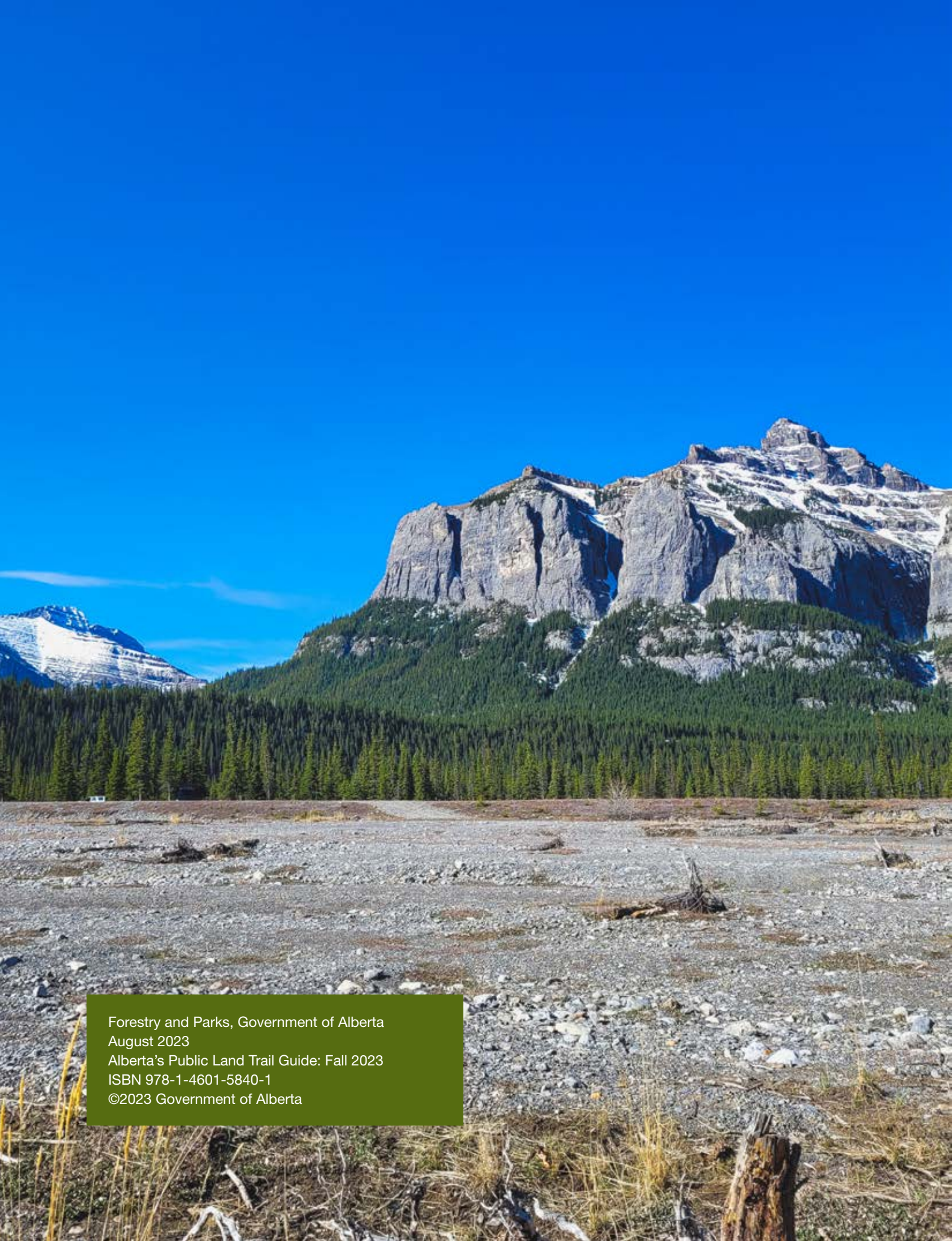

Alberta's Public Land Trail Guide

Fall 2023

Alberta



Forestry and Parks, Government of Alberta
August 2023
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A message from the minister



Alberta offers thousands of kilometres of designated trails on public land that are waiting to be explored. From stunning vistas to unique wildlife sightings, you'll discover the best of Alberta when you explore our provincial trails. The public land trail guide provides practical information on accessing and utilizing our summer trails, while highlighting the natural beauty and recreational opportunities available for everyone to enjoy.

Our goal is to provide well-maintained trails and recreation facilities, and the expertise necessary to protect Alberta's public lands so they can be enjoyed by future generations. Creating sustainable opportunities for recreation is a collaborative effort between our staff, partner organizations and Albertans.

Recreation partners have an essential role to help enhance visitor experiences, improve recreation opportunities and protect Alberta's natural and cultural heritage. Together, we will develop a plan for sustaining our most popular trails while conserving the surrounding landscape. This work is being supported by \$8 million in funding over four

years, which started in 2022-23. There are plenty of success stories and some of our valued partners share stories about their work and experiences throughout this guide.

Our government is also working to enhance public safety, which is why we introduced a centralized phone line for reporting public safety incidents, enforcement concerns and illegal activity on public land and within provincial parks and protected areas. The 310-LAND (5263) line is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure help is available to Albertans when they need it most. For more information, visit [Alberta.ca/310land](https://alberta.ca/310land).

As the Minister of Forestry and Parks, I understand the importance of outdoor recreation in promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting our economy and preserving the environment for future generations. Alberta's 2023 Capital Plan includes \$210 million over the next three years to improve and expand recreation and access in parks, recreation areas and on public land trails. The Alberta government is proud of the work we have done to protect our world-class recreation amenities and opportunities for recreation and tourism, creating precious memories for Albertans and visitors alike.

We hope this guide will inspire you to get out and explore the trails and to appreciate the natural beauty and diversity of Alberta. So, grab your gear and let's hit the trails!

Todd Loewen
Minister of Forestry and Parks



Cataract Creek Snow Vehicle Public Land Use Zone

Indigenous rights holders on public land

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have had deep relationships with the land. These relationships continue to this day. Indigenous peoples depend on healthy landscapes for their ways of living, and steward the land to maintain and enhance ecosystem health. Alberta recognizes many Indigenous peoples rely on natural landscapes and biodiversity for traditional land-use activities and to exercise their constitutionally protected rights. On public land, the rules for recreational users are different from those exercising a right to hunt, fish, or trap for food. This includes rules pertaining to camping and the use of off-highway vehicles or snow vehicles.

Learn more about:

- Indigenous rights on public land: [Guide to Applying the Public Lands Administration Regulation in the context of Aboriginal Peoples' rights](#).
- Indigenous hunting, fishing and harvesting rights Alberta at [Alberta.ca/HuntingandFishing](https://alberta.ca/HuntingandFishing)



Be BearSmart.
Learn more on Page 47,
or visit [Alberta.ca/BearSmart](https://alberta.ca/BearSmart)



About this guide

Crown land makes up 60 per cent Alberta's landscapes and includes provincial parks, protected areas and public land. Our Crown land supports multiple land uses and provides plenty of opportunity for recreation. Whether you're an avid camper, off-highway vehicle (OHV) rider, hiker, cyclist, equestrian user, hunter or angler, Crown land offers recreation opportunities to meet every need, from curated experiences in provincial parks to rustic adventures on public land.

Recreation and trails in Alberta Parks

The Ministry of Forestry and Parks manages 474 provincial parks, recreation areas and protected areas throughout the province. These sites protect Alberta's natural and cultural landscapes, and offer unique recreation, tourism and education experiences. In Alberta's provincial parks and recreation areas, visitors can access facilities like trail networks, campgrounds, interpretive programming and education services. Learn more at: <https://www.albertaparks.ca/>

Recreation and trails on public land

Explore Alberta's Interactive Recreation Map to find Crown land sites across the province and recreation pass boundaries: [Alberta.ca/RecreationMap](https://alberta.ca/RecreationMap)

Alberta's 18 Public Land Use Zones offer unique public land recreation opportunities. Learn more at: [Alberta.ca/PLUZ](https://alberta.ca/PLUZ)

Agricultural public land is held under a disposition and allocated for crop cultivation or livestock grazing. This land may be accessed for recreation with prior contact with the leaseholder based on conditions for access under the Recreational Access Regulation. Learn more at: [Alberta.ca/AgriculturalPublicLand](https://alberta.ca/AgriculturalPublicLand)

This guide is designed to provide you with the information you need to find summer recreation opportunities on public land and explore Alberta's beautiful public trail systems.

Alberta Hiking Association objectives

- To act as an advocate, at provincial and regional levels, for walking, hiking and snowshoeing interests.
- To create an information network that facilitates sharing ideas, concerns and actions needed to promote and preserve hiking and the natural environment on which it relies.
- To advance the development and maintenance of well-built hiking trails and to encourage trail-building initiatives in Alberta.
- To promote responsible, minimal-impact hiking that respects the natural environment and to educate through example.
- To increase awareness about the benefits to health and local economies of walking, hiking and snowshoeing.

The Alberta Hiking Association

Membership

Calling all hikers, walkers and snowshoers! We need you to work with us to help protect our parks and wildlands. Volunteers will receive training and will help carry out physical trail assessments on several identified hiking trails in the province. Volunteer work is vital for increasing trail volunteerism and improving hiking opportunities across the province.

We publish a quarterly online newsletter. To become a member, fill in the online form on the website and mail a check to the Alberta Hiking Association c/o Erick Dow, 836 22 Ave SE, Calgary, AB T2G 1N5.

Alternately you can pay by PayPal online. Individual membership is \$15/year, organizational membership is \$50/year.

To learn more, visit the Alberta Hiking Association website at <https://abhiking.ca>.



The Alberta Hiking Association is a provincial organization for member organizations (hiking clubs) and individual hikers, walkers and snowshoers. The Alberta Hiking Association is a registered non-profit society run by a volunteer Board of Directors:

- Don Cockerton, Chair (Calgary)
- Marla Zapach, Vice-Chair (Nordegg)
- Erick Dow, Treasurer (Calgary)
- Anita Thomas, Secretary (Red Deer)
- Murray Fierheller, Membership (Edmonton)

Designated trails





Recreation on public land

Alberta's public land is managed to support a variety of uses. Legislation guides planning, management and responsible use of the land. It outlines the rules and regulations to ensure sustainable use of provincial lands for industry, economic development, agriculture, conservation and biodiversity management, cultural activity and recreation, which often exist within the same area.

The [Public Lands Act](#), [Public Land Administration Regulation](#) and the [Trails Act](#) are the three main pieces of legislation that guide recreational use on public land. Familiarize yourself with the legislation by visiting: <https://www.alberta.ca/public-land-access.aspx>



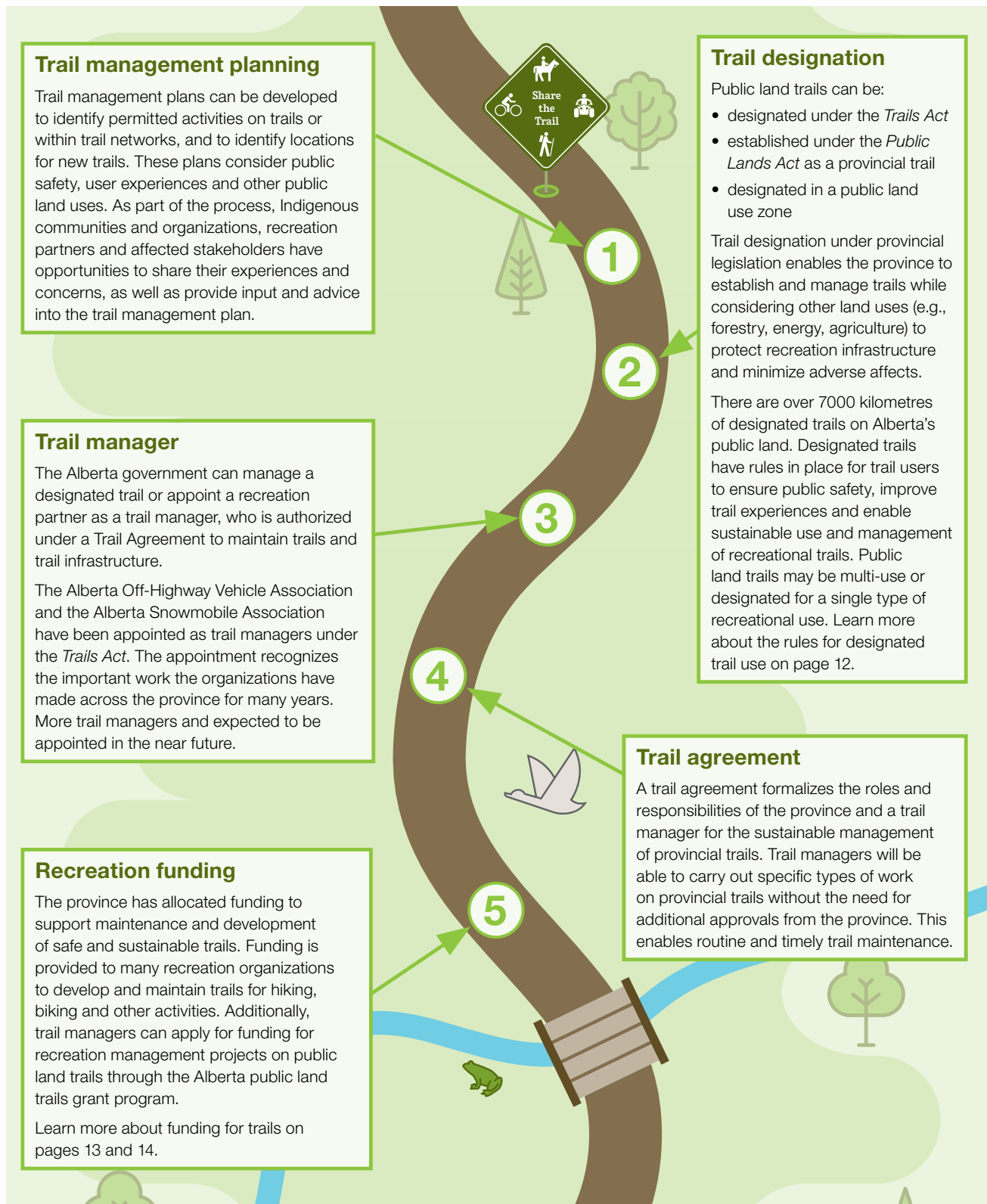
Livingstone Public Land Use Zone

Provincial trails and sustainable trail management

The *Trails Act* and amendments to the *Public Lands Act* came into effect in February 2022 to establish a sustainable trail management system for motorized and non-motorized recreational trails on Alberta's public land. For full details, visit [Alberta.ca/Trails Act](https://alberta.ca/trails-act)

The trails described in this guide are designated and managed to better protect recreation opportunities, trails and recreation infrastructure. Designating trails offer high quality, well managed and safe trail experiences for all Albertans and visitors to the province. Find maps of Alberta's public land trail systems on pages 24 to 37.

