

Bighorn Backcountry

Public Land Use Zones



2021

free distribution

Security Classification - Public

Alberta

Bighorn Backcountry PLUZs

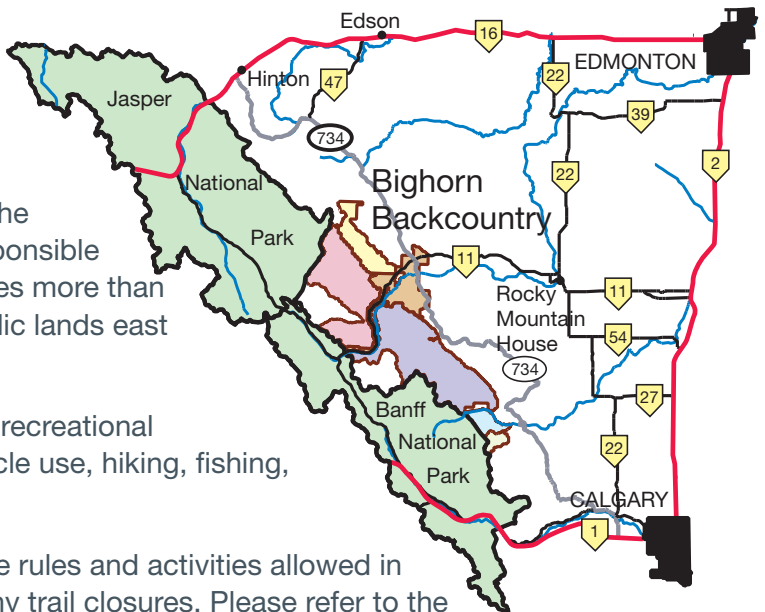
The Bighorn Backcountry is managed to ensure the protection of the environment, while allowing responsible and sustainable recreational use. The area includes more than 5,000 square kilometres (1.2 million acres) of public lands east of Banff and Jasper National Parks.

The Bighorn Backcountry hosts a large variety of recreational activities including camping, OHV and snow vehicle use, hiking, fishing, hunting and cycling.

It is your responsibility to become familiar with the rules and activities allowed in this area before you visit and to be informed of any trail closures. Please refer to the map and chart in this pamphlet for further details. Visitors who do not follow the rules could be fined or charged under provincial legislation.

If you have any concerns about the condition of the trails and campsites or their appropriate use, please call Alberta Environment and Parks at the Rocky Mountain House Office, 403-845-8250. (Dial 310-0000 for toll-free service.)

For current trail conditions and information kiosk locations, please visit the Bighorn Backcountry website at www.alberta.ca



Definitions for the Bighorn Backcountry

Motorized User	↔	recreational user of both off-highway vehicles and snow vehicles.
Equestrian User or Equine	↔	recreational user of both horses and/or mules, used for trail riding, pack horse, buggy/cart, covered wagon or horse-drawn sleigh.
Non-Motorized User	↔	recreational user which is non-motorized except equestrian user or equine where specified or restricted.
Power Bicycle	↔	a vehicle that is a power-assisted bicycle, pedalled at all times with a power output rating of 500 W or less.
Snow Vehicle	↔	motor vehicle designed and equipped to be driven exclusively on snow or ice.
Off-Highway Vehicles or OHV	↔	motor vehicle used for cross-country travel on land, water, snow, ice, marsh, swamp or other natural terrain and which has: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a curb weight of 590 kg (1,300 lb) or less,• tire pressure of 110 Kpa (16 psi) or less,• a wheelbase of 1.85 metres (73") or less,• a width of 1.78 metres (70") or less.

NOTE: Trail access may be amended, modified or closed by an Officer in response to fires, fire hazard, flooding, wildlife or other environmental and safety concerns. Ensure you have the most recent information on the area you are travelling to before you arrive and obey all posted signs and notices. Most wildlife have their young in May and June. If possible, avoid travel in the Bighorn Backcountry during this time.

Your Responsibilities as a User

As a user of the areas within the public land use zones, it is your responsibility to ensure you are adequately informed of trail closures, appropriate usage and rules.

