

Welcome to the backcountry

Jasper National Park is the largest and most northerly of Canada's mountain national parks. It protects over 11 000 square kilometres of the Rocky Mountains, a beautiful and dramatic landscape supporting a rich variety of plants and animals. Many of the park's backcountry trails were established by early travellers including Indigenous Peoples, fur traders, explorers and adventurers, many travelling on horseback.

With nearly 1000 km of trails and routes to choose from, backcountry camping is a great way to experience the rugged and untamed wilderness of Jasper National Park. This guide will help you plan a trip that is exciting, safe, and has low environmental impact.

For more detailed backcountry planning and trip information, visit www.pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry. Before setting out on a trip, check the latest trail conditions at pc.gc.ca/jaspertrails.

Backcountry camping permits

A backcountry camping permit is mandatory for all overnight trips. It can be obtained online at pc.gc.ca/bookjasperbackcountry or by calling 1-877-RESERVE (1-877-737-3783). A non-refundable reservation fee applies. Book popular campsites early as they book up fast. For updated fee information, visit: pc.gc.ca/jasperfees

Wilderness passes

Frequent backcountry travellers can save by purchasing an annual Wilderness Pass which covers the nightly, per-person fee and is valid in all the mountain national parks for a full year from the purchase date. Even with a Wilderness Pass, you must obtain a backcountry camping permit for each trip. The camping permit cost is covered through the purchase of the Wilderness Pass, but reservation and modification fees for each booking apply.

Refunds and cancellations

If you cancel a backcountry reservation at least 3 days prior to your start date, you will receive a full refund less the original non-refundable reservation fee and the cancellation fee. If your plans change, please take advantage of our refund policy and make your space available to others. To cancel, contact the Parks Canada Reservation Service (PCRS).

Note to Alpine Club of Canada hut users:

If you are staying at an Alpine Club of Canada hut you must obtain a backcountry camping permit from the Alpine Club.

Campfires

Campfires are a luxury in the mountains and are not permitted in some areas (see map). If you choose to have a fire, use the metal fireboxes provided, keep your fire small and use only deadfall. Tend to your fire at all times and extinguish it completely before you move on. Gas stoves are cleaner and more efficient for cooking. We recommend you use one.

Food storage

To reduce your campsite's attractiveness to bears and other wildlife, **all food, garbage, toiletries and cooking equipment** must be hung from the food storage cables or food lockers provided at designated campsites. In wildland camping areas, bear-resistant containers are mandatory to store food. Please clean food lockers after use.

Human waste

Use the pit toilets provided. When there are no facilities nearby, select a spot away from trails, campsites and at least 70 m from water sources. Dig a hole 12 to 16 cm. to the dark-coloured, biologically active soil layer. Loosely fill the hole with soil afterward. Use as little toilet paper as possible and carry it out or burn it.



For more information on low impact travel in the backcountry visit leavenotrace.ca or dial 1-877-238-9343.

Exploring the backcountry

Travelling with horses

Park information centres have information about guided day or overnight horse trips in the park. The Horse Users' Guide (pc.gc.ca/jasperhorses) provides detailed information to individuals or groups planning a horseback trip. Call the Trail Office to obtain backcountry camping and grazing permits (see Information).

Mountain biking

Mountain biking is permitted only on trails designated for bike use. Refer to the map for trails open to mountain biking.

Climbing, mountaineering and glacier travel

Mountaineering parties can apply at a Parks information centre to bivouac in non-vegetated areas. Special restrictions may apply. Visit pc.gc.ca/mountainsafety for more information.

Fishing

Fishing is permitted in many backcountry lakes. A National Park Fishing Permit is mandatory. Provincial fishing permits are not valid in national parks. Permits are sold at park information centres and Jasper retail outlets that sell angling supplies. Get a copy of the current Fishing Regulations Summary with your permit. Visit pc.gc.ca/jasperfishing for more information.

