



Wildlife Safety

- Be respectful of wildlife; familiarize yourself with wildlife safety techniques.
- Make plenty of noise when hiking, especially when approaching blind corners, dense shrubs and streams.
- It is best to leave your pet at home; if you do travel with a pet, keep it on leash at all times (loose dogs can attract and irritate bears).
- Always keep your group together and keep your children close at hand, especially at dawn and dusk.
- If you see signs of bear activity (i.e. fresh diggings along trails, bear scat, claw marks on trees), go back the way you came.

Contact

Alberta Tourism, Parks & Recreation

Rocky Mountain House District Office
 1st flr. Provincial Building
 4919-51 Street
 Rocky Mountain House, AB
 T4T 1B5
 Phone: 1-403-845-8349
 Toll-free: 310-0000
 Web: www.albertaparks.ca

To Book Group Camp

Phone: 1-403-721-3975

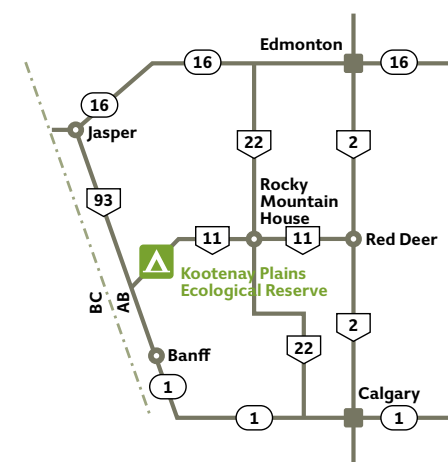
Report a Poacher: 1-800-642-3800

427-FIRE: 1-780-427-3473

Emergency: 911

Big Horn Backcountry Map

Phone: 1-403-845-8250



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Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

GUIDE



Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve protects one of the best examples of montane habitat in all of Alberta. Shielded within the front ranges of the Rocky Mountains, this unique grassland and forest mosaic is home to many species of rare plants, provides important habitat for wildlife and has been a culturally significant area for thousands of years.



Location

This area can be accessed along the David Thompson Highway #11 about 150 km west of Rocky Mountain House or 20 km east of the Hwy 93 junction at Saskatchewan Crossing.

Site Description

The Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve encompasses approximately 34km² of the North Saskatchewan River valley south of Abraham Lake. It is bordered to the east, west and north by the Bighorn Backcountry area and to the south by the Siffleur Wilderness Area.

The Kootenay Plains Provincial Recreation Area, including Two O'Clock Creek campground and the Cavalcade group camp, is located adjacent to the ecological reserve. The Stoney First Nations' land, also adjacent, is used for religious and ceremonial purposes.

Intersected by the Siffleur and North Saskatchewan rivers, the open plains are dominated by grasses, forbs and stands of aspen and limber pine trees. The surrounding slopes are forested mostly by white spruce and lodge pole pines. Waterfalls and deep gorges are scenic features along the Siffleur River.

Strongly influenced by the surrounding mountains, wide shape of the valley and persistent winds, the climate of the Kootenay Plains is relatively dry and warm. These favourable climatic conditions result in excellent habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife and plant species.

Recreational Activities

Hiking is permitted on all trails. Hikers should wear sturdy footwear as the terrain can be rocky and uneven.

Mountain biking is permitted on the Glacier Trail and Siffleur Falls trail as far as Siffleur River bridge **only**, other areas of the ecological reserve are either unsuitable or too fragile for mountain biking.

Equestrian travel is permitted on the Glacier Trail only for access to Whiterabbit trail. Equestrian users are not permitted to use the suspension bridge over the North Saskatchewan River to access this trail. Equestrian staging and river crossing is at Preachers Point Staging Area.

Fishing is not permitted in rivers or creeks within the Ecological Reserve or Wilderness Area boundaries. Fishing is permitted in the North Saskatchewan River.

Backcountry hiking in the Bighorn Backcountry and Siffleur Wilderness Area can be accessed via the Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve. For more information and backcountry maps please contact the Rocky Mountain House District office.



Trails

SIFFLEUR FALLS

This popular and scenic hike starts from the Siffleur Falls staging area leading hikers across the open plains and up the Siffleur gorge. This 4 km hike (one way) is of moderate difficulty. Stay on main path and behind guard rails at all times to ensure your safety. It is possible to continue along this trail to the 2nd and 3rd falls.

KINGLET LAKE

Trailhead and access point for the steep ascent up to Kinglet Lake or Tuff Puff trail.

GLACIER

Suitable for hiking, mountain biking or equestrian use. Glacier trail also provides access to the Bighorn Backcountry.

SIFFLEUR BACKCOUNTRY ACCESS

A direct trail for backcountry hikers or campers heading into the Siffleur Wilderness Area.

LANDSLIDE LAKE INTERPRETIVE FIRE TRAIL

Located immediately west of the Kootenay Plains, this two km loop trail winds through an area impacted by a recent prescribed burn forest fire.

Responsible Use

- Open fires are prohibited.
- Leave no trace—pack out everything you pack in.
- It is extremely important for personal safety and conservation of this protected area to stay on designated trails at all times.
- Travelling off trail can destroy fragile and rare plant species.
- Disturbance of areas off trail exposes the very thin underlying soil that is quickly eroded by the strong winds in the area.
- Please contact the Rocky Mountain House District Office for information about stewardship and trail adoption opportunities.

Hikers

- Extensive and harmful trail braiding is already damaging the popular Siffleur Falls trail, please follow trail signs and respect trail closures.

Mountain Bikers

- Please share the trail; reduce speed on downhill sections and blind corners. Use sound signals when coming from behind or entering blind corners
- **Mountain biking is not permitted on the Siffleur Falls trail beyond the Siffleur River bridge.**
- Mountain bikers wishing to reach Siffleur Falls, can drop bikes at the Siffleur River bridge and hike the remainder of the trail.

Equestrian

- Glacier Trail is the only trail for equestrian use; it provides access to the Bighorn Backcountry.
- Horses are not permitted on the suspension bridge.

Camping Facilities

Along Highway #11, 1 km north of the Siffleur Falls Staging Area, the Kootenay Plains Provincial Recreation Area provides basic camping facilities and a day use area. It includes Two O'Clock Creek with 20 basic campsites and Cavalcade Group Camp for group bookings.

There is no cell phone reception. In case of an emergency, a pay phone is located at the highway pull-out 1 km north of the Siffleur Falls Staging Area, in emergency situations requiring assistance of Alberta Parks staff please dial 403-845-8585.

