

Contact

Castle Provincial Park
Phone: 403-627-1165

Alberta Parks Visitor Information
Web: albertaparks.ca
Phone: 1-877-537-2757

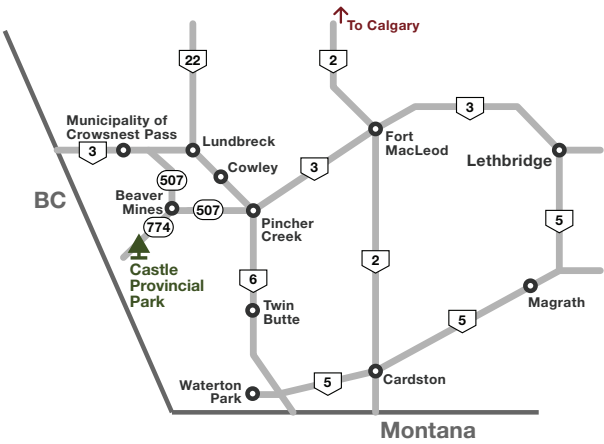
Illegal Activity/Public Safety (24/7)
Phone: 310-LAND (5263)

Fire Bans in Alberta
Web: albertaparks.ca/firebans

Report a Forest Fire
Phone: 310-FIRE (3473)

Report-A-Poacher
Phone: 1-800-642-3800

Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance)
Phone: 911



Cover Photo Credit:
Alberta Equestrian Federation
Updated April 2022



Photo Credit: Alberta Equestrian Federation

Trail safety

The Syncline Trail Network, between the South and West Castle Rivers, is a Nordic Ski Network in the winter. Looped trails allow you to vary the length of your rides and cover different terrain. The largest loop is an approximate 11 km ride with some fantastic views of both the West and South Castle River, but with limited access to the rivers for watering. Keep to the trails, as deadfall in this trail network is extensive. Taking a short cut through it can get your group lost and stuck very quickly.

Do not let your horse graze. There are poisonous, colic causing plants in natural areas.

Dogs must be kept under control and on leash at all times.

If you see a cow in distress or in an area you do not think it is permitted in, call the Environment and Parks Office with a description and location at 403-627-1120 and they can pass that information onto the range rider.