Managing our use

Humans have an impact in all areas of the park. The backcountry is especially vulnerable to our use. Park management regulations are in place to minimize our environmental impact. They include quota restrictions on trails and campsites, a limit on group size, a permit system and restrictions on special use.

Uniformed parks staff you encounter in the backcountry may ask to see your backcountry camping permit.



Grizzly Bear Photo: A. Graham

Filtering Water Photo: A. Graham

Maps

Government of Canada NTS topographic maps, 1:50,000

Gemtrek Jasper and Maligne Lake, 1:100,000, Columbia Icefield 1:75,000, Best of Jasper 1:35,000

National Geographic Trails Illustrated 1:100,000, T903, Jasper North, T902, Jasper South

For more information on each trail, trip planning and topographical maps visit: pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry

Skyline Trail Rides

780-852-4215, 1-888-852-7787 or skylinetrail.com

Tonquin Valley Adventures

780-852-1188 or tonquinadventures.com

Tonquin Valley Backcountry Lodge

780-852-3909 or tonquinvalley.com

Alpine Club of Canada

403-678-3200 or alpineclubofcanada.ca

Weather

The most predictable thing about mountain weather is its unpredictability. Rain or snow can fall at any time of the year and freezing temperatures are possible even during the summer. The best way to deal with the weather is to prepare for all conditions. For a detailed weather forecast, contact the Environment Canada Weather Office at 780-852-3185 or visit their website at www.weatheroffice.gc.ca.

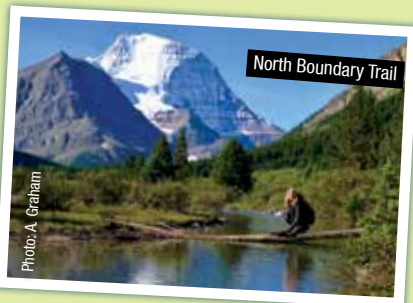
Guidebooks

The Canadian Rockies Trail Guide by Brian Patton and Bart Robinson

Classic Hikes in the Canadian Rockies by Graeme Pole

Hiking Jasper and Mount Robson by Rob Bryce

Detailed descriptions for all of Jasper's major backcountry trails are available online at pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry. They include lists of suggested equipment to bring on your trip.



North Boundary Trail Photo: A. Graham

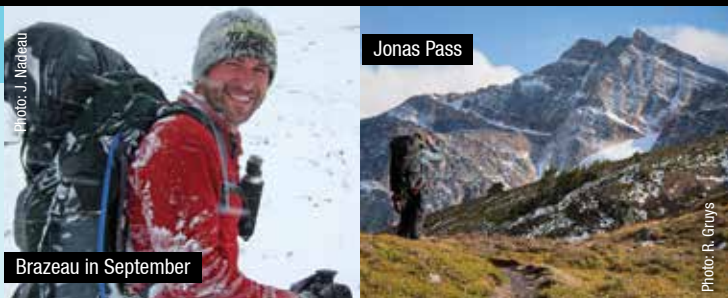
On the trails

Jasper National Park offers a range of backcountry opportunities. Trails and campsites are designated as **semi-primitive, primitive or wildland**.

Here's what you can expect*:

Semi-primitive	Primitive	Wildland
Receive the highest level of service. Expect major windfall to be cleared and bridges, corduroys and signs maintained. Campsites are equipped with food storage, picnic tables, throne pit privies and fireboxes (where fires are permitted).	Receive a lower level of service. Expect major windfall to be cleared annually, but may not be maintained prior to your trip. Campsites are equipped with bear poles and pit privies. Creeks may not be bridged.	Little or no maintenance. Provide opportunities for experienced, self-reliant users to travel and camp in unmaintained areas of the park.
You are very likely to meet others on the trail.	More remote. You may meet others on the trail.	Many of these areas are extremely remote.

