

GRASSLANDS NATIONAL PARK TRAIL GUIDE

CREEK TO PEAK TRAIL

750 m one-way; elevation gain: 70 m; 30 minutes

Trailhead: 13U 0388294E 5436302N
South of kitchen shelter

Wind up the hill along this mowed path to a rewarding peek of the Rock Creek valley and badlands beyond. The early morning sunshine makes this view especially beautiful.

ROCK CREEK TRAIL

2 km loop ; elevation gain: 40 m; 1 hour

Trailhead: 13U 0388192E 5436455N
West across Rock Creek bridge

Stroll this mowed path for a bird's eye view of Rock Creek. Take in an unobstructed grasslands horizon on the back side. For a more challenging experience, branch off this trail to the Red Buttes Route.

RED BUTTES ROUTE

8 km one-way; elevation gain: 220 m; 5-6 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0387898E 5436816N
Northwest off Rock Creek Trail

View the buttes turned red by oxidized iron carbonate activity, as you navigate your way through challenging creek bottoms and by cattle fence lines. Your destination view is ample reward.

***Special Note:** You may see cattle grazing in this area. Be mindful of gates and fences. This route is a remote wilderness experience that requires preparedness, self-reliance and orienteering skills.

VALLEY OF 1000 DEVILS ROUTE

6 km one-way; elevation gain: 194 m; 4-5 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0388192E 5436455N
West across Rock Creek bridge

This challenging trail requires strong navigation and awareness skills as you enter the heart of the badlands. In this environment, it can be up to 10° hotter than other areas. Plan to hike in the early morning and be prepared for extreme heat.

***Special Note:** This route is a remote wilderness experience that requires preparedness, self-reliance and orienteering skills.

Beware of quicksand/sinkholes



MORE INFORMATION

West Block Visitor Centre 306-298-2257

Rock Creek Visitor Centre 306-476-2018

Website: parksCanada.gc.ca/grasslands

Trail Information: ParksCanada.gc.ca/trails

Weather: weather.gc.ca

Camping Reservations:
reservation.parksCanada.gc.ca

EMERGENCY

Call 911 or
Park Dispatch 1-877-852-3100.

Cell phone reception is limited.

