

RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

MANITOBA

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LOCATION

Riding Mountain National Park is situated on a rolling plateau 1,000 feet above the vast prairies, 165 miles northwest of the City of Winnipeg. Riding Mountain is one link in a chain of elevations extending through the Province of Manitoba at heights up to 2,400 feet above sea level. Set apart as a National Park in 1930, it covers a total area of 1,148 square miles.

The detailed map in this folder has been prepared especially to help visitors readily identify the various features of the Park.

PURPOSE

Riding Mountain National Park is one of Canada's 18 National Parks which form a chain of nature sanctuaries extending from Mount Revelstoke in British Columbia to Terra Nova in Newfoundland. These parks have been established for the preservation of selected areas in their natural state for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations of Canadians.

This vast area of more than 29,000 square miles is administered by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

NATURAL FEATURES

GEOLOGICAL

Many of the natural features of Riding Mountain National Park were shaped by the great glaciers of the Ice Age, the last of which melted from the area about 10,000 years ago. Riding Mountain is



Great horned owls may be seen in the Park.

actually part of an erosion plateau formed by Cretaceous rocks of the Ashville, Vermilion River, Favel, and Riding Mountain formations. The steep escarpment of the mountain is mainly the result of pre-glacial erosion and was formed before it and the surrounding country were covered by immense sheets of ice.

Evidence of glacial movement remains in the depressions now filled by small lakes and by moraines and boulders that are found in many parts of the Park. To the north and east of the escarpment can be found old beaches of Lake Agassiz which existed in pre-glacial times. As the ice receded, large lakes were formed in the surrounding valleys and towards the east lay a vast inland sea of which Lakes Dauphin, Winnipegosis, Manitoba, and Winnipeg are all that remain. Some idea of this

watery expanse may be gained from the view of the vast panorama from vantage points or lookouts along the edge of the eastern escarpment.

The lakes in the Park are among its great charms. Lying between green ridges, they vary in size from small tarns to bodies of water several miles long. Clear Lake—the largest—is also the finest in the Park. Seven miles long, it varies in width from one to two and a half miles, and up to 100 feet in depth. It has a shoreline of more than 30 miles. Through its crystal clear waters may be seen bubbles from the many springs by which it is fed.

PLANTLIFE

The Park lies in the mixedwood section of the boreal forest region of Canada, but tongue-like extensions of the treeless prairie region extend into the Park. This gives an attractive and varied assemblage of plants in the area.

The most important trees are white spruce and black spruce but other trees such as jack pine, trembling aspen, white birch, larch, balsam fir, green ash, elm, and Manitoba maple are also present. The lighter shades of leaves and barks of the deciduous trees among the deep greens and browns of the evergreens offer strikingly beautiful contrasts. Smaller trees such as mountain-ash and service-berry are common, and shrubs of many kinds including hazelnut, high-bush cranberry viburnum, and osier dogwood are interspersed among the trees. In the autumn the shrubs combine with larger species to produce a marvellous colouring of the landscape.

From early spring until autumn a profusion of wildflowers cover the landscape. Among these are wild rose, twinflower, marsh marigold, wood lily,

prairie sage, giant hyssop, pasque flower or crocus anemone, Canada dogwood or bunchberry, various wintergreens, fireweed, Indian paint-brush, and Indian pipe, as well as goldenrods and asters.

WILDLIFE

The Park is a wildlife sanctuary where hunting and trapping are not allowed. Visitors may observe wild animals at close range but should keep a safe distance. Black bear, mule deer, whitetailed deer, and moose are found in the undisturbed forests, and beaver along the streams. One of the largest herds of elk in Canada ranges the plains and woodlands in the Park and may often be seen on the meadows near Lake Audy, or on some outlying trail. Some of the smaller mammals characteristic of the Park are: red fox, coyote, grey wolf, short-tailed weasel, Richardson's ground squirrel, thirteen-striped ground squirrel, Franklin's ground squirrel, northern flying squirrel, and red squirrel, along with lynx, skunk, badger, woodchuck, porcupine, snowshoe hare, northern pocket gopher, and chipmunk.

Although herds of American bison once roamed over the western plains in great profusion,



Glacial action and erosion have molded these hills and basins.



A bull elk is alerted.

these wild animals are extinct in this region. In 1931 an area of 2,000 acres was fenced in the Lake Audy area and an exhibition herd introduced from what was then Buffalo National Park in Alberta. When seen grazing on the prairie land in the enclosure, these animals recall to mind thrilling days when Indians, armed only with bow and arrow, pursued thundering herds across the vast reaches of the western prairie.