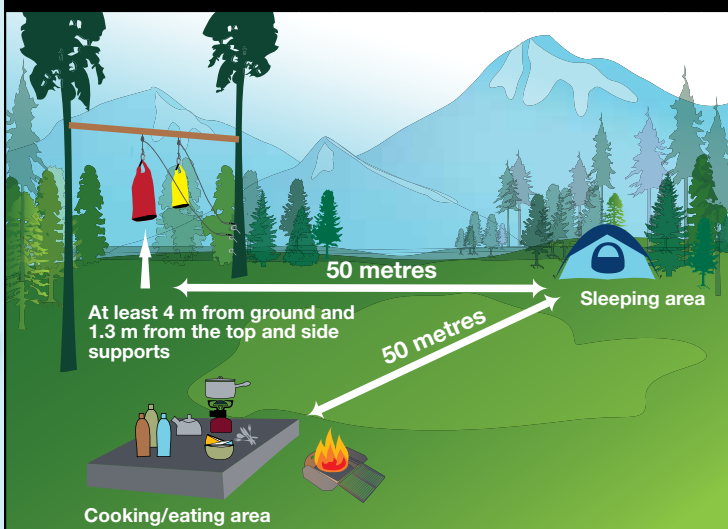
*While we aim to achieve the above standards, inclement mountain weather and events can considerably change trail, river and campsite conditions instantly. Self-reliance is important in all backcountry areas.



Brazeau in September Photo: A. Graham

Jonas Pass Photo: R. Briggs

How to properly store your food



Safety

Playing it safe

All outdoor activities involve some degree of risk. Rapidly changing weather, steep, rugged or unfamiliar terrain, avalanches (at any time of year), cold, swift-flowing streams, canyons, rapids and waterfalls, glacial crevasses, falling rocks and wild animals are all backcountry hazards visitors may encounter. Caution and self-reliance are essential.

Water

Giardia lamblia is a parasite carried by humans and some domestic and wild animals. These parasites can occur in any surface water in the park and may contaminate the water supply. Boil your drinking water or purify it with a water filter or iodine tablets.

Wildlife

Never forget that park animals are wild and can be dangerous. Any animal can become aggressive if it feels threatened, so keep your distance—30 metres from most animals, and at least 100 metres from bears.

Bears

Both black and grizzly bears are of special concern to backcountry travellers. Learn more about how to reduce the risk of bear encounters by reading the wildlife safety brochures available at park information centres or on the web at pc.gc.ca/bears-and-people

Dogs

Wild animals see dogs as either prey or predator. They can provoke confrontations with wildlife and affect your safety. This is why dogs must be kept on leash while in a national park. Please note that dogs are not allowed in some backcountry areas to protect caribou.

Remember—YOU are responsible for your own safety.

Checklist

- Select a trip which best suits your party's abilities and experience,** interests, equipment and the time you have available.
- Familiarize yourself with the trail you have selected.** This includes using additional reference guides and topographic maps.
- Obtain a Backcountry Camping Permit on-line at pc.gc.ca/bookjasperbackcountry or by phone at 1-877-737-3783.**
- Check trail conditions and weather** prior to departure.
- Be prepared to be self-sufficient** during inclement and rapidly changing mountain conditions by packing the right clothing and camping gear.
- Let a friend or family member know** about your travel plans.
- Check the trailhead kiosk prior to your hike.** It contains valuable information about closures and warnings.

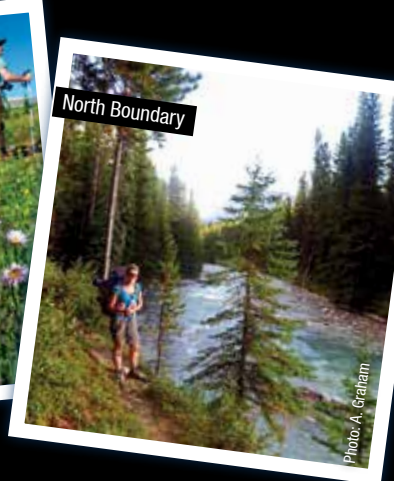
For further details on **PLANNING YOUR TRIP** visit pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry.

