

Castle Provincial Park & Wildland Provincial Park

Alberta Parks Winter Guide



Parks Activities

The Castle Parks offer a wide variety of front country and backcountry experiences. Snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, ice fishing, wildlife viewing, backcountry camping and snowmobiling are some of the activities you can enjoy in the area. Please see trail map for detailed information on the places to go and permitted uses.

Cross-Country Skiing

Cross country skiing is permitted anywhere in the Castle Parks unless otherwise posted.

Syncline Cross-Country Ski Area has ski trails between the South Castle and West Castle rivers. The scenic beauty of these trails extends through rolling landscapes of montane forests and meadows. A warming hut is available at Syncline South for public use.

Snowshoeing

Snowshoeing is permitted anywhere in the Castle Parks unless otherwise posted. Please snowshoe to the side of groomed ski trails and avoid the machine-groomed tracks.

Welcome to the Castle Parks

With more than 105,000 hectares, the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park protect vital habitat for more than 200 rare species. The parks border Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site to the south, the Crownsnest Pass to the north, the Waterton Biosphere Reserve to the east, and British Columbia's Flathead River Valley to the west. The Castle Parks are a part of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, an international region with dramatic landscapes and important wildlife corridors.

Know Before You Go

Stay safe in the Castle Parks. Please review the differences between a Provincial Park and a Wildland Park designation by visiting albertaparks.ca. Conservation Officers enforce the regulations under the Provincial Parks Act to protect the park and support the safety and enjoyment of its users.

Please remember:

- Before your visit, check albertaparks.ca/advisories and albertafirebans.ca for current notices
- **Watch the weather. Turn back before severe weather conditions develop, or seek shelter if conditions change too quickly.**
- Stay on the designated trails and respect other users in the area
- Leave no trace of your visit and dispose of your trash in marked bins
- Do not put any foreign materials into any watercourses (e.g., fuel, soap, body waste, grey water)
- Do not cut, remove or damage trees or any other vegetation unless you have a permit
- Read and follow signs and notices
- Have extra clothing and emergency supplies with you

Fat Bikes

Fat biking is permitted on all designated snowmobile trails within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

Ice Fishing

Ice fishing is a great winter recreational activity. Please see the map for lakes to ice fish on.

Highway vehicles are **not** permitted on the ice. Users with a disabled parking placard may use an OHV on the ice to assist with accessibility for fishing.

The common fish include Rainbow Trout, Bull Trout, Brown Trout, Cutthroat Trout and Mountain Whitefish. Check the Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations for restrictions and requirements.



Safety & Emergency Communication

Plan ahead. There is limited to no cell phone reception in most of the Castle Parks.

Please remember:

- When traveling in the backcountry, bring appropriate equipment, emergency provisions and review safety information
- Provide family or friends with your detailed trip plans and what to do if you do not report back on time
- Pay phones are located at the Beaver Mines Store, Castle Mountain Resort (T-bar Pub and the Day Lodge during regular business hours) and in the nearby communities
- Emergency contact information is listed on the back of this publication

Recreate Responsibly

Be Avalanche Aware

Avalanches are a significant risk to the safety of anyone recreating in the backcountry during the winter months. Many factors can initiate an avalanche, such as precipitation, winds and temperature. Terrain features such as elevation, aspect on the mountain, steepness and time of year are also important factors in avalanche awareness. Avalanches can occur naturally or be triggered by human activity.

To stay safe in avalanche terrain remember:

- **You** are responsible for your own safety
- Check Avalanche Canada for reports and updates at avalanche.ca
- Anyone planning to recreate in avalanche terrain should take an Avalanche Safety Course. These courses are available through many reputable institutions

Ice Safety

Ice thickness may fluctuate throughout the season and with changing weather conditions. No activity should be carried out on ice less than 15cm thick. In the presence of snow on ice, the minimum thickness required is 30cm. Any activity done on the ice is at your own risk.

Check Canadian Red Cross & My Wild Alberta for ice safety tips.

Snowmobiles and Tracked OHVs

Snowmobiles are permitted on designated winter multi-use trails and designated random ride areas in Castle Parks, as indicated on the trail map and on park signage from **December 1 to April 30**. Please be cautious of non-motorized trail users, and stay clear of wildlife.

