



Rocky Mountain House
National Historic Site

Activity Guide and Maps

Stay awhile



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada

How To Reach Us

Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site



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Rocky Mountain House,
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(see map, page 9)

Tel: 403.845.2412

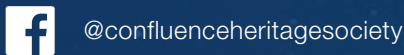
Fax: 403.845.5320

Email: rocky.info@pc.gc.ca

Visit Our Website

www.pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse

Follow the Confluence Heritage Society



Hours of Operation

May 10 to Labour Day
Daily 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

September
Thursday to Sunday
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Closed Oct 1 – May 9
See website for off-season
events.

Welcome

The forts are gone but the stories live on. Stories of trade, exploration and competition, but above all, stories of people.

In 1799 the North West and Hudson's Bay companies set up rival posts here on the North Saskatchewan River. During the 76-year history of trade at the site, nine different Indigenous groups visited the area. Explorer, fur trader and renowned mapmaker, David Thompson and his wife Charlotte Small used this post as a base for discovering a pass through the Rocky Mountains.

Today, Parks Canada tells the stories of the many different people who have spent time on the banks of this historic river highway, and protects the archaeological remains of the four trading posts. We are honoured to engage with community partners and Indigenous peoples who share their stories of today, and breathe new life into the history of this land.

Stay awhile. Let *your* story become part of this place, too.



Bienvenue miyoonakishkatoohk miyotôtâkewin

Parks Canada is honoured to engage with community partners and Indigenous organizations.

Métis Local 845

At Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site we are pleased to showcase some of our traditions like bannock-baking, jigging, tanning hides, and sharing stories of our Métis culture. We welcome you to visit a trapper tent, learn about the red river carts and try your hand at skills of the fur trade. Join us in celebrating our culture and experiencing the fur trades of the past. We look forward to seeing you!

The Confluence Heritage Society

We are a registered charity supported by volunteers. Our mission is to preserve, support and promote our Western Canadian history, heritage and culture. We work together with Parks Canada and community partners to promote and present events, summer camps, and other programs at the site for all ages and cultures. We also operate the Trading Post gift shop in the Visitor Centre. Come visit us!

Kis Sai Wah Toe Tat Towin Society

Kis Sai Wah Toe Tat Towin means “Coming together and taking care of one another in humbleness and wellness”. Our collaboration with Parks Canada has been an integral part of our ability to create and provide Gatherings and Ceremonies for our communities. The historic site provides a culturally appropriate and safe space for people to connect to important teachings, nurture relationships with local Indigenous Elders, and share meaningful experiences with visitors that promote truth and reconciliation.

David Thompson and Charlotte Small

David Thompson was 14 years old when he set out to map the land we now know as Canada. Between 1792 and 1812 he mapped 3.9 million square kilometres, about 1/6th of the North American continent. He first came to Rocky Mountain House in 1800 with his Cree-Scots wife, Charlotte Small, using the fort as a base for his trans-mountain travels. His 1814 “Great Map” of his explorations envisioned the Canada to come.

David and Charlotte spent a number of winters here and had their first child at the post. Charlotte was a great partner for Thompson. Raised by a Cree mother and a Scottish father, she was familiar with both Indigenous customs and languages and those of the traders. Unlike many fur traders, Thompson did not abandon his ‘country wife’ when he retired from the trade. Instead he took Charlotte and their children with him to eastern Canada, married Charlotte in a formal church wedding and they spent the rest of their lives together.

David and Charlotte, true adventurers, have been recognized as persons of National Historic Significance (Canada).



Explore, share, imagine

*These daily activities are free with site entry.
Ask staff for timing and locations.*

Visitor Centre

Artifacts, a replica fur trade room, exhibits and a **3D Virtual Reality Experience**. Journey back to Rocky Mountain House when it was a bustling fur trade post.

Play Fort

A mini fort where kids can play games, imagine life as a fur trader, and watch a puppet show about extreme adventurer David Thompson.