SHARING THE TRAIL

Hikers, horse parties and mountain bikers often share trails and campsites in certain parts of the park. Respect for others can go a long way toward reducing conflicts. **Make noise** if you are travelling quickly or silently, move off the trail to allow larger parties to pass, and avoid sudden movement around horses as they may spook.



Skyline Trail Photo: A. Graham



North Boundary Photo: A. Graham

Information

Trail information, trip suggestions, route descriptions: pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry

Online booking pc.gc.ca/bookjasperbackcountry
Trail conditions 780-852-6177 • pc.gc.ca/jaspertrails

Parks Canada Trail Office
JASPER TOWNSITE INFORMATION CENTRE
500 Connaught Dr. • 780-852-6177
Annual Wilderness Passes, trail information.
jnp.info@pc.gc.ca pc.gc.ca/jasper

PARKS CANADA INFORMATION, ICEFIELD CENTRE (mid-April to mid-Oct.) 780-852-6288 • jaspericefield@pc.gc.ca
Annual Wilderness Passes, trail information. 103 km south of Jasper on the Icefields Parkway

Visitor Safety Office 780-852-6155 pc.gc.ca/mountainsafety
Information on mountaineering, ice climbing, visitor safety.
Weather forecasts 780-852-3185 • weather.gc.ca
Winter avalanche information 1-800-667-1105
pc.gc.ca/avalanche

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL 911.
Cell phone reception outside of the Jasper townsite is unreliable.

Friends of Jasper National Park 780-852-4767
Retail outlet at the Parks Canada information centre in Jasper.
info.friendsofjasper.com • friendsofjasper.com
Ph 250-566-4325 (year round) 250-566-9174 (summer)
Reservations: 1-800-689-9025 • bcparks.ca

Alpine Club of Canada 403-678-3200 alpineclubofcanada.ca

FOLLOW US ON:



Two-Day Trips

131 Saturday Night Lake Loop Semi-Primitive
24 km return Elevation gain/loss: 786 m
 Maximum elevation: 1640 m

This well-marked trail begins and ends in the Jasper townsite. It follows a plateau below timberline, making it a good selection for the novice or early season hiker.

TRAILHEAD: P3 Townsite - Junction of Bonhomme St. and Patricia St.

139 Jacques Lake Semi-Primitive
12 km one way Elevation gain: 41 m, loss: 8 m
 Maximum elevation: 1540 m

This unique trail travels through a narrow mountain valley, skirts four lakes and crosses a watershed—all in less than 13 km and with little change in elevation. A good choice for novice hikers. Camping is not permitted at Beaver Lake.

TRAILHEAD: South end of Medicine Lake, 28 km from Jasper townsite on Maligne Lake Rd.

126 Big Bend Semi-Primitive
12.8 km return Elevation gain/loss: 267 m
 Maximum elevation: 1400 m

Rolling along the Upper Athabasca Valley, this trail follows a wide, well-packed fire road to spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. Make a day of it, or stay overnight at Big Bend Campground.

NOTE: The bridge at Athabasca Crossing is washed out. The Athabasca River is impassable.

TRAILHEAD: Sunwapta Falls, 54.5 km south of Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway.

Three-Day Trips

100 Skyline Semi-Primitive
44 km Elevation gain from Maligne Lake: 1410 m and loss: 1928 m. Maximum elevation: 2510 m
Caribou range—dogs not allowed.

A classic Rockies trail, most of it above treeline. The high elevation allows for panoramic views that extend over much of the park, encompassing vast meadows, windswept ridges and the chance to spot wildlife in the distance.

NOTES: Campfires not permitted. Use of a stove is mandatory. Snow may remain in higher areas until mid-July. Recommended travel between July 1 and September.

TRAILHEADS: Maligne Lake (50 km from Jasper townsite) and just before Maligne Canyon (about 8 km from Jasper on the Maligne Road). Recommended direction is from Maligne Lake to Maligne Canyon.

108 Tonquin Valley Loop Semi-Primitive
43 km Elevation gain from Astoria Trail: 1053 m and loss: 1293 m. Maximum elevation: 2210 m
Caribou range—dogs not allowed.