As per the Public Lands Administration Regulations, anyone operating an OHV within the Bighorn Backcountry Public Land Use Zones must obtain a **current copy** of trail information and comply with all of its instructions. To avoid misuse, have the most recent copy of The Public Land Use Zones of the Bighorn Backcountry brochure with you at all times while you are enjoying the area.

The brochure as well as current trail and area updates are located on www.alberta.ca
Printed brochures are also available at many vendors and AEP offices.

Motorized vehicle restrictions do not apply to vehicles used for government resource management activities and emergency purposes. Permits may be issued to trappers for motorized vehicle use within the limits of registered trapping areas. The use of motorized vehicles to conduct industrial activity is permitted in some zones under a Public Lands disposition approved by Alberta Environment and Parks.

Adjacent Areas

Banff and Jasper National Parks: motorized off-highway vehicles, firearms and hunting are not permitted. There are some restrictions for non-motorized activities. National Park Fishing Licences are required in the National Parks. Check for important bulletins including bison area closures at www.pc.gc.ca/apps/scond/index_e.asp. Contact Parks Canada staff for further information.

Siffleur and White Goat Wilderness Areas: foot-travel only; bicycles, equine, motorized vehicles, hunting, fishing and campfires are not permitted.

Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve: limited use/access, bicycles and equestrian users only on designated trails. Motorized access, hunting, fishing, grazing, camping and campfires are not permitted.

Volunteer Efforts in the Public Land Use Zones

Volunteers play an important role in maintaining and enhancing the designated trail system in the Bighorn Backcountry. Their work helps improve water quality and protect fisheries resources and riparian zones.

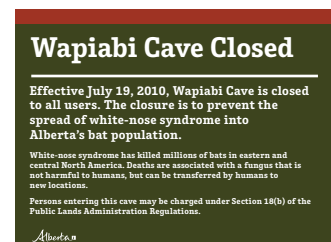
They routinely perform maintenance on existing bridges, trails and campsites. The efforts and funding of these dedicated individuals and groups provide recreational opportunities for all users of the area, while protecting the area's natural resources for current and future generations. Respect the work and the facilities our volunteers have contributed. Stay on designated trails and use facilities, toilets and camp rings provided.

Caving - **Wapiabi Cave is closed**

Wapiabi Cave is closed to prevent the spread of White-nose Syndrome to our local bat populations. Please ensure that you take the necessary steps to prevent the spread of this disease.

For more information on White-nose Syndrome see:

www.alberta.ca



Public Land Use Zone Rules – Know the Law



General

- You shall comply with the lawful orders, instructions and directions of an Officer.
- You shall comply with the instructions, prohibitions, and directions contained in signs and notices posted by or at the request of an Officer on or about the Public Land Use Zones (PLUZ), Public Land Recreation Areas (PLRA) or Public Land Recreation Trails (PLRT).
- An Officer may order a person within the PLUZ, PLRA, and PLRT to refrain from doing anything that in the opinion of the Officer is dangerous to life or property or detrimental to the management of or use of any road, trail or route within that PLUZ, PLRA, and PLRT.
- While in a PLUZ, PLRA or PLRT you shall keep the land and improvements in a condition satisfactory to an Officer.
- When leaving the PLUZ you shall restore the land to a clean and tidy condition.
- You shall remove all garbage for disposal at home or at an approved garbage disposal facility.
- No cutting, removing or damaging living trees or vegetation is allowed.
- Do not deposit harmful materials such as sediment, pollution, gray water or sewage into any water or onto ice of any watercourse or water body.
- When required, fire bans and travel restrictions will be implemented.

Motorized Vehicles

- OHVs are not allowed on numbered highways.
- You may only cross all waterbodies at bridges or lawful crossings. Crossing a waterbody anywhere other than a bridge or a designated ford is not permitted.
- Motorized users must stay on the designated trails.

Camping

- No camping or open fires allowed within 1 km of a PRA or PLRA within a PLUZ.
- Camping facilities must be temporary and portable.
- Limit your stay to 14 days.
- Campfires are allowed for cooking and warming purposes only.
- Campfires must be attended to at all times and extinguished before leaving your site.
- Camp at least 30 m (100 ft.) from water.

