

Bighorn Backcountry

Alberta's Bighorn Backcountry offers spectacular Rocky Mountain scenery and unforgettable recreational opportunities.

Keep this area beautiful:

- stay on the trail,*
- respect other users, and*
- leave no trace of your visit.*

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, hiking, fishing, hunting and cycling.

It is your responsibility to become familiar with activities allowed in this area before you visit. 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 Environment and Sustainable Resource Development 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.esrd.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 mules.
Non-Motorized User	↔	recreational user which is non-motorized except equestrian user or equine where specified or restricted.
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.

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 Sustainable Resource Development.

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 any instructions given therein. 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 the website www.esrd.alberta.ca. Hardcopy of the brochures are also available at many vendors and ESRD offices.

Public Lands Recreation Regulation

Every person who is within a public land use zone, public land recreation area or on a public land recreation trail shall comply with:

- the lawful orders and instructions of an Officer, and
- 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, public land recreation areas or public land recreation trails.

Visitors who do not follow the rules could be fined or charged under provincial legislation.

The map in this pamphlet and description of the designated trails system are the lawful orders and instructions of an Officer under section 181 of the Public Lands Administration Regulation.

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. 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.

For additional travel and tourism information:

Travel Alberta

www.travelalberta.com

310-0000

Random Camping

Random camping refers to camping outside designated campgrounds. Camping facilities must be portable and temporary.

- Limit your stay to 14 consecutive days to allow others to access the site.
- Choose camping areas that will minimize damage to ground vegetation.
- Camp at least 30 metres (100 feet) away from the nearest water body.
- Do not camp along game trails or near berry or shrub patches.
- Set up camp so cooking, food storage and sleeping areas are separate.
- Do not cut or remove live trees or natural vegetation.
- Do not remove artifacts.
- Remove all garbage for disposal at home or to an approved garbage disposal facility.
- **Random camping is not permitted within 1 km of any public land recreation area, provincial recreation area or provincial park within the Bighorn Backcountry area.**



Wildfire Prevention

All human-caused wildfires are preventable.

- 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.

Information Kiosks

Information kiosks are located throughout the Bighorn Backcountry. These kiosks are at forest and provincial recreation areas, staging areas and high-traffic intersections. This Bighorn Backcountry brochure and other pertinent information are posted on the kiosks. Take the time to read the information as it may contain updates to the local area and emergency situations, including fire bans and wildlife concerns.



User Etiquette and Stewardship

Many trails and public land recreation areas are visited by a variety of users. Stay on the designated trail and be courteous and respect other users and their limitations. Obey the signs and rules of the public land use zones. Many trails and public land recreation areas are maintained by volunteers and volunteer funding for the enjoyment of all users. Respect the work and the facilities our volunteers have contributed.

- Remain on designated trails.
- Use the appropriate facilities including toilets, fire rings and overnight camping areas.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times within a public land recreation area or a provincial recreation area
- Lend a helping hand if volunteer work is being completed.



Hunting and Fishing

The Bighorn Backcountry offers great hunting and fishing. Ensure you have the appropriate licence and current regulations. Refer to the current fishing regulations, as fishing may be restricted or closed in some areas. Hunting and discharging of firearms are prohibited in wilderness areas, provincial parks, ecological reserves, road corridor wildlife sanctuaries, provincial and public land recreation areas and near occupied buildings.

Be Wildlife Aware

The Bighorn Backcountry is home for many animals, including grizzly and black bears as well as cougars, wolves and coyotes. As a visitor, you share this natural area with all wildlife. Please act safely to avoid dangerous encounters with wildlife. Where provided, please use bear poles for food storage.

To avoid encounters with bears and cougars:

- Never feed, approach or disturb bears or wildlife.
- Stay in groups. Keep children close.
- Make plenty of noise when travelling into the wind, near dense shrubbery or along water bodies.
- Keep your dog on a leash all the time. Unleashed dogs may provoke an unwanted encounter.
- Look for signs of recent wildlife activity including scat, prints, tree markings and wildlife carcasses. If there are signs of recent wildlife activity, leave the area immediately.