Sustainable trail management system



Trail rules



Trail users are responsible for knowing where they are, the trail or area regulations and activity-specific regulations that apply. Learn more about recreation opportunities and regulations on public land on page 45.

On designated trails, there are rules in place to keep trail users safe while preventing damage to trails.

On designated trails:

- Follow all posted signs and notices, publications and any direction from an officer.
- Follow the posted rules for activities and other restrictions on a trail or area. Pack out what you pack in! Take all garbage and waste with you to dispose of at home or at a waste transfer station.
- Keep pets under control. Some trails and areas may prohibit pets or have leash requirements.
- Motorized users, except snow vehicle users, must stay on the trail tread.
- Do not leave any vehicles, motorized or human powered (including bicycles, motor vehicles, camping units, etc.) unattended on the tread of a provincial trail.
- Do not discharge a firearm (recreational target shooting) within 400 metres of the trail tread, unless hunting as defined under the *Wildlife Act*.

Additional rules may apply to trails in Public Land Use Zones. Learn more at [Alberta.ca/PLUZ](https://alberta.ca/PLUZ)



Enforcement

Specialized staff are responsible for enforcing provincial legislation on public land and on designated trails. Collaborative enforcement efforts ensure public safety, environmental protection and sustainable use of Crown land. Enforcement officers include:

- Conservation officers
- Environmental protection officers
- Fish and wildlife officers
- Municipal peace officers
- RCMP
- Sheriffs
- Wildfire peace officers

Failure to follow the regulations, legislation and signage on public land may result in an on-the-spot fine ranging from \$60 to \$600, direction to leave the area for a specified period, or criminal prosecution. Other offences on public land may result in seizure of property and/or a mandatory court appearance where a fine can be up to \$100,000. Learn more at: <https://www.alberta.ca/public-land-access.aspx>



Funding for trails

Millions of Albertans and visitors from around the globe explore Alberta's public land trails each year. Alberta is investing in public land to improve the designated trail system and expand access to recreation opportunities across the province.

Over the next three years, \$14 million will be invested to enhance provincial trails and tourism opportunities on public land to ensure safe access to recreation, improve public safety and enhance visitor experiences.

Planned projects include:

- The assessment, planning and design work for trail refurbishment at Cardinal Headwaters in Coal Branch Public Land Use Zone, the MacKenzie Creek watershed, Mount Hamell, Muskeg Falls and Twin Falls.
- The refurbishment of trails and amenities in the Kananaskis Public Land Use Zone.
- Building and improving designated public land trails.
- Improving existing infrastructure on public land across the province.

Learn more about planned projects at: <https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=86842FD59B84F-0CBA-5647-E2EABB8BF69DF0B1>

Alberta public land trails grant program

Developing more recreation and tourism opportunities is a priority for the Alberta government. The province relies on partner organizations to enhance and improve recreation opportunities on public land. The Alberta public land trails grant program launched in 2022 and allocated \$1.18 million in funding in its first year to improve designated non-motorized trails. The program focuses on funding projects that will contribute to meeting the following goals:

- enhance existing recreation opportunities
- develop safe and sustainable recreational experiences
- operationalize a new approach to managing recreation on Crown Land
- further Alberta’s Crown Land Vision

Safe and sustainable trail systems will help Alberta families and visitors enjoy healthy lifestyles and benefit communities with increased tourism opportunities year-round. The 15 recreation organizations who received grant funding in 2022 will use the funding to conduct maintenance and repairs of existing infrastructure, monitor and maintain recreational trails, conduct site rehabilitation and reclamation, and promote sustainable recreation through education and outreach.

Supporting community trail organizations helps build local capacity to maintain trails, improve user safety, build ecological knowledge and contribute to local tourism. Volunteer based trail organizations will contribute their expertise, time and energy to magnify the impact of this funding and provide incredible value for Albertans.

Organization	Project details
Alberta Hiking Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail assessment and monitoring in the Bighorn Backcountry • Outreach and Volunteer Training
Athabasca Recreational Trails Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Peace River Trail Upgrade
Friends of Eastern Slopes Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and maintenance of association-managed Public Land Recreation Areas along the Eastern Slopes
Great Divide Trail Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued refurbishment, maintenance and management of the Great Divide Trail
Grouard-Peace River Trail Net Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance and upgrading of the historic Grouard-Peace River Trail from the Narrows to Peavine.
Hinton Mountain Bike Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hinton Bike Trail Network Maintenance Project
Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campground maintenance at two Provincial Recreation Areas within the M.D of Lesser Slave Lake
Muskeg Flyers Nordic Ski Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hornbeck Ski Area Trail Management Plan
Peerless Trout First Nations Development Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peerless Lake and Narrows Random Recreation Areas Operations and Maintenance for 2023-2024
Pioneer Trail North Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational Trail Improvement
Rainbow Equitation Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail Repair for the trail system in Halfmoon Lake Natural Area
Rocky Mountain Wilderness Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Trail Project
The Alberta Equestrian Federation Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and outreach initiatives for responsible use and sharing trails
Willmore Wilderness Preservation & Historical Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Willmore Wilderness Park Trail Clearing Program
Woods & Water Recreational Trails Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Shore Trail Phase I upgrade

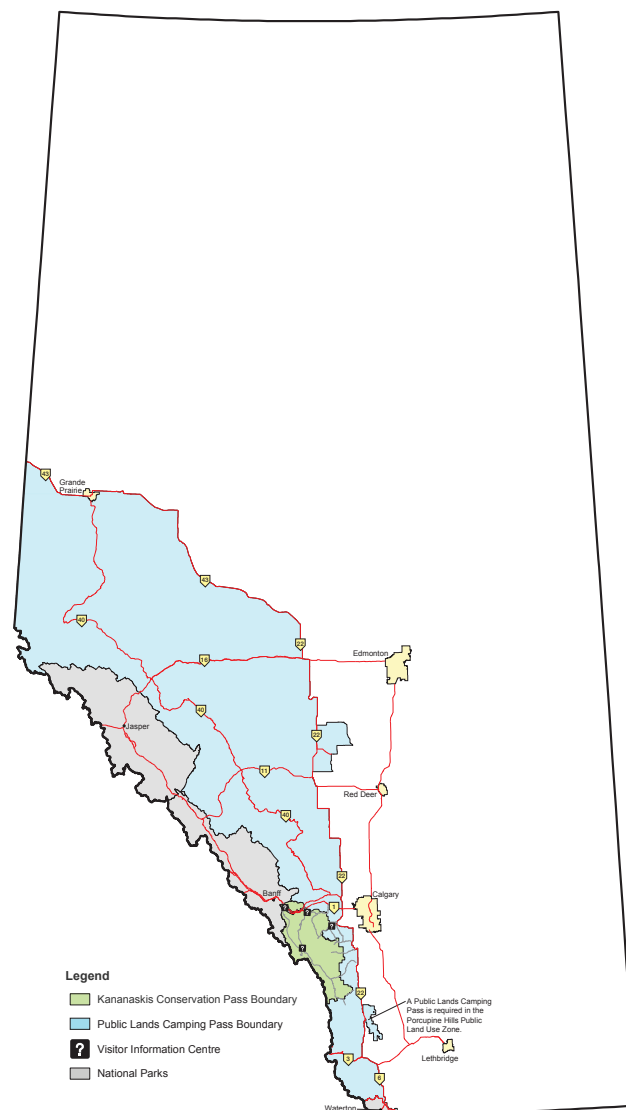
This funding is supporting high-quality and low-cost recreation sites on Alberta’s public land. For more information about the program, email outdoorrecreation@gov.ab.ca.

Investing in trails

The majority of Alberta's public land can be enjoyed by users at little to no cost. Campers 18 years and older must buy a Public Lands Camping Pass to spend the night on public land within the pass area. Passes cost \$20 per person for a 3-day pass, or \$30 per person for an annual pass. Campers should be prepared to provide proof of payment to enforcement officers. Learn more at: [Alberta.ca/CampingPass](https://alberta.ca/CampingPass).

Since it was introduced in 2021, Public Lands Camping Pass sales have generated more than \$2.5 million. Revenues from the pass have been reinvested in the area to maintain infrastructure, improve education, support conservation, monitor and enforce rules, promote public safety and provide better waste management.

Public Lands Camping Pass revenues will support recreation partners on public land through the Alberta public land trails grant program. Learn more on page 14.



Kiska/Willson Public Land Use Zone

Be BearSmart.
Learn more on Page 47,
or visit [Alberta.ca/BearSmart](https://alberta.ca/BearSmart)





Friends of Kananaskis Country

Friends of Kananaskis Country is a volunteer-based, charitable organization with a mission of building a community of volunteers and partners to maintain the ecological integrity and recreational use of Kananaskis Country by engaging in trail care, stewardship, education and research.

Since 1996, we have worked to build, maintain and steward multi-use trails and Kananaskis Country. We align with the Government of Alberta's vision of engaging the public in participating in the long-term use and enjoyment of Kananaskis Country. The Trail Care program provides a safe, fun and meaningful way for people to volunteer and give back to the trails they love. We are inspired by our volunteer's dedication to help build and maintain recreational trails and protect Kananaskis Country's natural environment. In 2022, 249 volunteers dedicated over 2,700 hours towards the stewardship of Kananaskis Country.

If you like recreating on trails, chances are you'll enjoy building and maintaining them too. Visit our website to learn more and to sign up to volunteer www.kananaskis.org.



FRIENDS OF
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

2022 Trail Report

87
Trail
Days

249
Volunteers

563
Shifts
Filled

2,733
Hours

TRAIL PROJECTS



Highway 40 Cleanup: 1 Trail Day + 107 Volunteers + 434 Hours

Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park: 44 Trail Days + 234 Volunteers + 1021 Hours

Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park: 23 Trail Days + 106 Volunteers + 596.5 Hours

Evan Thomas Provincial Recreation Area: 7 Trail Days + 49 Volunteers + 274 Hours

Elbow Sheep Wildland Provincial Park: 7 Trail Days + 24 Volunteers + 151.5 Hours

Kananaskis Country Public Land Use Zone: 6 Trail Days + 17 Volunteers + 105 Hours

Sibbald Public Land Use Zone: 7 Trail Days + 22 Volunteers + 122.5 Hours

Spray Valley Provincial Park: 1 Trail Day + 4 Volunteers + 24 Hours

Program Enhancements:

- 4 new e-bikes
- Backcountry Crew
- Chainsaw work

Trail Assessments: 103 km assessed on foot & 154 km on e-bikes over 25 outings

Expanded our trail care program to the Elbow-Sheep Wildland Provincial Park

Cloudline Trail: 285 hours over 16 sessions in our 2nd year of building this new trail

Canmore Nordic Centre new Iliad Trail Build: 22 sessions, 617 volunteer hours, 550m of new trail built

Hosted our first Winter Trail Days: 6 sessions, 48 volunteers - brushing of nordic/snowshoe trails

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



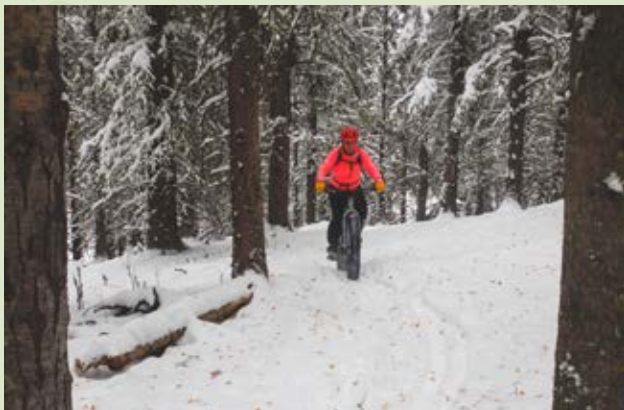
THANK
YOU

We strive to offer volunteer opportunities that enhance community involvement with our organization and foster a connection with Kananaskis Country. Thank you to our volunteers, members and supporters for another great Trail Care season!

Contact: info@kananaskis.org - 403-678-5593 - www.kananaskis.org



West Bragg Creek Trails



West Bragg Creek is a very popular trail network in the eastern foothills area of Kananaskis Country and the Elbow River Watershed. There are over 170 kilometres (km) of non-motorized, multi-use trails in the area, with connectors to trails in the Moose Mountain trail network and the trails along highway #68. The Trans-Canada Trail follows several West Bragg Creek trails, as it links Bragg Creek to Canmore. West Bragg Creek PRA, Fullerton Trailhead, Allen Bill Day Use and Station Flats Trailhead are all staging areas for the trail network, and within approximately 40km from the nearby communities of Calgary, Cochrane and Okotoks.

