

Lakeland Provincial Park

Lakeland Backcountry Guide

Alberta's provincial parks and recreation areas provide facilities and opportunities for outdoor recreation, protecting ecological processes within natural landscapes.

Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area were designated in 1992. Their total area of 590 square kilometres is less than one per cent of Alberta's land base. Elevations vary between 580 and 780 metres above sea level. Most of the provincial recreation area and all of the provincial park are considered "backcountry".

Lakeland Provincial Park covers 147 square kilometres and includes Jackson, Kinnaird, McGuffin, Shaw, Dabbs, Helena and Blackett lakes. The park focuses on primitive "wilderness" recreation and features Alberta's only backcountry canoe circuit.

Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area is the largest provincial recreation area in Alberta. It covers 443 square kilometres, and includes Touchwood, Pinehurst, Ironwood and Seibert lakes. The recreation area supports a broad range of recreational pursuits, plus limited oil and gas extraction.

Lakeland is an outstanding example of boreal mixedwood and old growth forest and supports a wide variety of wildlife. The unspoiled lakes provide excellent water recreation including fishing, swimming, kayaking, canoeing and boating.

The area's high hummocky hills, gently rolling terrain and sandy beaches are the result of ancient glacial activity and more recent erosion and deposits. Aspen, white spruce, balsam poplar, jack pine, black spruce, tamarack and willow can be found throughout Lakeland, each in their own favourite micro environments.

This variety of habitats supports equally diverse communities of wildlife from large species like moose, deer and woodland caribou, to fur bearing animals like river otter, wolf, lynx, beaver and wolverine. Bird species range from breeding waterfowl and birds of prey to song birds. Lakeland provides nesting habitat for the western and red-necked grebes, and is recognized internationally as an Important Bird Area.

Historically, this area was very busy. The Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company used it for access to the far north and west by way



of the Athabasca River. In pre-European contact times, people of the Woods Cree, Chipewyan, Blackfoot, Sekani, Sarcee and Beaver occupied this hospitable region. Archaeological evidence indicates there have been people here as far back as 7500 years.

Most recent history of the area includes a successful commercial fishery on Pinehurst Lake in the early 1900s as well as commercial trapping around Pinehurst and Touchwood lakes. Fur farming and an associated feed fishery operated off and on after WWII until the late 1990s. Sawmills operated on Touchwood, Pinehurst, Seibert, Jackson and Blackett lakes in the 1920s - often on the ice in winter.

The first campground in Lakeland was built in the early 1960s on Pinehurst Lake.

Facilities

Located east of Lac La Biche, several campgrounds, day use areas and staging areas can be accessed from Highways 663, 55 and 36.

The provincial recreation area has four campgrounds at Touchwood, Pinehurst, Ironwood and Seibert lakes, with a total of 211 basic campsites. Travel to all but Seibert Lake is on paved and high grade gravel roads. Access to Seibert Lake is via dry weather trail and four-wheel drive is recommended.

Jackson Lake Staging Area, Dabbs Lake Staging Area and Shaw Lake Day Use Area provide access to 45 kilometres of trails for hiking, bicycling and cross-country skiing. Another 140 kilometres of shared non-motorized and ATV/snowmobile trails are also found within Lakeland. ATV access at Mile 10 Staging Area and non-motorized access at Jackson Lake Staging Area provide access to the 38 kilometre-long Interior Lakes Canoe Circuit.

Shaw Lake Staging Area is the trailhead for Mosquito Lake Trail. This day use area provides all-season primitive services, a chalet and access to cross-country ski trails. It also provides access to more day-use areas, beaches and nature trails.

The new hiking trail from Touchwood Campground to Bareass Point is 7 kilometres in length (14 km round trip) and offers beautiful viewpoints and three walk-in campsites.

Year-Round Activities

In summer: camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, hiking, bird watching, photography, swimming, sun bathing, water sports, cycling, wildlife viewing.

In winter: camping, ice-fishing, hunting, snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing.

More than 30 backcountry campsites situated on various lakeshores enhance backcountry activities such as canoeing, hiking and cross-country skiing.

Boating

Minimize your impact:

- Fill gas containers and motors on land.
- Don't operate your boat near or through groups of birds.
- Try to operate your boat in ways that minimize wake; avoid flooding floating nests by reducing speed when manoeuvring near them.