Traffic Safety Act

Under the *Traffic Safety Act* an OHV (off highway vehicle) is any motorized mode of transportation built for cross-country travel on land, water, snow, ice, marsh or swamp land or on other natural terrain.

Every OHV and snow vehicle operating on public land must have the following:

- Valid registration and insurance. The operator must be able to produce these documents.
- Current license plate properly affixed in a visible location.
- Red rear tail lamp capable of emitting a light visible from at least 60m (185 ft.)
- At least one front white headlamp capable of illuminating a person, vehicle or object from at least 60 m (185 ft.)
- Proper exhaust muffler with a spark arrestor

Operation of an OHV on Hwy 734 (Forestry Trunk Road) is allowed for trail connector portions only. You must adhere to the following rules of operation:

- Daylight hours only.
- Maximum speed 50 km / hour.
- Operate as close to the right edge of roadway as possible.
- OHVs must proceed in single file.

To operate an OHV on Alberta public lands, people from another jurisdictions must:

- Carry proof of residency
- Follow the rules regarding registration of the vehicle and the display of licence plate as required by their home jurisdiction.
- Produce valid proof of insurance.
- If you have been in Alberta for more than 30 days all Alberta requirements apply.
- Operators under 14 years of age must be supervised by an adult.
- Visitors who do not follow the rules may be fined or charged under the provincial legislation.

Enjoy – Don't Destroy!

Leave the area in a natural state.

- **Abraham Lake - No motorized vehicles allowed below the high water mark or on the lake bottom from April 1 – December 1.**
- Highway garbage receptacles are a convenience provided for discarding small items that accumulate while travelling. Do not **drop off larger items of waste** such as bags containing garbage from your campsite. Transport your garbage home or to a waste transfer station and dispose of it properly.
- All painting or marking on rocks is graffiti and is illegal.
- Drinking and driving is illegal, **this includes consuming alcohol or cannabis before or during usage of an OHV or a watercraft.**
- Consider all sites as 'user maintained' whether there is a sign or not. Leave the area better than when you found it.
- Do not drive off of designated roads/trails or cut down trees to create a new random camping spot. Stick to the campsites that are established.
- It is illegal to cut live trees within the PLUZs
- If you want to stop to take pictures while driving, use the nearest available road pullout. Do not approach or feed any wildlife.
- Much of the Bighorn Backcountry does not have cell phone service. During an emergency, notification to and response by emergency services will be delayed. Follow instructions on any signs and notices and use good judgement to stay safe.

Human Waste is an Increasing Problem

Human waste and associated paper products are an increasing concern in the backcountry. It is unpleasant for other visitors and it also contributes to the spread of pollution. **Many areas do not have outhouses or backcountry toilets. In these areas you must dig a hole and burying human waste or pack out.**

Some outdoor backcountry toilets have been installed along many high-traffic trails and lake destinations. These toilets are not intended for garbage, food items and food waste, diapers, metal or glass. The pathways to the backcountry toilets are signed, with the toilets located away from main traffic for privacy.

www.leavenotrace.ca/principle-dispose-waste-properly



Traplines

Areas within the Bighorn Backcountry contain traplines, which are active from the beginning of October to the end of May and may have bait stations, baited traps, snares, and trails that are not designated for motorized use by the general public. If recreating in these areas during the active trapping season, keep dogs on a leash to prevent them from being drawn to baited traps.

Wildfire Prevention

- Whenever possible, use a stove for cooking.
- Be sure to select a site away from dry grass, heavy bush, leaves, peat areas and overhanging branches.
- When creating a campfire, dig down to mineral soil. Create a ring with stones, gravel or sand around the rim to contain embers and hot ashes.
- Ensure you have a shovel and a container full of water on hand to extinguish your campfire.
- Make sure your campfire is extinguished. Never leave a fire unattended. "Soak it, Stir the ashes, Soak it again".
- Check for campfire restrictions at www.albertafirebans.ca
- Report wildfires to 310-FIRE.

Know Before You Go

As a user of the Bighorn Backcountry, it is your responsibility to ensure you are adequately informed of trail closures, appropriate uses and rules. Visitors who do not follow the rules may be fined or charged under provincial legislation.

For more information, look for area kiosks.