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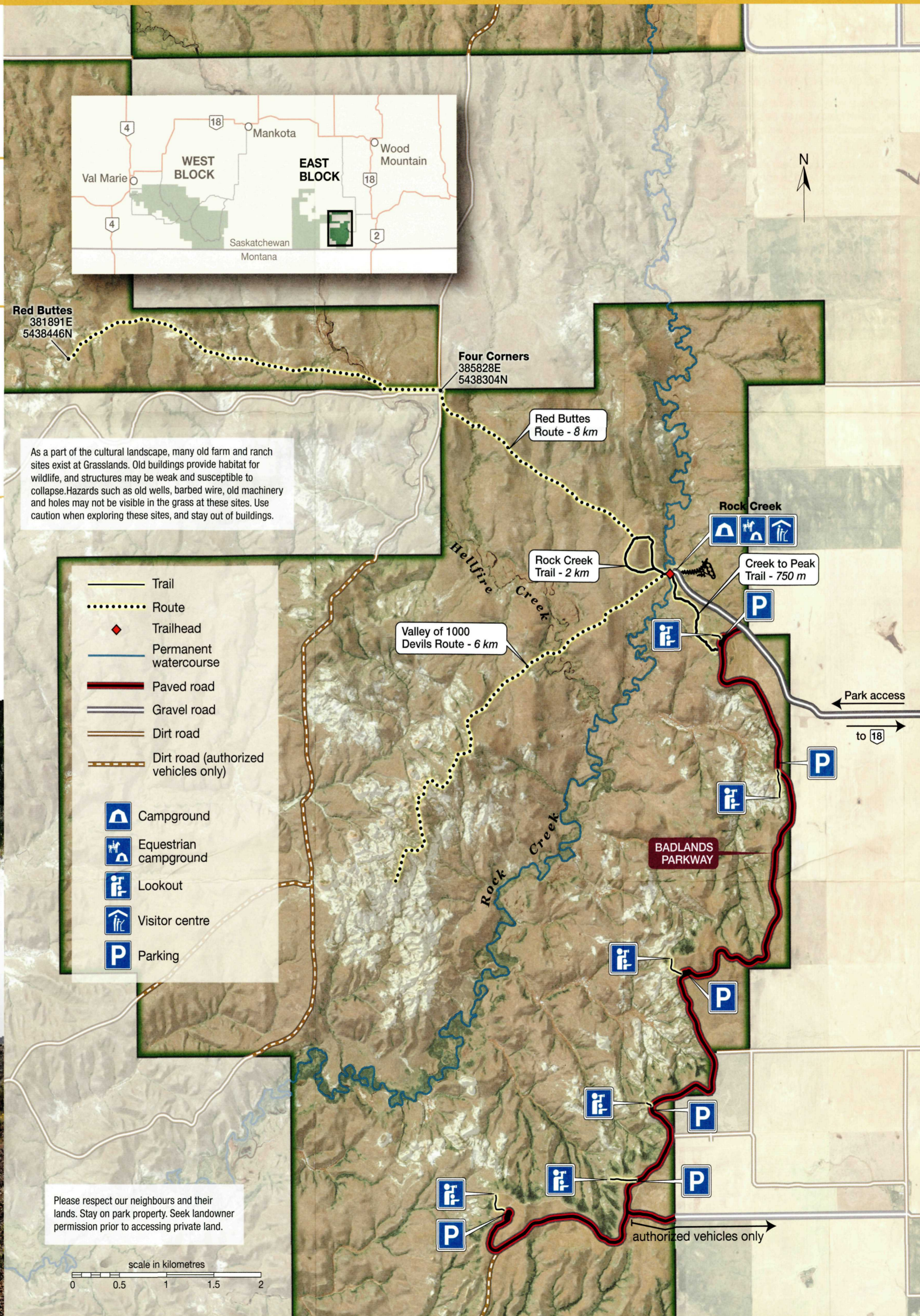
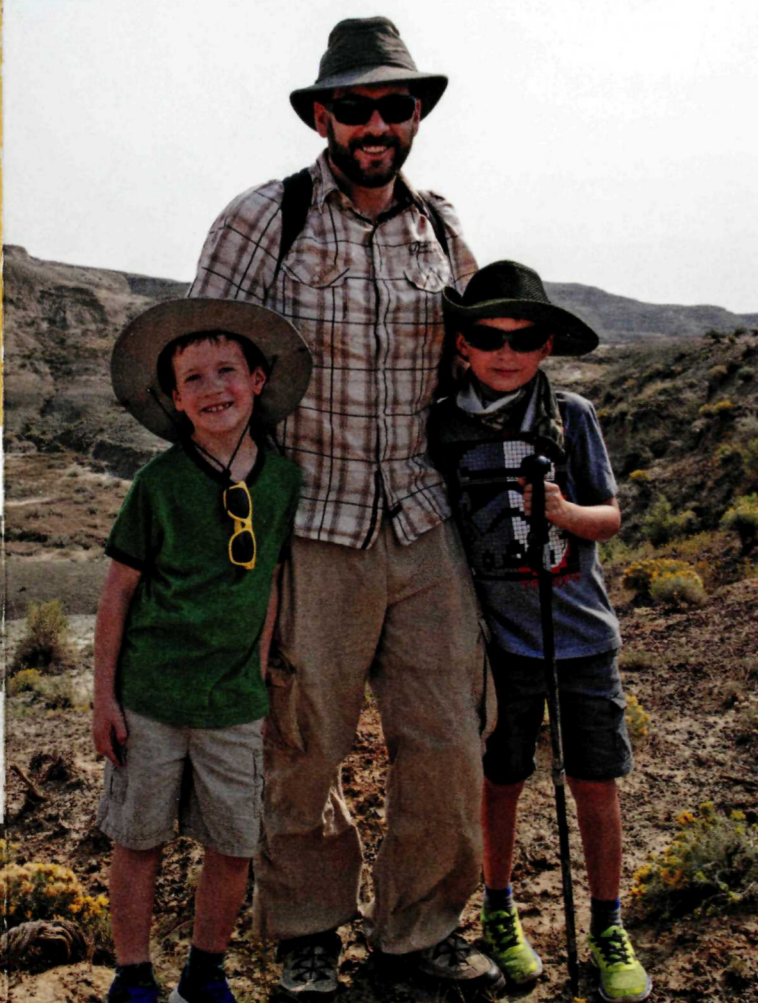
Trails are one of the best ways for you to connect with the landscape and experience the unmeasurable beauty and solitude of this park. Grasslands is a prairie wilderness with limited services and preparation is key to having a safe and enjoyable experience. Use this guide to help you choose a trail that is right for you.