All boats must carry one approved life jacket for each person on board, two oars with rowlocks or two paddles, one hand-held bailer or manual pump, floating line, waterproof flashlight or flare and some type of sound device for signalling.

For more regulations and tips on safe boating download the Safe Boating Guide from Transport Canada (www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety).

Canoe Circuit

The Interior Lakes Canoe Circuit includes four different lakes - Jackson, Kinnaird, Blackett and McGuffin. There are also roughed-in trails that provide challenging portages to connect to Dabbs, Touchwood and Seibert lakes. Another route to access the canoe circuit is from Shaw Lake Day Use Area (cross Shaw Lake, then portage for 3 kilometres on the Mosquito Lake Trail to McGuffin Lake). The trail is in excellent shape but the hills are demanding. As with other portages outside the canoe circuit, currently there are no canoe carts on these sections.

The Interior Lakes Canoe Circuit is approximately 38 kilometres in length. You will probably need three days to complete it. Most canoeists jump onto the Interior Lakes Circuit from Jackson Lake Staging Area on Highway 663 (locally called Touchwood Lake Road). There is a parking lot at the staging area and access to some "made in Lakeland" canoe carts. These carts are stored approximately 50 metres down the portage from the parking lot. The maximum load on these carts is 270 kilograms (600 lbs). Ratchet strap your canoe onto the cart right side up and load your gear.

Canoe carts are available at Jackson Lake, Kinnaird-Blackett, Blackett-McGuffin, and McGuffin-Jackson Ponds portages. Canoe carts can be



left at either end of the portage. The only catch is that if a cart is not on your end, you'll have to hike to the other end to grab one. There are approximately 15 carts at Jackson Lake Staging Area and two each at the other portages. If there are any maintenance issues with the carts, call Alberta Parks in Lac La Biche.

The canoe circuit is all flat water and an easy paddle. Just watch the skies and listen to the wind, as the lakes can get choppy in short order. The lakes are small enough that there are very few times, unless you choose, when you'll be more than a stones throw from a shoreline.

In years when water levels are lower and vegetation growth high, the north arm of Jackson Lake, Jackson Lake Ponds, the north end of Kinnaird Lake and the creek from Kinnaird to Blackett can be shallow, though still passable.

Portage distances are marked on the map. Jackson Lake portage is a 45-minute to one hour walk. Kinnaird-Blackett and McGuffin-Jackson Ponds portages are fairly short and simple. The portage between Blackett-McGuffin is hilly and a bit more challenging than the others.

Cycling

When coming up behind other trail users and when approaching blind corners, use your bell to warn others of your presence. Stay alert! You could startle bears or other wildlife if you move too quietly along trails

Fishing

Sport fishing in Lakeland is popular and demand often exceeds the capabilities of area lakes to produce sufficient numbers of fish, especially walleye. Catch and release fishing is still enjoyable and allows fish stocks a chance to return to productive levels. Get tips and details on proper catch and release practises from your Alberta Guide to Sport Fishing Regulations or from www.srd.alberta.ca .

Barbless hooks are mandatory. They make it easier to release fish with less handling. If you have barbed hooks they can be made barbless by pinching back the barb with your pliers.

Refer to the current Alberta Guide to Sport Fishing Regulations for seasons, size restrictions and catch limits.

To prevent lead poisoning in fish and birds, avoid use of lead sinkers.

Dispose of used fishing line in garbage receptacles. Birds and animals that get tangled in improperly discarded line eventually die as a result.

Hiking

Use well-defined trails.

Walk single file to avoid widening trails.

Don't create your own pathways around muddy or rough sections of trail; this makes the problem worse.

Avoid low wet areas; when this is not possible, take care to minimize your disturbance of vegetation.

Keep litter in your pockets or bring along a bag to put it in. As you hike pick up any litter you find along the trail.

Hunting

First Nations hunters and recognized Metis harvesters are allowed to hunt year-round in Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area.

For the general public, recreational hunting is allowed in Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area, Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 841, during specified hunting seasons. Consult the Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations for details and information on how to apply for hunting licences.

Hunters should use extreme caution and be aware that others may be hiking, cycling, canoeing or camping in the area. Hunting is not allowed within 400 metres of campgrounds.



Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

ATVs and snowmobiles are only allowed on designated motorized trails in Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area. Many designated trails have been upgraded so that ATV use does not degrade trail and landscapes. When operating ATVs and snowmobiles on these trails, please:

- Stay within the edges of trails. Do not creep around the edges of water holes or downed trees as this causes trail widening or braiding.
- Carry a saw to clear downed trees on the trail.
- Use boardwalks on the trail when provided. They have been placed to allow access over impassable or sensitive areas. Riding beside them destroys what they are there to protect.

- Drive cautiously and try not to spin tires excessively in muskeg and muddy areas as this will turn a small rut into an impassable hole.
- Be on the lookout for other users (hikers, bicyclists and others) - speed differences can be dangerous.
- Be respectful of wildlife you encounter. Allow animals to leave the trail on their own without prompting.

By staying on designated trails and practising responsible operation of OHVs, you will help to ensure that Lakeland remains a great place to visit.

Minimize Your Impact

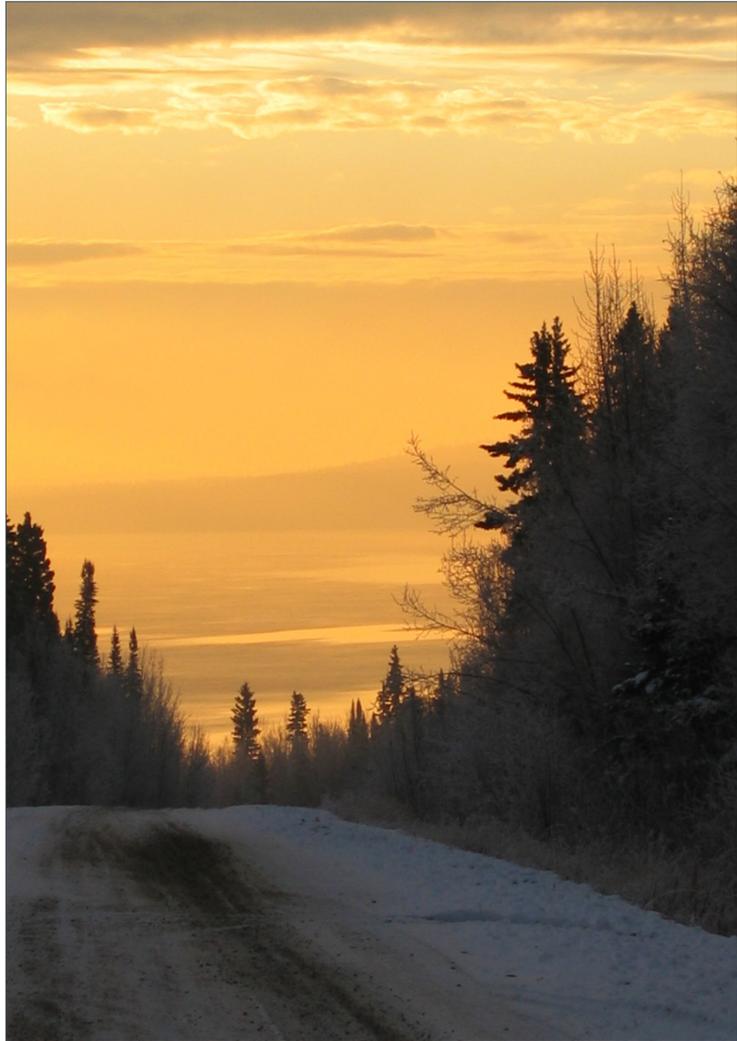
Be aware of your effect on the environment and act responsibly.

- Familiarize yourself with regulations in effect in the areas you are using. Choose lightweight equipment that is durable and safe.
- Park your vehicle in a designated parking area; avoid parking on roadside meadows or other sensitive areas.
- Check trail and campsite conditions before you go.
- Be aware of the potential negative effects of recreational use (wildlife disruption, soil and water contamination, loss of vegetation cover, soil erosion).

When in the backcountry, garbage must be packed out, never buried. Wildlife that find and dig up garbage become accustomed to human food and become problem wildlife. Feeding wildlife creates similar problems.