West Bragg Creek is a year-round trail network, with opportunities for hiking, trail running, mountain biking and equestrian activity every month of the year. The area generally gets less rain or snowfall, and more sunshine and drying Chinooks than the mountains to the west. This means that the West Bragg Creek trails are often quite dry during the spring and fall shoulder seasons.

The six foothill ridges within the West Bragg Creek trail network are no joke! The elevation ranges from simple hills to long, multi-branched ridges with climbs of 250 to 300 metres from the parking lot. Valleys between the ridges include the Iron Springs headwaters, multiple tributaries of Bragg Creek and the large Moose Meadows wetlands. Visitors to the area will experience first-hand the complexity of the ecosystem, including pine and spruce forests, aspen woodlands, grass meadows, riparian areas, beaver dams and large marshlands, on any trail they travel.

Single track trails make up about 100 km of the West Bragg Creek network. These trails climb and follow the ridges in the area, and connector trails create countless loop options. The climbs are generally at a moderate grade, so the trails are all rated as easy to moderate for hiking, trail running or horseback riding. All trails are designed to be multi-directional, so you should always anticipate other people on any trail. The trails have a flowy character and are mostly rated as blue trails for mountain biking.

The Merlin View Loop and the Ranger Summit-Strange Brew-Boundary Ridge Loop are some of the most popular mountain bike rides in Kananaskis Country. However, the trail network has a good variety of quiet trails to enjoy.



A few trails are set aside for specific activities. Fullerton Loop, the Watershed Heritage Interpretive Trail and the east half of Snowshoe Hare are limited to pedestrian traffic only—no bikes or horses. Boundary Horse is designed for equestrian use and hikers, but not for bikes.

There are about 70 km of wide trails in the network. Over the summer, these trails are popular for equestrian users and dog-walkers and used as connectors for single track trails for hiking or mountain biking. In the winter, many of these trails are groomed for cross-country skiing. December 1 to March 31, these trails are designated for skiing only, so snowshoeing, fat biking, hiking and horseback riding are not permitted. The ski trails provide opportunities for classic and skate skiing along Crystal Line, Sundog, Loggers and Iron Springs loops to the south of the West Bragg Creek parking lot, the Moose Loop and Mountain View loops to the west and Hostel Loop to the north. There are also multi-use trails that allow skiing, snowshoeing, hiking and fat biking. These include Mountain Road, Telephone Loop, Iron Creek and the south portion of Elbow Trail.

Several single-track trails in the network are groomed for fat biking, and provide great opportunities for snowshoeing, winter hiking, trail running and winter horseback riding. When the snow on these trails is packed for fat-biking, it is recommended that only fat-tires, wider than 3.7”

be used and that riders keep their tire pressure low, to prevent the formation of ruts. Fullerton Loop, Sagamore and Snowshoe Hare are not groomed and are generally well packed by users within a short time after a snowfall. Less busy trails can have soft and deep snow for extended periods in the winter, which is perfect for anyone wishing to enjoy a soft snowshoe or backcountry ski.

There are also several designated winter equestrian trails in West Bragg Creek. Riders can choose the ridgetop views from Boundary Horse, the easier West Meadow trail or a number of multi-user trails at the south half of the trail network.

Map signs are posted at all the West Bragg Creek trailheads and at every trail junction, making it easy to navigate the trail system. You can also download a georeferenced trail map or use any of the popular trail apps. Current trail condition reports are available at: <https://braggcreektrails.org/>

The original 43 km of trails within West Bragg Creek were constructed when Kananaskis Country was created. The current network of trails was built in 2010 and is upgraded and by the Bragg Creek Trails Association, in partnership with Alberta Forestry and Parks.

Bragg Creek Trails is a registered charitable organization, which relies on volunteers and donations to maintain this amazing place “For All, Outside, In Every Season”.

Willmore Wilderness Park is 4,600 square kilometres (1840 sq. mi.) directly north of Jasper National Park. Adventurers often see mountain goats, bighorn sheep, elk, deer, moose, caribou, wolves, coyotes, wolverine, cougar, lynx, black bears, grizzly bears and small game. The flowers are abundant in the summer months and turn meadows into a tapestry of colour. The rivers and creeks are crystal clear and there is evidence of fossils that show the ancient history of the area. Some of the most superlative fossil remains are dinosaur tracks located just north of Grande Cache. Old trapper's cabins, grave sites and historical campsites are evident throughout Willmore Wilderness Park.

Willmore Wilderness Foundation

Motorized activities are not permitted in the park under the *Willmore Wilderness Park Act*, which was passed in 1959 following a public lobby to protect the region from natural resource exploration. The Act protects traditional activities such as horse use, trapping and hunting. Access is restricted to horses and foot traffic. Backcountry hiking, equestrian trail riding, hunting and trapping are permitted within the park. The *Willmore Wilderness Act* continues to support the rich heritage of indigenous peoples, descendants of the fur traders and early explorers, trappers, outfitters and the general public.

Willmore Wilderness Park is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. Backpackers and horseback riders seeking a true backcountry experience can explore hundreds of kilometres of trails. Visitors to the Rockies should be experienced and well-equipped for extended backcountry adventures. *Willmore Wilderness Park* has four major staging areas making access available. These areas include the Sulphur Gates, Cowlick Creek, Berland River and Rock Lake. Corrals are available for those who venture on horseback.

The area has a unique horseback culture, traditions and history that date back to the Canadian Fur Trade. Travelling the old pack trails affords solitude and random camping experiences where adventurers can enjoy the beauty of the area. The Rockies offers wide-open spaces, and when accessed with horses or by hiking can nurture the spirit, leaving one with a feeling of connecting to the earth.

One of the most used trails in the park stretches from Rock Lake Staging area to Eagle's Nest Pass. Visitors on foot and horseback access the area along old CAT trail (old exploratory road or trail) from the 1950s used in oil and gas exploration. There are many campgrounds along this stretch of the trail. Well-seasoned, multi-day travellers can continue on this trail to Grande Cache.

Sheep Creek Trail is another CAT trail that runs from the Sulphur Gates Staging Area to an abandoned airstrip at Sheep Creek. A spur trail (a trail that branches off the main trail) carries on from the airstrip to connect users to the Great Divide Trail. There are many spur-trails along this route that can take travellers to scenic alpine expanses.

Both the Sheep Creek Trail and the trail to Eagle's Nest Pass route have dangerous river crossings, especially during high water. Extra care needs to be taken when crossing fast flowing rivers and creeks. There are two crossings of Muddy Water River along Sheep Creek Trail, and these are some of the most dangerous river crossings in Willmore Wilderness Park. The Wild Hay River and the Berland River may also be dangerous, especially for hikers.

Clark's Crossing along the Smoky River is another potentially dangerous area. It was named after Stan Clark, the first Superintendent of the Canadian Forestry Service, who started the role in 1912. In his retirement, Clark became an outfitter and would take hunters from Entrance to Rock Lake, over Eagle's Nest, up Rock Creek to the Sulphur River, to Big Grave, up Kvass Creek, down Wolverine Creek, across Smoky River and up to Sheep Creek. The Smoky was difficult river crossing for travelers on foot and horseback due to its proximity to a very dangerous whirlpool. Many lost their lives during the crossing. Crossing the Smoky River by boat was a much safer alternative. Clark packed a boat to the Big Smoky by horse and built a boathouse upstream of confluence of Wolverine Creek and the

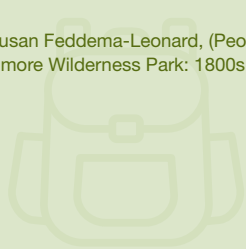
Smoky River. The site became known as Clark's Crossing. Today, travellers should continue to use boats or rafts to safely cross the Smoky River. A trapline cabin of Clark's remains at the site on the north side of the river¹.

Willmore Wilderness Park is vast rugged wilderness with no amenities for visitors and no help if you get into trouble. The weather, wildlife and remoteness of the park is unforgiving. Weather is unpredictable and can change very rapidly. A hot summer's day can quickly turn into stormy cold weather. It can snow and freeze in the Rockies during the summer months, so be prepared. Overnight travellers unfamiliar with the area should seek the services of a guide and outfitter who knows this region of the Rockies. Travellers should pack readily accessible bear spray, fire starter, matches, a First Aid kit, a knife or multitool, a flashlight, rain gear, extra clothing, appropriate boots, a Garmin InReach or GPS, map and compass.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation is a registered non-profit Canadian charity that has been actively clearing trails and rehabilitating historic campsites in the Park for more than 20 years. The Foundation owns and operates People & Peaks Productions Ltd., which produces television documentaries and social media for educational purposes. Learn more at: <https://willmorewilderness.com/>



¹ Susan Feddema-Leonard, (People & Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park: 1800s to mid-1800s), 15





Hinton Mountain Bike Association



Hinton Mountain Bike Association, formalized by volunteers in 2007, has an established culture of trail stewardship for the mountain bike trails in the Hinton region. The association's early efforts focused on formalizing a trail network with field maps for safe navigation and installing trail markers to identify trails as part of a mountain biking network in an area with many different recreational users. Over the years trails have been revived and repaired and new trails have been created to offer more opportunities for bikers.

Trails in the network have ranged from classic cross country to downhill, from technical to flow, and are constructed by hand or through machine builds. Hinton Mountain Bike Association's trail networks, including the Hinton Bike Park partnership with the Town of Hinton, are developed on Crown land and share a common theme of being constructed with sustainability in mind. These trails are developed through coordination with other land managers in the area. Years of trail management and development have fostered opportunities to promote, build and maintain trails while ensuring responsible and safe practices in environmental conservation, trail construction, maintenance and provide riding enjoyment.

When trail maintenance work or new trails are considered Hinton Mountain Bike Association considers the authorizations and consultations that are required with provincial staff, and all trail work starts with a plan. Plans have ranged in scope from general maintenance, small trail improvements, an entire new trail build or the coordination of a series of new trails in a master plan. Early project reviews focus on identifying other uses of Crown land to understand the impacts of those uses on our trail networks and how our trails can impact those other users and the environment. Each project incorporates proper trail building techniques focused on managing water and erosion while providing a positive trail riding experience based on the trail design.

Hinton Mountain Bike Association manages their trails following sustainable trail design guidelines from the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA). While a significant portion of work is completed by volunteers, Hinton Mountain Bike Association does partner with professional trail builders on some construction and maintenance projects. These partnerships have created opportunities for our members to collaborate and learn proper trail building techniques from professional trail builders that can be utilized with future projects.

Hal Jackson, President of Hinton Mountain Bike Association
www.bikehinton.com

Where to go





Be BearSmart.
Learn more on Page 47,
or visit [Alberta.ca/BearSmart](https://www.alberta.ca/BearSmart)



Designated trail maps

The maps in this section show trail locations and the experiences they offer. These maps do not provide regulatory information. Find regulatory maps, permitted activities, regulations and wayfinding for trails at: <https://www.alberta.ca/public-landrecreation-maps.aspx>

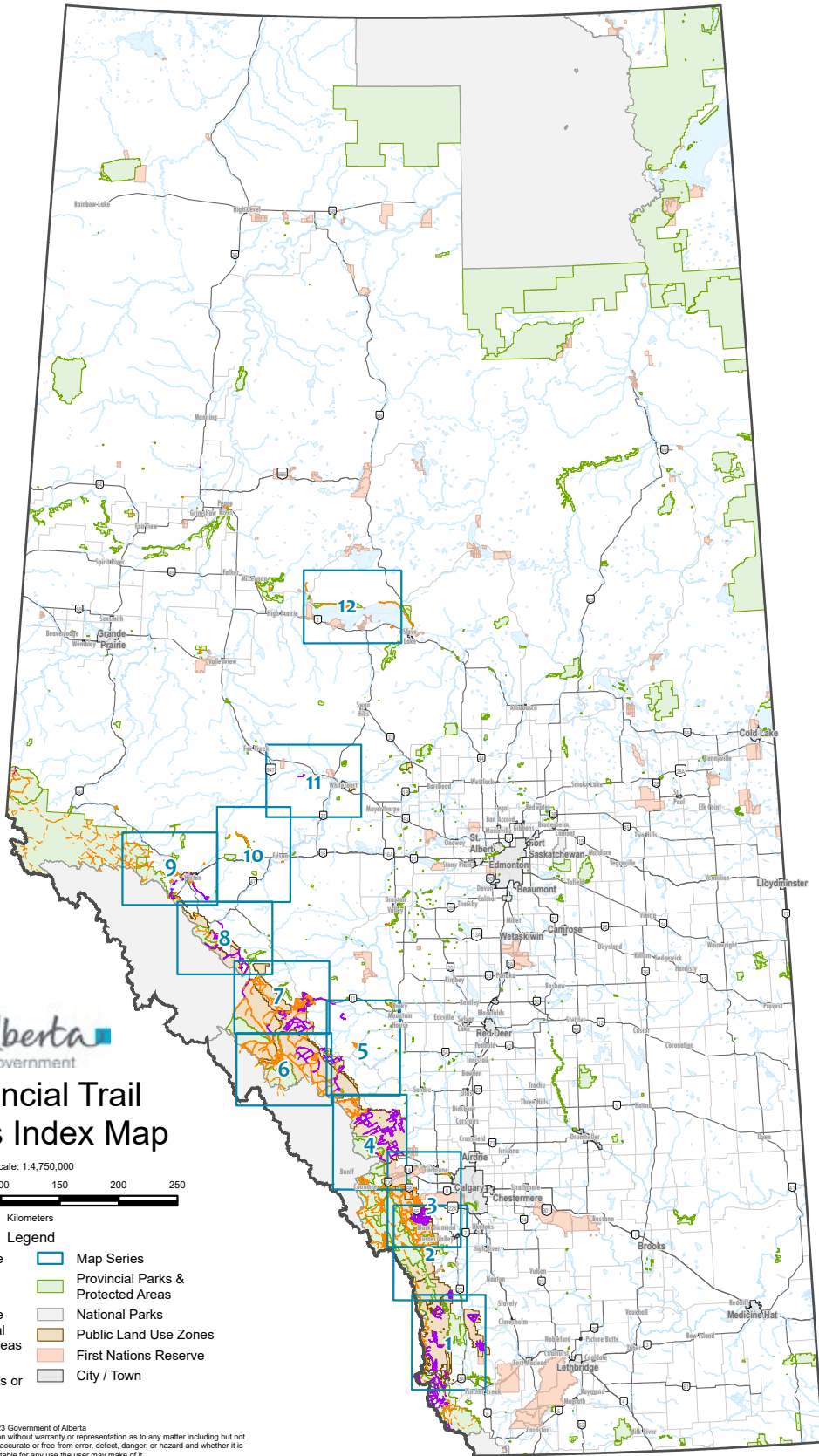
Many areas do not have cell service. Download or print maps of the area you are visiting for offline use and carry them with you while exploring the trails.