If you encounter a bear:

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

If you encounter a cougar:

- Immediately pick up your children and pets.
- Do not turn your back.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Fight back if it attacks.

bear print



cougar print



Caving - Wapiabi Cave is Closed

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



For more information on White-nose Syndrome see: www.esrd.alberta.ca


Wapiabi Cave Closed

Effective July 19, 2010, Wapiabi Cave is closed to all users. The closure is to prevent the spread of white-nose syndrome into Alberta's bat population.

White-nose syndrome has killed over six million bats in eastern North America, including several provinces. Deaths are associated with a fungus that is not harmful to humans, but can be transferred by humans to new locations.

Persons entering this cave may be charged under Section 18(b) of the Public Lands Administration Regulations.



 For more information visit www.esrd.alberta.ca

Travel Safely

There are no services in the Bighorn Backcountry, so plan your trip carefully. No regular patrols or regular maintenance occur 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.

Avalanche control and snow studies are not conducted. You are responsible for educating yourself to the best possible avalanche awareness and first aid level.

- Before you plan your trip into the backcountry, let friends or relatives know the route you intend to take and your travel schedule.
- Get the latest weather forecast. For winter travel, this includes the snowfall, wind, avalanche and weather conditions.
- Bring the recommended following items:
 - 1:50 000 topographic map(s) of the area you will travel and additional maps and/or trail books
 - Compass and GPS unit with extra batteries
 - Matches stored in a waterproof container or a lighter
 - Warm, waterproof clothing and extra clothing
 - Headlamp or flashlight and extra batteries
 - First-aid kit
 - Tool kit, spare parts, patch kit for bicycle or off-highway vehicle tires
 - Enough food to last the trip and enough water to last between fill-ups
 - Avalanche transceiver, probe and shovel for winter travel
 - Bear spray (accessible at all times)
- Travel with at least one companion. For winter travel, ensure your companion is educated in avalanche awareness, carries the appropriate equipment and knows how to use the equipment. Avalanche information can be obtained at www.avalanche.ca.
- Pack out all garbage and food waste. Do not bury any waste as this will attract wildlife.
- Watch for signs or check with information sources about fire hazards and weather conditions. Campfires, at times, may be restricted or prohibited.
- Plan your day to avoid travelling after dark.

Equestrian Use Within Public Land Recreation Areas

- Do not tie or highline horses to trees. Use provided tie facilities or tie your horse to your trailer. If tying to trailers, horses must not be able to reach the drip line of any tree.
- Electric fences are not permitted in staging areas and camping areas.
- All sites must be cleaned of manure and excess feed. Use provided manure disposal sites for manure only.
- Weed-free feed is encouraged and may be required, as directed in writing by an Officer. Use hay nets or appropriate feed containers to avoid feed being placed directly on the ground. Feed only the amount that horses will eat during your stay. Before leaving your camp, remove any remaining feed that may attract wildlife or introduce weeds. All feed must be disposed of at home.
- Avoid grazing wherever possible.
- When accessing water, use hard ground surfaces and avoid soft ground conditions to prevent streambank erosion.
- Provincial and National Park Backcountry patrol cabins and corral facilities are not for public use.



Off-Highway Vehicle, Dual Sport Motorcycle and Snow Vehicle Users

Motorized users must yield to non-motorized users. Pull over to the right side of the trail, turn off the engine and remove helmets when horses are approaching. Be courteous and respect other users. Travel only where and when permitted and stay on designated trails or in designated random sledding areas. Use designated bridges and water crossings and avoid rutting and tire spinning that may cause harmful erosion and damage to fish habitat.

All off-highway vehicles and snow vehicles travelling on public land require the following:

- Valid registration and insurance.
- Licence plate properly affixed and visible.
- Rear red tail lamp capable of emitting a red light visible from at least 60 metres (185 feet).
- At least one front white headlamp capable of illuminating a person, vehicle or object from at least 60 metres (185 feet).
- Proper exhaust muffler with spark arrestor.