Blacksmith Station

Listen for the elemental sound of hammer striking anvil. Enjoy daily demonstrations at the hardware store of the 1800s.

Women of the Fur Trade

Demonstrations and hands-on activities

in beading, quill work, capote-making, finger weaving, leather work and other Indigenous crafts.

Listening Stations

The wooden structures on the riverbank are interpretive story stations. They also mark the start and finish of the Chimney Trail and the David Thompson Trail. Audio in English and French.



Bison

Catch a glimpse of the small herd of Plains Bison, animals that originally came from Elk Island National Park, where most of the world's purebred Plains Bison originate. Please note: these are wild animals; do not enter the bison paddock.

Trading Post Gift Shop

Local and Indigenous crafts, books, furs, Hudson Bay blankets, blacksmithing items and other souvenirs.

Kids Activity Books

Ask at the Visitor Centre for a Parks Canada *Xplorers* Guide with activities for children aged 9-12 years old. For younger kids, pick up the *Parka* Activity Booklet, for children aged 4-8.

Open your senses to more...

The longer you stay, the greater your chance of experiencing more ways this place is special. Perhaps you will witness an Indigenous elder leading a sacred teaching or stoking the fire for a sweat lodge. Or an archaeologist will unearth an ancient artifact. Coyotes yip while the full moon rises over the river. Stay awhile, let Rocky surprise you.



Métis Campfire

Experience Métis culture, taste bannock cooked over an open fire, play a drum or a traditional game.

Trails and picnic sites

Seven kilometres of nature trails weave in and around the site. Pack a picnic and experience the beauty of this place. Follow in the footsteps of Indigenous Peoples, fur traders, trappers and legendary explorers David Thompson and Charlotte Small.



Chimney Trail

This trail circles through the archaeological remains of two Hudson's Bay Company forts dating to 1835 and 1868 (where the fort's original chimneys still stand).

- Begins and ends at the Listening Station on the river by the Visitor Centre
- 0.8 km loop, wheelchair accessible
- Allow 35 minutes

David Thompson Trail

Follow along the banks of the North Saskatchewan River to the oldest fort sites, including the first fort built by the North West Company in 1799.

- Begins and ends at the Listening Station on the river by the Visitor Centre
- 3.2 km loop
- Allow 90 minutes

Petro Canada Bicentennial Trail

- 5 km to the Town of Rocky Mountain House
- Allow 40 minutes by bicycle (2 hour walk)

Wheelchair and Stroller Access

- Chimney Trail, Visitor Centre and the washroom building are accessible.

Picnic Areas

- Camping areas
- Visitor Centre
- Play Fort

Keep in mind:

- Bring water and extra layers of clothing.
- Use sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Pets on leash are welcome. (Please pick up after your pets.)

Wildlife Viewing

This historic site protects over 500 acres of field, marsh, and old spruce forest. It provides habitat for many species including the mountain bluebird, red-tailed hawk, northern harrier, bald eagle, sandhill crane, Richardson's ground squirrel, coyote, fox, moose, grouse, beaver and deer. Please help us keep wildlife wild by not approaching or feeding animals, big or small.

Camping—from RVs to tipis

Stay awhile



Parks Canada / Leo de Groot

Tipis, Trapper Tents and Trapline Cabins

Camp in comfort! Cook bannock and trapper's tea over a fire. Immerse yourself in the lifestyle of the fur trade. Camping fee includes a Fur Trade Camp Kit: bison hide, period cooking kit and utensils, blow tube and flint/steel fire-starting kit, bannock mix, trapper's tea, spices, oil and soap.

Make your overnight experience even more special by booking a program or workshop during your stay (see next page for details).

Métis Trapper Tents

- Sleep up to 5 on double or twin beds (beds and mattresses included).
- Wooden platform flooring, rustic table and chairs provided.
- Communal fire pits.

Tipis

- Sleep up to 8, sleeping mats provided.
- Wooden platform flooring, rustic tables and chairs provided.
- Outside fire pits and picnic tables.