The Tonquin Valley's scenery is unrivalled. This is one of Canada's premiere alpine regions, a unique combination of rugged peaks, ghostly ice and fertile lakes. There are several excellent day hikes in the area.

NOTES: No fires. Use of a stove is mandatory. Recommended travel between July 1 and September. Regular horse use during July and August and rain can make trails muddy and challenging for hikers.

TRAILHEADS: Km 12.7 on the Cavell Rd (Astoria Trail) and at km 6.3 on the Marmot Basin Rd (Portal Creek Trail).

122 Fryatt Valley (Brussels) Semi-Primitive
17.7 km one way Elevation gain/loss: 715 m
 Maximum elevation: 1715 m

This alpine valley tucked into one of Jasper's great mountain ranges is a jewel that rewards all your efforts. Camp at Brussels and explore the upper valley and beautiful Fryatt Lake on day two, or tackle the infamous headwall to the Alpine Hut and the small hanging valley beyond.

NOTES: Biking allowed to Lower Fryatt Campsite. Alpine hut must be booked in advance (see Information).

TRAILHEAD: Km 2.0 of Geraldine road, off Hwy 93A just north of Athabasca Falls.

Four-Day Trips

130 Brazeau Loop Semi-Primitive
80 km Elevation gain/loss-clockwise loop: 2351 m
 Maximum elevation: 2475 m
Caribou range—dogs not allowed.

The "grand tour" of the southern ranges, this circuit includes one of the park's largest backcountry lakes and an extraordinary alpine traverse with glaciated peaks, lush wildflowers and a variety of wildlife. The trail passes through extensive alpine meadows and three passes.

NOTES: Snow levels may hinder travel until mid-July. No fires at Jonas Cutoff ▲23. Campsites are located at the beginning and end of the 20-km pass section. Horse use prohibited in Jonas Pass.

TRAILHEAD: 112 km south of Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway at Nigel Creek.

130 Poboktan-Jonas Pass Semi-Primitive
54 km to Nigel Creek, one way Elevation gain: 1691 m and loss: 1346 m. Maximum elevation: 2470 m
Caribou range—dogs not allowed.

A shorter alternative to the Brazeau Loop, this is an impressive hike with over 13 km of travel above treeline. Good views and prime habitat for park wildlife including hoary marmot and woodland caribou. See notes for Brazeau Loop above.

TRAILHEAD: Sunwapta station, 72 km S of Jasper townsite on Icefields Parkway.

Seven to Ten-Day Trips

In wildland camping areas, toilets and food storage may not be present in some locations. Bear-resistant containers are required to store food. These trails are very remote and rugged and some major river crossings are not bridged. The trails are maintained infrequently and has some horse traffic. We recommend checking with the trail office for current conditions.

115 Athabasca Pass Wildland
98 km return Maximum elevation: 1755 m, Minimum elevation: 1210 m

Step back in time along this historic trail. It follows the Whirlpool River Valley, the traditional route of indigenous people and early fur traders crossing the Rocky Mountains. The rugged trail has not changed much since those days. Large gravel flats, glaciers and sharp peaks dominate the middle section of the route.

TRAILHEAD: Km 6.4 of Moab Lake Road, off Highway 93A South.

150 North Boundary Wildland
179 km Maximum elevation: 2020 m, minimum elevation: 1355 m

North Boundary country possesses its own unique brand of beauty—a wilderness of broad valleys and distant views that is inhabited by an array of wildlife. The western section of the trail leads into the spectacular beauty of Berg Lake and Mount Robson. Most of the rivers and creeks along this historic route are no longer bridged, so the best time to hike is mid-August to the end of September.

NOTE: Blue, Carcajou and Gendarme creek bridges are out.