Distances given in the trail descriptions are approximate. Times given are on-trail times for hikers.

Coordinates given are UTM datum NAD 83

Easy ● Moderate ■ Difficult ◆ Very Difficult ◆◆

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As a part of the cultural landscape, many old farm and ranch sites exist at Grasslands. Old buildings provide habitat for wildlife, and structures may be weak and susceptible to collapse. Hazards such as old wells, barbed wire, old machinery and holes may not be visible in the grass at these sites. Use caution when exploring these sites, and stay out of buildings.

Please respect our neighbours and their lands. Stay on park property. Seek landowner permission prior to accessing private land.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Your Limits – Choose a trail that suits your skills and experience, and those within your party.

Plan Ahead – Check with park staff for trail and road conditions, some roads within the park are impassable when wet. Inform friends or family of your itinerary and how to contact you. Check the weather forecast before leaving. Acquire a backcountry camping permit for all overnight trips.

Services in this area are limited. When travelling by vehicle, make sure to fuel up before heading into the park or traveling between the East and West Blocks. Please visit our website for a list of local services.

Be Prepared – Hike with a group. One person in your party should be familiar with wilderness first aid. Ensure you have adequate water, food, clothing and equipment for at least one day longer than your intended trip. Carry a first-aid kit, cellphone, GPS/compass and map.

Cell phone service in the park is limited.

RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT

- Pack out all garbage including food waste, diapers, and hygiene products.
- To dispose of human waste, select a spot at least 70 m away from trails, campsites and water sources. Dig a shallow hole with a stick or heel of your boot. Cover the hole with soil afterwards. Pack out toilet paper.
- Keep your pet on a leash at all times. Pets are not permitted on prairie dog colonies.
- Wildflowers, horns, antlers, rocks, fossils, arrowheads, tipi rings and all other natural and historical objects in a national park are protected by law. Leave them in their natural setting for others to discover and enjoy.

SAFETY - You are responsible for your own safety.

REMEMBER THE 5 W'S

Wayfinding

Be aware of your surroundings and become familiar with the area before heading out. Always carry a map and GPS/compass. Roads may become impassable when wet. Please check road and trail conditions at the Visitor Centres.

Water

Bring at least 2-3 litres/person/day. Surface water is not suitable to drink due to high salinity. Potable water is available at the Frenchman Valley and Rock Creek campgrounds.

Wildlife

Do not feed or approach wildlife – this harms their health, alters their natural behaviour, and exposes you to danger.

Rattlesnakes – Beware of rattlesnakes. Do not wear headphones so that you may hear the rattle sound. Wear boots or shoes that cover your ankles and long, loose fitting pants. Do not step on or over rocks or shrubs. Keep children close by. Protective snake gaiters can be borrowed from the West Block Visitor Centre and Campground Office.

