fording the Red Deer River. The main trail is a novice trail taking 6 hrs round trip.

### (2) Scalp Creek Trail

Head west fording Bighorn and Scalp Creeks and follow the trail to a drift fence and gate. Continue NW along the west side of Scalp Creek. Before the next creek crossing you must take an upper cut line trail and get out of the creek bottom. Turn right at next cut line which continues NW. You can follow this as far as you want to go to the upper end of Scalp Creek. Intermediate trail becomes advanced the further you go up Scalp Creek.

### (3) Scalp Creek Water Slide

Cool off on a hot day in the Scalp Creek Water slides! Head NW from the campground crossing Bighorn Creek and Scalp Creek following the Scalp Creek Trail. Continue along the creek instead of going up the cut line. You must cross the creek 4 times before you get to the end of the trail where you can tie your horse. Continue on foot walking up the creek to the water slides. Novice to Intermediate trail; 2.5 - 3 hrs round trip.

### (4) Well Site Trail

Ford Big Horn Creek and Scalp Creek heading NW on the Scalp Creek trail. You will meet an old road (the old Banff trail). Follow this trail west about 200 meters where it forks south and north west. Take the NW trail leading to the old well site. Novice to intermediate trail; 3.5 hrs. round trip.

### (5) Hidden Falls

Travel west along the North side of the Red Deer River approx. 4.5 km to the Hidden Falls fording. Take the trail along the east side of the creek up towards Hidden Falls. Continue until you get to hitching rails. You need to walk down a fairly steep trail to observe the falls. Intermediate trail; 3 hrs round trip.

### (6) Wolf Creek/Labyrinth Mtn. Loop

Ford the Red Deer River south of the campground and take the Wolf Creek trail south. This trail follows Wolf Creek east, down to the Red Deer River and main Ya-Ha-Tinda road. The trail crosses the road and parallels it north to Frontier Town, Eagle Lake campground and back to the Bighorn campground.

This trip is approximately 20 km with a 500 ft elevation gain with steep terrain. Advanced trail; approx. 8 hrs round trip.

### (7) Bighorn Creek/Eagle Creek Low Loop

Cross the road directly north of the campground gaining the hill up Bighorn Creek. Follow the main trail which parallels Bighorn Creek on the east side. The low loop cuts east approx. 1.5 km from the road. This trail proceeds easterly north of a pond. You will reach a ranch east boundary fence with a gate. Con-tinue east and south hitting Eagle Creek where a main trail takes you back west past Frontier Town and to the campground. A new trail bypasses Frontier Town on the west. Novice trip; approx. 3 hrs round trip.

### (7a) Bighorn Creek/Eagle Creek High Loop

Cross the road north of the campground following Bighorn creek along the east bank. Continue NE until you reach the ranch north boundary. You then turn east and southeast contouring along the hillside through mixed forest. This joins the lower trail along Eagle Creek and back west towards the campground. Intermediate trip; approx. 4 hrs round trip.

### (8) Eagle View Point

Head east along the Red Deer River and follow the trail across the road to the Eagle Lake parking lot. Follow the trail bypassing the YMCA camp on the north side and continue following the trail to Eagle Creek crossing. The trail then heads north, crossing the creek a second time, and heads up a steep hill. The summit is one of the best viewpoints of the area. For return, continue northwest and then west to join the Bighorn Creek trail. Turn back south towards the Bighorn campground. This trail includes some steep switchbacks. Intermediate trail; 1.5 hrs round trip.

### (9) Eagle Lake / James Pass

Head east along the Red Deer River and follow the trail across the road to the Eagle Lake parking lot. Follow the trail bypassing the YMCA camp on the north side and continue up Eagle Creek to Eagle Lake. Eagle Lake is approximately 5.5 km, James Pass is approx. 7.5 km. Novice trail; 3 hrs for Eagle Lake and 4 hrs for James Pass round trip.

### (10) The Sheep Mtn. Loop

Cross the road north from the campground and head up Bighorn Creek. Take the crossing just above the Bighorn Falls, gaining the west side of the creek and the Old Forestry Road. Continue north to the ranch boundary. Head east at trail junction heading to cut-blocks. A blazed trail heading north gains the ridge up Sheep Mountain. You can make a round trip descending on the NW side on an old cat trail joining the Clearwater trail and return (this will take more time). Advanced trail; 8+ hrs round trip.