Designated public land trails and trail networks are found on vacant public land and within Public Land Use Zones (PLUZ). Many designated trails continue into provincial parks and recreation areas and are shown on these maps as hashed lines.

Alberta Parks sites are provincial parks, recreation areas and protected areas, and denoted on these maps as:

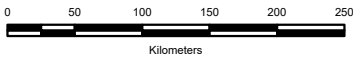
- ER: Ecological reserve
- HR: Heritage rangeland
- NA: Natural area
- PP: Provincial park
- PRA: Provincial recreation area
- WA: Wilderness area
- WP: Willmore wilderness park
- WPP: Wildland provincial park

Learn more about recreation opportunities and trails in Alberta Parks sites at: <https://www.albertaparks.ca/>



Provincial Trail Guides Index Map

Scale: 1:4,750,000



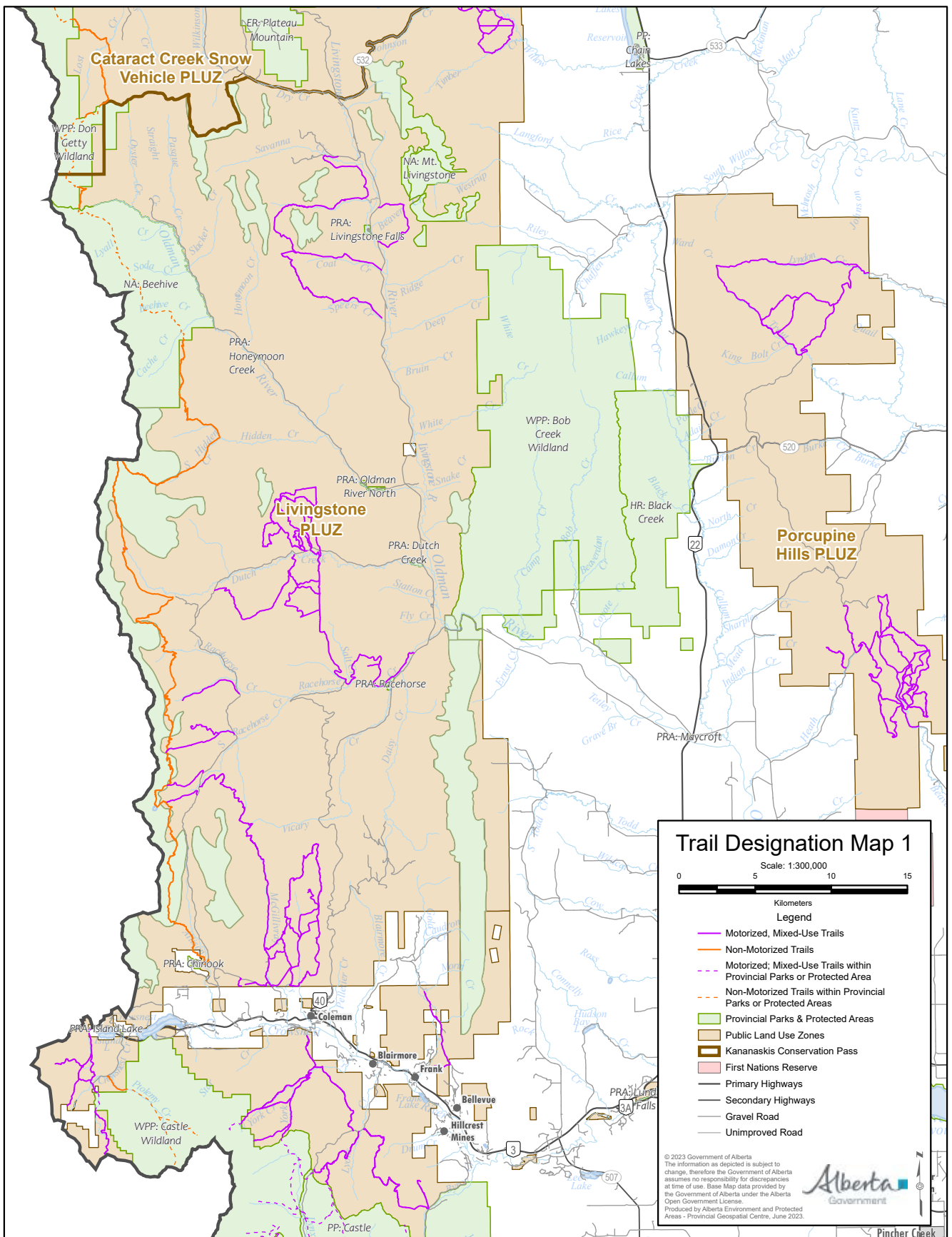
Legend

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Motorized, Mixed-Use Trails | Map Series |
| Non-Motorized Trails | Provincial Parks & Protected Areas |
| Motorized, Mixed-Use Trails within Provincial Parks or Protected Areas | National Parks |
| Non-Motorized Trails within Provincial Parks or Protected Areas | Public Land Use Zones |
| | First Nations Reserve |
| | City / Town |

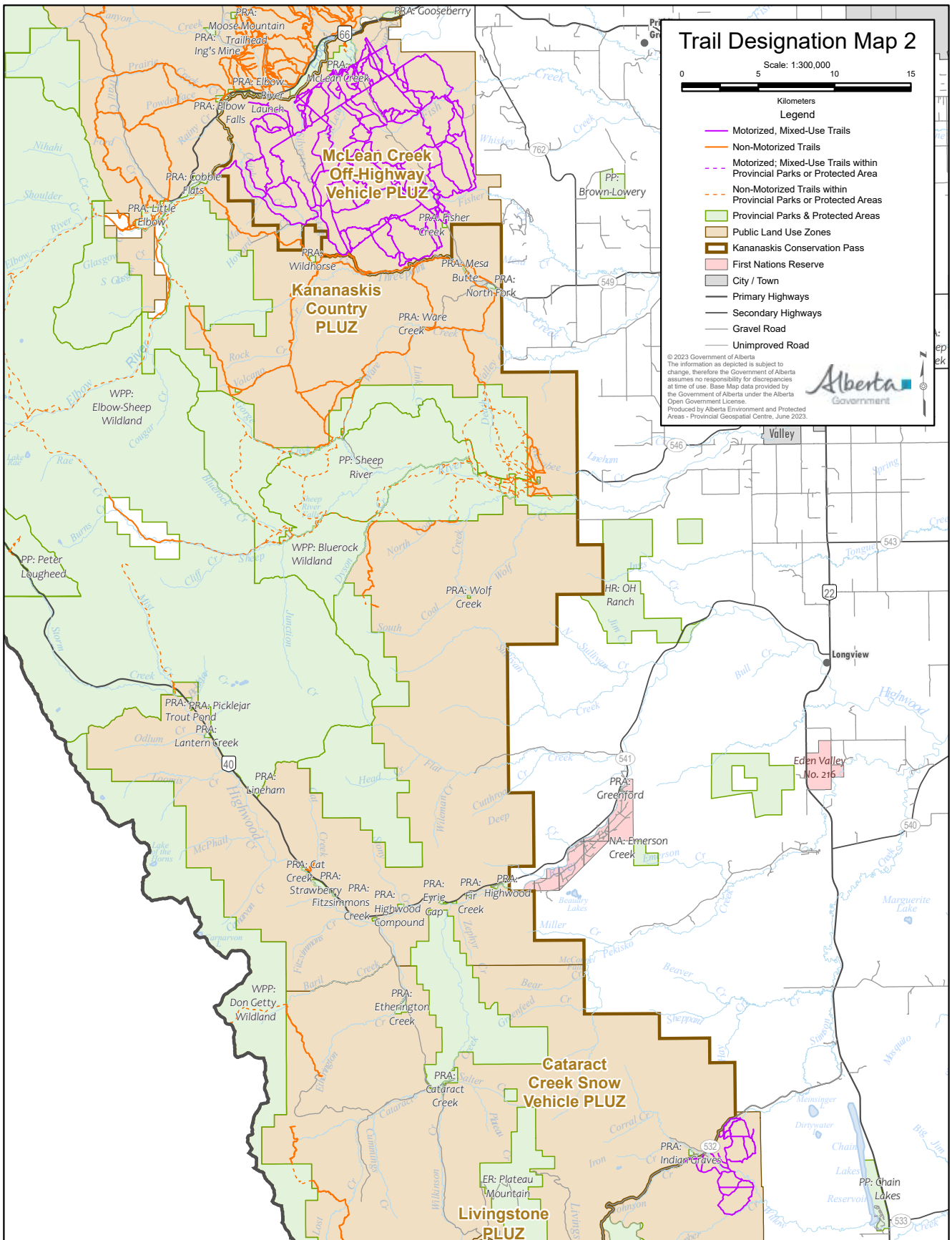
© 2023 Government of Alberta

The Minister and the Crown provides this information without warranty or representation as to any matter including but not limited to whether the data / information is correct, accurate or free from error, defect, danger, or hazard and whether it is otherwise useful or suitable for any use the user may make of it.

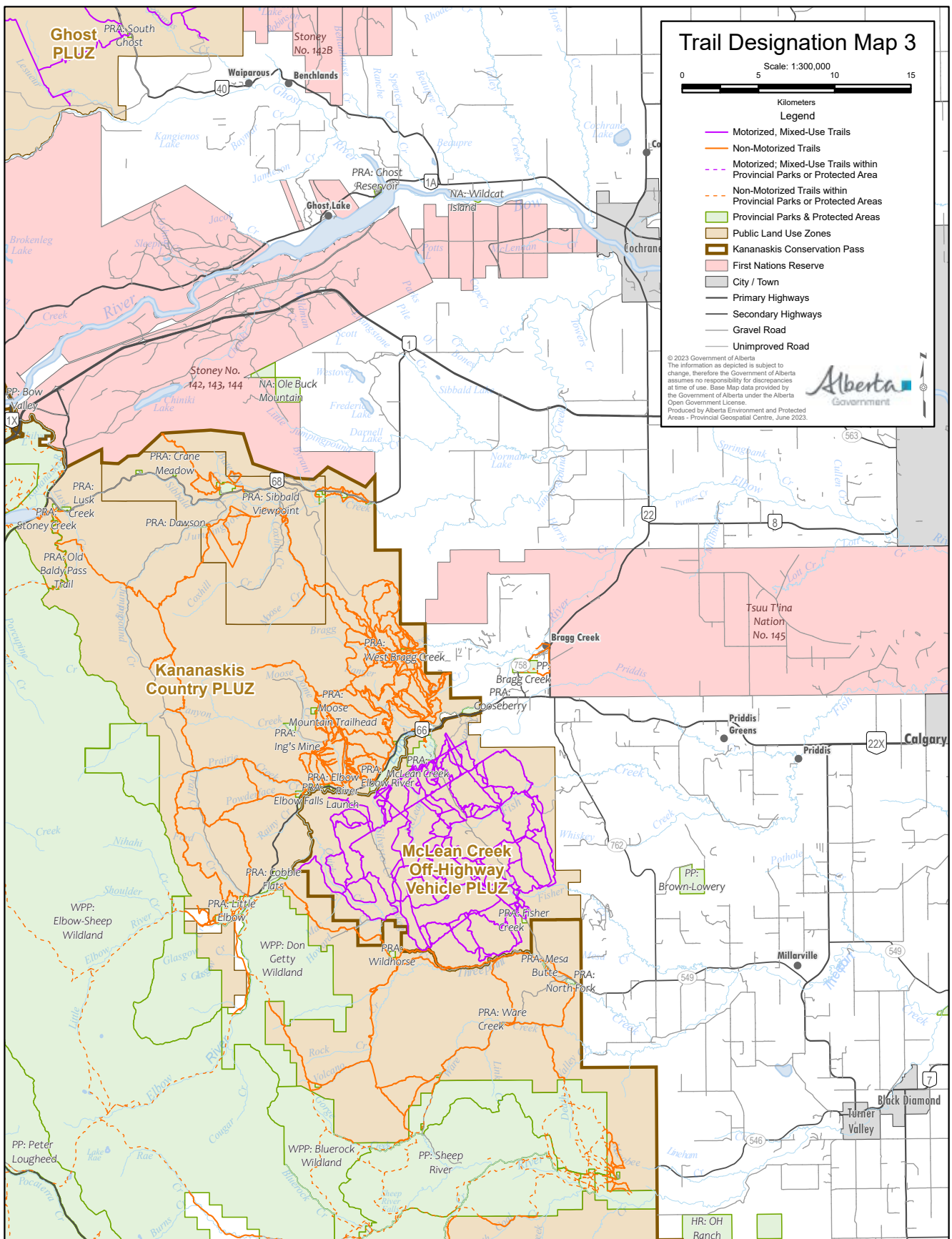
Base Map data provided by the Government of Alberta under the Alberta Open Government License.
Produced by Alberta Environment and Protected Areas - Provincial Geospatial Centre, June 2023.



