

Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area



Snowshoeing

The 97 square kilometre Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area contains forests, pastures and wetlands. It is a multiple use area that supports a variety of activities, including agriculture, wildlife management, natural gas extraction and outdoor recreation.

Active wildlife management programs in the area have created a wide range of habitats that support numerous wildlife species. Winter recreation opportunities include horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and fat biking. The area provides excellent wildlife viewing opportunities along its more than 170 km of maintained trails.

Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area is the site of the *Canadian Birkebeiner Ski Festival*, held each year in February.



Trail Information

Trail Conditions

- Winter trail conditions vary depending on snowfall amounts, temperature fluctuations and levels of trail use.
- Trail grooming staff work hard to ensure trails are managed accordingly.
- Typically trails between Waskehegan and Islet Lake staging areas are groomed first.
- Be sure to check trail reports before you head out at albertaparks.ca/trailreports

Cross-Country Ski Trails

- Dogs are not permitted on track-set trails.
- Trails are packed and groomed regularly, as snow conditions warrant.
- There are trails for both novice and advanced skiers: 65 km track-set, 35 km packed for skate skiing, and numerous non-groomed trails.
- Many trails are double-tracked for 2-way traffic.
- Some warm-up shelters are provided along trails. Please extinguish fires when you leave.
- Skiers should keep left when passing and step off to the right when stopping. Downhill traffic has right-of-way. Use caution when approaching steep slopes and bridges.

Equestrian Trails

- Pastures, alleyways and winter equestrian trails may be used for horseback riding (alleyways are also used by snowmobiles).
- For a quieter ride, use marked equestrian trails from Central and Waskehegan Staging Areas.
- Blackfoot Staging Area trails are closed to horses from Dec. 1 to Mar. 31.
- Please refer to albertaparks.ca for current information.

Dogsledding

- Available from Blackfoot Staging Area.

Recreational Use

- Cooking Lake-Blackfoot is open daily from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m.
- Garbage receptacles are not provided along trails or in backcountry areas. Please pack out all garbage.
- Open fires are permitted in designated fire rings and shelter stoves. For cooking portable stoves



Sleighting

- are recommended. It is unlawful to collect and burn deadfall in all Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas.
- Staging areas are equipped with a shelter, multiple fire rings, vault toilets. Potable water is not provided.
- Do not disturb wildlife herds in fields.
- Leave all gates as you find them.
- Do not approach, harass or attempt to feed wildlife or livestock.
- Keep your pet on a leash at all times.
- For the safety of yourself and others please respect and obey all signage within the provincial recreational area.
- Snowshoeing and fat biking are not allowed on track-set ski trails.

Hunting

- During hunting season, a valid hunting license is required for the kind of wildlife and the wildlife management unit to which the open season applies. Indigenous hunting may occur in the area year-round.
- Discharging firearms is not permitted within 400 metres of staging areas or within 200 metres of backcountry shelters. Boundaries are identified by bright orange-yellow signs. **Note:** under the *Provincial Parks Act*, bows are considered to be firearms.
- Hunters wishing to carry or discharge a firearm in the recreation area must obtain a Firearms Discharge Permit online at albertaparks.ca.



Elk calf

Waskehegan (1.3 km) connects forests north and south of grazing fields. Equestrian use is permitted north of Central Trail junction.

Wanisan (4.5 km) portion runs near east shore of Wanisan Lake. Main trail section is not regularly maintained and is outside the ungulate fence.

Equestrian Trails

Baker Springs (1.3 km) location of a natural mineral lick used by animals in the area.

Blackfoot (25.5 km) longest equestrian trail in the area. Extends from Waskehegan to Blackfoot Staging Area.

Cutoff (0.5 km) connecting trail between Blackfoot and Waskehegan trails. Continues into Elk Island National Park. Equestrian use is not permitted north of Elk Island boundary fence.

J.J. (0.9 km) begins at gate in northwest corner near Range Rd. 210. Connects to Blackfoot Trail.

Running Dog (3.0 km): runs along north shore of Running Dog Lake. Group shelter just off the trail.

Swan (0.7 km) named for swans often observed in the area during summer months. Link from N.U.L. north to shelter on Running Dog Lake.

Waskehegan (1.3 km) equestrian use permitted north of junction with Central Trail.

Winter (3.7 km [South 2.4 km; North 1.3 km]) excellent wildlife viewing. South portion is for skiing only, north portion is for both equestrian use and skiing.

Central Staging Area

Skiers and equestrian users share portions of these trails. Skiers meeting horses should stop and step aside to allow them to pass. Moose Link Trail connects Central and Islet Lake Staging Areas. Trails around Central are fairly flat, with one major hill on Beaver Loop heading west from Central Staging Area.