Note that wheeled motorized use is **not** permitted December 1 to April 30 on winter trails; only tracked OHVs are allowed to maintain user experience and safety.



- Never go into avalanche terrain alone
- Learn to recognize and when possible, avoid avalanche terrain
- Carry the gear and know how to use it, including an avalanche beacon, shovel and probe
- Minimize exposure to steep, sun exposed slopes
- Use extra caution on slopes if the snow is moist or wet
- Pay attention to hazards like overhanging edges of snow (cornices) above you that could trigger an avalanche below them if they collapse.

Be Wildlife Smart

Rich with biodiversity, the Castle Parks contains important habitat and wildlife corridors for many species. You may encounter grizzly and black bears, wolverines, wolves, big horn sheep, cougars, moose and elk. All wildlife can be unpredictable and precautions should be taken when in their habitat.

- Store all attractants, such as food, garbage and pet food, in a secure bear/wildlife proof container
- Be aware that bears may leave their den at times in the winter
- Stay well back from **all wildlife**
- Avoid surprise encounters on trails by making noise
- Keep children close to adults
- Pets must be kept on a leash (2 metres maximum length) or in a cage, supervised and under physical control at all times
- Clean up after your pet



Every off-highway vehicle (OHV) operating in the Castle parks must have:

- Valid registration and insurance
- Exhaust muffler with spark arrester
- Approved helmets for all off-highway vehicle users
- Direct adult supervision for operators under the age of 14 years.
- A licence plate that is securely attached on front or rear of OHV and visible to other operators
- Head lamp on the front of the vehicle capable of emitting a white/clear light of sufficient intensity to illuminate a person or object from at least 60 metres (185 feet)
- Tail lamp on the vehicle rear capable of emitting a red light visible from at least 60 metres (185 feet)

Highway Vehicles

Vehicles (cars, trucks, Jeeps, SUVs) registered for highway uses are only allowed on highways and designated roadways within the Provincial Park and Wildland Provincial Park. No highway vehicles are allowed on any part of the designated trail system without written authorization.

Camping

Camping amenities are closed for the winter season. Please visit reserve.albertaparks.ca to book your summer camping experience.

- Designated Camping Areas 1-6 are closed Nov 30th to May 1st.
- Designated Camping Area 7 is closed until 2024.

Backcountry Camping

Backcountry camping is allowed within the Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

- The campsite and fire must be at least 1 kilometre from any facility, road and at least 50 metres from any trail.
- As much as possible, use existing campsites.
- Never leave a campfire unattended.
- Make sure the fire is out and cold to the touch before retiring for the night and before leaving camp. Soak it thoroughly and stir it – then soak it again.

Please practice traceless camping methods including dismantling fire pits and packing out all your supplies and garbage. Backcountry camping permits are not required.

Campfires

Provincial Park

- Fires are only allowed inside a receptacle or facility designated for that purpose
- Purchase locally sourced firewood
- A tree cutting permit is required to collect wood for burning

Wildland Provincial Park

Collection of dead wood for fires is allowed for immediate use and requires a permit for removal.

Note
December 1 – April 30
The road to Castle Falls is gated and closed to motorized vehicles. The O'Hagen road is gated and open to snowmobiles and tracked OHVs.

Alberta Parks Regulations

Firearms & Hunting

Hunting is a permitted activity in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

In areas where permitted, dogs may be off leash only when they are being actively used for hunting cougars or upland game birds, as long as they are under control.

If you are hunting in Castle Wildland Provincial Park, a firearm discharge permit is not required.

If you are hunting in Castle Provincial Park, you must have a discharge permit.

If not engaged in hunting the firearm must be unloaded and disassembled or fully encased. A discharge permit is required in addition to a valid hunting license. This regulation applies to all provincial parks in Alberta where hunting is allowed. Target practice is not permitted in the park.

Download a free discharge permit from albertaparks.ca/castle. **It is your responsibility to review the permit conditions before heading into the park to hunt.**

Under Provincial Parks General Regulation: "firearm" means any device that propels a projectile by means of explosion, spring, air, gas, string, wire or elastic material or any combination of those things.