Safety in the Back Country

Know the basics of navigation, first aid and minimum impact camping. Know your route and the area; obtain proper maps and keep track of where you are at all times by map and compass, GPS, or both. Use caution when fording streams - they can be dangerous, especially when stream flows are high.



Muskeg and fen/bog areas can be extremely wet and have little or no surface tension when walked on. If you step down and see the ground move ahead of you, it is wise to travel around the area.

Never travel alone.

Inform family, friends or authorities of your route and your expected return time. Once you're missed, a search party will be sent out.

Bring sufficient clothing and gear such as food, matches, first aid kit and emergency blanket, even on day trips.

Be prepared for weather changes. Dress in layers. Bring clothing and equipment that will keep you warm, dry and comfortable.

If you get lost, stay put. Keep warm and dry.

In an emergency, think first ... then act. This will increase your chances of survival.

Familiarize yourself with wildlife safety techniques.

When heading into bear country:

- Warn bears of your presence by making noise.
- Be aware of bear signs such as tracks, droppings, diggings and food sources such as carcasses and berry patches.
- If you see a bear, or fresh bear signs, leave the area and notify Alberta Parks staff.
- For detailed information about safety in bear country, read our Bear Smart brochure, downloadable from www.albertaparks.ca.

Don't forget, other wildlife like moose, can also be dangerous. Stay alert and aware to avoid dangerous close encounters

Trapping

Trapping is a traditional activity that still occurs in Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area. There are trappers' cabins and numerous trails for setting traps in Lakeland. These cabins and trails are marked as being part of a trapline. Please respect the cabins and use only designated trails.

Oil and Gas Development

Gas exploration and development are allowed only under strict access and development regulations to minimize the environmental footprint these activities have. If you come across oil and gas infrastructure, do not touch or attempt to alter the equipment as this can be extremely dangerous.

On a side note, all gas wells and booster stations have visible signs outside with the legal land description marked on them. You can use these descriptions along with your map as a navigational tool to determine your location.

CFB Cold Lake

Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area borders Cold Lake Air Weapons Range. For safety reasons, do not travel in the Air Weapons Range. Signs

are posted along the boundary to prevent accidental wandering into this restricted area.

Occasionally you may spot military planes flying overhead. Those who are interested in identifying military aircraft can ask at the Alberta Parks office in Lac La Biche for a copy of our Military “Bird” Watcher’s Guide.

Airmen’s Cairns

Three lakes in Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area, as well as several other lakes in the area are named in honour of twelve airmen and three soldiers from Alberta who were killed in combat during World War II. In 2003 the Lac La Biche branch of the Royal Canadian Legion began a program to commemorate these airmen and soldiers.

The Legion built and placed memorial cairns at each lake. Each cairn has a plaque that gives a brief history of each serviceman and his final actions, and another plaque with the Legion’s prayer. The project was undertaken by the Royal Canadian Legion, the Canadian military, Alberta Parks, Sustainable Resource Development, and countless local individuals. Our duty to honour and remember those who gave their lives for our country is exemplified by these cairns.

Emergency Numbers

Alberta Parks District Office (Lac La Biche)	(780) 623 –7189
Alberta Parks Lakeland Complaint Line	(780) 623–5200
Emergency (including ambulance)	911
R.C.M.P. (Lac La Biche)	(780) 623–4380
Forest Fires	310–FIRE
Report-A-Poacher	1–800–642–3800

For Further Information:

Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area
Box 1019
Lac La Biche, AB
T0A 2C0
phone: (780) 623 –5235
fax: (780) 623–5239

Alberta Parks
www.albertaparks.ca
1–866–427–3582

Lac La Biche Area information
www.laclabicheregion.ab.ca
1–866–623–9696

Recommended resources:

Alberta Guide to Sport Fishing Regulations (published annually):

- available where you purchase fishing permits and online at www.srd.alberta.ca

Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations (published annually):

- available where you pick up hunting permits and online at www.srd.alberta.ca

Parks Brochures (downloadable from www.albertaparks.ca):

- Bear Smart
- Living With Cougars
- Regulations brochure
- Research & Collection Permits
- Filming & Photography in Albert Parks

Topographic maps can be purchased from retail map dealers.

Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide (downloadable from www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety)

www.leavenotrace.ca/main.html