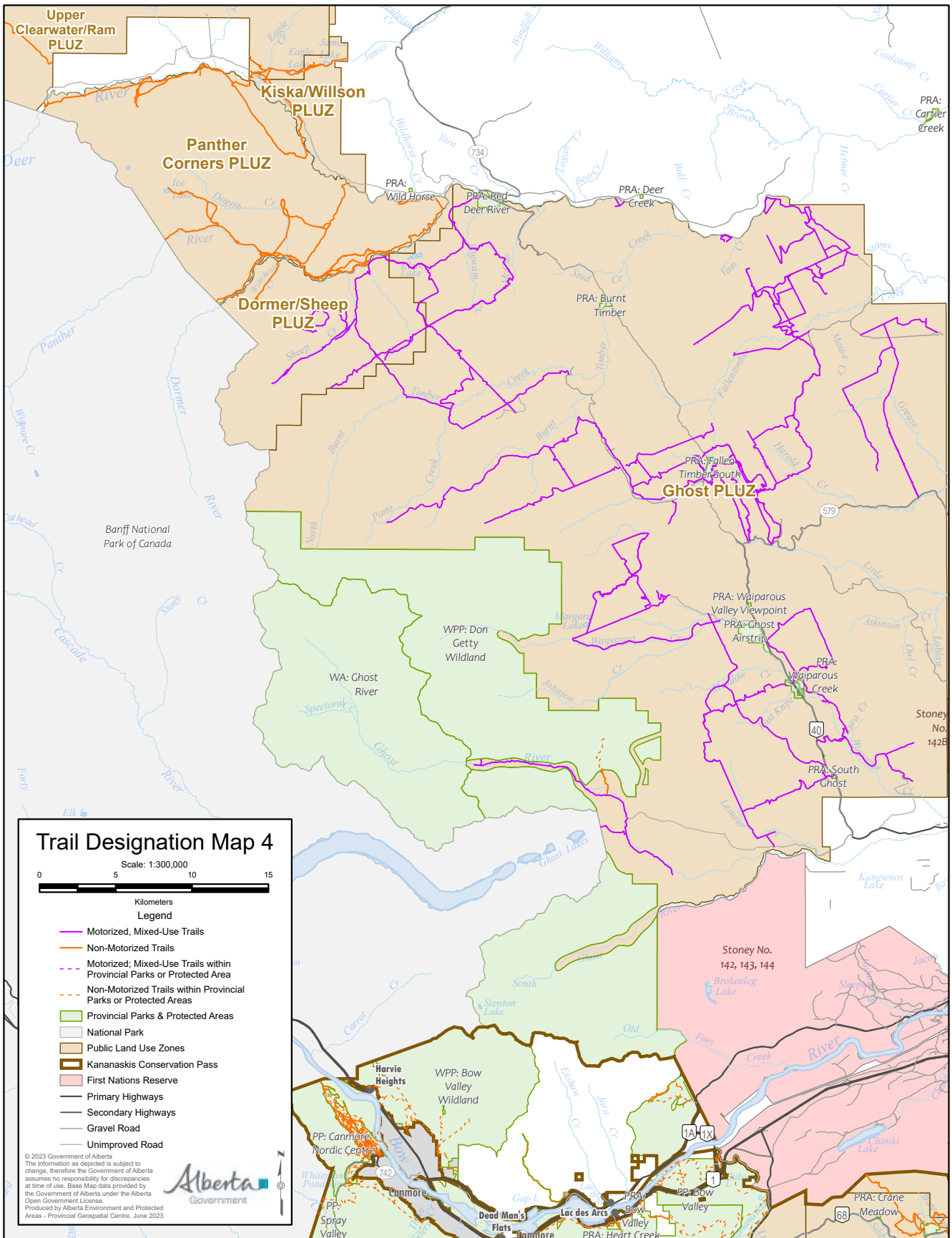
Vehicles parked at provincial park and public land sites within Kananaskis Country and the Bow Valley require a Kananaskis Conservation Pass. You may need a pass to access trails show on this map. Learn more at: Alberta.ca/YourPass



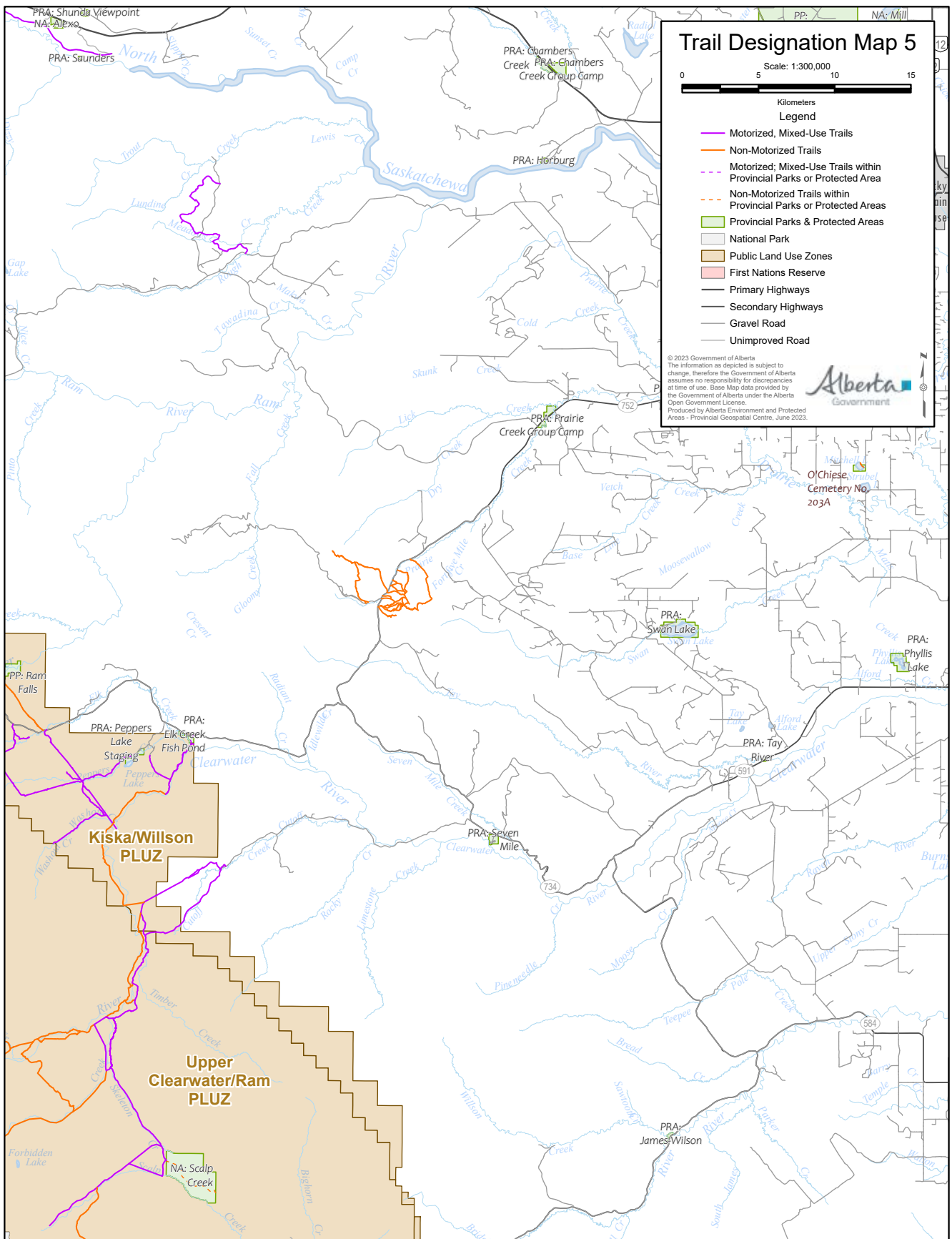
Vehicles parked at provincial park and public land sites within Kananaskis Country and the Bow Valley require a Kananaskis Conservation Pass. You may need a pass to access trails show on this map. Learn more at: [Alberta.ca/YourPass](https://alberta.ca/YourPass)