BIRDLIFE

There are about 193 kinds of birds in the Park. Migratory birds, following the skyways to and from their nesting grounds in Northern Canada, find rest and shelter on the lakes and marshes. Many birds remain to nest. Wild ducks, Canada geese, swans, cormorants, and white pelicans are among the picturesque transients; loons and bitterns feed around the lakes and sloughs. The soaring birds are represented by bald eagles and ospreys, among others. Some birds, which gladden the ear, include

the white-throated sparrow, song sparrow, purple finch, American goldfinch, robin, red-winged black-bird, rose-breasted grosbeak, Baltimore oriole, cat-bird, and meadowlark. Colourful birds such as the blue jay, kingfisher, pileated woodpecker, scarlet tanager, cedar waxwing, bohemian waxwing, evening grosbeak, and ruby-throated hummingbird are around in numbers. The gray or Canada jay tends to collect around campsites at mealtime. Sharp-tailed grouse, ruffed grouse, various owls, and hawks are also native to the Park.

FISH

Modern methods of fish management are followed to improve angling in the various lakes and a regular stocking program is carried out. Eastern brook trout and rainbow trout, lake trout, pike, yellow walleye, and yellow perch may be taken. Fishing Bulletins with up-to-date information are issued regularly and are available at the Park Information Centre, where required fishing licences should also be obtained. These licences are also available from Park Wardens, all park entrances, and campground offices.

As Fishing Regulations change occasionally, visitors are advised to consult Park Wardens and the Park Information Centre concerning licences, season and catch limits.

HOW YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PARK

To help you understand and obtain greater enjoyment from your Park visit, the National Parks provide an Interpretation Service. A Park Naturalist is on duty during the summer and conducts hikes and campfire talks to explain the natural features and purposes of the Park. Some of these nature talks are illustrated by

films and slides during the evening in the Park amphitheatre. Well marked nature trails of a self-guiding type are established in some areas. Labels identify various species of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers, and trail-side exhibits are also provided at points of interest. More detailed information is available at the Park Information Centre.

HOW TO SEE THE INTERESTING FEATURES

While the roads in the Park lead to some of the interesting Park features, the best way to gain a full appreciation of nature in the Park is to use the trails. A large number of people benefit from rambling or riding over many miles of well kept trails. Reference to the accompanying map will give further information as to their location.

To secure the maximum benefit from their park experience visitors will find the use of these woodland trails into areas of unspoiled nature most rewarding. A journey into the more secluded sections of the Park can contribute greatly to the restoration of the human spirit. It is a sanctuary for man, as well as the wild creatures.

PARK ENJOYMENT

Although the Park has been set apart primarily to preserve its natural features for the enjoyment of future generations, the Park Service also provides other recreation facilities. In addition to those already mentioned, there are: tennis courts, an 18-hole golf course, bowling green, children's playground and park amphitheatre. Boat launching and docking facilities are provided at Clear Lake, and lifeguards are on duty in the swimming areas. Private interests offer alternate recreational activities, as well as other facilities customarily found in most vacation areas.

Wasagaming townsite contains all the usual services of a modern community with hotels, motels, restaurants, and other business establishments.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PARK ADMINISTRATION

A resident Superintendent is in charge of the Park, with offices at Wasagaming. The protection of the Park and the visitor is in the hands of the Warden Service assisted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

INFORMATION

Complete information is available at the Park Information Centre conveniently located at Wasagaming.

SEASON

The Park is open throughout the year, but complete facilities for visitors are provided only from May to September.

CAMPING

Camping facilities are available at the main campground at Wasagaming, and at four outlying locations indicated on the map. Camping privileges at nominal fees include kitchen shelters with tables, stoves, firewood and water. Upon payment of nominal fees, visitors may remain for periods up to 21 days.

PRESERVATION

National Parks are selected areas set apart as nature sanctuaries and special care is taken to maintain them *in their natural state*. For this reason

all birds, animals, wildlife, trees, shrubs, rocks and fossils are to remain undisturbed. Even the wildflowers are not to be picked; they are to be left for others to enjoy. Feeding, touching or molesting wild animals is not permitted. This is in the interests of the animal, as well as the human, who could receive serious injury.

Please help protect your own Park for future enjoyment. It is part of your national inheritance.

PREVENT FIRE

Campfires may be kindled only in fireplaces provided for this purpose and must be completely extinguished before campers leave the site. Visitors observing an unattended fire should attempt to extinguish it if possible and promptly report it to the nearest Park employee.