Trapline Cabins

- Sleep up to 6, double bunk beds plus double bed in loft, mattresses provided.



Additional Information

- Trapper tents and tipis are 50 metres from parking area to ensure a true nature experience.
- Washroom facilities nearby, bear-proof garbage containers, day use area, volleyball court and boat launch.
- Community fire pits and picnic tables.
- Walking distance to Visitor Centre, gift shop and on-site events and interpretive programs.
- For tipis, trapper tents and trapline cabins, check-in at Visitor Centre, 1–5 p.m.; check-out 11 a.m.
- For information and bookings check website or call 403-845-2412.

Front Country Camping

Walk-in tenting: 14 sites

RV campground: 24 un-serviced trailer sites

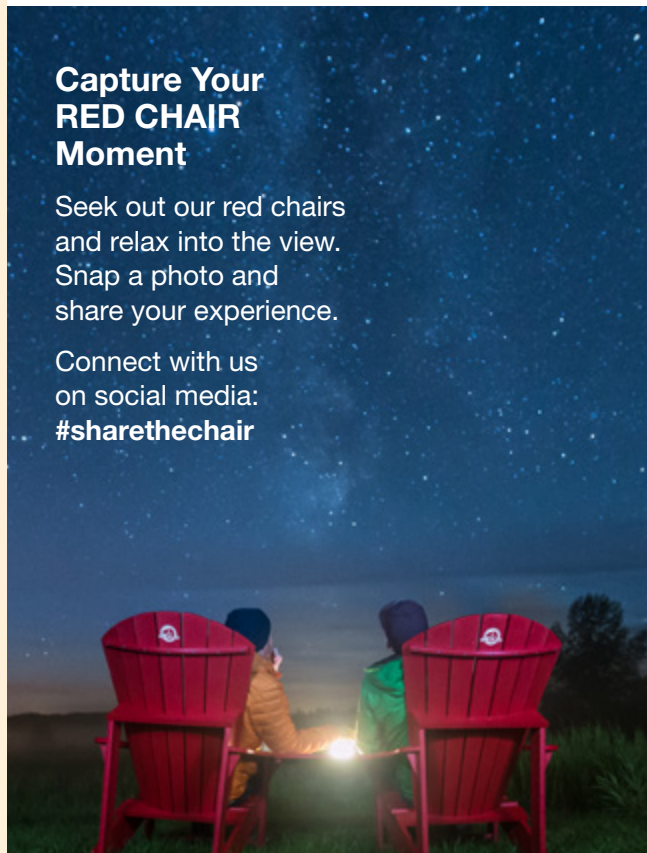
Equipped Camping

No gear? No problem. Tackle the great outdoors with a fully equipped camping kit. Book this experience and Parks Canada will provide the basics.

Capture Your RED CHAIR Moment

Seek out our red chairs and relax into the view. Snap a photo and share your experience.

Connect with us on social media: [#sharethechair](#)



Enhance your stay

Dive deeper into the past and the stories of this place. Book a hands-on experience for yourself, your family or group. All supplies are included in the program fee. Programs or workshops are of varying length and can be customized or bundled to suit your needs. For more information and to make a booking call 403-845-2412.



Bannock-Making

Create your own bannock then cook it over the open fire. (Max. 25 people)

Capote Making

Watch how a Hudson's Bay blanket is transformed into a beautiful and functional capote coat. Use leftover scraps from the blanket to make

your own colourful wool handbag. (Max. 10 people)



Traditional Games

Indigenous games teach essential skills like observation, intuition and hand-eye coordination. A great workshop for youth groups, or as a teambuilding exercise. (Max. 20 people)

Dream Catcher Workshop

Learn the traditions around this Indigenous custom and create your own beautiful dream catcher to take home. (Max. 25 people)

Drum and Song

Gather around the campfire with a local Indigenous drummer, dancer or story teller. Have an open dialogue in this informal educational opportunity, as well as a chance to share in an authentic cultural experience. (Max. 25 people)

Métis Crafts

Hands-on traditional crafts including beading, finger weaving, quill work, and/or doll making. Add beads to your capote handbag, make a bracelet from finger-weaving or wolf willow seeds. (Max. 25 people)

Blacksmithing

Crank the bellows to a red hot fire. Work alongside a trained blacksmith to create a beautiful candlestick holder, dinner triangle, or hook. (Max. 10 people)

Candle Making

Make a traditional candle from beeswax. (Max. 10 people)



HIGHWATER HOUSE

Rent Highwater House for your wedding, family reunion or special event – any time of year.