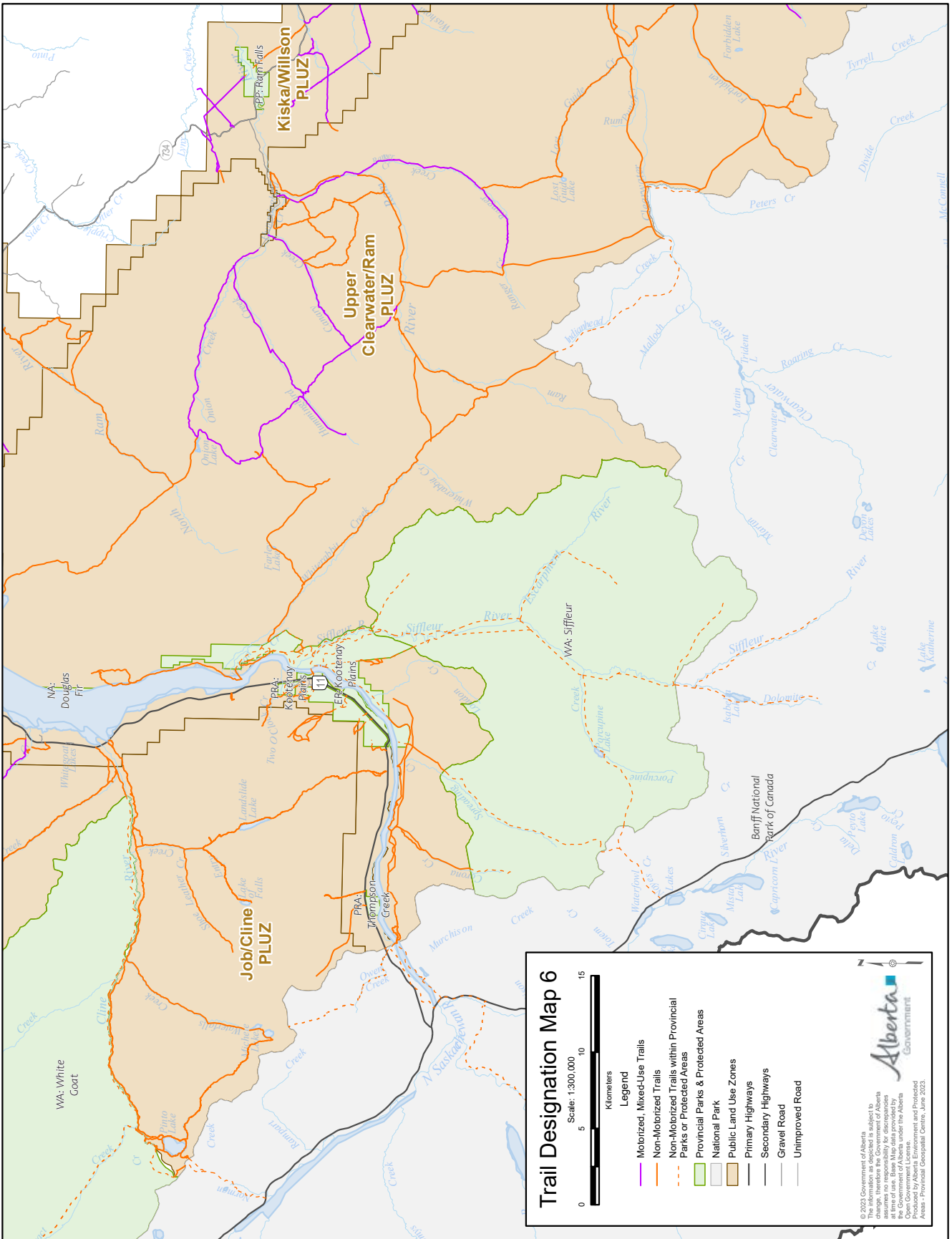


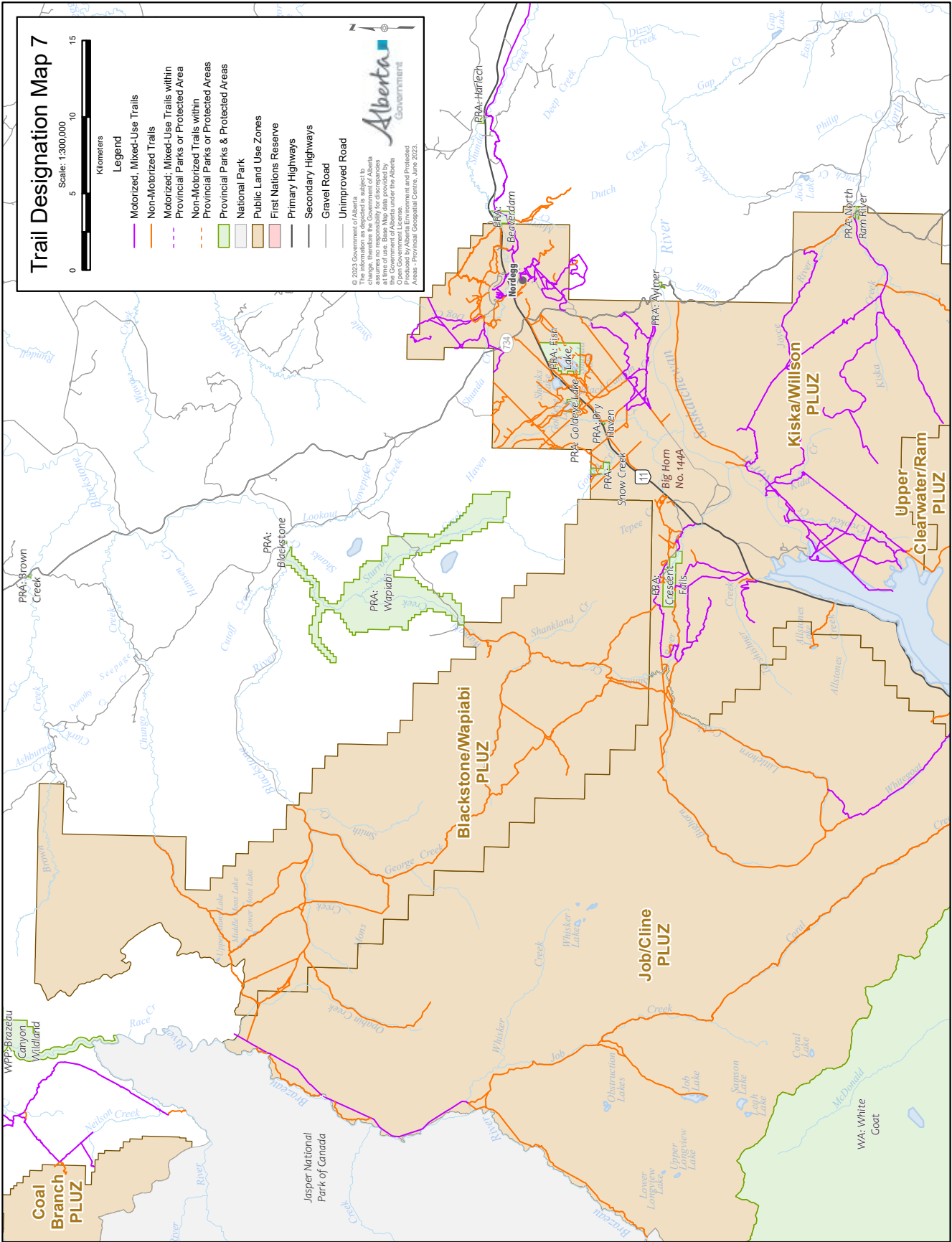
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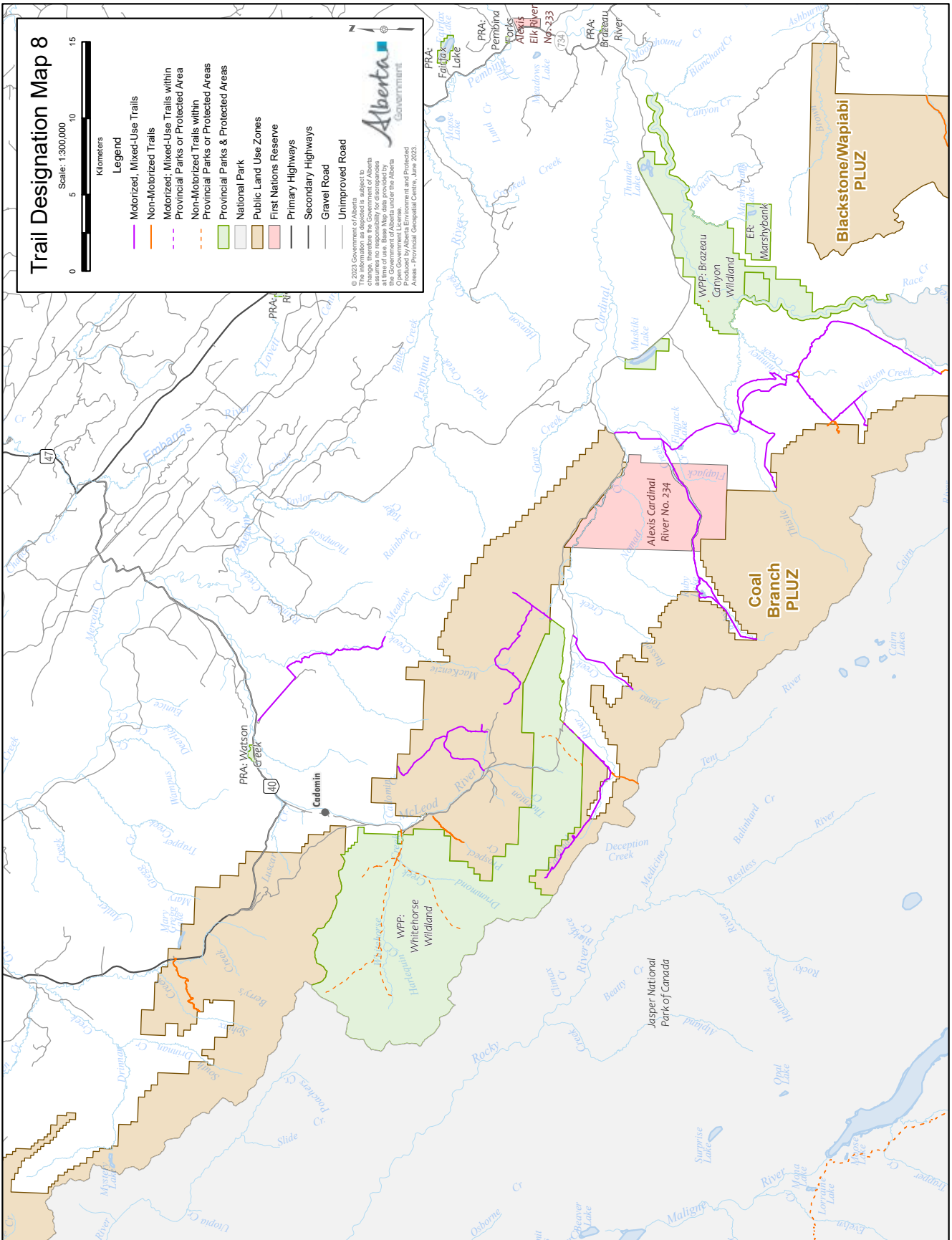


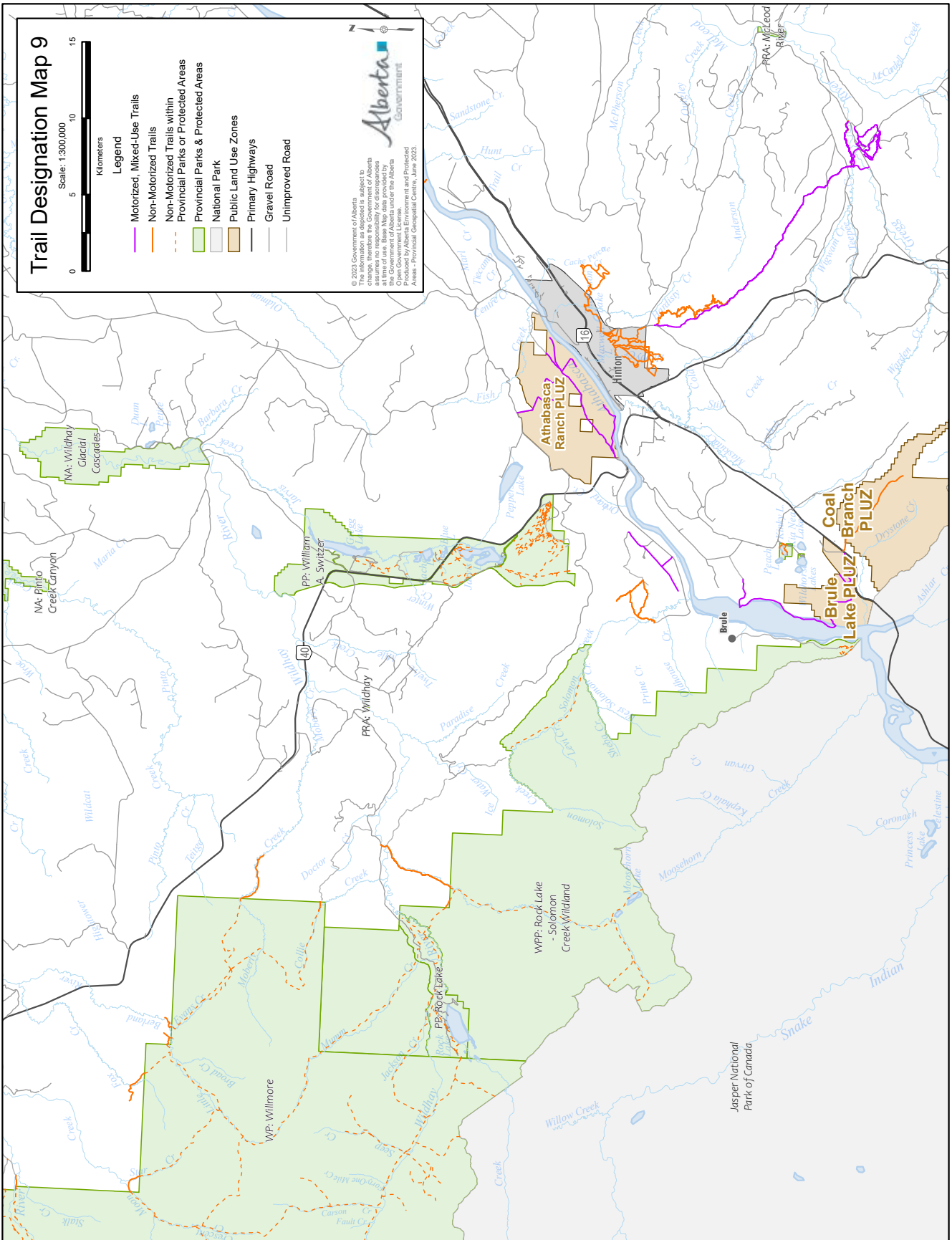
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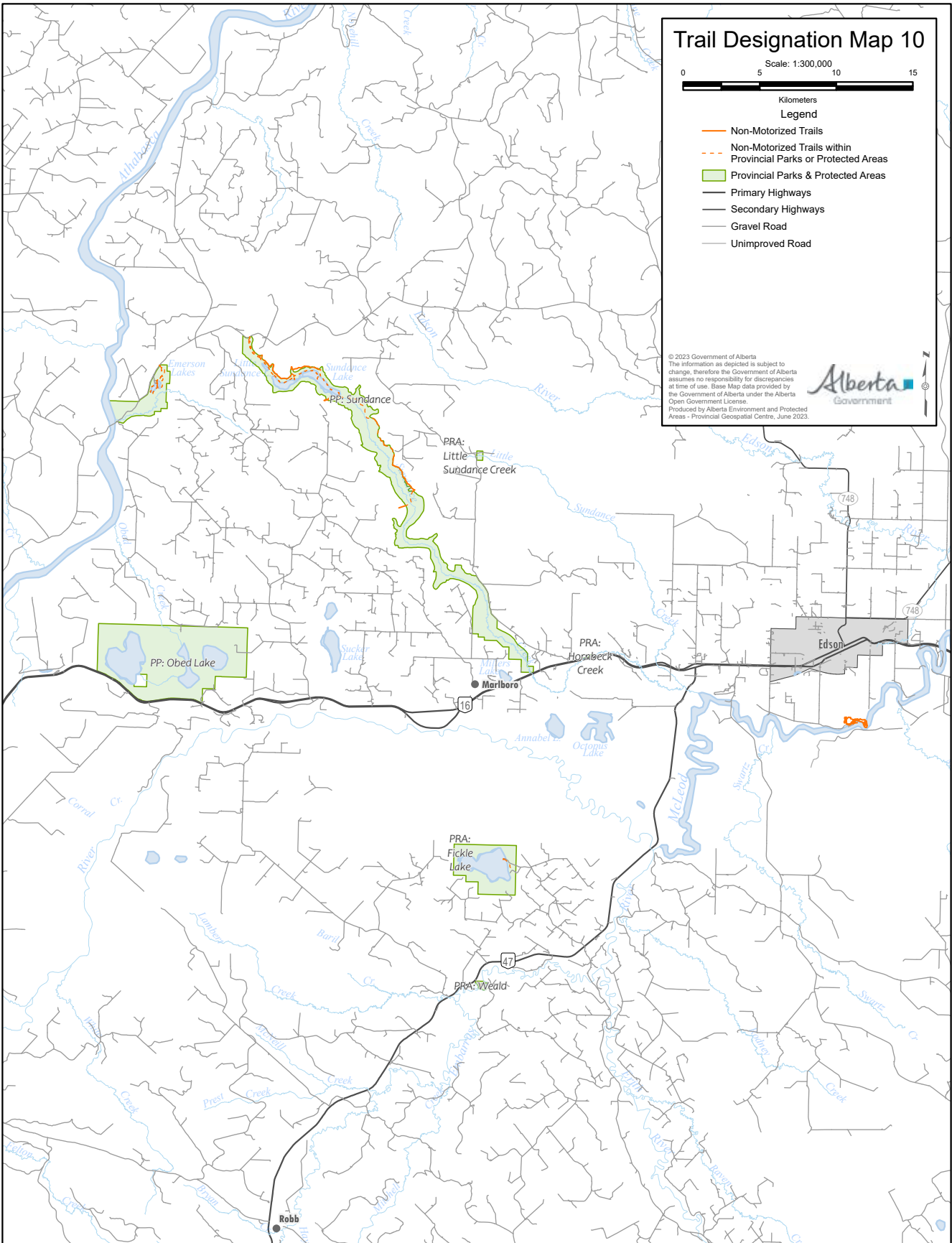