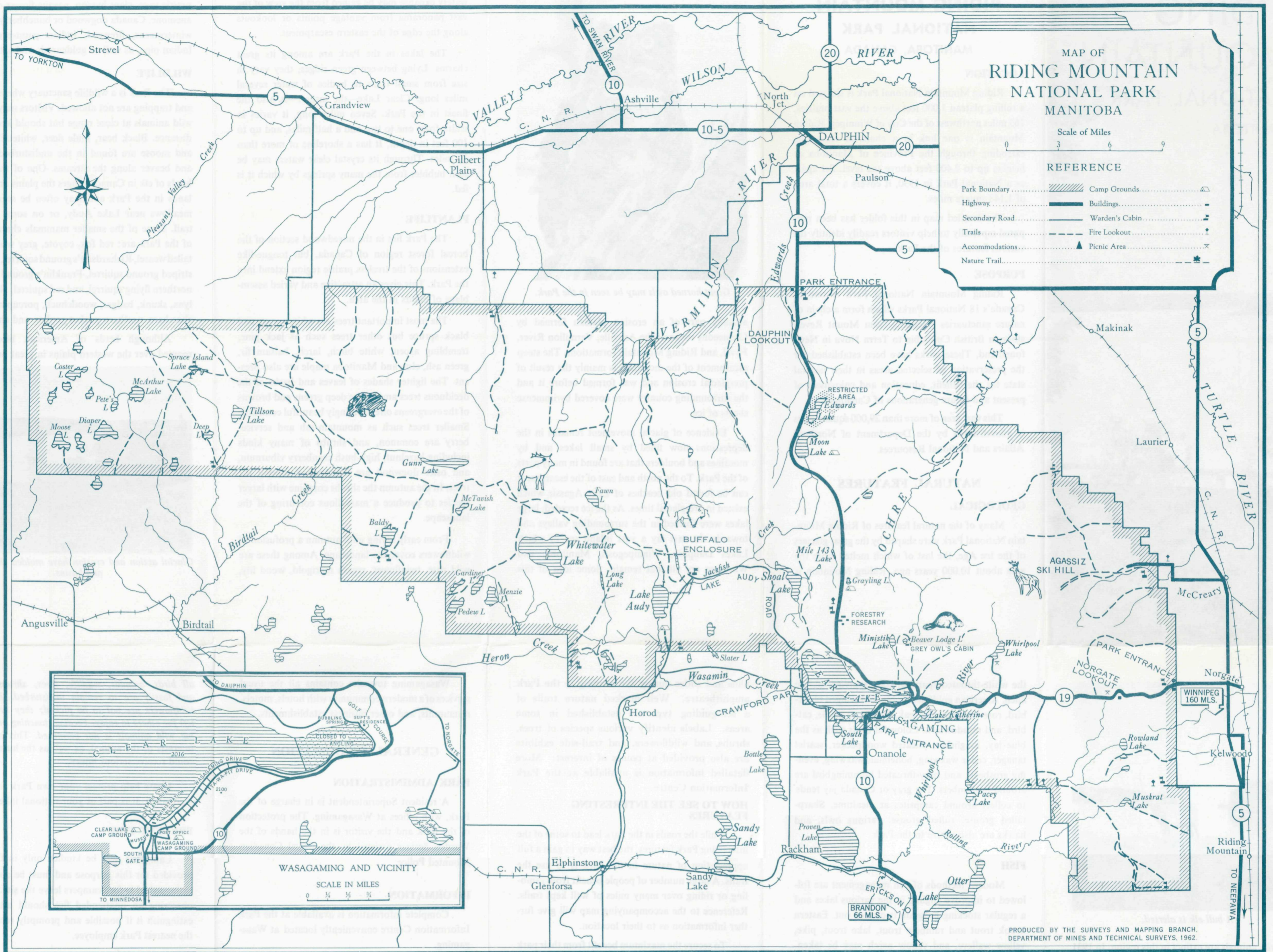
Fire in a National Park can cause damage which cannot be repaired in a hundred years.

PETS

Dogs and cats may accompany visitors into the Park. For the protection of Park animals, however, dogs must be kept on leash.



Trees of many kinds flourish in the Park.



MOTOR LICENCE

Motoring visitors are required to obtain a Park motor vehicle licence at the entrance. A licence good in all the National Parks in Canada is available.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

Riding Mountain National Park is well served by all means of modern transportation, rail, air, bus, and car. Reference to the map will indicate the alternative approach routes. The nearest airports are at Dauphin and Brandon.

ACCOMMODATION

A variety of accommodation is offered in the Park, details of which are available at the

Park Information Centre. The National Parks Service does not arrange accommodation or reservations.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The name "Riding Mountain" is believed to be a derivation of a Cree Indian name meaning "Hill of the Buffalo Chase". Henry Youle Hind, who visited the region in 1858, said that his guides tried to dissuade him with tales of strange noises and "devils" in the Mountain from exploring a fresh moose track leading into the plateau. The old lake ridges were, however, used as Indian trails for countless years.

In 1906, control of the area was passed to the Forestry Branch of the Federal Department of the

Interior. Before 1930 the roads were far from smooth or adequate. A trail from Dauphin, through Keld and Audy Lake, then south to Elphinstone, was one of the colonists' trails across the mountain. The road from the south came from Minnedosa via Clanwilliam and was not always fit for travel. There was also the old Thompson Trail across the mountain to Dauphin which was somewhat east of the present No. 10 Highway. The original No. 10 Highway was begun in 1931 and the Norgate Road was also built in the same period.

Under an Act transferring the natural resources from federal to provincial authority in 1930, this area was designated as Riding Mountain National Park. The official opening ceremony took place on

July 26, 1933, and is commemorated by a tablet and cairn to be seen just north of the present Park Office.

Persons wishing additional information concerning the Park may address their inquiries to:

The Superintendent,
Riding Mountain National Park,
WASAGAMING, Manitoba,

or

Natural and Historical Resources Branch
Department of Northern Affairs
and National Resources,
OTTAWA, Canada.

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