- Self-service kitchen and seating for up to 50 people
- Patio with additional seating and unbeatable views of the river
- Wood stove; rustic cabin design

For fees and booking: ask at the Visitor Centre, call 403.845.2412 or rocky.info@pc.gc.ca



Black Powder – A Real Blast!

Watch and learn how hunting tools and weapons evolved from throwing knives to flint lock guns to the cannon. Try your hand at throwing, firing, and even cannon blasting. (Max. 25 people)

- 1 Métis Campfire and Red River Cart
- 2 Cairn
- 3 Paul Kane Plaque
- 4 Boat House, York Boat, and Blacksmithing
- 5 Play Fort
- 6 War Memorial
- 7 Charlotte Small and Alexander Henry Plaques
- 8 Bison Lookout
- 9 Centennial Canoe
- 10 Canoe Launch and Brierley Rapids
- 11 Visitor Centre and 3D Virtual Reality Experience
- 12 Sweat Lodge
- 13 Highwater House

Former Fort Locations

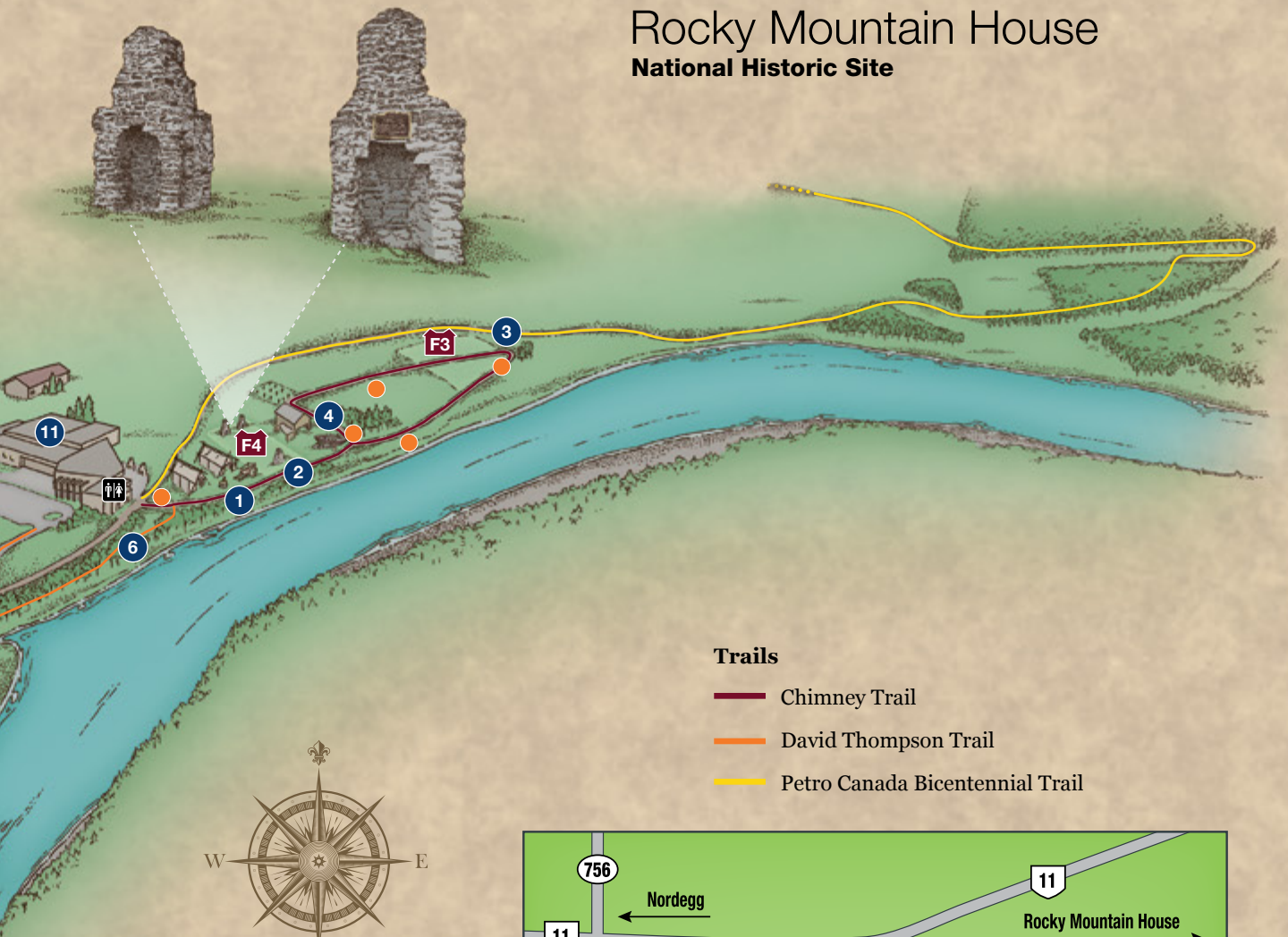
- F1 North West Company 1799 - 18??
- F2 Hudson's Bay Company 1799 - 18??
- F3 Hudson's Bay Company 1835 - 1861
- F4 Hudson's Bay Company 1868 - 1875