To learn more about Public Land Use Zones and the Bighorn Backcountry, including trail updates, visit www.alberta.ca

Additional web resources:

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry – www.alberta.ca

Alberta Parks – www.albertaparks.ca

Parks Canada – www.pc.gc.ca

Vacation Guide – www.travelalberta.com



Please note cell coverage is not available in most areas of the Bighorn Backcountry. Before you plan your trip let friends or relatives know the route you intend to take and your travel schedule. There are no services in the Bighorn Backcountry, no regular patrols or regular maintenance and natural and/or man-made hazards may or may not be marked. Rivers and creeks may rise quickly after a storm resulting in dangerous crossings and trail washouts. During the spring season, water bodies are often higher in the afternoon than in the morning.

In the mountains, be aware that the weather can change suddenly and temperatures can fall to freezing any time of the year. Get the latest weather forecast. For winter travel, this includes the snowfall, wind, avalanche and weather conditions.

PLUZs are not controlled for avalanches, so be prepared to properly manage avalanche related risk when travelling through this area. For more information on avalanche safety and to check avalanche hazards and terrain ratings visit www.avalanche.ca

Equestrian Use Within a Public Land Recreation Area

- Do not tie or highline horses to trees. Use provided facilities or your trailer. If tying to trailers, horse must not be able to reach the drip line of any tree.
- Electric fences are not permitted in staging or camping areas.
- All sites must be cleaned of manure and excess feed before leaving. Use provided manure disposal sites for manure only.
- Use weed free feed and hay.
- All remaining feed must be disposed of at home. Do not leave any feed behind.
- Avoid grazing wherever possible.
- When accessing water, use hard ground surfaces and avoid soft ground conditions to prevent bank erosion.



Avoiding Wildlife Conflicts

The Bighorn Backcountry is home to many species of wildlife. Here are five tips to minimize conflicts between wildlife and humans:

1. Do not feed wildlife.
2. Do not try to approach or pet a wild animal.
3. Make noise to let animals know you are nearby to avoid startling them.
4. Watch for animal tracks and scat.
5. Carry bear spray when hiking, biking or riding OHVs; know how to use it.

For information on wildlife in the area and ways to avoid conflicts, please refer to the Bighorn Backcountry BearSmart program at www.mountainviewbearsmart.com and sign up for weekly reports and updates.

If you encounter a bear:

- Do not approach or disturb the bear.
- Slowly back away while talking in a firm, low voice.
- Have bear spray accessible at all times.
- Keep your backpack on your back.
- Do not make eye contact.
- Pick up small children and keep pets on a leash.

If you encounter a cougar:

- Pick up small children and keep pets on a leash.
- Do not turn your back to the animal.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Have bear spray accessible at all times.
- Fight back if it attacks.



bear print



cougar print

Wheels Out of Water

- Stay on the trail to avoid waterbodies, wetlands and shorelines.
- Wheeled or tracked vehicles are not allowed on beds or shores of watercourses, wetlands or waterbodies.
- You may only go across all waterbodies at designated bridges and lawful crossings.
- Do not wash your vehicle in a watercourse, wetland or waterbody.

Ride Responsibly

- Lead by example; use the trails in a safe and responsible manner.
- Slow down. Adjust your speed of travel according to trail conditions.
- Be courteous of other users and practice good trail etiquette.
- Ride when trails are dry. Avoid riding after heavy rainfall or snowmelt.
- Motorized users must yield to non-motorized users. Pull over to the side, turn off your engine and remove your helmet when horses are approaching.
- Reduce the spread of invasive species by washing your vehicle before entering the PLUZ.
- Ensure exhaust systems are clear of debris that may ignite and cause wildfire.
- Report unauthorized or illegal activities.



What are Public Land Use Zones?

The Bighorn Backcountry is divided into six distinct areas called Public Land Use Zones.

A Public Land Use Zone (PLUZ) is an area of land to which legislative controls are applied under the authority of the *Public Lands Act*.

A PLUZ is created specifically for that landbase and the conditions that exist within it. Each PLUZ can vary greatly on what is or is not permitted.