Ensure exhaust systems are clear of debris that may ignite and cause a wildfire.

Encourage other off-highway and snow vehicle users to ride responsibly.

Report unauthorized or illegal activities to local authorities.



Human Waste

Human waste and associated paper products are a concern in the backcountry. 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.



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:

	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, with an additional seasonal access trail.	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. Access in some areas requires written approval from an Officer.	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.
Type of Use						
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	Permitted	Permitted removed; no permanent camp	Permitted structures to remain without authorization; limit your stay to maximum 14 days.	Permitted	Permitted
Helicopter Access	Permitted	Permitted No landing on, or with	Permitted in 200 metres (656	Permitted feet) of any lake	Permitted without authorization.	Permitted
Motorized Recreation Off-Highway Vehicle (OHVs)	Not Permitted	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails within the timing restrictions (see map), unless otherwise posted.	Permitted - No OHVs allowed on Pinto Lake and Aylmer trails. A few trails have timing restrictions (see map). Remaining existing trails available year-round, unless otherwise posted.	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails within timing restrictions unless otherwise posted. One section requires written approval from an Officer (see map).	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.
Snow Vehicle Use	Not Permitted	Permitted - Allowed on designated trails and random sledding areas, within the timing restrictions, (see map) unless otherwise posted.	Permitted - No snow vehicles allowed on Pinto Lake and Aylmer trails. A few trails are closed to snow vehicles due to timing restrictions. Remaining existing trails available for use, snow cover permitting, 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.

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	No	Yes	Yes
Bear Pole	No	No	No	No	No	No
Day Use Parking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Overnight Parking	not yet constructed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Overnight Camp Site	not yet constructed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equestrian Tie Facility	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manure Disposal Site	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
OHV Use Permitted	Yes	Yes	Yes	***	Yes	Yes

* Public Land Recreation Area (PLRA)

** Provincial Recreation Area (PRA)

*** OHV staging permitted from upper parking lot only

Bighorn Backcountry



- ### Legend
- Backcountry Toilets
 - Gasoline
 - Gate
 - 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, two lane
 - Gravel Road, one lane
 - Ecological Reserves, Wilderness Areas, Natural Areas, Provincial Recreation Areas, Wildland Parks
 - Lakes and Rivers
 - Creeks
 - Glacier, Icefield
 - Wildlife Corridor
- Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Sites**
 Off-highway Vehicle, Snow Vehicle or Equestrian Access May Be Permitted.
- Backcountry Campsite
 - Parking/Staging
 - Public Land Recreation Area
 - backcountry toilet and/or rustic facilities (vary between locations)
 - informal campsite
- Tourism, Parks and Recreation 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
- 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).
 - 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 open year-round to non-motorized users unless otherwise posted. Trails closed year round to motorized users. Snowmobile users must obtain a permit for trail use between January 1 - April 30 if adequate snow conditions allow travel.
 - 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 OHV usage due to severe erosion or washout. These will remain closed until maintenance can be performed or new routes approved/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.



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. Please ensure you have the most recent information on the area you are travelling to before you arrive and obey all posted signs and notices.

Ensure you are aware of the regulations and guidelines when travelling into adjacent areas from the Bighorn Backcountry. This map is intended to provide a general orientation to the Bighorn Backcountry. All trail locations are approximate and some trails may not appear on this map. The suggested map series for detailed topographic information is the National Topographic Series (NTS).

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development - Clearwater Area
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 Base Data Provided by the Spatial Data Warehouse Ltd.

Portions of recreational trail layer data provided by Alberta TrailNet Society on behalf of the Provincial Trail Map Project, its participating project partners and members of the Bighorn Backcountry Steering Committee.

Information as depicted is subject to change, therefore the Government of Alberta assumes no responsibility for discrepancies at time of use.

Scale 1:170,000

RESPECT THE LAND

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.

Getting There

Use the map on page 12 as a general guide to your destination. Key roads to and within the area are Highway 11, a paved provincial road; and 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 Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Office or visit www.esrd.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.wildfire.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.