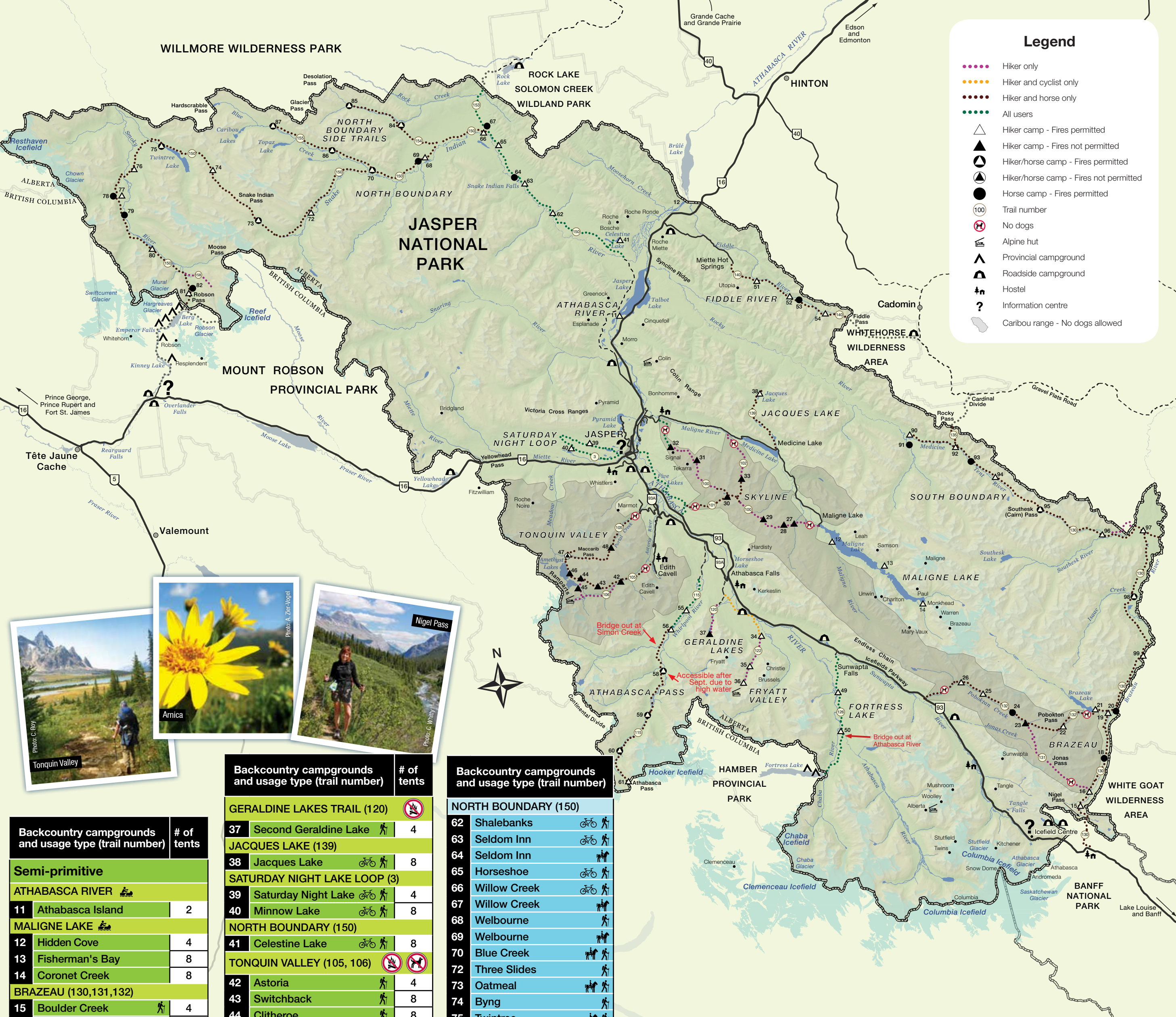
TRAILHEADS: End of Celestine Road, 53 km from Jasper townsite; Rock Lake, 32 km from Hwy 40 to Grande Cache; and at Mount Robson, 88 km west of Jasper townsite on Highway 16.

130 South Boundary Wildland
120 km Maximum elevation: 2262 m, Minimum elevation: 1580 m

This remote high country trek travels through lowland forest and over three spectacular alpine passes. You are unlikely to meet others along the way.