Legend

- Listening Stations
- Brierley Rapids
- ⛶ Day Use Area
- ⛶ Picnic Area
- 🚻 Washrooms
- 🚻 Outhouses
- P Parking

Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site



Trails

- Chimney Trail
- David Thompson Trail
- Petro Canada Bicentennial Trail



Entrances

- ▲ E1 Visitor Centre Entrance
- ▲ E2 Campground Entrance

Camping

- A Campground Self Pay Stations
- B Métis Trapper Tents
- C Tipis
- D Trapline Cabins
- E Walk-in Tenting
- F RV Campground



Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site Sites of Interest



1. Métis Campfire and Red River Cart

Discover Métis history with cultural interpreters, and enjoy free bannock around the campfire. Climb aboard the iconic Red River Cart and imagine the era when carts like this transported goods and people across the prairies.



2. Cairn

This cairn tells the story of the site's designation as a National Historic Site. The site was formally recognized in 1926 for its important role in the historic fur trade, its association with David Thompson and Charlotte Small, westward exploration, and its relationship to Indigenous Peoples.

3. Paul Kane Plaque

Paul Kane was an Irish-born Canadian painter, famous for his artistic paintings of Indigenous Peoples, including during visits to Rocky Mountain House in the late 1840s. This plaque was dedicated in 1952, commemorating Kane as a National Historic Person.



4. Boat House, York Boat, and Blacksmithing

Rocky Mountain House was an important site for the construction of the great York Boats. This boathouse is a replica of the original which was at this very location from 1868 to 1875. Hop into the replica York Boat and imagine the three-month voyage to Hudson's Bay with your cargo of furs destined for England. A great photo op! Visit the blacksmithing station to forge a memorable experience as a blacksmith's apprentice.



5. Play Fort

Channel your inner voyageur in this miniature version of a fur trade fort. There is lots to explore, including a fun puppet show about David Thompson.

6. War Memorial

This monument honours the men and women from the Rocky Mountain House region who gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and the Afghan War.

7. Charlotte Small and Alexander Henry Plaques

Charlotte Small came to Rocky Mountain House in 1800 with her explorer husband, David Thompson. Of Cree-Scots background, she played a valuable role in the fur trade. In 2015 Small was recognized as a Person of National Historic Significance. Alexander Henry was a fur trader and explorer, whose journals became one of the best records of the early 19th century fur trade, including from his time here at Rocky Mountain House.