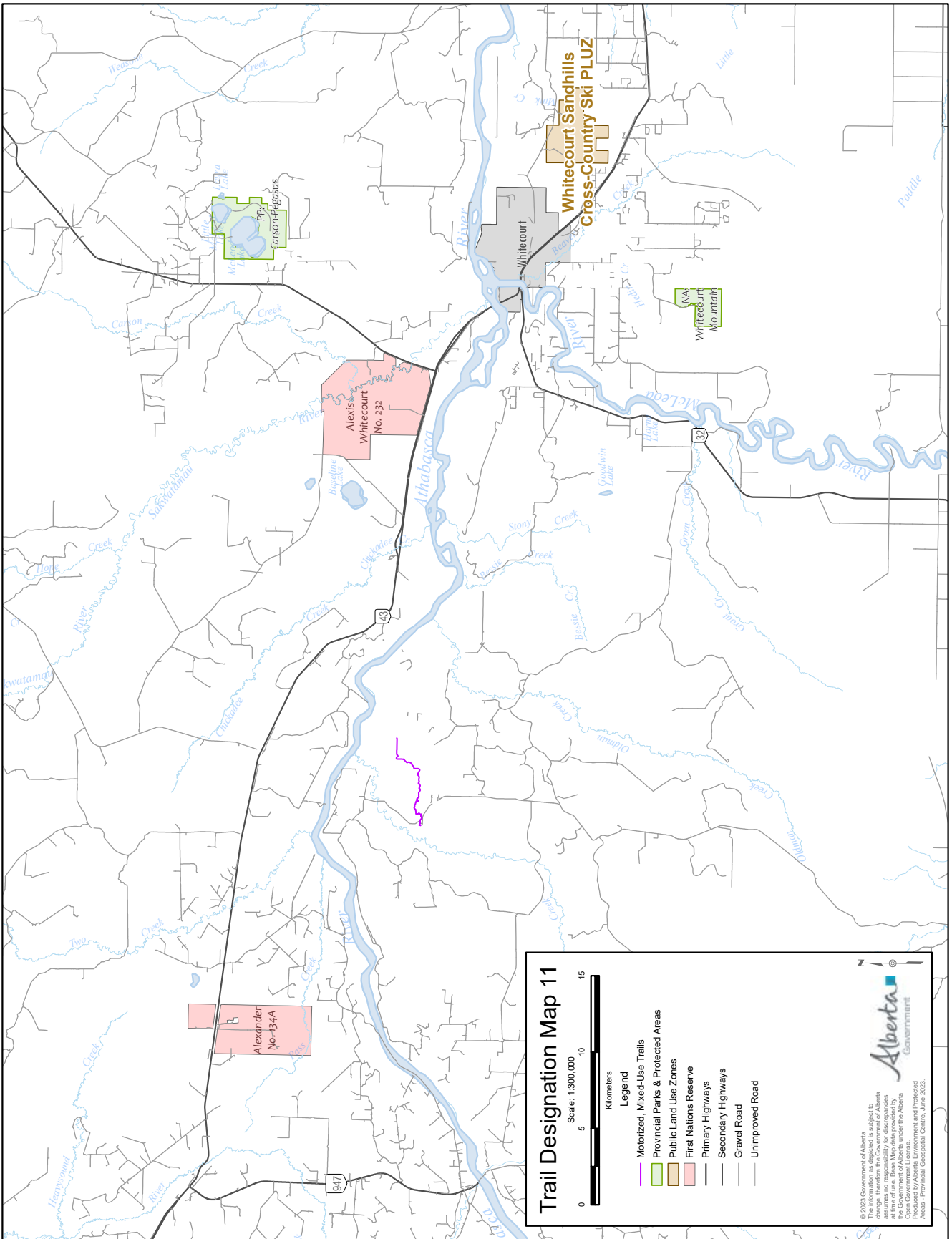


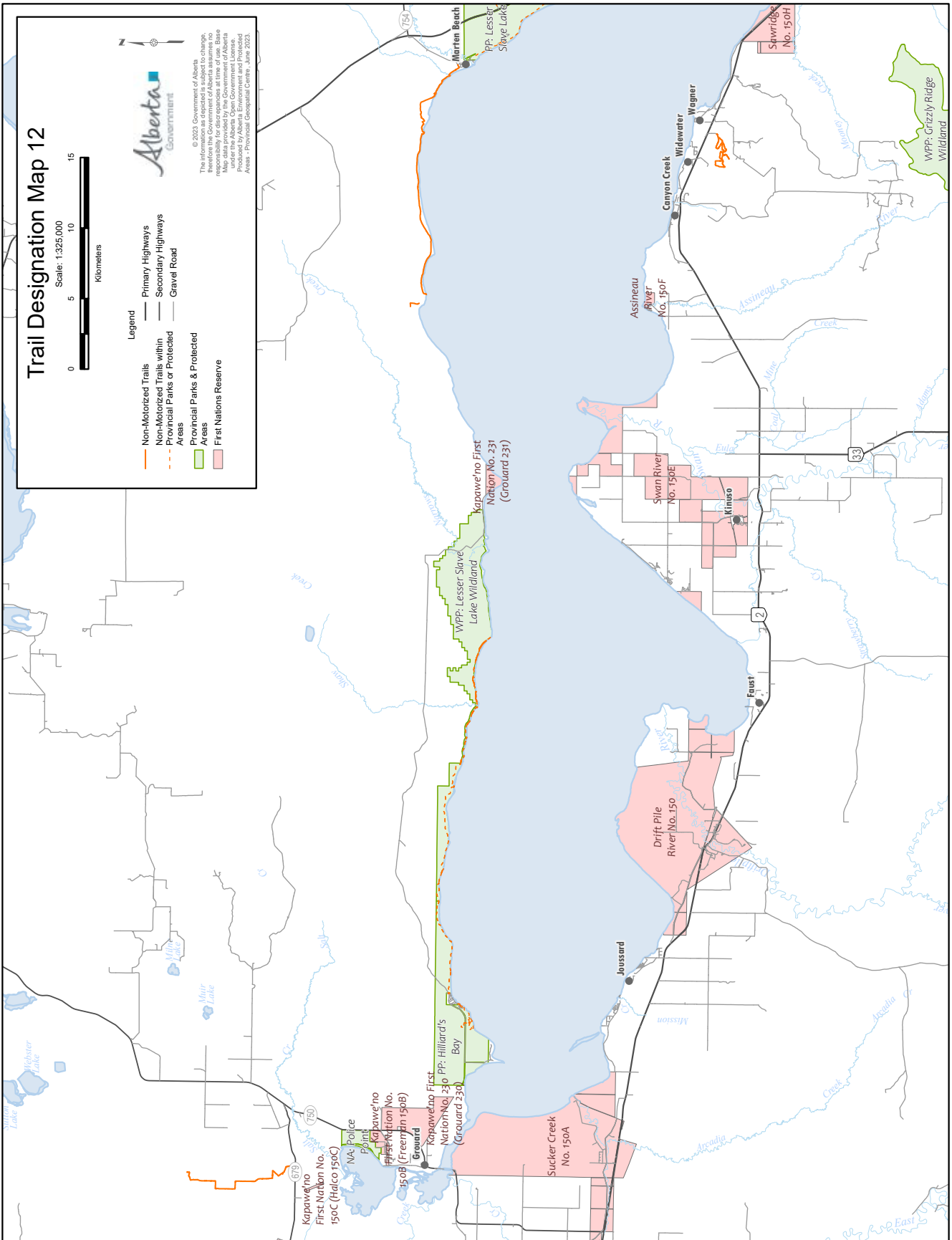














Kananaskis Mountain Rescue



Our provincial parks and recreation areas provide opportunities for Albertans and visitors to enjoy the great outdoors; however, exploring our mountain parks comes with risks that should be known and understood prior to visiting the area.

Kananaskis Mountain Rescue (KMR), which was previously known as Kananaskis Country Public Safety, was developed in the late 1970s. The name change was intended to enhance awareness and understanding of the program and improve clarity of the services provided. KMR operates in the Kananaskis Region and on adjacent provincial lands in Western Alberta's Rocky Mountains. When requested, KMR also responds to incidents outside of the region when its specialized technical rescue skills are required.

KMR works closely with the RCMP and many other partners and agencies. The four main objectives of the program are: backcountry search and rescue for Kananaskis Region; avalanche forecasting; training; and public outreach and education. KMR operates 365 days per year, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The program consists of mountain rescue specialists, conservation officers and Kananaskis Emergency Services dispatchers. KMR is one of the busiest rescue teams in Canada and responds to an average of 380 backcountry incidents annually.

Over 15,000 rescues have been completed since 1979 with countless lives saved through critical life-changing interventions. The team is dedicated and proud to be a part of the essential service the program provides to visitors to the Kananaskis area.

Get out there, enjoy and play safe! Use trails with caution to avoid injury or tragedy. Some trail terrain may be dangerous if it is beyond your skill and ability. In case of emergency, dial 9-1-1 and carry an emergency satellite communications device such as a Garmin inReach.

Cows and Fish

Recreation and Riparian – Having fun in the Green Zone



Why do you love the outdoors? Whether bird watching, hiking, biking, driving an off-highway vehicle or just lounging in a chair at your campsite, getting outside is a great way to recharge, enjoy fresh air and relax. Often, the recreation activities we enjoy most take place near water because these places offer an abundance of fun opportunities. All types of riparian areas are attractive to visit, but are extra sensitive environments. Streamside floodplains, lakeshores and marshy areas around wetlands have moist soils and water nearby which can easily be harmed.

In addition to our work with livestock grazing, Cows and Fish works with recreationalists to thoughtfully use these areas. Whether a lakeside campsite or a trail running along a foothills stream, we want these treasures to last for generations to come. There are many outdoor activities that we may consider to be ‘low impact’, but our impact depends on how our actions affect the health of the land and water, and there are several visual cues that can help us. Healthy riparian areas may look messy because they have a tangle of native plants covering the ground, which helps filter runoff, protect our water and support abundant fish and wildlife. In contrast, an unhealthy riparian area often has compacted, bare soil, with few trees and shrubs remaining, which increases erosion, reduces water quality and limits homes for fish and wildlife.

Aside from the obvious things like not cutting down trees for firewood or to make room for a campsite, what else can be done to keep riparian areas healthy? It is often the little things that add up.

Each time we quad, hike, camp or fish we can have a positive impact by making thoughtful choices. Keeping our vehicles and campsites away from the water and riparian areas allows this natural buffer to trap runoff, store water and energy during floods, and leaves a wildlife corridor, as well as allows water storage in the underground ‘sponges’ that riparian areas provide. Staying on designated trails, rather than creating new ones, reduces the erosion that almost inevitably happens with unplanned trails which often are in inappropriate locations, including running downhill, funneling soil into the streams at the bottom. Keeping soil out of streams prevents smothering of fish eggs and improves water quality – making our drinking water safer downstream. By taking these small actions each time we enjoy ourselves on Alberta’s Crown lands, we are also ensuring that we have an amazing gem to share with our family and friends the next time we return.

Interested in learning more about what you can do to care for these important ‘green zones?’

Explore our website: cowsandfish.org

Attend one of the Recreational Stewardship Fairs this summer and share your passion for the outdoors. See the events calendar on our website for details.

Read Alberta Native Trout’s blog – Re-creating Recreation: Defining a new generation of fun: <https://medium.com/@AlbertaNativeTrout>



Great Divide Trail Association

Introducing Alberta's New High Rock Trail

In 2016, the Great Divide Trail Association began building the first new section of the Great Divide Trail (GDT) in 30 years, culminating with the new High Rock Trail Grand Opening, on July 22, 2022. Speeches, ribbon cutting, socializing and celebrations commemorated this historic event.

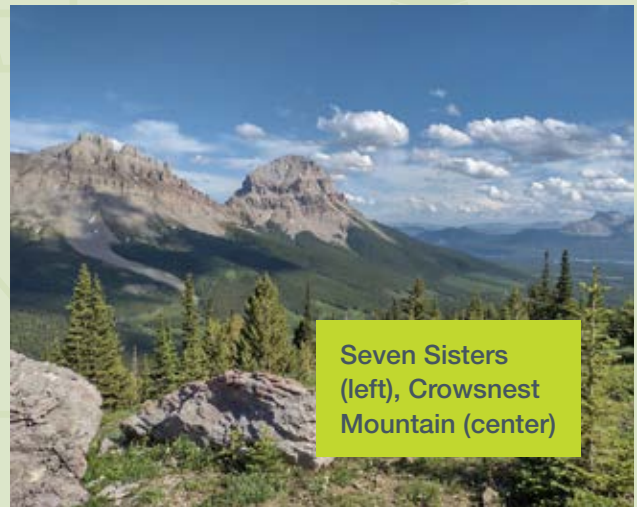
The High Rock Trail highlights the spectacular wilderness of the Crowsnest Pass area on its 50km journey along the impressive headwall of the Great Divide from Chinook Lake Recreation Area to Dutch Creek Bridge.

Hiking the High Rock Trail

For a great 3-day GDT experience, it's hard to beat a hike on the High Rock Trail, with its craggy peaks soaring up to the Great Divide, its lovely alpine meadows and expansive, forested valleys below.

The High Rock Trail is easily reached from Atlas (Allison Creek) Road. To hike north on the High Rock Trail, park at Atlas Staging Area and find the trailhead at the staging area's south end on the west side of the road. Heading off on the trail, follow switchbacks down to the new Allison Creek bridge. Fill up with water here, as the next reliable source is Window Mountain Lake in 16km. The High Rock Trail climbs east, but for a refreshing swim on a hot day, head west 1km to Chinook Lake!

Continuing north, the High Rock Trail climbs forested slopes of the Divide. Soon the trail breaks out of forest into alpine, and the climb eases below rock walls of the Great Divide's High Rock Range, to the west. The High Rock Trail remains above treeline and offers spectacular views of Crowsnest Mountain and Seven Sisters.