NOTES: Due to post-fire deadfall and re-growth, the route between Jacques Lake and Rocky Forks Campground is very difficult to navigate. Travel through this area is not recommended. Beyond Brazeau Lake, trail is maintained infrequently. Overlaps the popular Brazeau Loop Trail. Check online for campsite availability.

TRAILHEADS: Rocky Pass via Hwy 40, 77 km SE of Hinton Nigel Pass: 112 km from Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway.



Backcountry campgrounds and usage type (trail number)	# of tents
Semi-primitive	
ATHABASCA RIVER	
11 Athabasca Island	2
MALIGNE LAKE	
12 Hidden Cove	4
13 Fisherman's Bay	8
14 Coronet Creek	8
BRAZEAU (130,131,132)	
15 Boulder Creek	4
16 Four Point	8
18 Wolverine South	-
19 Brazeau River	4
20 Brazeau Meadows	-
21 Brazeau Lake	8
22 John-John	4
23 Jonas Cutoff	8
24 McCready	-
25 Waterfalls	4
26 Poboktan	4
SKYLINE (100, 101, 102)	
27 Evelyn Creek	4
28 Little Shovel	8
29 Snowbowl	8
30 Curator	8
31 Tekarra	8
32 Signal	4
33 Watchtower	4
FRYATT VALLEY (122)	
34 Lower Fryatt	4
35 Brussels	8
36 Headwall	4

Backcountry campgrounds and usage type (trail number)	# of tents
GERALDINE LAKES TRAIL (120)	
37 Second Geraldine Lake	4
JACQUES LAKE (139)	
38 Jacques Lake	8
SATURDAY NIGHT LAKE LOOP (3)	
39 Saturday Night Lake	4
40 Minnow Lake	8
NORTH BOUNDARY (150)	
41 Celestine Lake	8
TONQUIN VALLEY (105, 106)	
42 Astoria	4
43 Switchback	8
44 Clitheroe	8
45 Surprise Point	4
46 Amethyst	8
47 Maccarib	4
48 Portal	8
Primitive	
FORTRESS LAKE (126)	
49 Big Bend	4
50 Athabasca Crossing	4
FIDDLE RIVER (140)	
51 Utopia	4
52 Slide Creek	4
53 Slide Creek	-
54 Whitehorse	4
Wildland	
ATHABASCA PASS (115)	
55 Whirlpool	4
56 Tie Camp	4
58 Middle Forks	4
59 Scott Camp	4
60 Kane Meadows	4
61 Athabasca Pass	4

Backcountry campgrounds and usage type (trail number)	
NORTH BOUNDARY (150)	
62 Shalebanks	
63 Seldom Inn	
64 Seldom Inn	
65 Horseshoe	
66 Willow Creek	
67 Willow Creek	
68 Welbourne	
69 Welbourne	
70 Blue Creek	
72 Three Slides	
73 Oatmeal	
74 Byng	
75 Twintree	
76 Donaldson Creek	
77 Chown Creek	
78 Chown Creek	
79 Timothy Slide	
80 Wolverine North	
81 Adolphus	
82 Adolphus	
84 Little Heaven	
85 Spruce Tree	
86 Ancient Wall	
87 Natural Arch	
SOUTH BOUNDARY (130, 135)	
90 Rocky Forks	
91 Rocky Forks	
92 Medicine Tent	
93 Medicine Tent	
94 La Grace	
95 Cairn Pass	
96 Cairn River	
97 Southesk	
98 Isaac Creek	
99 Arête	



Woodland Caribou

The woodland caribou found in Jasper are a threatened species. Less than 100 caribou are left in south Jasper.

What you can do to help woodland caribou:

- Stay on designated trails and if you see caribou give them space.
- Dogs are not allowed in caribou habitat (see map).
- Avoid hiking in caribou habitat during calving season (June – early July) and rut season (late September to early October).

To find out more about caribou conservation in the mountain national parks, visit www.pc.gc.ca/caribou.