The following are the PLUZs of the Bighorn Backcountry:

Type of Use	Blackstone/Wapiabi Provides a year-round network of trails for non-motorized and equestrian use. No motorized recreation access permitted.	Job/Cline Provides non-motorized and equestrian use with some additional seasonal access trails for equestrian use. Provides motorized off-highway vehicle use on designated trails with seasonal access.	Kiska/Willson Provides a large network of trails for non-motorized and equestrian use, with additional seasonal access trails for equestrian use. Provides motorized off-highway vehicle use on designated trails, many with an additional	Upper Clearwater/Ram Provides year-round access for non-motorized and equestrian use. Provides motorized off-highway vehicle use on designated trails with seasonal access.	Panther Corners Provides a year-round network of trails for non-motorized and equestrian use. No motorized recreational access is permitted.	Dormer/Sheep Provides year-round access for non-motorized and equestrian use. Provides motorized off-highway vehicle use on designated trails.
Boating (Motorized)	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Permitted - Only permitted on the North Saskatchewan River and Abraham Lake.	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted
Camping (Primitive)	Permitted No cutting of live green trees; garbage must be removed; no permanent camp structures to remain without authorization; limit your stay to maximum 14 days.	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Helicopter Access	Permitted No landing on, or within 200 metres (656 feet) of any lake without authorization.	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Motorized Recreation Off-Highway Vehicle (OHVs)	Not Permitted	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails within the timing restrictions (see map), unless otherwise posted.	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails within the timing restrictions (see map), unless otherwise posted.	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails within the timing restrictions (see map) unless otherwise posted.	Not Permitted	Permitted - All existing trails open year-round, unless otherwise posted.
Motorized Recreation (On-Highway Vehicles)	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Permitted - Permitted on highways and secondary roads, or where posted.	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Permitted - Permitted on highways, secondary roads, industrial roads where public access is not restricted, or where posted.
Recreational Equestrian Use	Permitted - Equine tethered at least 100 metres (328 feet) away from lakeshores.	Permitted - Equine tethered at least 100 metres (328 feet) away from lakeshores. Timing restrictions on the following trails: Allstones Creek, Waterfalls Creek, Landslide Lake and Lake of the Falls (see map).	Permitted - Equine tethered at least 100 metres (328 feet) away from lakeshores. Timing restrictions on Allstones Creek trail (see map). Remaining existing trails available year-round, unless otherwise posted.	Permitted - Equine tethered at least 100 metres (328 feet) away from lakeshores.	Permitted - Equine tethered at least 100 metres (328 feet) away from lakeshores.	Permitted - Equine tethered at least 100 metres (328 feet) away from lakeshores.
Wagon Use	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Permitted - Wagon accessible trails	Permitted - Wagon accessible trails	Permitted - Wagon accessible trails	No Permitted
Snow Vehicle Use	Not Permitted	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails and random sledding areas, within the timing restrictions, (see map) unless otherwise posted.	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails, within the timing restrictions, (see map) unless otherwise posted.	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails and random sledding areas, within the timing restrictions, unless otherwise posted (see map).	Not Permitted	Permitted - All existing trails available for use, snow cover permitting and unless otherwise posted.

The following are the PLRAs (Public Land Recreation Areas) of the Bighorn Backcountry:

Type of Service	Blackstone Gap PLRA*	Hummingbird PLRA*	Cutoff Creek PLRA*	Crescent Falls PRA**	Eagle Creek PLRA*	Panther Corners PLRA*
Information Kiosk	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Toilets	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Garbage Removal	No	No	No	No	No	No
Fire Ring	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bear Pole	No	No	No	No	No	No
Day Use Parking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Overnight Parking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Overnight Camp Site	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equestrian Tie Facility	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manure Disposal Site	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
OHV Use Permitted	Yes	Yes	Yes	***	Yes	No


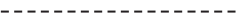









* Public Land Recreation Area (PLRA)

** Provincial Recreation Area (PRA)

*** OHV staging permitted from upper parking lot only

There is a bear pole located at the southeast end of Landslide Lake.