Bison – Maintain 100 metre distance from bison (length of a football field). Startled or irritated bison can respond aggressively. If you encounter bison along the Ecotour Scenic Drive, remain in your vehicle and proceed slowly. Maintain extra caution during May and June when cows are very protective of newborn calves and in July and August during breeding season, when hiking with pets, cycling and when on horseback.

Weather

Be prepared for extreme heat and sudden weather changes. Severe winds and lightning storms are dangerous and it can be difficult to find shelter. Always check weather forecasts before leaving, plan your trip to avoid the heat of the day and make sure to pack all necessary supplies and equipment. Roads in the park can become impassable when wet.

Wildfire

Wildfire is common on the prairies and extremely dangerous. Lightning storms and strong winds are a contributing factor. If you see smoke, report it to Park Dispatch immediately. Fire travels quickly, be prepared to evacuate. If fire traps you, head for low vegetation areas (gravel roads, prairie dog colonies) or burned areas (the "black zone").

EAGLE BUTTE TRAIL

2 km loop; elevation gain: 97 m; 1 hour

Trailhead: Gate at parking area

A great trail to view wildflowers and soaring birds of prey. May – early July is peak season for flower blooms. Well-graded and surfaced, it climbs gently around Eagle Butte. Suitable for all levels. Enjoy the interpretive panels describing prairie vegetation, human history and intriguing geology. For something more challenging, continue to 70 Mile Butte Trail.

70 MILE BUTTE TRAIL

2 km loop elevation gain: 145 m; 1-2 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0306224E 5453181N • Branches from Eagle Butte Trail.

For breath-taking views of the Frenchman River Valley with a smaller time commitment, this trail is for you. Well-graded with short, steep sections and switch-backs, it is challenging but worth the effort. Enjoy the interpretive panels along the way.

***Special Note:** This trail becomes quite muddy after rain, allowtime for trail to dry before using.

TWO TREES TRAIL

4 km loop; elevation gain: 140 m; 1-2 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0304118E 5451015N • Two Trees Day Use Area

Only have a short amount of time? Take this trail for an introduction to prairie grasslands. Seek out cultural features at your feet while keeping an eye skyward for songbirds such as Sprague's pipits. A viewing scope at the end beckons faraway looks beyond the trail. Scan the horizon for a view of Three Sisters.

RIVERWALK TRAIL

3 km loop; elevation gain: 48 m; 1 hour

Trailhead: 13U 0304133E 5450985N • Two Trees Day Use Area

Examine riparian plant life, discover hidden deer and observe birds utilizing the steep riverbank cliffs as you follow this mowed, grassy trail. The Frenchman River, formed by runoff of glacial melt waters, is the lifeblood to this ecosystem and plays an important role for the survival and navigation of people and animals alike.

THREE SISTERS TRAIL

4 km one-way; elevation gain: 68 m; 2-3 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0309599E 5443673N • Access from Rosefield Grid

An old vehicle trail leads through open grasslands to the Saskatchewan Natural History monument that marks the establishment of the first Black-tailed Prairie Dog sanctuary in Canada. The colony still exists and surrounds the monument. Enjoy a river valley view prior to visiting the monument.

TOP DOGTOWN TRAIL

750 m loop; elevation gain: 7m; 20 minutes

Trailhead: 13U 0313283E 5453217N • Ecotour pull-off #2

Listen to the rare Black-tailed Prairie Dogs bark at your approach as you stroll across the Top Dogtown on this hard surfaced, level trail. Take advantage of the viewing scope to see deer or antelope crossing Laoune Coulee, or look for blooming wildflowers at your feet along the ridge.

***Special Note:** It was the Black-tailed Prairie Dog that inspired the creation of a 'prairie' national park.

TIMBERGULCH TRAIL

17 km loop; elevation gain: 484 m; 5-6 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0316205E 5447253N • Ecotour pull-off #3

The three prominent, glacially created, coulee bottoms you'll traverse have created an inviting habitat for bison which tend to linger in this area. One of the most challenging trails within the park, be prepared for exposure, wind, unstable footing and 'feeling small' in a big landscape, just like the lonely Manitoba Maple standing sentinel.