Safety

In an emergency, locate the nearest trail map sign for emergency contact numbers.

Travelling on recreation area trails can be hazardous. Weather conditions can change quickly. Many of the trails are remote and are not patrolled on a regular basis. It is important that you be prepared by carrying the following in your pack or saddlebag:

- first aid kit
- warm clothing
- extra food and drinks
- headlamp or flashlight
- lighter or matches
- pocket knife
- whistle
- map and compass
- hoof pick and leather sticker (equestrian users)
- extra ski tip (x-c skiers)
- cell phone – there is cell coverage in most areas of Blackfoot.
- bike repair kit (mountain bikers)

Hypothermia and Frostbite

Hypothermia, the lowering of body temperature is caused by exposure to cold and can occur even on relatively warm days. As the body cools, it loses its ability to function normally. Symptoms include shivering, confusion and clumsiness. To avoid hypothermia, keep warm and dry, dress in layers of loose-fitting clothing and wear a hat. Carry extra socks and an extra sweater or warm jacket.

Frostbite is the freezing of living tissue. Fingers, feet, ears, nose and cheeks are most susceptible. The first sign of frostbite is the skin turning red, then suddenly becoming a grayish-white colour. To treat frostbite, gently warm the area by breathing on it or placing it under an armpit. Avoid rubbing or massaging the skin – this can destroy skin cells.

Contact

Park Office
Phone: Phone: 780-922-3293

General Provincial Park Information
Web: albertaparks.ca
Phone: 1-877-537-2757

Public Safety and Enforcement (24/7)
Phone: 310-LAND (5263)

Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance)
Phone: 911



Updated October 2022



Norris Ridge (2.1 km) follows ridge above Norris Creek.

Outlet (0.5 km) provides access to ungulate fence from northeast loop of Blackfoot Trail.

Springs (2.4 km) provides access to Ukrainian Cultural Centre via Elk Island boundary.

Well Site (1.0 km) there's access to the ungulate fence from this abandoned well site.

Whitetail (3.1 km) be on the lookout for white-tailed deer along this trail.

Islet Lake Staging Area

More than 30 km of cross-country ski trails can be accessed from this staging area. Two short loops with small hills (Highline and Middle trails) are for novice skiers. Trails around Elk Push Lake are more difficult. Islet and Waskehegan trails are linked through Elk Push shelter.

Highline (2.4 km) mainly follows ridge crests. Excellent for bird watching.

Lost Lake (14.9 km) connects Islet and Waskehegan Staging Areas.

Middle (1.3 km) allows several loops of varying lengths to be made in the Islet Lake area.

Moose Link (2.5 km) Islet Lake trails can be accessed from Central Staging Area using this trail. Named for unusual moose antlers found along the route. Antlers are on display at the Heritage Interpretive Centre at Waskehegan.

Porcupine (0.8 km) many porcupines in the area. Keep pets on leash to avoid nasty vet bills!

Push Lake (1.9 km) hilly trail accesses west side of Elk Push Lake. Dividing ridge between Islet and Elk Push lakes. Excellent viewpoint.




Cooking Lake/Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area

Winter Trail Use

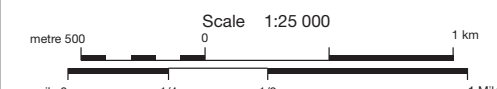
Township 52, Ranges 19-20
West of the Fourth Meridian

Total Trail Distance 171 Kilometres












Trails

Recreation Area Boundary	
Trail - Equestrian	
Trail - Cross Country Skiing; double-tracked	
Trail - Shared (Equestrian, single-track X-C Skiing, Snowmobiling)	
Trail - Skate Skiing, Dog Sledding, Fat Tire Biking; roller pack)	








Junction Distance (Kilometres) • 2.1 •







Recreation Symbols

Bus Stop Shelter		Picnic Area		Snowmobiling	
Backcountry Shelter		Firepit		Staging Area	
Parking		Firewood		Washrooms	
Park Office		Information Kiosk			

Base Symbols

Secondary Highway		Lake		Restricted Road	
Improved Road		Intermittent Lake		Railway	
Gravel Road		Creek		Pipeline	
Texas Gate		Bridge		Wellsite	

Pasture Symbols

Pasture	Field 6B	Barbed Fence, Single Wire Gate	
Enclosure, Corral	E C	Smooth Wire Fence	
Ungulate Fence		Elk Trap Jump Rails	
Ungulate Gate	UG		