8. Bison Lookout

Get up higher off the ground for a better chance of seeing the herd of bison in the field ahead. It's also a great vantage point for wildlife viewing and landscape photography.





9. Centennial Canoe

In 1967 to honour Canada's 100th birthday, ten provinces and territories entered canoe teams in an epic 5000-km race from Rocky Mountain House to Montreal, along the historic voyageur route. This is the actual canoe paddled by the Alberta team. In 2017 for Canada's 150th birthday, another race began here, called the Canada 150 Rupertsland Express, racing 1600 km from Rocky Mountain House to the Pas, Manitoba.



10. Canoe Launch and Brierley Rapids

Start your river adventure at the boat launch, or watch other thrill-seekers test their canoeing and kayaking skills on the famous Brierley Rapids.

11. Visitor Centre and 3D Virtual Reality Experience

Exhibits and artifacts (most of which were found on site), offer a window into the life of European fur traders and Indigenous Peoples. Try the 3D Virtual Reality Experience and journey back to Rocky Mountain House when it was a bustling fur trade post. Pick up a souvenir of your visit at the Trading Post gift shop.



12. Sweat Lodge

A sweat lodge is used by Indigenous groups for sacred ceremonies, called sweats. The lodge is constructed of willow saplings covered with canvas and sometimes animal skins. Intended for prayer and healing, the ceremony is only to be led by elders who know the language, songs, traditions and safety protocols. This particular site has been used for sweats by local Indigenous groups. Occasionally visitors are invited to respectfully witness or participate.

13. Highwater House

Used for special event programs and available for private rental. A great venue for social functions, weddings or meetings.

Fort – F1

Established in 1799 by the Northwest Company, this was the first trading fort in the region. Named Rocky Mountain House, the fort served as the company's main base of operations, hosting notable fur traders such as David Thompson. Here you can see archaeological pits that show where the fort once stood. In use until the Northwest Company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821.

Fort – F3

In 1835 the Hudson's Bay Company replaced its aging Acton House fort with this unique fort named Rocky Mountain House. This post saw hard times as the fur trade lost popularity. It burned down in 1865.

Fort – F2

This fort, named Acton House, was built by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1799 and located only 35 metres away from the Northwest Company's fort. It gives you an idea of the extreme rivalry between the two fur trade companies. This fort was used until 1821 when the two companies merged under the common name of the Hudson's Bay Company. The volumetric iron bars shows the actual size of Acton House in its day.



Fort – F4

Facing dwindling fur trade markets, the Hudson's Bay Company made one last-ditch effort to keep the fur trade alive in the area. In 1868 the company built its grandest-ever fort, double the size of its predecessors. Unfortunately, this was not enough to keep business running, and in 1875, Rocky Mountain House closed for the last time, marking the end of the fur trade in this region. The twin chimneys are the only remaining structures from the fort.

Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site

Time to connect.



Jasper
National Park



Elk Island
National Park



Jasper
Icefields
Parkway



Banff
National Park

Rocky Mountain House
National Historic Site

Banff

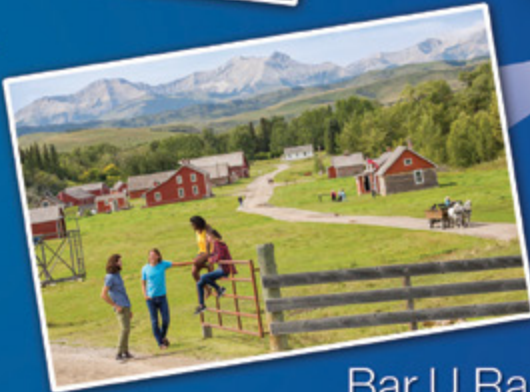
Calgary

Red Deer



Waterton Lakes
National Park

Waterton



Bar U Ranch
National Historic Site