Contact

Alberta Parks Pincher Creek Office
Web: albertaparks.ca/castle

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

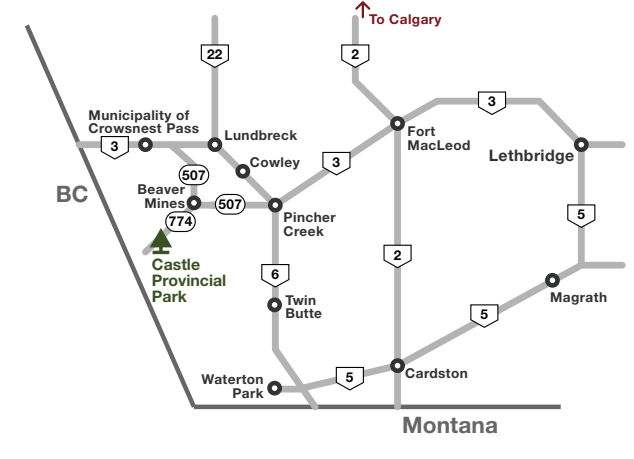
Illegal Activity/Public Safety (24/7)
Phone: 310-LAND (5263)

Avalanche Canada
Web: avalanche.ca/map

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

Report a Poacher/Public Lands Complaints
Phone: 1-800-642-3800

Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance)
Phone: 911



Updated December 2024



Permits

It is up to you to be familiar with what activities require a permit. Permits are required for certain activities to protect public safety and the landscape.

A list of the possible permits that may be needed and information about permits can be found online.

For more information about permits and to obtain a permit please visit albertaparks.ca and click on the Permit Portal link.

Tree Collection Permits

Enjoy the festive winter season with your family by harvesting your own Christmas tree.

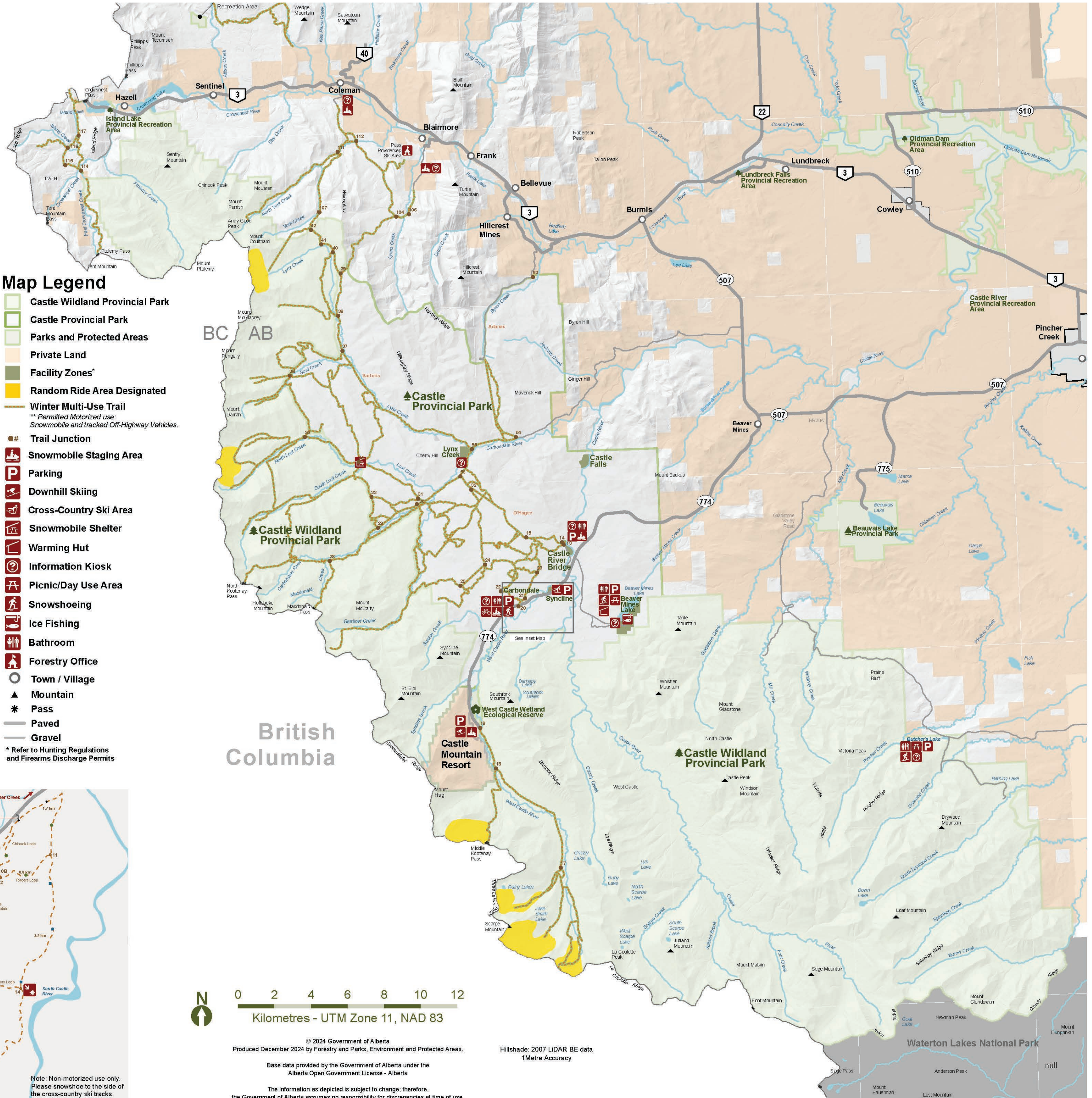
For any tree cutting activities, make sure you have a permit, follow the conditions provided and only cut trees in the areas indicated on the map.