Trail Classification

-  Bighorn Backcountry Public Land Use Zones Boundary
-  Major trails (**only** non-motorized use is permitted, unless otherwise posted). (Major trails in the blowout maps are represented with a white dotted line.)
-  Minor trails and seismic lines (**only** non-motorized use permitted, unless otherwise posted). Trail located estimated.
-  Trails with timing restrictions for off-highway and snow vehicles. Year-round use for all non-motorized users is permitted, unless otherwise posted. **Open for off-highway vehicle use July 1 - February 1. Open for snow vehicle use July 1 - April 30.**
-  Trails with timing restrictions for off-highway and snow vehicles. Year-round use for all non-motorized users is permitted, unless otherwise posted. **Open for off-highway vehicle use December 1 - February 1. Open for snow vehicle use December 1 - April 30.**
-  Trails with timing restrictions for equestrian users. All other non-motorized users permitted year-round, unless otherwise posted. Off-highway and snow vehicles not permitted on these trails.
-  Trails that are open year-round for motorized off-highway vehicles, snow vehicles and non-motorized users, unless otherwise posted.
-  Random sledding area. Areas allowing snow vehicle use anywhere within the designated area during specific time periods. Off-highway vehicles not permitted in these areas except on designated trails. Year-round use for non-motorized users permitted, unless otherwise posted.
-  Trails that have been temporarily closed to motorized usage due to severe erosion or washout. These will remain closed until maintenance can be performed or new routes created.
-  Trails with timing restrictions for off-highway and snow vehicles. Year-round use for all non-motorized users is permitted, unless otherwise posted. **Open for off-highway vehicle and snow vehicle use July 1 - April 30.**
-  Trails with timing restrictions for off-highway and snow vehicles. Year-round use for all non-motorized users is permitted, unless otherwise posted. **Open for both off-highway and snow vehicles use December 1 - April 30.**

On-highway vehicle access is permitted on existing clearings/trails up to 75 metres (246 feet) beyond Highway 11 and Highway 734 (Forestry Trunk Road) Right-of-Way unless otherwise posted.

Legend



Backcountry Toilets



Gasoline



Gate



Horse Drawn Wagon



Information Kiosk



Interpretive Trail Pedestrian



Lookout Tower



Patrol Cabin



Sanitary Landfill Site



STARS Medical Evacuation Site



Travel at Your Own Risk



Paved Highway



Gravel Road, 2 lane



Gravel Road, one lane



OHV usage corridor – OHVs allowed to be driven on portions of the highway as shown on the map. See *Traffic Safety Act* portion of brochure for details.



Ecological Reserves, Wilderness Areas, Natural Areas, Provincial Recreation Areas, Wildland Parks



Lakes and Rivers



Creeks



Glacier, Icefield



Wildlife Corridor - See current hunting regulations for details. PLUZ access regulations apply.

Environment and Parks Sites

- Off-highway Vehicle, Snow Vehicle or Equestrian Access May Be Permitted.



Backcountry Campsite
• backcountry toilet and/or
• informal campsite



Parking/
Staging



Public Land Recreation Area
• rustic facilities (vary
between locations)

Alberta Parks Sites

(Off-highway Vehicle, Snow Vehicle or Equestrian Access Not Permitted Unless Otherwise Posted)