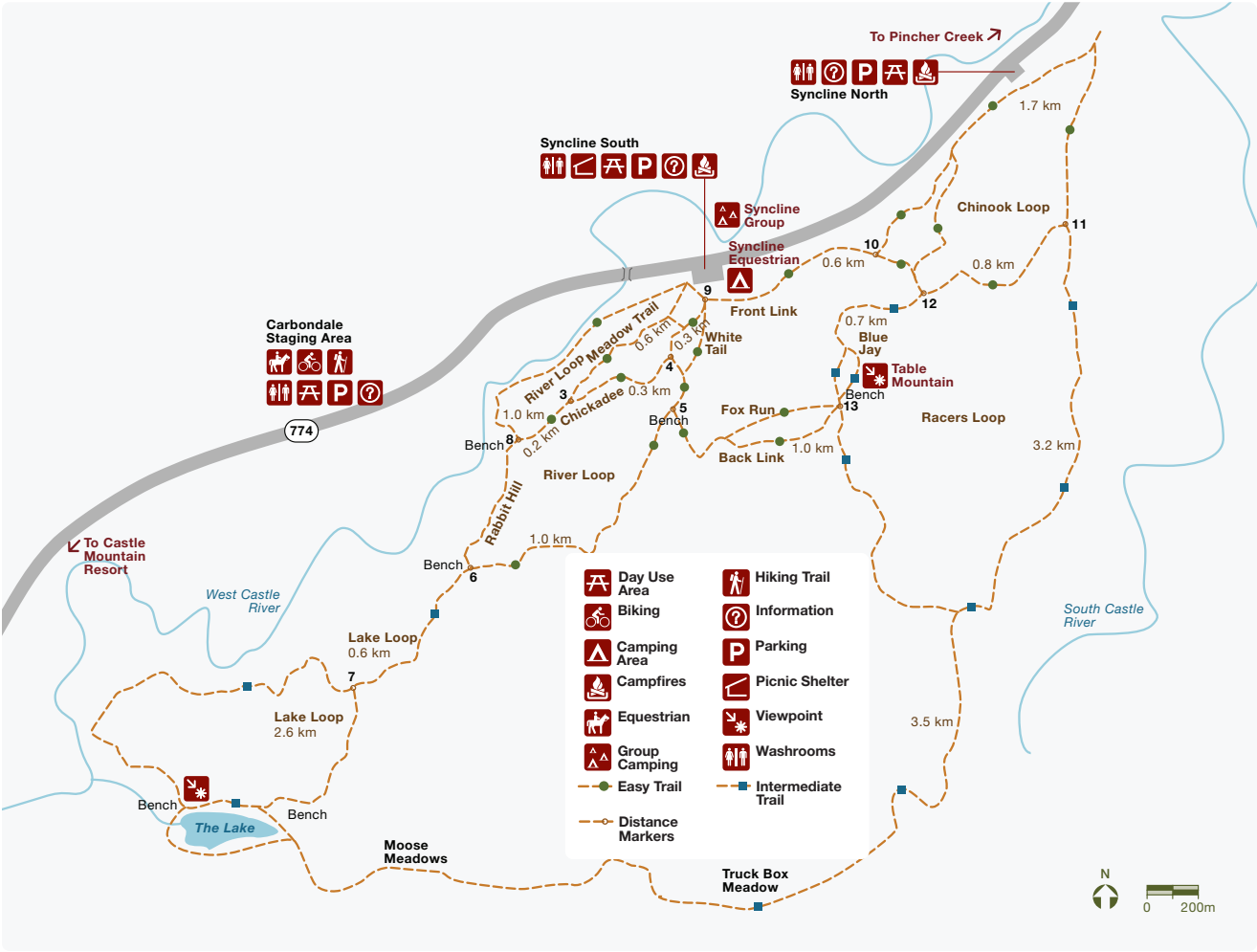
Drivers on Highway 774 may not understand how to drive past horses; use caution when crossing or riding along the side of the highway. Please also respect and stay out of reclamation areas along the highway edge.

While riding along trails, encourage your horse to *walk while they “go”* to spread manure evenly along the trail. This helps reduce manure-spread diseases and minimizes issues for other users.

Greet hikers or mountain bikers you meet on the trail. When they answer you a conversation begins that can help your horse identify the other person on the trail. Help non-riders feel safe while passing a horse or group of horses.

Be considerate of other trail users, and understand that hikers and bikers may not be familiar or comfortable around horses. Offer instructions on how to safely pass. Never put a hiker or cyclist at risk of being struck by a horse’s hoof.

You can be a good ambassador for equestrians. Meeting horses and riders on a trail is memorable;



Syncline summer trails map

a positive short visit will help other trail users understand and appreciate who they are sharing the trail with. Syncline Trail Network is a great area for new hikers, cyclists and riders to have their first experience in nature.

If you have to tie your horse on the trail, use a healthy aspen tree. Aspen are numerous and are overtaking grass meadows. Breaking branches on evergreens to tie your horse safely is illegal in a park, and you could unknowingly damage a species at risk, particularly nesting birds.

Note
There is no cell coverage in much of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Satellite based communications is recommended.

Look into other backcountry best practices, such as leave no trace and pack it in pack it out. Carry a communications device and a first aid kit for you and your horse. Be sure someone at home is aware of your planned route, ride with a companion and a (topographic) map, and do your research!.

Castle Provincial Park & Wildland Provincial Park



Welcome to the new Castle Designated Camping Area for equestrians and their horses. The Equestrian Campground opened June 1, 2022, and was created through a partnership with the Alberta Equestrian Federation.

This campsite supports a traditional, quiet and accessible way to visit Castle Provincial Park and Wildland Provincial Park. Equestrians have an opportunity to ride multiuse trails through native ecosystems, fescue grassland, montane forest right up to the sub alpine at Grizzly Lake and beyond.