Seven Sisters (left), Crowsnest Mountain (center)

From here, the High Rock Trail continues along the base of the High Rock Range's majestic peaks. It alternates between dropping down into forested valleys and climbing to ridge tops and alpine meadows. Several high points are reached, providing awesome views of forested valleys and rocky peaks. The trail is mostly singletrack with a few short OHV track sections, occasionally crossing other trails, so pay careful attention to trail markings—orange blazes, GDT markers and other signs.

Although there are many features along the way, a few are worth noting.

Gorgeous Window Mountain Lake and its lakeside campground are set in a dramatic cirque just below peaks of the Great Divide. Access to Window Mountain Lake is rather rugged so hikers only. Equestrians can take the bypass to continue on the High Rock Trail. Spending a night at the lake is well worth the effort!



North of Window Mountain Lake, the High Rock Trail heads up switchbacks to climb Racehorse Shoulder. This stretch, in alpine meadows and larch forest, has amazing views in all directions. Racehorse Shoulder, at 2255 metres, is the High Rock Trail's highest point.

Good camping is also available near First Creek. After crossing the creek, the High Rock Trail climbs to a saddle and veers northeast to follow the beautiful larch covered Domke Ridge crest for 2.5km. This steep sided ridge provides great views of valleys below. The trail descends the north end of Domke Ridge to reach a lovely campsite at North Racehorse Creek.

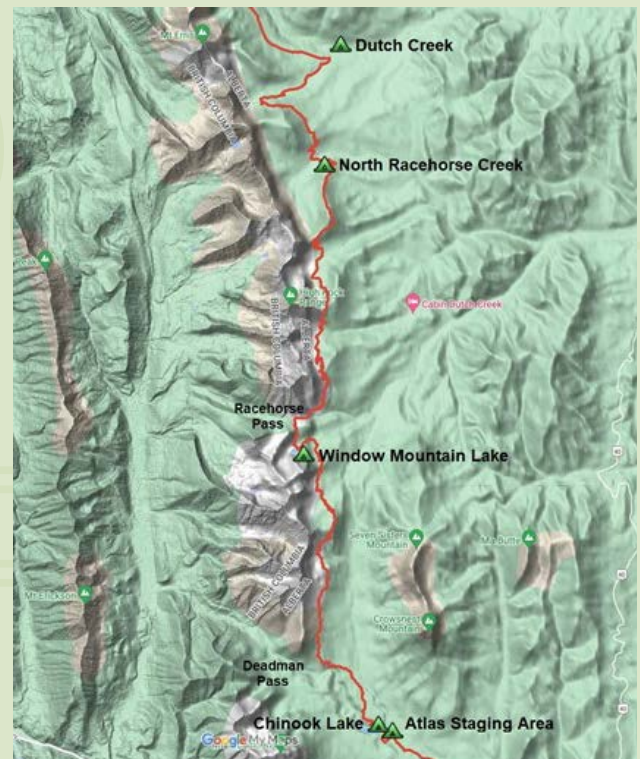


Window Mountain Lake

Below the impressive headwall of Mount Erris, the High Rock Trail reaches a junction near Dutch Creek. Go right here to leave the High Rock Trail and head back to Atlas (Allison Creek) Road. And just like that, your High Rock Trail adventure is over, celebration time!

Trip planning:

- Trailhead directions: Atlas Staging Area trailhead parking area is 5 km up Atlas (Allison Creek) Road, 10 km northwest of Coleman AB on Highway 3.
- Permits (required): [Public Lands Camping Pass](#) for all campers 18 years and older.
- Distance: About 50 km.
- Difficulty: Moderate.
- Elevation: The High Rock Trail climbs to 5 high points at 2100 metres and beyond with elevation gains of 201 - 545 m.
- The [FarOut GDT Trail Guide App](#) for iPhone and Android phones (a portion of every App sale supports the Great Divide Trail Association's trail maintenance and improvements).



High Rock Trail Route



First Creek Bridge

Built by Great Divide Trail Association volunteers, here's what it took:

- 7 years
- Almost 50km of brand-new trail
- Five brand new bridges
- 45 trail crews, 5 or 6 days each
- Additional scouting, flagging and bridge building trail crews
- 10–20 volunteers per trail crew
- Many volunteers worked on multiple trail crews
- Generous donors equipped trail crews
- Additional volunteers provided organizational and logistical support

But statistics don't tell the whole story.

The Great Divide Trail Association values diversity and is committed to building the Trail for everyone. Volunteers came from many walks of life, from across Canada and beyond. They ranged from teens to seniors pushing 80, and all ages in between. Some had worked on GDT trails since the 1970s, and others were completely new to trail building, with all levels of experience in between.

Trail crews ran from late June into September. It was physical work, however volunteers worked at paces comfortable for them. Tool use and trail building training was provided. Each trail crew included safety instruction, as volunteer safety is always highest priority. Trail crew members brought their own sleeping bags and tents, while the Great Divide Trail Association provided a camp kitchen shelter and toilet.

There was camaraderie, satisfaction in seeing newly built trail and bridges, stories and laughter around evening campfires, new friends, new things. Trail building with the Great Divide Trail Association is more than just work; it's an opportunity to:

- EXPLORE the geography and breathtaking beauty of this area.
- STEWARD the land, helping to create new sustainable recreation options for hikers and equestrians.
- PRACTICE or TEACH backcountry skills with fellow volunteers.
- LEARN about flower and tree identification, animal tracking, conservation issues and sustainable trail building techniques.
- MEET like-minded individuals with a wide array of life experiences and anecdotes.
- SLEEP under the stars. Rejuvenating!
- UNWIND, enjoy the great outdoors.

For more information, visit:

[Great Divide Trail Association Website](#)

[Great Divide Trail Association Membership Information](#)

[Join A Great Divide Trail Association Trail Crew](#)

The Rail Trail

Clearwater County and the Government of Alberta kicked off work on the Rail Trail in 2008. The Rail Trail project will create a multi-use trail system along the abandoned historic rail line between Rocky Mountain House and Nordegg. The trail will establish important connections between these two communities, existing Provincial Recreation Areas and existing trail systems. Those who explore the trail will enjoy scenic view points, rest stops and picnic sites. So far, work has been completed on the first 30km of trail between Nordegg and Saunders Provincial Recreation Area. But there is much more work underway! Once complete, the Rail Trail will provide over 100km of trail for everyone to enjoy.



Responsible recreation





Ghost Public Land Use Zone

Recreation activities

Learn more about recreation opportunities on public land at: [Alberta.ca/PublicLandRecreation](https://alberta.ca/PublicLandRecreation)



Boating, Canoeing and Kayaking



Angling



Camping



Firearms and Hunting



Campfires



Hiking



Climbing and Caving



Horses and Equestrian Use



Cycling, Electric Bikes (E-bikes) and Mountain Biking



Motorized Recreation



Drones





Know before you go

Take time ahead of any outdoor adventure to plan ahead and be prepared.

- Choose a trail that matches the skills and abilities of your group.
- Know and follow the rules of the trail and your activity.
- Know the terrain, plan for natural hazards and potential emergencies.
- Check the forecast and be prepared for all weather conditions.
- Check for fire bans or advisories at <https://www.albertafirebans.ca/>.
- Assign someone to be your emergency contact. Leave them a trip plan with details of where you are going and when you will return. Your emergency contact should know to contact the RCMP if you miss your expected return time.

Stay safe

- You are responsible for your own safety on Crown land. Outdoor safety starts with prevention. Follow these tips below to go prepared: Carry extra food and water, warm clothing, a waterproof layer and a first aid kit.
- The area you are visiting may not have cell coverage. Bring a satellite communications device (if you have one) and a current map.
- Be bear smart. Carry bear spray year-round, keep it within reach and know how to use it. Learn more about at <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-bearsmart.aspx>
- Respect wildlife and never approach or feed them.
- Save information and reporting line contacts in your mobile device so they are available if you need them. Find public land recreation contacts on page 50.

Trail etiquette

- Respect the land by leaving it in a better condition than you found it.
- Avoid travel through wet or sensitive areas whenever possible.
- Leave all gates and fences as you found them, open or closed.
- Respect other users and share the trail. Motorized users should yield to non-motorized users like hikers and cyclists, and all users should yield to equestrian users.
- Slow down when passing other users. If there is a group of you, hold up the number of fingers to indicate how many are in your group.



Be BearSmart

- Carry bear spray year-round, and know how to use it.
- Stay alert. Bears are most active at dawn and dusk. Watch for fresh scat, tracks and clawed trees.
- Travel in groups and make reasonable noise. Wind, rain or flowing water can mask sounds of you approaching.
- Keep your food and garbage away from bears. Leave nothing behind.

alberta.ca/BearSmart





Search and Rescue Alberta

What would you do if you get lost or injured while exploring and enjoying Alberta's beautiful landscapes? Responders from Search and Rescue Alberta are here to help when you need it most! We are the provincial association for volunteer search and rescue and assist search and rescue teams in providing dedicated and a high level of services to Albertans who are lost, missing or in distress. Our responders are ready at a moment's call out, day and night, during your time of need.

Over its 30-year history, organized volunteer ground search and rescue in Alberta has grown and adapted to meet the needs of Albertans. Until recently, we have been operating as a 100% volunteer organization. Search and Rescue Alberta current has 33 teams across the province and consists of 1400+ volunteers and just one employee! We endeavour to continue to be there for Albertans in some of the most difficult moments of their lives – free of charge.

Outdoor safety and incident prevention is the number one focus for Search and Rescue Alberta. We have partnered with AdventureSmart, a national organization that promotes trip planning, preparedness and incident prevention for every outdoor adventure to keep recreationists safe and ideally, prevent them from ever needing to call us. AdventureSmart and its suite of five program provide online and on-site awareness with targeted outreach in order to reduce the number and severity of Search and Rescue incidents. We encourage you to download the AdventureSmart app to your mobile device for helpful trip planning checklists and resources that will help you start every adventure knowing that you are prepared for anything!

Find more resources at: www.adventuresmart.ca.

To support the great work of SAR Alberta with a monetary donation, or to find more information about becoming a volunteer, please visit www.saralberta.ca.

Enjoy the outdoors and stay safe!



Alberta Equestrian Federation

The Alberta Equestrian Federation is a non-governmental provincial organization with a rich history of work dedicated to Alberta equines and our equestrian community. Since 1978, we have been promoting and supporting the equine industry, including equestrian sport and recreational activities.

The majority of our 18,000 members participate in recreational activities with their horses. This includes everything from quality time spent grooming their animals, to pleasure wagon and carriage driving, to trail riding on multi-use trails and extended backcountry horse packing trips.

A significant portion of our efforts goes into advocating for equestrian recreational opportunities. We help preserve and enhance access for equestrian-use activities and promote safe use and education for horse riders and other recreational users about equestrian-friendly trails. This aligns with our values of caring and stewardship.

On Alberta's Crown land, equestrian users share staging areas and trails with many other users, including hikers, mountain bike riders, OHV users and many more. For everyone's safety and enjoyment, it's a good idea for all users to understand some basic knowledge about horses and how to encounter and pass each other safely and appropriately on the trails.

You may be surprised to know that even experienced horses see hikers with large packs, bikers with helmets and shiny sunglasses and swiftly moving, silent trail users as a threat. Despite thousands of years of domestication, horses retain all the instincts and reactions of prey animals and are constantly on the alert for danger from predators. Equestrians work diligently with their mounts to gain trust and safely guide them in situations that an equine might perceive as dangerous. However, each horse reacts differently to situations and, in some encounters, can be

unpredictable. Reactions can vary from 'spooking' (moving extremely fast across or on the trail), to spinning, or sometimes even bucking to get to safety. Such a reaction could result not only in injury or death to riders, but also to other nearby users. Knowing simple approaches to encountering and passing horse riders helps to keep everyone safe.

The North American standard for trail etiquette is to yield the right-of-way to horse riders. Along trails that allow equestrian and other types of use, you will notice a yield sign showing both hikers and bikers yielding to horse riders.



This sign was created to remind trail users that they should always be watching the trail ahead, and when horses are spotted, stop and pull off the trail while keeping visible. Don't hide! When applicable and if safe to do so, move to the downhill side of the trail since predators

normally approach from above. Smile and speak to the rider – this assures the horse that you are a human and is key to a safe encounter for all parties.

If you come up on a horse rider from behind, be sure to call out from a good distance. Don't wait until you are immediately behind the horses. Ask the riders how best to pass safely and be patient while they move into safe locations. Don't assume that it is OK to ride or run by the party, but again, ask what is appropriate. Never ride or run up fast and unannounced behind horses!

We all want everyone on the trails to stay safe, enjoy their time on Alberta's Public Lands and share the trails together. A little knowledge about horses on the trails helps us all to achieve this. Visit our website for more resources or to join those who ride our trails.

Happy Trails!

<https://albertaequestrian.com/>

Public land recreation contacts

Information and reporting lines are available to help you.

For all emergencies: 9-1-1.

Fire ban information: 1-866-394-3473

Report wildfires: 310-FIRE (3473)

For information and to report public safety incidents, illegal activities or enforcement concerns 24/7 on Crown land:

310-LAND (5263), or from outside of Alberta: 1-833-310-5869 (Toll free).

Report A Poacher: 1-800-642-3800

Report spills, releases or environmental emergencies to the Energy and Environmental Response Line: 1-800-222-6514

Stay up to date with recreation on public land:

<https://www.facebook.com/RespectTheLand/>



Whitehorse Wildland
Provincial Park

Know before you go - check for fire bans

AlbertaFirebans.ca

Alberta



Alberta