

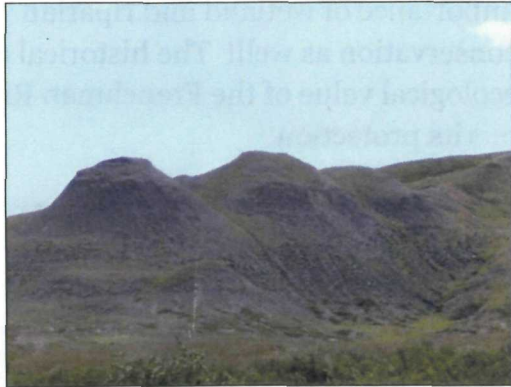
Welcome to Riverwalk Interpretive Trail!

1. Stop and observe

This trail will guide you along the bottom of the Frenchman River Valley and the Frenchman River riparian area.

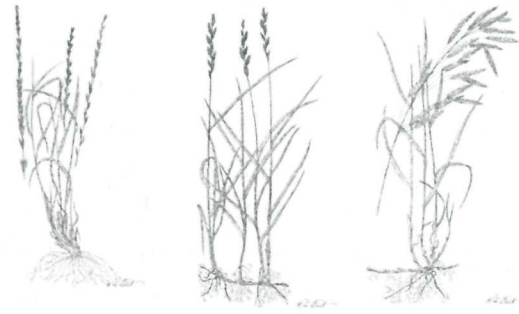
A *riparian area* is the link between land and water. It is home to some of Canada's most endangered wildlife. Explore the riparian area and discover secrets hidden within!

Enjoy the Trail!



2. Three Sisters

The three bumps that you see in front of you are part of an interesting land feature known as the Three Sisters. The Three Sisters sits on the outer edge of the Frenchman River Valley and the butte was likely formed by glaciers, but shaped by erosion.



**Slender
Wheatgrass**

**Western
Wheatgrass**

**Smooth
Brome**

3. Alien Invasion

Is there more here than what meets the eye? Riparian areas are rich in biodiversity! That is, many different species of plants can be found here! Take a look around for Western Wheat Grass, or Slender Wheat Grass. These native grasses have been found on the prairies for thousands of years. Smooth Brome is considered *invasive* because it is not native to the prairies. When Smooth Brome invades, it threatens the existence of native grasses as it out competes with them for resources like light and water.



Grasslands
National Park

Riverwalk Interpretive Trail

*Explore the unique habitat of the
Frenchman River*

Grasslands National Park
West Block Visitor Centre
(306) 298-2257
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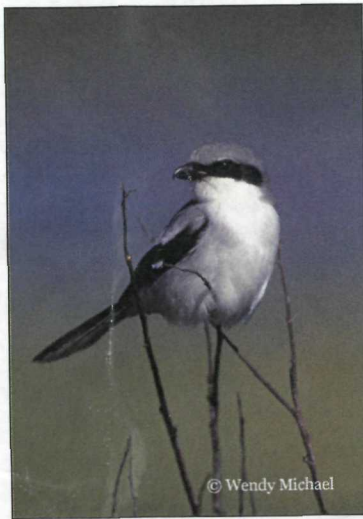
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4. The Loggerhead Shrike

Easily identified by its black “bandit” mask, the Loggerhead Shrike can be found nesting in riparian areas. The bird will wait on a perch and swoop down to capture its prey; insects, lizards, and other birds. Without any talons like other birds of prey, the Loggerhead Shrike resorts to impaling its prey on thorns or barbed wire before eating it. The Loggerhead Shrike is not the only bird that enjoys the cool shade of the riparian area. Keep your eyes out for the Swainson’s Hawk Soaring above the trees, or a graceful Great Blue Heron standing tall.



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5. The Mighty Frenchman

Take a look around you and you will notice that you are in what is called the Frenchman River Valley. The Frenchman River is an example of what is called an “under fit” stream, because it is so much smaller than its own valley. Twelve thousand years ago, this valley was formed by the runoff of glacial melt water from the Laurentide ice sheet. The Frenchman River is a tiny remnant of the raging melt-water channel.



6. Shhhh... Look carefully and listen!

The best way to see wildlife is by sneaking up as slowly and as quietly as you can. Give it a try! When you reach the river, look into the water do you see anything moving? At first glance, the brackish water may appear barren. The rare Northern Leopard Frog makes its home here in these waters. If you hear any splashes, this is likely a painted turtle seeking refuge in the cool water.

7. Cliffs in the Prairies

These steep protruding cliffs are a sharp contrast to the gently rolling prairie landscape. Caused by the flowing Frenchman River and erosion, these cliffs make an abrupt river bank. Sparse in vegetation, these cliffs are now habitat for Swallows and other prairie birds.



8. A River for All Seasons

The Frenchman was not only used for natural resources and transportation. After a hard day of work on the farm, an escape to the river to cool off was called for! Frozen rivers were how many famous Saskatchewan hockey players learned to skate!



9. The Modern Frenchman

Today, the Frenchman is essential for the local economy. It is the source of water for irrigation projects that keeps local farming and ranching going. When we talk about prairie conservation, we need to remember the importance of wetland and riparian conservation as well! The historical and ecological value of the Frenchman River merits protection.