Useful reminders when cutting Christmas tree:

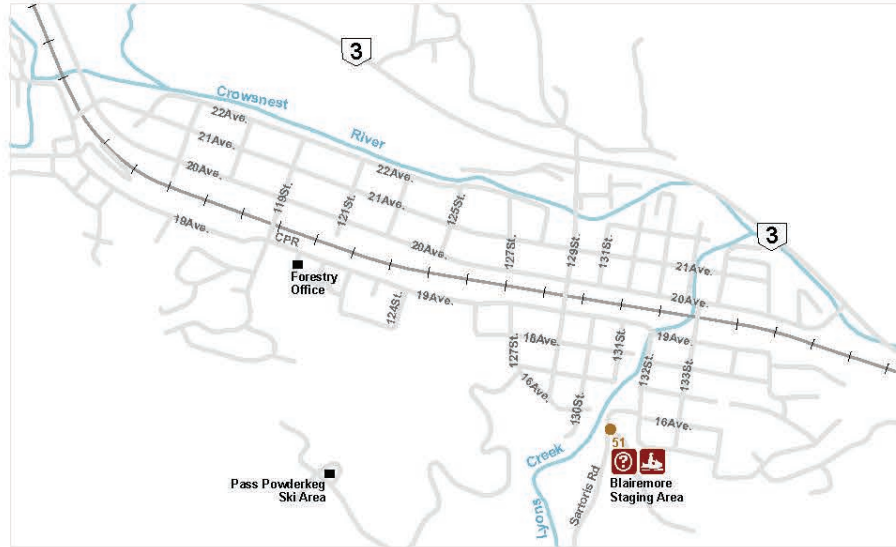
- Be prepared for cold weather and snow conditions
- Don't forget your saw or axe, and ropes for tying the tree down for transport

Castle Provincial Park & Wildland Provincial Park Designated Winter Trails 2024/25