Help keep these areas healthy, minimize erosion, and reduce the spread of invasive species by following the guidance provided in this brochure.

This camping area is available for equestrians and their horses from **May 1 – November 30** annually. This is consistent with equestrian use dates for the Syncline Trail Network. Horses are not permitted on the Syncline Trail Network in winter as trails are being packed and prepared for Nordic skiing. As part of our community, please share the trails and support local ranchers who graze cattle in Castle.

Day Use Equestrians

Day use equestrains accessing the Syncline Trail Network must park in the main day use parking area where indicated. Do not block other rigs or non equestrian traffic, and if possible, park facing the exit.

Carbondale Staging Area, a few km south, has access to multiuse trails for equestrians wanting to expand their range.

Manure

The Syncline South Staging Area and Equestrian Campground is a facility shared by multiple activities and must be kept free of manure and old hay to:

- avoid transmission of invasive plant species in this rare plant ecosystem
- reduce the amount of biting insects in the area



- minimize biosecurity risk for all horses who visit the area
- show respect for this facility and the others who share it

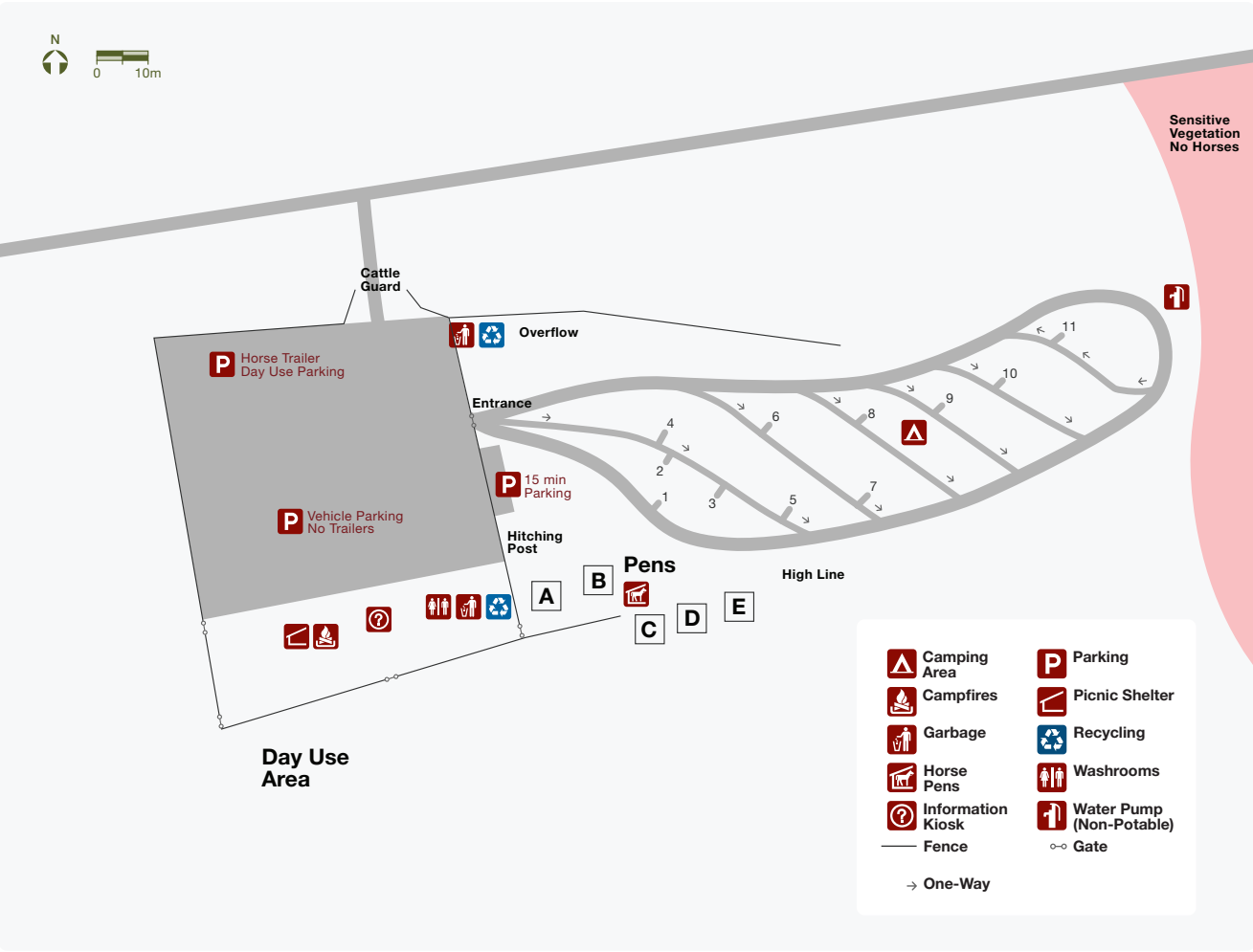
Please clean up after horses and dogs throughout the staging and camping area, including:

- unload and tack up area in the main parking lot
- in the campground
- at the hitching posts
- in the pens
- at the high line area, and
- individual campsites.

Do not pitch any manure or left over hay/other feed into grass or the trees. A manure bin is available for disposal of manure and excess feed. Alberta Parks staff maintain the campsite and manage the manure bins.

Hay, cubes, pellets and grain

The grassland in Castle Provincial Park and Wildland is allocated for cattle grazing and wildlife. Horse grazing is not permitted. Hay and feed must be brought in for the duration of your horses’ stay.



Syncline equestrian campground map

All hay must be cleaned up thoroughly and stored in a manner so it will not blow away or scatter from the campground or day use areas. Hay will carry seeds from invasive agronomic species such as smooth brome, non native fescue, Kentucky bluegrass as well as invasive species such as downy brome and even knapweed.

Processed feed such as alfalfa or timothy/alfalfa cubes and pellets are less likely to spread any invasive agronomics or invasive species.

Avoid attracting bears and other wildlife to the area by cleaning up oats, complete feeds/pellets mineral and salt after feeding, and storing it in a locked area inside your truck or horse trailer.

If you see any invasive species such as oxeye daisy, blueweed, knapweed or burdock around the campsite, please pull them and place in a garbage container. Photograph, document location and report any possible infestations of invasive species like toadflax, knapweed, and leafy spurge and email: swparks@gov.ab.ca.

Trucks and trailers

Turn left after entering Syncline South Parking and access the campground by traveling clockwise from the gate, find your campsite and park. Do not block the access road for more than 15 minutes. Rigs park on the designated gravel pads only, and can stay hooked up. Keeping vehicles off the mud and grass helps encourage regrowth of native vegetation.

Backcountry overnight riders

Can keep their rig in a campsite, so long as they are registered for 16 days or less. Please only book pens for the days you need them for your horses, and always leave pens clean.

Horses facilities

Horses must stay in the available campsite facilities, in your horse trailer or tied to your horse trailer.

- **Pens:** mark occupied dates, horse description, registered campsite number, and clip to pen. An honor system is in place, if someone is out riding, and has an occupied clip on the pen, other users are asked to respect that the pen is in use.
- **Highline Area:** use the highline area provided with horses experienced in such a practise. (High lines

- are not appropriate on live trees).
- **Trailers:** park your trailer to maximize the gravel area on the tack room side, so that tied horses do not damage the native grass/vegetation area between campsites.
- **Manure and Excess Feed:** pens, highline and hitching post area must be cleaned daily. Place manure and old feed in disposal bin provided and clean your trailer out at home to help minimize the cost and effort required to maintain manure bins.

Water

Water is not tested for human consumption. Use the pump water for putting out campfires (soak, stir, soak, stir, soak again) and watering livestock if you are comfortable watering horses with non potable water. Riders will find access points to water near West Castle River, the lake and smaller streams along the trail, or can bring their own from home for shorter stays.

Campfires

A community campfire pit is available for campfires. Campfires are only permitted in the designated fire pit. *Portable fire pits must be placed inside or just next to the designated community fire pit.*