***Special Note:** Bison occasionally scratch on the trail markers knocking them down. Be aware of your surroundings, wildlife and use your orienteering skills.

BEARPAW SEA TRAIL

10 km one-way; elevation gain: 292 m; 4-5 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0306941E 5452899N • Branches from 70 Mile Butte Trail
13U 0313111E 5452031N • Ecotour pull-off #3

From tabletops to valley bottoms, this trail explores the wide variety of habitats found within the park. You'll encounter a Prairie Dogtown, coulees sheltering deer and open country filled with song birds.

***Special Note:** This trail travels near a snake hibernaculum area that may have access restrictions or warnings. Exercise extra caution during April-May and September-October. Snakes can be encountered anytime. Protective gaiters available for loan from the Visitor Centres. Plan a vehicle shuttle at opposite end to avoid return hike.

BROKEN HILLS TRAIL

11 km loop; elevation gain: 326 m; 4-5 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0316205E 5447253N • Park at Belza Day Use Area. Travel west back towards entrance to cross road to trailhead.

One of the few locations to gain an uninterrupted, 360° view of grasslands. Then, rough, challenging topography is your gateway to a rewarding overlook of the Frenchman Valley. The nearby river follows you to your return.

***Special Note:** Enjoy this trail horseback and its proximity to the equestrian camping facilities.

LARSON TRAIL

1.5km loop; elevation gain: 19 m; 30 minutes

Trailhead: 13U 0317969E 5447621N • Ecotour pull-off #6

Observe evidence of early ranching along this mowed trail which also provides views of the adjacent Frenchman River. Begin at the Larson homestead and move past old grazing and hay fields. Walt Larson and his family ranched in this area from the 1920's until 1984 when his land became the first purchase to form the park.

BACK COUNTRY CAMPING

Random camping is permitted in the back country. Camps must be set up at least 1 km from roads and trails. Group size can be no greater than 12 people. A back country camping permit is required for any overnight trip.

Campfires are not permitted in Grasslands' back country. Portable stoves are prohibited in the back country during fire bans.

RANDOM HIKING

Random hiking is permitted throughout the park. Please park in the designated areas of the campgrounds, day use areas or Molestead Back Country Launch (West Block). Seasonal restrictions may apply.

CYCLING

The park currently does not have trail experiences that have been designed for cycling. However, you may cycle on the Badlands Parkway, Ecotour Scenic Drive or the Backcountry Loop. Please be alert for wildlife that may be along the roadways and for motorists.

KAYAKING

The Frenchman River water levels fluctuate seasonally. Kayaks may be launched at the Belza bridge and taken out at the Molestead Back Country Launch. The Frenchman River flows through the park and private lands, be considerate of our neighbours and only camp or take-out within the park. Be aware of your proximity to the the United States boundary.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Horseback riding is permitted throughout the park. Equestrian camping areas with water troughs and pens are located adjacent to the Frenchman Valley and Rock Creek campgrounds. Please see the "Horse Users" section of the Visitor Guide for more information.



OTTER BASIN ROUTE

15 km loop; elevation gain: 150 m; 5-6 hours

Trailhead: 13U 0337533E 5441624N • Access from Back Country Loop

This is the most rugged 'trail' experience the park offers. Expect isolation, loose footing, orientation challenges and rugged terrain. At 1006 metres (3300 feet), this area has the highest elevation in the West Block, which creates different soil conditions to support unique plant growth. The choice is yours to make it a day experience or pitch a tent overlooking the Otter Basin escarpment, with the nighttime glows and coyote yelps as your only companions.

***Special Note:** This route is a remote wilderness experience that requires preparedness, self-reliance and orienteering skills.

The Back Country Loop is impassable when wet.