Valid for December 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025



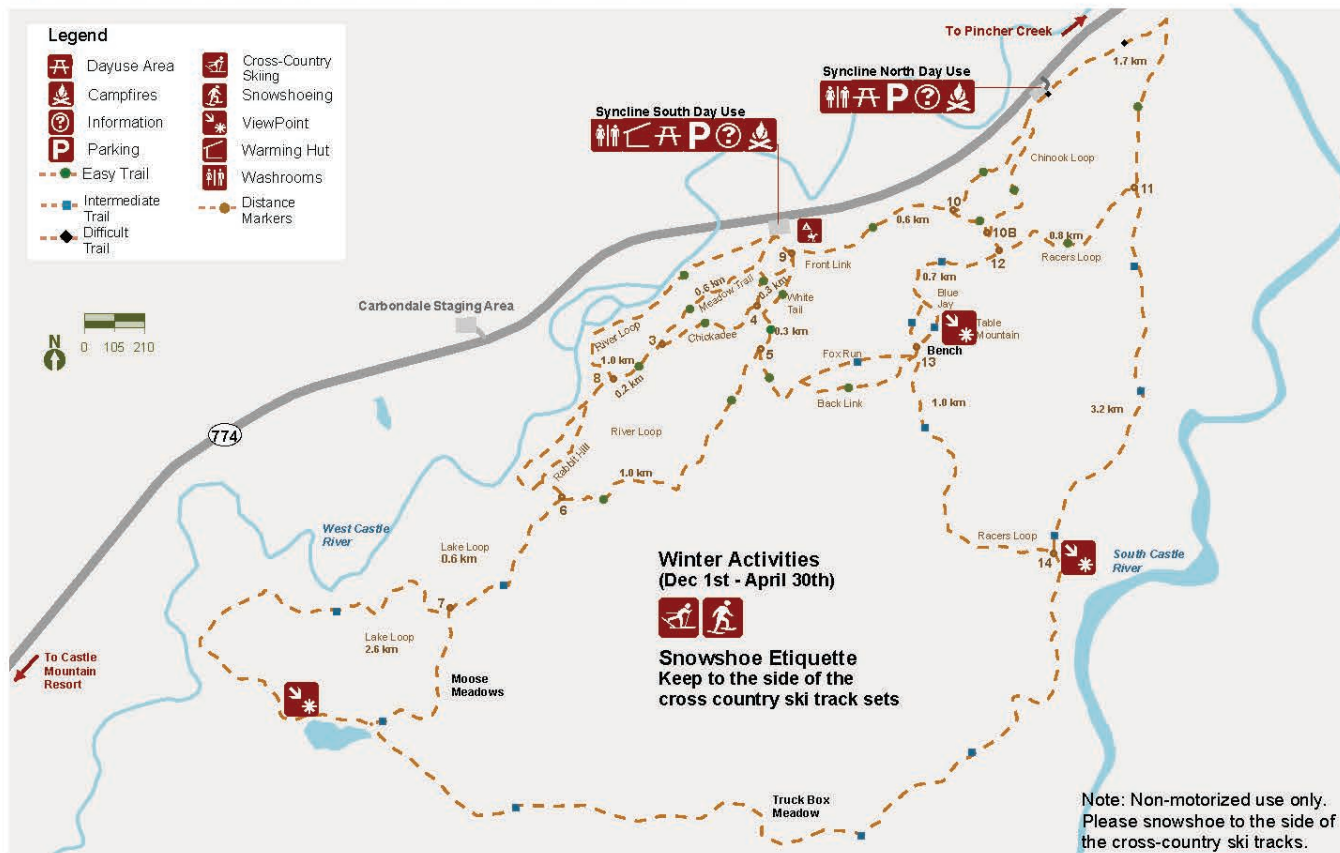
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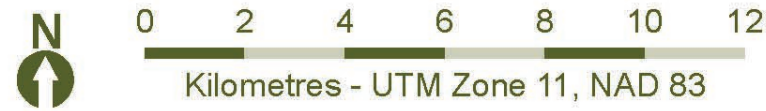
Syncline Cross-Country Ski Area Map - Non Motorized



Map Legend

- Castle Wildland Provincial Park
 - Castle Provincial Park
 - Parks and Protected Areas
 - Private Land
 - Facility Zones*
 - Random Ride Area Designated
 - Winter Multi-Use Trail
 - ** Permitted Motorized use: Snowmobile and tracked Off-Highway Vehicles.
 - Trail Junction
 - Snowmobile Staging Area
 - Parking
 - Downhill Skiing
 - Cross-Country Ski Area
 - Snowmobile Shelter
 - Warming Hut
 - Information Kiosk
 - Picnic/Day Use Area
 - Snowshoeing
 - Ice Fishing
 - Bathroom
 - Forestry Office
 - Town / Village
 - Mountain
 - Pass
 - Paved
 - Gravel
- * Refer to Hunting Regulations and Firearms Discharge Permits

British Columbia



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

Hillshade: 2007 LIDAR BE data
1Metre Accuracy

Waterton Lakes National Park