Campground



Day Use Area

D1 to D17

DA to DI

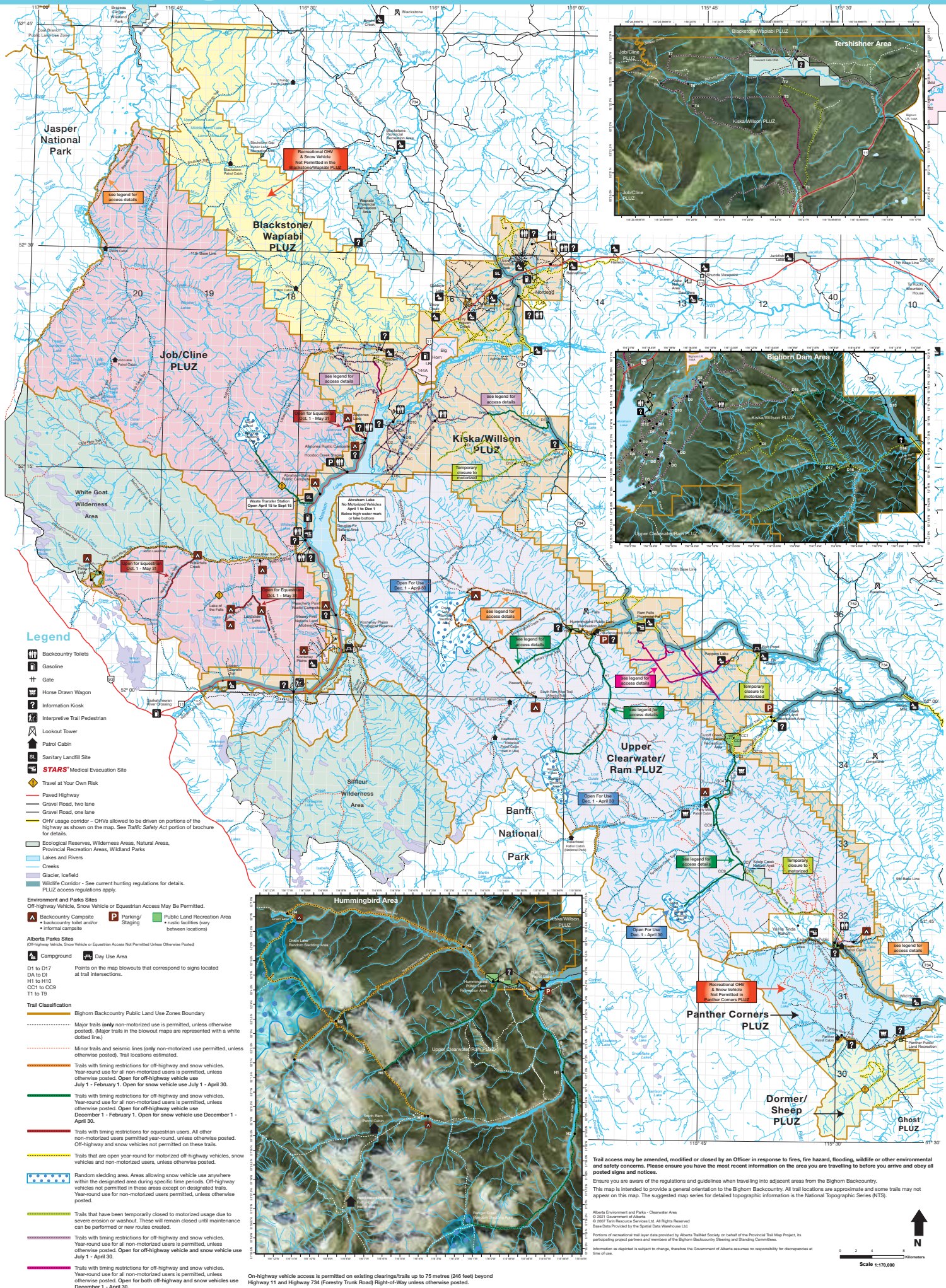
H1 to H10

CC1 to CC9

T1 to T9

Points on the map blowouts that correspond to signs located at trail intersections.

Bighorn Backcountry



Getting There

Use the map on the reverse side as a general guide to your destination. Key roads to and within the area are Highway 11, a paved provincial road; the all-weather, gravel Highway 734 (Forestry Trunk Road), Highway 752; and the Coal Camp Road west of Sundre. Other access points to the Bighorn Backcountry are along dry-weather roads and truck trails, which may not be passable by all vehicles or in inclement weather.

For More Information

Contact the nearest Alberta Environment and Parks Office or visit www.alberta.ca

Rocky Mountain House
403-845-8250

Drayton Valley
780-542-6616

Sundre
403-638-3805

Alberta Parks - RMH
403-845-8349

You can access Alberta government offices toll-free from anywhere in the province by dialing 310-0000 and then entering the area code and seven-digit phone number.

In case of an emergency, please dial 911. Cellular phone service may or may not exist.

For further information on fire bans, dial toll-free 1-866-FYI-FIRE (1-866-394-3473) or www.albertafirebans.ca

To report a wildfire, dial **310-FIRE (310-3473)** anywhere in the province. For daily fire hazard information, fire weather forecasts and fire situation reports, visit www.alberta.ca

To report hunting and fishing violations, dial Report-A-Poacher at **1-800-642-3800**

Environmental Spill & Incident Reporting at **1-800-222-6514**

